



Newsletter

October & November 2020



Hello dear reader

Sorry folks, its been some time since the last newsletter, Spring in fact! I think the summer months in between have been somewhat mislaid, in fact I think we can safely say that the whole of 2020 has been somewhat mislaid!!! I remember well that on 1st January I announced that 2020 was going to be a good year, oh dear how wrong could I be !!! However, we are now trying to restore some kind of 'normality' Last Sunday the Group held its long awaited Annual General Meeting, via Zoom, to ensure that we met current Covid-19 guidelines and all those who wanted to attend could do so safely. Anyway, to business, to get you up to date, here are the notes of the AGM:

Annual General Meeting

Walsall Group of Advanced Motorists

Held on Sunday 18th October 2020, at 10.15am via Zoom

Minutes from the previous year: The minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting had previously been circulated via email. The Chairman, Martin Goad, enquired whether everyone had read the minutes and whether there were any objections. No objections were received, therefore the minutes of the 2019 AGM be approved as a true record. The proposal was approved.

Matters arising from the minutes of the previous AGM: There were no matters arising from the previous AGM.

Chairman`s Report: Martin Goad reported as follows:

This report covers the period from 1st May 2019 to 18th October 2020. 2020 is our 50th anniversary year and we had plans to celebrate in various ways during the year, including an afternoon tea before our AGM. Sadly our plans have been put on hold by the Covid-19 outbreak which has meant that there has been little Group activity since March 2020. There is no prospect at present of any group meetings in this calendar year.

Previous to the lockdown in March we had a busy and productive 10 months of associate training, observer training and group events. Ten associates passed their Advanced Driving test, three with a First. Congratulations to all of them and thanks to their observers and the team that supports them. Our observer training is a continuous process under our Chief Observer Josie Hubbard-Palmer. This year an observer training logbook was introduced to provide a record of runs and training activity.

There were two stand-alone events, a morning at RAF Shawbury on Humans Factors and a day on Electric Vehicle familiarisation. There has been on-going training during the Sunday morning meetings and at other times for individual observers. We have had a programme of events until lockdown including, talks on forensic collision investigation, smart motorways and observation blind spots, visits to Middleton Hall and Bletchley Park, one of Chris Rice's famous quizzes and a meal at Walsall College restaurant.

A big thank you goes out to all our volunteers, our observers, our committee members and our supporters on Sunday mornings. Without them we would not be able to carry out our aims of supporting associates towards their advanced tests and furthering road safety in Walsall and beyond.



Treasurer's Report: Ann Humble reported as follows:

Opening balance at the end of April 2019 = £4663.46. Closing balance at end of April 2020 = £4073.55. Expenditure included room hire £609.00 and other expenses £931.91. We have replaced our old computer; our tired gazebo; and purchased new A Frames. This was to improve our image when we attended events etc, sadly not to happen, but ready for a full calendar for next year, hopefully. Other expenses included umbrellas, and vacuum flasks. Our Tea Fund increased from £373.24 to £491.39 during the year.

Resolution: that the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 2019 be approved. No objections were received, therefore the report was passed.

Election of Group Officers

Chairman: Martin Goad stood down as Chairman and the chair was temporarily taken over by Mike Bentley. Mike informed the meeting that Martin had been an excellent Chairman during the past year and thanked him. No other nominations had been received, therefore Martin Goad was elected as Chairman for 2020/2021. Martin took over the chair and informed the meeting that he is willing to serve as Chairman until the next AGM.

Group Secretary: The Chairman thanked Josie Hubbard-Palmer for her work during the past year. No other nominations were received and Josie was re-elected as Group Secretary for the coming year.

Treasurer: The Chairman thanked Ann Humble for her work as Treasurer. Ian Locke had indicated his agreement to become Treasurer. Once elected to the committee, he would be elected as Treasurer. This was agreed.

Election of Committee: Four members of the previous committee were standing down: Sarah Harrison, Ann Humble, Alison Kimberley and Sandra Wootton. Alison and Sandra wish to be re-elected onto the committee. Sarah and Ann were thanked for their valuable work for the committee. Alison, Sandra and Ian Locke were nominated and elected onto the committee. The remaining members of the committee were also re-elected for the coming year. Ian was welcomed as a member of the committee. The committee now numbers 9 members. Martin thanked the previous committee for their hard work during the past year.

