



AGM Highlights

SPHA's Inaugural AGM took place at the Village Hotel, which saw a great turnout from members and non-members.

Our members got involved in discussions about the SPHA's campaign plans for the future, including Glasgow's 7 year rule, fighting for bus lane access for Edinburgh drivers and campaigning to make Safety Screens permanent in Private Hire vehicles.

We welcomed our new friends from the Edinburgh Private Hire Drivers Association, who informed everyone that their members will be joining SPHA and helping to shape our East of Scotland branches.

We elected our National Executive Committee, Glasgow and the West Committee and formally adopted SPHA's constitution.

Our Member Benefit packages were unveiled which includes deals from The Village Hotel, Patons Insurance and discounts with other local businesses such as cafes and garages. You can find a full list of member benefits on our website - www.spha.scot/spha-member-perks.

Thank you to The Village Hotel for hosting our AGM and presenting our members package. Thank you to William from Patons for presenting our members package and answering your questions.

Most importantly, we would like to thank everyone who attended and extend a warm welcome to our new members. There was a strong feeling of positivity and realisation that Scotland's Private Hire industry has been badly needing an association that represents Scottish driver's interests and to be the united voice of the trade. The SPHA seeks to be that voice - your voice.

Success!

- We successfully got Glasgow City Council (GCC) to issue the Taxi And Private Hire Driver Support Grant to two drivers after they missed the deadline to complete their declaration form.
- We contacted GCC on behalf of some of our members where their licensed documents or receipts hadn't been issued on time. These were then issued a few days later.
- A member was having issues with Uber verifying their new vehicle documents. We contacted Uber Management urging them to verify our member's document as a matter of urgency as they were unable to work. Uber verified the documents shortly after.

If you have any issues that you would like us to help with, please fill out our casework form. This will give us the mandate to work on your behalf:
www.spha.scot/casework

Glasgow City Council Elections

General Secretary, Eddie Grice, sent an open letter to all candidates standing in the 2022 council elections as councillors for Glasgow City Council asking them to confirm if they will support the following policies and whether or not they would work towards ensuring these policies are implemented during the next council term.

In his letter, he stated that any candidate who agrees with these points and who pledges to work towards implementing them during the next council term, will be met with full throated, vocal support of the Scottish Private Hire Association.

- To increase the upper age limit of private hire vehicles from seven years to fourteen years, in recognition of the vastly increased vehicle purchase prices that the private hire trade now faces.
- To allow the permanent use of safety screens in private hire vehicles for the purpose of driver safety.
- To amend the rules on the placement of vehicle identification plates to allow for a "no-drill" solution so that vehicle owners no longer need to permanently damage their bumpers with drill holes.
- To remove the requirement to display rear window sticker ("backflash") in line with neighbouring councils and in recognition of the self-employed status of private hire drivers thus allowing them to work for more than one firm if they wish to.
- To postpone the implementation of enforcement of low emission zone until, at least, the summer of 2024.
- To commit to a long term moratorium on the introduction of financial charges for the use of electric vehicle charging stations by private hire vehicles (and taxis).
- To pledge to engage with the trade in continuous dialog and commit to an open door policy with trade representatives and stakeholders.
- To commit to vigorously support the trade without delay when catastrophic events occur and not leave drivers having to beg and protest for assistance.

So, who responded?

Cllr Thomas Kerr, leader of Glasgow Tories was the first to respond. He pledges to support the taxi and private hire trade and to deliver on the pledges.

We also received response from Cllr Malcolm Cuning on behalf of all Glasgow Labour Councillors and the Glasgow Labour Party. Labour candidates pledge to support and say they will listen to, engage with and advocate on behalf of the trade.

Cllr Alex Wilson of SNP responded with the following statement; "Supporting the trade is a given for me. It's not about plaudits. I have supported our trade throughout my role as chair of licensing and will work with anyone to help our drivers and operators. As the industry evolves, the SNP will take steps to meet the challenges being faced".

We would like to thank Cllr Thomas Kerr, Cllr Malcolm Cuning and Cllr Alex Wilson for their support to the trade and commitment to continuous dialog with trade representatives.

We welcome others to do the same.

Zooming Success!

West of Scotland Branch held their first branch meeting via zoom on Tuesday 29th March which was hailed as a roaring success amongst those who attended. The meeting was hosted by branch chairman, James Armstrong, where he and the West of Scotland Committee discussed strategy for future campaigns, an update from Eddie on his "open letter" to Glasgow City Councillors standing for election, an announcement from James and an update on foodbanks.



