

Sensible Driving

Archive

June 2010-January 2013

January 2013 update

Just a few weeks ago Mark MacDonald an MSP from North East Scotland, came out fully in support of the Graduated Licence Scheme. Over the past month in the local newspapers you may have read that the Scottish Government now want to introduce a Graduated Licence Scheme. Indeed on GMTV in December they were talking about this introduction being the way ahead. Well thanks to you all as part of this team, we have made the three words 'Graduated Licence Scheme' now very topical.

Still related to road safety, we have linked up with Conor McKenna a local HGV driver and his team, to promote a change in the law which would allow HGV's to increase the legal speed limit from 40mph on the open road to 50mph. Of course they would still have to adhere to the 30mph and 20 mph when required. Some may think this a strange proposal to support, but South of the border in England and Wales they are doing just that. We support it because whilst driving on the A9 for example, frustration is caused to many motorists who are stuck behind a queue of slow moving traffic behind an HGV doing 40mph. This causes frustration and frustration causes collisions.

The 50mph campaign was launched in a blaze of publicity during December and at that time we wrote to the Government asking if they were considering this option North of the border. At that time we were advised that they were not, but just last week they have done a 'U' turn and have intimated that they will now look at the proposals.

Our next campaign is called 'Switch on to Safer Roads' and is geared to educate drivers to put on dipped headlights in poor visibility.

Again we have Stagecoach Bus on Board, who only last week agreed to provide a whole rear of a double decker bus for our advert free.

This space should normally cost about £9000, so thanks again Stagecoach. Local sign makers and printing firm, Acorn Signs, have kindly agreed to provide the wrap around graphics for free.

This should normally cost £2500.

We already have 5000 leaflets printed with the graphic designed by 15 year old Rosie Watters from Charleston Academy, Inverness, whilst she was on work experience in this office.

Finally, local car dealership, Macrae & Dick have agreed to provide us with a liveried up car for our launch which will be during the first week of February at a local superstore.

Thereafter we are looking at a campaign relative to poor eyesight and driving.

Apparently 1 in 6 drivers would fail an eyesight test if it were carried out by an optician.

We are going to campaign for a proper eyesight test, carried out by opticians before you sit your driving test, instead of the customary, can you read that number plate?

North Road Safety Campaign MSP welcomes graduated driver licensing announcement in Northern Ireland

14 June 2012

The system of learning to drive in Northern Ireland will be radically reformed with the aim of reducing young driver crashes and casualties.

Last month Northern Ireland Environment Minister Alex Attwood announced a form of graduated Licence would be introduced for young and new drivers in the North of Ireland.

Highlands and Islands Labour MSP David Stewart, who set up the Sensible Driving – Always Arriving campaign said, “I congratulate the Northern Irish Government on their direct action to reduce serious and fatal road casualties especially amongst the young drivers, by introducing this scheme.

“Along with my team in the North Of Scotland Driver Awareness Team (NOSDAT), we have been pushing for this change to driver training since early 2010.

“Working with Dr Sarah Jones from Cardiff University, we have been able to evidence how up to 22 lives per year could be saved by introduction of a graduated licence scheme and up to £80 million to the Scottish economy alone.

“It is frustrating when our efforts are falling on deaf ears and lives continue to be lost on our roads.”

Mr Stewart continued “ We are not alone, the Scottish Government and organisations such as the Road Safety charity BRAKE are all in favour of a form of graduated licence scheme.

“I proposed that we trial the scheme in Scotland, but so far the UK Government has knocked back all proposals made.

“I have placed a motion in Parliament today, recognising the initiative taken by the Government in Northern Ireland and I will ask the Minister for Housing and Transport, Keith Brown MSP to bring more pressure on the UK Government to let us at least make Scottish roads safer”.

David Stewart's motion :

Safer Driving Proposals in Northern Ireland

That the Parliament welcomes the proposals by the Northern Ireland Executive to introduce a form of graduated driving licence; notes what it sees as the Northern Irish administration's commitment and dedication to reducing serious and fatal road collisions among young drivers; believes that, by introducing such a scheme, lives will be saved and there will be economic benefits; understands that a similar scheme in Scotland could save up to 22 lives per year and be worth £80 million to the economy, and asks the UK Government to consider the introduction of such a scheme in Scotland.

A Poignant and Educational Road Safety Film Premiered in Inverness

by Ruth Mackenzie

16/11/2011

A new road safety film aimed at new and young drivers was previewed at the Vue cinema in Inverness last Friday and was watched by an audience of 40 invited guests including the parents of a 17 year old who died in a fatal road collision .

