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Issue 304 May 2025

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# OUR FINEST



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**TAXI  
CHARITY  
WITH  
VETERANS  
FOR 80TH  
VE DAY  
TRIBUTE**

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## CELEBRATING HEROES, AND FEARS FOR TRADE

As highlighted on our front page, the unwavering dedication of taxi drivers involved in the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans is nothing short of extraordinary. Their selfless service is a testament to the very best of our trade — they are a class act, deserving of our deepest respect and heartfelt gratitude. Thank you, and well done.

But while we celebrate their efforts, a darker reality is unfolding for our industry. This week, I sat alongside the LTDA, UCG, and Unite on a panel before the GLA Transport Committee to confront the sheer inadequacy of the Mayor's so-called Taxi and PH plan. Let's not sugar-coat it — the plan is a disaster for our profession. I'm genuinely appalled that TfL have the audacity to present this to us as if it holds any real value or substance. It's an insult.

The harsh truth is this: TfL is rapidly losing relevance when it comes to safeguarding our industry. Before our taxi panel even spoke, three representatives from the PH associations took the floor — and astonishingly, their message echoed ours. Too many PH vehicles. Uber's relentless oversaturation of the market is driving drivers into the ground.

There was an eerie sense of unity in that chamber, as if even the councillors in City Hall had finally begun to grasp the painful reality — that the ruin of livelihoods, the chaos on our streets, the collapse of sustainable working conditions — all trace back to one root cause: Uber. The despair hanging over our trade is real, and if those in power don't act soon, we risk losing everything that once made this profession proud and dignified.





# E16

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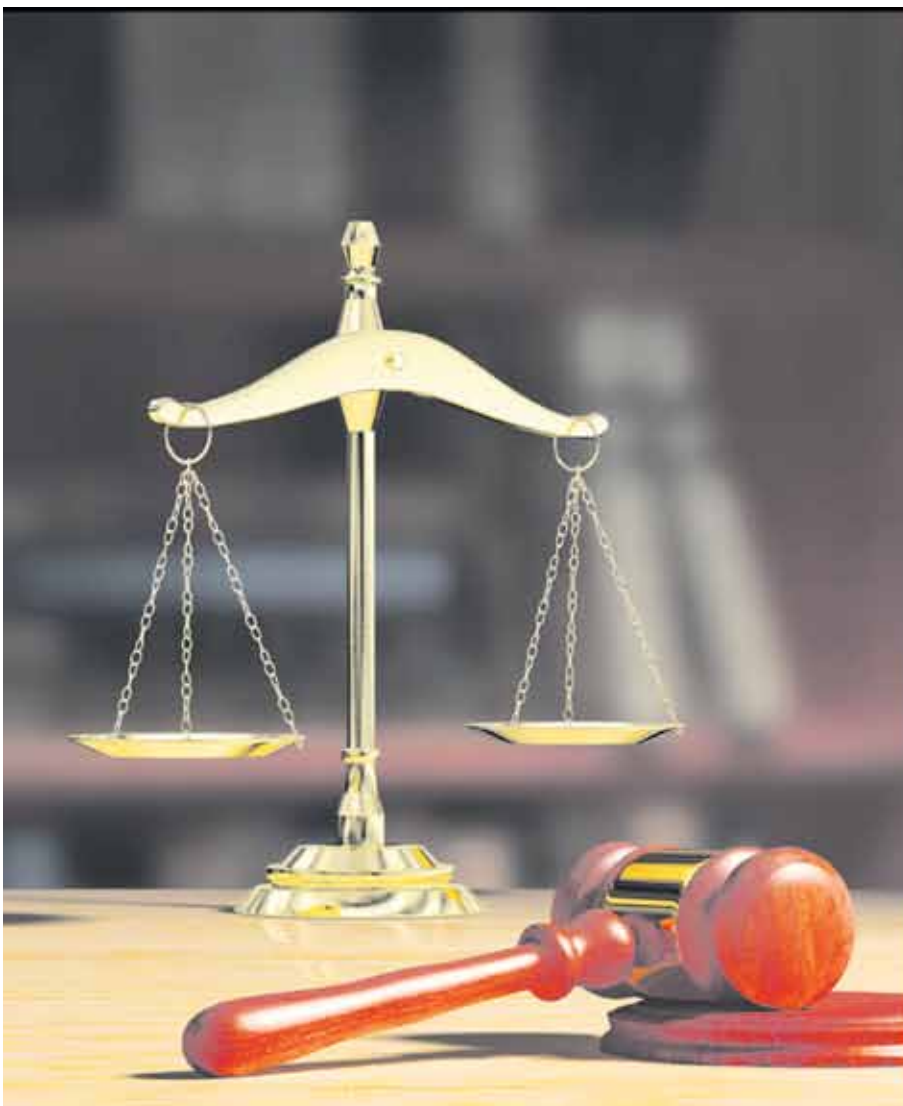
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We at the LCDC don't often bang our own drum when it comes to helping our members with their legal troubles. A lot of the cases which come our way with members are quite sensitive and we respect their wishes to keep things in house and out of the paper which I can fully appreciate.

However, not only do Payton's Solicitors offer our members a 24 Hour Duty Solicitor 365 days a year, but since getting involved with the Club, our solicitor Keima Payton has the distinction of having a 100% success rate in all her cases which she has handled on behalf of the Club's members.

Keima Payton has a fearsome reputation in court and should ever the need arise you will find no one better able to fight your corner and save your Badge than Keima.

- Grant Davis, LCDC Chairman

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# Royal honour for Taxi Charity for Military Veterans vice president, Dick Goodwin



**The Taxi Charity for Military Veterans is proud to announce that their vice president, Dick Goodwin, has been awarded the distinguished title of Knight in the Order of Orange-Nassau by His Majesty King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands.**

This royal honour, conferred on Dutch Liberation Day in Wageningen, is especially meaningful as it recognises the contribution of a British citizen to Dutch society and international friendship. The award was jointly presented by the Mayor of Wageningen, Floor Vermeulen, who gave a speech, and the Mayor of Renkum, Agnes Schaap, who had the honour of presenting and pinning the insignia.

Dick has been a dedicated

volunteer with the Taxi Charity since 2004, serving as a linchpin in organising memorial visits and commemorative events for British veterans in the UK, the Netherlands, Normandy and across Europe. His tireless work ensures that veterans can return to the places where they served, to honour fallen comrades and share their stories with new generations.

Dick has played a leading role in fostering connections between British veterans and Dutch communities, especially young people. He has facilitated meetings, encouraged discussions and strengthened the bonds between Dutch students and veterans, thus securing the proverbial bridge to the future. His efforts to involve veterans in events including Dutch Liberation, the Airborne

March and Market Garden commemorations have built lasting friendships and deepened mutual understanding. These emotional reunions are cherished not only by veterans but also by the Dutch people.

Colin Mills, London cab driver and chairman of the Taxi Charity, said: "We are absolutely thrilled that Dick has been awarded the title of Knight in the Order of Orange-Nassau. His dedication to the veterans we support, and to preserving the bonds between the UK and the Netherlands, is extraordinary. Dick embodies everything the Taxi Charity stands for - service, compassion and remembrance - and this honour is a fitting tribute to the many years he has devoted to ensuring our veterans are celebrated, supported, and never forgotten."

All of this work has been undertaken on a voluntary basis, in his own time, and with the steadfast support of his wife, Susy.

The Taxi Charity is immensely proud of Dick and this richly deserved honour. His unwavering commitment, compassion and leadership continue to inspire us all.

## About the Knight in the Order of Orange-Nassau

This is the fifth class of the Order of Orange-Nassau. People who are appointed Knights have usually rendered meritorious service of regional or even national importance.

[www.royalhonoursanddecorations.nl/decorations-and-honours/order-of-orange-nassau/knight](http://www.royalhonoursanddecorations.nl/decorations-and-honours/order-of-orange-nassau/knight)



# TAXI CHARITY HELPS HEROES TO MARK 80TH YEAR SINCE VE DAY

**On 8 May 2025, people across Europe commemorated the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day.**

VE Day marks the end of World War II in Europe. It honours the service and sacrifice of those who fought in the war, including British, Commonwealth and Allied Forces. The day marks the date of the formal acceptance by the allies of WWII, of Germany's unconditional surrender on Tuesday 8 May 1945. This marked the official end of the war in Europe.

For the Taxi Charity, which has been supporting veterans who served in WWII for 77 years, this was another wonderful opportunity to honour those who gave so much for our freedom.

Colin Mills, Chairman of the Taxi Charity, said: "As a charity which is wholly reliant on grants and donations, fundraising is always in the forefront of our plans, as we are continually checking the

balance sheet with concerns that we won't have the funds to continue our work with veterans. For the 80th anniversary of D-Day, charity volunteer Susy Goodwin designed a wonderful logo that was used on badges, keyrings and t-shirts to raise much needed funds. For VE Day, she has designed another logo which we hope will also help with our fundraising."

The history of using 'V' during the war began in 1941, when Belgian refugee Victor de Laveleye proposed the 'V' symbol as a symbol of resistance. He broadcast that the letter 'V' should become a resistance emblem standing for "Victoire", victory in French. It also conveniently worked for "Vrijheid", freedom in Dutch, and "Viktoria", victory in German. People began scrawling 'V' graffiti across occupied countries. Someone also realised that the Morse Code symbol for V, 'dot dot dot dash', is the same rhythm as Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and the music became part of the victory movement.

