Bournemouth & Dorset Advanced Drivers

October Newsletter - 2026 (edition 136)

The clocks have changed, but has your mind 'up-dated'?

It might sound silly, but as the clocks change, this is often the time of year when you spot cars driving around with no headlights on. In days gone by, the dashboard would remain dark if the car's lights weren't turned on. However, with the advent of LEDs seems to mean that the dash is illuminated all of the time; that coupled with DRLs and streetlights the manual part of the equation (i.e. The driver) seems to ignore the fact they still need to turn the light switch.



Yes, I know that many, if not all modern cars, now have built-in light sensors and thus the ability to turn on headlights automatically, but that still requires the driver to select that option. I'm sure that none of our members would ever be caught driving without their car lights on, but rest assured that many of the non-advanced driver community are likely to! I guess the only saving grace for those who forget to switch the lights on, they can't forget to switch them off and don't end up with a flat battery!

On the topic of flat batteries, if you notice any strange behavior from your car, such as slower crank when starting, or your stop-start isn't functioning, then this could be an indicator that the battery is starting to fail. Often a failing battery can be high-lighted with a drop in ambient temperature.

Many years ago, I can remember driving over to Portland for a IAM committee meeting with the then Dorset (Dorchester) IAM Group. My car started fine on the journey out there, but the battery seeming lost all of charge over the 90 minute or so meeting. Before you think it; no, I hadn't left my headlights on! However, as I like to be prepared for the basics, I do carry set of a jump leads in the car - which up to this point had never been used to start my own car - came into their own, and I was soon my way back home. I'm not sure if it is ever mentioned, but I feel this is another good reason to reverse into a parking bay. A replacement car battery was ordered the following morning (at great cost) and the car has not skipped a beat since. Opps, there I go tempting fate.

Whilst on the topic of winter motoring, don't forget to ensure all your car windows and clean inside and out to minimize the chance of headlight dazzle. I've heard that the latest generation of matrix headlights are meant to be very good at helping to prevent this. I'll keep an eye out over the coming months!

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 member(s) who have recent joined the Group. Observer allocations, where known are shown below:

Alison Highnam	(pending)
Gian Paolo Fusano	(pending)

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IAM Test passes for the Group

Congratulations to our latest Full members of the Bournemouth & Dorset Group who have recently passed their IAM RoadSmart test (observer is listed beside them if known at publication):

Adrian Simms Gordon Smith

Great driving and thanks to our Observer Team for helping you achieve your pass and becoming a new member of the IAM RoadSmart family.

Forthcoming Social events

5th November 2026
David Sidwick, Police and Crime Commissioner for Dorset will be talking to the group finishing off with a Question and Answer session.
Time: 1900

3rd December 2026
Christmas social meeting, with festive bites and a Quiz.

January 2027
No social is planned

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/

Meet Our Chief Observer

I'm Jason Chalk, a Chief Observer, Skills Day instructor and Masters Mentor for the highest driving qualification in the UK. I've been volunteering for the charity for 26 years.



Driving has been a huge part of my life, but it's far from the whole story. Over the years I've held a RoSPA driving qualification, an international track racing licence and a rally licence. I've also been lucky enough to experience flying fixed and rotary helicopters and even a fighter jet.

Away from the roads and skies, I'm a qualified scuba diver with specialties in night diving and rescue diving. Along the way I've had my fair share of adventures and close calls too, including crashing a helicopter, surviving an encounter with a shark, and experiencing nitrogen narcosis... although thankfully not all on the same night!

Life has given me plenty of stories, lessons and experiences, and I'm always keen to keep learning, improving and helping others do the same.

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Joining the Group as a committee member

As we look to the future, we're keen to welcome new committee members who can help shape the next chapter of the charity. The role involves attending a committee meeting approximately once every two months and contributing ideas, support and guidance to help the group continue to grow and thrive.

Our committee discusses a wide range of topics, including social events, marketing, finance, policy, volunteer development and ways to strengthen and support our members.

Whether you're an experienced volunteer or simply looking to become more involved, we'd love to hear from you. No previous committee experience is required. What matters most is a willingness to contribute, share ideas and help make a positive difference.

