

FREE MAGAZINE FEBRUARY - MARCH 2018

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EDITORIAL

The College Green issue is a little like the area itself, you can skirt around it but it'll take you a fair bit of navigating to get back on track.

This edition of Tacsai Magazine tackles the problem head on, and luckily for us; we have not been banned from the area – the pen, we find, is mightier than the road block.

We hear from one Councillor who would see taxis not only removed from the area for good but also booted out of bus lanes on pages 6 & 7. Sense can be found on pages 29, 35, 38 & 39 – where the TTnH and Tony Roe among others make their voices heard on the issue.

A worrying spate of attacks on drivers caused alarm in January, culminating in one driver's death in early February. From a teenage gang in west Dublin to vicious assaults around Dublin's city centre it seems as though we are in the midst of a crisis. Something must be done to safeguard working men and women in their cars. This is an issue for the Gardaí, it is an issue for the NTA, who so often are so quick to seek to "increase standards" for taxi drivers. Let you start first with an effort to increase "safety standards" now before the cars under your authority begin to feel wholly unsafe to operate in certain areas or at certain times of the day. Or the next time the NTA roll out some stats for the media let those stats show how many

drivers have been threatened/attacked/verbally abused or made to fear for their own well-being. Those are numbers, I suspect, may make some real headlines.

Derry Coughlan in Cork is concerned that the authorities are not doing all that they can to provide a proper and efficient taxi service to the public. Derry has highlighted the recent fare increase, and stressed the need for drivers themselves to keep up the standards of the profession on pages 16 & 17.

Mytaxi and Aware have joined forces to combat Mental Health issues and provide drivers with the appropriate information in dealing with day to day cases of mental health problems they encounter with the general public. Drivers For Change is a hugely positive step by the company and one that could possibly even save lives in the future. Read about that story on pages 26 & 27.

We have all that and lots more in this month's edition of Tacsai Magazine. And in one final note; in our last edition my own contact details appeared on an advertisement for WhistleTaxi app. Whilst we are glad to support and encourage the Whistle Taxi app in all of their business endeavours, neither I nor anyone at Tacsai Magazine are associated with that company. It was an oversight in design and we apologise for any confusion caused.

Safe travels,
Stephen Young
Editor

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COUNCILLOR PAT DUNNE LEADS CALL FOR EMPTY TAXI BAN AT COLLEGE GREEN

Controversial politician argues that “plying for hire” taxis should stop.

What do we all make of this? “Why should an empty taxi, simply because they’ve a taxi plate, be allowed through a public transport corridor?” asks Independents 4 Change Councillor Pat Dunne, in the Dublin Inquirer magazine. “I can’t think of a reason why.”

As Dunne sees it, there are too many unoccupied taxis travelling through the likes of College Green and clogging up the city’s bus lanes.

For him, the solution is removing taxis without fares from travelling through College Green and its immediate environs.

Others says that perhaps the changes should go even further, arguing that it’s time for taxis without passengers to stay out of bus lanes all over the city.

But for taxi driver Christy Humphrey, taxis are just an easy target. “Taxis are public transport,” he says. Inconvenience them and you inconvenience the public, he argues.

Since the Luas Cross City got going last month, there have been longer delays around the city’s core artery.

Although Dublin City Council has plans for a pedestrianised plaza at College Green, An Bord Pleanála cancelled an oral hearing about these plans earlier this month.

The oral hearing was set to move plans forward for the pedestrianisation of College Green and its proposed plaza.

Following its cancellation, and with no set date as of yet for a future hearing, Dublin City Council’s Chief Executive said he had to do something.

At this month’s full council meeting, Keegan said that since mid-December there has been a “very significant reduction” in pedestrian priority at College Green.

This means longer waits for pedestrians at the area’s road crossings. That’s no good, he said. At last week’s meeting, councillors voted in favour of allowing Keegan to implement signal changes at College Green.

As Keegan and the council’s traffic-management team try to deal with the back-ups and congestion and restore pedestrian priority over the coming weeks, Independents 4 Change’s Dunne thinks it’s time to re-examine the allowances given to taxi drivers across the city.

“We’re trying to put through both buses and taxis around [College Green],” says Dunne. “I don’t have a problem with taxis using the corridor as public transport. But they should have a passenger on board.”

National Transport Authority rules state that taxis are not allowed use bus lanes if they’re driving home or transporting goods, according to Dermot O’Gara, a spokesperson for the NTA.

Taxis are also not allowed to use contra-flow bus lanes, lanes in which traffic flows in the opposite direction to adjoining lanes, he added.

A taxi, operating as a small public-service vehicle, is allowed use the bus lanes while carrying a passenger, or on the way to pick up a pre-booked fare, or if it’s “plying for hire” – in other words, driving along hoping to be flagged.

It’s that last one that Dunne thinks need to be looked at.

As he sees it, bus-lane congestion around Dublin could be eased by removing unoccupied taxis from the bus lanes around Westmoreland Street, Dame Street and Nassau Street. That would mean putting them into general traffic



**COUNCILLOR
PAT DUNNE**

unless they had a passenger.

Or in the case of the College Green bus corridor – which loops around Trinity College and is only open to buses, taxis and cyclists from 7am to 7pm, Monday to Friday – preventing taxis without passengers from travelling through.

Others are in favour of an outright ban on taxis around College Green.

Labour councillor Andrew Montague says that at certain pinch points in the city, like College Green, he would be in favour of kicking out taxis altogether.

Public transport, such as Dublin Bus services and the Luas, has to take priority in the city centre, he says. “I think around College Green, they have to ban taxis even with passengers,” he says. “I think in this particular case taxi drivers are the ones that will have to go first.”

But in bus lanes elsewhere in the city? “I don’t think that’s viable,” he says. “You want taxis to be able to get around the city centre efficiently.”

Fine Gael Councillor Paddy Smyth says that these rules are difficult to police. But banning taxis without passengers from using bus lanes makes sense, he says.

“I’ve been on buses that have been delayed by the fact that there’s four or five taxis in front of them,” he says. “And certainly as a cyclist you see a lot of taxis in bus lanes without any passengers in them.”

Priority has to be given to the larger public-transport modes like Dublin Bus, to ensure an efficient service, says Smyth.

If the city pulls unoccupied taxis out of bus lanes and mixes them in with general traffic, there might be serious delays at first, says Smyth.

But he says that he thinks the long-term benefits for public transport are worth it. “Removing the unoccupied taxis is a reasonable first measure,” says Smyth.

Any attempt to remove unoccupied taxis from using bus

lanes will ultimately affect the consumer, says taxi driver Humphrey, who is head of the National Private Hire and Taxi Association (NPHTA).

“If a passenger is at a bus stop and trying to hail a taxi in the lashings of rain or trying to get to a hospital appointment ... you’re prohibiting the person,” he says. “That’d be an inconvenience.”

Fianna Fáil Councillor Tom Brabazon agrees. If taxi drivers have to make circuitous routes around College Green or move into general traffic because they’re not allowed use bus lanes, it’s going to make their jobs harder, he says.

That, in turn, will inconvenience potential passengers. “Taxi drivers are just trying to make a livelihood,”

There’s the congestion and back-ups around College Green to tackle first, though. The solution could involve an outright ban on taxis from the area.

Anything less – like only allowing occupied taxis through, as Dunne suggests – might not satisfy the council and the NTA’s engineers, says Fine Gael’s Smyth.

“I’d agree with that as an interim measure around College Green to see if it alleviates the issues,” he says. “But even if we do that it may not satisfy the engineers. I would go further in that I would happily see the bus lanes everywhere only being used by taxis if they’ve a passenger.”

