

STOIC MEETING – NOTES & INFORMATION

Age Concern Hall, Linden Road, Romsey – Friday 25th March 2011

The main topic of our meeting this time was the **Older Driver Skills Scheme** from Hampshire County Council (HCC), introduced and presented by Caroline Howson, Principal Road Safety Officer. The scheme aims to find ways of helping older people drive safely for as long as they are fit to do so. It's ideal for people who have been driving for years and want to update their skills or gain confidence. Also for those recovering from illness or injury or are returning to driving. It's NOT an exam, there's no risk of failure, but an informal, confidential appraisal that helps to improve driver awareness, confidence and above all safety.

Caroline gave a very comprehensive and informative presentation and with lots of audience interaction, many comments and questions. Some of the key points made included:

- Some 1.4m adults use the roads and pavements across Hampshire. Their safety is of paramount concern to HCC's small road safety team based in Winchester.
- Road casualty statistics:
2009 ; UK figures = 2,222 people killed ; 26,096 killed or seriously injured ; over 222,000 total road casualties.

Hampshire only

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Killed	46	36
Killed or seriously injured	587	650
Total casualties	4,163	4,033

56% of car driver casualties involve people over the age of 60. New Forest District has the highest percentage of casualties involving older people (probably because it's the biggest district in terms of population, volume of roads and high older population). By contrast Gosport has the lowest percentage. Like the rest of the UK we have an ageing population and by 2016 we expect to have 443,000 over 60's in Hampshire (equivalent figure for 2009 was 400,000). In fact the over 85's in percentage terms is the highest growth category.

- As we get older our physical, cognitive and visual abilities worsen, therefore older drivers are more vulnerable and more at risk if involved in an accident. Injuries tend to be more serious and recovery times are longer.
- 7 'Golden Rules' for driving (particularly useful for older drivers):
 - Wake Up – have regular breaks – 15 minutes for every 2 hours of driving
 - Sober Up – avoid alcohol
 - Buck Up – concentrate / maintain focus
 - Check Up – ensure vehicle regularly checked / serviced
 - Belt Up – law since 1983
 - Shut Up – avoid using mobile phones whilst driving
 - Slow Down – older people typically have slower reaction times
- Road Safety Tips
 - FLOWER i.e. Fuel, Lights, Oil, Water, External Rubber

- BOB (check left hand wing mirror for cyclists on inside)
 - TOM (check right hand wing mirror for motor bikes on outside)
 - Two second rule (make sure you maintain a 2 second gap between you and the car in front)
 - T'n'T (be able to see the base of the tyre of the car in front and some tarmac)
 - Reduced mobility – more difficult to check blind spots – take extra care
 - Medication – sometimes more difficult to stay alert if taking these
 - More difficult to process information – leading to delays in reaction time
 - Eyesight – slower reactions – recognition of signs/road markings – regular tests
 - Avoid rush hour traffic, bad weather, stick to daylight hours, known roads
 - Declare any medical conditions to insurance companies
- Older Driver Skills Scheme has been successfully running for a number of years and is consistent with and aligned to the Government's Road Safety Strategy. It's not a test, no pass or fail, but a 90 minutes appraisal, including a driving assessment (own car, local roads) and a comprehensive de-brief at the individual's home where any concerns and necessary remedial actions are discussed. A written report is then produced and sent out. This is confidential and not sent out to any third party unless the individual requests this. The whole appraisal costs £30.

Benefits of taking the appraisal include:

- opportunity to update driving skills in today's changing environment
- reduce any bad driving habits acquired over the years
- refresh skills if returning to driving after a break
- improve confidence levels
- help to continue driving safely for as long as possible

How to book

Phone Road Safety Office on 01962 846100 or email road.safety@hants.gov.uk

Website = www.hants.gov.uk/roadsafety

Other useful information includes: Department of Transport Road Safety website <http://think.direct.gov.uk/index.html>. Latest copy of the Highway Code (2007) – cost £2.50.

