



WELCOME FROM OUR CHAIRMAN Adrian Barlow

The almost relentless rain which has fallen since mid-Autumn has caused colossal damage to many road surfaces and verges creating considerable hazards for all road users. Potholes have increased both in numbers and size with rain washing out road foundations some of which are then deposited on the road surface. Rural road edges have been undermined leading to cracking and erosion which, combined with softened verges, have led to the development of gulleys where previously there were firm verges. Flooding has also been a threat. Frequently, it is difficult to see these hazards especially in the dark and when they are filled with water. Anticipation, observation and concentration by drivers are vital in minimising the risks combined with driving at an appropriate speed and ensuring good visibility through clean windows and mirrors with all lights operating correctly. Of course, extra care is necessary in the presence of frost, snow or ice.

The reorganisation of roles which we planned during the autumn and aimed at reducing the workload of Group Contact together with recruiting at least two area coordinators for Driver Refresher Days (DRDs) had to be reconsidered due to changes in personal circumstances. We have now finalised new arrangements as follows:

Kath Watts will assist Stella, our Group Contact. Linda Harding and Anne Harling-Bowen become Area Coordinators for the West and East areas respectively whilst Debbi Kinsey will assist Nigel Jenkins with the Kingsland DRD and help elsewhere when needed. We are enormously grateful to Kath, Linda, Anne and Debbi for volunteering for these roles which will be hugely beneficial for the Group.

We have an excellent programme of DRDs for 2026 which we hope will attract many attendees and continue our important work of improving safe driving throughout the county.

Best wishes

Adrian

chairman@advanced-drivers.org.uk

FROM OUR GROUP CONTACT Stella Boyd-Carpenter



We were very busy in 2025 ... our Driver Refresher Days are attracting a larger number of attendees – and just as a reminder all our members are welcome to attend these days – the principle of them is in the title “a Refresher and a reminder of the rules of the road as shown in the new Highway Code”.

We held our Refreshers in the Spring/Summer months and in 2025 we were at Whitney-on-Wye, Weobley, Bodenham, Bishops Frome, Ross-on-Wye (2 days) and of course at St. Michael’s Hospice. We have also had more people applying to take the Advanced Driving Course which is great news – approximately 20 this year and I am pleased to report that we have had many younger drivers taking the Advanced Driving Course.

Below is this year’s programme of Driver Refresher Days. If you would like to attend, or if you know anyone who would (they don’t have to be a member) please contact the named person beside each event.

2026 DRIVER REFRESHER DAYS

Saturday 18th April - Ewyas Harold

Linda Harding, 07791 859143

aco-west@advanced-drivers.org.uk

Saturday 16th May, Kingsland

Nigel Jenkins, 07554 397395

chief-observer@advanced-drivers.org.uk

Saturday 20th June, Bishops Frome

Anne Harling-Bowen, 07973 306903

info@advanced-drivers.org.uk

Saturday 25th July, St Michael’s Hospice,

Bartestree

Stella Boyd-Carpenter, 01432 840835

Group-contact@advanced-drivers.org.uk

Saturday 12th September, Ross on Wye

Adrian Barlow, 07967 201902

chairman@advanced-drivers.org.uk

Saturday 3rd October, St Michael’s Hospice,

Bartestree

Stella -as above

Driver Refresher Days cost £30 per person or £25 each for two or more booking together. Please call or email the person organising each event to book or find out more.



OUR CHIEF OBSERVER WRITES.....

To all Observers:

My sincere thanks for your help and support over the year, it has been difficult to find sufficient volunteers to match our needs at times but you have risen to the challenge, and many of you have taken on more than your fair share of the workload.

When I became Chief Observer a little over three years ago, I was one of three to hold the National Observer qualification and eligible to train (the then) Local Observers to National standard, then I became the only one. So, as the only sufficiently qualified, I was faced with the difficult task of ensuring all Locals were retrained within two years and qualified to the new National standard.

The real success story is that all our Observers are now accredited National Observers due to some of you early qualifiers taking on the role of trainers; a massive thank you to those who helped me with ensuring we met our target, also welcome to those new Observers who have completed their training to obtain their qualification.

