

Somerset and Wiltshire Advanced Motorists -

AGM –Thursday 17th March 2022 at 7.30pm

Present: Chair - John Morley (JEM), Deputy Chair - Lindsay Flower (LF), Group Secretary – Rosemary Tandy (RT), Chief Observer/Associates Coordinator –David Major (DM), Treasurer/Newsletter Editor – Clare Hogg (CH), Publicity Relations Officer – Robin Clark (RC), Membership Secretary – Peter Huntington (PH), Minutes Secretary – Sue Phillips (SP), Vice President - Judith Pepler, Vice President and Guest Speaker- David Gallagher.
23 Members

1. Welcome

JEM welcomed David Gallagher, Vice President, the guest speaker, and those attending the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence:

Paul Pywell, Harry Lawrence, Vincent Jeffrey, Andrew Clark, Penny Lewis, Derek Fisher, Luke Pickett, Andy Poulton, David Moreman, Alistair Andrews, Caroline and John Marsden, Jess Young

3. Annual Reports

Chair - JEM

This is the first time the Group has held its AGM at Beckington, as the previous AGM was held via Zoom.

Firstly, I would like to thank all members of the Committee for their energetic efforts to keep the Group running during the past year.

My Deputy, Lindsay Flower, never ceases to come up with new ideas, and is constantly in the background raising the profile of SWAM, liaising with IAMRS and other groups and helping to find guest speakers.

Rosemary Tandy, our Secretary, keeps busy providing support for committee meetings and other general meetings and provides advice on IAMRS issues.

Clare Hogg, our Treasurer and Newsletter Editor, works very hard keeping our accounts up to date and producing the newsletter, Forward, which involves a great deal of input. Clare would particularly like to thank Andy Poulton for his contributions to the newsletter. She is always looking for interesting articles on motoring, so if you have any ideas, please let her know.

David Major, our Chief Observer and Associates Coordinator, has had to cope with the aftermath of the virus and its effects on training, with a small number of Associates still reluctant to continue with their training programs.

Peter Huntington, our Membership Secretary, has been busy maintaining membership issues and has been involved in quiz nights held via Zoom. If you haven't taken part in the past, I can recommend them; they are good fun and you can win a prize if you come first.

Robin Clark, our Public Relations Officer, is fairly new to the committee. He has been involved in a number of opportunities associated with media exposure, as well as helping to focus the Group on its aims and objectives.

Sue Phillips, our Minutes Secretary, has been busy throughout the year capturing and recording the outcome of committee meetings. A difficult task with all the dialogue that occurs.

A special thank you must go to Penny Walker and Rosemary for their assistance with refreshments.

Moving on, this last year has again been hampered by the continuation of the Coronavirus, but we have managed to keep the business running.

Thankfully, due to the NHS, the impact of the virus is gradually diminishing.

During the year we have had: 15 Associates pass their Advanced Test, 4 of them with a F1rst, 2 Members qualifying as Local Observers, with no Local Observers qualifying as National Observers. We have also had 4 Members pass their Masters, all with a distinction. A good year's work by all involved, especially David Major, our Chief Observer, who has coordinated our activity.

The Group currently has 212 Members, including Associates. This figure is slightly down on last year's number of 231, but it continually fluctuates. We currently have 18 active Associates, with 12 on hold for various reasons. We have 24 Observers, 3 Masters Mentors and 1 trainee Masters.

The majority of our group evenings have been held via Zoom. This has been for various reasons including the virus and winter conditions. The attendance at these meetings has been generally poor, which has been disappointing, especially when presenters have carried out a lot of work to provide interesting talks and quizzes on motoring and

associated subjects. So the message is: please attend if possible, you will hopefully find the evenings interesting and you will have the chance to meet other members of the Group.

As restrictions caused by the virus are now lifting and we are moving into Spring, we should be moving away from Zoom meetings and meeting up in person at Beckington more often.

In September, as a result of the efforts of our Events Secretary, Dave Edwards, the group was represented at the Frome Cheese Show, where we showed off our new gazebo. With one exception, Paul Pywell, the stand was manned by members of the Committee and we had a Ford Mustang on show as part of the display, which seemed to attract a lot more interest towards our stand. It was a long, hard day, and the objective was to offer the public the opportunity of experiencing advanced driving by taking a taster session, or by becoming a member of IAMRS and taking the test. It was unfortunate that we were not on the main thoroughfare, but that didn't deter us from engaging with the public. Peter Huntington was the star of the show, continually trying to entice people to take up the offer of a free taster session. It was unfortunate that, just as we had packed our gazebo away, a member of the public asked if he could join IAMRS. In conclusion, we decided that in future we should attend events focussed on motoring and, where possible, we should find a pitch that would provide maximum visibility.

During September, we also represented IAMRS and our Group, at MOD Lyneham, where in blustery conditions we attempted to promote our cause to 1000 troops.

Secretary - RT

Hello. This last year has been a difficult one for everyone but we hope we are slowly returning to normal. We are one of the few groups that have kept going over the last couple of years thanks to Zoom. We have been able to have some very interesting talks without the need for anyone to get in the car.

We feel fortunate to have found this hall for our Group meetings, plenty of parking together with excellent places to eat nearby should you arrive early.