The film is part of the North of Scotland Sensible Driving Awareness (NOSDAT) campaign, fronted by Highlands and Islands Labour MSP David Stewart.

David Stewart became inspired to do something about young driver fatalities on North of Scotland roads after meeting with Diane and Graham Matheson from Inverness.

Their 17-year-old son Callum was killed in a Fatal Road Collision on Island Bank Road, Inverness, during March 2010.

Callum's 17-year-old friend Ahlee Jackson was driving.

Ahlee was only a provisional licence holder and she was insured to drive a 2 litre car.

The campaigns message is 'Sensible Driving-Always Arriving'.

The film begins with Diane Matheson speaking about the moment herself and Graham were told of their sons death by the Police.

The Scenes of Callum's empty bedroom emphasises the feeling of loneliness, emptiness and loss.

David Stewart has been championing the need for a graduated licence to be introduced as a pilot in Scotland.

In the film Mr Stewart puts forward a debate in the Scottish Parliament for a graduated licence.

A mandatory requirement of the graduated licence would be the display of 'P' plates for ninety days after successful completion of the test.

The scheme would also incorporate night driving, motorway driving, and driver observation.

Callum's close friends, 17 year olds Sally Nevillie and Jan Zargorski took part in the film and also speak about Callum's death and the effect it had on them.

This was a particular poignant hearing them talking about the loss of their friend.

The younger perspective on the safety of new drivers contributes to the films relevancy to the younger audience.

Speaking about the completion of the film David Stewart said:

"I am delighted that after six months of hard work by all involved in this short film, we have been able to produce this educational, inspiring and frankly moving film which hopefully will convey the message that your drivers are your responsibility"

Over the coming months the film is expected to be rolled out to all Secondary schools in the Highlands and Islands.

Ruth Mackenzie

Ruth Mackenzie has recently passed her driving test

Update October 2011

A lot has happened these past few months. We have made contact with the group SCID who are a voluntary body of people who support victims of serious/fatal road collisions in Court proceedings or in preparation for Court.

We have also made contact with a group in Aberdeenshire called 'DFAM – Don't Forget About Me'.

This group was set up by a mother who also lost her young son in a fatal road collision.

This particular group provide support to the families who have lost loved ones as a result of fatal road collisions.

Last month I wrote to Nikki King, Chief Executive of Isuzi Trucks – She appeared on the TV programme ‘Undercover Boss’.

She was very interested in our work and verbally endorsed our efforts.

I had also written to Goodyear and Michelin Tyres to establish if they would support us, but alas I am still awaiting a reply.

I also made contact with the Chairs of the Highland Youth Forums looking for volunteers to help us, but again so far no-one has come forward.

The important piece of work that we have now nearly completed is the commissioning of a film relating to this whole issue.

The Producer – Tom Duncan of ‘All The Rage’ Productions has been filming these past few weeks and we are looking at viewing a draft rough cut of the film this coming Friday.

Also last month we managed to secure a debate in the Scottish Parliament on the graduated Licence Scheme.

David Stewart MSP was the ‘Lead’ in this debate and spoke for eight minutes on the topic highlighting much of the work of Dr Sarah Jones of Cardiff University.

At the conclusion of the debate the Scottish Government promised to keep lobbying the UK Government in order to allow a pilot of the scheme to be introduced in Scotland.

Finally, I have approached a local multi franchise car dealer in the hope that they may support our efforts to stage a one day seminar on this issue in Inverness in the next couple of months.

We are looking at a package with a local hotel and would like to invite about 30 well placed and appropriate individuals and organisations to the event which will also allow us to plan for the future.

Well that is the latest update.

We are always looking for new supporters and sponsors, so if you want to come on board our bus, please get in touch.

Since the 5th. May 2011, we have met with the new Chief Constable of Northern Constabulary George Graham who has indicated that he will be very supportive of our campaign.

We have received sponsorship from a local taxi firm (Inverness Taxis) which allows us to have our graphics on the rear of 3000 of their business cards.

Unfortunately we are still £1500 short of our target for the eight minute film we have commissioned to highlight the devastation Fatal Road Collisions cause to families.

This film will include a section on our campaign.

The Producer of the film has waived a lot of the costs and indeed next week I am meeting him as he indicated he is prepared to go ahead with the filming without the full funding being in place.

The Producer of this film is Tom Duncan and the company is 'All The Rage'.

We have placed another motion asking for the introduction of a Graduated Licence Scheme before the Parliament.

We have written to local companies seeking more sponsorship.

I have also spoken to the local radio station – MFR – to see what they can do to help us.