What is not so good is that we are still not able to increase our Observer numbers by any significant amount. For every new Observer we gain, we lose one, so the number available for this year will probably remain the same. Also, some of us are well into our 70's & 80's or beyond and we must urgently act to recruit new trainees. Unfortunately, unless we all make a determined effort to find new trainee Observers, we will continue to struggle to meet our needs, particularly at Refresher Days. We have started to see results recruiting new Associates from Refresher Days by convincing them they are good advanced driver material, so let us see if we can be more proactive and encourage our newly qualified advanced drivers to find out what a rewarding job it is to be an Observer. The bottom line is that, unless we take action, our Observer pool will continue to get smaller, and none of us want that.

To our Associates:

Thank you for the effort you make to work with your Observer to ensure you get good results on your tests, it is much appreciated. Also, we value the lasting friendships that develop as a result of such close co-operation between mentor and pupil so it is often a slightly sad time when that association comes to an end.

We hope you continue your association with Herefordshire Advanced Drivers and we can always find volunteering opportunities, so don't leave us, come and spend the odd hour helping out at Refresher Days or spreading our message to potential new Associates; that would truly be of tremendous value to us and you!

Many thanks again, not just to our Observers and Associates, but to all our volunteers, for your hard work and dedication to ensuring Herefordshire Advanced Drivers is seen, and admired, by our public as a community who make a serious contribution to road safety.

Nigel Jenkins
Chief Observer
07554 397395

chief-observer@advanced-drivers.org.uk

OUR LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS:		
ADVANCED DRIVERS		
Name	Pass	Observer
Dylan Ray	Pass	Anne Harling-Bowen
Julian Gallimore	Pass	Nigel Jenkins
Victoria Stewart	F1RST	Stella Boyd-Carpenter/ Anne Harling-Bowen
NATIONAL OBSERVERS		
Joseph Robertson	Pass	Scott Evans, ASDM
Nigel Jenkins	Renewal	Scott Evans, ASDM
CONGRATULATIONS EVERYONE!		



THE NEW ROAD SAFETY MEASURES 2026

A brief guide to new proposals by Martin Thomas



The Government has launched its new road safety measures for changes that apply to England and Wales. Scotland and Northern Ireland have already adopted some of these. There will be public consultation and as Advanced Drivers please respond.

EYE and COGNITIVE TESTS FOR OLDER DRIVERS

Drivers aged over 70 to have their vision checked every 3 years at an Opticians. These are free for over 60s. Options to develop cognitive tests for older drivers is pledged to happen.



LEARNING PERIOD BEFORE TAKING YOUR TEST

Learner drivers could face a minimum period of 6 months between taking the theory test and the on-road practical test. It is proposed that this will help learner drivers develop their practical skills including driving in different conditions. This learning period would include Driving School lessons as well as informal learning with parents and others.



STRICTER DRINK DRIVING LIMITS

It is proposed that the alcohol limit for new and recently qualified drivers to be reduced from 80mg of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood to 20mg of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood for learner and recently qualified drivers and from 80mg to 50mg for everyone else. These limits are already in force in Scotland.

Some drink-drive offenders will have 'alcolocks' installed on their vehicles which prevent engines being started or driven unless the driver passes a breath test. Penalties for drink-driving will also be reviewed.

CHANGES FOR MOTORCYCLISTS

The learning process to ride a motorbike could be overhauled following consultation. This could include changes to the existing Compulsory Basic Training and government funded schemes to ensure motorcyclists are wearing safety helmets. It is proposed that a further roll out of the new pilots of Project Prime, an initiative to help motorcyclists drive more safely on country roads.



TOUGHER FINES AND PENALTIES

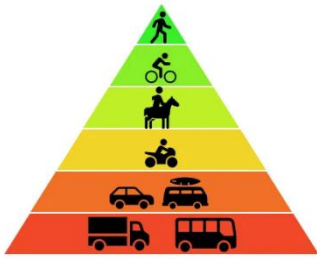
These are aimed at penalising the most dangerous drivers these include: penalty points for not wearing a seat belt and for children not wearing a seat belt; suspending licences of people suspected of drink or drug driving until they appear in court. Tougher punishments are planned for driving without an MoT or insurance or using 'ghost' number plates that cannot be read by recognition cameras.

