

Bournemouth & Dorset Advanced Drivers

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RoadSmart

December Newsletter - 2025 (edition 126)

The Committee would like to wish
all our Members, Associates,
Observers and readers a very
Happy Christmas and
a safe New Year



Could I repeat last year's editorial?

Looking back at the words I wrote this time last year I think I might almost get away with a copy & paste, but maybe at least one eagle-eyed member might notice! The synopsis would be fairly similar: travelled around a bit and the roads were wet! What has differed this year is a few additional train trips to London; it can be quite nice to relax on a train before the hustle and bustle of figuring out the underground!

I'm not sure that all of my editorial was correct last month, but thankfully no one has emailed in to tell me I was massively off the mark, so I'll take that as a win. I'm happy to take any constructive feedback, and if anyone would like to write any additional articles on motoring related topics then please feel free. This is a Group newsletter, so anything which sparks your interest is likely to make for an interesting read by our membership.

Stay safe & happy motoring,

Matt Ames
Membership and Newsletter Editor
Bournemouth & Dorset Advanced Drivers
membership@bdiam.org.uk

New Associate Members of the Bournemouth & Dorset Group

We welcome the following new Associate members who have recently joined the Group. Observer allocations, where known are shown below:

Tim Spirit - (pending)

email groupcontact@bdiam.org.uk

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The Richard Jolly Observer of the Year Award

This award is established in memory of Richard Jolly who was our Chief Observer for many years. His dedication, integrity, and commitment to excellence set an enduring example for all who serve as Observers. Richard's passion for the role, his fairness, and his unwavering professionalism continue to inspire our group Observers

Each year, the Observer of the Year award will honour an individual who embodies these same values — demonstrating exceptional service, consistency, and a positive impact on the observer program.

This includes the number of Associates the Observer has had over the year, check drives administered and any behind the scenes activity that benefits our Observer Program.



We are proud to announce that Martyn McCarthy (left) is the first Observer to receive this award; it was presented by Chris Smith (one of our Group's examiners) at the December social evening. Congratulations Martyn.

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Forthcoming Social events

January 2026

No event is planned.

5th February 2026

The Group's Annual General Meeting (AGM) will take place. Further details be published in due course.

Time: 1900

5th May 2026

(tbc)

Time: 1900

2nd April 2026

(tbc)

Time: 1900

Drinks can be purchased from the bar from 1900, talk starts at 1930. Accessing Wimborne Town football club can be a bit of a fine art. Recommended access is to follow Lonsdale Road (from the B3073) through the new housing estate, and then turn left onto Ainsley Road, and park in the ground's carpark on the right.

As always the latest information about Group Social evenings can be found on our website at: <https://www.bdiam.org.uk/social-events/>

Membership catchup

Time to change my hat from Newsletter Editor to Membership Secretary. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to respond to my emails about renewals. Over the Christmas break I'll be going through the Group's bank statements cross referencing Standing Order payments to members to work out either who has set up a Standing Order and not told me.

One final reminder email from me will follow probably early in 2026 after that your membership will be cancelled.

As you can imagine it can be quite a challenge, but I believe that I have responded to every email which has been sent regarding membership.

Thanks,

Matt

email groupcontact@bdiam.org.uk

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Nearly half of young drivers illegally use phones to text at the wheel

from the IAM Blogs

- texting, social media use, and video calling is rife among 17-24-year-old drivers
- For new drivers within two years of gaining full licence, being caught using a mobile phone illegally risks leaving them with an astronomical £12,000 bill.

Almost half (43%) of drivers aged 17-24 admit to illegally writing or reading a message at the wheel while driving, while a third (34%) confess to using a hand-held mobile phone to record footage or take a photo while driving.



This compares to one third (29%) of drivers aged 35 – 44, and just 16 percent of drivers aged 45 to 54.

The survey, conducted by the UK's leading road safety charity IAM RoadSmart, reveals a concerning snapshot of young drivers over the last 12 months as they struggle to detach themselves from the distracting nature of a smart phone.

Asked if and how frequently they have used a hand-held mobile phone over the previous 12 months, one in eight (16%) said they have illegally read or written messages while driving on at least half of journeys, which increases to 43% when including those admitting to doing it 'once or twice'.

For taking videos and photos, 13 percent say they have carried this out on at least half of journeys.

Despite most cars and phones having handsfree technology, the research shows that half of younger drivers continue to hold their phones while driving.

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And four in ten (41%) younger drivers say they have made video calls using handsfree technology which, while technically legal, carries a huge risk of distraction and eyes being taken off the road.

Using a handheld mobile phone behind the wheel is illegal, even when stopped at traffic lights or in a queue.

Penalties include a £200 fine, up to six penalty points, and potentially losing your license if you passed your test within the last two years under the provisions of the Road Traffic (New Drivers) Act 1995.

According to new analysis by IAM RoadSmart, a £200 fine could be the least of concerns for young drivers who are not only dicing with death but also risking crippling legal, insurance, commuting and retest costs totalling up to £12,000.

COSTS

A typical 19-year-old male that receives a CU80 endorsement for using a mobile phone whilst driving may find themselves with a whopping £10,675 in additional insurance costs, almost £700 in alternative transport costs, and more than £800 for refresher lessons, new test costs and fines.

To put this into context, the total amount is the equivalent of one year of university tuition, a decent second-hand car or several all-inclusive holidays in Europe.

Using a handheld mobile phone while driving for interactive purposes has been illegal since December 2003.

In 2017, the penalties increased from a £100 fine and three licence points to £200 and six points.

In March 2022, the law was updated making it illegal to hold a phone for any reason while driving, not just for interactive communication**.

Many police forces consider it to be part of the 'fatal four', causing significant distraction at the wheel.

Department for Transport data shows that in 2024, there were 154 people killed or seriously injured (KSIs) where using a mobile device was identified as a

factor, while there were 920 KSIs attributed to distractions either inside or outside of the vehicle***

IAM RoadSmart Director of Policy and Standards Nicholas Lyes said:

“The statistics show that a troubling number of young people are not only dicing with death, but they are also putting themselves at huge financial risk giving into the urge of using their smart phone. While the fear of missing out or FOMO appears to be a huge problem when behind the wheel, younger drivers should be far more worried about the implications of illegal phone use.

“Even if the risk of a serious collision isn't enough to deter this behaviour, losing your licence so early on will stunt your employment chances, disrupt education and will put you at a significant financial disadvantage.

“Enforcement remains one of the best tools to combat the epidemic of illegal phone use at the wheel, and would-be criminals should be aware that forces are using new cameras to catch people.

“It's almost a decade since the penalties were increased for mobile-phone related driving offences, and we would support upping the fine level once again. Perhaps a good place to start might be by matching the fine to the price of a new smart phone.”

“Education is also important – young people need to realise that using a phone at the wheel can have devastating consequences.”

* Research carried out by Online95 in September 2025. The figures used are for 17-24-year-olds (sample size of 202), with a wider effective sample size of 2,025 of all UK motorists.

** <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/changes-in-the-law-on-driving-while-using-a-mobile-phone/>

*** RAS0701: Reported road collisions and casualties by severity, road safety factors and road user type, Great Britain, 10 years up to 2024

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