

Drivers' meeting 29th October 2025 at Kenn Road Methodist Church Hall
7.00pm.

Present: Ian Turner (Chair), Janine Ball, Liz Beckerlegge, Di Brown, Terry Burns, Julie Butt, Richard Cawse, Jill Clode, Terry Collins, Jane Cumming, Steve Elson, Peter Febery, Rich Fenn, David Fife, Mike Gerrish, Julie Ginn, Chris Hembery, Hugh Hunt, Mike Long, Kay Osborne, Tony Parker, Brian Rose, Alan Singleton, Andrew Spear, Marie Spear, Terry Williamson

Apologies: Ruth Berry, Steve Carter, Brian Cherry, David Clinton, Brian Crewe, Roger Davidson, Jon Pittard, Tom Shaw

Ian welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Ian informed the meeting that normally Tom, as Driver coordinator would be chairing the meeting, however he had been taken ill this morning and had spent most of the day in hospital. Everyone at the meeting sent their best wishes to Tom for a speedy recovery.

Ian as Chair of the committee, Julie our DO coordinator and Marie our Secretary would fill in on behalf of Tom.

Tom's plan for the meeting was not just for drivers to hear what the committee have to say, but for drivers to share their thoughts with the committee members here tonight, however, there were some specific points Tom and Julie wanted to raise and we would go through these first. Drivers were encouraged to speak up during the meeting on points as they were discussed and there would be an opportunity for open discussion at the end.

Introductions & Driver recruitment

There were a number of new drivers joining us this evening and Ian asked everyone in attendance to introduce themselves.

Ian welcomed everyone, new and old to the meeting and Clevedon Care. Ian and those present sent their congratulations and thanks to Brian Cherry who will reach 15 years volunteering for Clevedon Care in December. A significant milestone and Clevedon Care were grateful for his service during that time, as well as all drivers and Duty officers, it is a fulfilling role and a great thing we all do for our community.

There had been significant inroads to driver recruitment this year and under Toms lead, we had 11 new drivers join us, two of whom were going through the enrolment process at the moment. Most of those joining us had come through the Local Reach advert or word of mouth.

Points from Tom

We are looking for a closer coordination between Drivers and Duty Officers and with this in mind, Tom had joined the DO meeting held recently and Julie, as DO Coordinator was here tonight.

Mobile phone signal at Weston Hospital

The mobile signal in Weston Hospital (WGH) is poor. It is suggested that your phones are set up for WIFI calling. Clients can ask reception to call you if they are having difficulty getting through. The WIFI signal in Costa Coffee at the entrance is good and drivers are welcome to sit and wait here for their clients. One driver had difficulties with his phone being disconnected and he had to restart it, so worth checking this.

You can drop off and pick up at the entrance and then park in the car park. Drivers have to register their car reg with the reception desk annually. It is believed that it is in April as previously advised by

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Tom, however one driver thought it also had to be renewed from 31st October. Drivers were asked to double check with Reception when they are at WGH next, just in case.

Ambulance bays at Dental & Eye hospital

The general consensus was that we could drop off and pick up in the Ambulance bays at both of these sites and then park elsewhere to await the client phone call. Parking at the BRI/St Michaels is an option as we have our digital passes which allow free parking.

Digital parking needs to be renewed in October, Tom to confirm that this has been done.

Parking at Southmead

You can drop off and pick up at the main entrance and park elsewhere. Some drivers park out on the main street, go to Horfield leisure centre (you have to register for free), or Lidl, which has a 90 minute restriction and you need to buy something.

Some drivers present also use the Multi storey with no issues. Once parked you go to the reception/parking desk at the main entrance, register your car, showing them the drivers pass, and you are then covered for the whole day. If you have issues getting out, you can press the button at the barrier and security will let you out. The cameras do get used to your car reg number over time and will recognise it and lift the barrier. Over the weekend and out of office hours, drivers should be able to press the button at the barrier and security will let them out.