The BBC launched a "V for Victory" campaign, and the symbol was used on badges, walls and other items, and Winston Churchill became a prominent user of the symbol, making it with his hand and urging citizens to do the same.

Susy Goodwin, Taxi Charity volunteer, said: "When I was looking at this design, I took into account how important the 'V for Victory' symbol had been throughout the war. With that in mind, I wanted to incorporate the Morse Code for V. The Morse code for the letter 'V' is three dots and a dash, and as 'V' was used during World War II to represent freedom, resistance and victory, it seemed very fitting to add it to the design. What I also particularly liked is that this Morse Code pattern is also the same as the opening notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. This stirring piece of music was used before every news broadcast and people were encouraged to use 'V' whenever they could, including on envelopes and stationery."









# THE FARE TARIFF INCREASE

**As you know, the fare tariff increased on Sunday, 27th April.**

The meter now starts at £4.20, increasing from £3.80. Tariffs 1, 2 and 3 increased by 5.05% Tariff 4 stays in line with Tariff 2 and so will also increase by 5.05%

Additionally, extras for Heathrow will see the feeder park charge reducing from £2.00 to £1.60 and the drop-off charge increasing from £5.20 to £6.00. The fixed fares operating from the annual Wimbledon Tennis Championships will increase by £1.50 on all rates.

## HOW WILL THIS AFFECT MY INCOME?

This is a very understandable question asked by worried drivers every year before and after tariff increases. Although it seems counter-intuitive, the answer is that all things equal, the effect is positive.

Everyone knows the old saying that if you put the price up, you sell less and that applies to us as for any other business. On average, the effect will be your fares will likely decrease. The important thing though is how do you end up; better or worse off?

Fortunately, this has been theorised and tested in the real world and the result is that your overall takings, all things equal, will increase overall and your real costs (less inflation) will fall, as a result of fare increase.

## THIS DOESN'T MAKE (COMMON) SENSE

I know, many of us will feel that they are getting worse off, rather than better off. Common sense will tell you that. Well, I tell you that common sense is a dangerous thing. It deals in feelings, rather than facts.



A very well know trade face recently gave such an opinion. This Face questioned the increase in Tariff 4 last year, as common sense told anybody that it was a bad thing. The Face then went on to destroy his own argument with facts that refuted, rather than supported, his commonsense theory.

The Face stated that Heathrow fares had dropped off by 20% in response to fares increasing by 24%.

Think about that for a second. If the number of fares dropped by 20% but fares went up by 24%, common sense should tell him that takings overall increased by 4%. Mind you, common sense would be wrong if that was the deduction. Fares would actually reduce by 0.08%, because only the remaining 80% of fares would increase by 24%

That said, if this were the case, Heathrow drivers would still be better off because while their takings reduced by less than 1%, their costs reduced by 20%. They were now doing only 4 fares instead of 5 to take 99.2% of their takings but... they went through the feeder park 20% less, saving £2.00 each time. They only used 80% of the fuel and wear and tear on the cab that they would otherwise have done.

The other real increase comes from the time saved by only doing 4 fares and back, rather than 5. So OK, common sense may say increasing T4 by 24% was a bad thing but the facts say that drivers were better off in both time and money.

## YER TOO EXPENSIVE, MATE!

It has to be said that many drivers agree with this. In fact, almost half that respond to the annual consultation on fares, do not want a fare increase. This is driven by (understandable) fear rather than fact. These drivers see us being vastly outnumbered by the little people (PH for the uninitiated), imagine their prices, rather than knowing them, and fear we will lose even more work to them.

So it went with our well-known trade face again. The Face panicked when a random customer (not going to Heathrow) informed him that he often got a cab from SW1 to Heathrow and it had gone up from £80 to £100(25%) and the final straw was getting an Uber back from the airport for £40.

So, on the strength of a poll of one customer, commonsense says we shouldn't have raised T4 by so much. A customer, by the way, who may not be telling the truth but let's suppose he was.

## LET'S GO BACK IN TIME

Never mind about the T4 increase last year, let's go back to May 2022. If Chummie's fare was £80 before the last increase, it would have been around £65, 3 years ago. Think about how much your costs of driving a cab have increased in the last 3 years. Then add what has happened to your home cost of living – supermarket bills, electricity and gas, etc. Would you survive, still doing Heathrow from Victoria for £65?

Not only that, still using Chummy/Face figures, even at £65, you would still be asking for a fare that is still more than 50% higher than his Uber fare. They would contend that we would not lose so much work to Uber. They would be right – partially.

Of course, more customers would choose a taxi at £65 than at a £100, even if Uber were charging £40. However, it would have to have increased the number of fares from Victoria to Heathrow by more than 50% to break even with a £100 fare. Does anybody really think these fares would increase by 50% in the situation where Uber are still 40% cheaper even with cab fares at £65? Well yeah, our trade Face obviously does.

## THE PROBLEM OF TIME LAG

This is where we get in so much trouble with the TfL Finance Committee and general public alike. Things are fine when general inflation is low and steady but it's a different story when inflation is volatile and/or high. The public cannot be expected to know that the inflation of the costs we incur run two years behind. That's to say, this month we will work out how much the cost of running a cab has increased over the last year, back to May 24. However, it then takes TfL a full year before those increases show up in the tariff adjustment of April 2026.

There lies the problem and it's why we only got 7% last year instead of the 11% out costs increased by. Inflation was in double figures when our costs increased but was down to around 5% by the time we actually received the increase. We can hardly blame Joe public for thinking, for example, a fare increase of 10% is awarded when general wages have increased by 5%. Common sense will tell you that!

## TARIFF END NOTE

I have worked on the tariff group for more than a decade. We have argued with the TfL reps for all of that time that against the common sense view that increasing the tariff will reduce driver earnings. TfL reps think this is not the case... until this tariff round. Asked the question by the Finance Committee, the TfL rep admitted that despite the tariff more or less constantly increasing during his more than a decade tenure, there does not appear to be any evidence to suggest these increases have been detrimental to taxi driver earnings.

I rest my case against common sense.



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# The cost of privilege - and why the warden scheme had to go

By Jamie Hawes for  
'The Badge'

In the latest edition of the LTDA's Taxi magazine, Senior Rep Sam Houston delivered a glib and condescending defence of the Heathrow Warden Scheme.

His article, "Put the Crayons Down," is long on sarcasm but short on honesty. It's a sanctimonious whitewash of a scheme that has undermined trust, distorted queue discipline, and created a privileged class of drivers at the direct expense of everyone else.

Houston insists the scheme "costs the trade nothing." The truth? It handed queue-jumping privileges to a small number of drivers who were no different from anyone else — except they got to skip the queue by throwing on a hi-vis vest and playing traffic marshal for two hours.

## Not Volunteers — Just Jumping the Queue

Let's be absolutely clear: these wardens are not external marshals or HAL employees. They are licensed cab drivers, just like everyone else in the feeder park. On any normal day, they'd sit in the queue for 3–4 hours waiting for a dispatch job.

But under Houston's scheme, they're rewarded with 2 jobs in 2 hours — bypassing the entire queue — simply for telling other drivers where to park. That's not "volunteering." That's not "saving the trade money." That's queue privilege dressed up as public service.

## The Real Cost: Time Lost, Trust Eroded

Every ride that goes to a warden who hasn't waited like the rest of us comes at someone else's expense. Every driver who plays by the rules loses time — and money — because a handful of others get fast-tracked.

Even at a revised 54 queue-jumped jobs per day, that's nearly 20,000 rides a year given out of order. With every ride, another driver's time is stolen.

And what was the result? Widespread resentment Eroded trust in the fairness of the feeder park. Allegations of wardens deliberately obstructing lanes in the early mornings. This isn't efficiency. It's opportunism.

## Suspended - for a Reason

Houston says critics are just making things up. But



Heathrow Airport Limited — not the LCDC — suspended the scheme after receiving multiple complaints from a range of sources, including from within our own ranks.

And when they did, what happened? APCOA deployed just two agents — and the Feeder Park moved better, faster,

and fairer than it had in months. No obstruction. No queue manipulation. No whispers of backhand rewards. Just honest drivers moving through the system in the order they arrived.

## If It Was About Flow, We'd Pay for It

If Houston genuinely

believed the wardens were essential to the smooth running of the park, then the logical solution would be to pay for professional marshals under proper oversight.

Instead, we got a scheme where drivers "volunteered" to avoid waiting like the rest of us — rewarded not with wages but with fast-tracked income, regardless of how they behaved, who they delayed, or what corners they cut.

## Conclusion: Time for Fairness, Not Favouritism

The Warden Scheme wasn't suspended because of some witch-hunt. It was suspended because it was rotten — operationally, ethically, and reputationally.

We will always call out systems that reward queue-jumping, that undermine equality among drivers, and that turn silence into favour. Because when the trade speaks up — with facts, not crayons — the truth is harder to ignore.

The LTDA may want to protect the scheme. But the LCDC will always protect the driver at the back of the queue — not the one who knows how to skip it.



