

## **RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders Cornwall:**

### **Driver section Report-2020-21**

An enormously difficult and disappointing year for the Drivers and Car Tutors I'm sure you'll all agree....

At the start of the year in March 2020, we had half a dozen Associates in training, 1 Short Course to complete, two new Driver Tutors to organise Tutor training for and two 3 year re-tests needing refresher training all on the books.

Then COVID-19 stopped all Advanced Driver/Rider training as people will be aware in the national lockdown.

We met as Committee following the lockdown on a reasonably regular basis to discuss the way forwards and the implications etc

In the early Summer, the Riders section were briefly allowed to resume training rides outdoors with a strict Covid safety protocol in place. This was very welcome and helped the Riders with their section which had quite a number of Riders waiting to complete their training etc

At the time and subsequently, at a number of further meetings, we decided on each occasion, regrettably, that resuming car driver training would simply not be sensible or safe in the light of the much higher risks faced by drivers inside the vehicle where safe distancing would not be possible. Clearly, we were also guided by National guidance and restrictions issued by the government, DVSA, and RoSPA Headquarters - this guidance applied to their approved Examiners also.

Looking ahead to when restrictions were anticipated to be relaxed, we canvassed all of our Tutors on a number of occasions who broadly felt similarly that they would still not wish to resume

tutoring given the evolving pandemic and very real risk of rising infection rates as lockdowns were relaxed. Nonetheless, we drew up a Driver 'Covid-19 safety protocol' to follow for such a time as the rules allowed training to resume and by this stage we had two Tutors who were willing to help start the training process again but just as this plan fell into place, lockdown again forced us to hold back. There were therefore only two re-tests that managed to get done for a couple of Tutors and one Associate who did his Car test in a very brief window of opportunity when an Examiner was free.

Looking ahead to this year, we still have a number of Members to train-this includes those who were in training or about to start training for the advanced car test by March of last year, plus Members who have since booked their 3-year re-tests (in accordance with RoSPA advice) but who have yet to start their long-awaited refresher drives and retake their tests. Understandably, we are keen to ensure that when Driver training is allowed to resume, we have a clear plan of priority for these people in place. We trust the Covid-19 safety protocol will help minimise risks for Driver and Tutor or Examiner first and foremost. The vaccination programme will undoubtedly have put more minds at rest and should make for helpful risk reduction inside the vehicle in theory if both Associate and Tutor are vaccinated.

We are currently in the process of drawing up a provisional Events diary for the rest of the year to interest the Drivers, alongside the possibility for those interested to have online Roadcraft training e.g. via Zoom meetings, with the hope of future meetings again in various local Village Halls where we can meet up in person as Covid-19 rules and restrictions allow. Some of these meetings may be co-hosted with the Riders e.g. an educational theme or topic on an aspect of Roadcraft. We had a couple of excellent Speakers who had accepted invitations to come and talk to our Group last year -we hope we can persuade them to come down to Cornwall if they are

still willing! The Events will be advertised on our Website and Facebook page in due course.

We are also in the process of organising our Tutor training programme once again. We used to meet up several times a year before Covid restrictions stopped them. Our Tutors-all volunteers giving many hours of their free time to help their Associates-need and value refresher driving sessions and updates. This programme encourages all to keep up training standards as well as the opportunity to offer support to each other.

The Rider Tutors occasionally join the Driver Tutors in these meetings in our shared love of Advanced Driving and Riding in Cornwall.

We look forward to welcoming new and old Members alike when Advanced Driving finally gets the go-ahead.

My personal thanks to all the Tutors and Committee Members in particular for their outstanding help and support throughout a challenging year.