

Editors column

Hello and welcome to the March newsletter.

Spring is in the air, days are finally getting longer and British Summer Time is only a couple of weeks away. I myself have noticed I am going to work and back again in the light.

I have included information regarding the AGM this month. I also have an interesting article from Julie Hage that was on MSN news last month

If you have any comment or anything you can add to the next newsletter please feel free to E-Mail myself (kevinhill213@outlook.com).

I will gladly reply to any e-mail sent.

Also if you have anything to put to the committee please feel free to E-Mail me and I will reply after the following committee meeting.

Committee News

This month see's the Annual General Meeting, which will take place on the 15th March 2017 at 8.00pm This is at Police HQ Enderby. We would like to invite anyone who would like to consider joining the Committee to put there names forward before this date. You can send your details to myself or to Melvyn Smith (melvynsmith21@gmail.com) or speak to any of the committee on the night of the AGM.

The committee would like to wish our Vice Chairman (Fred Palmer) a get well wish after his recent Open Heart Surgery. We all hope you have a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing you at the group night and committee meetings in the very near future.

A Warm Welcome

The Committee would like to offer a warm welcome to the following people who has enrolled in the Skills For Life course in the last month.

- Christian Malin
- Monica Duggal

We hope you enjoy the training. Remember you are all welcome at the group nights which are on the third Wednesday of every month. I will be in touch with you all in the coming weeks to explain the next steps and getting you paired with an observer.

Congratulations

Congratulations to the following people for passing there Skills for Life Test. They are:

- Hannah Lane (Fred Palmer Observer)
- Sylvia Hitchen (Malcolm Ballard Observer)

Well done to you both!

Group Night

Group night this month will be the Annual General Meeting. This is on the 15th March at 8.00pm. Although at this time we have not secured a speaker we hope to have a speaker from within the Leicestershire Police force.

Everyone is welcome so please join us.

This is being held at the Police Headquarters. This is situated at Narborough rd. (B4114) near Fosse Park.

Full postal address is

Leicestershire police Headquarters

St Johns

Narborough Rd

Enderby

LE19 6BX

We will also be holding a prize raffle and presenting awards. All members are welcome to the AGM and group nights, so come along and get involved with your group. After all its free. Even the tea and coffee is free.

Any questions or suggestions about group night events you can contact Fred Palmer (vice Chairman/ Events Co-Ordinator) palmerdec@btinternet.com

Membership

This was the item for the February newsletter but due to it's importance I have included it again in the March newsletter

Change of System for Group Subscriptions

The Committee has unanimously agreed to change the way Group Subscriptions (Subs) are collected, switching from an "Anniversary" system to an "Annual" system.

Anniversary systems are when subs are collected each year in the same month as when a member joined the Group; the Annual system is when subs are due on the same date each year – that date will be 01 April.

The key advantage of the annual system is that members can be notified electronically (website, newsletter or email) that their subs are due and only those for whom we do not hold an e-address will need to be contacted by post. The key disadvantage is the loss of revenue during the changeover, however the Committee has considered this and believes the long-term benefits outweigh the short-term loss.

The new system will be introduced immediately, although it will not be fully in effect until next year – here's how it will work:

Members whose anniversary subscription date is in January, February, March & April will pay as normal in 2017, but not in 2018 until 01 April,

Members whose anniversary subscription date is May – December (inclusive) next subscriptions will not be due until 01 April 2018,

Subs will remain at £7.50 per year,

Some members will need to change their Standing Orders with their banks – everyone except those currently paying in April,

We would like to treat any money collected from members who do not change their anniversary payment as a donation,

From 2018, ALL subs will be called for payment in April.

No-one loses out, although those with subs due in April gain nothing, everyone else gains to a varying degree.

A simple sliding scale of membership costs for new full members joining the Group throughout the year has been worked out, as has a system for newly-qualified former Group Associates having passed their test and wishing to continue as a member of the Group.

The Treasurer, Tony Moore, will explain further at the Annual General Meeting on 15 March 2017 and there will be reminders in future newsletters. If you have any suggestions or queries before the AGM, please contact him by email on anthonyj.moore@btinternet.com

Observer News

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Observers who attended the associate training day on Saturday 11th February. Without your dedication these events would not take place. I am planning another training day in April and I will be in touch when the final arrangements are in place.

Calling all Full Members!

Over the last few months our Observer numbers within Leicester Group have reduced to 9. We are looking to recruit more observers as we have a backlog of associates waiting to be trained to the standard for test.

If you are a full member and would like to give some of your time to pass your skills on to someone else, then please get in touch with myself or any committee member.

Becoming an observer is not as difficult as you may think. This can be very rewarding and doesn't have to take all of your spare time. Some observers have as little as one associate that has an assessed run just once a month. Training to be an Observer can take as little as three runs out with a Local Observer Assessor to which we have 4 LOA's within the group

The group will provide all of your training at no cost to you, other than some of your time. There are three levels of observers.