South Bristol Community Hospital

Clarification was sought on where drivers park at this hospital. There are disable parking bays at the front, which we can use with a Blue Badge. One or two drivers use the furthest away Ambulance bay, but stay with their car. There is a sports centre, but at least two drivers had been caught with parking fines. It was thought you needed to go into their reception and register your car. One driver had no issues using the NCP car park, he pressed the button at the barrier on exit and security let him out. It was agreed that some clarification on if we could use the NCP car park for free by registering somewhere, would be good. Tom to investigate further.

Nuffield/Chesterfield

Drivers need to register their car at reception and coffee is free.

Complaints Procedure

A new Complaints procedure had been put together and issued to DOs and Drivers for comment. There was a need for this as during this year we had received 6 complaints, and it was clear that a formal process and guidance was needed. There were two types of Complaints, one being safety and then everything else. Any complaint relating to the safety of a driver would initially result in the driver not driving whilst the complaint was being investigated. The reason for this was to protect the organisation. Investigations would take place, this would be done as swiftly as possible but would require interviews with both the client and driver to establish the facts. If the complaint was unfounded then the driver would resume driving as normal. Any other complaints would be dealt with by the respective DO and/or Driver coordinator. They would then provide a report to the committee on such incidents. There is a Complaint form to complete in all instances. If there was any feedback please let Ian or Tom know ASAP, as the Complaints Procedure will be ratified at the committee meeting next Monday. Printed copies will then be available in the office and it will also be put on the secure area of our website for access by all.

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Points from Julie

Following a recent DO meeting, attended by Tom, the following points were discussed.

- Please can drivers contact the office using the mobile phone, this should be answered quicker than you using the landline, as you will sit in a queue. The landline is extremely busy.
- Where possible can drivers take details on jobs verbally on the phone, it is time consuming for us to text/WhatsApp using the keyboard on a phone and whilst we are doing this, the person doing it usually gets behind in recording information on the calls being taken by the other DO. We appreciate this is not always possible, but please bear this in mind.
- We are tweaking the layout of our master driver list in the office. Apart from 2 or 3 drivers who have specifically requested or do not have mobiles, we are proposing to contact drivers by mobile as their preferred method of contact, with the landline second. Drivers at the meeting were in agreement to this, but anyone else should notify Julie direct if there is an issue with this and they want an alternative method.
- Tom recently asked drivers to let him know how many drive jobs they are ideally looking to do each week. There are one or two yet to reply. Julie will make contact with them and we will then update our records so we do not over burden drivers.
- We are more than happy for drivers to call into the office to see us, pick up information etc....
- We have been trialling an increase on the length of time in advance that we take jobs. This was 2 weeks, but we have extended this to 4 weeks. We have found that clients receiving their appointments would ring as soon as they get them, but this could be beyond the 2 weeks, and then they might forget to ring back. It eases their worry that we can book them in as soon as they get their appointment. DOs are happy with how this is going, and those present were happy too. This will be discussed and ratified at the next committee meeting. We will then update our website accordingly. For oncology appointments, we are happy to have the list of appointments as far in advance as they have the information, with no restrictions on date range.
- Currently we have two columns in our diary, labelled N/A and Holidays. Here we record the names of drivers who have informed us of their holidays or if they are N/A (not available) for either one day or a period of time for whatever reason. There has been some confusion with the DOs regarding if they can ring drivers listed under the N/A column. We have therefore decided to just have one list. Labelled DND (do not disturb) and when a driver informs us that they are not available, whether it is for one day or more, they will be listed and not contacted at all. This will provide clarity for the DOs and will be set up on the new Diary from Jan 2026.
 - One driver asked if there was a preferred method of contact to tell Duty Officers that they are not available. They had informed the office they were not available this week and had received 4 phone calls already. Julie and Marie apologised as this should not have happened. Drivers can inform the office either in person, over the phone or by email. Email address is office@clevedoncare.org.uk
- Suggested office opening over the festive period is as follows:-

