



**September & October
2019**

**For your diary
Sunday Observed Drives**

Aldridge Community Centre, on the
first Sunday of each month (unless otherwise stated)
at Middlemore Lane, Aldridge. WS9 8AN
Starting at 9.30am on
Sunday 1st September
Sunday 6th October
Sunday 3rd November

Since the last newsletter....

**WELL DONE & CONGRATULATIONS
ON PASSING YOUR TEST
to**

Muhammed Hanif

who passed his test on 27th July. Muhammed's Observer was Brian Clarke
This is Brian's first pass, as our newest Observer. Senior was Simon Arnold.

Fiona Lees

Fiona has retaken and passed her test. We are very proud of her.

Kevin Jennison

Kevin also re-taken his test and was awarded a First.
He has since qualified as a Local Observer. Well done Kevin.

and

WELCOME TO OUR NEW ASSOCIATES

Amanda Featherstone

Charles Shepherd

James Simcock

Stephen Lewis

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

Committee meetings:

These will be on the **second** Tuesday of the month. Venue: Aldridge Community Centre

Your 2019 diary

Autumn talk - date to be confirmed:

Jill Vincent-Wilson will provide us with a presentation on Smart Motorways

Saturday, 12th October - Bletchley Park, Milton Keynes

This is an all-day trip, in a minibus, maximum of 12 people. The cost will be £18.

Departing from Aldridge Community Centre at 9am. I visited Bletchley Park several years ago - its brilliant. Warning - be quick to book, the mini-bus will soon fill up!

Wednesday 20th November-

Quiz Night + Fish & Chip supper

Quizmaster - Chris Rice. Venue: Aldridge Community Centre. For those of you who haven't attended one of our Quiz nights - well you have missed a brain-aching treat. Chris Rice is the Quizmaster (Chris is also one of our Observers), and he sets some devious questions - so come along and give it a try this time.

The book a place and organise your fish & chips: Please contact Martin Goad at "martingoad@mail.com" to put your name on the list. Further details and reminder will be circulated a bit closer to the event.



Dear Reader: If you do have any ideas for visits, events, talks - then please just sent an email to Martin Goad, who will be pleased to hear from you. These things take time to organise so whatever suggested can be added to next years diary



Chairman`s Chat from Martin Goad

Did you know that:

- It is against the Highway Code for car drivers to use lane one of a motorway. That lane is just for lorries.
- It is illegal to move out of lane two unless joining or leaving the motorway or overtaking.
- You can be arrested for driving with snow on your roof even if your windows are clear.
- All speed cameras have a built in 10% tolerance.
- Approaching a roundabout you should signal right unless you intend to take the first exit.
- It is illegal to eat a bacon sandwich whilst driving.

These are all things that experienced drivers believed to be true. What do you think ? ? ?

Some are more clear-cut than others but they are all false. They give a taste of the misconceptions of many people out on the roads. Some poor driving out there is just flagrantly aggressive or rude but in many cases road users really do not know how they should be acting as they have forgotten over time or maybe were taught wrongly when learning or have followed poor examples on the road. So, when it comes to driving, we must never stop questioning what we think we know.

Many times I have heard people say "what can we do about poor driving and riding out there"? The obvious answer is to get people to do their advanced test, but realistically this only applies to a few and not the mass of drivers and riders. There is nothing that you can do about the hard core of deliberate misbehaviour except keep out of the way and make yourself and yours safe. So what about the mass of low skilled road users out there?

This is where we can make a difference as every time we go out and drive to advanced standards somebody is watching. If we take pride in being calm, observant, knowledgeable and courteous maybe others might take note. This applies particularly to our own family and friends in the car with us, and especially to the young who are the road users of the future.

Whenever and wherever drivers meet up terrible tales are told of outrageous or ignorant behaviour by other road users. As advanced drivers we should know our highway code and how to be safe out there and we hopefully always obey the rules of the road. We do have the chance to make a difference and improve road safety in the wider community by influencing those closest to us every time we drive or ride.

