

NORTH EAST LONDON & ESSEX GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

Registered Charity Number: 1056280

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

held at the Moby Dick (A12 junction with Whalebone Lane), RM6 6QU

as well as 'in-person' this AGM also had members attending via ZOOM

Tuesday 12th April 2022 at 7.30pm

Before the formal business of the AGM there was a 45 minute presentation on Dashcams, Road Safety & the Police Portal by Elliott Blackburn of NextBase cameras

Minutes

The Chair, **Paul Gillett** introduced the **AGM** welcoming everyone to the meeting.

1. **Apologies for absence** – Iain Wyness, John Saffer
2. **Minutes of previous AGM** (Zoom) on *Tuesday 13th April 2021*
 - Amendments to: **Apologies for Absence....** *Clint Charles* should read *Clint Childs*
Minutes were then accepted as a true record. Proposed by Charlie McGlinchey,
seconded by Derek Leggetter. **Carried unanimously.**
3. **Matters arising from the 2021 AGM Minutes**
 - Two matters arose from the Members' discussion, *i.e.* meeting location & membership subscriptions. These would be addressed during this meeting.

4. **Chairman's report**

Additional to the Chairman's report, which was given out at the meeting and is posted on the NELE website under "Events", the Chair thanked Jennifer MacLellan for her outstanding efforts on publicity, not just for the AGM but for the year. The Chair also mentioned that Brian Calcutt was retiring from the Committee and thanked him for his long-serving, efficient & unobtrusive service. In accepting a plaque presented to him by the Chair, Brian thanked the Committee, especially Iain Wyness (no longer a serving Committee member), who, as his Observer many years ago, encouraged Brian to take up the role of Membership Secretary.

Chairman's Report 2021 - 2022

At this time last year, we were hoping for an imminent resumption of NELE's activities. Needless to say, those hopes were soon dashed! Nevertheless, it is good to be able to report that for NELE, 2021 was a year of overcoming adversity to achieve at least some of our objectives, by delivering observed runs and providing social meetings, albeit mostly over the Internet.

Observed Runs

The Advanced Driving Course necessarily results in two people sitting in close proximity within a confined space, which is not the ideal environment during the COVID pandemic. Over the past 12 months, several NELE observers had to self-isolate, some for the whole year, in the interests of their own health or that of domestic contacts. Similar restrictions affected a number of Associates. Consequently, it has not been possible to carry out a full calendar of Observed Runs.

Nevertheless, by following guidelines issued by IAM RoadSmart and the government, our team of around 20 Observers (it varies over time) have managed to continue providing Observed Runs to Associates, of whom we typically have around 50 at any snapshot. We are grateful to **Peter Rowles** and his team for their continuing battle against the many challenges thrown their way. Their efforts mean that we were able to provide an albeit limited service when other Groups nearby had completely ground to a halt.

However, Associates' ability to practise between Observed Runs has also been compromised by lockdowns, resulting in slower progress and a greater load on Observers, who have to recap previous learning rather than being able to move on.

We are conscious that our ability to deliver has been geographically patchy. Consequently, we have backlogs in certain areas of our somewhat extended territory - some Associates beyond the edge of our "patch" were allocated to us because their normal Group had suspended operations. At the same time, our nearest Observers to them were self-isolating. A perfect storm! We are trying hard to catch up. Unfortunately, the traditional IAM option of borrowing Observers from neighbouring Groups to help fill gaps is definitely not an option whilst they, too, are tackling backlogs.

One measure taken by IAM RoadSmart to ease the pressure and be fair to Associates has been to extend the validity of Advanced Driving Course membership beyond the normal one-year limit. NELE adopted the same policy, so that Associates were not disadvantaged by the enforced delay.

As restrictions ease, we will seek ways of strengthening our Observer Team especially in those Boroughs where we are currently under-resourced. This could include a Head Office mailout to those from appropriate postcodes who achieved good recent Test passes, inviting them to undertake Observer training. Inevitably, this will be subject to COVID restrictions.

Despite all the difficulties experienced over the past year, NELE Associates managed to achieve three test passes and another three First passes – congratulations go both to those Associates and their hard-working Observers.

Social Meetings

Another example of triumph over adversity has been NELE's programme of Social meetings. By embracing internet technology, we have been able to continue our programme of monthly presentations on a wide variety of topics, mostly related to motoring but with the occasional detour to provide contrast.

