

# St Albans Licensing Newsletter

## July 2024

### Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licencing Policy

At the Licensing & Regulatory Committee, it was agreed that the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licencing Policy would be adopted. This came into effect the day after, on 09th July 2024.

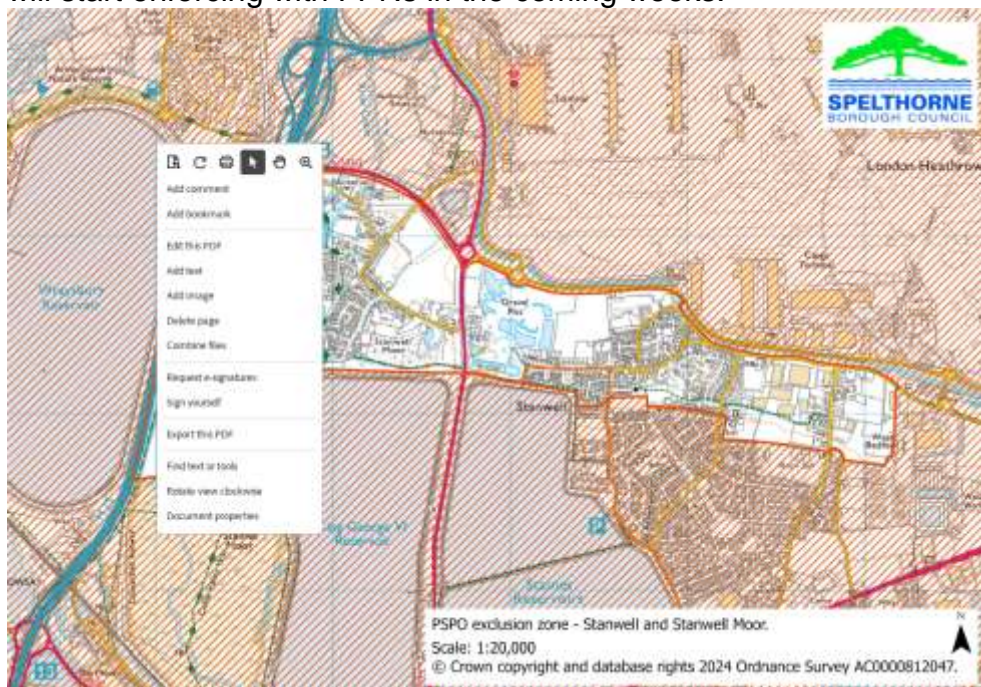
You can view the newly adopted policy at the link below;  
<https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/taxi-licensing>

We ask all licence holders to familiarise themselves with this policy and the requirements within, as all licences issued from 09th July 2024 will need to comply with this policy, including licence requirements, the code of conduct and the conditions.

### Spelthorne Public Space Protection order

Spelthorne council have asked us to advise you that a new Public Space Protection Order has recently gone live within Spelthorne, one part of which creates an exclusion area in Stanwell Moor and parts of Stanwell where no taxis or private hire vehicles are permitted to park.

At this time, warnings only are being given however they have advised that they will start enforcing with FPNs in the coming weeks.



## **Parking**

We have seen an increase in complaints about hackney carriage and private hire vehicles parking on school zig zags, double yellows and bus stops, so please note we will be monitoring this situation closely.

In terms of the Highway Code, the words 'must' and 'should' are often used. The word 'should' is advisory and the word 'must' is used when giving an instruction of a rule or law (regulative).

The guidance of the Highway Code rule 238 states

“You **MUST NOT** wait or park on yellow lines during the times of operation shown on nearby time plates (or zone entry signs if in a Controlled Parking Zone). Double yellow lines indicate a prohibition of waiting at any time even if there are no upright signs. You **MUST NOT** wait or park, or stop to set down and pick up passengers, on school entrance markings (see 'Road markings') when upright signs indicate a prohibition of stopping.”

Rule 243 of the Highway Code states that drivers **DO NOT** stop or park:

- near a school entrance
- anywhere you would prevent access for Emergency Services
- at or near a bus or tram stop or taxi rank

We expect all drivers to be aware of the above and to follow the Highway Code.

## **Penalty notices**

Enforcement has been previously carried out on the High St taxi rank throughout the year, with some occasions being up until 22:00. This involves an officer remaining in the vicinity throughout the evening. We can confirm that throughout December 2023 and January 2024 58 notices have been served on this taxi rank. 183 notices have been served to vehicles parking in the taxi rank from end of January 2024 and July 2024.

We will continue to work closely with the Parking enforcement team to monitor the situation.