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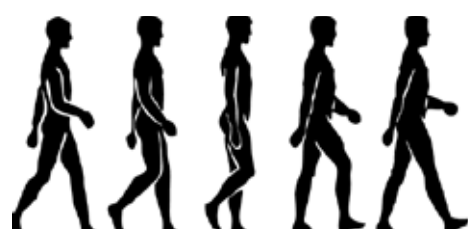
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# Walker on the march...

## LONDON METRO DRIVERS CLUB

For those of you lucky enough to me much younger than me, you may not be aware that the Metro Club was the first inception of the LCD (London Cab Drivers Club). M&Os FX4 monopolised our vehicle market for the third time in 1965, until Metro became a viable alternative when introduced in July 1970. The Club was a group of drivers sharing problems and solutions they had with the Metro. In the 1990s, it evolved into a genuine trade organisation.

Thus, it should come as no surprise to any cab driver with the least intelligence, that the LCD would favour breaking the monopoly in the market currently held by the manufacturer of the TXe. There is all sorts of rubbish flying around the trade that in promoting the Ford Maxicab as an alternative, the LCD are receiving benefits for promoting this vehicle. What a load of old b\*\*\*\*ks.

The Club's position has never changed; we oppose the monopoly held currently by Geeley, nothing more, nothing less. Monopoly is universally regarded as a bad thing and LEVC are no exception. Their product, the TXe, is over-priced, although in this particular case it isn't due to making excess profits due to their monopoly position. In reality, despite the price, they cannot turn a profit from the TXe, just as before it, the monopoly producer could not make a profit right back to the FX4. Why not?

## THE CONDITIONS OF FITNESS

Herein lies the reason. All modern mass-manufactured vehicles will not meet the turning circle condition of fitness. The turning circle

is a very useful tool that we possess. However, it is the single reason that we are not able to use mass-produced vehicles and so end up with a niche vehicle that results in far higher per vehicle R&D and tooling costs than mass-production vehicles. If we abandoned the turning



circle requirement, a range of suitable vehicles would almost instantly become open to our trade. Certainly, the Maxicab would be instantly available but more would follow.

The Maxicab wouldn't actually be significantly cheaper to buy than the TXe. However, it would still produce cost savings. The average driver will be lucky to get 50% of a shift on electric. After that, is faced with a choice of losing up to a couple hours sourcing a charger and charging the cab or run on petrol. The Maxicab will run 200 miles on electric.

Not everybody has access to a home charge but a significant number of drivers do and those that don't will not need to charge as often as with the TXe. A day man can commute in and out and complete his shift, go home and charge his cab overnight for about £5. How does that compare.

## WHAT ABOUT OUR IDENTITY?

This argument has raged on for decades. There are those among us that feel that a taxi has to look like a taxi. We need our icon and I would not disagree. But the joke is that currently our "Icon" consists of TX4,

TXe, Vito and Nissan. Not only that but many of these drivers that feel the "Icon" is sacred are running taxis that are blue, yellow, gold, silver and all the colours of the rainbow. Others have supersides or complete liveries. Some Icon?

AL (Addison Lee) proved this 20 years ago. After they became licenced, they change their whole fleet to black MPVs. They weren't all the same make and model. By the time Uber got their hooks in, Joe Public had the idea that AL were not taxis and not PHVs, but rather a distinct service between the two.

I go to the same place in Spain often and the taxis there are all shapes and sized, makes and models. However, a taxi is instantly recognised because the vehicle is white with a green stripe all the way down the sides and a hire light on the roof, facing front. I've been around the world a bit

and it is the same almost everywhere I've been. Look at New York. The big old beast of the Yellow Cab was every bit as iconic as the London taxi. Now in New York they use all sorts of makes and models of vehicles. I have to agree they are not as iconic as the old Yellow Cab. Tell you what though. They are still yellow and still just as recognisable.

Like most of us, I take pride and enjoyment from the iconic look of the London taxi. Just as I do red phone boxes, red buses and Old Bill with tit hats. Oh no, silly me. They've all gone. But that doesn't mean I'm stupid enough to recognise Old Bill or a bus any more. The iconic look is nice but it doesn't actually put bread on the table and that is what really matters. Any new vehicle will have to be an MPV to accommodate wheelchairs and six passengers. They will be recognisable as taxis and even more so if they are all the same colour and they will put more bread on the table than the icon does. We're running businesses here, not tourist attractions. From that perspective, a range of vehicles makes sense.

## WANNA CHEAP LOAN?

There are certain times of year when the big bills arrive. There's the cab overhaul and insurance to find, there's Xmas, there's holidays to be paid for, while no money's being earned. And, or course, the dreaded taxman cometh in January and July.

I learned to flatten such expenses out many years ago by joining the LTD Credit Union, back in the day when it was part of the LTDA but is now unconnected. Credit Unions are a fantastic idea and nothing like banks. In

essence, the LTD CU is a collective of cab drivers and their families helping each other out.

Unlike banks, CUs are non-profit making. Members pay reasonable interest rates on loans and any surplus the CU makes after expenses is shared among the members according to how much they have saved. The CU is no substitute for a bank: there are no debit cards and withdrawing money requires a visit to the office or an email to transfer funds the same day. The positives dwarf the negatives though.

Have you ever been to a bank for a loan and have some snotty kid make you jump through administrative hoops and make you feel like a beggar? Well, the credit union isn't like that.

Here's how you get an LTD CU loan. Let's say you want to borrow for your tax bill this coming July. You need to open an account at least 8 weeks before you are eligible for a loan. After that, you can borrow up to four times your savings. For example, save £125 per week for 8 weeks and you are eligible to borrow up to £4,000. No jumping through hoops but just a form to fill in that Annie or Mary will help you with.

The loan is then insured for free against your life. Should you be unlucky enough to peg it, your loan gets paid and your nearest and dearest get a lump sum. The set-up means that you continue saving at the same time as paying off the loan and have the ability to withdraw savings. It teaches you to save money.

Do yourself and your family a favour and give Annie or Mary a ring on 0208 904 3818 and listen to what they have to say. What can you lose?



**The London Licensed Taxi Trade has been offered two new life-lines. But unfortunately, they have come up against a barrage of criticism.**

The first option and one that (IMHO) is a game changer, is the app Jump.

Offered free to all Taxi drivers on the TaxiWord System. There are no fees to either driver, or passenger... it's Licensed Taxi only and what you see is what you get.

The biggest criticism is that the TaxiWorld card system is too expensive when used to clear payments.

But when you take into account that it comes fitted free, with a dash cam system and a tablet, connected to the meter, that offers you work at no extra cost to driver or passenger, surely... the fact you are paying nothing for this work, helps the system pay for itself.

Amazingly it's the drivers

## The Anderson Shelter's TAXI LEAKS

who failed to join the campaign to stop the mandate that saw only expensive authorised TfL systems, who appear to be opposed.

When we (Save the Black Taxis group) set up the campaign against the mandate, we were called Luddites and assured the mandate would put bums on seats, when in fact it was just a cash cow for TfL's golden stakeholders.

Amazingly, the same drivers are now complaining about the costs of using TfL authorised systems and are generally using unauthorised hand-held machines that if caught, could put their licences in jeopardy.

Secondly, we may soon have the chance of a

new, cheaper vehicle... but again, many drivers are up in arms saying that it looks like a converted van!



Funny, the Mercedes Vito driven by most of the complainers for years, had/has a similar look!

However, there is a problem... in that it doesn't have the current required turning circle,

but speaking to members of the GLA at the recent MaxiCab presentation, it looks like the conditions of fitness could soon be

changed to accommodate the Ford's entry to the London market (as recently happened in Manchester), putting an end to the current expensive monopoly.

Khan is very interested in

the fully electric model but can't authorise that without authorising the hybrid version.

Obviously, the Diesel model will not be offered as an option for London.

### TAXI LEAKS EXTRA BIT:

Another aspect that needs explaining is the fact that some of these moaners and complainers working on a certain app, recently turned a blind eye to an illegal practice being carried out by Bolt drivers, sharing their app accounts and PH vehicles with unauthorised drivers.

At present the trade is under constant attack from TfL, using their policy of divide and conquer, and it appears to be working extremely well.

There's an old saying... Never look a gift horse in the mouth.

But it appears the trade is currently looking a gift horse up its rear end.

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## London Cab Drivers Club (LCDC)

# Formal Rebuttal to HAL Enforcement Letter and Summary of Systemic Failures at Heathrow Airport

Date: 10th May 2025

To: Kap Jhuti, Senior Landside Operations Manager, Heathrow Airport Limited

Charanjit Brar Singh, Car Parks and Landside Operations, Heathrow Airport Limited

Cc: Elly Baker AM, Chair, GLA Transport Committee

John McDonnell MP, Member for Hayes and Harlington

John Murphy, Unite the Union – Bus and Cab Section

Civil Aviation Authority

Transport for London

LTDA, UCG, RMT

Legal Counsel

## Executive Summary

This letter responds formally to Heathrow Airport Limited's (HAL) 7 May 2025 notice threatening disciplinary action against licensed taxi drivers for alleged queuing infringements. As an Heathrow Representative for the LCDC and a licensed taxi driver with over 40 years of experience — three decades of which have been spent serving Heathrow — I categorically reject the legitimacy of this enforcement and its underlying basis.