Finally, we have made contact with a group in the Central belt of Scotland (S.C.I.D.) who support victims of road crashes.(website link)

I am hopeful that we can start working with them.

Drive IQ-Pro the company in Surrey who met with us and had introduced a new scheme to take over from Pass Plus have come back on to us to say they have devised a new product which allows the Employer to train staff engaged in driving duties to enhance their current skills.

Earlier this year David Stewart MSP was contacted by a constituent who asked him to do whatever he could to stop the carnage on Highland roads following the death of two teenagers, Callum Matheson (17) and Ahlee Jackson (17) in a Fatal Road Collision on Island Bank Road, Inverness, during March 2010.

The car involved, a Skoda Fabia vRS 2.0, was driven by Ahlee who was only a provisional Licence holder and was found to be over the drink drive limit.

Discussions were held between David and his Office Manager (Doug Mackenzie) and it was decided to launch a campaign to do whatever could be done to make a positive contribution to this issue.

A press release was put out detailing David's intention and on the back of this press release Diane Matheson, the mother of the fatally injured teenage passenger of the collision referred to, asked if she could come on board and work with David.

At this time about eight other local persons with an interest in this matter also wanted to come

on board and as a result a meeting was held at Inshes Parish Church hall on Friday 20 August 2010 to discuss this topic.

In the lead up to this meeting there was a large amount of press and media exposure.

It was learned of an initiative in Wales called 'Deadly Mates' which warns young drivers that their passengers are their responsibility.

This initiative was borne out of the death of Kyle Smith five years ago in Cardiff, having just got into a vehicle which later crashed and killed him. He had just left a McDonald's Restaurant.

The Deadly Mates leaflet was distributed through McDonald's Restaurants in Wales.

What were the outcomes of the Team meeting?

We decided to pursue the following:

Mandatory display of 'P' plate for 90 days after successful completion of test

A graduated Licence scheme incorporating night driving, motorway driving, driver observation etc.

The driving test to be in three stages: Initial, Intermediate and final.

In the Intermediate stage the driver could drive unsupervised between 6am and 10pm each day only, he/she could not carry any passengers under 25 years of age and they could not drive a car with an engine size larger than 1400cc.

Initiatives with Insurance companies like their tracker device which restricts the use of a car between certain times

PF/Police referrals to approved driving schemes

Deadly Mates initiative - Leaflets detailing the Deadly Mates message which can be distributed throughout the Highlands and Islands as detailed hereafter.

Outcome

We decided to tackle this initiative in two phases;

Educational

Political – Graduated Licence Scheme Introduction

With regards to the Educational the following is an update of our work to 1 November 2010:

Stagecoach Bus has agreed to display the poster internally in 180 of their local buses.

There is no charge for this service if the advert supports local communities.

They are also now considering displaying a large poster on the back (external) of a local bus.

Normal charge for this would be between £5K and £10K.

The Eastgate Centre, Inverness has agreed to display six A2 posters within the Eastgate Centre.

They cannot put a cost on this advertising, as they do not normally allow organisations out with the Centre to display posters within. A4 Design and Print, 50 Seafield Road, Inverness has agreed to provide the six A2 posters for display in the Eastgate Centre.

The Ink Shop, Post Office Avenue, Inverness printed 5000 leaflets for Diane Matheson and her family which they distributed at a recent Inverness Caley Thistle home football match (18 September 2010).

During early November 2010 they agreed to print off another 5000 leaflets free of charge). Inverness Caledonian Thistle gave permission for Diane and her family to distribute these leaflets outside the ground on the above date.

McDonald's Restaurants have agreed to distribute the leaflet through their Inverness outlet.

They have yet to set a date for a meeting to discuss the distribution of leaflets from all their Scottish outlets.

'LovetoLove' nightclub, Castle Street, Inverness have agreed to display the posters within their nightclub free of charge.

They do not normally permit external advertising within.

MacRae and Dick have agreed to livery up a Mazda Sports car in the Deadly Mates colours and logo and have given us permission to use it at forthcoming events.

Two local business men have sponsored 40 radio adverts relative to our campaign on the local Station - MFR

With regards to Political, listed below is a resume of our work to date:

David Stewart MSP has written to the Scottish Transport Minister, Stewart Stevenson on this issue and he has also written to the Westminster based Transport Secretary, Phillip Hammond. To date the responses have been positive.

David Stewart MSP has raised a motion in the Scottish Parliament and he has asked the Scottish Government a series of questions (PQs) on this issue.

Miscellaneous Activity

This campaign has received an unprecedented amount of media coverage which the Team are delighted with.

Dr Sarah Jones, Cardiff University has made contact. She and colleagues have researched the graduated licence scheme over 10 years and have statistical analysis which backs up our drive to have the graduated licence scheme introduced. This study has shown that if such a scheme were introduced up to 22 lives in Scotland could be saved and up to 1500 less injuries sustained by road users.

David Stewart has been invited to motoring organisations to give an input on this campaign. Amongst those attended was the Inverness Driving Instructors Association. Doug Mackenzie, has given an input to the Moray Driving Instructors Association.

The Team have decided on a name for their Group – NOSDAT – North of Scotland Driving Awareness Team and have appointed Sandy Grant of Sandy Grant Mortgage and Insurance Services as their elected Chair.

Discussions are ongoing with various other Groups and organisations with regards to this initiative to establish if they would like to work with us.

Funds to promote road safety charity

29 September 2011

Highlands & Islands Labour MSP David Stewart who set up and leads the road safety charity group, the North Of Scotland Driver Awareness Team – NOSDAT has appealed for supporters of the campaign 'Sensible Driving – Always Arriving' to consider sponsoring some of the group's projects.

Speaking earlier today Mr Stewart said,

" We have come such a long way as a team, much we could not have even started without the support of some local businesses and local people.

"Just last month the group received a cheque for £500 from a family in Wick who raised the money at a local event in Wick.

"This family lost their son and brother in a fatal road collision involving a car in which he was a passenger during 2008.

"Stagecoach Bus have been a great partner and have made so much possible, that is without mentioning all the other organisations who have helped".

He continued,

" Our campaign was set up after the deaths of two 17 years olds in Inverness in March 2010.

"I and the NOSDAT team are determined to make our roads safer and we will keep pushing to achieve this aim.

"So far we have lobbied the Scottish and UK Parliaments seeking the introduction of a graduated licence scheme.

"We secured a debate in the Scottish Parliament on this issue.

"We have gone a fair way down the road to raising awareness of the issues in particular trying to emphasise that 'Your passengers are your responsibility'.

"Education is key, but there are other areas where we want to develop our initiative.

Currently the team are nearing the end of producing a short film highlighting the devastation that fatal road collisions cause to families.

Once complete they hope to gift this film to all secondary schools in Highland & Islands and Moray.

Mr. Stewart further stated,

"In November I would like to hold a seminar in Inverness with key people involved in road safety, from our local Police Forces to Transport Scotland, hopefully even a Government representative in attendance, right down to local individuals.

"Of course funding such events needs hard cash and I take this opportunity of asking anyone out there who wishes to support us, to please consider donating or sponsoring some of our up and coming events".

Anyone wishing to assist the group, donate towards the groups aims or even sponsor the groups activities, are asked to contact the campaign co-ordinator Doug Mackenzie on douglas.mackenzie@scottish.parliament.uk or by telephone on 01463 716299.

MSP proposes graduated driving licence scheme pilot

11 August 2011

Highlands & Islands Labour MSP, David Stewart, is calling on the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland to introduce a pilot graduated licence scheme for young or new drivers, which he is convinced would lead would reduce the number of casualties on roads in Scotland and provide young or new drivers better skills.

He believes that it would make roads safer, reduce the cost in dealing with fatal and serious collisions involving new drivers, and at the same time, saving millions of pounds to the Scottish economy.

Mr Stewart has tabled a motion in the Scottish Parliament on the issue which reads :

That the Parliament notes with concern the research published by Dr Sarah Jones from Cardiff University in relation to the graduated licence scheme that shows that in Scotland between 2000 and 2007 there was almost no change in the number of road collisions involving young drivers, while the number of road collisions involving older people fell by 19% over the same period; supports the view that, if such a scheme was introduced in Scotland, up to 22 lives per year on average could be saved; believes that up to £80 million could be saved every year with the introduction of a graduated licence scheme; further notes the work being undertaken by the Sensible Always Arriving campaign, which is being run in the Highlands, that aims to educate young people on the dangers of irresponsible and urges the Scottish Executive to work with the Department for Transport to implement a pilot scheme in Scotland to evaluate

whether this can help reduce the number of deaths of young people on Scotland's roads.

Mr Stewart said "I am convinced a graduated licence is the way forward.

" I have the research to back this claim up, and I am determined to make the roads safer.

"I want to work with the young or new driver in doing this.

"I am determined to make sure I can do all I can to persuade the Government that this is the way forward.

