



FIFE IAM

Kingdom of Fife Group IAM, helping improve road safety in Fife and beyond.

April 2021

Spring into the drivers seat

Hi all, hope you are doing well. As the weather starts to improve, we may be out and about a little more in our cars or taking the bikes back out of the garage. As a group however, I'm afraid we still have our dust covers on. We'll update you when we know more but until that point, the section on the right shows you the best places to stay up to date.

Let us know if your situation has changed.

We will be led by IAM HQ on when and how we restart but should any associate have concerns about any aspect of training or pre course reading, then please do contact their appropriate Chief Observer. Likewise if any associate has had a change of heart and no longer wishes to start/carry on training then again contact their Chief Observer.

Not too much to say

This is going to be a short newsletter as we've all been under restrictions over the last wee while. If you do have anything you'd like us to cover in future newsletter, just let us know.

Car Safety

Inside this issue we are introducing a deeper dive into car safety measures. Each edition will focus on one particular item and this time its lane assist. This focus really started when myself and our Treasurer, Scott, both got new Kias during lockdown and we both really dislike the lane assist. We felt this was a good opportunity to share those thoughts.

We'll also take a look at the timeline of car safety measures of the past and what else we may expect to see in the coming years on page 4.

Lockdown continues

As with most services just now, we are still unable to operate any advanced driving or riding activities at this current time. We will restart as soon as possible but you can still interact with us our social media spaces.

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Elon-gated range

TESLA have recently announced a refreshed model S and one of our members , Steven Wilson, has kindly written an article around it.

Tesla have recently revealed their first major refresh to the 'Model S' sedan since its initial launch in the US in 2012.

Many of these updates will also be carried over to their SUV 'Model X'.



At launch there will be three variants of the 'S'. The slowest is the 'Long Range', with a 0-60 mph time of a pedestrian 3.1 seconds. You can say goodbye to range anxiety though, with an estimated range of 412 miles on one charge. At almost £84k you will also be saying goodbye to many, many pounds. To put that into perspective with a more traditional Petrol car, the BMW M550i starts at £71k and has a 0-62 mph time of 3.8 seconds.

Middle of the new 'S' range is the 'Plaid' at £111k and 0-60 mph in a blistering 1.99 seconds with three electric motors producing 1020 horsepower.

Their flagship is the 'Plaid+' which is obviously faster than just the 'Plaid' at £131k, with more than 1100 horsepower and over 520 miles range. It is rumored that to achieve this enormous range it will have a new type of battery developed in house by Tesla.

From the outside there is not much change. Slightly restyled front and rear ends which have a similar family appearance to the smaller 'Model 3', black trim replaces chrome round the windows and door handles and the wheels have been updated.

It is the inside that has been given the most controversial treatment. All models will be available with a yoke steering wheel like you would expect to find in a plane (currently it is thought this will be legal in the UK). Gone are those annoying sticks that protruded from all over the place and get in your way of driving. Indicators and wipers are now buttons on the yoke steering wheel. There is even no gear selector for you to tell the car to go forward or reverse. The car will use its cameras, sensors and radar to understand where it is and its artificial intelligence to determine what direction you want to go in. It will still have a 17" tablet style main screen, but now rotated 90 degrees from portrait to landscape. You can watch Netflix, YouTube and play games on it while charging, or even while the car drives itself (a feature promised to be released and sent via an over the air update sometime in the future).

Other additions on the inside include a rear screen for your three back passengers to play games, a rear armrest and door pockets (yes, the old 'Model S' did not have creature comforts like a back seat armrest or door pockets).



We would be keen to know your opinions on the yoke wheel and not having a gear selector, but also what you think about Tesla and electric vehicles in general.

Charging Infrastructure

Following on from our TESLA article, the Department for Transport releases stats on a regular basis but recently they published [data](#) on electric charging infrastructure in the UK.

In 2020, electrical charging devices overall increased by around a quarter, whilst rapid charge infrastructure increased by over 35%.



Scotland has the highest number of rapid chargers within the UK per 100,000 population and the second highest in the UK for all public charging devices. According to the data, Fife is one of the poorest areas in Scotland for access to charging points per head of population.

Orkney tops the list with 143 per 100,000 people although that means they do only have 32 in total. Fife has 25 per 100,000 population or 93 points in total. This is the number of public points and does not take into account charging points at home.

One of the descriptions I've heard for electric vehicles is that you need to think of them like your mobile phone or a laptop. You can charge them when your are out at the coffee shop but will not always be possible and in reality most charges take place at home.

What happens with flats I hear you say. I wonder if lockdown is making me hear voices? In Fife around a quarter of all properties are flats and around half are detached or semi-detached houses. On that thinking, at least half would be able to charge their car at home.

I charge mine at home and used to use a public point near my place of work in those days long ago when we were able to leave our local area. I am quite shocked by this survey though as I thought Fife's infrastructure was doing okay but it now looks like it could be much better.

What to do in an accident



The IAM produced some guidance in March around [what to do if you are involved in a collision](#). If you haven't seen it, its worth a read as often we can be a little bit shocked and unsure on the correct course of action to take following an accident.

The first thing to do is to stop your vehicle as soon as is safe to do so following a collision. Failure to stop is a criminal offence but if you are unable to stop for whatever reason, then you must report the accident to the police within 24 hours.

The next thing to do is speak to those involved. You will need names and addresses, telephone number and details of insurers if known. It would also be useful to take some photos of the accident, ensuring you get at least 1 picture of the license plate of the other car(s) involved. Taking photos will also help if you need to make any claim to insurers.

It may be useful to get witness details also. A few years back I was crossing a pedestrian crossing and a car ran a red light, almost crashing into my son in the buggy. I got the registration number and reported it to the police but without witness statements, all that happened was that he got a warning. Failing to get details was just the shock but I'd know better now.

There are times when you may need to call the police too and these may include if you suspect the other person is under the influence, fails to provide details or if you hit a large animal or dog and the owner is not present.

Vehicle 'improvements'

As I mentioned on the front page, myself and Scott met for lunch one day and discussed how much we like our new Kias but hated the Lane Assist feature. As such, it spawned the idea for a focus on various car safety measures over the coming months.

The Lane Assist function is on by default when you start the car. In my car, its positioned to the console on the right of the steering wheel and as part of my starting drill, I've added 'turn the lane assist off to preserve my sanity'.



What does it do?

It uses a camera, normally in front of the rear view mirror, looks at the road ahead and reads the lane markers to adjust the car if it crosses the line without indication. It operates between 60 km/hr (37mph) and 200km/hr (120mph).

It will make an audible sound that will scare the bejesus out of you and it will adjust the steering slightly to steer back into the lane.

I believe its also required to activate adaptive cruise control but seeing as I've not gone on any long journeys since I have had the car I can't confirm that one.

Why don't we like it?

Its just too sensitive for my liking. It seems to misread the road sometimes and if you are on a wide road with a tarmac join I've seen it get confused and assume that is the lane marker.

On top of that, If you overtake another vehicle and choose not to indicate before moving back to the nearside it has a little fit and tries to put you back into the lane you've just come from.

What about the safety side?

Yes, I'll concede that it is a safety feature that most cars have now and on the whole an important one that will help those with poor lane control or in the unfortunate scenario of a driver falling asleep at the wheel, I hope it would help prevent a serious crash.

In our opinion though, this is just too sensitive so it actually has the adverse effect that I turn it off as soon as I get into the car and therefore if I need it, its not available.

What do you think?

I know this isn't the most positive start to a new section that we are looking to cover so I suppose I'm looking for your views on it too. Does your vehicle have lane assist and what do you think about it? Let us know via our social media links on page 1 or drop me an email.

If there some technology you would like us to cover next? Just drop me an email and we'll do a deeper dive into it.

Car safety over the years

Car safety has improved over the many years and this article by [The Car Expert](#) tells us more.

A lot of the safety improvements developed by manufacturers are widely shared across all manufacturers to keep everyone safe.

In the early part of the 1900s, windscreen wipers and indicators were added to cars and even airbags were being trialed during that time.

Volvo are credited with designing the 3 point seatbelt and they existed from the 50s but it wasn't legislated fully until the early 90s.

In more recent times, Antilocking braking systems, autonomous braking systems and things like lane assist have all been introduced to help reduce human error.

As we move to more autonomous vehicles, what additional safety measures will be required?

The Car Expert suggests that around 90% of all accidents are caused by human error. The first developments in car safety were created to reduce the impact of a crash while the latter developments are to stop them happening in the first place.

Maybe these new developments will reduce accidents as well as the impact when an accident occurs.

Speeding through lockdown

I'm not talking about how fast this past year has gone but more about people going fast during lockdown. The Department for Transport stats use Automatic Traffic Counters to understand how fast drivers travel on specific roads when free to do so. [This article](#) looks at this in more detail.

Why is this a good indicator?

Automatic Traffic Counters (ATC) are normally two rubber lines laid across the road. They use the time taken for the vehicle to cross both lines to calculate the speed. Often, the ATC can also use weights or axle length to understand the type of vehicle too e.g. car or HGV. They are a good indicator of actual speed as often drivers won't notice them and will drive as they normally would. This may not be the case if a mobile speed unit or a static speed camera was in place although the ATC is only in place to gather data.

What did the DfT find?

The graphic on the right shows the overall pattern of vehicle behaviour by three different road types. These are motorways, single carriageways and 30mph limit roads over the course of 2020. The DfT data splits them down into quarters but I've averaged it for the whole year.

The greatest number of vehicles exceeding speed limits was in the 30mph range whilst single carriageways were significantly lower. Over half the vehicles in 30mph zones exceeded the speed limit.

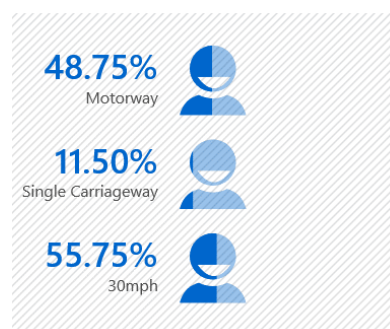
The data also looks at time of day which I found interesting. There was generally little variation in speeding during the day but on motorways it did peak between 5 and 6am and again between 5 and 7pm. For 30mph roads speeding was gradually increased from 4pm and generally peaked around 5am before dropping off significantly.

I suppose this is what you expect with motorway 'rush hour' being the peak speeding time and it is at least heartening to know that significant speeding on 30mph roads occurs when most people are asleep.

Anything else of note

What I didn't see in the guidance was if 31mph was classed as speeding or what the leeway was, if any. The 2020 data used 77 speed counters throughout the country but appeared to use a limited number of cars for that data set, which I can only assume is a result of the pandemic.

Speeding by road type



Speeding in Fife

I know I've touched on this a few times during the lockdown issues but still the speeding continues.

Here are two recent examples from [The Courier](#) around this issue.

One driver was caught doing 100mph on the A92 between Lochgelly and Kirkcaldy, a notorious section of road that sees accidents at the best of times. The other driver was caught doing 80mph in a 40 zone on Queensferry Road. Both drivers have been reported to the Procurator Fiscal.

Even though the roads are quieter, please remain vigilant as this along with the data above indicates that speed is a significant issue just now.

Keep in touch

Don't forget, if you want to get in touch with us to share thoughts or ask a question you can do so by:

- www.kofgiam.org.uk
- [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) or email newsletter@kofgiam.org.uk