



# Newsletter ~ February 2024

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

## Welcome

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

We have got off to a good start this year on a number of fronts. Four Associates have passed the Advanced test, three have joined us and two of our Observers have obtained high level observing and driving qualifications. The high driving and observing standards we set ourselves are evidenced by these achievements. We also have a new trainee Observer! Alison Jones passed the advanced test in January and has decided to join the Observer team. Thank you Alison for supporting the Group in this way.

We offer to any Group member or friend a driving check by one of our

Observers. You may be feeling less confident with your driving than when you once were so give your driving an annual MOT as well as your car! It will be completely confidential. Your Observer will not share their observations of your driving with anyone else. We are here to help you as much as our Associates.

There are some things you can do for yourself to remind you what advanced driving is all about. Take a look at our [driving tips](#) section on the website or the [Reg Local videos](#) on YouTube which are excellent.

We are also doing a lot on the publicity front with our newly formed Publicity and Recruitment (P&R) team doing remarkably well over such a short

period. Did you see our advert in the motoring section of the St. Helens Star in December? Let me know if you did. If you have ideas about how we could promote the Group then please get in touch. Our P&R team could explore your ideas. All you need do is provide them. We are particularly keen to work other charitable organisations or businesses.

Our AGM will be on Thursday 6th June at the Town Hall, **7.45pm** prompt start rather than the usual 8pm start. This will give us a little more social time after the AGM and talk. So, make a note now in your calendars / diaries.

**Mark Farnworth,**  
**Chairman**



St. Helens Group website

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

### Contacts:

contactshgam@gmail.com  
07849 674393 (after 6pm)

editorshgam@gmail.com

### **More Information** (click links)

[SHGAM News](#)

[IAM News Releases](#)

[SHGAM Driving Tips](#)

[IAM RoadSmart Advice](#)

[Our Courses](#)

[Course dates](#)

## Stay alert on the road this winter- IAMRS Blog 23rd Jan

With dark, cold mornings in abundance right now, it can be hard to get going once the alarm goes off, especially if you haven't had a good night's sleep. Extreme tiredness can also lead to microsleeping. These are short episodes of drowsiness or sleep that could last a fraction of a second or up to 30 seconds. Any vehicle travelling at 70 mph will travel 31 metres per second, giving plenty of time to cause a serious crash during a micro-sleep.

- Speeding, using a mobile phone, drinking

and drug driving, not wearing a seatbelt and careless driving are responsible for a large proportion of incidents and are considered 'the fatal five'. Fatigue is a serious contributor to careless driving.

- Make sure you take regular rest breaks to split up the journey, especially when travelling on a long, boring stretch of motorway. The simple rule is don't drive or ride tired; stop at least every 100 miles or two hours of driving BEFORE fatigue or drowsiness sets in. Make sure the break is at least 15 minutes long; getting

out of the car and walking around will help.

- If necessary, plan an overnight stop. If you feel too fatigued to carry on, then book yourself into a hotel at the next service station and sleep it off. Wake up fresh with a good breakfast and carry on your journey. It's good to note that a caffeine high may be a quick fix, but it is not a long-term solution and certainly not a substitute for proper sleep.

- You're bound to be tired after a full day at work, so avoid setting out on a long journey after you

have finished the day. It's best to start your journey earlier when you're more alert.

- If possible, avoid travelling between the two peak times for sleepiness. These are between 3am and 5am and 2pm and 4pm.

- If you have taken prescribed medication, then seek advice from your GP as to whether you should be driving or riding. If bought over the counter, then read the instructions on the pack or speak to a pharmacist.

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



## GROUP NEWSLETTER

We have had monthly and bi-monthly newsletters since the formation of the Group in December 1985. With the advance of technology there has been a rapid shift to members providing email addresses to receive email notifications that a new newsletter is available for viewing on the Group's website.

Approximately 240 email notifications are sent out for each newsletter to members and friends of the Group. Ten members are sent a paper copies of the newsletter.

The Committee has taken the decision to stop producing paper copies for both economic and environmental reasons.

A paper newsletter recipient gets six newsletters per year. When we

consider the cost of second class stamps (75p), envelopes and printing there is little left of their £8.50 Group subscription. Add to this the time to produce a paper version (removing hypelinks that exist in the electronic version), buying envelopes and stamps, attaching stamps and writing names and addresses on envelopes and posting, the admin time is not justified by the small revenue the Group receives. In addition, the world is changing and we all need to be more environmentally aware. We need to reduce the use of paper as much as possible.

So, this February edition of the newsletter will be the final newsletter for which a paper version is produced and delivered.

If you are a paper newsletter recipient then apologies but we need to move on. If you actually have an email address then let me have it and I'll put you onto the Group's email list. My email address is:

**editorshgam@gmail.com**

The need for the Group to reduce the amount of paper it uses extends to other areas of our activities.

At our AGMs we put onto chairs various AGM documents. Approximately four hundred A4 sheets of paper are normally put onto chairs. This is also unjustified on environmental grounds and costly to the Group not only economically but in the use of admin time. AGM documents are emailed out to members before the AGM. There is no need for paper versions on the night as well. If you are a member without an email address then let me know and I'll post you AGM documents if you wish. Contact me through the Contacts tab on the Group's website.

**Mark Farnworth,  
Chairman and Newsletter Editor**

## Notice Board

### Welcome

Welcome to Ian Haskell, Matthew Wild and Christopher Vernon who have joined our Winter Advanced Driver Course. Best wishes to you all. I'm sure you'll enjoy the experience.

### Congratulations

Congratulations to:

Carla Hay  
Alison Jones  
Stephen McKay  
Jean Goldstone

For passing the Advanced Driving Test. Well done to you all. Your hard work has paid off. Fantastic achievements.

**Mark Farnworth  
Chairman**

### AGM

Thursday 6th June

St. Helens Town Hall

7.45pm - Prompt start

Guest Speaker: Andy Blythe,  
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service

### **Petition to scrap VAT on life-saving air vests**

The petition now has over 11,000 signatures so the government will respond. If it gets to 100,000 then there will be a debate in parliament

Please consider sharing our petition with friends and family, and let's make the roads a safe place for everyone.

**Nicholas Lyes**, Director of Policy

### Group Meal

#### Maturo Meat House

39-81 Eccleston Street,  
Prescot.  
L34 5QH

Friday 23rd February  
7.15pm for a 7.30pm start

You are welcome join us for a meal at this fantastic venue. Family members and friends also welcome.

Please let our Events Organiser, Kay Heppenstall. know by Wed 14th February if you are planning to attend.

**eventsshgam@gmail.com**

### Congratulations



Congratulations to Observer Val Cunningham for passing the Master Driver Test and obtaining a distinction. And then ... a month later Val passed the National Observer Assessment.



Congratulations to Paul Fryer for passing the National Observer Assessment.

Well done both for these fantastic achievements.

**Mark Hemans  
Lead Observer**