Update of 'issues' raised at last STOIC meeting (28th January)

Initial list – more can be added

- Pavements / Roads - Owner = Paul Buxton (Jane Olden to help with reporting)
 - Paul to keep records of incidents and actions taken.
 - So far, one success story... planters outside the White Horse Hotel which were previously blocking the level part of the pavement, have now been moved back into the archway next to the hotel, therefore no longer creating a hazard for mobility scooter and wheelchair users. Particular thanks go to Oriska Hiscock, one of our members for instigating this and also to Mark Cooper, local and county councillor, for his responsive actions towards resolving this.
- Hospitals - Owner = Anne Meader
 - 'Reaching Carers' project at Southampton General Hospital. Providing information to visitors and asking them what information would be useful. Includes questions to

ask when being discharged and when back at home. The project has the full support of the Head of Nursing who wants to work together with the team to further improve the quality of information provided at the point of discharge.

Romsey Hospital services at risk from NHS/Govt 'Value for Money' criteria. Only one ward is now open with a maximum of 27 beds. Previous services closed at Romsey over the years, include A&E facility, maternity unit, operating theatre. Remaining ward and outpatients department could be at risk. Need to ensure remaining services are well used e.g. blood testing (encourage local GPs to refer patients to Romsey v Southampton General wherever possible). Potential campaign issue.

- Cheque Books - Owner = Dorothy Baverstock
Campaign against the proposed phasing out of cheques (Government decision due by 2016 – although this date may slip further out).
- Library Services - Owner = Veronica Lakey
Reductions in service across Hampshire/Test Valley. Impacts both villages and towns. No visits within 2 miles from the nearest static library. Frequency of service also reduced. Veronica has the current list of mobile library stops that will still be in use across our area.
- Deliveries to shops - Owner = Margaret Niblett
Some are/were still being done at the busiest times of the day, e.g. outside the Co-op, making it difficult for older people walking along or trying to cross the road. Margaret has been in touch with the Romsey Town Centre Manager to discuss the issue and possible ways forward. Following further discussions with several parties involved, we are pleased to say The Co-op have agreed to revert back to early morning deliveries i.e. before 9.00am. Again very good news

Romsey Rapids Leisure Centre

'Forever Active' programme – Sports & Activities for the over 50's. Specific activities and days/times e.g. Gym, Swim, classes for pilates, yoga, workouts etc. Contact 01794 830333 for more information. Feedback and suggestions are always welcomed.

Vulnerable People and Crime initiative

Christine Hebburn, Age UK volunteer, shared her perspective with us on this Home Office / Age UK joint crime initiative. Christine in her role with Testway Housing, works with and comes into contact with a significant number of vulnerable people, particularly older people. Crime in the community with particular focus on vulnerable people is a growing and serious problem. Theft is the most obvious and common crime in this respect. There is a need to be extremely vigilant especially at home. Some merit in having written notes as reminders e.g. close/lock all doors and windows before going to bed, lock away valuables etc. When outside be particularly careful with purses and handbags e.g. use a lanyard to secure purses to handbags. Know where they are at all times. Over the shoulder bags like 'messenger bags' are useful in that you have both hands free and no need to put the bag down.

Bus services review 2011 – Public consultation

Questionnaire now available from Hampshire County Council. An ideal opportunity to have your say. HCC is facing significant cuts from the Government in the amount of money it has to spend on bus services and wants views from the public on how best to prioritise this reduced sum for the design of a package for bus services that will be introduced in October this year. This time the whole of Hampshire will be considered in the same way to ensure an equitable approach. In our area extra concessions were previously made (i.e. bus passes starting at 9.00 rather than 9.30) so that rural areas were not disadvantaged.

Questionnaires should be returned to HCC by the end of May at the latest. Some copies were given out at our meeting. If you would like a copy than please contact the Passenger Transport Group, HCC, on 01962 846921 or email environment.bus.review@hants.gov.uk.

A.O.B.

STOIC Membership 2011-2012

Anne gave a general reminder that our annual membership subscription is now due (from 1st April). Cost of £5. Benefits include a £1 discount if attend all 6 meetings per year and regular newsletters and mailings.

Romsey Town Centre Survey

Being conducted by Southampton University during the Farmers Market on Sunday 3rd April.

‘A week in Romsey’ event

Held on Friday 18th March at the Town Hall. Members of the public gave their views and suggestions on how things can be improved in Romsey e.g. healthcare, roads, activities etc. Part of the Community Conversation Project being run by Test Valley Borough Council. Not too many people but good quality feedback from those who did attend.

Remaining dates for 2011 (Fridays at 2.05pm – fourth Friday every other month)

- 27th May
- 22nd July
- 23rd September
- 25th November (AGM)