According to O’Gara, the spokesperson for the NTA, the authority is currently examining options for College Green for when new Luas trams, 55 metres in length, come into effect by March. Current trams are 43 metres long.

“Those solutions could include adjusting traffic signalling and sequencing, adjusting bus prioritisation measures, rerouting some traffic,” said O’Gara.

Taxi union representatives are due to meet the council’s chief executive, Owen Keegan, later this week. Says the NPHTA’s Humphrey: “We will be telling Owen Keegan that the status quo should be left.”

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THE COLLEGE GREEN BAN IS LUDICROUS!

Tony Roe blasts decisions taken by authorities and speaks out on the recent spate of attacks on drivers.

Tony Roe, Chairman of the National Transport Assembly Committee (NTAC), has voiced his concern over the banning of taxis in Dublin City centre.

Recently, steps were taken to halt the movement of public transport in and around the College Green area. This has caused consternation amongst drivers and we have heard from many different organisations on the matter.

Tony said: "This is an unmitigated disaster. Combined with the closure of 16 taxi ranks – all in high footfall areas, with two more to be closed – this is disgraceful. We have been inundated with complaints from local businesses and taxi users in the area, all of whom are saying that they've been greatly inconvenienced by the rank closures and disruption in this area in particular.

"Some of these customers are wheelchair-bound, some live outside the catchment area of the Luas and therefore have no other ways or means to get home or into town. The shopkeepers around there have informed us that revenue could be affected due to the inconvenience many shoppers now face. They fear that many shoppers will now be shopping elsewhere.

"People in wheelchairs are complaining that they are now being dumped out of taxis, sometimes in the rain due to the

Council's decision to ban taxis in the College Green area.

"The ranks that have been closed; some of these are now being used as car parking spaces by other cars! It's madness. The irony now is that taxis are driving all around town now like headless chickens and the Council have given them nowhere to work from.

"We've made suggestions to Dublin County Council that we should have 57 taxi ranks around the city centre. Everybody has been affected by this; what the council are doing is like something thought up out of a Tom & Jerry cartoon because taxis now are wasting fossil fuel. We're contributing to pollution and contamination. Now that need not be the case. We know we have too many taxis, but now we also know we don't have enough spaces.

"Passengers with disabilities have been disregarded by this ban. Buses aren't available 24 hours a day, neither is the Luas. Taxis are available 24 hours a day and it's about time someone in the Council realises that."

The College Green issue seems to be a landmine one for the Council, the NTA and the Department of Transport. They have dug themselves hole on this issue and no matter what way they turn now they will no doubt end up with muck on their faces. Poor planning and foresight, aligned with complete disregard for taxis and commuters with certain needs, have left many scratching their heads.



Meanwhile, in a worrying spate of new attacks on drivers, a Dublin taxi driver has been left blinded in one eye after a passenger slammed a door into his face in a horrifying assault.

The attack on the man in his 60s took place a week before Christmas near St Stephen's Green.

The incident occurred after the driver, who is from Finglas, picked up the passenger at 2.30am at the rank on St Stephen's Green North on Monday, December 18.

It's understood the man asked to be taken to Stillorgan, but became disruptive and the driver stopped on the right-hand side of Baggot Street across from the Allied Irish Bank.

The man continued to argue with the driver and struck the door of the cab.

While attempting to get out of the vehicle, the taxi driver was struck in the face by the car door, causing serious injuries and leaving him without sight in one of his eyes.

"We know from investigations that the man walked along Ely Place and back to St Stephen's Green East towards Earlsfort Terrace, St Stephen's Green South and Leeson Street.

"He may have got another taxi in that area," a Garda spokesman said.

"The suspected offender is described as 25 to 30 years, 5ft 7in to 5ft 8in, with short hair with a casual jacket and shirt.

"The man had a Dublin accent," he added.

Gardaí are asking for any driver in the area who may have dash-cam footage of the incident or part of the incident in and around the Baggot Street area to come forward.

They are further appealing to taxi drivers who may have been working in the area and picked up a fare around this time, similar to the described person, to come forward.

Tony Roe said there had been a number of cases where taxi drivers had been assaulted or robbed and not come forward in recent weeks.

Tony wants the names of drivers to be removed and replaced by a serial number instead to protect their identity.

"Security for drivers can be beefed up by putting a number on the taxi licence, not a name.

"There's quite a lot of these attacks happening now, there was one stage where there were three fellows, two with knives, one punched and left for dead.

"It is great to see the police patrols (in west Dublin) recently. If there were more Gardaí on patrol it would help, though Leo Varadkar did add some more recently I still think we could do with another couple of hundred.

"It's very dangerous when they can look at your ID badge and say 'we know your name and we'll get you'. The address has been taken off fair enough, but I think names need to be taken off too.

"Security is not tight enough for drivers.

"Look at it this way – you don't see a Garda or bus drivers or train drivers going around with their names or addresses on their ID badges."

GARDAÍ WANT DRIVERS TO TAKE ACTION IF IN FEAR OF AN ATTACK

West Dublin gangs have struck panic into many cabbies.

Taxi driver who feel unsafe carrying a suspicious fare are now able to covertly tip off gardaí if they fear they are about to be robbed.

A number of drivers have been the victims of armed robberies and assaults, especially in the Tyrrelstown, Ongar, Clonee and Blanchardstown areas of west Dublin, since late last year.

On New Year's Eve, a driver was threatened with an imitation firearm and robbed in the Hazelbury Park area of Clonee, west Dublin. The driver, although shaken, got to Blanchardstown Garda station where he gave gardaí a statement.

Now when drivers feel unsafe, they are able to send their location to a messaging group. Gardaí are then alerted, as

well as taxi drivers in the area, who search for the roof sign number of the driver in trouble.

On many occasions, drivers have received an escort from gardaí – especially if the drivers are entering a housing estate which is considered a hotspot for anti-social behaviour.

Gardaí recently held a meeting in a Dublin city centre hotel where they urged drivers to share stories about attacks and robberies they had experienced.

The same half dozen housing estates kept cropping up and officers were able to establish a profile of the people carrying out the robberies.

Two teenagers have appeared in the Children's court, charged with a number of robberies on dates before Christmas 2017. Garda appeals have been issued for



information in relation to other incidents, including the New Year's Eve theft.

Many drivers are now avoiding picking up and dropping off in certain parts of Ongar, Clonee and Tyrellstown areas for fear they will be targeted.

A report on behalf of taxi drivers has been made to the National Transport Authority (NTA). It is understood that this was done as drivers fear that customers will make complaints about their refusal to travel to certain areas.

According to one man who informed the NTA, the body has urged drivers not to travel to certain areas if they feel unsafe. Drivers have also been told not to be concerned if contacted by the NTA if a customer makes a complaint about being refused service.

Last month, TheJournal.ie reported that taxi apps were being used to "lure" drivers to robberies.

Gardaí are urging drivers to do the following to protect themselves:

- **Drivers advised to be cautious on collection/drop off locations.**
- **Pickups/drop offs in well-lit busy thoroughfares.**
- **Utilise dash-cams for internal/external areas of vehicle.**
- **Restrict opportunity for reach and grab of phone/cash.**
- **Activate find my phone app, record IMEI number of phone (*#06#).**
- **Report all incidents and any information/suspicious activity.**

Gardai believe the thugs, linked to more than 70 robberies and assaults in the last couple of months, are potentially on the verge of becoming "a proper crime gang".

Two UPS delivery men have been attacked in the last month, with the ruthless youths robbing them when they arrive to an address after making an order under a false identity and nicked cards.

