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to remaining members giving a date for the re-launch of the 1/230 Branch. (6.30 pm Tuesday 15th July Transport House Theobalds Road WC1)

Although titled the "Central London Branch", which implies Green Badge only, it does in fact cover both Green and Yellow Badges in most of London as the only other branch in the Capital, is the 1/300 Branch based in Heathrow and so as only Green Badges can work the Airport the 1/230 is the only branch for everyone else licensed by the PCO/TfL.

Quite why notice of the restart of the branch meetings has been given now is not clear, but it is to be welcomed. Many members have been asking for the restart and complaining that although the existing branch officers were due to have been out office last December (2007) due to expiry of their allocated time in office (2 years) they had continued to behave and act as officers. This meant that they were writing and speaking as if they were giving the Branch's position on many issues such as the "Ethnic

## STOPPING AT AN ATM

One of Mayor Boris Johnson's manifesto pledges was to allow taxis to stop on red routes so that passengers could use an ATM without the cab driver getting a penalty charge. The Mayor has now announced that all licensed taxis, as well as private hire vehicles with appropriate signage, will be allowed to stop on London's red route network at night to let passengers safely use cash machines.

Between 10pm and 6am every night, any passenger who needs to withdraw money to pay for their journey will now be able to ask their driver to stop near an ATM on red routes for a maximum period of five minutes.

This new exemption from red route regulations is being piloted for six months, after which the impact on red routes will be assessed. Transport for London will then consult with licensed taxi and private hire drivers, their passengers, and local authorities to consider the overall effect and success of the policy.

This exemption does not apply to other motorists who will continue to be liable for penalty charges if they stop on red routes within the hours indicated on roadside signs.

To further improve passenger safety, the Mayor has asked TfL's Public Carriage Office to consider proposals to improve card payment arrangements in taxis. Currently, about a third of licensed taxis can accept card payments, but at a premium fare. Boris Johnson said: "I made a commitment during my election campaign to cut needless red tape. I have listened to

the concerns raised by taxi and private hire drivers and their passengers about how difficult it can be to stop near a cash point late at night to pay a fare and that's why I have allowed taxis and private hire vehicles to stop at red routes for this purpose.

"People will be able to withdraw cash late at night to pay their fare, secure in the knowledge that their cab is waiting close by. TfL will also be encouraging more taxis to accept credit and debit cards to make it easier and safer for passengers to pay their fare. London is a great city, but some aspects of day-to-day life can be unnecessarily tough. As Mayor I want to make life easier for Londoners, and this is just one of the ways that I will be doing so."

Jeroen Weimar, TfL's Chief Operating Officer for Surface Transport said:

"We're making these changes on a trial basis to improve passenger safety and make life easier for everyone. However, we will be monitoring closely to ensure that this exemption for taxi and private hire drivers is not abused and doesn't cause delays for other night-time traffic in London. We continue to expect all drivers to comply with traffic regulations in order to keep London moving."

If the pilot is successful, TfL will work with London Councils to explore whether such exemptions from stopping restrictions could be extended to local borough roads around the Capital.

## UNITE GIVE NOTICE OF RESTART OF CENTRAL LONDON BRANCH MEETINGS

*by Eddie Lambert*

Following 18 months without any branch meetings of the Central London Branch of what was under the T&GWU, the Cab Trade Section letters have been sent

Knowledge," when in fact as there have not been any branch meetings there could not be a branch position on these issues.

What is now needed is for the rank and file members who have been denied any input into the trade through the branch to attend in numbers. This meeting is a chance for the members to return democracy to the branch. This includes Yellow Badges, it's your branch too. There is much going on in the trade that will affect all badges holders and if you want to have a branch that reflects the rank and file membership's position on trade issues then you need to attend.

We need to bring the branch back to it's rank and file members and make the branch's officers, and others who hold positions through branch membership and votes account-able to the branch. We need to improve communications with the members so everyone knows what is happening in their name. A newsletter that actually contains trade and union news and is not a "stop me and buy one" sales flyer.

A branch where fellow members of the Cab Trade Section from out of town will be welcome to attend our branch meetings as guests and be able to pass on their experiences and knowledge of the trade outside London. BE THERE IT'S YOUR BRANCH YOUR TRADE HAVE YOUR SAY.