Presentation of Awards There were two awards this year:

John Hodgkiss Award for Endeavour: This was awarded to Arthur Adams. He is one of our more senior members, aged nearly 90. He came to the Group very keen to improve his driving. He took on the task and won. He achieved his test at the second attempt. Martin will take the award to Arthur at his home and present it personally, of course socially distanced.

Observer Trophy: This was presented to Philip Gough. The Chairman informed the meeting that Philip works quietly, efficiently and reliably as an Observer. This award will again be taken to his house and presented personally, again, socially distanced.

Any Other Business

- It was queried whether any decisions had been made regarding observing. A survey had been undertaken with Observers, only two Observers currently felt willing to observe. They are observing their Associates within safety guidelines. The Chairman said this is a difficult situation.
- It was queried whether the Group is sending out communications to Observers to tell them about the current position? Mike Bentley reported that this is being done.
- The meeting was informed that, a while ago, some on-line tutorials were produced by the IAM. It was queried if it would be possible to send these to Observers so they could be provided to their Associates to keep them engaged. It was agreed that this would be useful. It was understood there are various tutorials available. Research will be undertaken.
- It was suggested that these Zoom meetings be held, perhaps every two months. This was agreed as a good suggestion.
- A meeting member reported that he is currently due to take his National Retest and has been in touch with Robbie Downing, who has agreed that he is happy for this to be on-hold.

Closure of meeting: Martin Goad thanked everyone for attending the meeting

Dear reader:

I have taken meeting minutes, in shorthand, throughout my career, sometimes in some strange venues and circumstances, however last Sunday for me topped them all. I could see and hear the other meeting participants but fortunately they couldn't see me! Never before have I taken notes remotely via a computer link up and in, well, let's just say I was dressed in something 'comfy'. No, it wasn't in my pyjamas!

Chairman's Chat

From Martin Goad -

October 2020



We had our belated Annual General Meeting on the 18th October virtually via Zoom. Thanks to those who signed on, the minutes are in this newsletter for all. This might seem like this is the only thing that has happened since lockdown in March but other things have been progressing. The committee have been keeping in touch with each other and we have had two physical meetings, one on the lawn outside the community centre on a rather cool August Sunday morning and one in the centre, socially distanced, in September.

It did seem at that stage that with the centre reopening that we might be able to have a couple of Sunday meetings before the end of the year, albeit with reduced numbers, and that is what we were planning. However, with the resurgence of Covid-19 the proposed opening and use of the centre has been reversed and its future is uncertain. We shall be looking to restart activities as soon as there is a chance to do so safely. Any further meetings will need to be virtual until the situation eases.

Josie, Mike and I have been meeting during the Summer and Autumn to try and plan for observing to restart once the IAM gave to go ahead in June. We have circulated observers on two occasions and learned that, understandably, most are not yet ready to go out in cars with their associates. There are a couple who are and there is a limited amount of training going on with established partnerships. We have developed a risk assessment to be used in cars to ensure that the process is as safe as possible.

Our Golden Anniversary year has certainly turned quite differently from what we hoped and were planning. It has been a year to forget rather than one to cherish. Let us hope that we can get back to doing what we do best as early in 2021 as possible. I hope that you all stay safe and healthy until we meet again.

Martin Goad

Associate Co-ordinator Corner

Seems such a long time since we all met for a Sunday Morning Run. Since then restrictions have put an end to most of our activities. One or two observers have been taking out an associate - by mutual agreement and obeying the IAM Roadsmart Guidelines for travelling in a car together. Many members, I know, were concerned about this due to their health and age profile. Lets hope 2021 allows us to get out on the road again.

I would like to thank Observers and Associates who have kept in contact and have done an excellent job of remote mentoring. Our recent Zoom AGM highlighted how much, as a group, we did before lockdown. I am also delighted that Arthur Adams has been presented with the Award for Endeavour. Arthur worked really hard and when he failed his first test at 89 he redoubled his efforts and passed in September.