The gang, with African origins and nicknamed locally as "The Pesties" after the one-time fearsome Westies crew, are also carrying out similar attacks on taxi drivers using the mytaxi app.

A source told the Irish Sun: "This gang is terrorising

Blanchardstown from all angles.

"At first it was reports of them robbing other teens and shops, then taxi drivers, now it's delivery men.

"What they're doing is setting up fake UPS accounts under false IDs, getting things like phones and tablets delivered to one of their hideouts, and ganging up and beating the driver when he arrives, taking what they can.

"Two drivers have been hit in the last four weeks in the Clonee and Ongar areas, and left with nasty injuries.

"Who knows what other delivery companies are being hit, because these guys don't follow any rules.

"They're also setting up mytaxi accounts under false names and booking drivers for jobs that they say will pay in cash, then beat and rob them upon arrival.

"Taxi drivers have already begun staying away from certain areas as a result, and I suspect other companies will follow suit if this isn't stopped."

A local source added: "Blanchardstown is a good area – there are particularly good schools and sports clubs.

"It's not a deprived area, nobody can use the excuse that residents have been abandoned. There are other factors at play here – bad parenting for one."

Last month, it was revealed that a west Dublin vigilante group calling themselves Hell's Angels had taken matters into their own hands by targeting the leaders of the gang in a number of hits. The following day, two leaders of the gang, aged 14 and 16, appeared at the Dublin Children's Court and were remanded on bail with strict conditions.

They were charged with three counts of robberies of taxi drivers in the Tyrellstown area on December 10, 12, and 17 last year.

It was alleged that phones worth €400 and €600 were stolen from taxi men along with €350 in cash in three separate incidents.

And Gardai in Blanchardstown, who have set up a special unit to control the lags, fear they could be looking at the emergence of a "proper crime gang".

A source revealed: "There's a full time operation in Blanch now and it's starting to be treated more seriously in other areas too.

"Gardai are genuinely worried they are looking at the emergence of a very serious criminal gang. They are keen to stamp this out quickly because otherwise it will spiral."

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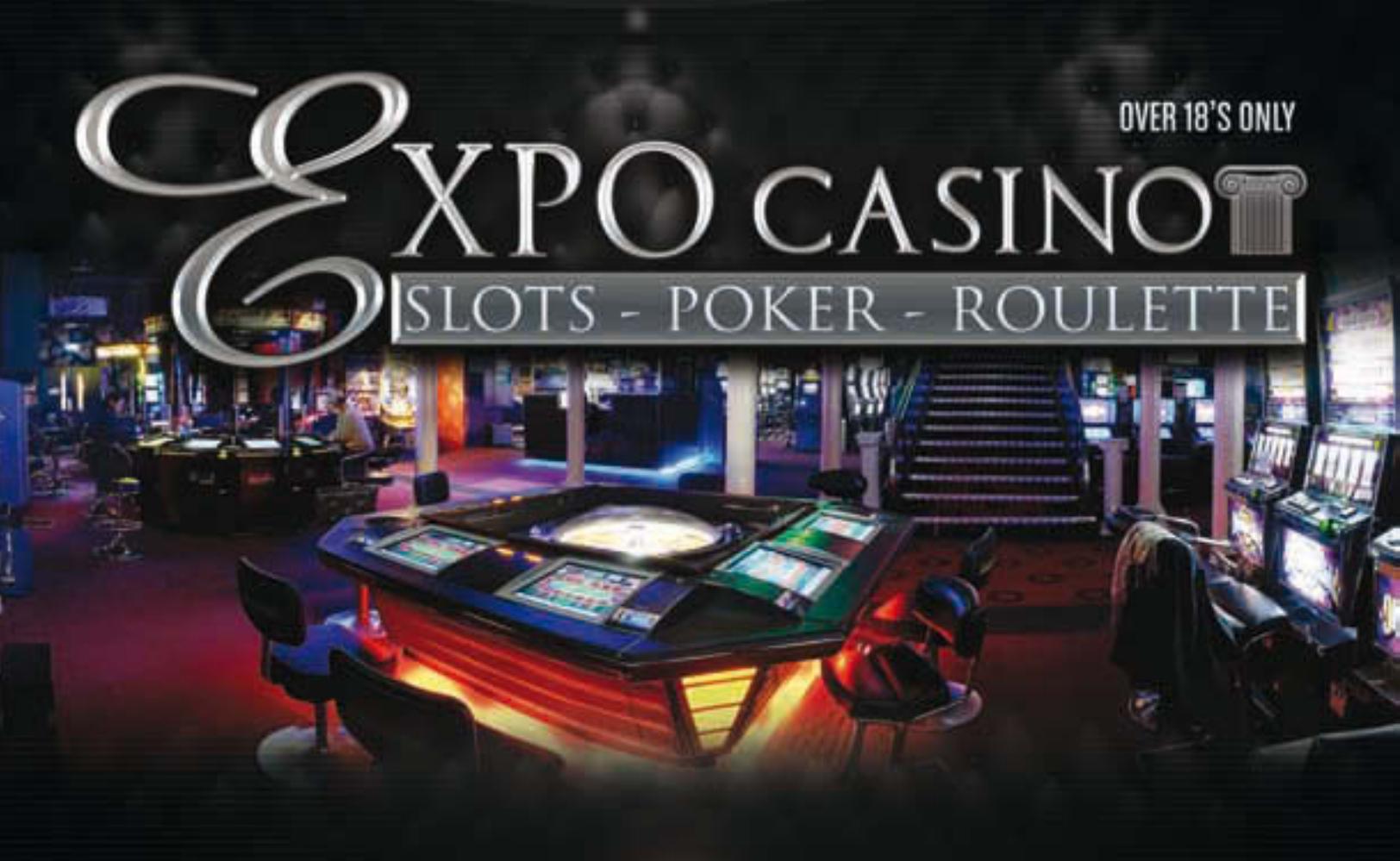
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COUGHLAN CALLS FOR ACTION ON TWO FRONTS

Cork Taximens' Association highlight need for increased professionalism and shine a spotlight on the fare increases

Tacsáí Magazine heard from Derry Coughlan of the Cork Taximens' Association recently on two very important issues – the widely-debated and controversial fare increase and the role of the taxi driver within our towns and cities, and how both the driver and the authorities can do more to offer a better service for the general public.

Derry said: "In general taxi vehicles must be upgraded and taxi drivers must change and become more business trustworthy. The general public complain. Visitors and the tourist board are concerned. Towns and cities must become more accessible, operational, have all services available and no confusion should exist. Recreation, amenities, trading, services, business, accommodation, travel services and guides must all exist.

"It does appear that local authorities in our towns and cities have gone ga-ga by their delinquencies in planning and functional duties of public places and street services in the Legal Code of Practice. With a public concern to taxi services, the official journal of the European Communities on Public Transport, in its framework for the taxi industry, has retained the unique right to 'ply for hire' and that will be protected at all times by the new legislation enacted in 1995.

"The Commission attaches great importance to the freedom of taxis, positive aid measures, vocational training, harmonization of fares and charges, conditions of access to the profession and protection of the designation – ranks, for example.

"Look at the deficiency that our authorities have caused in our cities and town – closing streets, parking problems,

issues with loading bays (there should be collection and delivery platforms on time limit only), unnecessary inner street cycling, one-way street system delays, cycle lanes should be on wider footpaths, permanent taxi ranks with legal provisions and occasional night-time taxi ranks must be retained in streets and public places (not like the situation arising in Tralee which is out of order). There must be no spoiling of our cities with graffiti and unnatural and illegal road ramps on public roads and streets serve no purpose but to damage taxi drivers and wheelchair-bound passengers' health plus their equipment and vehicles, due to their constant usage.