HAL's position is untenable. Over the past



15 years, the airport has consistently failed to maintain or modernise the Taxi Feeder Park (TFP) system, while favouring commercially profitable arrangements for Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs), especially through the creation and expansion of the Authorised Vehicle Area (AVA). The TFP — a critical public transport infrastructure — has suffered from obsolete technology, broken infrastructure, and worsening facilities, despite drivers contributing millions of pounds in regulated charges.

While the taxi trade has engaged in good faith, HAL's decisions have led to:

- A systemic collapse in taxi throughput and access,
- A commercial model that rewards unregulated practices while penalising compliant operators,
- Disproportionate enforcement threats with no clear legal authority,
- A pattern of consultation failure, operational neglect, and discriminatory practices that undermine the principles of public

service and equality.

This rebuttal sets out a consolidated account of HAL's policy failures and mismanagement, and demands immediate withdrawal of the enforcement threat,

globally — and held to strict environmental, accessibility, and fare controls determined by Transport for London (TfL).

At Heathrow, black cabs serve a unique and



independent oversight of TFP operations, and a reset in how HAL engages with the licensed taxi trade.

## 1. Overview of Taxi Operations at Heathrow

Licensed London taxis are not private competitors in a free-for-all marketplace. They are part of the capital's regulated public transport network. Drivers are vetted by the Metropolitan Police, trained through The Knowledge — a rigorous examination unmatched

essential function:

- They provide 100% wheelchair-accessible transport by law.
- They offer regulated, metered fares without surge pricing or algorithmic distortion.
- They are available at all terminals 24/7, unlike many app-based operators.
- They assist with Heathrow's wider obligations under surface access and sustainability plans.

The Taxi Feeder Park (TFP) is central to this operation. It is not simply a car park — it is the regulated dispatch mechanism through which licensed taxis are called forward to terminal ranks. Entry is charged under the Civil Aviation Authority's Other Regulated Charges (ORC) framework, which is supposed to ensure that the system is cost-recovery only, with proper consultation and reinvestment in facilities.

In return for these obligations, taxi drivers receive no subsidies or protection. They:

- Purchase (or lease) their own vehicles — now £74,500 electric taxis.
- Pay all HAL entry charges and TfL licensing fees.
- Operate without holiday pay, sick pay or guaranteed work.
- Must comply with live enforcement from both TfL and the airport.

This regulated, working-class workforce plays a crucial role in maintaining access and equity at Heathrow. Yet it is now facing disproportionate penalties for attempting to operate within a system that HAL has allowed to deteriorate through chronic neglect.

## 2. Chronology of Failures and Mismanagement (2010–2025)

Over the past 15 years, HAL has presided over a sustained and well-documented decline in the infrastructure, governance, and fairness of the Taxi Feeder Park (TFP). Despite repeated warnings from drivers, trade representatives, and local authorities, the problems have worsened — and now culminate in HAL attempting to penalise drivers for the consequences of its own failures.



# — FORMAL REBUTTAL TO HAL ENFORCEMENT LETTER —

**2010–2015: Early Warning Signs Ignored**

- Complaints began surfacing about sporadic failures in TFP barrier systems and queue mismanagement.
- TfL’s rapid expansion of Private Hire licensing (from ~60,000 to over 100,000 in a few years) placed unacknowledged pressure on Heathrow surface access.
- HAL made no substantial investment in infrastructure despite rising traffic and PHV volumes.

**2016–2019: Acknowledgement Without Action**

- HAL formally admitted the Taxi Expert dispatch system was obsolete. RFID entry tags were unreliable; barriers failed repeatedly.
- Meetings in 2017–18 noted urgent need for upgrades. HAL at various points claimed funding was “secured”, then “delayed”, then redirected.

- Manual workarounds (e.g. paper tickets) became routine, causing driver delays and throughput confusion.
- Meanwhile, HAL launched and promoted the Authorised Vehicle Area (AVA) for PHVs — rapidly expanding it without equivalent provision for taxis.

**2020–2022: Pandemic and Post-Crisis Neglect**

- During COVID-19, HAL paused all infrastructure upgrades. But it increased TFP gate fees to over £7.
- No rent or fee relief was offered to taxi drivers during the travel collapse, even as AVA arrangements continued.

- Post-pandemic recovery saw no improvements to the TFP, and HAL began actively resisting calls for transparency on revenue usage and reinvestment.

**2023–2024: Governance Failures**



**and Escalation**

- The Civil Aviation Authority commissioned an independent review (Grant Thornton, 2024) into HAL’s ORC cost allocations. The review criticised HAL for failing to consult users or account for revenue use.
- Internal minutes repeatedly noted broken chargers, failing toilets, no reinvestment in the dispatch system, and absent on-site management.
- HAL began trialling new digital queue systems — but without a functioning base infrastructure, these efforts were chaotic and lacked driver confidence.

**2025: Breakdown**

**and Blame**

- Despite no delivery of the promised TFP upgrades, HAL issued letters threatening three-month bans for drivers alleged to be queuing on clearways — even when queueing was caused by

system faults.

- HAL failed to cite any enforceable legal basis for the penalties. TfL confirmed it does not have delegated authority to enforce HAL byelaws.
- Trade organisations, including LCDC and Unite, formally objected, citing lack of legal grounds, lack of prior consultation, and breaches of regulatory conditions and equality duties.

This timeline shows a clear pattern: Heathrow has known of these issues for years, failed to act on them, and now seeks to impose discipline on drivers for the predictable outcomes of its own inaction.

**3. Discriminatory Practices and Governance Concerns**

Heathrow’s approach to taxi operations has not only been marked by neglect but by inconsistency, double standards, and

failure to uphold its obligations under public sector duties. These practices have created a culture of blame-shifting, exclusion, and unequal treatment that disproportionately affects licensed taxi drivers — a predominantly older, ethnically diverse, and working-class workforce.

**Exclusion from Decision-Making**

Despite years of structured engagement through forums such as the Taxi Feeder Park Governance (TFPG) group, HAL has repeatedly failed to consult meaningfully on decisions affecting the trade. Patterns include:

- Agendas not circulated in advance.

- Minutes delayed or selectively recorded.

- Enforcement policies introduced without consensus or notice.

- Stakeholders informed of decisions post-fact, rendering consultation meaningless.

This undermines HAL’s obligations under the Civil Aviation Authority’s H7 Licence Condition C.2, which requires transparent, meaningful consultation with users.

**Unequal Faith Provision and Operational Impacts**

In 2025, HAL introduced a multi-faith prayer facility at the TFP following longstanding informal use of a condemned building. While the intention was inclusive, the practical implementation created issues:

- Drivers using the facility have, on occasion missed re-entry times and caused obstruction to the smooth running of the taxi feeder park system.
- No clear guidelines have been issued to accommodate faith-related breaks within the queuing and dispatch regime.
- Other drivers making use of toilets are not afforded the same understanding.

This inconsistency raises concerns under the Equality Act 2010, particularly the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which requires HAL to consider the needs and impacts of all groups fairly and proportionately.

**Workforce Treated as a Problem, Not a Partner**

Taxi drivers at Heathrow:



# — FORMAL REBUTTAL TO HAL ENFORCEMENT LETTER —

- Own or rent their vehicles outright — often at personal cost of £70,000–£90,000 for electric models.
- Operate as independent sole traders without institutional support or protections.
- Deliver 24/7, accessible, public transport — regulated, insured, and accountable.

Yet instead of being treated as essential contributors to Heathrow’s service offer, drivers are subject to arbitrary enforcement and minimal facility provision. By contrast, app-based PHV platforms are accommodated with commercial incentives, priority parking, and infrastructure that enables seamless operation.

This disparity is not just a policy failure. It is a breach of duty to a workforce that has historically served Heathrow with professionalism and resilience throughout all manner of disruption from terrorist threats, a pandemic, volcanic disruption and even the most recent electrical fire and blackout.