Let's Get Campaigning

Before the meeting commenced, an agenda was sent out which highlighted key campaigns that you told us you would like SPHA to focus on. Members showed passion and enthusiasm when discussing these campaigns and we took away some action points going forward.

- **"7 Year Rule"** - Eddie shot the firing gun on this last week when he wrote to Glasgow City Council (GCC) Councillors standing for the GCC elections with a series of pledges, which included the seven year rule. SPHA is campaigning to have the vehicle maximum age limits increased from seven years to fourteen years. We believe that if the trade is to play its part in reaching Carbon Neutral targets, it needs to be financially viable for drivers when purchasing significantly more expensive vehicles. SPHA member, Locky, has forwarded a letter to our office that he sent to West Dunbartonshire Council, which led to them raising their vehicle age limit. Eddie is currently building a webform petition to collect driver signatures that will be attached to a similar letter to be sent to Glasgow City Council after the election.
- **Road Safety Campaign** - A lively discussion took place regarding bicycle couriers and the danger they pose by failing to follow the laws of the road (i.e. jumping red lights etc.) and failing to have adequate lighting on their bike at night time. A sub-committee was set up to spearhead the campaign. Members of this committee are James Armstrong, Robert Douglas, Eddie Grice, Manny Ipermakhou and John Wallace.
- **West Dunbartonshire Fees** - Locky will lead this campaign to reduce licensing fees in West Dunbartonshire (WDC) as fees are a lot higher than in Glasgow and surrounding Licensing Authorities. He will lobby WDC to reduce fees with support from Eddie.
- **Food banks** - Members have expressed their desire to give back to local communities by helping people who may be struggling and who may not be able to reach their local food bank. A sub-committee was set up to organise efforts. This committee consists of Locky, JP Duffy, John Wynn, Manny Ipermakhou, Hardeep Singh, who will be lead by James Armstrong.

Announcements

Branch Chairman, James Armstrong, announced that he is standing down from the role for personal reasons. He emphasized that he will still be part of the committee and will still be involved in the association. We would like to thank James for the hard work and dedication he has put in to the role.

Following his announcement, Hardeep Singh announced that he will be standing down as Vice Chairman for personal reasons and will remain as part of the committee. We would like to thank Hardeep for his time and efforts that he gave to the role.



Announcements Cont...

James nominated John Paul Duffy to serve as chairman of the branch which was seconded by Hardeep, with no objections from the members in attendance. John Paul accepted his nomination and is formally elected to serve as Chairman of the West of Scotland Branch.

Eddie nominated Paul Nelson to serve as Vice Chairman of the branch which was seconded by John Paul, with no objections from the members in attendance, Paul accepted his nomination and is formally elected to serve as Vice Chairman of the West of Scotland Branch.

Grow The SPHA

The SPHA is in its infancy so many private hire drivers may not know we exist and is missing out in everything that we have to offer.

Please invite your private hire driver friends who are not members of the SPHA to join. The SPHA will get stronger as our membership grows.

GCC Low Emission Zone

We wrote to all Glasgow City Councillors to urge them to delay enforcement of LEZ until summer of 2024. Although many driver's vehicles do comply with LEZ in the city, we recognised that some don't. The pandemic has affected some drivers more adversely than others, meaning they are not in a financial position to upgrade their vehicle to euro 6 at this time. This will push drivers into further debt and force even more out of the trade while the trade continues to struggle with a shortage of drivers.

A delay to enforcement of LEZ would give drivers extra time to recover and upgrade their vehicles so that they comply with LEZ.

Unfortunately councillors voted against extending the LEZ to summer 2024.



Backseat Chat

This month we sit down for a backseat chat with SPHA's Deputy General Secretary and newly elected Chairman of the West of Scotland Branch, John Paul Duffy.

How long have you been in the Private Hire trade and what did you do before getting in to the trade?

I have been a private hire driver for six years. Before getting in to the trade, I had many management roles in retail but decided that I needed a change. I haven't looked back since!

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I love the unpredictability of the job. I love not knowing where I'll be at any given time. I also enjoy driving and talking, the two main components of the job. I enjoy meeting all walks of life and hearing their stories.

What made you want to get involved with the grassroots movement within the trade?

I was looking for an organisation to join during the first lockdown. I heard about the "go slow" demo in Glasgow and felt compelled to support drivers in their fight to get Covid support from the council.