"Taxi drivers participate in the promotion of cities and towns, and are the only source of transport available on a 24-hour basis, but they must get the support from the local authorities. They drive the local economy, but must get proper Workplace Rules of the Road (Road Traffic Act Revised), freedom of usage day and night. Better planning for motorization all round is an important requirement for the benefit of the moving public.

"Internally, we will have to look at a list of vehicle standards for taxis in public carriage (size and capacity etc). Preparation and interior cleanliness of the vehicle is a big issue in this country – the drivers' dress code en suite means to ensure the most perfect civility from them and to prevent any overcharge or imposition being practiced. A return to "taximeter areas" is advised for public relations and a return to private hire outside "taximeter areas". More business will be gained by price work, journey quotations and contracted duration carriage etc.

“Taxis are here to stay, but we must adhere to our lawful calling and help along the public paying passengers on their journeys. Automatic vehicle location systems greatly assist these days but we could do without the ‘digital sharecroppers’.

“The philosophy of business and entertainment must be studied and understood by our city and town administrators, with the appraisal of the needs for law and order documented (Commercial Appearance and Vehicle Carriage Standards).”

Derry has also recently conducted a survey on the new fare increase, which came into effect last year. Derry has a novel idea for solving the grievances over the fare increase – and that is to opt for a ‘taximeter system’. It is an interesting proposal indeed and should get much interest.

Derry said: “You may observe (In the document pictured) that journeys over 40 kilometres are too expensive for the general public. This is why we emphasise that taximeter areas should be retained and all journeys outside the ‘taximeter area’ are agreed fares, set quotation prices for the selective destinations which always supported the market place and encouraged usage.

“City taxis are victimised by this issue, whereas rural taxis and hackneys gain in the business transport of the traditional fare methods. Taxis are universally patronised as the most useful and agreeable conveyances for the public accommodation, but your sales and marketing strategy must be affordable, as intending passengers find it very painful to sit in a taxi and watch their money dripping away in quick stages.”

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30	54.00	114.00
40	72.00	152.00
50	90.00	190.00
60	108.00	228.00
70	126.00	266.00
80	144.00	304.00
90	162.00	342.00
100	180.00	380.00
110	198.00	418.00
120	216.00	456.00
130	234.00	494.00
140	252.00	532.00
150	270.00	570.00
160	288.00	608.00
170	306.00	646.00
180	324.00	684.00
190	342.00	722.00
200	360.00	760.00
210	378.00	798.00
220	396.00	836.00
230	414.00	874.00
240	432.00	912.00
250	450.00	950.00
260	468.00	988.00
270	486.00	1026.00
280	504.00	1064.00
290	522.00	1102.00

INDUSTRY SURVEY
BY
HERRY CUGGILLAN OF THE CITY TAXIMETER ASSOCIATION

You may observe that journeys over 40 kilometres are too expensive for the general public.

This is why we emphasise that Taximeter Areas should be retained and all journeys outside the "Taximeter Area" are agreed fares, set quotation prices for the selective destinations which always supported the market place and encouraged usage.

City taxis are victimised with this issue, whereas rural taxis and hackneys gain in the business transport of the traditional fare methods.

Taxis are universally patronised as most useful and agreeable conveyances for the public accommodation, but your sales and marketing strategy must be affordable, as intending passengers find it very painful to sit in a taxi and watch their money dripping away in quick stages, etc.

able illustrating the main components of the fare structure and rates is provided below. The presentation of the fare below should not be used for programming. The technical appendices to this document provide schedules on the appropriate parameters for meter programming purposes.

National Maximum Taxi Fare				
Standard Rate <i>08.00 hours to 20.00 hours, Monday to Saturday</i> <i>Displayed as "1" on the meter</i>		Premium Rate <i>20.00 hours to 8.00 hours, Monday to Saturday, and all day Sunday and on most public holidays</i> <i>Displayed as "2" on the meter</i>		Extras
Initial Charge Includes 500m or 85 secs	€3.80 fixed	Initial Charge Includes 500m or 85 secs	€4.20 fixed	Passenger Charges Adults (first is free) Adults 2-7 €1.00 each Children (first is free) 2-3 €1.00 in total 4-5 €2.00 in total 6-7 €3.00 in total
Tariff A Next 14.5 km or 41 mins Up to €20.40	€1.14 per km or €0.40 per min	Tariff A Next 14.5 km or 41 mins Up to €25.40	€1.45 per km or €0.51 per min	Booking Fee: €2.00 Road toll charges: As incurred Soiling charge: Up to €140.00
Tariff B Over 15 km or 43 mins Above €20.40 for remainder of journey	€1.50 per km or €0.53 per min	Tariff B Over 15 km or 43 mins Above €25.40 for remainder of journey	€1.80 per km or €0.64 per min	Credit/Debit Card charge not permitted
Distance Rate applies unless speed drops below 21km/hr when time rate applies	A special premium rate applies between Christmas Eve 20.00h to St. Stephen's Day 08.00h and New Year Eve 20.00h to New Year's Day 08.00h. This rate is displayed as "3" on the meter. During these periods a tariff equal to Premium Rate Tariff B is applied immediately after the Premium Rate Initial Charge			

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Award winning GPO Witness History is located in the historical GPO (General Post Office) building on O'Connell Street, Dublin. The GPO building was the communications hub of Ireland and headquarters of the men and women who took part in the 1916 Easter Rising. The Easter Rising set in motion an unstoppable chain of events which would ultimately lead to the creation of the Irish Republic.

This spectacular experience focuses on the Rising, the aftermath and also how Ireland has developed since. History is brought to life through electronic touch screens, video, audio visual booths, sound and authentic artefacts.

The Iconic GPO building is the headquarters of the post office in Ireland as well as being an enduring symbol of freedom and a place of commemoration. The original building was built in 1818 (200 years ago this year) and it remains one of the oldest operating postal headquarters in the world.

The first ever permanent exhibition on the Irish Flag will be launched by the Ceann Comhairle on Friday, 23rd February at GPO Witness History visitor centre, to commemorate the 170th anniversary of the first flying of the Irish Tricolour. This exhibition includes details on the history of the



This iconic venue is also available for private functions and events.

OPENING TIMES

Mon – Sat: 10:00am – 5:30pm

Sun & Bank Holidays: 12:00pm – 5:30pm

July & August (*Late Opening Thursday*) 10.00am – 8.00pm

Last admission 1 hour before closing

Closed New Year's Day, St Patrick's Day, Easter Sunday, Dec 23rd – 26th

(Opening times may be subject to change, check our website)

flag, Thomas F. Meagher - who first flew it at 33 The Mall in Waterford in 1848, and also information on the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation which promotes pride in and respect for the Irish Flag and active citizenship. The flag was given to Thomas F. Meagher by French women sympathetic to the Irish cause.

Relax afterwards in the café and browse the gift shop which is also open to the public.

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TAXIMAN HAILS HIS MIRACLE TAXI

Ford Torneo racks up one million kilometres.

James Foley is saying 'thanks a million' to his hard-working taxi. Little wonder too. It has just put up a million kilometres.

And, with his trusty Ford Tourneo Connect motor still going strong, James, from Leighlinbridge, Co Carlow jokes: "There's no reason it won't go for another million."

So far, he has driven the vehicle the equivalent of:

- 25 times around the world.
- More than two trips to the moon
- 100,000km a year.
- Nearly 9,000km a month.

James bought the 2007-reg seven-seater second-hand in 2008 and the kilometres have been racking up ever since.

Naturally, most of his taxi work has been in the Carlow-Kilkenny area but he does the occasional longer run to Dublin.