Joining the committee is a great opportunity to develop new skills, gain experience and play a more active role in the future direction of the charity.

If you'd like to find out more, I'd be very happy to have an informal chat. Following that, our Chair, Alan Glover can guide you through the next steps.

Alex Money
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Group Annual Membership fee

Many of our Bournemouth and Dorset Group members have set up a yearly Standing Order to pay their local Group membership fees, but still a large proportion of you haven't (this only applies to full members, not Associates).

For those who may have forgotten, IAM operates a 2-tier level of membership, where you are required to be a member of IAM 'HQ' before you can join your local group. Thankfully our local Group costs are very reasonable at just £10 per year, and your membership helps us to continue making more Advanced Drivers in Dorset. If you have recently passed your IAM test, then we offer a year's free local Group membership.

In order to keep my life as simple as possible as your Membership Secretary, utilising a Standing Order is the easiest way forward. I plan on crossing referencing the Group's bank account December statement against our membership records

Payment by BACS or Cheque is possible, but increases the yearly admin work, but we'd rather have you all as members than not. If over then next week or so you received an email from me, then I would appreciate a timely response (even if that is to say you wish to no longer remember a member of the Group).

If you are not a paid-up member of the local Group you will not be able to vote at our AGM in February.

Matt Ames
Membership and Newsletter Editor
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Social Evening Report:
Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance

On Thursday 1 October 2026, our IAM RoadSmart group had the pleasure of welcoming representatives from the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance for an evening that was equal parts fascinating, eye-opening and, surprisingly, entertaining.

Most of us recognise the distinctive yellow helicopter when it passes overhead, usually followed by the thought: "I hope whoever needs that is okay." What many people don't realise is just how much expertise, training and dedication sits behind every single mission.



The team gave us a behind-the-scenes look at their life-saving work across Dorset and Somerset, explaining how they bring advanced medical care directly to patients when time is critical. Whether responding to serious road traffic collisions, medical emergencies, falls, or incidents in remote locations, their crews often provide treatment that would normally only be available in a hospital emergency department.

For a room full of drivers and riders, the discussion around road traffic incidents was particularly relevant. Hearing about the challenges faced by emergency responders really brought home the importance of safe, responsible driving. It was a reminder that while we all like to think "it won't happen to me", accidents can occur in the blink of an eye.

What made the evening especially engaging was the passion of the speakers. Rather than simply presenting statistics and facts, they shared real stories from the frontline that demonstrated the difference the charity makes to patients and families every day. There were moments of genuine admiration, moments of reflection, and even the occasional laugh along the way.

One fact that surprised many attendees was that Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance relies heavily on charitable donations to keep flying. Unlike what many

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people assume, the service is not funded day-to-day by the Government. Every fundraising event, raffle ticket, sponsored challenge and donation helps keep this essential service available to our communities.

Of course, no air ambulance presentation would be complete without a few questions about helicopters. Thankfully, none of us asked whether they could use the helicopter to avoid Dorset's summer traffic, although the thought may have crossed a few minds! The evening concluded with a lively question-and-answer session, giving members the opportunity to learn more about the aircraft, equipment and the highly skilled clinicians who make up the crew.



On behalf of IAM RoadSmart, we would like to thank the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance team for giving up their time to speak with us. Their dedication, professionalism and commitment to saving lives left a lasting impression on everyone in attendance.

They are truly one of those services that we all hope we never need, but are incredibly grateful to know is there when it matters most.

Alex Money

Prosecutions for being unfit to drive surge in just three years
from the IAM Newsroom

- Number of drivers receiving endorsements for being medically unfit to drive increases by 238% between 2022 and 2025
- Casualty numbers associated with illness remain stubbornly high since the turn of the decade

The number of drivers receiving endorsements on their licence for driving while medically unfit to do so has increased by more than 200% in the last four years, with the steepest increases among working age individuals.



DVLA data obtained and analysed by road safety charity IAM RoadSmart* shows that the number of motorists receiving endorsements for driving after a licence has been cancelled (revoked) or refused on medical grounds (LC50), driving after making a false declaration about fitness when applying for a licence (LC30) and driving with uncorrected defective eyesight (MS70) increased from 198 in 2022 to 669 in 2025.

