

St Helens Group of Advanced Motorists

38th Annual General Meeting

7th June 2023, St Helens Town Hall

Minutes

1. Welcome

Group Chair Mark Farnworth welcomed the Mayor, Councillor Lynn Clarke, Group President Lady Kirsty Pilkington, members, and friends to the meeting. Mark asked the Mayor to Chair the AGM and she kindly accepted.

2. Apologies for Absence

Group Secretary Chris Bradley gave the apologies. They were Valerie Cunningham, Jean Goldstone, Nigel Morley and Geoff Almond. There were twenty-three attendees for the AGM plus the Mayor and attendant.

3. Approval of the minutes from the 2022 AGM

By a show of hands, the minutes were approved by the Members present.

4. Matters arising from the 2021 AGM

There were no matters arising.

5. Annual Report and Questions

Group Chair, Mark Farnworth, presented the Annual report.

I would describe the last 12 months as a recovery from the turmoil of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic caused a substantial drop in Group activities, in recruitment, observed runs and events. Most of our Observers have now returned to observing. Over the last 12 months we have trained two new Observers. Mark Hemans passed the Local Observer assessment managed by the Group and then Mark and new Observer Garry Maddocks and existing Observer Andrew Farrimond all went on to pass the National Observer Test, conducted by an IAM RoadSmart Examiner. This means that our Observer team (12 Observers) is now only one short of what it was pre-pandemic.

In September last year the Committee took the decision to offer 100% cashback to any Associate who does eight observed runs or does the Advanced driving test – irrespective of a pass or fail. We did this for two reasons, to stimulate recruitment and re-energize the Group and to financially help Associates for the cost-of-living crisis that was looming and that is still here. Due to generous donations to the Group over many years we have sufficient funds stored away for a 'rainy day'. The rainy day is here. This strategy has paid off. The Group is highly active now with recruitment high, Observers busy and events well attended. We will continue to review the 100% cashback policy.

Events have been re-established over the last 12 months. A walk to the Dream statue in Sutton took place on the 18th June last year, we had a visit to the Western Approaches Museum, Liverpool on the 29th October and very well attended meals at the Lymewood Farm, Haydock, on the 19th January and Red Cat, Crank on the 30th March. Six Observers and Committee members also went Go-karting on the 27th of May.

As you will recall, in April last year we had to leave the Ibis hotel, Haydock, our Sunday morning meeting venue for approximately 10 years due to a government takeover of the hotel. We re-located to the Mercure Hotel in the St. Helens Town Centre. Unfortunately, in April this year the Mercure Hotel told us to stop meeting there on Sunday mornings due to an increase in Sunday

morning activities at the hotel such as weddings. The Group had to urgently find a new Sunday morning meeting venue. As I mentioned in the current newsletter, I am pleased to report that our new Sunday morning venue is the St. Helens Community Fire Station, Violet Way, St. Helens Town Centre - only a few hundred metres from the Mercure Hotel. It is a great venue, a modern building, a decent car park, a spacious community meeting room with a large white board and IT capability and even a kitchen that we can use to make hot drinks! I would like to thank Merseyside Fire and Rescue for approving our use of the building on Sunday mornings and at other times should we need to.

We have many talented individuals in the Group, skilled and dedicated Observers and a hard-working committee. It is the people that take the Group forward and we look for ways to encourage involvement through the recruitment of new Observers and Committee members. Andrew Farrimond was co-opted onto the Committee in September last year. Andrew adds a wealth of experience to our committee decision making. To facilitate a broader people involvement in our Observer team, as of the Committee meeting last night, I have stepped down from the role of Lead Observer. I am pleased to announce that Mark Hemans is our new Lead Observer and will join our committee should you vote so later. Mark brings to the Observer team a vast knowledge of advanced driving, training, and administration from his Police work of 30 years.

I'd like to thank all the Observers and Committee members for the time they give to support the Group. The Group is in a good place, skilled and dedicated Observers and Committee and a high level of Group activity. I am optimistic and excited about the future of the Group.

There were no questions.

6. Annual Accounts, Questions and Adoption of Accounts

Group Treasurer Stephen Dumont commented on the Income and Expenditure accounts and on the Balance Sheet. The accounts are healthy, even though some additional costs (insurance) had to be covered. Jane Williams (Council for Voluntary Services (CVS)) is still our Auditor. The Members present approved the accounts.

