

## BUY A BRICK APPEAL AT CHELSEA HOSPITAL

On 7th August at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, Michael Calvey, the Chairman of The London Taxi Drivers Benevolent Association For War Disabled presented a cheque for £500 to the Royal Hospital Chelsea Infirmary 'buy a brick' appeal on behalf of the charity. The cheque was received by Mr Roy Ratazzi CBE the Appeal Director. Also there to witness the presentation were Paul Davis, Secretary LTDBAFWD, and Derek Leone, committee officer.



L to R. Derek, Roy Ratazzi, Michael, Paul.

The Hospital is hoping to raise over £35 million over the next few years for a new infirmary building for the In Pensioners. 800,000 bricks are needed to complete the new building. The Royal Hospital Chelsea is Home for between 300 and 350 veteran soldiers, who have decided to surrender their military pension to the Treasury in order to receive accommodation, food, uniform clothing, professional care and medical attention, when they need it.

## OFFICER URGES CARE WITH TAXIS

A police officer in Norwich issued a stark warning about illegal taxis in an interview with Taxiwise after a bogus driver subjected a woman to a terrifying ordeal. In May this year the man attempted to abduct the woman before subjecting her to a vicious attack outside Norwich railway station. Sarah Mirow, from Norwich, had been celebrating her hen-night and was about to fly to Antigua to get married.

She was waiting with her niece for a lift at the station in the early hours of the morning when a man pulled up in a silver P-registration Mercedes and offered them a lift. When they refused to get in the vehicle in the knowledge it was not a taxi as all vehicles are of a similar type in Norwich, he became abusive and ordered the women to get into the car. Miss Mirow asked him to leave and he attempted to grab her and pull her into the car. She was lucky to escape without serious injury.

Sergeant Andy Cook, of the British Transport Police, is urging people to be

aware of the dangers of illegal taxis. He described the attack as "particularly nasty" and said the woman was left shocked. He said: "We feel this was a genuine attempt to abduct the woman by dragging her into his car. We would remind people to only pick up taxis from authorised spots or to pre-arrange bookings rather than flag down a private hire vehicle or getting in a vehicle that pulls up alongside them. If passengers are suspicious then they should contact the police with their concerns."

Celeste Clarke a spokesperson for Taxiwise commented: "It is a sad fact that this type of instance is an all too common occurrence. We cannot stress enough the importance of ensuring that passengers know what they are getting into. There are many opportunists out there however the more the taxi travelling public are educated as to the dangers the less opportunity there is for bogus mini cabs to prey on women in this way."

## CONSULTATION ON HIGHER CHARGES FOR GAS GUZZLING CARS

The Mayor recently announced Transport for London will start a consultation on a scheme to charge the cars which make the biggest contribution to global warming - such as the so-called 'Chelsea tractors', some high powered sports cars and expensive luxury vehicles. This could see charges of up to £25 to drive in the present central London Congestion Charging Zone. Cars driving outside the present congestion charging zone will not be affected. Models which emit under 120 g/km CO<sub>2</sub> or less will be exempt, while those over 225 g/km will pay £25 a day to enter the recently enlarged central London zone. Most other cars and commercial vehicles will pay £8 a day.

Within the congestion charging zone, the highest CO<sub>2</sub> emitting cars, which represent just eight per cent of cars registered in London, would face the higher £25 charge and lose their entitlement to the residents' discount. Some of the worst examples produce two or three times as much greenhouse gases as the average family car. The great majority of drivers within the zone would be unaffected and the least polluting vehicles will receive a 100 per cent discount and not pay any congestion charge at all.

The proposals are part of the Mayor's strategy to do everything possible to reduce pollution and London's contribution to climate change - a top priority as the recent catastrophic weather has brought home. According to a poll conducted by MORI for the Mayor, 64% of Londoners think the most polluting cars should pay a higher congestion charge. The consultation started on 10 August and end on 19 October. The Mayor will keep an open mind on the proposals until he has considered the responses to the consultation. Ken Livingstone said: "Londoners are becoming increasingly aware of the need to tackle climate change and this summer's floods were a reminder of the urgency with which we need to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The highest CO<sub>2</sub> emitting cars - like some of the so-called Chelsea tractors, high

powered sports cars and luxury executive cars - can produce twice as much carbon dioxide emissions as the kind of car driven by the average Londoner. By proposing these changes to the congestion charging scheme we are encouraging people to take into account the impact on the environment of their choice of car."

"We are already cleaning up London's fleet of public vehicles through measures like the Taxi Emissions Strategy and the introduction of hybrid buses. These new proposals will tackle emissions from private vehicles, and ensure that London is leading the way in the fight against catastrophic climate change."

Exemption criteria will become technology neutral. Regardless of powertrain type, cars emitting less than 120g/km, including petrol and diesel models, will pay nothing to enter the zone. Incentives for commercial vehicles are welcome too, with trucks meeting highest air-quality standards (Euro 5) set to qualify for a £2 daily discount. However, the SMMT (Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders) is concerned that the new scheme will add further layers of bureaucracy and confusion for road haulage companies struggling to come to terms with the forthcoming introduction of the Low Emission Zone (LEZ). Manufacturers investing in high blend bio-ethanol (E85) cars will be disappointed that TfL is not considering them for congestion charge exemptions. 'Londoners will be sceptical about the motives for this significant change to congestion charging and many will fear this is already a done deal,' said SMMT chief executive Christopher Macgowan. 'However, we will push for a re-think on these totally disproportionate proposals. A family whose car emits one g/km more than their neighbour's could end up paying thousands of pounds more a year. That can't be right.'