Advice from the IAM

Don't get the wet weather blues



We've had a typical English summer and here comes autumn - sun for a couple of weeks and then downpours for days on end. Here are a few ways to keep safe in heavy rain and floods.

Heavy rain

- Driving in heavy rain will affect your visibility, so take it slow. Rule 126 of the Highway Code states that the braking distance between yourself and another car on a dry road surface should be at least two seconds, and at least four seconds when driving in the rain
- Ensure your windscreen wipers are working correctly, and that the windscreen is clean - using your wipers when you have a dirty windscreen will just smear and make your visibility even worse.
- Turn your headlights on. Many of us now have automated headlights, but often they will not come on in adverse weather conditions; ensure they are on so you're visible to other road users. A good rule of thumb is that if you need your wipers on, then you need your headlights on too

Aquaplaning - Is your car aquaplaning? Here are some signs that you could be:

- Your engine may become louder if the driving wheels have lost grip
- It will feel as though you've dropped down in the gears causing revs to increase
- The steering may become lighter and unresponsive

If you experience any of this, try not to panic. Follow these tips:

- Ease off the accelerator or cancel the cruise control
- Hold the steering wheel straight and firm
- Do not hit your brakes hard
- When your car gains traction you can slowly begin to use the brake and slow down.

How to avoid aquaplaning

- Check your tyres - they can have a massive impact on how your car will handle in the wet.
- Reduce your speed; problems occur when the tyres can no longer clear the standing water as they rotate. Going slower will allow time for the tread to do its job
- Be alert for flood warnings on the road and if you can see any water in the distance, be sure to slow down and prepare to go around it
- Avoid using cruise control in extreme conditions

Floods

- If there are floods you need to consider other routes to keep you safe.
- If the water is standing more than six inches deep, avoid driving through it. You can judge the depth in relation to the kerb
- If there are similar vehicles driving safely through, then you can make a judgment call on whether it's safe to do so yourself.
- If the water is fast flowing, do not attempt to drive through it. There is a real danger of your car being swept away
- If you have decided to drive through a flood take the following precautions:
 - Go slowly and take it easy
 - Press lightly on the clutch and add gentle pressure to the accelerator to increase engine revs but do so without speed. Do this in a similar way to how you do hill starts, this will prevent water from entering your exhaust. If you're in an automatic, accelerate lightly but control the speed with your brakes
- If you have any doubt, turn back. If your engine takes in any water, it will immediately hydro lock and the engine will stop.
- Remember to stay alert and avoid splashing pedestrians!!! If this is done accidentally you can still receive a fixed penalty and three points on your license for driving without due care and attention. If done deliberately it could be a public order offence, a court appearance, or a fine

Advice from the DVLA

7 tips for motorists to stay safe online

With new online scams cropping up all the time, motorists have increasingly become a target for fraudsters. DVLA has revealed their contact centre received 1,275 reports regarding suspected vehicle tax scams during the last 3 months of 2018.



1) Only use GOV.UK

When looking for information or using their online services, double check that you are using a GOV.UK webpage so that you can be sure that you're dealing directly with DVLA.

2) Scam emails

We never send emails that ask you to confirm your personal details or payment information. If you get anything like this, do not open any links and delete the email immediately.

3) Beware of misleading websites

Keep an eye out for potentially misleading third party websites. These sites will often offer to help you apply for a driving licence or tax your car but are likely to charge additional fees for services that you could get for free or at a lower cost on GOV.UK.

4) Look out for premium rate numbers

Look out for websites offering to connect you to their contact centre, as they are usually premium rate numbers. Their contact centre numbers will only ever begin with 0300 - which costs the same as a local call.

5) Be mindful of what you share online

Never share images online of your driving licence and vehicle documents. This personal information could be invaluable to those looking to steal the identity of a vehicle or its owner.

6) Texts

The DVLA never send texts about vehicle tax refunds. Text scams often ask you to follow a link to provide credit card details. Never click on the link and delete the text straight away.

7) Report any suspected scams

If you are concerned about any calls, texts, emails or suspicious online activity, you should report it to the police via Action Fraud immediately.

