



**Dumfries & Galloway Group of Advanced Motorists and Motorcyclists**  
 .... run entirely by volunteers ....

## Winter 2026

STEERING A COURSE FOR SAFER DRIVING AND RIDING



<b><u>Group Committee Members for 2024/25</u></b>			This magazine was published by:  <b>Dumfries &amp; Galloway Group of Advanced Motorists &amp; Motorcyclists.</b>  For more details of our activities see our web site at:  <a href="http://www.iamdumfries.org.uk">www.iamdumfries.org.uk</a>  Contact the Group Secretary: <a href="mailto:iamdumfriesgroup@gmail.com">iamdumfriesgroup@gmail.com</a>  Facebook: <b>Dumfries &amp; Galloway IAM (Motorcycles) Group</b> <b>IAM Dumfries &amp; Galloway (Cars)</b>
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**What's on?:** Check out events at [www.iamdumfries.org.uk/events/](http://www.iamdumfries.org.uk/events/)

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January - NO Assessors Marking System - Presentation by Stephen Millar

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February (Date TBC) - Slot Car Club (Scalectrix) - Old Lochside Primary School

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March (Date TBC) - Ten Pin Bowling with Carlisle group - Carlisle Bowling

Venue for meetings: The Five Arches, 345 Annan Road, Dumfries, DG1 3JR. Starting 7:30pm except where otherwise stated

<b>For membership and all other enquiries call: 07707 035518</b> <b>or e-mail: <a href="mailto:iamdumfriesgroup@gmail.com">iamdumfriesgroup@gmail.com</a></b>	<i>Photography notice:</i> Occasionally we may take photos during meetings, guidance sessions or at other events in order to promote the Group and its activities. Photos may be reproduced in our web sites, our magazine or through other promotions. If you wish to withhold your permission for your image to be used please contact the Group Secretary.
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## Chairperson's Report

This month's activities once again demonstrated the commitment of our members to high standards of advanced driving and group engagement. Turnout at our practical sessions and observer-led coaching runs was strong, and feedback continues to reflect satisfaction with route planning, safety briefings, and peer learning.

We remain mindful of the evolving UK road safety and licensing landscape that affects all drivers, including advanced motorists. Recent DVLA/road safety policy developments emphasise enhanced fitness-to-drive standards, ongoing medical and vision considerations, and modernised licence management systems. Members should note **emerging consultation proposals around compulsory eyesight checks for older drivers and strengthened reporting of health conditions**, part of the Government's broader road safety strategy.

There are also changes already in force which may impact our group members — for example, **expanded vehicle category privileges for Category B licences allowing heavier electric vehicles (up to 4,250 kg)** and a continued rollout of **digital licence options via the GOV.UK wallet/app**.

As always, we encourage members to:

- Keep DVLA licence details and digital records up to date.
- Report relevant medical changes promptly, as required by DVLA rules.
- Maintain exceptional standards aligned with IAM best practice.

**Finally, I'd like to thank our observers and volunteers for their continued support; your dedication drives both safety and enjoyment within the group.**

Keep Safe!

- pp: **Alan Carmichael**, Chairman

## Secretary's Report

We are in a spell of really cold and frosty weather, hopefully everyone is driving and riding safely and using all our advanced skills.

Since the last newsletter we have had 2 car passes, Andrew McGregor and Alana Thompson and 2 motorcycle passes, Ewan McGregor and Andre Ramsay. Congratulations to all the members and their Observers. At present we have 11 car associates and 2 motorcycle associates progressing through their courses.

Our last meeting in November had a slightly better attendance but there is lots of room for more. It is very disappointing to arrange someone to come along, giving up their time to speak to us, and we have a limited audience. Colin Glen-Barr was excellent discussing different aspects of eyesight and how it affects our driving.

The January meeting is on the 20<sup>th</sup> at the Five Arches when Stephen Millar, our ADSM, is coming along to speak mainly to our car and motorcycle observers about scoring drives and rides to ensure all areas of the UK are at the same standard. If you want to know more about keeping your skills up or perhaps want to become an Observer then this would be ideal.

I am on the point of confirming dates for a visit to the slot car club at Lochside and also 10 pin bowling with the Carlisle group. If you want to attend either please let me know. We are struggling to find subjects to interest all so please let a committee member know if you have a subject we can arrange to come along to the group. Final dates will be on the website and a reminder will be sent out a week or so before the event.

# **New Road Safety Measures**

The UK government has unveiled its first major road safety strategy in more than ten years, with the aim of reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads.

The proposed changes apply only to England and Wales, as some measures are already in place in Scotland and Northern Ireland. While the plans will be opened to public consultation, the government has outlined several key proposals and how they could affect drivers.

## **Vision and cognitive testing for older drivers**

Drivers aged 70 and over may be required to undergo an eyesight test every three years, rather than simply declaring that their vision meets the legal standard for driving. Although drivers must currently be able to read a number plate from 20 metres away, no proof is required.

Eye tests through the NHS are already free for people aged over 60 across the UK. In addition, the Department for Transport has committed to exploring options for cognitive testing for older motorists.

## **Minimum learning period for learner drivers**

Learner drivers could also be required to complete a minimum learning period of up to six months between passing their theory test and taking their practical driving exam. At present, learners are able to book their practical test immediately after passing the theory test.

The government believes that introducing a set learning period would allow new drivers more time to develop their skills, including gaining experience in different driving conditions. Any decision on this proposal will follow a public consultation.

The minimum learning period would include both formal lessons with a driving instructor and informal practice, such as driving with parents or guardians. Evidence from other countries suggests that similar measures have reduced collision rates by as much as 32%.

Currently, many learner drivers are already facing waits of around six months for practical tests due to a backlog caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which is expected to continue until late 2027.