## 4. Enforcement Imbalance and Economic Impacts

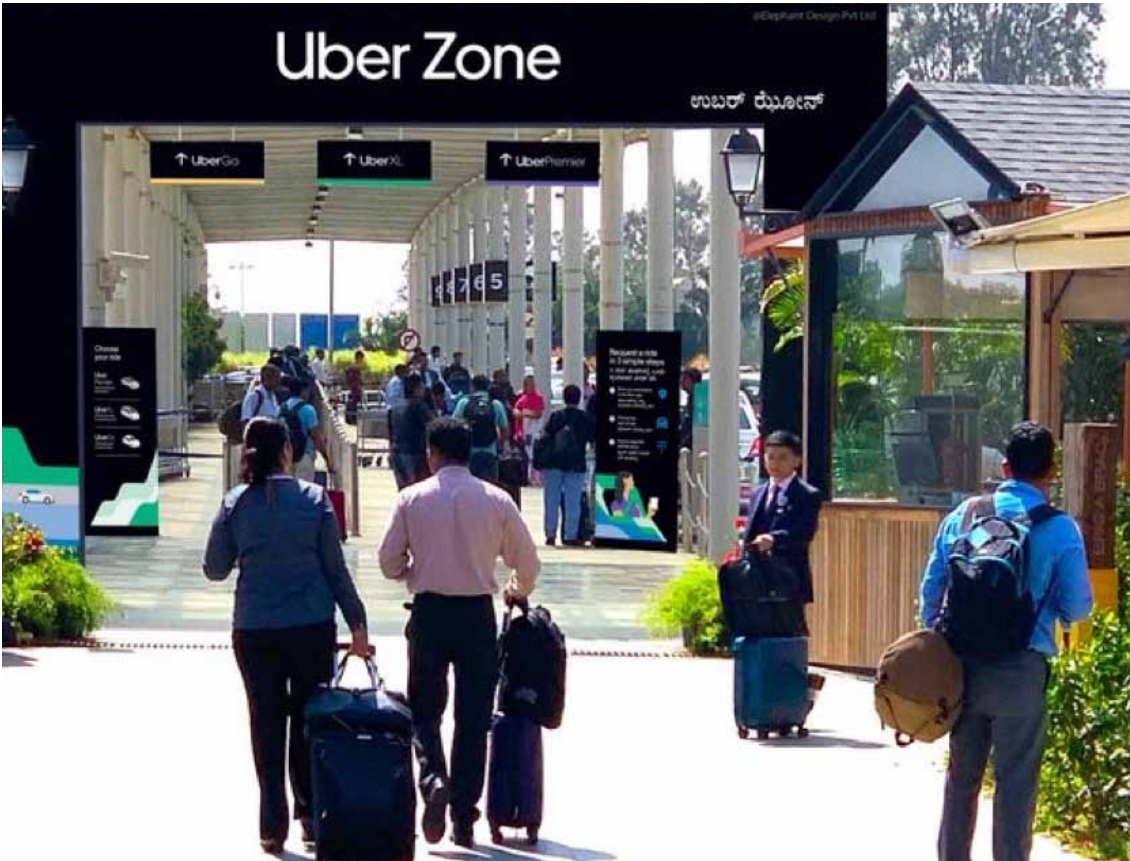
Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL) is applying enforcement in a manner that is not only disproportionate, but economically discriminatory. Licensed taxi drivers, already bearing the cost of an outdated and under-maintained system, are now threatened with penalties for attempting to operate within the constraints HAL has created.

## Threats Without Legal Basis

The 7 May 2025 letter issued by HAL threatens drivers with suspension from the Taxi Feeder Park (TFP) for alleged

## System Failures Blamed on Drivers

HAL has repeatedly acknowledged that



“queuing” on public access roads. This enforcement threat is alarming for several reasons:

- HAL has not published any Road Traffic Management Orders or equivalent documentation demonstrating legal authority for such penalties.
- No contractual agreement exists between HAL and individual drivers granting HAL the right to suspend or discipline operators in this way.
- Requests for this documentation — including under Freedom of Information and data protection rights — have been unanswered.

In the absence of legal foundation, this enforcement regime appears arbitrary and procedurally unfair.

the TFP’s dispatch infrastructure — particularly the Taxi Expert system and barrier controls — is unreliable. Despite years of promises, the system remains:

- Prone to failure, forcing APCOA staff to issue paper tickets.
- Unfit for volume, causing delays and operational confusion.
- Without real-time status updates or backup queuing information for drivers.

Yet drivers are being penalised for queuing behaviour triggered by these same system faults. This constitutes a reversal of responsibility: the operator’s failure becomes the driver’s liability.

## Financial Burden on a Public Transport

## Workforce

The cumulative financial impact on taxi drivers includes:

- Entry fees paid to HAL — charged regardless of system reliability.
- Increased fuel costs and wasted time due to queuing inefficiencies.
- Rising vehicle costs and insurance burdens under environmental compliance regimes.
- No equivalent flexibility, discounts, or digital integration support as offered to PHV platforms.

These pressures have been exacerbated by HAL’s refusal to disaggregate Taxi and PHV figures in mode share reporting — a move that conceals the sharp decline in taxi usage and falsely suggests surface access targets are being met.

This enforcement and charging approach represents a fundamental economic injustice:

regulated public transport workers are being penalised, while lightly regulated commercial operators are accommodated and incentivised.

## 5. The Role of Touting and HAL’s Failure to Enforce

Touting by Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) drivers has become an endemic issue at Heathrow, undermining the legal, regulated taxi service and eroding public trust in airport surface transport. While licensed taxis operate under strict regulation, transparency, and public accountability, many PHV drivers circumvent the Authorised Vehicle Area (AVA) booking protocols — engaging in practices that amount to passenger solicitation and informal ranking.

This includes:

- PHV drivers loitering in Short Stay car parks or perimeter roads, waiting to be “hailed” via messaging apps.
- Vehicles using dummy pre-bookings to enter AVA & Car Parks zones, while operating on a real-time, pick-up-on-demand basis.
- Direct approaches to passengers at terminals, particularly during peak times, giving the impression of legal availability.
- Absence of any verification or meaningful deterrent for repeated misuse of AVA & Car Park access.

These behaviours are not isolated incidents — they are routine, widely observed, and openly discussed across forums, including trade meetings and local authority consultations. Yet HAL has consistently failed to enforce against



# — FORMAL REBUTTAL TO HAL ENFORCEMENT LETTER —

these breaches in any systematic way.

**Enforcement Failure as Policy**

Rather than applying airport byelaws or working with the Metropolitan Police and TfL to deter illegal PHV conduct, HAL has allowed this behaviour to become normalised. Enforcement staffing remains minimal, the AVA is largely unmonitored, and the presence of “touting hotspots” is well known yet persistently ignored.

Incredibly, HAL has proposed that taxi drivers themselves — the most regulated mode — should fund a dedicated anti-touting team, at a projected annual cost of £390,000. This includes contributions towards police, security, and monitoring that HAL has itself failed to provide as part of its basic operational responsibility.

This proposal is deeply offensive. It represents:

- A dereliction of HAL’s duty to uphold lawful, safe, and fair operating conditions;
- An attempt to outsource accountability for its own enforcement failure;
- An unjust financial burden on a public transport workforce already under extreme cost pressure.

Taxi drivers are not responsible for policing others. Nor should they be asked to subsidise a response to problems caused by HAL’s own commercial choices and regulatory inaction.

The fight against touting is not optional — it is essential to protecting lawful operations, passenger safety, and the integrity of Heathrow’s

surface access policy. HAL must take ownership of this responsibility. It must fund enforcement in full, and it must stop punishing the taxi trade for playing by the rules while turning a blind eye to those who break them.

**6. Call for Accountability and Immediate Action**

The enforcement policy issued by Heathrow



Airport Limited (HAL) is not an isolated administrative misstep — it is the culmination of a decade of neglect, poor governance, and strategic choices that have consistently disadvantaged the licensed taxi trade.

This letter demands urgent redress, not only on behalf of the London Cab Drivers Club (LCDC), but as a matter of public interest and political accountability.

**Immediate Actions Required**

**1. Withdraw the Enforcement Threats**

- HAL must immediately

suspend all disciplinary action related to the 7 May 2025 communication. These threats are without clear legal basis and risk significant reputational harm if pursued.

**2. Disclose All Legal Instruments**

- HAL must provide full transparency over any contractual terms, traffic management orders,

or byelaw authorities it believes empower it to discipline licensed taxi drivers. In the absence of such documents, any enforcement activity must cease.

**3. Deliver the Promised TFP Upgrade**

- A fixed timetable must be published — with trade oversight — for the replacement of the Taxi Expert dispatch system, improvement of facilities, and implementation of modern queue management technology.

**4. Separate and Publish Taxi vs PHV Data**

- HAL must stop

combining taxi and PHV usage in surface access reporting. This practice conceals the decline of a regulated public service and undermines policy integrity.

**5. Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)**

- HAL must review the impact of its enforcement, consultation failures, and infrastructure decisions

on groups protected under the Equality Act 2010, including older workers, religious communities, and disabled users.

**6. Reform Consultation and Governance Structures**

- Trade meetings must be formalised with published agendas, minutes, and meaningful input from all recognised trade bodies. No enforcement or operational decisions should be made without this process.

**Political and Legal Oversight**

This matter has now

been escalated to:

- Elly Baker AM and the GLA Transport Scrutiny Committee.
- John McDonnell MP, representing the interests of working-class drivers in the Heathrow area.
- Unite the Union, which is reviewing legal options on behalf of members.
- The Civil Aviation Authority, in its regulatory role regarding the Other Regulated Charges (ORCs) regime.

Should HAL proceed with its current approach, further legal challenge and political scrutiny will follow. This includes the potential for Judicial Review, Parliamentary questions, and coordinated trade response.

**Conclusion**

Licensed taxi drivers at Heathrow have operated in good faith for decades — regulated, self-funded, and providing a vital public service. HAL’s recent actions betray that contribution, replacing consultation with command, and fairness with favouritism.

This rebuttal is both a warning and an invitation. Withdraw the enforcement threats. Rebuild trust. And finally deliver on the commitments HAL has made, year after year, to those who serve its passengers with professionalism and pride.

*Mark White*

*Heathrow Representative*

*London Cab Drivers Club (LCDC)*

*Unite the Union Member #21065313*



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### ■ HEATHROW AIRPORT REPRESENTATION

With our reps at the airport working

hard on the trade's behalf for a fairer, and more safer future at Heathrow.

### ■ RANKS AND HIGHWAYS

The LCDC attend the Joint Ranks committee, working hard for more ranks and more access for the taxi trade in London.

### ■ CAB TRADE ADVICE

All members can call the office for any information or up to the date news on any trade related subject.

