



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

Spring 2026

STEERING A COURSE FOR SAFER DRIVING AND RIDING



Group Committee Members for 2025/26

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Secretary	Helen Cameron	07707 035518
Treasurer	Andy Scott	07775 954290
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	Stephen Dawson	07860 730417

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***Dumfries & Galloway Group of
Advanced Motorists &
Motorcyclists.***

*For more details of our activities see our web site
at:*

www.iamdumfries.org.uk

*Contact the
Group Secretary:
iamdumfriesgroup@gmail.com*

**Facebook: Dumfries & Galloway IAM (Motorcycles)
Group
IAM Dumfries & Galloway (Cars)**

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this magazine are
those of the contributors and not necessarily those of
the Editor, Group or the Institute of Advanced Motor-
ists, to which the Group is affiliated. Reg Charity No.
SC 023511

What's on?: Check out events at www.iamdumfries.org.uk/events/

Tuesday April 21st - Curling at Dumfries Ice Bowl - 7pm till 8pm - £14 per person - Please contact Helen ASAP to book your place.

Wednesday 20th May - AGM

**For membership and all other enquiries call: 07707
035518
or e-mail: iamdumfriesgroup@gmail.com**

Photography notice: 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.

Annual General Meeting

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by order of the Group Committee that the Annual General Meeting of “*Dumfries & Galloway Group of Advanced Motorists & Motorcyclists*” will be held on Wednesday 20th May 2026 to enable the Trustees of the Group (*Registered Charity No. SC 023511*) to present their Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended **31 March 2026** for approval by the Group Members and to conduct an election.

Issued by: Secretary: Helen Cameron; Contact: 07707 035518; Group No 6071; e-mail: dumfries@groups.iam.org.uk - 1-4-2026.

All Members, Associates and Friends are invited to attend but only Fully Paid Up Members of the IAM and of the Group may vote.

A Member entitled to vote at the General Meeting may appoint a proxy to vote in his stead. A proxy need not be a Full Member of the Group.

If you would like to join the committee please get in touch with the group secretary.

CURRENT OFFICERS: All Officers retire annually.

Chair: Alan Carmichael – Willing to re-stand

Secretary: Helen Cameron – Standing down

Treasurer: Andy Scott – Willing to re-stand

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: One third of the Committee (excluding Officers) must retire annually and may offer themselves for re-election. (Group Rule 3.4)

A. RETIRING BY ROTATION AND STANDING FOR RE-ELECTION: Stuart Murray

B. B RETIRING AND NOT STANDING FOR RE-ELECTION:

C. COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT RETIRING & NUMBER OF YEARS REMAINING: Graeme McColm (1)
Chris Wilson (1), Paul Darby (2), Donald Stirling(2), Stephen Dawson (2)

NOTE: The total number of Committee Members including the Officers must not exceed twenty. See the Nomination Form (available from the Secretary) for details, which must be returned by **9 am on 20th May 2026**. Group Rules and the Minutes of the **May 2025 AGM** are available on the Group web site or may be requested, from the Secretary, at least seven days in advance of the date for the AGM.

IMPORTANT:

The Group belongs to its Members and it will benefit from your input at the AGM and/or your participation on the committee, if you are able to help. Any full Member of the group wishing to help the group by volunteering to be a member of the committee should let the Secretary know in advance of the date for return of nomination papers so that a Nomination Form can be raised.

Chairperson's Report



Welcome to the Spring edition of our 2026 IAM Group magazine. IAM Roadsmart celebrate their 70th Anniversary this year and are increasing the number courses that they offer hopefully to cover all types and ages of Driver and Riders. It is important to mention that in these times of rising cost of fuel and energy that the courses on offer not only raise awareness and safety but also can benefit in efficiency and savings for those who take up the courses in regards to vehicle sympathy and reduced fuel consumption. IAM Roadsmart are also updating their I.T. Platforms and becoming part of the digital world. This may be more of a challenge to some more than other, myself included.

The car section of the group has had a good winter continuing with observed sessions in all weathers and obtaining great results. Going into Spring they have eight current associates on the books and I am sure that the great results will continue. We sadly lost two dear members of our group. Andy Stott, a friend and car Observer who passed away earlier in the year due to a sudden illness. Also Andrew Edgar a keen attender of our social evenings. Our condolences are with their families and we thank them for their valuable contribution to our group.

