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**MELKSHAM & DISTRICT GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS**  
(Group No 1198) (Registered Charity Number: 1055930)

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE RIVERSIDE CLUB, MELKSHAM ON THURSDAY 19 MAY 2011**

**Committee members present:**

Paul Wilkins	Chairman
Archer Endrich	Secretary
Graham Bennett	Treasurer
David Major	
Luke Pickett	
Helen Pickett	
Angela Summers	

**Luminaries:**

Andy Poulton	Staff Examiner
David Merson	Examiner
David Douch	Speaker for the Evening (Car Safety)

**Visiting Groups:**

Swindon (Andrew Horton - Observer)

**ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The following apologies for absence had been received:

Members – June Nixon, Mike Doggart, Pat Ham, Alan Horner  
Luminaries – Richard Furneaux  
Invited Groups – Bath Group, Bristol Group, Taunton Group  
Invited visitors – Scott Hill

**ITEM 2. MINUTES OF THE 2010 AGM (Resolution No 1)**

The minutes of the AGM held on 20 May 2010 (proposed by Graham Bennett and seconded by Elaine White) were unanimously agreed as a true record and signed off by the Chairman.

**ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM 2010 AGM**

There were no matters arising.



#### ITEM 4. AMENDMENTS OR ADJUSTMENTS TO THIS AGENDA

There were no amendments to the Agenda.

#### ITEM 5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As I have made clear, I am standing down as Chair at this AGM. I took the post in 1996, when nobody wanted to do it, and without a Chair the IAM would insist that the Group fold. I did not want that to happen, for one reason which was important to me: I had got a great deal from the Group – and from Mike Thelwell in particular – and I felt that it was time that I paid some of it back.

I also became an Observer. There were two reasons for this. The first was, to parallel a conversation which I had with a tutor which qualified as an archery coach:

*Me: How do we repay you for the time and effort which you have given us?*

*Him: You don't repay me. You pass what we have taught you on to others.*

In addition, I have been for many years – around 50 – interested in road safety and I have made no secret of the reason for this. My father was killed in a road traffic collision when I was a teenager, as in not many years after that were at least three teenage friends and acquaintances. This kind of experience concentrates the mind somewhat. I did, when a student, work for a short period in the Road User Section of what was then the Road Research Laboratory, looking at road safety propaganda. As an aside, the message from them then was (and still is, as far as I am aware) that the approach of trying to frighten road users into safety doesn't work. I formed the opinion that we assume that drivers know what they should do but are perverse enough not to do it. For the younger drivers this may be partly true, but for most drivers the reality is that they don't know that they are unsafe.

As an example, since I qualified for a Bus Pass I have used buses quite frequently (12 times this week alone) – why pay for petrol when you can do the same journey for free, and no parking charges either) – and the standard of bus drivers is appalling. I have been in buses where the driver was tailgating and complaining about the driver in front. One of the worst was this week in Bath where the driver of the car in front in a traffic queue was leaving the gap in front of him as we recommend, i.e., you can see farmac, but the bus driver was blowing his horn and creeping up ever closer to the car. And complaining about it. Comments showed that I was not the only passenger to think that the one who was wrong was the bus driver. I should have filed a complaint with First, but by the time I got back to the bus station after 5 hours at the RUH, I was too knackered to want to put in the effort. I doubt if it would have done any good anyway. I have seen evidence that the more complex the skill, the less able people are at judging how good or bad they are at it. In fact, there seems to be an inverse relationship: the worse they are, the better they think they are. Bizarre, but it seems to be true.

So what have I achieved in the five years I have been Chair? Some things, perhaps, but not nearly anything like I wanted to.

My attempts to interest Clarendon College in Trowbridge in what we have to offer have fallen on deaf ears. I have offered to run a sixth form assembly on the subject of safe driving, but have been totally ignored. With the agreement of the Head, I leafleted all of the teaching staff with a Skill for Life leaflet in their pigeon-holes in the staff room – and watched while virtually every one of them dumped the leaflet in the nearby waste paper bin. The most frustrating bit was when the teacher responsible for promoting the Pass Plus program ripped it in half and *then* chucked it in the bin.

Moreover, I heard one member of staff declaim in response to the headline “Be a Better Driver” “but I am a better driver”. She isn't. I've watched her fail the DSA test in the first 200 yards on the Frome Road outside the Clarendon entrance. I was waiting for a bus at the time, incidentally.