### ■ TRADE'S FUTURE

The Club worked tirelessly in bringing in the green & yellow identifiers to the taxi trade.  
And are always working hard to protect our future.

### ■ CAB TRADE REPRESENTATION

We are working hard to work with members of the GLA and also politicians to fight our corner against TFL and was a major influence in the recent "future proof" document.

### ■ VEHICLE MANUFACTURERS

The Club works alongside LTC and

Mercedes to deliver a vehicle that meets our standard as a London taxi driver. Recently we have held meetings to work against the ULEZ strategy and the introduction of taxi age limits.

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# Mr Mayor, you say you back Black Cabs - but we're being driven out

By Mark White, LCDC  
Heathrow Representative

**Black cabs have served Heathrow for decades — 24/7, 365 days a year.**

Through terror threats, snowstorms, lockdowns, and airspace closures, and the recent fire at the substation - we have never walked away from our duty. But now, it feels like Heathrow — and the authorities that claim to regulate us — are walking away from us.

Taxi work at the airport is down over 20%. Meanwhile, PHV activity has increased by over 20%, as more and more passengers are funnelled toward unregulated, app-based platforms.

Why? Because the rules are rigged.



PHVs benefit from:

- Regulatory arbitrage (lower standards, less enforcement);
- Externalities of costs onto the public purse
- Algorithmic predatory

pricing, bankrolled by Silicon Valley;

- A workforce subsidised by the benefits system, while we pay everything ourselves.

At the same time, Heathrow has broken its "No More

Traffic" pledge, creating and considering expanding the Authorised Vehicle Area (AVA) to accommodate more PHVs — from which they profit through parking revenue.

And now they want to punish taxi drivers for queuing — caused by a broken dispatch system they've failed to fix. The Taxi Feeder Park is falling apart. Seven chargers. Half broken. HAL's plan? Cannibalise the dead ones. Nineteen more are "promised", but they don't exist.

We have asked for staffed desks in the terminals. We've been told to set up a legal entity and do it ourselves. Yet we are the licensed public transport mode.

The Mayor claims we are

"part of the solution". But TfL has never invested in our infrastructure. Our reward for supplying zero-emission, 100% wheelchair-accessible vehicles? Being undercut and left to rot.

We're not asking for handouts. We're asking for fairness. Mayor Khan — it's time to prove you mean what you say.

- Bring the TFP and taxi desks under public control.

- Build a solar-powered, future-ready facility with chargers for every cab.

- Hold HAL to their own promises — and stop letting algorithmic profiteers define London's transport system.

Because if this continues, London won't have a taxi service left to protect



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To the basement rooms in dingy pubs where old fighters chase the last round; a bullring in December under the stars; a small square on the outskirts of Naples with a ring obscured by a fountain; the abandoned centre of boxing excellence in a forest lost in East Germany; a railway arch in south London and a bin-bag packed with cash.

Let 'Buncey' tell you about the conversations with Mr. T at ringside; a meeting with the Pope's people; the thoughts of Donald Trump when he had plans to make boxing great again; Don King in exile in his nineties; an overheard conversation with Fidel Castro; and a very real diplomatic incident.

The hard conversations

with a dead boxer's mother in the hour after a machine had been switched off. The bravery,

simple, wonderful and truly awful business of boxing. It is Buncey's business and this is his story.

has been ringside at all my fights, from national amateurs all the way to Wembley stadium. He is the only reporter who could have ever got close to that lift in the Garden.



of him. A great guy!

**Carl Frampton**

I've known Big Buncey for almost two decades and have gotten to know him more recently as a work colleague. There's nobody I'd rather listen to reminiscing of the greats. The current greats and the greats of the past. His knowledge on the sweet science [of boxing] is second to none.

**Eddie Hearn**

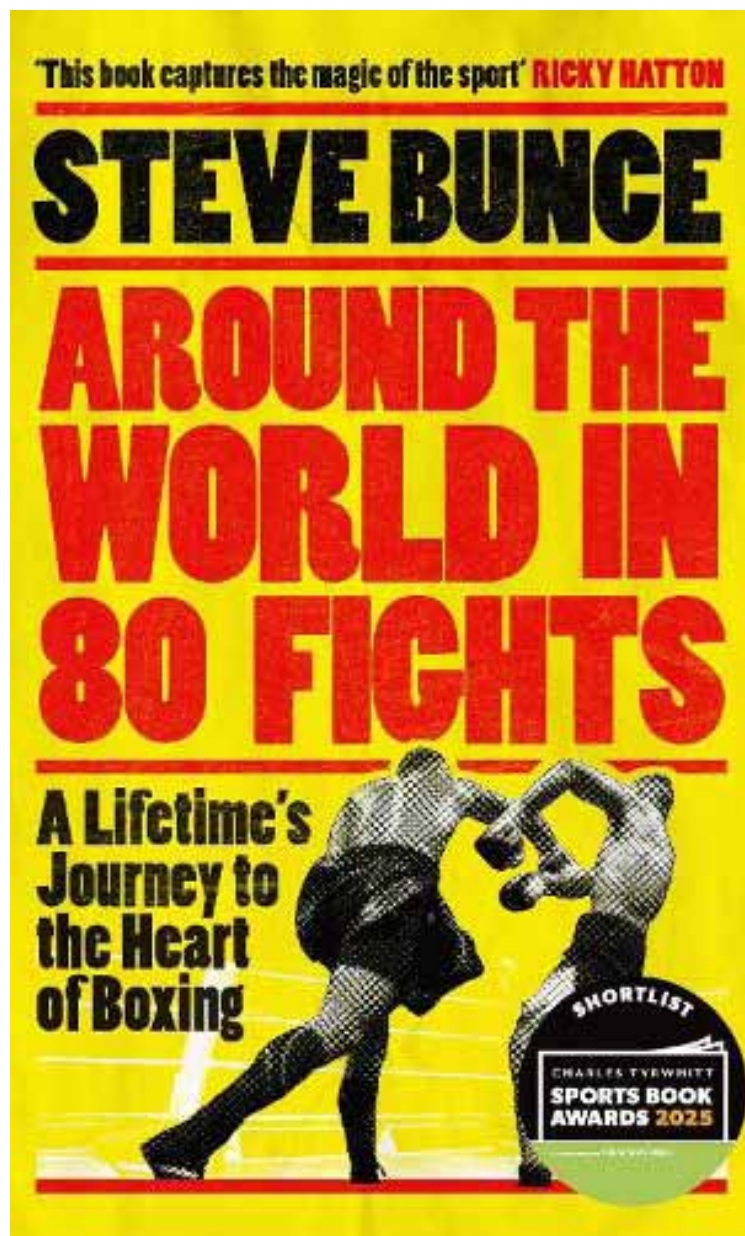
You know it's a proper fight night when Steve Bunce is in town! A first-class broadcaster and journalist. He's been there, done it and pretty much seen it all.

**Carl Froch**

Steve is an old school boxing historian who knows that much about boxing he simply has to write books about it. He understands how the minds of boxers tick, I know this first hand. From my amateur days right through to chinning my last victim in front of 80 thousand fans at Wembley Stadium Steve Bunce was on the whole journey. I'm proud to call him my good friend.

**Tyson Fury**

Bunce is a walking talking boxing library, and is not frightened to say what he thinks and says. I've enjoyed many nights and many fights with a true legend of the game.



stupidity, guts, desire and glory of the boxers in the world's most famous and unknown rings. They fought for millions, for pride, for their country and for nothing. They bled, cried and died in those rings.

*Around the World in 80 Fights* vividly reveals the

simple, wonderful and truly awful business of boxing. It is Buncey's business and this is his story.

**Anthony Joshua**

Steve and I go way back, all the way back. He

**Fred Sirieix**

Steve Bunce is the best boxing writer in the world. He knows everyone in the business. The man is a walking living encyclopedia!

**Katie Taylor**

No matter what fight it is, or what part of the world it's in Steve seems to be an ever present ringside at every boxing event! He has covered my career from amateur to pro and his love and enthusiasm for the sport is infectious.

**Lennox Lewis**

Bunce captured the madness in Memphis around the fight with Tyson... the behind-the-scenes story of the Bruno fight and was there from York Hall to Las Vegas.

**Prince Naseem Hamed**

Buncey is back with another book. Buncey has the knowledge and he's forgotten more than most people in boxing know.

**Joe Calzaghe**

I've known Steve for many years from the very start of my career and I've always liked and respected him. Always having a laugh with a great sense of humour and he has a great knowledge of our sport. my late Dad Enzo would also always speak highly

## Reviews

**Ricky Hatton**

This book captures the magic of the sport - the glory and the heartache.



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**Well by the time you read this the flower show will be with us, and according to some in the trade, the Chelsea Flower Show marks the end of the kipper season and good times are ahead!**

I must be honest but in 34 years of being a taxi driver I have never actually worked the flower show, so I don't really know whether it is busy or not? But one thing I do know is that I have never seen a drastic increase in work once the flower show starts.

My method of tackling work is just to get in the cab and either do my hours or any prebooked work I have and then go home, I have always found that this just is a game of luck, some days you are lucky and some you are not. You have good days and bad days, and on occasions you have a very good day or a very bad day, but over the month it all seems to work out, unless you are extremely unlucky of course.