## **Stricter drink-driving limits**

The government has proposed tougher drink-driving limits across the UK. Under the plans, the legal alcohol limit for learner and newly qualified drivers would be reduced from 80mg per 100ml of blood to around 20mg. For all other drivers, the limit would be lowered to approximately 50mg — the level currently in place in Scotland.

Alcohol limits vary depending on the type of test used. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the current limits are higher than in Scotland across breath, blood and urine tests. Lower numerical limits indicate stricter rules, though they do not translate directly into a fixed number of alcoholic drinks, as alcohol affects individuals differently based on factors such as age, weight and metabolism.

The strategy also includes proposals to require certain drink-driving offenders to install alcohol interlock devices, known as “alcolocks”, in their vehicles. These devices prevent a car from starting unless the driver passes a breath test. Having an alcolock fitted would be a condition of being allowed to drive again. Similar systems are already used in countries including Australia, Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands and the United States.

Penalties for drink-driving offences will also be reviewed as part of the wider strategy.

## **Changes for motorcyclists**

The government is considering a major overhaul of the process for learning to ride a motorcycle, following a public consultation. This could involve changes to Compulsory Basic Training, as well as updates to government-funded schemes aimed at improving helmet safety.

Plans are also in place to expand trials of Project Prime, an initiative designed to help motorcyclists ride more safely on rural roads.

## **Tougher fines and penalties**

Road traffic enforcement will be strengthened to focus on what the government describes as the most dangerous road users. Proposed measures include new powers to suspend the licences of people suspected of drink or drug driving until their court appearance. Currently, drivers charged with these offences are often allowed to continue driving while on bail.

Drivers could also face penalty points for not wearing a seatbelt, or for driving with children who are not properly restrained. Harsher penalties are planned for those driving without insurance or a valid MOT, as well as for using so-called “ghost” number plates that cannot be read by automatic recognition cameras.



# How To Drive In Snow And Icy Weather

Driving in severe winter weather should be avoided unless your journey is essential. If you do need to travel in snow or icy conditions, preparation and caution are vital.

## What to carry in your car

Wear warm, comfortable clothing and carry a waterproof coat, hat, gloves, sturdy footwear and a blanket. Take food such as biscuits or chocolate, water, a hot drink if possible, and ensure your mobile phone is fully charged. A torch, any essential medication, a shovel, and items such as cat litter or old carpet can also help if you become stuck.

## Preparing your car

Winter tyres can provide extra grip, especially in areas prone to snow. If using standard tyres, check they are correctly inflated and have sufficient tread. Keep screen wash topped up with anti-freeze, maintain a healthy battery, and keep your fuel tank reasonably full. Electric vehicle drivers should allow for reduced battery range in cold weather and plan charging stops accordingly.

## How to drive safely

Allow extra time for journeys and stick to main roads where possible. Clear all snow and ice from your windows, lights and roof before setting off, and never use boiling water to de-ice glass. Drive smoothly at a suitable speed, avoid sudden braking or acceleration, and leave extra space between you and the vehicle ahead, as stopping distances are much longer in snow and ice.

## If you get stuck

Stop accelerating if your wheels spin. Clear snow from around the tyres and use sand, gravel or cat litter to improve grip. Rock the vehicle gently by shifting between gears if possible. If you cannot move, stay with your car and run the engine only briefly for warmth, ensuring the exhaust is clear of snow to avoid dangerous fumes.





## St Michael's Services



St. Michael Street, Dumfries.  
DG1 2QD Tel: 01387 254304

Shell Standard & V-Power fuels, 3 x Jet Wash Bays,  
Air, Vac & Screenwash Bay, Londis Convenience Store,  
Cash Point, Outdoor Washing Machine & Tumble Drier.  
Special Offers for Dumfries Group Members

## Wigtown Road Services

Wigtown Road, Newton Stewart.  
DG8 6JZ Tel: 01671 403157

Shell Standard & V-Power fuels, Jet Wash, Snack bar,  
Large Londis Convenience Store,  
Costa Coffee Machine, Cash Point,  
Air/Screenwash/Vacuum/Fragrance Machine  
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## St John's Town Services

4 Ayr Road, St John's Town of Dalry,  
DG7 3SW Tel: 01644 430669

Shell Standard & V-Power fuels, Red Diesel & Kerosene,  
Large Londis Convenience Store, Costa Coffee Machine,  
Air & Screenwash Machine,  
Special Offers for Dumfries Group Members



## Benmar Services



Station Road, Moffat,  
DG10 9EL Tel: 01683 220010

Esso Standard & Supreme+ fuels, 2 x 24 hour Jet Wash Bays,  
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Outdoor Washing Machine & Tumble Drier,  
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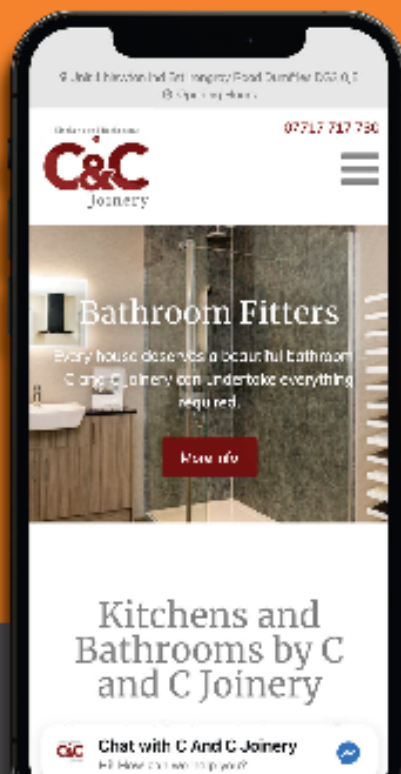
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