

Association of South Eastern Driving Instructors

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24 November 2004 (ac)

Venue: The Old Lighthouse Inn, Capel-le-Ferne.

Members Present:

Terry Hughes, Hazel Leng, Lindsay Hodgson, Bryan Coward, Sue Banks, Phil Plant, Peter Glenn, Steve Lavender, Steve Bailey, Tracey Amos, Renata Wilcoxon, Peter Cotterill, Andy Brown, Tony Simcock, Andy Carter, Fred Henniker, Jon Turbutt, Roy Hayes, Jackie Cowans, Tony Flisher (8:10).

Apologies Received:

Robin Burgess, Keith Davies.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8:00, by introducing Bob Millard – Deputy Chief Driving Examiner, who was accompanied by Steve Spitty – Local Supervising Examiner (L-Tests).

Bob talked about “Eco-Driving”, a modern driving technique being promoted by DVO – a group that comprises DSA, DVLA and VOSA. He showed some interesting slides, stating facts and figures to accompany the claims that this style of driving can assist in fuel and cost savings, as well as following the DSA Green Plans. It is also borne out of the EU 3rd Directive for LGV’s.

Bob told that “Eco-driving is a recognised and proven style of driving that contributes to road safety...” It can also assist in reducing damage to the environment.

A day’s course at Cardington has been undertaken by all the main national ADI Associations, and Bob felt that it may be possible to invite a dozen or so members of this association to attend a future course. DSA is also developing a training package for Eco-Driving.

At the end of the talk, Bob offered everyone a copy of a video entitled “On the level” – a Network Rail production about road safety at level crossings. Bob is involved in a Level-Crossings working group, the aims of which are to improve safety and driver behaviour. Some spare copies were left for any member that would like one.

Steve Spitty then invited questions from members. At the last meeting, we heard about candidates being asked to pull-up on the left during their tests, when there were few appropriate spaces. Steve explained that the examiner should always be able to see at least two gaps. He added that ADI’s could assist by making it clear to their pupils that it is not expected for them to immediately steer into the left – but that they may travel until they find a suitable place. Candidates are expected to make at least two normal stops during their test.

No fault would be marked if the candidate missed a couple of places, but they may be prompted again by the examiner. They will receive a fault if they steer straight into the first available gap if they do so without executing the normal safety checks etc.

If the candidate finds themselves too close to a car in front, or across a driveway, they are permitted to manoeuvre the vehicle into a better position. It is important where the vehicle is parked, and any manoeuvring must be done safely and with effective observation.

The Car-Park at the Driving Test Centre is not the place to teach Bay Parking. Some ADI’s have been using it for this purpose, but they are not thought to be ASEDI members. A complaint was received by DSA from other users of Palting House, and further complaints could result in the car-park becoming out-of-bounds except for tests. Members are reminded to take care if using this car-park, and to avoid test start and finish times, as well as the beginning and end of the working day.

DSA is looking into sites for new Driving Test Centres, but is finding this very difficult.

There was some good news with regard to Test appointment waiting times. There has been some success with the latest recruitment programme resulting in new examiners coming to local centres. Folkestone already has one new examiner, and another is hoped to be joining at the end of the year. Canterbury and Maidstone are also due new examiners at the same time, and Gravesend and Gillingham expect more following the February course. Current test waiting times are 12 weeks for Folkestone, and 10 weeks for Ashford. The aim is to reduce average national waiting times to 6 weeks by the end of January. Currently this stands at 10 weeks.

DSA are developing a Quality Assurance programme for Driving Schools, although there would be benefit to the individual ADI as well. One inclusion is the subject of Mock Tests, whereby training can be given in how a real driving test is conducted and marked, so that a mock test can become as close as possible to the real thing.

In closing, Steve passed on thanks from his wife, who had received a card from the ASED I following a recent fall in Folkestone. She is now fully recovered.

The Chairman and Members thanked Bob Millard and Steve Spitty for their kind attendance, and moved to discuss ASED I business at 9:20.

Tony Simcock proposed that the minutes of the last meeting would be accepted as a true record. Andy Brown seconded this. Carried.