Office

Open - Monday 22nd December

Open - Tuesday 23rd December

Closed - Wed 24th, Thurs 25th & Fri 26th December

Open - Monday 29th Dec & Tuesday 30th December

Closed – Wed 31st December, Thursday 1st & Friday 2nd January

Reopen as normal on Monday 5th January

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The drivers present asked if we could make provision for oncology patients on Wednesday 24th & 31st December and Friday 2nd January even though the office will be closed. It was agreed to provide for this, but is subject to driver availability on these dates.

- **Driver's**

Monday 22nd & Tuesday 23rd December – open to take jobs but depends on driver availability
Wednesday 24th December – open for driving for oncology appointments only
Thursday 25th through to Sunday 29th December - closed for any driving
Monday 29th December - open to take jobs but depends on driver availability
Tuesday 30th December – open to take jobs but depends on driver availability
Wednesday 31st December – open for oncology appointments only
Thursday 1st January – closed for any driving
Friday 2nd January – open for oncology appointments only
Reopen as normal on Monday 5th January

Parking charges

The committee were asked what provisions had been put in place regarding the pending car park and on street parking in Clevedon.

Marie informed the meeting that she has been in contact with North Somerset Council (NSC) Cllr Hannah Young, since February regarding the car park charges that could affect Duty Officers. Some DOs park in the current free car parks and therefore may need to start paying to park whilst on duty.

Cllr Young had suggested we may be able to use the Library car park for free, but Marie hasn't heard anything else since then, despite chasing several times. Marie has emailed the Leader of NSC in August who has put her in contact with Cllr Mark Canniford who is the cabinet member responsible for this area. Mark Canniford has confirmed that they are aware of our request and it is with his Parking services team. Marie doesn't hold out much hope. The committee have discussed the above and agreed that DOs should not be out of pocket for volunteering their time freely to man the office. Therefore a simple expenses claim process will be put into place for DOs to claim back any car parking charges they incur whilst performing their voluntary duties. This will be communicated to DOs in due course.

The committee are aware that implementation of car park charges and on street parking charges will affect some of our local drives. Marie has been keeping an eye on NSC council meetings to keep up to date as much as possible with the latest. A business group have put in a legal challenge in July, but we are not sure of the outcome on this. Marie believes following the consultation period there has been a slight amendment to the proposals to the on street parking and that provision is being made for half an hours free parking, Marie cannot find any documentation on this, only the verbal exchange at a recent NSC council meeting when it was mentioned.

The car park charges order for the three car parks in Clevedon have been approved but a High Court appeal has been made by the business group, led by Daniel Adam's at The Stationary House.

Marie believes it is inevitable, despite the legal challenges and appeal that these parking charges will be in place by the end of the year or early 2026.

Additional time permitted for persons displaying a disabled badge is 1 hour.

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Car Parks where these charges are coming into place are:-

Great Western Road East

Great Western Road West

Marson Road (opposite the YMCA) The charges are as follows

Charges are applicable 9.00am – 6pm, Monday to Saturday.

1 hour - £1.00

2 hours - £1.50

3 hours - £2.50

All day - £3.50 (n/a Marson Road)

On street parking charges will affect the following roads:-

Alexandra Road

Bellevue Road

Gardens Road

Hill Road

Charges are applicable 9.00am – 6pm, Monday to Saturday Max 3 hour stay, no return within 2 hours

** possibly free for the first half an hour (but can't find documentation)

1 hour - £1.50

2 hours - £2.50

3 hours - £3.50

In addition Elton Road and Old Church Road will also have parking charges, same times etc. with a High season and low season.

The charges on Hill Road will affect clients that we take to Tudballs, Vision Express, Chiropractor and also the Marson Road car park charges will have an effect on clients we take to Specsavers and Boots Opticians and also the Chiropractors nearby.