The thing is there is nothing unusual about the Tourneo Connect.

The engine, for example, is a standard, straightforward Ford 1.8-litre TDCi turbo diesel.

According to James, it hasn't given an ounce of trouble over all the years.

He makes no bones about why it has been running so well for so long.

"In my business, regular servicing is an absolute must and I religiously stick to the service schedule – never more than 12,000km between service actions."

In that respect, he has huge praise for local mechanic Francis Kavanagh, who helps so much in keeping the car in tip-top condition.

James' rate of mileage means that he has to have the car serviced every six weeks or so.

As you may know, the Tourneo Connect is the passenger version of the Transit Connect van and smaller brother of the famous Transit (a new version of the Transit Connect is due in Irish showrooms in May, by the way).

Ciarán McMahon, chairman and managing director of Ford Ireland, told us: "It just shows what can be achieved when you look after a vehicle's engine properly.



James Foley in his trusty
Ford Tourneo Connect.



"I'm sure we will continue to see well-serviced models displaying such impressive mileage milestones."

However, James faced a unique problem when the car's odometer reached the 999,999km mark.

The early format digital display on the dash could not cope with the 1,000,000 figure – the newer ones can – so it stuck on 999,999 because the older format did not automatically reset to zero.

How many people ever have the pleasure of having to worry about that sort of detail?

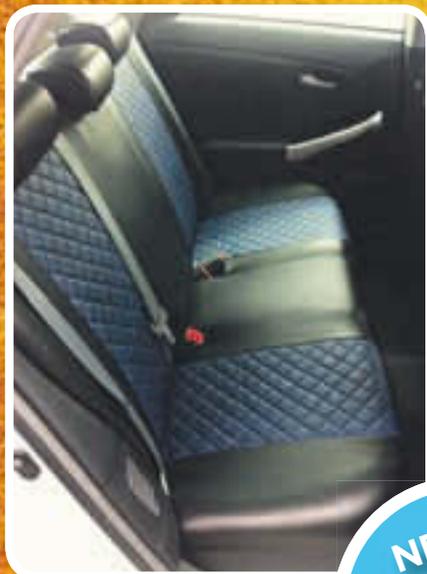
In the breach stepped main Ford dealer Boland's of Wexford, to help reset the dials – for free.

It's back to zero as James goes about his business with a million kilometres under his Tourneo Connect.

Here's to another 25 trips around the world.

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MYTAXI AND AWARE TEAM UP ON DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

Cabbies given the opportunity to take part in three-hour workshops and we hear from one of the mytaxi team.

It's been a tough couple of years for taxi drivers.

In the midst of the worst recession since the 1930s the government unleashed a string of hard-hitting reforms on the industry - the reviled vehicle age limit chief among them, and this, combined with the astronomical hike in insurance premiums, has left drivers on their knees and many have abandoned the industry

for safer shores.

As we here at Tacsáí have covered before, mental health is hugely important issue for drivers. Derek Devoy's Taxi Watch in Kilkenny, which started three years ago, is now nationwide. The stigma of mental health is breaking down and mytaxi are keen to do their part, too, to help anyone out there who may just need to talk.



The Drivers For Change campaign is a link-up between mytaxi and mental health charity Aware, and its aim is to encourage taxi drivers to use their place within the public transport system to promote positive mental health and teach them how to deal with people in distress.

Already a number of taxi drivers have taken part in three-hour workshops that covered topics such as Aware's national service, an overview of mental health conditions in Ireland and symptoms of depression.

The workshops also aimed to help taxi drivers understand how to have a conversation with someone who appears depressed, stressed, or anxious.

Aware aims to roll out the workshops to dozens of more taxi drivers over the coming year.

Christopher Flynn, of mytaxi who attended one of the workshops, said: "The Aware workshop and introductory training gave me a real insight into the mental health challenges faced by so many people in Ireland on a daily basis.

"It supported real awareness-building for me, and now I feel better equipped to impact positively on the general population around mental health issues.

"I would strongly urge my colleagues to also get involved in this campaign because our daily interaction with the public gives us a real opportunity to relieve some of the pressures felt by those suffering in this area."

Drivers that participate in the campaign are also being asked to use Aware stickers and leaflets in their taxis as part of educating themselves and their passengers about mental health.

Director of Services at Aware, Brid O'Meara explained by the initiative was launched: "Taxi drivers are very well placed in the community to assist in the reduction of stigma in the area of mental health. There is a real potential for taxi drivers to foster positive change as part of this campaign."

The campaign also aims to help taxi drivers better deal with their own mental health too, as it can oftentimes be an incredibly lonely profession.

As per The Journal.ie in December, one taxi driver said that he chooses to work every Christmas Day due to loneliness.

"There are a lot of drivers who are divorced. It can be a very lonely time of year," he said.

"Going to work is the only way they may be able to see anyone on Christmas Day. I'm divorced myself. I'd be waking up with no decorations around me. You'd just get out to meet people."

In Ireland, one in four people will use a mental health service at some stage in their lives, according to Mental Health Ireland.

Earlier this year, Unicef published a report outlining that Ireland has the fourth highest rate of suicide amongst teenagers in the EU.

IF YOU NEED TO TALK, CONTACT:

- **Samaritans** 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org
- **Aware** 1800 804 848 (depression, anxiety)
- **Pieta House** 1800 247 247 or email mary@pieta.ie – (suicide, self-harm)
- **Teen-Line Ireland** 1800 833 634 (for ages 13 to 19)
- **Childline** 1800 666 666 (for under 18s)



MEET NIALL CARSON

mytaxi have had quite a year. They have transitioned from their previous incarnation as Hailo and are the biggest app company in Ireland while their growth is showing no signs of slowing.

Thousands of drivers call the app their work home, but who will you meet when you walk through the doors of their Upper Mount Street office? Who are the people behind the famous brand name?

One man you will likely meet is Niall Carson. Niall is Head of Sales and is based out of the Dublin office. Niall said: "I'm originally from Cavan (try not to hold that against me). I've lived in Dublin for 17 years and now in Westmeath.

"My role is to lead the B2B side of the business with corporate accounts and hospitality included under that. I have been with the company over two and a half years since the Hailo days and in that time we have seen B2B grow to 10 times the size it was in 2015.

"What I really enjoy is engaging our driver base and helping to win the accounts that the drivers who work with mytaxi want access to, be it a hotel account or a large bank or broadcaster, we want to ensure a driver who decides to work with mytaxi is rewarded for doing so. Mytaxi is a great company to work with as we believe in working hard, playing hard and looking after each other, and that goes for drivers and passengers alike.

"Like all members of the mytaxi Ireland team, we all spend time every week in the Driver Centre on Mount Street Upper or occasionally on regional trips. In my time in the office I have had some great moments but some of my favourite days were last year when we raffled off two brand new cars to drivers who have been working with mytaxi. Seeing the shock and delight on the drivers' faces was priceless. Outside of that I love speaking with drivers and understand what we can do as a company to make their lives better.

"For me, the reason why a driver should move to mytaxi is that we really value our drivers and do everything we can to support and reward them. The seven days a week support that we offer to drivers and passengers alike is crucial in running an effective taxi business, we really do listen to our drivers and do our best to resolve issues as swiftly and painlessly as possible. In mytaxi we have also seen a huge increase in the number of tourists arriving in from all across Europe that are using the app and it is important that drivers are using the mytaxi system to have access to these passengers."

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FROM M50

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TTNH SPEAK OUT ON THE LUAS SHAMBLES

“This proposal is anti-competitive to taxis, would add huge costs to customers”

The Dublin City Centre Luas works have caused chaos, widespread and total chaos for years now in the capital.

