

# Dorset IAM RoadSmart



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## Lockdown productivity?

As lockdown continues, now with ever less stringent levels I am left wondering what goals and targets we set at the start and if we have managed to achieve them?

Initially I planned to exercise at least once a day - be that going for a run, a cycle, or a walk. While I can't say that I managed to keep to that 100%, I feel like I've not done too badly. Some days, I may have stretch the rules - but I think push a lawn mower around for 1.5 miles on a baking hot afternoon probably counts! For the first time in my career as a runner, I have started attending speedwork sessions. This obviously wasn't possible until gatherings of up to 6 people from outside one house were allowed to meet (whilst still following social distancing). This works much better than just meeting up as we used to and going for a running (pre-lockdown), as you can't have much of a group chat when spread out in a long line! The speed work general entails running a smallish circuit (say about 150-200m). As everyone has a different pace, we are all in the vicinity but not right beside with each other. The recovery time allows for a quick chat before setting off again. The sessions don't last very long, but certainly make you work hard!

I've also been venturing out on the bike a bit more, and one of my friends has recently embarked on a couch to 50k cycling plan. Last weekend he asked for route suggestions to cover approx. 25 miles (40k). Given that we live in Dorset I couldn't think of anything flat which didn't involve endless loops! In the end I sent him out from Dorchester to Moreton via part of the West Stafford bypass and then West Stafford before heading to the tea rooms at Moreton, the return leg was via Puddletown and past Hardy's Cottage (so a rather sneaky bonus hill climb thrown in for free), and then out to Charminster and back via Poundbury Road. I am always amazed at the number of back roads which exist, and often are not known about by those other than people who live on them, runners,

cyclists and horse riders. Certainly a bonus as the number of poorly driven cars on the roads seems to have increased dramatically. I suspect it is caused by a lot of drivers not having used their cars much over the last few months, and once let out on the open road they discovering their driving skills aren't as polished as they once were. Or worse still, they don't realise their standard of driving has dropped - making them even more of a hazard. I am sure that everyone who has attended Doug's amazing seminar evenings will be familiar with the question "Do you think you are an above average driver?" at which point most of the room raises their hand, only to then hear the words "We can't all be above average".

Since lockdown started, I have travelled a mere 500 miles in my car, where as previously that would have been a week and a bit of commuting. My wallet is, however, very grateful; but sadly I'm still paying car insurance for a car which is happily, and safely tucked up in the garage. I do believe that one Motor Insurance provider was offering some form of discount during this period, but the rest appear to have opted not to follow suit which is a little disappointing, but depending on the conditions attached to a reduced policy, this might be harder to police.

I am sure that I, like many have taken the extra time at home to do some of those jobs we keep putting off. I have sorted through all my outstanding paperwork which required filing (thank goodness more platforms are now able to provide paperless billing). I've also had a good rummage through my garage and found various car parts I no longer require - mainly for my mk1 Octavia - a set of 5 alloys, a proper factory designed dog guard, spare tools, and for my mk2 a spare wheel (instead of the can of gunk) and a never fitted towbar. Next step will be to see if I can find any takers before they get turfed out (which would be a shame).

My final outstanding task is to work through the club membership and send out membership renewals for

those who haven't yet embraced the modern world of Standing Orders!

I hope you are all keeping safe, staying out of the heat of the day (at least before the rain arrives!), and not coming in too much contact with the litter generating day-trippers which have been flocking to Dorset in their thousands recently.

Stay Alert, Control Lives, Save Lives

*Matt Ames*  
*Newsletter Editor*

### **Latest for the IAM RoadSmart Press Room** **“Don't leave your road safety to chance, get your MOT done promptly says IAM RoadSmart”**

Get your MOT done as soon as you can to avoid leaving your safety to chance, is the message from the UK's largest independent road safety charity, as a new poll indicates one in seven people plan to make full use of the six-month Coronavirus (COVID-19) MOT extension.

With thousands of vehicles passing their MOT test due date every day, IAM RoadSmart has expressed concern that a minority of drivers and riders are putting their own and other people's lives at risk by putting off the annual expert check on their vehicle's fitness for the road.

The poll, by RAC Approved Garages, indicates 14% of those surveyed intend to take full advantage of the six-month MOT extension for all cars, vans and motorcycles in Britain, introduced by the Driver Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) from 30 March as the lockdown began nationwide. Drivers and riders in Northern Ireland have been given a one-year exemption. Department for Transport (DfT) figures for 2018 show 39 people died and 378 were seriously injured in crashes on Britain's roads where a vehicle defect was a contributory factor in 2018.

Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart's Director of Policy and Research, said: “Delaying your MOT test longer than you have to is a false economy and one which potentially puts lives at risk on our roads.

“If you wait longer than you need to, you not only risk a mechanical problem but face a potential delay in getting your MOT test done as the backlog created by the relaxation of the rules leads to inevitable delays and hassle trying to get a booking that fits your needs.

“Vehicle maintenance checks are something we should all be doing weekly. During lockdown they have been a good way to keep on top of the basics. But hard to check areas such as brakes and emissions need to be assessed by a garage. A clean bill of health given by an MOT station is a good starting point for your own regular safety checks.

“Getting your MoT test done sooner rather than later will give you peace of mind. If you have gone past your renewal date, it is your responsibility to ensure the car is fit to be driven. Many relatively new vehicles can fail their first MOT test on safety critical items such as brakes and tyres so it's always best to safe not sorry. Misplaced confidence in the roadworthiness of your vehicle could cost lives.

“It may well save you money on expensive repairs in the long run and it could enhance the value of your car if you decide to trade in or take advantage of the much talked about scrappage schemes that may be coming along soon.

Neil added: “It's also worth remembering that although the government has extended the MoT for many, the scheme may change again as we slowly emerge from lockdown so take action now and make sure you and your vehicle are ready for the road again.”

Check your MOT via this link:  
<https://www.gov.uk/check-mot-status>