

GMB URGE CHELMSFORD COUNCIL TO THINK AGAIN ABOUT ISSUES RELATING TO THE TAXI DISPUTE AND ASKS CHELMSFORD DRIVERS TO HEED VINTNERS WARNING AS PLANS GO AHEAD FOR NEW YEAR STRIKE ACTION

Taxi Strike Will Lead To Drink Driving Says Vintners

At a recent between GMB including the Chelmsford Taxi Association (CTA) and the Chelmsford Vintners Association, the Vintners expressed their deep concern at the prospect of no cabs in Chelmsford over New Year as a result of the strike action by GMB members who work as cabbies in Chelmsford.

Bob Bennett, Chairman of the Chelmsford Vintners Association said, "**Nearly everyone I speak to believes we have enough cabs on our roads, this impending cab strike concerns our members greatly with no cabs available clearly many will be tempted to 'Drink Drive' and we all know the consequences of that. We call upon the Council to initiate talks with the GMB/CTA as a matter of urgency, obviously the cabbies deserve our support and we are supporting their request for an unmet demand survey and an immediate freeze on plate issuing. This Council must protect this vital service to our customers and the public.**"

Terry Flanagan GMB/CTA agrees saying, "**GMB/CTA would ask all drivers to heed the concerns of the highly reputable Vintners Association and remember that the New Year should be a time of celebration and looking forward. Please don't drink and drive. This warning from the CTA really brings home the vital role of the Chelmsford cab service and the extent to which the Council is willing to potential put lives at risk despite the legitimate requests of their local cabbies.**

GMB/CTA urge the Council to get in touch and negotiate about the issues surrounds the New Year taxi strike. It is apparent that this Council is out of touch. GMB/CTA call on the Council to safeguard public safety and commence talks with GMB immediately. No Cabbie wants to strike over the New Year but unfortunately this Council seems oblivious to real situation within the Cab Industry. Surely talks are the sensible option at this moment in time?"

Ends

Contact: Terry Michel local GMB Professional Driver members on 07782 190 844 or Terry Flanagan, GMB Professional Driver Branch Secretary on 07958 275339 or GMB Press Office: Rose Conroy 07974 252183.

Notes to Editors:

The GMB Professional Drivers Branch and the Chelmsford Taxi Association met with Chelmsford Council in October and were told by Councilor Whitehead that Chelmsford Council had no intention of restricting the amount of licenses it will issue nor will it do an 'unmet demand survey' despite the fact this costing the Council nothing.

Chelmsford local drivers' have asked the Council not to issue any more licenses as there is not enough trade to provide the current licenses holder with a viable living. GMB has pointed out that there are so many cabs and so little work that desperate drivers were working ridiculously long hours (80+) just to keep a roof over their heads. Too many cabs and not enough work have lead to many of Chelmsford's professional drivers facing repossession as their earnings leave them unable to pay their mortgages. Chelmsford cabbies, worried about placing an financial burden on Chelmsford Council Tax payers, have offered to pay for an official 'unmet demand' survey which they believe will prove their case. The Council has rejected the offer.