### Cab Chat

You may have seen by now that I have relaunched Cab Chat, I missed doing the show and wanted to do it again, the problem is that we have no venue you be able to record Cab Chat in the previous format, so I have decided to use the back of the taxi to record the interviews and shows. The show is called Cab Chat so what better place to record them than in a cab?

You can still find us on all the social media channels, and the website is still active at [www.cabchatshow.uk](http://www.cabchatshow.uk), the only difference now is that we are also recording the shows in video format which are available on YouTube which you can find at [www.cabchat.uk](http://www.cabchat.uk). If there is someone you would like to see interviewed on the show, please let me know, or if you have any suggestions on subject that you would like to see us investigate and tackle then please get in touch.

We also have a new logo

for Cab Chat as I never really liked the old one and it was only supposed to be a temporary one until we designed something different, but in 10 years we never got around to sourcing a new one, but we now have a new logo, I am not sure if it will be the final design as I am always looking for new ideas and inspiration to make it look better. Let me know what you think of the new logo?

### Jamie the Cabby (YouTube)

I have been banging out quite a few videos on YouTube over the past couple of months and have managed to start posting 2 per week, one on a Tuesday for Cab Chat and another over the weekend for my own channel.

I have recently done a video with Courtney Connell about his knowledge school and his views on the changes made to the knowledge by TfL. Courtney explained how the points system has changed with the new list of 6000 points and the way in which they run the school in City Road.

I have also done a video with Paul Byron about the

Jump Fest at Doon Street carpark; Paul gives his views on the Jump App and their credit card system and the benefits it offers for fleet owners.

A couple of weeks ago I went along the SMMT to have a test drive of the new Allied Vehicles Ford Maxicab, I filmed the cab and Grant held the camera quite badly while I was driving the vehicle, if you want to see the video just visit my YouTube channel [youtube.com/@jamiethecabby](https://www.youtube.com/@jamiethecabby). The comments on the video seem to prove that drivers are divided as to whether this vehicle should be allowed to be licensed by TfL.

### Piccadilly Underpass

The Piccadilly Underpass is due to be closed in both directions until the end of July, it has already been closed eastbound for some time now and causing congestion around Hyde Park corner.

In all of the times that I have passed the underpass I have never seen any activity in the tunnel, I admit that the tunnel curves so you cannot see right through the length, but I would have thought that

there would be personnel either entering or leaving the tunnel at some point?

We can only wait and see what the congestion will be like along Piccadilly and around Hyde Park Corner when it is closed, especially when Changing of the Guard is taking place, and the Palace roads are closed.

### Cross Border Hiring

It seems that even PHV drivers are no longer happy with the number of licences that are being issued by TfL and are calling for a cap on the number of PHV

licenses. The state that the ever-increasing number of licenses issued by TfL are contributing to a fall in driver income and working conditions. They state that TfL's claim to make Taxi and Private Hire driving a more attractive proposition is unachievable with the current licensing regime.

TfL's Taxi & Private Hire Action Plan 2025 was attacked by three representatives of the PH trade in City Hall during the transport committee hearing at City Hall, they also condemned the cross border hiring situation where drivers from licensing authorities like Wolverhampton are currently working in London.

The ironic thing is that reading through their complaints and concerns reminds me of the last 12 years where the London Taxi trade have been raising these exact issue and concerns only, it appears, to have our voice ignored. I wonder whether the PH industry and their representatives will have greater success than the Taxi trade and our representatives have over the past decade or so?

Well that's it for this month, I hope that the work picks up for us all over the coming months and that we are all kept busy through and after the flower show. Be Healthy, be Happy, be Nice and most of all Be Lucky.







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# Manchester opens door to Maxicab

**There was no mistaking the mood in the main council chamber of Manchester's magnificent Town Hall on Monday 28th April. Expectation.**

The city's taxi trade had come in their numbers to meet with the councillors on the Licensing Committee. Top of the agenda was to debate and agree some major changes to Manchester City Council's (MCC) taxi policy on age limits and emissions standards. However, the trade and the councillors had also come to review Cab Direct's new Ford Maxicab. It was agreed to consider the Maxicab first.

The Maxicab had to go up in front of the committee because it is 5cm longer than MCC's maximum length requirement of 5 meters. When questioned by the committee on this issue, Roy McMaster of Cab Direct explained that

"5cm is less than the height of a credit card, so it's not going to make any practical difference to the city's taxi ranks, which would also be occupied by other purpose-built taxis." OK, there was general acceptance to this. The councillors then decided to view the Ford Maxicab out on the street nearby. What clearly carried the day for the committee was the incredible amount of manoeuvrable space they found inside the Maxicab for wheelchair users. They also praised its strong safety partition, build quality and very high specification including a large panoramic roof. A favourable wind blowing for the Maxicab was also helped by the new taxi having 3 versions all in the same body, to the same specification - a diesel, a 2.5 litre hybrid and fully electric taxi. A perfect fit for Greater Manchester's ULEZ policy.

Back inside the chamber the committee

unanimously agreed that the Ford Maxicab should be given an exemption to the 5 metre rule, and the new taxi was approved. McMaster was delighted, "Yet another major UK city

airport in a Vito Taxi and having seen the Maxicab it's got more passenger room and space for luggage than even my cab so it's going to be an ideal airport taxi for drivers. I also like that

government of an £8 million grant to be used to enable cab drivers to upgrade their taxis. Sean Kenny, Chair of the Manchester Taxi Owners and Drivers Association, commented "The taxi organisations in Manchester are satisfied that after a lot of hard work with Taxi Licensing at MCC it has been agreed to extend the age limit for taxis to 17 years, and to delay the requirement for all taxis to be Euro 6 or better until the end of 2026. That gives us breathing space. We're also going to have an input on how the £8 million government grant will be allocated."

LCDC opinion... Manchester demonstrates that you can have a licensing authority and a taxi trade having a constructive working relationship to deliver sensible policies that take account of everyone's best interests. Pity that doesn't happen here in London!



has recognised the best-in-class benefits of the Ford Maxicab, this is the future of purpose-built cabs in the UK." The taxi trade was also pleased to see the Maxicab approved and long-time Manchester taxi driver, Paul McCormick said "I work the

you get a choice of Euro 6, hybrid and fully electric, so there's a great competitive price range."

This comes at an important time for Greater Manchester, having recently received confirmation from

# Britain is losing another working-class route to modest affluence

**Walking to The Telegraph each morning, I am reminded that even the finest creations have their own natural lifespan and eventually reach obsolescence.**

The red London phone box is a globally recognised instant symbol of our capital city. Yet who needs public phones today? The six exemplars I pass have all had their phones taken away, but the boxes can't be removed as they are listed. The kiosks have instead been resolutely drilled shut.

Might the black cab be facing a similar trajectory? In 2013-14, there were 22,810 licensed cabs on London's streets – an all time high. By

2023-24 this had fallen to around 14,500, a fall of one third in 10 years.

The number of licences issued to new drivers stood at 1,010 in 2016 – it was 110 last year. On current trends, the Centre for London think tank has estimated the last cab will be off our capital's roads by 2045.

The rate of decline could actually speed up as Transport for London figures show 62pc of cabbies are aged 53 or over. Future tourists might be reduced to posing in a fibreglass mock up of a black cab taking them nowhere, perhaps conveniently positioned in the by then superfluous ranks outside London's

railway stations.

An argument can be made that the decline in the cab trade is the inevitable product of human progress. Who needs a cabbie who has spent years cramming to acquire The Knowledge when a driver who only arrived in London a few months ago can instantly find the same, or even a better, route via sat nav?

Black cabs thrived on restrictive practices – they can be overpriced and infuriating. In my experience, the one trade that out-moans cabbies is that of the university academic – any casual conversation will likely soon turn into a hard luck story in both cases.

Back when Ken Livingstone was mayor in the 2000s, the traditional cabbies' complaint was that licences were being handed out like confetti and there were too many now on the road. Now it is that Sadiq Khan is strangling the trade.

Sadiq has indeed been a nightmare for black cab drivers. Low traffic neighbourhoods and complicated one way systems, the insistence on new vehicles all being expensive and electric, forcing old diesel models to be taken off the road after 12 years – these have all made the cabbies' lot an unhappy one. But just as with the old print unions, technology means the

decline is almost certainly inevitable.

Nevertheless, the cabbies' decline is a tragedy which has nothing to do with the much vaunted argument that London has the best cabs in the world. The trade has traditionally been that rare thing – a route for working-class men with few academic qualifications to make a decent living.

It is easy to say the cab trade is an anachronism, but such anachronisms make us richer as a society. It will not be a happy day when another non-academic route to modest affluence is cut off. There are far too few of them already.  
*Courtesy of The Telegraph*



# CAMPAIGNERS FIRST IN UK TO DEFEAT COUNCIL OVER LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOOD SCHEME

**Campaigners have won a sensational High Court victory in their battle with a London council over the introduction of a hugely controversial low traffic neighbourhood scheme.**

They had asked the court to judicially review the LTN in West Dulwich, claiming it had been introduced by Lambeth council with inadequate consultation.

Judge Tim Smith, in a judgement delivered on Friday, said the campaigners had succeeded in one of their three parts of their legal challenge. This was that the council's "consultation on the orders [introducing the LTN] was unfair".