The Bike section has had a short sabbatical while the weather has been at its worst and the roads have been treated with grit & salt. We are experiencing warmer weather, the days are stretching out and we will be resuming Observed runs imminently. We have four associates three Bike N.O.s and one in training. The Bike section is carrying out Rider refinement courses along with Police motorcyclists from Police Scotland this year. This is a National scheme being carried out through out the whole of Scotland. We have two dates 14th June and 19th July. (More details regarding this course can be found on IAM Roadsmart website).



For Bikers, please watch out on social media for up-and-coming Biker Don courses. IAM members along with other groups and SFRS have been undergoing training and are expecting to deliver courses in the very near future at Dumfries and Stranraer.



We had our annual ten pin bowling competition against Carlisle group earlier in the year and Dumfries retained the trophy, Yeah, even Helen's guide dog puppy got in on the act.



An enjoyable evening was had by group members at Dumfries Slot car club recently. It was so good one of our committee members has joined the club. (Good for you Chris)



A curling evening is planned for 22nd April at Dumfries Ice Bowl where we will take on a challenge from Carlisle group. If there are interested parties that wish to join us, please let Helen know in advance. (Tuition will be given to those who have not curled on the night).

The group will be attending events throughout the year; volunteers are always welcome to come along and help promote what we do and offer to the public our experience and share our knowledge and hopefully recruit onto our available courses. (two of those dates are below).

Scottish Fire & Rescue (SFRS) Open day Dumfries Saturday 16th May

Castle Douglas Soap Box Challenge Sunday 12th July

Remember if you wish to join in on any of our social events / evenings or volunteer at events please just get in touch with any of the committee and we can update you with what's going on.

It only remains for me to thank our observers and volunteers for their continued support; your dedication drives both safety and enjoyment within the group. Keep Safe!-

Alan Carmichael, Chairperson

Secretary's Report Spring 2026

As we approach the start of the busy period for motorcycles and cars, we hope to be more proactive in spreading the word about the IAMRoadsmart and road safety in the region. This year is the 70th Anniversary of the Institute of Advanced Motorists and Motorcyclists.

If you are able to spare a couple of hours to help man the gazebo at events or give out leaflets then it will be greatly appreciated. Our first event is Saturday 16th May at Dumfries Fire Station Open Day, then we will be attending the Soap Box Challenge in Castle Douglas in July so if you have a spare couple of hours please let me know.

Our April and May events are at the front of the magazine but if you have any suggestions for the 26-27 syllabus or you would like to stand for a 3 year stint on the committee, please let a committee member know before the AGM in May. We are looking for 2 new committee members and as I am stepping down as secretary after a number of years this will be my last magazine report.

The April meeting is a joint meeting with the Carlisle group and it's at Dumfries Ice Bowl. We will be getting tuition and trying curling so if you want to have a go or even just want to come and watch please let me know numbers as soon as possible. This will be Wednesday 22nd April at 7.0 pm.

Our AGM will be on Wednesday 20th May at the Five Arches on Annan Road with a 7.30 start.

We have had 2 car passes since our last magazine so congratulations to Jennifer Thomson and John Carlyle who both achieved a F1st pass.

Subscriptions for 2026-27 are due on 1st April 2026, the cost will stay at £15. Please see attached forms and return to Andy Scott as soon as possible.

We are always looking for new blood on our committee and would welcome anyone who can help us to come forward.

Gordon Shedden Experience At Knockhill

The afternoon at Knockhill Racing Circuit had that mix of nerves and excitement you only really get before doing something properly special. Set in the hills of Fife, the track looks tight and tricky even just standing in the paddock—and it definitely lives up to that once you're out on it. Blind crests, quick direction changes, and not much room for mistakes make it feel like a proper challenge from the start.

To make things even more interesting, the session began in the wet. The track was properly damp at first, which made those early laps feel even more cautious. Grip was limited, braking distances were longer, and it really forced you to be smooth with everything. But as the afternoon went on, the conditions slowly improved. The racing line started to dry out, confidence built up, and you could gradually push the car more and more each lap.

What made the day even more surreal was having Gordon Shedden in the passenger seat, talking me through everything. Knowing you've got a BTCC champion beside you is a bit intimidating at first, but he was actually really relaxed and easy to listen to, which helped settle the nerves pretty quickly.

The car for the day was a Honda Civic Type R, and straight away it felt serious. You sit low, everything feels tight and focused, and once you get moving you realise it's properly quick but also really easy to trust—even in tricky conditions.