This is a brief summary of the proposals. For more information about the road safety strategy 2026, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-safety-strategy>

ARE CARS KINGS OF THE ROAD?

By Anne Harling-Bowen

Those of you who have attended one of our Driver Refresher Days will have learned about some changes to the Highway Code in 2022, introduced as a result of earlier research into the causes of death and injury on our roads. With Spring around the corner and more of us venturing out, I thought it would be timely to discuss the Hierarchy of Road Users. This places pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders at the top in terms of vulnerability and the priority that other road users should give them.



Many of us feel frustrated when we are behind a slow-moving horse or cyclist, with no opportunity to pass. However, this law reminds us that we all *SHARE* the roads, the roads are not just for cars. Pedestrians, cyclists and horses have every right to use our roads, but they need our help to stay safe because they are more vulnerable. The Highway Code (pages 5-7) provides rules and guidance about how we should navigate around them to ensure their safety.

Rule H1 – **All road users** should have consideration for the safety of others. It places greater responsibility on the drivers of vehicles that could cause the greatest injury, so they are lower down the hierarchy. Look on the above triangle where cars are, near the bottom! It also reminds us that pedestrians may have impaired hearing or sight which might not be obvious. Horses can be easily spooked by an approaching vehicle and need a slow, wide pass. Cyclists are vulnerable to potholes and ironwork in the road, so if you can see one ahead, the chances are they will need to move out. Using your anticipation skills in this way will keep them safe.

Rule H2 – Road users, including cyclists and horse-riders, must give way to pedestrians at junctions, on zebra crossings and shared-use tracks. Pedestrians can use any part of the road unless there are prohibition signs. This does bring into question, as advanced drivers, our anticipation of what else is happening on the road – you may wave a pedestrian on, but what if you can see another vehicle coming? It is unlikely that the pedestrian knows the Highway Code, so you may need to exercise judgement about the best way to keep them safe.

Rule H3 – You should not cut across cyclists, horse-riders or horse-drawn vehicles when turning or navigating a roundabout. You must give way to them. If there are multiple cyclists, you should wait for a gap. This is difficult if you encounter a long line of them on the road without gaps, but there will be opportunity further on to pass safely. Patience is the key, remembering that they have just as much right to be on the road as car users, but they are much more vulnerable.

THE HAD CHRISTMAS LUNCH AT THE WALWYN ARMS, MUCH MARCLE

Saturday 6th December 2025

By our Secretary, Ray Papworth

The Christmas lunch 2025 took place at the Walwyn Arms on Saturday the 6th of December. This was a change from previous years prompted by comments from the membership who were critical of the fact that the lunch usually took place on a weekday. It had been hoped that this change would encourage more members to attend and although the numbers were slightly up on previous years the total was still a moderate 25.

Having said that, those attending appeared to enjoy the new environment and certainly I have not heard a single complaint about what I thought, was an excellent lunch. We turned up between 12:00 and 12:30 and were welcomed by the staff who showed us where our party would be accommodated. Those fortunate enough not to be driving enjoyed a drink from the bar whilst the rest of us ordered our non-alcoholic beverages! The tables were laid out so that most of us could fit around one table, but 8 members had to be on a separate one. This was not a problem, as conversations could be held across the gap!

The three course meal itself was excellent and the choices on offer meant that everyone's dietary needs were met. Conversation around the table was ongoing and seemed quite joyous and only seemed to die down a little whilst people were eating.

At the end of the meal, the Chairman, Adrian Barlow gave a short speech thanking committee members for their work during the year and to thank all those attending. As coffee was being served, some members started to drift away whilst others continued their hearty conversations.

I was the last to leave at 16:00 having thanked the staff for their attentiveness before, during and after the meal and checked that all the bills had been paid!!

At the moment, this year's lunch will be held at the Walwyn Arms on Saturday 5th December but will be confirmed later in the year when members will be asked if they would like to attend.

Ray Papworth, Secretary
secretary@advanced-drivers.org.uk

A Gentle Reminder!

Your subs for 2026 HAD Membership are due on 1st January each year. The cost is £15 each or £17 for a couple. Please pay yours now if you haven't already done so. Our account details for BACS:

IAM Herefordshire
Sort Code: 20-39-64
Account number: 63447480