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Newsletter

 January 2022

Happy New Year

Dear Reader. Before I go any further, here’s the important information:

We are having an EGM, (Extra-ordinary General Meeting) to elect the Officers of the Group for the coming year, ie Chairman, Group Secretary and Treasurer. The date is:

**Sunday 6th February, 2022**

**Time 11am**

**Venue: Aldridge Community Centre**

As you know, we did recently hold an AGM (Annual General Meeting) where the majority of items were proposed, voted upon and passed successfully, however the procedure for election of Group Secretary was felt to be in need of more clarity.

Here’s a list of the current Officers serving on the committee:

Chairman: Karl Spooner Karl’s decision is awaited

Group Secretary Josie Hubbard-Palmer Josie’s decision is awaited

Treasurer: Ian Locke Ian wishes to be nominated as Treasurer

The current (2021) committee:

Alison Kimberley, Chris Rice, Kath Hawker, Sandra Wootton, These committee members are seeking re-election to the 2020 committee.

Standing down from the committee and not seeking re-election: Martin Goad

If you would like to be nominated for the committee it would be great to hear from you. We’re a welcoming bunch of people (so modest, but we are) and meet once a month. Please send you nomination in by 30th January, 2022. Attached /included with this newsletter is a nomination form, we would be really happy to hear from you.

If any of you would like to apply to be an Officer of the Group, ie Chairman, Group Secretary or Treasurer, well here’s a very short summary of those jobs:

**Chairman:**

The Chairman is the Managing Director/Chief Executive, he/she oversees the running of the Group, and is perhaps the figurehead. He/she keeps us in order at the committee meeting.,

**Group Secretary:**

He/she liaises with the head office of the IAM, deals with any concerns linked to members and associates.

**Treasurer:**

He/she keeps the Group’s financial head ‘above water’, makes sure we don’t spend too much and keeps just enough money in reserve also books our meeting rooms for the year in advance.

The EGM will take place after the Sunday drive so we look forward to seeing you on 6th February. Hopefully you may wish to join us on the committee.

**Log on to our website where you can find back copies of the newsletter and where details of events will be published once confirmed**

[**www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/walsallam/about-us/our-community**](http://www.iamroadsmart.com/groups/walsallam/about-us/our-community)

What's new in 2022?

**New Year and new rules - coming in early 2022**

**You can't touch your phone behind the wheel (as if we would !)**

Lawmakers are planning to close a loophole that has allowed drivers to evade prosecution when caught using their mobile devices behind the wheel. Currently, motorists can only be penalised for using a handheld phone for 'interactive communication' while driving, meaning anyone using their device to record video, take selfies, snap pictures and scroll through downloaded music are able to avoid fines and points.

However, ministers will in 2022 introduce new rules that makes using a phone or any handheld device behind the wheel illegal in almost all circumstances - and mean culprits receive a fine of £200 and six points on their licence. The stringent rules will also apply when stopped at a red light or stuck in traffic.

The only significant exception is that drivers will still be able to use their phone as a sat-nav as long as it is secured in a holder, and hands-free calls. Mobile payments at drive-through restaurants or on toll roads will also be allowed.

**Cyclists and pedestrians to have priority over drivers at junctions**

To be introduced 29 January (subject to parliamentary approval)

A scheduled update to the Highway Code from January will see the launch of an official 'hierarchy of road users' system that is designed to protect the most vulnerable people, including pedestrians and cyclists. The new hierarchy will mean road users who can do the greatest harm will have the greatest responsibility to reduce the danger they may pose to others.  It will have the biggest impact at junctions, with drivers having to ensure they do not cross the path of cyclists or horse riders. And it also gives pedestrians priority when they are waiting to cross at a crossing or junction rather than only when they are already crossing.

(Dear reader: my personal observation is that some pedestrians at junctions seem to be in a ‘world of their own’ either plugged into earphones or looking at their phones !!! )

**All motorists could be banned from parking on the pavement**

**Date of introduction:** No decision yet following consultation in 2020

Scotland has already passed a new bill that will outlaw all parking on pavements from 2023, but elsewhere the tougher rules could be applied this coming year.

Parking on the pavement is already illegal in London but changes to the law are expected in 2022 that will give local councils across England and Wales the power to issue on-the-spot £70 fines to those who mount the kerb.