It was noted that the charges are payable using an App or contactless.

The committee asked for any input or suggestions from drivers on how we might manage these additional costs, which should not be borne by the driver. A healthy discussion took place with various ideas and thoughts put forward. One consideration was that the organisation should bear the cost, with the driver putting in a claim. Whilst the funds of the charity were healthy, the concern was the sustainability of this. The much favoured suggestion was that we have an additional increased Local donation charge for these identified destinations. Clients would be informed of the increase in local charge due to parking charges by DOs when they booked, and they would pay this direct to the driver. The driver will pay the parking fee as appropriate. Whether the driver parked, found a free space somewhere or decided to go home to await a call, was at their discretion, but the higher donation would still be payable by the client.

If a driver becomes aware of any other destination locally that needs to be included in the higher local donation charge, then they should let Tom or Jon know.

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Recent parking charges had been brought in at Nailsea and this needs further investigation as to whether the regular monthly trip for a client to 65 High Street Nailsea, needs to be increased?

Marie was aware that Portishead are next on NSC list to bring in charges, but as yet there was no documentation that she could find on this. If anyone becomes aware of anything, please let Tom or Marie know.

Ian thanked the drivers for their input, it had been a useful discussion and the committee will discuss this further at their forthcoming meeting and liaise with Jon Pittard as well.

Double journey incident & clarification

A driver asked for clarification on the 2 hour waiting rule. He had recently taken on a job, where he wasn't informed that it was more than 2 hours or a double journey. As soon as the client got into the car they informed the driver that it was expected to be more than 2 hours as it was for a procedure. The driver wasn't sure how he should deal with this and how the office determines the length of waiting time when taking the call. It was noted that the client did pay for a double journey. The driver waited for 4 hours.

It seemed as though the client was fully aware he was having a procedure and hid that from the DO when booking a driver and this was out of order. If this happens, the driver should let the office know so that we can investigate and write or speak to the client.

If, as in this case, the driver only finds out it is a journey longer than 2 hours when the client is in the car, they should advise the client that this should have been booked as a double journey. He will take the client and then return once the client is ready and that it will be double the cost. If the driver is unable to go back and collect the client due to other personal commitments, then a callout should go on WhatsApp for assistance and the client kept informed.

Julie and Marie confirmed that when a client books, DOs ask how long the appointment will be, we ask if the appointment is for a procedure, tests or a consultation as this will give us some guide. In all circumstances, where we are told it is a procedure, it is booked as a double journey. If after speaking to the client they are still not sure what they are going for or how long they will be, we ask them to ring the hospital and find out. Anything over 2 hours or a procedure is booked as a double journey.

The exception is cataract operations at some private hospitals as they do tend to be on time and less than 2 hours. Although even then, we would advise drivers to go with the patient where possible and ensure hospital staff are aware they are volunteer drivers, waiting and confirm the length of time.

Incorrect telephone numbers

A driver asked what the process is if they have taken down the phone number for a client incorrectly and the office is closed, therefore they are unable to contact the client. It was confirmed that in such cases, the driver should put a message on the Drivers WhatsApp group. It was confirmed that a database of client information is held, and all committee members have access to this, and they would therefore be able to search the database for the information required.

The database is updated on a regular basis by Jane Cumming, one of our drivers, who holds the 'master'.

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David Steele

Ian asked those present to join him in offering our sincere thanks to David Steele who had recently retired from Clevedon Care after 21 years of service. David took an active role in the management of the organisation, was Chairman before Ian and was highly thought of for his commitment to Clevedon Care. Prior to that he was Driver Coordinator and has always been a formidable active driver, popular amongst DOs and clients alike. Unfortunately due to poor health he has had to take a step back, but everyone wished David a speedy recovery and best wishes for the future.

Ian thanked everyone for their continued support of Clevedon Care and their input into the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm