



## Notes of the Northern Ireland Group Meeting

Held on: 8<sup>th</sup> April 2014

At: Premier Meetings, Belfast City Centre, 2-6 Waring Street, Belfast

Item	Notes	Action Points
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Notes of Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>The meeting was opened by Davy Palmer (DP), chair of the BPA Northern Ireland Group. DP welcomed Helen Crozier (HC), President of the BPA to Belfast and asked her if she would like to address the meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>HC gave a brief presentation on her year to date as President of the BPA and her aspirations for the rest of her term of office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main points in her address covered the following:</li> <li>• Improving Standards within the parking industry</li> <li>• The importance of putting the customer first</li> <li>• The on-going government consultation in England and their impact in England &amp; beyond</li> <li>• The Launch of the BPA master plan at Westminster</li> <li>• The Launch of the shared BPA/IPA plan for Ireland at the EPA congress in Dublin</li> </ul> <p>HC stated that she was very happy to have been given the opportunity to visit Belfast to take part in the meeting and was keen to meet with as many members as possible.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Parking enforcement on private land - Independent Appeals Service/POPLA</b></p> <p>a. <u>Alternate dispute resolution consultation</u>: Patrick Troy (PT) CEO of the BPA gave a brief history of the introduction of the independent appeals service for parking on private land, POPLA, and the impact that it had had since its introduction in October 2012.</p> <p>Around 26,500 appeals have been received by POPLA with 21,799 adjudications having been concluded. Of these 45% have been found in favour of the motorist and 55% in favour of the operator. This can be taken as an indication of the long term direction for the service.</p> <p>The BPA continue to lobby the Northern Ireland Assembly for legislation to introduce keeper liability in Northern Ireland as a means of extending POPLA to the country. The BPA undertook a consultation with members to gauge their views on the introduction of an appeals service: there was support for POPLA to be extended to NI but only if keeper liability were to be made available.</p>	

Members expressed a keen interest in obtaining more information on the introduction of such a service in Northern Ireland and were particularly interested in the effects the service was having on operators based in GB. Concern was raised by one member over the cost per appeal as it was noted that parking charges are generally lower in Northern Ireland than in GB.

b. Approved Operator Scheme: Davy Palmer gave a brief presentation to the meeting on his experiences of being in the AOS and the positive effect that he felt that this had had both on his company and in the promotion of the private parking sector in Northern Ireland. Other points made were:

- DP confirmed his position is one of being in favour of Vehicle Immobilisation
- DP also raised a personal preference that a compliance manager be in place to meet BPA members quarterly in order to keep AOS standards of compliance as high as possible. It should be noted this was a personal point of view and not voted on by the members.
- AOS Licensing –a suggestion that there should be a testing of personnel quarterly

The possibility of the introduction of POPLA to N. Ireland led to a lively and well informed debate within the room with the following being the salient points:

- POPLA Charges
- POPLA contract with London Councils up for renewal in Oct 2015 and a procurement process was currently being drawn up. It was acknowledged that charges may be reviewed now that levels of appeals are well defined.
- The importance of good evidence packs by operators.

4. **Department of Justice Consultation on Wheel clamping**

Judith Logan (JL) from the Department of Justice gave a presentation outlining the background to the consultation on how the private security industry in Northern Ireland should be regulated in the future. The consultation also considers whether the practice of vehicle immobilisation (wheel clamping) on private land should be banned in Northern Ireland.

Following the Protection of Freedoms Act introduced in 2012, the Northern Ireland Minister for Justice felt that the provisions of the Act should not be introduced into NI. However, the DoJ undertook research into vehicle immobilization being undertaken in the province and felt that the issues facing much of the UK were not as serious in NI and there was much support for VI remaining as an enforcement tool. As a result a consultation has been launched and this is now underway. The consultation is open to all stakeholders, customers and the public. Following the consultation the four options facing the Minister will be:

- a. Leave things as they are (i.e. licensing of VI operators through the SIA)
- b. Leave as is but with some amendments (to be determined) e.g.