It is no easy task to pull together such a programme. Potential speakers must be found and contacted; their availability ascertained to find when it fits with our calendar; then follows all the practical details of arranging and publicising the meeting. Once it's over, its details get summarised for the newsletter and website. This has all been managed most effectively by **Jen MacLellan** who has arranged 11 presentations from speakers during 2021: a most remarkable achievement under the circumstances; the swan-like appearance of these events belies much activity beneath the surface!

Meetings have taken place exclusively over Zoom with one exception, which was held in person at Lopping Hall, Loughton; even this was a hybrid meeting, simultaneously broadcast over Zoom. We are conscious that some members prefer to meet in person, whilst others value the ability to participate from home. It is therefore the committee's intention to develop a social programme for the future with meetings that are mostly hybrid in nature.

However, we recognize that a key factor in holding in-person meetings is finding a location that is welcoming and has good facilities. Our current venues are not entirely satisfactory in this respect. Before lockdown the committee was working its way through a list of alternative venues, but progress was necessarily halted when most potential meeting places closed down "for the duration". Work has resumed as rooms and halls reopen.

We wish to ensure that all our members have the opportunity to provide feedback about what they would like from their Group in the way of social and motoring get-togethers. For this reason, you will find an invitation/RSVP enclosed that incorporates a Questionnaire. Please complete and return this to our Secretary by 8th April 2022. Those who attend the AGM will also have an opportunity to share their ideas in person.

We would also like to find a volunteer who can assist Jen in arranging presenters for Group Nights. Meetings have already been provisionally booked until September.

Administration

NELE couldn't function without a team of unsung heroes looking after the day-to-day administrative tasks.

- **Mike Noel**, as our Group Secretary, deals with the day-to-day correspondence and all things to do with officialdom, whether that be working with Head Office, ensuring that our Charity Commission registration is up to date or dealing with the paperwork for committee meetings. As it says in Roadcraft, "Quiet efficiency is the hallmark of the expert".
- **Brian Calcutt**, who has been our membership secretary for many years. His records show who needs to renew their subs, where their newsletter should be delivered, and who would prefer that to be by email. Where possible, he keeps your NELE membership details aligned with those of IAM RoadSmart Head Office. He's also the very useful chap who keeps the details of who has signed up for Gift Aid, thereby adding to NELE's coffers at no additional cost to themselves. These and many more things happen in the background, but Brian comes into his own when he manages to cope calmly with all the problems that human errors seem to be able to generate when dealing with databases. After this AGM, Brian will be standing down, his successor to be appointed following the AGM. We offer Brian our best wishes for a quieter life in future and our thanks for his many years' service to NELE.
- **Pete Minvalla** is the technical expert that supports NELE's IT systems, including web-hosting, emails, and Cloud storage of information.
- **Paul Heasmer** will get his moment in the spotlight when he delivers his Treasurer's report at a later point in the meeting, but we should also recognise the essential role he plays in working with Brian and Pete in dealing with membership renewals and subscriptions.
- Although she's been mentioned above, **Jen MacLellan** is deserving of a further entry here, having effectively filled many other roles, including Editor of **Roadworthy**, and our Publicity and PRO, incorporating our Facebook presence.
- **Derek Leggetter** and **Charlie McGlinchey**, who have limited access to IT, have been somewhat side-lined this year by our enforced transfer to Zoom committee meetings, so have held the role of committee members without portfolio. We expect them to be able to resume a more active role in 2022.

The Coming Year

As has been alluded to above, the coming year will see the committee trying to return NELE to full strength in the wake of the COVID pandemic. In particular, we intend to:

- Strengthen the Observer team, especially in areas where we currently have few or no Observers available.
- Find a new venue or venues for our meetings to reinvigorate our Social calendar
- Introduce ways of working with the education sector to engage with younger drivers that could benefit from Advanced Driving skills to enhance their own safety and job prospects.

And finally...

I'd like to thank NELE's members for your continued support over the past year. By remaining members of IAM RoadSmart and NELE, your subscriptions help us to continue with our efforts to improve the standard of driving (and riding) in the UK, both directly by providing the Advanced Driving Course and indirectly by contributing to Road Safety initiatives, influencing policy makers and publicising better driving standards. By continuing your interest, you also ensure that you are seeking constantly to maintain and improve your own standards because, as we all know, the best drivers never stop learning.

Resolution 1: To accept the Chairman's report

Proposed by: Martine Heasmer; **Seconded by** Ricky Poon

Carried unanimously

5. Treasurer's report and adoption of accounts.

The Treasurer's Report was handed out at the meeting, as well as included in the **Spring 2022 Edition of Roadworthy** (p16) and on the NELE website.

