



Newsletter ~ April 2026

St Helens Group of Advanced Motorists
Working to make our roads safer every day...

Welcome

Hello everyone and welcome to the April edition of the newsletter.

With the lighter nights approaching and Spring starting to take a grip, we'll all have greater opportunity for more driving. The roads will become busier later into the evenings and so our advanced driving skills of good observations, observation links and anticipation will be put to good use.

As members and friends of the St. Helens Group you are very welcome to make contact with us and ask for a free 'MOT' of your driving. These observed runs are confidential between you and the Observer so please have no concerns about this. Bad habits can easily creep into our driving so an extra, non-judgemental, pair of eyes

on your driving may be all you need to become even safer.

It's important that we continue to promote ourselves in St. Helens and the surrounding area. If you are involved with another social group who has regular meetings with speakers then let me know and I'll offer its organising Committee a talk from the Group. We have done this recently for a U3A group and are planning to do so for a couple of Age UK groups.

April is the time of year when the Annual Subscriptions to the Group are due. Group subscriptions are different to annual subscriptions to national IAM RoadSmart.

We have held the subscription at £8.50 for at least 15 years and have

no plans to raise it at the moment. However, increasing costs are bearing down on the Group - notably Group Insurance and the hosting fees for our website (previously free hosting on the IAM website). So, please consider renewing your membership for another year. If you are no longer a current member but would like to support the group with a donation of any amount then this would be much appreciated - please let me know. If your donation is £8.50 or more you'll become an official St. Helens Group member!

For Associates who joined the Group after August last year, we will waive your annual subscription this year.

Mark Farnworth
Group Chairman

News from IAM RoadSmart

REACTION: IAM RoadSmart responds to government's motorway and major road upgrade plans

William Porter, Policy and Public Affairs Manager at IAM RoadSmart said: "Today's announcement is a welcome recognition that maintaining and renewing our road network is just as important as building new infrastructure when it comes to road safety. Drivers rely on well-maintained roads for safe journeys, and years of

underinvestment have left too many routes in a poor and potentially dangerous condition.

This focus on long-term, preventative maintenance is a positive step, but investment must go hand in hand with measures that improve driver behaviour and road design. A truly effective road network is one that is not only reliable and resilient but consistently supports safer driving and reduces the risk of collisions for everyone using it."

REACTION: IAM RoadSmart responds to new government figures on speeding

William Porter, Policy & Public Affairs Manager at IAM RoadSmart, said: "With speeding offences now at the highest level since 2011, it's clear we need renewed thinking to help reverse this dangerous trend. On average, these statistics show that more than 6,800 people are caught speeding every day, which reflects widespread disregard for lim-



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More Information (click links)

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its and puts lives at risk. We need a renewed focus on enforcement, education, and driver behaviour. Without decisive intervention, we risk normalising dangerous driving habits that have devastating consequences for individuals, families, and communities."

If you come across any interesting online articles relating to driving or road safety, from newspapers or motoring magazines etc. then send me the link for possible newsletter inclusion. **Mark Farnworth**



SUVs are more dangerous to pedestrians than smaller vehicles, say one third of Brits

- IAM Press Release 5th March

- 32% think SUVs are a greater threat to cyclists than smaller vehicles.
- 21% think SUVs should be banned from areas with high footfall, such as city centres.
- 32% support increasing Vehicle Excise Duty on SUVs.

One third of Brits think SUVs (Sports Utility Vehicles) are more dangerous to pedestrians than smaller vehicles. The research, carried out by the UK's leading road safety charity IAM RoadSmart, found that 32 percent of respondents thought that the plus-sized vehicles posed a more significant road safety threat to pedestrians.

One in three – 33 percent - think SUVs are a greater threat to cyclists than smaller vehicles. The survey, of 1,048 UK motorists shows that pedestrians, cyclists and people in smaller vehicles feel threatened by SUVs. More than half (52%) think the occupants of an SUV are safer than those in smaller vehicles - an opinion that is backed up by Euro NCAP (European New Car Assessment Programme) ratings which bill some of them as the safest family cars.

One fifth (21%) think SUVs should be banned from areas with high footfall, such as city centres. While no council is yet to ban the

vehicles, some have started to introduce increased parking fees, including Cardiff which has approved the principle of an additional charge for residential parking permits for vehicles weighing over 2.4 tonnes. The plan is aimed at cutting congestion and pollution and encouraging people to walk, cycle or use public transport when travelling in and around the city.

Research by Imperial College London in 2025 concluded that in the case of a crash, a pedestrian or cyclist hit by an SUV is more likely to be severely injured or killed than if they were hit by a smaller car. The odds of being killed increased by 44 percent for adults, and by 82 percent for children and cyclists due to the higher front end of an SUV, meaning that the victim is more likely to be thrown into the road instead of being carried on the vehicle's hood.

Sales of SUVs show no signs of waning; as of 2023, SUVs made up 48 percent of new car sales globally, up from 15 percent in 2010. In addition vehicle sizes are ballooning; Autocar magazine compared the average weight of new cars in its weekly road tests in 2016 and 2023 and found an increase from 1,553kg to 1,947kg – a rise of nearly 400kg.

Modern SUVs often exceed the standard UK parking space size of 2.4m x

4.8m, which has remained largely unchanged since the 1970s.