Matters Arising:

Marine Parade Car Park is now closed. Members were reminded that the car park at the end of Marine Parade is available. There is also a disused car park at the site of the former Little Chef in Cheriton.

There are 35 people confirmed for the Christmas Meal on 4 December.

There has been no reply from ADINJC regarding the letter sent from this association. We will continue to wait.

A tragic accident happened in Romney Marsh recently, involving ADI Paul Brankley. Sadly Vivienne, his wife, lost her life whilst driving. Paul had been in the vehicle, but was not driving due to having a foot in plaster following a previous injury.

The chairman thanked Peter Cotterill for visiting Paul shortly after the accident.

The reports in the local papers did no favours for Paul, as they stated Paul was in the passenger seat of the vehicle, which had dual-controls and L-Plates fitted. Members were read an email sent to the chairman by Andy Carter. The content was discussed and it was agreed that the ASED I should write to the papers expressing concern over the reporting of the accident. Peter agreed to discuss this with Paul. *[Since the meeting, Paul has been contacted and is very happy for the association to proceed as discussed.]*

Any other business:

A member of the public has spoken to an ASED I member, regarding the conduct of an ADI. The ADI named has offered to discuss the matter directly with the member of the public. An open meeting is not the place to discuss matters such as these.

Steve Bailey has completed the transfer of all the Treasurers duties to Andy Brown. The chairman thanked Steve for his work as Treasurer over the past year, and also for all his hard work in promoting the Association. All members wished Steve well in his new home.

Andy Carter reminded members that the new committee are still looking for ideas for next years programme. A few suggestions have been received and are being looked into currently.

Check Tests are not taking place at the moment, but are thought to be resuming in February or March. There are possible plans for a more local SE(ADI) – but they would be based in Canterbury as this is more central to the region.

Two members have been given conflicting advice from two examiners regarding EMS Warning Lights on their Peugeot cars. One member was told that the light being illuminated would result in the test being abandoned. The other member was told that there would not be a problem. The Chairman agreed to contact Steve Spitty regarding this. Unfortunately, the discrepancy was not discovered until Steve had left!

Peter Glenn is still reviewing the consultation documents from DSA, and will report back to a future meeting.

Garden Road is now One-Way between Mead Road and Allendale Street. There is access from Pavilion Road as far as Allendale Street, but traffic must then turn right, and can only proceed North via Albert Road, or may return South via Russell Road and Watkin Road.

A letter has been received from the Transport Minister regarding vehicle lights, in particular the DSA refusal to take a vehicle on test with a faulty light. The law is thought to allow for a period of days to rectify such a fault, whereas DSA will only allow their normal five minutes. As this is DSA policy, it cannot be argued or discussed. The matter needs addressing at a future date.

A report has stated that whilst numbers of Safety Cameras (or Speed Cameras) have increased, so have the number of road-related deaths. The report suggests that driver education can result in greater savings in accident numbers.

The D441 form is thought to be being phased out. Currently it can be purchased for £5. One member paid for a D441 which was then torn up by an examiner, in front of the ADI and candidate. Andy Carter agreed to contact the DSA and DVLA to find out what will happen in the future. *[Since the meeting, a reply has been received: the form is not being phased out. Full details will be given at the next meeting.]*

The fee for Driving Tests increases on 8 December. This is contrary to what was previously discussed. The fee for Category B tests will be £42 for normal times, and £51 for weekend and evening tests when available.

Invicta Motors is closing in Folkestone on 30 November, but it is already pretty-much closed! Business has been transferred to Ashford Orbital Park, but there will be a courtesy bus between the two sites, and an increase in the availability of Courtesy Cars. Unlike some other garages, they do not have a dual-controlled vehicle available.

There being no further business, the chairman moved to close the meeting. As this would be his final meeting, he thanked all members and committee members for their work over the past years. The chairman explained that he is very excited for the future of the association, and hoped that membership numbers could be increased once more.

Date and time of next meeting:

The next meeting will be the Annual General Meeting, and will be held at the Old Lighthouse Inn, Capel-le-Ferne, on Wednesday 26 January 2005, commencing at 8:00pm.