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PRINTERS

Cumbrian Newsprint, Cumbria

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Lincolnshire PE10 9PH

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LONDON AT NIGHT – BY THE LTDA

In a DVD entitled London at Night, cameras film the activities of the minicab trade in London. The LTDA has produced the DVD in response to the problems being faced by its members every night on the streets of the capital.

ENFORCEMENT IS LONG OVERDUE

The cameras show Wardour Street, with long lines of minicabs parked on double yellow lines, Charing Cross Road where even a pedicab has joined the long line of parked minicabs on yellow lines and outside Abacus on Cornhill where the long lines of “ranked” minicabs are on both sides of the road. If any action to make sure these vehicles are not allowed to park and break parking rules has been taken, it seems the risks must be financially viable as the minicabs are parked up in the West End every night.

LICENSED MINICAB MARSHALS

The DVD shows clearly the lengths that some touts and clipboard johnnies go to in order to ensure that they get the fares. The touts are filmed outside Tiger Tiger in Haymarket, at Walkabout on Victoria Embankment, whilst at the Whisky Mist Club in Hertford Street the tout has taken Health and Safety regulations seriously and is wearing a high vis coat which is marked “Coordinator Licensed Minicab Services” with the website address of a chauffeur company. One of his colleagues outside Crystal in Wells Street has not been quite so good and just has a jacket which states “Licensed Minicab Marshall” not a high vis jacket! Other places shown on the DVD are just a small sample of the problems the taxi trade is up against every night. Bob Oddy, General

Secretary at the LTDA said: The locations featured in the LTDA DVD are a snapshot of the problems which our members encounter every night of the week. They provide a clear target for the new Police and PCO anti tout initiative.”

NEW OPERATION BEGINS

Ed Thompson was shown the DVD. He said: “I congratulate the LTDA on producing this informative DVD. It really brings home some of the late night problems which cabbies are encountering in central London. It formed the main talking point of a constructive meeting hosted by Bob Oddy at Taxi House, involving TfL, TOCU, Westminster City Council and representatives of Unite and the LCDC.



Ed Thompson



Bob Oddy

“TfL, WCC and MPS (TOCU) have started a 3 week operation to target some of the touting issues discussed at the meeting.”

Taxi drivers will probably consider those three weeks might not be a long enough period to sort out the numerous problems there are every night. Experience has shown that although these sorts of operations are successful in the

short term, once they finish the touts are back out in force to continue with their lucrative illegal work.

WATCH AND LEARN

For one future cab driver, the touting problems have led him to set up a petition on the No. 10 website. Billy Gould has asked the Prime Minister to help the taxi trade stop the illegal ranking outside clubs and bars in central London.

He says: “Please help with this petition, it will be on the No 10 website for almost a year and we would hope to get all the drivers, all their friends and family to sign it. I personally, will be printing cards with the petition address on and handing them out to interested customers.”

If you want to sign the petition, you will find it at <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/blackcabsunite/>

CHANGES AT THE PUBLIC CARRIAGE OFFICE

From 1st May 2009, Dave Stock will be taking responsibility for the delivery of taxi and private hire vehicle licensing and inspection services. Currently Dave Stock’s role is that of Head of Service Delivery. Ed Thompson, Taxi & Private Hire Director at the PCO announced the news. He said: “The core services are delivered, under contract, by SGS United Kingdom Ltd. Since the contract came into effect in April 2004, this contract has been managed within the PCO by Alan Matthews, Head of Projects and Developments. However, as a result of planned organisational change within the PCO, Alan’s current post as Head of Projects and Developments will cease with effect from 30 April 2009. The PCO Contract Management Team, under the day to day responsibility of Ray Biggs, will now report into Dave Stock. This change will not affect the standard of service delivered to taxi and private hire licensees.”

