



# Newsletter ~ August 2024

**St Helens Group of Advanced Motorists**  
*Working to make our roads safer every day...*



## Welcome

Hello everyone and welcome to the August edition of the newsletter.

It was nice to see many of you at our AGM. The Group is in a good place with sound finances and a good level of Associate recruitment.

We have plans to increase activity in the recruitment and marketing side of the Group. We want to strengthen our community involvement since the more people who know who we are and what we do the greater opportunities we have to help make our roads safer and to help people to become more confident and skillful drivers.

Next year the Group will celebrate its 40th anniversary - 40 years of delivering advanced driving

courses to the local community.

Those of you who didn't attend the AGM will not know the following.

We have started to develop an **advanced riding** element within what we do with the official launch planned for Spring next year.

Alan Douglas, a National Rider Observer has joined the Group and is helping us set up the delivery of Advanced Rider Courses. This can't be achieved quickly. To obtain a team of rider Observers then the riders must first pass the Advanced Rider Test and then with more training they must pass the rider National Observer test.

We have already started

this training with over 20 observed rider runs taken place in June and July. Several Observers/committee members/other riders are involved. IAMHQ are supporting the process by providing advanced rider Associates to help with the rider training but without 'flooding' our fledgling rider group.

If you are a rider and would like training to go for the Advanced Rider test then let me know. Also, if you have already passed the Advanced Rider test and would like to become a SHGAM National Observer then please let me know that as well.

Safe driving ... and riding

**Mark Farnworth**  
**Group Chairman**

Official Provider

St. Helens Group website

[www.shgam.org.uk](http://www.shgam.org.uk)

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### More Information (click links)

[SHGAM News](#)

[IAM News Releases](#)

[SHGAM Driving Tips](#)

[IAM RoadSmart Advice](#)

[Our Courses](#)

[Course dates](#)

## IAM News

### [IAMR calls for immediate action as data shows surge in drink driving fatalities](#) 25th July 2024

IAM Policy and Public Affairs Manager, William Porter, said: "It is deeply concerning that drink-drive-related fatalities are at their highest level since 2009 and worryingly show a dangerous upward trend for the second year running. IAM RoadSmart research shows motorists consider drink-driving to be the highest enforcement priority for traffic police, with 45% of mo-

torists considering it to be the top issue in our 2023 safety culture report.

We strongly support the increase in frequency of random roadside breathalyser testing and additional resources for police forces to enable them to carry this out. Alongside this, more drink-drive rehabilitation courses will be a key part of tackling this issue, given the evidence that shows that those undertaking such courses are two-and-a-half times less likely to reoffend. Finally, the UK Government should give serious consideration

to reviewing and reducing the drink-drive limit in England and Wales."

### [IAMR calls on social media companies to update policy to deter illegal driving](#)

IAM Director of Policy and Standards Nicholas Lyes said: "Yet again, we are seeing tragedy on our roads where drink-driving and illegal phone use have been contributory factors in a fatal collision. In this day of advancing technology, social media companies can play a vital role in deterring

people from uploading and sharing pictures and videos of illegal driving on our roads.

If we can reduce the temptation for drivers to do this, we may start to break the lethal cycle of using a phone illegally at the wheel for likes and comments online. We call on all social media companies to start updating their policies which either blocks such content or removes it swiftly from their platforms and hands the offending material over to the police."



## Record number of drivers caught ignoring Red X signs on smart motorways

### **IAM Press Release 23rd July**

- More than 53,000 drivers have been caught by cameras since police started enforcing against the contravention and the numbers have risen ten-fold in three years
- Red X signs are common on smart motorways and indicate the lane is closed
- Flouting the rules puts lives at risk when motorists are stranded in a live lane

Analysed data\* gathered through a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to police forces in England reveals that in 2021, nine police forces were enforcing against Red X infringements, with 4,393 drivers caught. A further eleven forces be-

gan prosecuting against the contravention in 2022 resulting in 20,773 motorists being captured by cameras. In 2023, a total of 21 forces used enforcement cameras to catch 28,231 drivers breaking the law. Almost all police forces with smart motorways within their boundary areas are now actively pursuing this type of criminality.