	<p>introduce a code of practice and an independent appeals body.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. De-regulate</li> <li>d. Ban VI on private land as in Scotland, Wales and England so that ticketing or barriers become the sole means of enforcing parking on private land.</li> </ul> <p>Members are encouraged to contribute in their own right to the <a href="#">DoJ consultation</a> which closes on 16<sup>th</sup> May. The BPA will be responding in full.</p> <p>Questions were put to JL on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is banning VI being considered: <i>thought that this may be a public safety issue e.g. with intimidating behaviour being the paramount concern.</i></li> <li>• The length of time it takes to get a VI licence: <i>this was not within the remit of JL to answer.</i></li> <li>• Why VI licences are for 1 year whereas Doormen licences are for 3 years. <i>There are moves to bring all licences into alignment with 1 year licences for all being the norm.</i></li> </ul>	
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>BPA and general parking updates</b> - Jane Hack (JH) Chief Operating Officer, BPA gave a roundup of some of the key work at present being undertaken by the BPA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BPA Parking Summit – held in London on 27<sup>th</sup> February and attended by Robert Goodwill MP (Transport Minister) and Richard Burden (Shadow Transport Minister) as well as stakeholders representing all aspects of the parking profession and consumer representatives. Both Sean McConnell and Davy Palmer were present to represent Northern Ireland members.</li> <li>• BPA Governance - a major restructure of the BPA Governance is nearing completion with elections for representatives of all sectors of membership now complete. Northern Ireland members are represented by Davy Palmer as chair of the NI Group and Andy Hiles as a representative of Individual professional members. Both members will be happy to hear from any members of matters they would like debated at the Council of Representatives.</li> <li>• Northern Ireland Group – JH introduced the regional support team of Davy Palmer, Sean McConnell, Andy Hiles, Tom Porter (BPA Senior Development Manager, Safer Parking Scheme) and JH who are tasked with liaising over agendas and venues for the NI Group and our collaboration with colleagues in the Irish Parking Association. JH encouraged all present to spread the word about the group and to send through any ideas they had for strengthening the group or for matters to be discussed/debated at meetings.</li> <li>• Parkex 2014 will take place on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> June at Kensington Olympia and the Autumn Conference will take place in October, venue to be announced.</li> <li>• Park Mark is 10 years old this year and JH updated the meeting on some of the marketing initiatives currently underway as well as detailing some of the results of the Park Mark survey that had recently been carried out with members of the public to gauge their knowledge and engagement with the scheme. JH encouraged anyone not yet in the scheme to consider the Award especially with the benefit of increased PR in this 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year.</li> <li>• BPA and SPS Websites – currently being refreshed and hope to be</li> </ul>	

	<p>launched later this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualifications – the BPA are pleased with the progress and uptake of their new parking qualifications awarded by Wamitab. 3 Centres are now offering the qualifications and more are expected to be approved shortly. Anyone wishing more information on what is on offer should contact Rocky Dato, Head of Membership and Professional Development at the BPA. <a href="mailto:Rocky.d@britishparking.co.uk">Rocky.d@britishparking.co.uk</a> (<b>Please note:</b> Rocky is now on maternity leave, and so requests for information should instead be sent to Alison Tooze, Acting Head of Membership and Professional Development, at <a href="mailto:Alison.T@britishparking.co.uk">Alison.T@britishparking.co.uk</a>).</li> </ul>	
6.	<p><b>DRD Update</b> – Sean McConnell’s (SM) presentation covered how the Department of Regional Development’s Parking Enforcement unit;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is managing parking enforcement across Northern Ireland</li> <li>• Is involved with the Local Government Reform initiative, and</li> <li>• Views the closure of the Vehicle Licensing Office in Coleraine</li> </ul>	
7.	<p><b>Shared Parking Plan for the island of Ireland</b> – a joint presentation by Keith Gavin (KG) Chair of the Irish Parking Association and PT on the Shared Parking Plan since its official launch at the EPA Congress in Dublin last year. It was agreed that this was an important document that needed to be promoted and was a useful tool for engaging with both country’s governments.</p>	
8.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>Keith Gavin from the IPA thanked the BPA for their support of the recent EPA congress held in Dublin.</p> <p>He also pledged that the IPA would write to the Minister for Transport in the Republic of Ireland to have the data transfer policy between both jurisdictions continued.</p> <p>There was some general discussion on Park Mark and qualifications available via approved BPA sources before the meeting ended.</p>	