

- c) St Edmundsbury Borough Council – Street Trading Consent, High Street

6. Matters Raised by Councillors

- a) Clements Close – Orbit Housing Association Issues – Cllr Mick Graham
- b) Prevention of Underage Drinking – Cllr Mabon Dane

7. Supported Public Transport

To consider the attached report on suggested taxi-bus operations

8. Grants

To consider the awarding of Grants to local organisation

9. Precept 2003/2004

To determine and recommend to the Full Council the precept for 2003/2004.

10. Authorisation of payments

To authorise Payments.

11. Matters of report

To enable members to exchange any items of news, interest and importance.

12. Closure

Signed



Town Clerk

11 December 2002

Subsidised Public Transport

Since the decision by the commercial bus operators to withdraw from the town routes, the County Council has subsidised two replacement services. In reality this is one bus operating over a "figure of eight" route, at approximately hourly intervals between 9.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. This services has changed operators twice in the last year, and there is no guarantee that the bus will be accessible to the elderly or those with young children. The service has a very low patronage.

There is an opportunity to bid for Countryside Agency funding to establish a taxibus service in the town. A taxibus is a multiseater vehicle, with tail-lift, capable of accommodating up to fourteen passengers. Under a special licence the taxibus would operate a scheduled bus service during the day, and could then be used as a taxi outside of those times.

Any bid submitted would be effective during 2004, and cover capital and revenue costs during the 2004-2007 period.

Discussions have taken place between Suffolk County Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Haverhill Town Council, and those interested existing Hackney Carriage Licence-holders (of which there are two, who between them hold the majority of the licences). The Hackney Carriage Licence-holders are committed to the principle and have suggested potential routes and frequencies.

There are a number of issues that need resolution before too much further. The one that needs a Town Council decision is that of vehicular access to High Street and Queen Street. At present access during the periods of pedestrianisation is nominally restricted to those needing access to the Weavers Mill site, some delivery vehicles, and vehicles carrying a disabled person.

The draft routes drawn up by the Hackney Carriage Licence-holders include use of High Street and Queen Street. Suffolk County Council Public Transport Section endorse this as the taxibuses can then "deliver" passengers to their required destination rather than 50 metres away in the Bus Station. With the frequency of operation suggested this could give an additional six journeys an hour over both streets.

There is a possibility that increased frequency and accessibility will result in more disabled persons travelling by taxibus, reducing the number of cars in High Street particularly. This is also an apposite time to reconsider the pedestrianisation scheme.

Questions that the Committee may wish to consider are:-

- Should taxibuses be permitted to operate through the pedestrianised areas ?
- If so, should barriers be introduced to prevent access by other vehicles ?
- Should taxibuses be permitted to operate through High Street on Saturdays ?