We had a very well attended Group meet in September where all the Committee introduced themselves as this was the first time we had met as our new Group. Andy Poulton entertained us with a very amusing talk leaving us all wanting to hear more. During the year, we have had talks on Towing, Eyesight, Blood Bikes and Reg Local, who I am sure you are all familiar with, to name but a few.

We have Sean Cronin, our IAMRS Regional Manager speaking in April about his plug-in Hybrid car, and some Three in a Car events planned for early summer.

Sadly, Covid again put a stop to face to face meetings so we went back to Zoom.

In September, we asked Members to fill in questionnaires asking "How are we doing?" The general consensus seems to be that you are happy at the way the Committee are running the Group. We are always open to suggestions for Group meetings and talks, and indeed any negative comments, in order that we can improve. Please speak to any committee member of any concerns you may have, or ideas.

Regarding Zoom, we will continue to have Zoom meetings in the winter months so that you do not need to leave the comfort of your home. We have sometimes been disappointed at the attendance of some meetings as we do our best to find people to give interesting talks. They give these talks for no fee so it is a little embarrassing when the Committee outnumber the Members. If you can, please support these online meetings.

We are attending the Nick Mason (of Pink Floyd fame) open garden event on 30th and 31st July, to raise our profile and hopefully attract some young drivers as they are our future. Last year we attended the Frome Cheese Show.

We are a growing Group of over 200 members but in order to improve the standard of driving we need to gain more young people to spread the word of Advanced Driving. We also offer Taster Sessions which have proved very popular and are happy to give talks to any group or organisation.

The Committee have worked hard to ensure the smooth running of the Group continues and that our limited resources are utilised in the most effective manner. We owe a vote of thanks to David Major and his Observers who have a record number of passes and more F1rst's than ever before.

I would like to say thank you to all my committee members for their support and to our tea lady Penny for serving tea, coffee and biscuits with a welcoming smile.

Finally, I hope the coming year will be Covid free and we will be able to continue to meet again in this lovely location.

Treasurer - CH

The Annual Accounts for 2021 have been available to view on the website and have been printed for you to see them here.

Our main expenses for the year have been attending the Frome Cheese Show in September, and the Zoom costs and hire of Beckington Memorial Hall for our meetings. Another expense has been buying IAMRS shirts for members of the committee, a scheme which is being extended to National Observers in 2022. This enables us to be recognisable at meetings and to stand out as members of a group when we attend events.

If anyone has any questions about the accounts, please feel free to ask them now. The accounts for both 2021 and 2022 have been audited by Ken Fryer and I am very grateful to him for his support in doing this for us. Roland Hindmarsh asked a question about the cost of Observer Training as no manuals were printed and CH replied that this item will be removed.

Acceptance of the Accounts was proposed by Graham Jamieson and seconded by Roland Hindmarsh. The Accounts were approved unanimously by all those present and able to vote.

4. Election of the Committee

The Chairman handed the meeting over to David Gallagher at this point. David proposed that, as all the Committee Members were standing again, that voting should be carried out en bloc. This was accepted by all those present and able to vote. He read out the names of the Committee and their positions. There were no Objections and the Committee were voted in by all those present and able to vote. David then handed the meeting back to the Chairman.

5. Vision for SWAM - JEM

The main business of IAMRS and our Group is to promote road safety by improving the standards of drivers. Since the merger between Melksham and Bath, the reformed group has become bigger, better and stronger. In fact people from other areas have expressed an interest in joining our Group, possibly due to our reputation. We are financially secure, and have a dedicated and hardworking committee, who worked tirelessly after lockdown to get the Group back up and running while other groups put business on hold. Our Observers will have a Three in a Car update of their skills annually to ensure they maintain their standards. We are also planning to participate in Observer Training with the Swindon Group, and the first session is due to take place in June. So I hope that we shall have a good representation. David Major is also planning a series of training sessions for our Observers throughout the next year, these will be held at Beckington or via Zoom. And we intend to build on our strengths to plan and raise the profile of the Group. I have already mentioned two events that we attended last year. We are now planning to promote our cause in June by attending the Bath Festival of Motoring, and in July having the Group represented at Middlewick House Open Gardens, which normally has a large motoring contingent. In this way we are taking control of our recruitment, some of it through taster sessions that lead to membership. We are also working on our website and currently have a committee members' rota to produce articles of interest to be placed on the web. So, if we are to improve and develop further, please don't leave it all to the committee members, let us have your inputs for the web, come along and help us at external events, turn up at group meetings and quizzes. You will enjoy it. We need your input. Before we proceed, has anyone got any questions for the committee? I shall now hand you back to David Gallagher, our guest speaker.

6. Vice President - David Gallagher

7. Closing Remarks - JEM

Before I close the meeting, I would like to inform you all that we are very privileged to have Jess Young among our membership. Not only did she pass her Advanced test with a F1rst in June 2019, she also went on to prepare for her Masters, which she was due to take in April 2020 at the age of 19. This was put on hold due to the virus. However, she persevered and took the Masters at the age of 20, passing with a distinction. A remarkable achievement for someone who was only 20 years old. Unfortunately, she could not be with us this evening so, on behalf of the Group I would like to offer our congratulations to Jess and to her Mentor, Alistair Andrews. Thank you all for coming. The meeting is now closed.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.



Chair@SWAM