Best wishes to all our associates and we look forward to starting up again when the virus allows. Please contact me if I can be of any help.

Michael D Bentley. Associate Co-ordinator

*In these very strange times, here's a few ideas on how to
Stay cheerful, positive and happy !!!*



Remain optimistic: Tough times call for stamina and endurance. Everything will be better next year. Make a list of the things you want to do and places you want to go next year.



Stay positive, this can be difficult when nothing seems to be going right, but the alternative is to fall into the pit of negativity. Think of the money you may have saved by not spending on big items !

Exercise: Stretch your legs and get some fresh air, good for you mentally and physically. Each time we exercise we release endorphins in our bodies. Any physical activity will help the body to feel better as well as make you feel more positive. Also being outdoors in nature can really help you manage those feelings of anxiety.

Take time to breathe

A calming breathing technique for stress, anxiety and panic takes just a few minutes and can be done anywhere. By taking a deep breath in, filling your lungs, holding it for five seconds and then breathing out will help calm your breathing and heart rate, giving your body a chance to relax.



Start talking

A problem shared is a problem halved. Talking to someone else will help you to reduce the weight of the issue in your head, and by doing so will give you a better opportunity to share those feelings with someone close to you.

Some ways to keep your driving skills sharp during Covid-19



As most of us will be driving less than before and as we are not being observed or observing it is easy to let those hard won skill levels drop. Here are a couple of ideas that could help keep you sharper and safer.

- Get out your handbook or Roadcraft and have a browse.
- Go to the IAM website, to the dashboard and to my next challenge and try the Advanced Knowledge Quiz.
- Have a look again at the Highway Code.
- Go for a drive. Choose an interesting route and practise your skills.
- Do a bit of commentary on your normal drive (best when you are alone!)
- Go on the internet and search for driving skills clips, there are lots out there.



Using your skills is the best way to keep them up.

Whether we like it or not, winter is coming and due to this and other circumstances, we may not be doing as much driving as usual so here are a few reminders how to look after your car

For many of us our cars are crucial, it's never been more vital to have trust in your vehicle.

Keep everything topped up

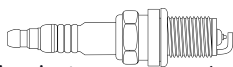
Engine oil check is simple and takes just seconds, and it could save your engine if it's dangerously low. If your oil level has dropped, check for leaks on the ground which could point to something more serious.

Windscreen wash & Coolant: The worst thing you can do is to wait for an emergency light to come on, so being proactive can save pounds.

Tyres: Having your car parked on the driveway gives you the perfect opportunity to check and inflate your tyres. While you're adjusting the tyre pressure, check the condition of each tyre and look out for any damage. Use a 20p coin to check the tread in your tyres and ensure that the wear is distributed evenly across the tyre.

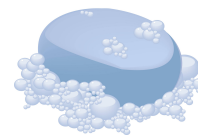
Don't forget your spare wheel too, if you have one. Remove it from the vehicle and check its condition. Inflate it to the right pressure and give it a wipe down. Check you have all the parts you need to fit your spare too, including the vehicle jack.

Essential electricity



Your battery plays a crucial role in your car, but it doesn't like sitting idle as it has a finite amount of charge. When your car is parked without use it slowly continues to take charge from the battery. Usually the battery recharges while you're driving around. However, doing so too often can actually dangerously deplete the battery. Also check that all bulbs are working correctly. Have someone from your household sit inside the car and work their way around the lights while you check them outside.

Clean it!



Cleaning your car is never high on anyone's list of fun jobs, but a thorough vehicle valet is an essential maintenance task. An exterior wash will take your car from a muddy mess to sparkling clean in less than an hour. While cleaning your car, you can look for any dents and damage to the paintwork, windscreen or wheels. Give your windscreen wipers a rub down with a cloth and check for any nicks, splits or cracks. Replace if they're wearing thin.

While cleaning the interior of your car check that everything is working correctly. Ensure that all seatbelts are in good condition, and every clunk is met with a click. Test all child's car seats too, to ensure they're safe and secure, and finally, make sure you lock your car when you have finished cleaning your car !!!

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www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/walsallam/about-us/our-community

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