

Guildford & District Group of Advanced Motorists

# Minutes of the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

Held online on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2024 commencing at 19.30

## 1. Chairman's welcome, and apologies for absence.

In attendance: Gordon Farquharson (Chair), John Holcroft (Sec), Michael Tilney (Treasurer), David Clifton (Chief Observer), Michael Guest (Vice-Chair), Paul Whitehead (Membership Sec) and Lesley Pearce, John Panting, Stephen Ivermee, Nick Bond, Angela Williams, Jennifer Caddy, John Munn,

The Chairman, Gordon Farquharson, opened the meeting at 7.30 pm and welcomed attendees to the 49<sup>th</sup> AGM. He recalled that the calling notice had been sent out as required and that IAM approves of online AGMs. He also indicated that a number of polls would be held, but only GAM members may vote. The Chair noted that the meeting was quorate.

The following apologies for non-attendance had been received -

Diana Hoad, Deborah Chamberlain, Clive and Julie Collins, Richard Cunningham, Norman Price, Margarita Wood, Michael Hughes, David Mason, Irene Rowley, Colin Pound, Gerald Blues, Clive Heavens, Michael Hopkins and Susan Lochner.

## 2. Review of Minutes of 48<sup>th</sup> AGM

The minutes were reviewed. No comments were received in relation to their accuracy.

## 3. Acceptance of Minutes of 48<sup>th</sup> AGM

Following a poll the minutes of the previous AGM were accepted (ten votes in favour, two abstentions)

## 4. Chairman's Report

### Paul Whitehead

This brings me to a most significant event that occurred at the end of last year. Paul Whitehead, our Secretary decided it was time to resign/retire from the role he had held for 16 years and several other tasks he had taken on over the COVID years to support Committee roles from members who had moved on. Paul has been a GAM stalwart for 30 years, and to recognise this the Committee has voted Paul Honorary Membership, joining John Panting and Paul Wallace-Stock. I would like to add my personal gratitude as Chair. Paul's unstinting support, huge knowledge of GAM history and procedures, and preparedness to deal with many of IAM RS HQ's vagaries has kept me in line and made my role much easier. Thank you so much Paul! Thankfully Paul agreed to support a period of transition, particularly to new Secretary John Holcroft, and continue as Membership Secretary until replaced.

### Observers & Observing

I want to recognise the great work of all our Observers. The 2024 test results, 25 Passes including 9 F1RSTS speak for themselves. The team led by David Clifton (Chief Observer) have worked hard on delivering both allocated observer runs (AOR) and Sunday run-day (SRD). During the year we have seen an increasing shift from Sunday runs to AORs, formerly called 'Non-Sunday Runs'. We're very fortunate that so many of our Observers are prepared to coach during the week.

We always need to reinforce our Observer team recognising that team members move on from time to time and retirement is inevitable. We know that new Observers are most likely to come from our new members (Associates who have recently passed the test), and we have been working hard gently twisting arms. IAM RS have now revised the Observer qualification to a single National Observer (NO) level, dispensing with the Local Observer (LO) category. This now means that all new Observers are trained by GAM and tested by IAM RS to the NO standard, and all our legacy LO's must be tested for NO qualification.

During and post COVID we have seen an increase in Associates with neurodiversity. Their needs bring a new coaching challenge that GAM is looking to become more aware of. HQ provided some very general help for both riding and driving in March 2020 in a paper called "Neurodiversity Documentation". This sets out to address conditions such as Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, Autism & Asperger's, Tourette's and ADHD. The focus is on "The System" of course, but the guidance provided is really very general and doesn't help volunteers refine their approaches. GAM has a plan to develop some more specific

guidance, targeted at the key Advanced Driving competencies.....we'll see if this helps. So far, we have some good experience with Associates who engage and help us understand what they find difficult.

The final aspect of Observing I wish to note concerns vehicle technology. We're finding a rapidly expanding range of car ages, drivetrains, technology and sophistication. The technology includes Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), including mandatory functions like Intelligent Speed Assist (ISA). Not all our Associates are 'petrol' or 'electro' heads, and many arrive for coaching with little real knowledge of their vehicles and in particular some of the new complex functionality. The salespeople at dealers seem to treat them as magic black boxes, handing over the keys with little guidance. It has become a real challenge for our Observers keeping up to speed to ensure we can coach effectively. As exposure to EVs increases this situation should improve. The good news is that The System doesn't change, and in my experience, once you've conquered the tech the driving of these cars is easier.

## GBC Depot

We've enjoyed GBC's support of a free venue for probably around 40 years. During the year we knew that our time at GBC Depot was going to come to an end due to GBC's plans to move to new premises in the Slyfield area, with the Depot becoming the Weyside Urban Village. The old premises and the whole depot environment were in a state of decay, so we needed to plan a move. It was decided to move to Ripley Village Hall, now beautifully rebuilt and expanded. You may recall that GAM were small donors to the Ripley Village Hall fundraising appeal.

## Committee activity & available positions (gaps)

We have appealed for new committee members regularly at AGMs and in Newsletters over the years. The gaps were Secretary-in-waiting, Membership Secretary, Associate Coordinator, Newsletter Editor, and IT support. Paul's resignation triggered a refreshed appeal that has borne some fruit in 2024/5. The current situation is that we are still in need of a President, Membership Secretary, Newsletter/News editor and general committee members to shadow and ensure we have a succession plan. If you want to know more about how to get involved, get in touch with me for a chat.

Finally, I want to update you about how we communicate with you. You will all have noticed that we have dropped the printed and posted Newsletter. We decided on this approach because we were without an Editor, contributions were rather sparse, and the cost of printing and postage had escalated. As a previous Editor I was finding that one or two of us were writing the whole document. As mentioned above, an Editor is still a gap.

Our current intention is to post news from time to time on the Website, Facebook, LinkedIn and X, and also email the membership periodically. We need someone to look after hunting for news-worthy material and managing inputs from Members. We hope this role attracts support.

## 5. Secretary's Report

### Group Committee & Officers

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

After more than thirty years of service Paul Whitehead has handed over the Secretary role to me but has kindly agreed to act as Membership Secretary until a replacement can be found. I'm sure that members will wish to thank Paul for his sterling service.

At the last committee meeting, held in September this year, two new committee members were coopted, namely John Munn who has agreed to become Associate Coordinator and Lesley Pearce who has joined as an ordinary member.

The committee still have a vacancy for Newsletter Editor. Consequently, production of the quarterly newsletter has been suspended. We are also seeking a Marketing Manager who will have the objective of increasing the number of Associates and increasing the retention rate among Members.

### Associates & Tests

At present we have a total of 52 Associates who are distributed as follows -

- Allocated to Sunday runs 23
- Allocated to a single Observer 17
- Awaiting test 7
- Awaiting induction 5

In addition, there are six people awaiting a free taster. In the year since last September, we have had 25 test passes of which no less than 9 were F1rst. We had two failures, but one of these candidates passed on the second attempt.

### Observers & Training

Currently we have fourteen Observers all of whom except one are National Observers (those approved and tested by HQ and registered with IMI). Observers carried out over 200

Sunday runs in the year and a further 85 AOR runs. 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 popular, with over 40% of Associates allocated to this route. However, we retain our monthly Sunday meetings as these have benefits in allowing 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.

## IAM Region and HQ Liaison

Our Area Manager, Stuart Haythorn, has, after several years of service, decided to retire and enjoy more travel. We wish him well in this endeavour. At the time of writing HQ is seeking to recruit a replacement.

We retain a good working relationship with the staff at IAM HQ who help us with Membership matters and Associate progress. Your Chief Observer and Secretary are scheduled to attend a Region 2 meeting on 12th October. We expect this to be a great opportunity to discuss matters with fellow Group staff.

## Newsletter, Web Site and Social Media

As noted above the Newsletter has recently been suspended as the workload could not reasonably be undertaken by the present committee. Having said that, four newsletters were produced during the year, all of commendable quality and Gordon deserves our thanks for coordinating and producing them. However, to restart the Newsletter 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.

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.

## Other Matters

For around forty years GAM has enjoyed the free use of Guildford Borough Council's depot as a base for our Sunday runs. The Council has plans to move next year to a new site in the Slyfield Industrial area. Consequently, funds were not being spent on the upkeep of the

original site, which gained an air of neglect. The committee therefore decided to move our base of operations to the newly constructed Ripley Village Hall. Our first meeting was held there in August. Because of ongoing bookings by others and the potential lack of parking spaces, we changed the normal run day from the third to the second Sunday of the month. Feedback on the new facility has been positive.

## 6. Treasurer's Report & Acceptance of Accounts

Copies of the accounts were distributed before the meeting. The accounts had been approved by an independent auditor, Anthony Hamett.

The Group Treasurer, Michael Tilney, gave an overview of the Group's accounts and current financial position. Reserves were described as "very healthy". In the coming year room hire at Ripley Village Hall will be higher but will be offset by the suspension of the newsletter.

In a poll the accounts were unanimously accepted.

## 7. Election of Officers and President

The Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and vice-Chairman all stood down and offer themselves for re-election. The re-election was voted for on en bloc. The resolution was accepted unanimously.

The post of President was vacant. No proposals concerning this post had been received.

## 8. Election of Committee Members

One-third of committee members must stand down but may offer themselves for re-election.

Paul Whitehead stood down but offered himself for re-election.

There was a proposal for new committee members, namely John Munn as Associate Coordinator and Lesley Pearce as an ordinary member.

These proposals were voted en bloc and were unanimously accepted.

## 9. Motions

There was one motion. The Committee asks to be authorised to increase subscriptions for the coming year if deemed necessary subject to that increase not exceeding £2.50 per Member per annum.

The Chairman explained that in order to raise the Group's membership fee a full meeting of the Group (such as an AGM) must vote on the proposal after it has been submitted to the Chief Executive of the IAM. Having a vote on a possible small increase at the AGM allows the committee to raise additional funds if necessary and would not require a further meeting to be called.

The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

The Chairman closed the formal part of the meeting.

## 10. Other Business

The Chairman invited comments and questions.

Paul Whitehead thanked all for their kind comments on his contribution to GAM and remarked how much he had enjoyed the experience.

Paul also reminded the meeting that the next year would be the 50<sup>th</sup> for GAM and wondered if it merited some special celebration. In response Nick Bond suggested that it might be possible through the good offices of Brooklands Trust to gain access to Mercedes Benz World's facilities, including their track. John Holcroft suggested that a "treasure hunts" or similar driving experiences are popular and relevant to GAM's field of interest.

The Chairman thanked all the attendees and ended the meeting.

John Holcroft

Secretary, GAM

14<sup>th</sup> October 2024