"To this end I would ask any such driver interested in working with me to contact our Co-ordinator Doug Mackenzie at douglas.mackenzie@scottish.parliament.uk or by telephone on 01463 716299"

Launch of online petition

27 December 2010

The North of Scotland Driver Awareness Team (NOSDAT) led by Highlands and Islands MSP David Stewart, has launched an online petition asking the Government to introduce a Graduated Licence Scheme.

Research carried out over the past 10 years shows that this would reduce Scottish deaths on the roads by up to 22 per year if introduced north of the border.

Research also shows that up to £80m could also be saved to the Scottish economy.

Much of the work of NOSDAT has been highlighted through the media already.

As a result of campaigning out on the streets by team members, 500 signatures in support of the campaign have been collected in six hours.

Now the team wants as many people as possible to sign an online petition which can quickly be accessed through the group's web site at www.sensibledriving.org.uk

David Stewart commented: " We have received an overwhelmingly positive response to our campaign so far, but I would ask everyone to sign our petition which merely asks that a Graduated Licence Scheme be introduced in Scotland.

"We know from research that up to 22 lives per year can be saved by such a scheme, so our efforts are totally justified. If one life was saved it would all be worth it, but we can prove that many lives could be saved."

The Team Co-ordinator, Doug Mackenzie, can be contacted at douglas.mackenzie@scottish.parliament.uk for anyone who wishes to know more about this campaign.

MSP holds meeting to discuss improving road safety in the Highlands

20 August 2010

Highlands and Islands Labour MSP David Stewart is holding a meeting in Inverness today (Friday August 20) to discuss ways of improving road safety throughout the region.

Those present at the meeting in Inshes Church Hall, which will include road hauliers, driving instructors and advanced driving instructors, will discuss whether there are any gaps in the current road safety framework and how they might be plugged.

Diane Matheson, mother of 17-year-old Callum Matheson, who died in a car crash in Inverness in March this year, will also be attending.

Mr Stewart said: "The aim of the meeting is not to question the work of agencies already involved in promoting road safety who do a first class job but to see if there are any ways we can improve things."

Mr Stewart launched a campaign in June to stop young people from dying on Scotland's roads after meeting Mrs Matheson.

He has written to Northern Constabulary, Grampian Police, Highland Council, and Moray Council asking them to support his campaign.

Mr Stewart has suggested the introduction of measures to compel young drivers who have just passed their test to display the 'P' plate on their vehicle for 90 days after successfully passing their test.

He has also proposed the introduction of measures which would compel such drivers to attend a one day Pass Plus driving course.

Other possibilities he wants looked at include involving young people in the strategic planning of Road Safety initiatives and some form of limit on the number and age of young passengers carried by a new driver.

David Stewart launches campaign to stop young people from dying on Scotland's roads

8 June 2010

Highlands and Islands Labour MSP David Stewart has launched a campaign to stop young people from dying on Scotland's roads.

Mr Stewart was moved to begin the campaign after meeting Diane Matheson, mother of 17-year-old Callum Matheson, who died in a car crash in Inverness in March this year.

Callum was a passenger in a Skoda Fabia vRS driven by his 17-year-old friend.

Both of them died in the accident.

Mr Stewart has written to Northern Constabulary, Grampian Police, Highland Council, and Moray Council asking them to support a campaign to try to stop young drivers from being killed or seriously injured.

He has suggested the introduction of measures to compel young drivers who have just passed their test to display the 'P' plate on their vehicle for 90 days after successfully passing their test.

Mr Stewart has also proposed the introduction of measures which would compel such drivers to attend a one day Pass Plus driving course.

Other possibilities he wants looked at include involving young people in the strategic planning of Road Safety initiatives and some form of limit on the number and age of young passengers carried by a new driver.

Mr Stewart said: "I am proposing a range of measures which I believe could reduce the terrible loss of young life on Scotland's roads.

"I hope all the organisations I have contacted and the Government will join me and Mrs Matheson in finding answers to this terrible problem. Hopefully by working together we can find the right solutions."

Mrs Matheson and her husband Graham, with the help and advice of Northern Constabulary, may visit schools to tell pupils about the consequences and devastation felt by families as a result of such road accidents.

In a joint statement Mr and Mrs Matheson said: "We have asked Mr Stewart to help investigate

the measures other countries have in place to reduce the deaths of young drivers and their passengers.

"We have now one son of fourteen and in time he will want to learn to drive as will his peer group.

"If as a result of Callum's death it means future teenage drivers, their passengers and parents are better educated as to the dangers of speed, inexperience and alcohol then we have achieved something positive.

"Also, any change in legislation would be an added bonus."