Most of the endorsements were for driving after licence revocation, with these accounting for 646 out of 669 of the three categories in 2025. Within this category, it is working age adults accounting for 84% of prosecutions, while those aged 65 and over account for 10%.

Separate DVLA data obtained** by IAM RoadSmart shows that between 2020 and 2022, the average time taken for drivers to receive a medical decision doubled from an average of 49 working days to 96 in 2022. However, measures taken by the DVLA since then has seen the average waiting time fall back to 45 days in 2025 – the lowest since the pandemic. In 2024, the number of decisions made by the DVLA's assessment team was more than 900,000, resulting in just over 59,000 (or 7%) individuals having their driving entitlement revoked.

In 2025, the were 1,192 fatal and serious injuries on the road where defective eyesight or illness and/or disability were recorded as a factor in a collision. These numbers have been broadly stable since 2019.

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Guidance states that you must tell the DVLA (GB) if you have a driving licence and:

- develop a notifiable medical condition or disability
- A condition or disability has got worse since you got your licence.

Those with a car or motorcycle licence can report a condition online. However, those with a bus, coach or lorry licence need to send a form or questionnaire to DVLA. There are different forms for different conditions and disabilities.

Drivers will need to surrender their licence to the DVLA in cases where:

- A doctor tells them to stop driving for 3 months or more
- A medical condition affects their ability to drive safely and lasts for 3 months or more
- They do not meet the required standards for driving because of the medical condition

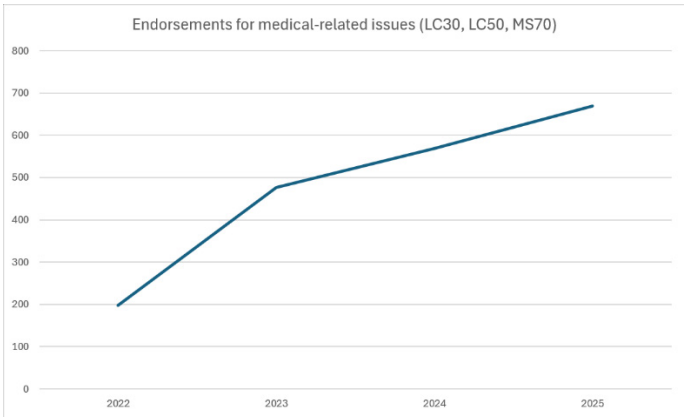
Drivers can reapply for a licence if fitness once again reaches required standards. Failing to disclose a condition to the DVLA may result in a fine of up to £1,000, while driving after a medical revocation is an offence under section 87 of the 1988 Road Traffic Act. Meanwhile, points will be added to the licence if it is under review with the DVLA medical team.

IAM RoadSmart Director of Policy and External Communications, Nicholas Lyes said: "While the numbers are relatively low, they still equate to two people every day and the trend is heading in the wrong direction. Greater use of ANPR enforcement is likely to be the most plausible cause behind the increase, but it still paints a worrying picture of individuals that are unwilling to stop driving, despite being told not to.

"Having a medical condition that impacts on your driving is undoubtedly stressful for the individual because of the uncertainty and the potential loss of independence that comes with effectively surrendering or losing your licence. We also understand that waiting for a decision from medical experts can be frustrating.

However, drivers have a responsibility to keep everyone safe – themselves and others on the road and no matter how concerned you might be about needing to travel, driving when unfit to do so could cause serious injury or worse, both for you and others."

* Source: Freedom of Information (FOI) request to DVLA: LC30, LC50, MS70.



**Source: Separate FOI request from August 2025

REACTION: IAM RoadSmart responds to the Chancellor's Budget Statement
from the IAM Newsroom



Responding to the announcements in today's Budget, IAM RoadSmart Director of Policy and External Communications Nicholas Lyes said: "Drivers and businesses will breathe a sigh of relief that the Chancellor has cancelled the proposed fuel duty hike planned for early next year. This would have proven extremely costly for those operating fleets who may have had to make difficult decisions to balance the books. Additional measures for tax free mileage are also welcome. These pragmatic moves by the Chancellor will be well received by millions of motorists who depend on their vehicles for work, family commitments, and everyday journeys."

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