What was supposed to be a “clean and swift operation” has turned calm into calamity every which way but loose across the Fair City.

Local businessmen have complained, other public transport modes have voiced their displeasure, and of course the Luas works have wreaked havoc with the taxi industry. Ranks have been displaced – most never to return – and it seems to anyone with a keen eye and sharp wit that the government are steering the public ever closer to a Luas City where taxis and maybe even buses no longer get their fair crack of the whip on the streets of Dublin.

All of this added to the College Green shambles, and many have the right to be feeling disgruntled.

Yes. Drivers are furious about this eventuality, and also the massive disruption caused during the endless building process. We spoke to Dave McGuinness of the TTnH to hear his take on things as they currently stand.

He said: “As taxi drivers are aware the Luas Cross City project has been ongoing for a number of years. This project has seen many prime taxi stands becoming Luas Stops, and the works have caused considerable disruption to taxis and customers in the City Centre.

“At the start of this project and through three years of negotiating we had offered many alternatives to Dublin City Council, however none of our proposals have been adopted to date. It is expected the larger trams will come on stream in February 2018 and Dublin City Council have relayed it is their intention to ban taxis travelling through College Green, whilst allowing private coaches and buses carriage through the corridor.



Dave McGuinness

“This is totally unacceptable to drivers and will cause huge problems. Currently we are corresponding with all stakeholders in the industry. We would hope for a show of unity from all sectors of the industry on this important issue. We would request all drivers contact their local political representatives and make their views known.

“This proposal is anti-competitive to taxis, would add huge costs to customers due to the circuitous route been taken and we reject the precedent this proposal sets in banning taxis from certain parts of the city. We are currently in talks and would hope for a favourable resolution. We will keep drivers informed on this issue.”

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FARE TO SAY IT'S A CONTROVERSY

Massive queues to update meters while some say the increase is not enough.

Hundreds of Dublin taxi drivers were forced off the streets on February 1st as they queued for hours to get their taxi meters upgraded to show the latest fare increase.

The queue, outside taxi service company Skan ATM in Finglas, began at 6am on the morning of the 1st according to a driver at the scene and at lunchtime on the day the queue contained 150 drivers.

"I arrived at 10am and I am still in the queue," a driver called Adeel said just before 1pm.

"I can't work without the upgrade," he added. "I could, but I would be offering customers the old, lower price.

"It would be better for them but if I was inspected the National Transport Authority (NTA) would fine me for having an incorrect meter," Adeel added.

According to the NTA website "Operating with a taximeter not appropriately calibrated and verified will attract a fine of €60 up to €250 depending on the circumstances."

The fare increase, signed off by the NTA in September, will add 30 cent to a standard €10 fare.

However, while many drivers have applauded the NTA's efforts to boost their income, some say the increase is too small to offset the higher cost of insurance, tax and fuel.

Irish taxi app Lynk said drivers will have to pay €200 to recalibrate their meters.



Martin Conroy waiting outside Skan

These will then have to be checked by the National Standards Authority of Ireland's Legal Metrology Service at a cost of €86.

However, Lynk said that in the long run it will mean higher earnings for drivers, both existing and those considering entering the industry.

"We're welcoming the new fare increase because it will improve the income for our valued drivers," said Lynk boss Noel Ebbs.

"We already offer a package that helps our drivers make a healthy income and control that with their own work schedule.

"However, the higher costs of running a taxi and, in particular, rising insurance costs, have put heavy financial pressures on some drivers."

The increase comes shortly after it was revealed that the number of taxi drivers in Ireland has fallen to its lowest level in the past decade.

The National Transport Authority said there were 26,012 licenced taxi drivers at the end of last year. In 2009 there were 47,222.

In Dublin there are 10,688 registered taxis.

What do you think about the fare increase? Is it fair enough, or does it not go far enough? Email the editor with your thoughts; stephenyoung399@hotmail.com

400 LESS CABBIES IN THE LAST YEAR



A marked decrease of drivers in the sector reported.

The number of taxi drivers in the Republic has fallen to its lowest level in the past decade with a net loss of over 400 cabbies in the past year.

Figures published by the National Transport Authority show there was a total of 26,012 licensed taxi drivers at the end of 2017. It indicates there was a net reduction of 408 individuals working as taxi drivers over the previous 12 months and an annual decrease of 1.5% in driver numbers.

The total number of drivers has now fallen by 45% since levels peaked in 2009 when there were 47,222 working in the sector.

Taxi representative bodies have complained that operational costs have soared in recent years largely as a result of large increases in motor insurance premiums.

Jim Waldron, spokesman for the National Private Hire and Taxi Association said some drivers were finding it more lucrative to return to their former professions.

“Many people from trades in the construction sector became taxi drivers when building work dried up and they are now going back to their old jobs as they are providing more regular work and pensions,” Mr Waldron said.

He claimed that the cost for new entrants to the industry was prohibitive as first-time applicants had to buy wheelchair accessible taxis which are considerably more expensive than standard vehicles.

Taxi drivers have welcomed a 3% increase in fares announced last summer which is due to be implemented on February 1 — the first price increase since 2015.

There were a total of 20,581 taxis and hackneys licensed at the end of December — 223 fewer than at the end of

2016. More than half of all licensed vehicles operate in Dublin, with 10,688 registered taxi cabs in the capital, followed by Cork (1,780) and Meath (1,091).

Meanwhile, Taxi drivers and operators of other public service vehicles are set to benefit from a new €7,000 grant scheme aimed at encouraging them to opt for electric vehicles.

Minister for Transport, Shane Ross, will this week announce a new incentive scheme offering a €7,000 grant towards the purchase of an electric vehicle for those with a small public service vehicle (SPSV) licence. That grant is on top of the existing electric car incentives — the €5,000 rebate on vehicle registration tax, a €3,800 grant from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), and the upcoming new grant from the SEAI for installing a home-charging point.

The Department of Transport grant applies to any fully electric vehicle up to six years old, although the amount reduces according to the age of the car. A smaller €3,500 grant applies if you want to buy a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) for taxi use, but only those with Co2 emissions lower than 65g/km. Conventional hybrids are excluded.

The move is the latest in a series of measures being introduced by the Government to promote electric car ownership. Minister for Finance Paschal Donohoe introduced a one-year exemption on benefit in kind for electric vehicles in the budget, and it is expected that the exemption will be rolled out for at least three years, including a suspension of any benefit in kind levied on charging your electric car at work.

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TRAFFIC CHAOS AT COLLEGE GREEN

Buses and taxis taking the blame.

Restrictions on Dublin Bus access to College Green in late January led to “minor” improvements in the delays that have become a daily occurrence in the area since the new Luas line opened before Christmas.

AA Roadwatch reported a slight improvement in traffic outside Trinity College on the first day of restrictions as seventeen Dublin Bus routes were diverted away from the area for the first time as a measure to alleviate congestion.

A spokeswoman for Dublin Bus said there were “improvements in journey times” during the morning peak rush on routes which have been “realigned”. Dublin Bus will continue to monitor how effective the changes are in the coming days, she added.

A number of bus routes that usually travel through College Green and Westmoreland Street were rerouted via Tara Street and Burgh Quay while express routes, which only operate at rush hour, ceased to serve stops on D’Olier Street, Nassau Street, Kildare Street and Merrion Row.

“The change might improve as time goes on and should definitely have an effect but I don’t think anyone will have noticed a substantial change,” said Barry Alworth, from AA Roadwatch.

According to an Irish Times journalist – “Following a walk around the area on Monday morning, there was little change in the gridlock along Westmoreland Street, College Street and towards Nassau Street. While the number of Dublin Bus vehicles may have dropped slightly, the presence of private bus companies and taxis only further exacerbated the problem.”