The Government held a consultation on the matter in November 2020, with proposed blanket ban to prevent motorists blocking pavements for parents with pushchairs, those with limited mobility and anyone reliant on a seeing-eye dog. The DfT's consultation proposed three options to reform the rules on pavement parking:

1. Improving the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process, under which local authorities can already prohibit pavement parking.

2. A legislative change to allow local authorities with civil parking enforcement powers to enforce against 'unnecessary obstruction of the pavement'.

3. A legislative change to introduce a London-style pavement parking prohibition throughout England.

A decision is expected to be made on the matter.

**MOT extension period**

Back in 2020, getting your car to the garage for an MOT was difficult or simply not possible. To help, the government announced an extension period for any vehicles whose MOTs were due between 31st March and 31st July. With a maximum extension of 6 months, the latest any qualifying vehicles could get their MOT completed was the end of January 2021, a deadline that has now passed.

Remember, driving a car without an MOT is illegal and can lead to hefty fines (as if we would)

**We need new Trainee Observers**

We are looking to recruit a few new trainee Observers to join the Observer Training Team. If you feel this is something you would like to get involved in please let us know and we can have a chat about what is involved. Observing is an excellent way to keep your own Advanced skills at a high level whilst helping others to improve theirs.

**Are you still anxious about returning to the roads?**

As many people embraced home working and online deliveries, many cars were left to languish on driveways and in garages. However since social gatherings, offices, and schools have been the given the green light to return to normal, the nation’s roads are almost as busy as they were pre-lockdown.  Living in times of heightened anxiety and a deterioration of driving skills having not driven for a long period of time, has left many reluctant to get back in the driver’s seat. We recommend rebuilding confidence by undertaking short journeys on familiar roads, and then gradually increasing the distance of journeys.  Your Group is available to improve your skills and confidence. Why not come along for a ‘top up’ assessment drive at one of our Sunday meetings? Friends and relatives are welcome too

**Deterioration in skills and roadcraft**

Have the lockdowns had a detrimental impact on your driving habits? Do you feel you would fail your driving test if you had to take it again today. While it was inevitable that lockdown would result in rusty skills and confidence issues due to a break from the roads, refresh your skills and knowledge with your Group, ensuring our roads are kept as safe as possible.

 **When you think of winter - snow, hail and rain are the usual suspects.**

**However, bright sun can also be a significant problem**

According to data from the Department for Transport, around 3,900 people are injured in accidents caused by the blinding effects of the sun each year, which could lead to claims on their [car insurance](https://www.axa.co.uk/car-insurance/). During the spring and the winter, the low angle of the sun can often mean that your sun visor doesn't actually protect your eyes – a hazard that is particularly acute when the sun reflects off a wet road surface, creating strong, bright glare. However, there are a few simple steps you can take to improve visibility and keep you from driving blind.

* [Keep your windscreen clean](https://www.axa.co.uk/car-insurance/tips-and-guides/driving-in-bright-or-low-sun/#section1)
* Keep [sunglasses](https://www.axa.co.uk/car-insurance/tips-and-guides/driving-in-bright-or-low-sun/#section2) within reach
* [Be extra aware of other road users](https://www.axa.co.uk/car-insurance/tips-and-guides/driving-in-bright-or-low-sun/#section3)
* Slow down

and finally .....

Dear Reader, Here’s my recent personal observations ….

Store car-parks

* I usually try to park well away from other cars, usually in a section well away from the main entrance (its good exercise) - why do motoring school cars seem to use my car as practice to park in the next car bay ? Concerning!
* Very recently, I was pushing my shopping trolley back to my car, stopped in a car space, before crossing the vehicle roadway towards my car. Plenty of car spaces around for drivers to choose from. A car pulled up, no indication, and the driver pointed/jabbed his finger at the space I was standing in !!!! I did rather loudly question whether any indicators were fitted to his car. (no, I didn’t say anything rude !) (as if I would !!!!) However this has prompted the very basic question - are indicators fitted to vehicles these days ???Dear reader, have you experienced any store car parks incidents. Please share

**Group President: Trevor Poxon MBE**

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| **Chair: Karl Spooner:** Karl Spooner**Group Secretary:** Josie Hubbard-Palmer**Treasurer:** Ian Locke | **Committee Members:** Kath Hawker; Chris Rice; Alison Kimberley, Martin Goad**Newsletter Editor & Minutes Sec**Sandra Wootton Email: sandrawootton.flowers@gmail.com |
| **Assoc Co-ordinator:****Chief Observer:** Josie Hubbard-Palmer |
| Group Registered Charity no. 1082326 |
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