

# TAXI DRIVERS STAND TALL



(LtoR) Richard Boyd Barrett, Jim Waldron, Joe Herron, David Mc Guinness and Gerard Macken handing a letter of protest to An Taoiseachs office Sept 15<sup>th</sup> 2020.

The Covid 19 pandemic has completely decimated the Taxi Industry. The movement of people Air Traffic, Hospitality Closures coupled with a ban on large gatherings have taken their toll on drivers' incomes. Whilst the pandemic payment (pup) has helped many drivers remain fearful for their future. It is not clear when and if the industry will return to profitability similar to pre Covid levels. The groups pictured N.P.H.T.A the Taxi Alliance of Ireland, Taxi Federation and T.T.n.H. have been meeting with politicians on a regular basis to ensure our Industry is not forgotten. Drivers in Cork under the Cork Taxi Council along with their colleagues in Waterford and Limerick continue to hold ongoing protests. There has never been a more important time for drivers to stand together to ensure theirs and their families future.

Budgetary measures have allowed drivers maintain their pup payment whilst being allowed to operate and have a nett income of 480.00 p.m. For many drivers not returning taxi insurance remains a factor with drivers forced to pay insurers from their weekly payment. We have raised this issue at every level and will continue to keep it at the forefront of negotiations. The consultation regarding extending vehicle age limits due to be replaced in 2021 was completed on Nov 12<sup>th</sup> and we would hope for a positive outcome to alleviate financial pressures on drivers facing vehicle replacement. We would

advise drivers with credible information due for renewal Jan, feb and March 21 not to change their vehicle and the impending announcement will cover all vehicles due for replacement throughout 2021. This consultation also took in annual licence renewals for all operators costing 150.00 (suitability test fee) and it is expected this fee will be waived for all operators for 2021. For drivers whose licence has lapsed there are no late licence renewal fees to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2021.

At the time of writing the groups have met with An Tánaiste Leo Varadkar and the agenda included, Taxi Advisory Committee, insurance costs, buy back scheme, income continuance plan(pup payment due to cease April 2021), extension of all vehicle licences, return to work grant whilst maintaining pup payment. An Tánaiste has agreed to speak to the relevant Departments with our requests.

On Tue Nov 24<sup>th</sup> N.P.H.T.A. the I.T.D.F. the T.A.O.I. and T.T.n.H. met with the National Transport Authority to discuss the Taxi Advisory Committee in its current format and role. It is our intention to see the Industry in a negotiation position as opposed to an advisory or consultative role. The NTA have requested the groups put forward proposals to reform the Taxi Advisory Committee and we will keep drivers updated on this important issue.

To all drivers we are stronger together. Our industry plays a vital role in public transport and we must ensure we are not forgotten. An incredibly special Thank You to all Drivers who turned up to support their Industry and Colleagues on Sept 15<sup>th</sup>. To the drivers countrywide who travelled to Dublin many thanks. To Richard Boyd Barrett, People Before Profit, and Darren O'Rourke Sinn Féin a heartfelt thanks for your continued support in difficult times for drivers and their families. If negotiations fail it is likely we will have to take action to ensure we are not forgotten and would hope for your continued support.

**David Mc Guinness. T.T.n.H.**