The NTA said it was monitoring the impact of the route

changes but that it was too early to make a full assessment of their impact on traffic. It added that if delays persisted further changes to bus routes and possible taxi restrictions would follow.

Joe Herron, president of the Irish Taxi Drivers Federation, said it would be “grossly unfair” if restrictions were introduced which allowed buses to enter the College Green area and not taxis.

“It would be crazy if we had to do two or three times the distance to cross from one side of the Liffey to other. It’s a busy area for taxi business and if we couldn’t go through there we’d have to go all the way up the quays to Parliament Street and come back around.”

Mr Herron also called for restrictions on private bus companies operating in the area.

Dermot O’Gara, head of public affairs at the NTA, said last week that the “interim measures” would remain in place until there was more clarity around the proposed public plaza for the area.

A public hearing on plans to build a €10 million pedestrian and cycle plaza was cancelled earlier this month. The plaza project would mean all traffic, including buses and taxis, would be banned from accessing Dame Street through College Green.

Under EU rules which came into force last May Dublin City Council will have to reissue the notice, and give another 30 days for the public to assess the material, before any hearing can take place.

An Bord Pleanála said the hearing was expected to be rescheduled in March but that an exact date had not been set.



General Knowledge Questions

1. In which city do Benfica football club play their home matches?
2. What is the chemical symbol for lead?
3. What is the capital of Poland?
4. What was the name of the character played by Kylie Minogue in TV's "Neighbours"?
5. What type of food is Pumpernickel?
6. According to the children's nursery rhyme, who stole a pig and away did run?
7. Which perfume house markets the perfume "Opium"?
8. In the name of the Trade Union the NUJ, what does the "J" stand for?
9. What was singer and actor Frank Sinatra's middle name?
10. What group of plants are commonly known as Snapdragons?
11. What nationality was the painter Vincent Van Gogh?
12. Who wrote the music for the opera "Porgy and Bess"?
13. Which organisation has its headquarters at Langley, Virginia?
14. What is the name of the donkey in the "Winnie the Pooh" stories?
15. On which course is the Scottish Grand National raced?

THE TACSAÍ MAGAZINE BUMPER QUIZ

16. What was the name of Dick Turpin's horse?
17. If you ordered calamari in a restaurant, what would you be eating?
18. Which Irish county is known as the Treaty County?
19. In Greek mythology, the watchman with a hundred eyes shares it's name with which retail chain?
20. What was the name of the bumbling secret agent played by Rowan Atkinson in several films?

- ANSWERS**
1. Lisbon, Portugal
 2. Pb
 3. Warsaw
 4. Charleen Mitchell
 5. A (Coarse Rye) Bread
 6. Tom Tom the piper's son
 7. Yves St Laurent
 8. Journalists
 9. Albert
 10. Antirrhinum
 11. Dutch
 12. George Gershwin
 13. CIA
 14. Eeyore
 15. Ayr
 16. Black Bess
 17. Squid
 18. Limerick
 19. Argos
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WORLD NEWS

TOP STORIES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

BRITAIN

Taxi and private hire drivers have admitted the regulation of licences needs to be tougher for public safety. It comes after the Suzy Lamplugh Trust found more than 860 drivers in England and Wales had been granted licences, despite having criminal convictions.

Current guidelines say applicants with serious convictions should be refused a licence, but councils can grant them to those deemed to be “fit and proper”.

The Licensed Taxi Drivers’ Association said the rules were “inadequate”. The Suzy Lamplugh Trust, which campaigns on personal safety issues, called the findings “deeply troubling” and warned passenger safety was being compromised.

Its report, published in January, follows widespread anger last month after it emerged black cab rapist John Worboys was to be released from prison.

The charity gathered statistics from Freedom of Information Act requests made to local authorities across England and Wales.

From the 46 local authorities that were able to provide data on drivers’ criminal histories, more than 860 drivers were found to have successfully obtained or renewed a licence in the last six years, despite having a criminal conviction.

Current Local Government Association guidelines state applicants convicted of sexual and violent offences should not be granted a licence.

But local councils in England and Wales are free to give licences to whoever they consider to be “fit and proper” drivers, a term which is not defined in legislation.

Chief executive of the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, Rachel Griffin, said rigorous national licensing standards were “vital”.

“It is deeply troubling that there are taxi and minicab drivers with serious criminal convictions operating across the country,” she said.

“The ambiguity currently surrounding what constitutes a ‘fit and proper’ person with regards to taxi and private hire vehicle licensing is unacceptable.”

The Local Government Association, Licensed Taxi Drivers’ Association and Licensed Private Hire Car Association backed the report’s recommendation for national minimum standards.

Steve McNamara, general secretary of the LTDA, said the report “highlights the inadequate regulations currently in place for obtaining taxi and private hire vehicle licences across the UK”.

He added it was “shocking” that taxi and private hire drivers were not legally required to undergo “the most basic background checks, disability equality training or exploitation training”.

NEW YORK

A prominent Bronx politician lobbied to run a new City Council committee that oversees taxis and car services after collecting thousands in campaign funds from the industry.

Councilman Ruben Diaz Sr., a Democrat, confirmed that he pushed for the creation of the Committee on For-Hire Vehicles he now chairs — despite having taken at least \$12,475 from the industry and its workers last year, city campaign filings show.

Diaz, a former state senator, got at least another \$13,700 in industry donations to his Senate campaigns since 2002.

Council Speaker Corey Johnson (D-Manhattan) named Diaz chair of the new committee this month, giving the outspoken 74-year-old minister subpoena power and oversight of yellow and green taxis, Ubers and other car-service vehicles regulated by the Taxi & Limousine Commission.

Johnson gave the new post to Diaz to reward him and the Bronx Democratic organization for supporting his bid to become speaker, council sources said. Johnson stripped jurisdiction of taxis and car services from the Transportation Committee, which since 2014 has been chaired by Councilman Ydanis Rodriguez (D-Manhattan), another pol with many industry workers in his district.

Inventing the new committee was seen as a convenient way to punish Rodriguez for challenging Johnson’s bid to be speaker.

“For the speaker, I think this was an easy way to reward Ruben Sr. for his loyalty while embarrassing Ydanis for running against him,” one council source said.

Though Rodriguez kept the Transportation Committee chair, with oversight over public transit and city DOT matters, he was livid that he lost power over for-hire vehicles, Council sources said. Rodriguez took in at least \$36,085 from the industry since 2000, according to



campaign filings. Rodriguez said in a statement that he is “confident” in Johnson’s ability to organize the committees and that he’s honored to continue as Transportation Committee chair.

Johnson and Diaz are unlikely allies. The openly gay speaker visited Diaz in the hospital twice even though LGBT groups gripe that the Pentecostal minister is a homophobe who as a senator opposed New York’s gay-marriage law.

Johnson spokeswoman Robin Levine said the council is “proud” to have the newly dedicated committee “as for-hire vehicles become an area of increased concern for New Yorkers.”

Diaz insists that despite the support he’s gotten from the industry, he’ll be fair and independent. “I am not for sale, I am not for hire, and I am not for lease,” he said.

FRANCE

French taxi startup Heetch has revealed it has raised \$20m to bring its brand of social ride-sharing across Europe. It relaunched in April 2017 as a taxi platform with professional drivers and is now the second-most downloaded taxi app in France, after Uber.

Teddy Pellerin, co-founder of Heetch, says the company wants to provide a more sociable experience of ride-sharing. He believes that it’s this aspect of the company that will help it succeed in new markets, like London.

