



# Newsletter ~ December 2023

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



## Welcome

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

Winter has arrived and as I write there has been wide-spread snow fall across our region. Take extra care and take heed of the comments in the IAM blog below.

As I mentioned in the last newsletter we would like to ramp up our publicity and recruitment activities with the setting up of a Publicity and Recruitment team. I'm pleased to say that we now have a core P&R team consisting of Committee member and Observer Andrew Farrimond and Observers Val Cunningham and Garry Maddocks. These will be supported by me and other Committee members as and when needed. Some positive outcomes

have already been achieved. Our leaflets are now being displayed at St. Helens and Knowsley Colleges and we have an advert for our Winter Course in the St. Helens Star [on line events section](#).

If you have ideas about how we could promote the Group then please get in touch. We have people in place who could explore your ideas. All you need do is provide them. We are particularly keen to work with the charitable groups, the U3A, Rotary Clubs, Womens Institute, Classic Car Associations, 6th form Colleges and even small businesses who may have a few delivery drivers. We need help to get the contacts. It's not too late to join our P&R team.

Our meeting at the Town Hall on the 9th November went very well (see page 2). I'd like to thank Mark Hemans, Val Cunningham and Andrew Farrimond for contributing to the event. Their talks were excellent. We are hoping to repeat this kind of meeting in the new year. If you are able to put together a 20 minute presentation on a topic that you feel may be of interest to our members then please get in touch with me.

The presentation on drink driving was particularly timely as Christmas approaches. Judging from the findings of a recent IAM survey there is still much to do about stopping drink driving.

**Mark Farnworth**  
**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](#)

## Is your car feeling the cold? - IAMRS Blog 7th Nov

There's nothing worse than your car not starting on a cold, icy morning, but with a bit of planning, you can make sure your vehicle is ready for the colder months. Here is a handy guide to help you prepare for the colder weather.

### Battery

The battery on your car can go flat at any time, whether you're popping out for a Halloween celebration or to catch the fireworks in November. Make sure you keep a set of jump leads in your car so you can start your engine with help from another driver's vehicle if you need to.

### Check antifreeze and screen wash

Antifreeze stops the water in

the engine's cooling system from freezing and overheating, so make sure yours is topped up. Also check your screen wash levels, as something might seem minor, but something as simple as a bird doing its business on your windscreen can completely reduce visibility.

### Get kitted out

Always carry a winter driving kit. This should include an ice-scraper, torch, blanket, de-icer and a first aid kit, just in case. Packing water and snacks is also a good idea, should you find yourself waiting for a recovery truck.

### Light it up

Less light means, of course, using your headlights more.

Check that they are clean; a wipe down with a cloth should suffice, and make sure none are blown or cracked, as not only do they make you less visible, it's also a MOT failure. Don't forget to check your full beam and fog lights as well.

### Keep your car clean

Salt will often make your car windscreen, headlights, number plates and rear parts very dirty. You should stop regularly at service stations to clean your windscreen and headlights when the roads have been gritted or keep a filled bottle of water in the car boot to give your lights, windows and mirrors a quick wash over.

### Seasonal Tyres

If you often drive in the winter, you should consider buying a set of [winter tyres](#). Even cold, damp roads can dramatically affect the [performance of tyres](#), leading to an increased accident risk.

### Warning lights

Never ignore any warning lights that appear on your dashboard. If one appears, get it checked out as soon as possible. Being stuck on the side of the road is annoying at the best of times, but breaking down in freezing conditions is not only uncomfortable it can also be dangerous.

**Richard Gladman,**  
**IAMRS Chief Examiner**



## IAM DRINK DRIVE REHABILITATION COURSES

St Helens IAM Group met for a mid Course Meeting in early November at St Helens Town Hall. Presentations were received regarding Electric Cars, Tyres and Grip on road surfaces and IAM`s Drink Drive Rehabilitation (DDR) Course.

Former Trainer with IAM`s DDR Courses, and local Observer, Val Cunningham shared some information with the Meeting. At a time of year when there is a concerted effort to inform the public of the dangers of drinking and driving, particular points of interest arose from the presentation:

- The drink drive legal limit in England and Wales is 35 micrograms of alcohol per 100 ml of breath

- 240 people were killed in colli-

sions in Great Britain where at least one driver was over the drink drive limit.

- There are a lot of myths around ways to sober up including – drinking lots of water, drinking coffee, taking exercise, eating greasy food, drinking milk and sleeping, none of which work, only **TIME** will allow the body to remove alcohol from the body.

‘Beer goggles` were demonstrated and these indicated the effects of alcohol on a drivers` vision; perception, co-ordination, flawed judgement, hazard awareness and confused messages sent to and from the brain.

The message to all drivers by IAM is to have **NONE FOR THE ROAD!**

**If you drive don't drink,  
If you drink, don't drive.**

## How to calculate the number of units consumed

To work out how many Units of alcohol there are in a bottle or can, the formula is:

Multiply the size of the drink in 'mls' by the strength '%' and then divide by 1000 to find the number of Units.

On average the body can process 1 unit of alcohol per hour. This can vary depending on your size, sex and metabolism.

If you have 3 large glasses of wine and stop drinking at midnight, you are still likely to be unfit to drive the following morning.

At just below the legal limit (England/Wales) your reaction times are 13% slower than normal and you are 4 times more likely to be involved in a crash.

## Notice Board Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year

<p><b><u>Winter Advanced Driving Course</u></b></p> <p>Course Introduction 8pm St. Helens Town Hall</p> <p>100% cashback to all those who join the course (T&amp;Cs) apply</p> <p>Let your family and friends know. An ideal gift for Christmas.</p>	<p><b>Make a change by signing the petition to scrap VAT on life-saving air vests</b></p> <p>We've been busy spreading the word about our campaign to scrap VAT on life-saving air vests. As part of our campaign to protect motorcyclists and reduce the number of people killed or injured on our roads, we've been speaking with cross-party MP's and our partners to raise awareness of the importance of recognising motorcyclists as vulnerable road users.</p> <p>Did you know 1 in 5 road deaths on UK roads is a motorcyclist, and nearly two thirds of motorcyclists said the cost of safety wear has put them off buying it? We know more needs to be done to protect all road users, so by removing VAT on air vests will allow more people to access this life-saving PPE.</p> <p>We have now met our initial target of <b>10,000</b> signatures but the more signatures the better. If you haven't already done so, please consider <b><u>sharing our petition</u></b> with friends and family, and let's make the roads a safe place for everyone.</p> <p><b>Nicholas Lyes</b>, Director of Policy and Standards</p>
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**More than a quarter of drivers say there are instances where it is okay to drink or drug drive**  
**News Release 30/11/23**

A national survey by IAM RoadSmart has revealed that more than a quarter (27%) of drivers think there are circumstances when it's okay to drive under the influence. Christmas is a time of celebration for many and our data reveals that more than three-quarters (77%) of drivers are planning to attend a party or gathering of some sort. A busy social calendar at this time can lead to an increase in overall alcohol consumption and even drug taking, but IAM RoadSmart's new survey shows almost a third of (29%) people wouldn't feel comfortable trying to stop their partner from driving while under the influence and half (49%) wouldn't stop their parents from getting behind the wheel while inebriated.

While most people understand getting into a car after consuming alcohol or illegal drugs is a bad idea, more than one in 10 (11%) people think it's safe to drive the morning after a night of heavy drinking or taking illegal drugs. Some respondents felt it was okay to drive after drinking alcohol or taking illegal drugs if you need to drive someone to hospital and there are no ambulances available (15%) or if there's no other way home.