IAM RoadSmart Policy and Standards Director Nicholas Lyes said:

"Huge cars were once associated with the USA, but car spreading is alive and well in the UK. "Many drivers will have noticed that fitting a car into a space has become tighter compared to 20 years ago and may also hold their breath if they see a large oncoming SUV on a narrow country road. Despite the fact that these cars are growing, both in size and popularity, our roads and parking spaces are not significantly wider and something needs to give.

"Arguably, it is not the vehicle most at play but the driver who should be in control and have a greater spatial understanding of their vehicle. By doing so, this should foster more careful driving, particularly on rural roads and in busy urban environments. However, with demand for bigger cars showing no sign of abating, we believe improvements to vehicle design such as mandating bumpers and hoods from materials that reduce injury severity and pedestrian automatic emergency breaking".

Notice Board

Welcome

Welcome to the following Associates.

Brian Jackson (rider)
Brian Woodward (driver)
Martin Maunder (rider)
Eliel Aldred (rider)

Best wishes as you progress through your advanced driver/rider training.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Shaun Rowley on passing the Advanced Rider Test. Well done Shaun, all your hard work has paid off.

Mark Farnworth
Group Chairman

Observer Success



Alan Douglas, lead Rider Observer, has passed the Advanced Driving Test and achieved a F1rst.



Simon Brook has passed the car National Observer Assessment.

Well done to you both

Mark Farnworth
Group Chairman

Visit to the Anderton boat lift, Cheshire CW9 6FW

Saturday 25th April
11am start

The Lift is designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument and is a priceless piece of our living heritage. The unique 150-year-old structure was the world's first major commercial boat lift and transports around 3,000 boats a year between the Trent & Mersey Canal and the River Weaver Navigation some 50 feet below.

Family and friends are also welcome to join us.

Kay Heppenstall
Events organiser



**You are cordially invited to the
St Helens Group of Advanced Motorists
Annual General Meeting**

**to be held at 8pm on Thursday 11th June 2026
Ibis Hotel, Haydock, WA11 0GR.**

Guest Speaker: TBC

We hope that the new Mayor or Deputy Mayor of St. Helens will be able to attend. Our President Lady Kirsty Pilkington will also be attending. Due to these special guests we are looking for a good turnout and encourage you to make every effort to attend.

Wives, husbands, partners etc are welcome.

NOMINATION FOR 2026/2027 ST HELENS GROUP COMMITTEE

I _____ (full name in capitals)

_____ (signature)

wish to be elected to the following position:-

*Chairman

*Vice-Chairman

*Secretary

*Treasurer

*General Committee. Member

*Other (specify)

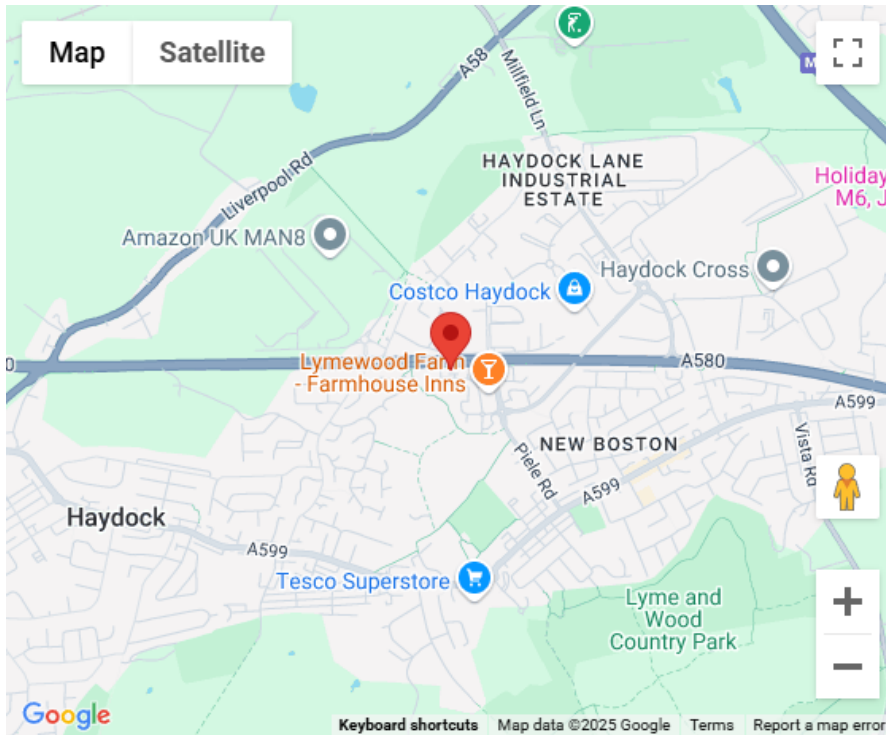
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Proposer (full name in capitals) **Seconder** (full name in capitals)

_____ (signature) _____



St. Helens Group Annual General Meeting Ibis Hotel, Haydock, WA11 0GR



NOMINATION FOR 2025/2026 ST HELENS GROUP COMMITTEE

N.B. The Nominee, Proposer and Secunder must be **full** members of the St Helens Group.
Nominations **must** be **submitted** to the Group Secretary, Mr Chris Bradley
by **Thursday 28th May 2026**

Please send an email to register your Nomination via the
following email address
editorshgam@gmail.com