

## **GAM AGM 2023**

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

A year of consolidation following the disturbances of pandemics and other activities – “steady as she goes” is probably the best description.

#### **Group committee and Officers**

Your Officers remained in post at the last AGM and under Gordon's leadership we have continued to hold on-line committee meetings, with ad-hoc discussions and meetings through the year.

Your committee is still running very 'lean', and some new members to help with some of the tasks would be really appreciated. New ideas are always welcome; nothing is cast in stone, and if anyone fancies being Group Secretary please note as always that I will not be at all offended by your kind offer! Full training provided.

#### **Associates and tests.**

Observers carried out nearly 200 Sunday runs in the year and a further 70 runs outside Sundays. For a team of just 17 available Observers that is a lot of work completed!

We had a smaller number of new Associates join us over the last year (around 50); we now have around 35 names on the list, and we will be working hard to get them all up to test standard as soon as possible. Communication is key, so we ask all Associates to keep us up to date with their intentions regarding their advanced driver training.

In the last 12 months – as at the end of September – we have had just 11 test passes (two of them F1rst). We had a short spell where there were a small number of unsuccessful tests, but we and the Associates involved all persevered and we got there second time around. There have been no test failures for several months now.

#### **Observers and Training.**

It has been a busy year for the Observers and we send our sincere thanks to all those who have given up a lot of their free time to train Associates for their test. 'Appointed Observer Runs' (AOR) are a popular route to the test for those who cannot manage to get to us on a Sunday, but we retain our monthly Sunday meetings as these have benefits in allowing all Associates and Observers to meet on a regular basis, and, when space allows, to extend our reach to member refresher drives, charity assessments and new Associate 'taster' sessions.

We have 17 Observers in the team; all but two are qualified as National Observer and this will be the standard in the future as the Observer training and qualification process moves towards a single tier.

#### **IAM Region and HQ liaison.**

Our Area Manager, Stuart Haythorn, has returned to the role, as his replacement from last year, Katrina Lowe, has decided she needs more family time at the moment and has moved into a less busy but equally important position as an IAM ambassador. Welcome back Stuart – everything is running well, just as you left it!

We retain a good working relationship with the staff at IAM HQ who help us with Membership matters and Associate progress, and we have just been in attendance at the Region 2 meeting in October where it was a great opportunity to discuss matters with fellow Group staff.

### **Newsletter, web site and social media**

Gordon produced some more very good newsletters during the year, with many technical articles and useful material for all Advanced drivers. We could always do with more contributions from members to keep the content fresh and relevant – do please think about making a contribution. Your personal motoring stories or questions are always of interest to our readers.

However, we really do need a new editor. It's only 4 issues each year and we have several sources of relevant information, so please consider if the journalist inside you is keen to find a new outlet for your skills. We will be publishing all the newsletters as printed matter since some members are not keen on the on-line version and we need to ensure that those who do not have internet access are still in receipt of certain essential documents. Please pass your copy on to members of your family or another potential IAM Associate rather than recycling it – every contact helps!

The GAM web site has been operating effectively and Clive Heavens keeps the web site updated and continues to make improvements along the way.

Our social media activities have also benefitted from Clive and others taking the time and trouble to ensure that we remain well connected and as relevant as possible in the modern world of communications. Some discussions during the year looked at the possibility of having a members' forum as part of the web site, but with falling member numbers, software requirements, operating costs and other limitations this option was not pursued. We will be looking at refreshing the Group WhatsApp account for those who are interested in this form of communication.

### **Summary**

Overall a quiet year, mostly 'business as usual' but with a noticeable decline in the number of people willing to part with their hard earned cash to improve their driving skills, and a similar reduction in numbers of retained IAM members. GAM and IAM are well aware they need to offer something for the members, but without members telling us what they want, this is all guess work. Please engage by whatever means is most suitable for you so that we can direct our resources towards things you want us to do.

My personal thanks as always to all my colleagues on the committee and all our helpers and observers for all their hard work – it is greatly appreciated.

Paul Whitehead – October 2023