The Red X is often used to close lanes on a smart motorway when an obstruction such as a broken-down vehicle is detected in the road ahead. Closed lanes are also used by the emergency services attending those who might need urgent assistance at the incident in question. Enforcement cameras automatically detect vehicles passing

illegally under a Red X, which can result in a fixed penalty notice of up to £100 and three points or, in some cases, more severe penalties or a court appearance.

IAM RoadSmart Director of Policy and Standards, Nicholas Lyes said: "Ignoring a Red X sign on a smart motorway is dangerous because it risks a serious collision and for this reason, we welcome police forces clamping down on those who break the law. "If a lane is closed on smart motorway, it usually indicates there is either a stranded vehicle ahead, people are working in the road, or there has been a collision. Disobeying the sign puts the lives of those in the vehicle as well as those ahead in danger.

## **Notice Board**

### **Congratulations**

Congratulations to Sarah McNally for winning the Group's Associate of the Year trophy. Sarah passed the Advanced driving test in March and obtained a F1rst. She showed great commitment and perseverance to the Advanced Driving course amidst a series of personal challenges.

### **Welcome and Congratulations**

Welcome to David Clayton who had joined us as an Advanced Rider Associate. Aloo, congratulations David for passing the Advanced Rider Test today (31st July)! David is our first Advanced Rider test pass.

**Mark Farnworth**  
*Chairman*

### **Observer Meeting**

10am Sunday 18th August,  
St Helens Fire Station

### **Next Advanced Driver Course**

Thursday  
29th August  
Course Introduction  
8pm St. Helens Town Hall

Course programme on [website](#)

### **Annual Go-Karting Event** **Sunday 30th June**

We had an incredible time at our annual go-karting event

Congratulations to our top racers:  
1st Place: Tom Oaks  
2nd Place: Michael Wishart  
3rd Place: Charlotte Hemans

@TeamSport Karting features fully electric go-karts that are super fast and fun to drive! If you haven't tried them yet, make sure to check them out.



### **Winter Hill Walk**

11am Saturday 10th Aug

A walk to the Winter Hill television mast near Horwich. The walk will be approximately five miles along the mast service road and moorland. Walking boots or stout trainers will be required along with a packed lunch. Please ensure you bring waterproofs in case it rains!

Open to family members and friends. Dogs are welcome.

We will meet half way along [George's lane](#) before we start the walk.

Walk lead: Mark Farnworth

### **Jodrell Bank**

11am Saturday 31st August

Visit the Jodrell Bank space science museum. £14 entry.

Jodrell Bank is an inspirational place full of mind-blowing stories of pioneering heritage and cutting-edge science. Part of The University of Manchester, it is, uniquely, both a World Heritage Site and a live scientific research facility.

Family members and friends  
Are welcome to join us.

**eventsshgam@gmail.com**



# AGM 2024 - Thursday 6th June

The 39th AGM of the St. Helens Group of Advanced Motorists was held at the St. Helens Town Hall on Thursday 6th June. There were approximately 25 attendees. The Mayor of St. Helens Councillor Jeanette Banks and her Consort Councillor David Banks attended along with our President Lady Kirsty Pilkington. Our guest speakers were Andy Blythe and Lee Seddon from the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS).

The Mayor graciously accepted the invitation to Chair the AGM which she did with great efficiency. The AGM business was concluded after 25 minutes. If you are a member and would like to see the AGM Minutes then please let me know.

Following the AGM various awards and trophies were presented by the Mayor. First up was Alan Prescott, our

Associate co-ordinator who was presented with a trophy as a 'thank you' for being our Associate co-ordinator for 30 years! This is a fantastic achievement. I'm sure you'll join me in thanking Alan for his three decades of voluntary service to the Group.

Val Cunningham was presented with the Driver of the Year trophy in recognition of passing the Master Driver Test and obtaining a distinction and also passing the National Observer Assessment with a commendation from her Examiner for the high standard she achieved. The Mayor also presented Neil Taylor with his Advanced Driving Test certificate.

**Mark Farnworth,  
Group Chairman**



Left to right, Group Chair Mark Farnworth, Andy Blythe (MFRS), the Mayor, Councillor Jeanette Banks, Lee Seddon (MFRS) and the Mayor's Consort Councillor David Banks.



Alan Prescott receives a trophy to commemorate being Associate Co-ordinator for 30 years



Val Cunningham receives the Driver of the Year Trophy



Neil Taylor receives his Advanced Driving Test Certificate