

Wightwash

Newsletter of the Isle of Wight branch of CAMRA



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Andrew Turner MP
Riverside Centre
Newport

Dear Andrew,

Chequers Mini-bus

When Sue and Richard Holmes took over the Chequers Inn in 1989 they bought a 15 seater mini-bus to provide a free service.

Customers were regularly picked up and driven home at no charge (although it was not uncommon to tip the driver).

This continued for many years. The driving duties were shared amongst the staff. It was very popular for several reasons, the most obvious one being the removal of the temptation to drink and drive.

The Chequers is not on a public bus route and trying to get taxis can be tedious and expensive (and at times impossible).

Regrettably, this all came to an end when two rather apologetic policemen arrived at the pub and explained in operating the mini-bus they were, in fact, breaking the law.

The law, which I understand is administered by the "Traffic Commissioner", states that if a service is for "hire or **reward**" it comes under either Public Service Vehicle legislation (or, if the vehicle has less than 8 seats, Hackney Carriage legislation).

The term "**reward**", the police explained, was now considered to mean any service connected to a *profit making business*.

After considering the cost and other implications of obtaining all the necessary Public Service documentation, Sue and Richard decided to sell the mini-bus. I understand that many other pubs took the same decision.

As Richard points out in the accompanying document, there are many good reasons for pubs to provide their own transport. I would add that it would also be a boost to tourism. Many visitors to the Island stay in holiday cottages in rural areas. Being able to visit a pub without the need of a car could only be a bonus.

If you would like me to find out more on this subject, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,

Oakdene, Rookley, Ventnor, Isle of Wight PO38 3NH