7. Authorisation to increase Membership subscriptions if deemed necessary

Authorisation was sought by the Treasurer and approved by a show of hands by members present.

8. Election of Officers

The following were Proposed and Seconded prior to the meeting and approved by a show of hands by members present.

Chair (Mark Farnworth) – Proposed by Jim Cunliffe and Seconded by Alan Prescott.

Vice Chair (Phil Sharples) – Proposed by Kay Heppenstall and Seconded by Chris Bradley.

Secretary (Chris Bradley) – Proposed by Mark Farnworth and Seconded by Kay Heppenstall.

Treasurer (Stephen Dumont) – Proposed by Alan Prescott and Seconded by Mark Farnworth.

9. Election of Committee Members

The following were Proposed and Seconded prior to the meeting and approved by a show of hands by members present.

Anita Clift – Proposed by Kay Heppenstall and Seconded by Alan Prescott.

Andrew Farrimond – Proposed by Mark Farnworth and Seconded by Anita Clift

Mark Hemans – Proposed by Mark Farnworth and Seconded by Andrew Farrimond.

The following Committee members do not need to be elected at this time – Jim Cunliffe, Alan Prescott, Ken Nevitt and Kay Heppenstall.

10. Any other AGM business

There was no other business.

The AGM finished at approximately 8.20am and the Mayor handed over to Group Chairman Mark Farnworth.

11. Presentations by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Lynn Clark

Driver of the Year: Winner Garry Maddocks, judge Mark Farnworth.

Observer of the Year: Winner Chris Bradley, judge Phil Sharples.

Associate of the Year: Winner Paul Fryer, judge Alan Prescott.

12. Constable 1209 Mark Hemans, Forensic Collision Investigator, Merseyside Police

Mark said that he works at the Forensic Collision Investigation Unit, Rose Hill HQ. The unit comprises one sergeant, eight constables and one vehicle examiner. The unit is working towards ISO accreditation. The purpose of the unit is to obtain all evidence and reconstruct events. The investigator although employed by the Police is independent of the Police since the evidence and findings obtained are shared with prosecution and defence representatives. The report is unbiased. This is one of the few areas of Police activity that opinion can be given.

The Forensic Collision Investigation Unit deals with the following: scene and vehicle examination, photography, analytical work, research papers, testing, expert report, vehicle examination, CCTV analysis, examination of the Event Data Recorder (EDR), interpretive work and peer review. In contrast, the Serious Collision Investigation Unit deals with witnesses, the prosecution file, post mortem, suspects, CCTV collection, coroner and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

To become a qualified forensic investigator there is a four-week residential course, a 2hr maths exam, a 2hr physics exam and skid mark assessment. Further qualifications include a university certificate in continuing professional development, a certificate in higher education, a foundation degree and a BSc (Hon). In addition, there are several specialised courses that include tachograph analysis, crush analysis and light bulb forensic analysis.

A forensic investigator investigates all fatal collisions, likely to prove collisions, serious injury police vehicle collisions and serious injury collisions. At the collision site debris, contact marks, dashcam footage glass and blood splatter are all considered. Photographs are taken of observation lines, vehicle controls and mechanical defects. A scene survey can be conducted using a laser scanner (Trimble TX8). Airbag control modules are inspected. Expert witness evidence is provided to the Coroners Court, Crown Court, Civil Court and the Officer of the Traffic Commissioner.

For the final part of the talk Mark gave a case study about a fatal Road Traffic Collision. The victim was a motorcycle pillion passenger. Mark carried those present through from initial scene analysis, followed by more detailed analysis of the motorcycle tyres, marks on the car door and bonnet and on railings adjacent to the point of collision. Mark gave a fascinating insight into how the investigation evolved and led to the successful prosecution of the car driver – death by careless driving.

13. Vote of thanks and close

Mark Farnworth thanked the Mayor for efficiently chairing the meeting and thanked Mark Hemans for his excellent talk. He also thanked all those present for attending the AGM and making it an excellent meeting.

Minutes by Chris Bradley, Group Secretary

June 2023