

MAYOR TEST DRIVES THE TESLA ROADSTER

London's Mayor has recently test driven the World's only fully electric, zero emission sports car, the Tesla Roadster in London. The Mayor has gone on record saying that his next car will be electric. He was attending a preview of the IQ2 Green Festival on Climate Change conference and exhibition, open to the public on Sunday 25th January at the Royal Geographical Society in London. The event brought together acknowledged experts in the area of climate change to raise the awareness and stimulate debate in this important area.

The Tesla Roadster has been developed by the Californian based company and is produced at the Lotus factory in Norfolk. Over 160 Roadsters have been sold and are currently in customers hands. With a 0 to 60 mph acceleration time of 3.9 seconds and top speed of 125 mph, the Roadster delivers super car performance with far more energy efficiency than compact hybrids.



NO FARE? TAKE A PACKAGE INSTEAD!

Running empty is a real problem for anyone who makes a living from their vehicles. Industry experts claim around 25% of all truck journeys are undertaken with empty loads. This represents a major challenge for hauliers struggling with high fuel costs, let alone a full-blown recession. For taxi drivers, the issue of running empty is of course, one of passengers not parcels. But the principle is the same. Every journey made without a paying fare represents a cost to the business.



Colin Hay

The truck sector has invested millions in better logistics, real-time vehicle tracking and driver monitoring software to maximise loads and minimise costs to address the problem. Now a new web site has the potential help London cabbies do the same – albeit much more cheaply. The site www.stuff2send.com was launched in December 2008. Site founder Colin Hay, recognised the benefit of services that linked empty truck loads with potential jobs. He took the concept one step further and applied it to private motorists, and small businesses. And now he's looking for taxi drivers to join the community. "It's a very straightforward web site," he said. "The idea is that if someone is driving somewhere anyway, they can bid on-line to deliver a package or parcel to a destination close-by, for someone else. There are real advantages in sharing your vehicle space with a package. For all road users it means less unnecessary traffic, while for the individual it means getting paid for journeys you already do."

The service has signed-up 500 delivery drivers including students, commuters and small businesses like van couriers. But Hay believes the service could soon be a hit with London cabbies too. "We understand that many black cab drivers commute into London from outside the capital, so our service should prove a benefit on those empty runs."

The cost of using Stuff2Send has been kept low too. It's free to join for those who want to send stuff by posting details onto the site; those who join as a deliver driver pay a one-off fee of £10. Once registered, drivers search for parcels and packages to be picked up near where they start a journey to be delivered close to their planned destination. "We've only recently launched Stuff2Send, but already there's been great interest," added Hay. "We want to develop our community of delivery drivers and senders. I can't think of a better community to spread the word and reap the benefits of Stuff2Send than London cabbies."

It's an interesting idea. And while parcels may not be the world's greatest tippers, at least they won't ask you to turn the radio down!

LOVE IS IN THE TEXT

First there was speed dating and now its 'car dating' for those seeking love and friendship. MYPL8 is a 'pay as you go' means of mobile social networking where members jot down the car registration of the person who catches their eye and, when it's convenient, text them through the easy to use MYPL8 service. The scheme is completely anonymous, it is safe to use, with users only divulging contact details if they choose. So the next time you see a passenger texting in the back of the cab, you never know they may be trying to contact someone in the car next to you at the traffic lights.

Founder Euan Williamson said, "We are staggered by the take-up of MYPL8 and now have clusters of members in almost every corner of the UK. We don't promise to help people find the partner of their dreams but it is happening. Others are making friends or simply chatting with owners of similar cars, especially vintage and more unusual models, or reporting potentially serious vehicle defects like faulty brake lights to fellow members. We've even heard cases of members getting their registration numbers printed onto t-shirts so they can be contacted when they're not in their cars!"

"Of course there is a safety issue, but from the very beginning of MYPL8 we were determined that users should be able to have fun whilst being protected from any abuse. To this end all users must be members and sign up. We hold their mobile phone details, their car registration (which is verified) and log all member activity. MYPL8 is fully compliant with current data protection legislation."

Of the cost Euan said: "Unlike some other social networking websites, MYPL8 doesn't charge a joining fee or subscription so sign up and make sure you don't miss someone wanting to text you! Not only that but to keep it fun, we have no advertising on site or in the MYPL8 messaging system, just as we would prefer ourselves."

There is also no cost to receive texts, only to send. Members are reminded NOT to text when driving.

GOOD DEALS FROM BLACK HORSE TAXI FINANCE



With competitive rates, LTI's financial arm, Black Horse Taxi Finance, is still helping drivers buy new Taxis. Many banks have stopped lending or reduced the amount that they will lend to borrowers, but Black Horse Taxi Finance continues to provide specialist loans and its business as usual for drivers looking for a new deal in 2009. "I've been asked by some drivers if there is still competitive finance available to buy a TX4 and the answer is absolutely yes," said Rob Laidler, LTI's Sales Director. "It's an excellent time to buy a TX4. Dealers are offering some of the most competitive deals ever available and at a time when interest rates are really low and with VAT at 15% drivers can get themselves a real bargain. Added to this Black Horse Taxi Finance continue to provide funds for drivers to take the opportunity to capitalise on the current offers. If drivers are thinking of getting a good deal on a TX4 but worried that they cannot get finance, I would say get down to your local dealer now because it business as usual and there is finance available at great rates."