The first few laps were mainly about just getting used to the track and dealing with the lack of grip. Knockhill isn't somewhere you can just jump in and get right—it takes a bit of figuring out. Corners like Duffus Dip are especially tricky, and even more so in the wet, where you're going downhill and turning in at the same time. It felt a bit unnatural at first, but Gordon was constantly giving pointers—when to brake, where to turn in, when to get back on the power—and it all started to click after a while.

Over the 30 laps, the confidence definitely built up—helped a lot by the track drying out. At the start, I was braking way too early and being quite cautious, but as the grip improved, I started carrying more speed and trusting both the car and the advice I was getting. The Civic Type R handled it all really well—it just seemed to grip and go, especially once a dry line appeared, which made it a lot easier to push on.

What stood out most was how Gordon explained things. He didn't overcomplicate it or throw loads of technical stuff at me—he kept it simple and focused on getting the basics right. Things like being smooth with the steering, not rushing the corners, and getting a clean line made a big difference. By the end of the 30 laps, the track felt a lot more familiar—and a lot quicker—than it did at the start.

Then came the part where I jumped into the passenger seat.

Watching (and feeling) Gordon Shedden drive the same car on the same track was honestly a bit of a shock—in a good way. What felt fast when I was driving suddenly felt like another level completely. He was braking so much later, carrying loads more speed through the corners, and everything just felt incredibly smooth and controlled—even with some damp patches still lingering off the racing line.

Those two hot laps went by very quickly, but they were probably the biggest eye-opener of the whole day. It really showed the difference between a decent track session and proper professional driving. The car just seemed to do everything effortlessly in his hands.

Overall, it was an amazing experience. Not just because of the speed, but because you could actually feel yourself improving as the laps went on—and adapting to the changing conditions as the track dried. Driving at Knockhill is something special on its own, but doing it in a Civic Type R with Gordon Shedden coaching—and then seeing what he can really do with it—took it to another level.

Having watched the BTCC at Knockhill for years this was definitely an experience I won't forget anytime soon.

Chris Wilson



New Driving Test Booking Rules

New rules for booking driving tests in the UK will be introduced over the next few months to make the system fairer, according to the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA).

From the 12th May, only learner drivers will be allowed to book, change, or swap their car driving tests. This means driving instructors will no longer be able to do it for them. Then from the 9th June, learners will only be able to move their test to one of the three closest test centres to where they originally booked.

The government says these changes are meant to reduce long waiting times and stop people from unfairly making money by reselling test slots. Simon Lightwood said learners deserve a fair system and should not be taken advantage of by third-party websites. He explained that the changes will help stop the system being “gamed” and make sure test slots go to people who genuinely need them. At the moment, some instructors and third parties have been misusing the booking system. Investigations found that some instructors were paid to share their login details, allowing others to book tests in bulk. These tests were then sold on platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook for as much as £500, even though the official DVSA price is only £62 on weekdays and £75 at evenings or weekends.

The DVSA said the new rules are a big change, especially for instructors, but they are based on evidence and feedback from learners, most of whom wanted more control over their bookings. The changes are also designed to stop the use of automated bots that quickly book up available slots and resell them for profit.

However, not everyone supports the plans. Richard Holden criticised the government, saying the changes do not go far enough and fail to solve the bigger issue of long delays.

There is still a major backlog of driving tests, mainly caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Around 1.1 million tests were missed during 2020–21, and it may take until 2027 to fully clear the backlog.

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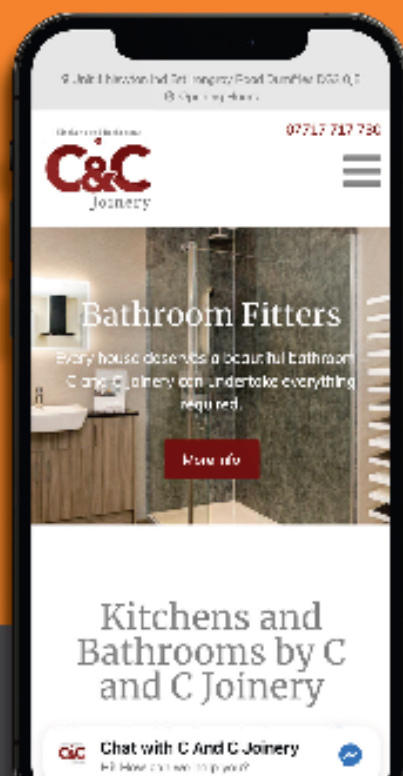
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