A spokesperson for the West Dulwich Action Group said: "We are delighted with today's ruling, which clearly demonstrates that Lambeth council failed to fully consider the impacts and effects of the LTN on local residents and businesses.

"This ruling sends a clear signal to all councils nationwide: communities will no longer tolerate top-down, poorly conceived schemes that ignore local input, which prioritise revenue over real solutions to issues like pollution."

WDAG said the case should never have reached court. "Lambeth council chose to spend public funds fighting the very community it exists to serve, rather than sitting down with us to find a workable, locally supported solution," the group's spokesperson said.

"Meanwhile, over 700 residents and businesses had no choice but to raise more than £50,000 just to have their voices heard. It's a shameful misuse of resources that could have been avoided through genuine engagement."



Cllr Rezina Chowdhury, deputy leader of Lambeth council, said afterwards that the council was considering the implications of the judgement but the LTN would remain in place in the interim.

She said: "We implemented the West Dulwich Street Improvements to reduce road danger and create a neighbourhood where residents can live safer, happier and healthier lives. This was part of our overall ambition to reduce road danger, encourage more active and sustainable travel, and improve air quality for communities across our borough.

"The court has allowed the claim against the West Dulwich Street Improvements on one of the three grounds of challenge, and dismissed the other two. We acknowledge the court's decision and are carefully considering the implications of this judgement; we will provide further updates in due course.

"The current trial scheme in

West Dulwich will remain in place in the meantime, while we await further directions from the court."

In general, LTNs aims to restrict "rat running" by non-local motorists but can also result in residents taking longer to make journeys - and often results in winners and losers in terms of how traffic is re-routed.

A public meeting in 2023 to discuss the introduction of the West Dulwich LTN became so hostile that councillors were in tears and council staff were offered "wellbeing" leave to recover, the court was told.

But the judge said in his judgement on Friday that the council was guilty of a "masterclass in selective partial reporting" in how it reported the outcome of the library consultation. The judge said of the council's official notes of the meeting: "It is what it does not say that renders the reporting of the event misleading."

The LTN was implemented to prevent residential streets

being inundated with "rat running" traffic from the South Circular Road.

The ruling is the first time that LTN opponents have won a court battle to force a council to axe a low traffic neighbourhood. Others have been removed - but normally after a change of power at the relevant council.

The case was brought by West Dulwich Service Station Ltd on behalf of the West Dulwich Action Group, which says it represents about 1,000 residents opposed to the LTN. The "David v Goliath" challenge was crowdfunded, with more than £46,000 raised to cover the cost of bringing the case.

Lambeth council's barrister told the court that the claim was "without foundation and should be dismissed".

Some residents say they have benefited from the scheme - but have been afraid to speak up in public. The Better Streets West Dulwich group said it had made the area safer for cyclists.

In a 34-page judgement that was frequently critical of the council, Judge Smith said: "Some of the elements of consultation could undoubtedly have been improved upon.

"The shortcomings I have identified range from the inconvenient (e.g printing of the URNs on envelopes only) through to the more significant (e.g. errors in the hand delivery of some printed material). But the question always is whether something has gone so 'clearly and radically wrong' as to render the consultation process unlawful... In my judgement the answer is clearly not."

Prior to seeking the judicial review, West Dulwich Campaign Group had submitted a 53-page dossier to the council highlighting what it saw as flaws in its processes. This included concerns about the LTN worsening air pollution, displacing traffic onto boundary roads and increasing road danger in residential streets. There was also concern that "overwhelming" levels of opposition, of about 67.5 per cent, were being ignored.

The judgement also highlighted an "apparent flaw" in the council's approach - the erroneous belief that a first consultation was "less important" because a second consultation would follow.

The judge said the 53-page dossier should have formed part of the council's considerations. "Its content was highly relevant to the issues being deliberated upon and thus it was a material consideration," he said. The failure to have regard to it was a serious failing, rendering the decision to make the orders unlawful."

*Courtesy of The Standard*



# London Taxi PR launches new 'Choose Taxi' customer campaign

London Taxi PR (LTPR), an organisation which represents and promotes the interests of the Licensed London Taxi profession, has announced the launch of 'Choose Taxi,' its new customer focused campaign.

'Choose Taxi' has been launched to encourage people to use London Taxis more and is also in response to the numerous recent media headlines falsely predicting the London Taxi profession's imminent demise. The aim is for the campaign to be one that customers can relate to and interact and engage with, in the hope that it will not only generate more business for London Taxi drivers but also be a campaign that has a fun feel to it.



With regards to this, London Taxi PR has produced T-shirts which have a throwback feel to the eighties on them, bearing the campaign slogan, 'Choose Taxi,' the T-shirts have been designed to be reminiscent of Katherine Hamnett's 'Choose Life'

ones that were produced for the pop group Wham. The hashtag #ChooseTaxi is also being used in conjunction with any social media posts on respective platforms.

"Anyone that sees the T-shirts and the slogan will be reminded of that design, and we wanted to keep it simple but also make it stand out and be something that everyone across the profession can hopefully get on board with, as we all want to encourage more people to use London

Taxis," said Andy Scott, PR and Communications spokesperson for London Taxi PR.

"To help promote the campaign we have had a number of banner advertisements designed and are also in the middle of negotiating a six-month commercial radio deal which will hopefully help to spread the word."

The campaign was launched with the assistance of renowned author and journalist, Tony Parsons, a keen

supporter, and advocate of London Taxis, as well as the Centreforce radio team, who also kindly displayed the T-shirts.

"We hope more celebrities will endorse the campaign, and also that those within the profession, the drivers, fleet owners, Shelter keepers etc will also get on board and help create a buzz about it. And yes the T-shirts are for sale to anyone who wants one, just drop us a line and we will get back to you with all the relevant details," Andy concluded.

Since their formation, London Taxi PR has undertaken a series of targeted media campaigns, which are being used to promote the benefits, advantages, and safety of using the iconic licensed London Taxi service to a wide audience.

All the campaigns and publicity that has so far been generated by the company has been funded by fellow London Taxi drivers and businesses within the profession, many of whom have signed up to donate to the cause on a monthly basis, indicating how passionate they all are about their industry and the cause.

London Taxi PR. Passionate about promoting and preserving the iconic London Taxi trade and funded by London Taxi drivers and businesses who care about their industry.

For more information on London Taxi PR and their campaigns, plus details on how to become either an individual or a business supporter, please visit their website <http://londontaxipr.com>





There are some buildings that are like marmite, as the saying goes. Either you love them or you hate them. On my regular travels around London, I have two buildings that I hear described as ugly by some, but which I am particularly fond of. The architectural term often used to describe the buildings is 'brutalist' a turn of phrase, I'm also partial too.

First up is Centre Point on the corner Oxford Street and St. Giles High Street. Currently undergoing renovation it is situated, if you are new to London, almost directly above Tottenham Court Road tube station.

When I was a young pup first venturing 'up West' this building was a landmark for me. I always enjoyed seeing the fountains at its base, but they have sadly been removed due to the work by Crossrail scheme to renovate the aforementioned tube station.

Work started on Centrepont in 1963 and finished in 1966 at a total cost of £5.5 million. Designed by George Marsh of Seifert and Partners for property magnate Harry Hyams, it was made of precast concrete and constructed by Wimpy Construction. It stands 385 ft. high and has 34 floors. It has an adjacent block, which includes maisonettes, more office space and retail units.

It largely remained empty from the finish of construction to 1975.

The Confederation of British Industries –the CBI- eventually became its longest tenant, staying from 1980 to March 2014.

1995 saw it achieve Grade Two II listed building status.

2011 saw the opening of The Paramount private

## The Mumper of SE5



# Let us be brutal

members club operating on the 31st and 32nd floor with a viewing gallery on the 33rd floors. I was lucky to get up there once or twice and the views were spectacular.

The Paramount closed in 2015. In that same year, work began to convert it from office space to luxury apartments.

Second on my list, and

no matter what its current proper name is – I've just looked it up and it's the BT Tower – it will always be the Post Office tower to me. Situated in the area of Fitzrovia, it stands



at 627 feet (if you count the aerial) and it is my landmark from all points of the city when trying to get my bearings.

The General Post Office, or the GPO for short, commissioned the structure to transmit telecommunications to all parts of the country. It was designed, somewhat surprisingly given its radical look, by the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works, with architects G.R. Yeats and Eric Bedford overseeing the main contractor, Peter Lind & Co. It is made of concrete covered in glass and cost £2.5 million.

Work began on it in the summer of 1961 and the then prime minister Harold Wilson officially opened it in the autumn of 1965.

In the May of the following year, it was opened to the public by Billy Butlin, who's Butlins company operated the rotating restaurant on the 34th floor and the then post master general Anthony Wedgewood Benn (later known as simply Tony Benn).

High speed lifts travelled from ground to the top in under 30 seconds, travelling at just over 15 MPH.

The restaurant appears in the 1967 film 'Smashing Time', spinning out of control and then short-circuiting the whole of London's power supply.

The restaurant closed for good in 1980 due to security concerns and public access to the building ended in 1981

The tower however is still in use today and relays signals for a host of television broadcasters and provides satellite services

Alas, unlike Centrepont, I have yet to get to the top of this particular building, but I still have that ambition to one day get on to the rotating floor.



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