## **Wheelchair Accessible Contact List**

Wheelchair users are very dependent on our licensed trade. Having the ability to contact a Hackney Carriage Driver directly, to book a wheelchair accessible vehicle, is very beneficial to them.

We have a list of hackney carriage drivers with wheelchair accessible vehicles on our website, this list provides contact details so that members of the public are able to contact them and book them directly.

If you would like to be included on this list, and you have a wheelchair accessible vehicle, please contact us on the following email:

[licensing@stalbans.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@stalbans.gov.uk)

Please include the following within your email:

- Your vehicle licence number
- Contact number
- Booking availability (days of the week, hours)
- Do you need 24 hours' notice for a booking

## **Card payments**

As you are aware all licensed Hackney Carriages vehicles, must have available at all times, an electronic device that allows contactless or card payments to be made. The driver must ask the passenger if they require a receipt. If the passenger requires a receipt, the driver must provide one which accurately states the time and date of the journey, driver number and fare.

All licensed Private Hire vehicles, must ensure at all times, they can provide a means for passengers to pay for fares by card or as a contactless payment. This can be, but is not limited to, electronic card payment devices or operator websites and apps.

The licensing authority would like to pass on the thanks and complements received regarding the adoption, implementation and smooth transition of card payment facilities.

## **Driver News**

If there is anything you would like to see included within our next newsletter please get in touch with the Licensing Team on [licensing@stalbans.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@stalbans.gov.uk)

## Assistance dogs, private hire and taxis: What you need to know



### **What is the most important thing for me to know and understand?**

People who use assistance dogs use them to aid their independence. They are working dogs and are better behaved than pet dogs. Most people are friendly and reasonable. So, all you need to do is ASK how you can best assist in helping them into your taxi with their assistance dog.

### **What is an assistance dog?**

An assistance dog is a dog which provides help and support to a disabled person. These can include guide dogs, hearing dogs and support dogs.

### **Can I refuse an assistance dog?**

No. The Equality Act 2010 is totally clear that no driver can refuse a dog on any grounds – cleanliness of the dog, does not like dogs, fear of dogs, cultural or religious reasons. A refusal leaves you open to investigation by Licensing which could result in the withdrawal of your license, or to a legal claim against you.

### **What is a medical exemption?**

A medical exemption can be issued by the Licensing Authority if you have a genuine medical reason why you cannot have an assistance dog in your taxi. You need to display the exemption openly in your taxi.

### **Can I say where the assistance dog has to go in the taxi?**

Legally no you cannot. Most assistance dog users like their dogs in the front with them. A smaller number prefer them in the back. Others are happy for their dog to go in the boot of an estate car. It is very unlikely anyone will allow their dog to go into a saloon boot. You can ask the owner where they would like their dog to go, but if they ask for somewhere you don't agree with you cannot insist.

### **Can I ask to put a blanket under the dog to collect hairs?**

Yes, you can ask. Some owners will agree, some will not. Again, you cannot insist. Blankets or towels are preferred to plastic sheets. Some assistance dog owners carry their own blankets with them.

### **Can I charge more for carrying an assistance dog?**

No. There are no circumstances in which you can do this.

### **If I arrive for a booking and find someone has an assistance dog but not told me, can I not pick them up?**

No. The owner is under no obligation to tell you. The law says you must still pick them up.

### **If I really don't like dogs, can I insist the dog is kept away from me?**

You can ask politely for this, but you must understand that it may not be possible for the owner to do this. Getting frustrated or angry with the owner will not help and only make the owner feel uncomfortable and unwanted in your taxi.

### **What assistance do I need to give to the person using the dog?**

Although some people who are blind or partially sighted have mobile phones, they will not know what the colour of your car or registration is. So, if you know or see the person has a visual impairment, please get out of the car to offer them assistance. Some will want to take your arm, some will want you to take their arm, and some will not want any assistance. Ask the person if they want you to put their hand on the top of the door so they know where it is. Don't assume the person knows which way to go or that they can tell you where they want to be dropped off. Most importantly just ask.

### **Accessibility**

If you need this document in an alternative format, please email [info@pocklington-trust.org.uk](mailto:info@pocklington-trust.org.uk) or telephone 020 8995 0880.

### **About Sight Loss Councils**

Sight Loss Councils are led by blind and partially sighted members. We tackle local issues and work with businesses and service providers to improve the accessibility of their services.

Email: [info@sightlosscouncils.org.uk](mailto:info@sightlosscouncils.org.uk)

Website: [www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk](http://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk)

Facebook: [@SightLossCouncils](https://www.facebook.com/SightLossCouncils)

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