Finally, when there was a collision by a Clarendon student which resulted in one of their passengers suffering life-changing brain damage, the Head vetoed a piece in the newsletter about the IAM. He



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doesn't drive. I'll try one last time in the next week or so, but I am leaving the College in the next few weeks. Retirement beckons at last!

Another major failure was my attempt to get Wiltshire Police to encourage their drivers to take the Skill for Life programme. My idea was that by getting them to do so it would cut their own driver training programme significantly, and thus cut costs and increase the number of officers they could put through their programme. Silly me. What actually happened was that the (then?) head of driver training saw it as a threat to him and essentially vetoed the whole idea. Maybe my successor would like to try again, since it still seems to me to be a good idea – I've seen some atrocious police driving. Again, I suspect ignorance.

Finally, in this catalogue of things which didn't happen was Wiltshire Sound. They were doing an item one morning on motoring – specifically about why people don't go out for Sunday afternoon drives any more – and wanted comment from us. I challenged the presenter on air to do the SfL programme and he got as far as sending me an application form, as we had agreed to pay the fee. Then it went dead. If my successor wants to try again, I'll give him the contract. But don't hold your breath.

On the positive side, we have had a number of favourable press articles. David Major did a very good piece in the Wiltshire Times on economic driving. We have had items in the community news section of that paper, mostly written by me. Marie Green, initially, and Helen Picket, subsequently, have organised entertaining and informative talks by various speakers. Marie was a hard act to follow, but Helen has risen to the challenge. We had a visit to Morgan Cars in Malvern, which led to a comment that "you don't buy a Morgan, you join a very exclusive club".

I gave two talks on archery – my other obsession. The second one led to a taster session where a number of club members spent an afternoon shooting with Bath Archers.

One of the more entertaining events was when we had the speed cameras out by the bridge. A gentleman came up to me and launched into a harangue about them and how he had got nine points on his licence because of them "none of which were his fault". I refrained from commenting!

I suppose my main achievement over the last five years has been to hold the group together. I wish my successor every success, and I offer my support for anything they wish to try.

### **ITEM 6. TREASURER'S REPORT AND ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS** (Resolution No 2) (Resolution No 3)

The main expense during the year has been stationery and ink cartridges (relating mostly to the Newsletter). We also purchased a Projector for use during presentations. We promoted a Skid Pan event at Castle Combe Race Course, subsidising participants by £20 each. It was difficult to get people interested in the events, even when subsidised.

With an Opening Balance of £1,500.15, Net Expenses were £1,935.91 and Net Income was £1,447.65, making a Total Balance in the Community Account of £1,011.89. The Business Account + Interest received on 4 February 2011 is now £2,110.37.

Graham explained that he had to finish as Treasurer this year because of the health problems of his Mother, resident in Wales. It was necessary to be available for her during the coming months.

Graham thanked Douglas Colborne for being willing to take over as Treasurer and thanked the Committee for their support.

Douglas Colborne thanked Graham for handing over 'clean' accounts. Graham explained that he had supplied accounts to the Committee on a monthly basis and kept a monthly update on the Annual Accounts.

Paul Wilkins thanked Graham Bennett for doing a very good job as Treasurer.

Approval of the accounts (Resolution No 2) was proposed by ?, seconded by Elaine White, and carried unanimously.



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The approval of freedom to change the Group Membership Fee by no more than 20% should it be necessary (Resolution 3) was proposed by Bob Swaffield, seconded by Mike Thelwell and carried unanimously.

### **ITEM 7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Chairman:	Bob Swaffield
Vice Chairman:	Richard Clark
Secretary:	Archer Endrich
Treasurer:	Douglas Colborne

Bob Swaffield was proposed as Chairman by Mike Thelwell and seconded by David Major. Richard Clark was proposed as Vice Chairman by Bob Swaffield and seconded by Elaine White. For Secretary and Treasurer, Archer Endrich and Douglas Colborne, were proposed respectively by Graham Bennett en bloc and seconded by Richard Dalton. All votes were carried unanimously.

### **ITEM 8. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE**

RETIRING AND STANDING FOR RE-ELECTION: David Major (Chief Observer) and Luke Pickett (Newsletter Editor and Webmaster).

RETIRING AND NOT STANDING FOR RE-ELECTION: (none)

NOT RETIRING: Pat Ham (Librarian), Helen Pickett (Events Coordinator), Angela Summers (Membership Secretary)

This complies with IAM requirement that 1/3 of the committee stands down each year.

David Major and Luke Pickett were re-elected unanimously.

### **ITEM 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no AOB.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20:05 hrs.