The Group's reserves stood at **£11,210.00** and are held in two current accounts. The Treasurer addressed the issue that pre-pandemic we thought we may have had to increase subscriptions. However, because we weren't meeting physically, lower expenses were incurred; he doesn't anticipate a need for subscriptions to increase next year either. The Treasurer also addressed the issue of *Gift Aid*, by urging everyone present [full-members only] to fill in the pink form, which was available from Jen at the back of the room. Each Gift-Aided subscription gives £2.50 back to NELE once the form has been filled in & handed to the Treasurer. [This is a potential 'gift' to us of £600 <£2.50 x 240> once all members have signed]. Members need only sign up for Gift Aid once; it does not have to be re-newed every year. Asked by a member what was the most expensive item in the Report, the Treasurer answered that it was the cost of printing & postage, although the cost of printing RoadWorthy had significantly decreased from previous years.

Paul Heasmer thanked everyone in the group who had assisted him in his role as Treasurer.

Resolution 2: To accept the Treasurer's report and adopt the accounts.

Proposed by: Clint Childs; **Seconded by:** Pete Minvalla

Carried unanimously

6. Resolution 3: That any monies unclaimed by Group members for over one year by the end of the AGM should be treated as a donation to Group charitable funds.

- We include this every AGM to avoid "ghost" entries in the accounts where members, for example, have moved and cancelled their membership but not a standing order, or where members have paid twice and not asked for a reimbursement.
- There were no unclaimed monies carried forward for 2020/21

Proposed by: Derek Leggetter; **Seconded by:** Brian Calcutt

Resolution carried unanimously

7. Election of officers (*Officers must retire annually & may offer themselves for re-election*)

Standing for re-election:

- Chairman: **Paul Gillett**
- Secretary: **Mike Noel**
- Treasurer: **Paul Heasmer**

Proposed by (*en block*): Grant Powell; **Seconded by:** Jay Rashid

Carried unanimously

8. Election of committee members

Every year one-third of Committee members must retire in rotation and may offer themselves for re-election.

Committee Members retiring and not standing for re-election:
Brian Calcutt

Committee Members retiring & standing for re-election:
Derek Leggetter, Clint Childs

Proposed by: Charlie McGlinchey; **Seconded by:** Peter Rowles
Carried unanimously

- **Derek Leggetter** proposed that we should formally thank our *Observers* who have worked continuously during the past year.
Proposed by: Derek Leggetter; **Seconded by:** Charlie McGlinchey
Carried unanimously

9. The formal part of the AGM was declared over by the **Chair** who then handed over the meeting to the **Secretary** to lead an informal discussion about future meetings, venues and format.

- The Secretary thanked members for completing the AGM Questionnaire and urged those who hadn't, to take the opportunity now to do so. He said that this discussion wasn't to give an analysis of the responses – which would appear in the next edition of RoadWorthy – but to give those who hadn't voiced their thoughts on the venues, format or time of meetings or any other issues, the opportunity to do so. However, the Secretary did give some insight into some of the responses he had seen thus far by saying the group is a very 'social' group and are very much interested in social events e.g. a Summer BBQ and/or a Christmas Social. This prompted him to urge for someone to join the Committee as an Events and/or Speaker Co-ordinator in order to 'spread the workload' of the existing Committee.
- The Secretary continued that since October 2019 our 'time was up' at the Metropolitan Police club in Chigwell and since then we have been 'nomadic' trying different 'homes' e.g. Grange Farm in Chigwell (down the road from the Police club), Lopping Hall in Loughton and St James' Church Hall in Buckhurst Hill. Each had its advantages/disadvantages which prompted the views that any future venues chosen must satisfy certain criteria:
 - o Adequate parking supplemented by good pathways and outdoor lighting
 - o Internet access or a stable Wi-Fi connection. *This was important as the majority of 'returns' seen thus far stated they wished to have the option of either attending meetings physically or by "Zoom"*
 - o Adequate accessibility e.g. step-free, a wheel-chair lift and/or a lift for anyone with mobility needs.
- The Secretary pointed out that these criteria have always guided our selection as well as others listed in IAM's Handbook. These were used by himself and other members in an extensive search last summer for an alternative venue following last year's AGM. We desperately need a permanent home to re-establish our 'identity'.
- Asked why we couldn't 'renew' our 'membership' of the Police club, the answer was that: cost and policy changes have regrettably made the venue unavailable.
- The majority present indicated they would be happy with attending the Moby Dick for future Social evenings.
- The Secretary thanked everyone and closed this section of the meeting.

10. **Any other business** – Nil

The meeting finished at 21.25 hrs