When looking for contact details or any of DVLA's digital services, you should only use GOV.UK so you can be sure that you're dealing directly with DVLA.

5

Posting on social media is a way of life for most drivers, however they may not realise they risk setting themselves up as a prime target for fraudulent activity. People can stay ahead of the criminals by being vigilant with their personal information and who they share it with, and reporting anything suspicious to the Police via Action Fraud.

Fraudsters are increasingly using more sophisticated ways to trick their victims, and so it is important that members of the public think about their online behaviour and ensure that they do everything they can to protect themselves.

Taking measures such as limiting the amount of personal information shared on social media platforms and being cautious of any unsolicited messages received can help to prevent online crime.

You should always be cautious when sharing personal information online. Always check that who you dealing with really is who they claim to be - for example, by only using GOV.UK when accessing government services online, such as the DVLA.

If you believe you have been a victim of fraud, please report it us via the DVLA online reporting tool or by phone 0300 123 2040.

A gentle reminder to our Associates



- ❖ Please keep in touch with your observer - it is your responsibility to do so (it also saves them wondering what has happened!)
- ❖ If you cannot keep an appointment - please do tell your observer. Observers work on a voluntary basis and have lives of their own to fit around their observing. It is only courteous to let them know.
- ❖ When you have passed your test - let us know, so that all the group can celebrate your success.

Thanks



Ask a silly question...

DVLA has released a list of some of the unusual questions customers have asked whilst trying to find out if their car is taxed. DVLA's services on Google Assistant and Amazon's Alexa allow motorists to ask DVLA when their vehicle tax is due by providing the registration number. These services have been used over 47,000 times by more than 20,000 unique users since they launched 2 years ago.

While most people have asked when their tax is due, some have asked some slightly more unusual questions, including:

- how do you get chewing gum off a leather settee?
- how do I apply for Love Island?
- do you know a good vegan recipe for chicken?
- are red cars the fastest?
- what time is lunch?
- is it going to rain in Ellesmere Port today?
- what did you think of the Bumblebee movie?
- how can I stop my flatmate drinking my milk?
- where are my socks?
- is this rash normal?

The DVLA want motorists to be able use their services quickly and easily and voice assistants are becoming more and more popular. While some of the questions customers have asked fall a little outside their area of expertise, they continue to make their services simpler, better and safer. Nearly 98% of interactions with DVLA are now carried out using DVLA's digital services.

Anyone wishing to try out the Alexa Skill can download it, or if they have Google Home or Google Assistant on their phone or tablet they can ask it to "Talk to DVLA" or "Ask DVLA".

and finally.....

Editor Sandie's observations (actually a good old moan !!!) about other cars on supermarket car parks!

- ❖ I usually park on a remote section of supermarket car park, where there are less or no cars (its good exercise too). Why do driving school cars feel it necessary to use my car as a target to practice parking next to ?

It's most un-nerving when pushing my trolley back to the car to see my car seemingly being used as a target! However, a glare at the offending car is usually enough to sort the situation out!

- ❖ Does anyone use the indicators on their cars these days ? On car parks or the roads ? I will be pushing my trolley back to my car, will stand still in a parking bay waiting for a vehicle to pass by, when this vehicle driver decides he/she wants to park in the space where I am standing - without indication., just starts turning in ! Lots of other spaces around too. Probably just because I am standing in that space !!!
- ❖ The newer 4 x 4 vehicles are now so wide I am totally surprised anyone can get out of them, as there is so little space between them and the car next to them! Sometimes the drivers using these huge cars seem to barely see above the steering wheel - makes you wonder why they own them? Its one of the reasons I park well away from other cars - these monster cars have such wide doors. However as the car spaces haven't changed over the years, the problems will only get worse - I'm staying well away from them!

Oh, I've enjoyed that moan. Seriously, has anyone got an observation on supermarket car parks - email me please

and definitely finally - a joke from the Edinburgh Festival (apparently)

Someone stole my antidepressants.
Whoever they are, I hope they are happy.

Sorry but I did promise to include it !

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