Teddy Pellerin, co-founder of Heetch, says the company wants to provide a more sociable experience of ride-sharing. He believes that it’s this aspect of the company that will help it succeed in new markets, like London.

“We would love to come to London. Our service is more used by young people when they’re going out and we’re trying to make

something more friendly, more about sharing and a bit different.

“We want our passengers to feel as if they are sharing a moment in the ride, not just a professional driver that is driving you home or somewhere else. And we think that would work quite well in London because many people are going out.”

INDIA

Police in the western Indian state of Goa have arrested a motorcycle taxi driver for allegedly molesting an American tourist last month.

Isidore Fernandes was detained after the woman posted his picture on social media, describing the alleged incident.

She said he asked her for a kiss and when she refused, he tried forcing her hands underneath his clothes.

She asked people to share the post so he doesn’t “endanger another woman’s safety”. In her Facebook post, the woman said she had hired Mr Fernandes to drive her to dinner. She said he was “friendly” and they chatted as she saw no harm in having a conversation with him.

She said he offered to wait for her and drive her back to the hotel. When they were on their way back to the hotel, she said, he began “misbehaving”.

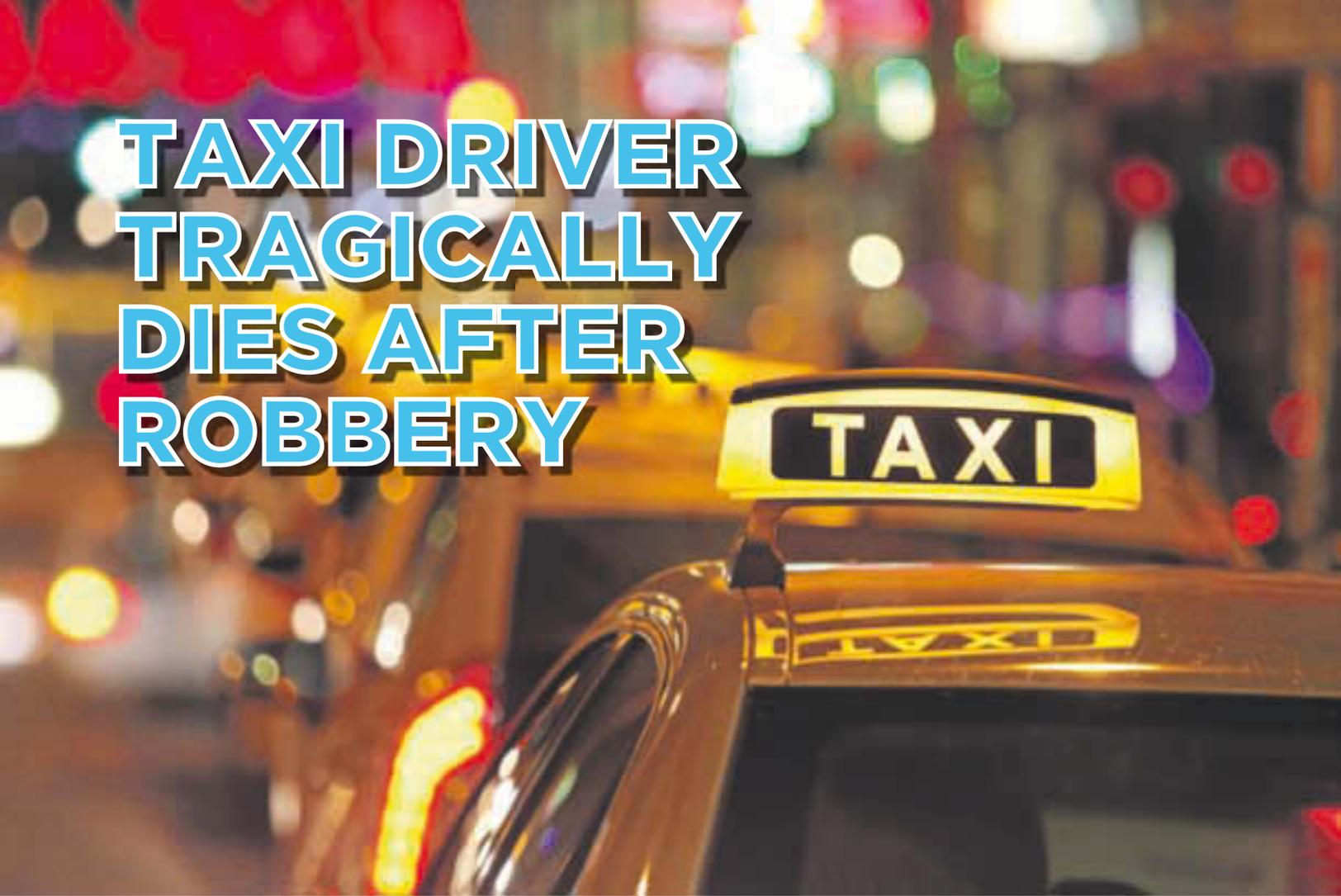
“He forced my hands and took them under his shirt and despite constantly telling him to “keep it professional”, he took my hands further down over his pants,” she wrote.

He allegedly kept turning into lanes, claiming he was taking a shorter route, and then he told her he needed to pull over.

“He stopped his bike and before I could realise what was happening, his penis was in my hands,” she said.

She said she managed to escape - she threw some money at him and ran onto a busy road.

TAXI DRIVER TRAGICALLY DIES AFTER ROBBERY



Altercation leads to death following “incident” over stolen mobile phone.

Gardaí believe a taxi driver who died suddenly on Sunday February 3rd became distraught after two thugs had stolen a mobile phone from him.

The man, who was a foreign national in his 40s, became unwell following an “incident” with a fare at around 4.30am on James’s Street, Dublin.

A senior source said last night that the man was not stabbed and suffered no visible injuries in the incident.

“There may have been a brief scuffle but this man did not suffer any injuries consistent with any form of serious assault,” the senior source said.

The case is being investigated by Kilmainham gardaí who are working on the “early theory” that the man may have had an “underlying illness” which was activated by the stress of his phone being stolen.

Officers expect to make arrests shortly and have obtained “excellent quality CCTV” of the two alleged thieves entering the Basin Street flats complex in the south inner city shortly after leaving the taxi.

The taxi driver had been living in the Clondalkin area and is understood to have been resident in Ireland for a number of years.

The man was treated at the scene and brought by ambulance to St James’s Hospital where he was pronounced

dead a short time later.

A man who came to the aid of the taxi driver took to social media to share his account of what happened.

“I was driving home after work last night [on James’s Street] when I saw a taxi stopped at the side of the road with the door wide open.

“I pulled up alongside the car and the driver said, ‘Please help. I’ve been attacked by two guys’.

“So I got out to help him and as I did he fell out on the road saying he was tired and to take his shoes off...

“I rang the guards as I sat him up holding him against my leg while giving details.

“The cops and an ambulance then came and they took over,” he said.

Jim Waldron, of the National Private Hire and Taxi Association, said the man was not part of the organisation, but wished to express his sympathies.

“It’s very sad no matter how this man died and of course our sympathies go to his friends and family,” he said.

A taxi driver who passed by after the incident said that he saw the man lying on the ground beside his taxi.

“He was on the road by himself, facing outbound while I was driving towards the city.

“I couldn’t tell if he was injured, but he was moving.

“I must have passed him before the ambulance and police arrived because he was on his own, but the second time I drove past I saw two or three taxi drivers with him.”

Gardaí confirmed they are treating the case as a sudden death and a file will be prepared for the coroner.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Kevin Street Garda station 01 6669400 or the Garda Confidential Line 1800 666 111.



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