The first is a Local Observer which is the lower level of Observer. To gain this qualification you will be trained and tested within the group. You will also go through periodic training within the group usually two to three morning training sessions held every year with all the other Observers. Although it is not mandatory you attend every session.

The second level of Observer is a National Observer. This will see you being trained within the group but you will take a test outside of the group by an IAM examiner. This will need to be retaken every five years. There will also be periodic training sessions within the group. This is the same sessions as the Local Observers.

The third level is a Local Observer Assessor. If you wish to attain this level you will be trained in the same way as a National Observer with a test by an IAM Examiner. The only difference is you will have to retake the exam every three years.

If you, like me would like to pass on the skill you have obtained through IAM. There couldn't be another rewarding way to do it.

If anyone is interested please come and talk to us on the group evening or contact myself (Kevin Hill) on email using kevinhill213@outlook.com or call me on 07904 386250

Associate News

The recent Associate training day was a great success with a good turnout. I would like to thank everyone who attended and hope you all enjoyed a very informative day. I look forward to starting the new associates in the coming weeks.

I plan on doing another associate training day very soon due to the rising number of associates waiting.

To all associates out there currently being assessed.

Please be aware that if you have been assessed for a year or more without taking your test, you may have to renew your IAM membership to carry on your assessed runs. If you have not managed to complete your course within the year please contact myself to check if you are still valid for insurance purposes. We may be able to extend your membership if there are mitigating circumstances. I should be in contact with any associate that has expired there membership, but if you have not been contacted or think your membership has expired please get in touch.

If Anyone would like to have a piece included in this newsletter please contact me.

Kevin Hill (Group Co-ordinator) kevinhill213@outlook.com

Leicestershire's Police report

A short report from Graham Compton of the Leicestershire Police:

Christmas Drink Drive Campaign.

We arrested 49 drivers including 4 for drug driving. Just a few less than 2015. 19 arrests followed RTAs. One third were young drivers under 24. Lots to do on this one.

Mobile Phones.

New penalties kick in on 1st March upgrading the penalties to 6 points and £200 fine. There will be a big campaign in the interim to try and get the message across.

Thank you Graham for this report.

Mobile Phone laws

As Graham has mentioned in the item above, the laws changed on the 1st of march regarding the use of mobile phones whilst driving. I have included below the official page on the Government website that explains the new law in full.

It's illegal to use a hand-held phone or similar device while driving, or riding a motorcycle.

(The rules are the same if you're stopped at traffic lights or queuing in traffic.)

It's also illegal to use a hand-held phone or similar device when supervising a learner driver or rider.

You must stay in **full control of your vehicle** at all times. The **Police can stop you** if they think you're not in control because you're distracted. This includes if you're using devices like your Sat Nav or car radio.

When you can use a phone in your vehicle

If you're the driver, you can only use your phone in a vehicle if you:

- need to call 999 or 112 in an emergency and it's unsafe or impractical to stop.
- are **Safely parked**

Penalties for using your phone while driving

You could get 6 penalty points on your licence and a fine of £200.

Your case could also go to court and you could be **Disqualified from Driving or Riding** and get a maximum fine of £1,000. Drivers of buses or goods vehicles could get a maximum fine of £2,500.

Extract from the gov.uk website

New Drivers

It is worth noting that any new drivers only have 6 points to lose in the first 2 years of driving. This could mean that a lot of new drivers could end up losing their licence for being caught once for a mobile phone offence. I think the message is pretty clear "Do Not Use Your Mobile Phone Whilst Driving."

As we should all be aware being advanced motorist, the risks of using your mobile phone behind the wheel can be devastating. The distraction even when on hands free could lead to a major accident.

And Finally

The Dutch Reach

This article has been sent in from Julie Hage which I find very useful.

The Dutch Reach if widely adopted by motorists, could save lives and help elevate the reputation of Britain's roads to that of those of oft-revered cities such as Amsterdam or Copenhagen.

Originating some 50 years ago in the Netherlands, the Dutch Reach is a method of opening a car door with the hand furthest from the handle, so in the UK, the left hand of the driver, or right hand of the passenger. This means motorists are forced to turn their body towards the door, allowing them the opportunity to look over their shoulder to see whether a cyclist - or motorcyclist - is coming.

In the Netherlands it is taught to children both in school and from their parents, as well as being a required section of the driving test.

The method has become a central pillar to groups campaigning to put an end to "dooring", the rather literal name that describes when a cyclist is knocked off their bike by an opening car door.

For more information you can go to the link below

<http://www.msn.com/en-gb/cars/ownership/how-opening-your-car-door-like-the-dutch-could-save-someones-life>

Thank you Julie for this article.

Article source www.msn.com

Next Month

I will be reporting on the AGM and associated reports from the officers along with any changes within the committee.

I will also be reporting on the new car tax rates, as well as existing car tax rates. Both new and existing car rates are going through some major changes in April. More cost for us all I am afraid.

If anyone has any suggestions for an article please get in touch. After all this newsletter is for all group members to communicate with the group so please use it.

Kevin Hill (Group Co-ordinator) kevinhill213@outlook.com