

NEW
LOOK
COVER

Spring 2022

GOOD MOTORING

The magazine for members of GEM Motoring Assist

GEM turns 90

We kick off an exciting
year of celebration

Your home from home

All you need to know
about campervan and
motorhome holidays

Also in this edition...

- **Competition**
Win a weekend in Herefordshire
- **Future mobility**
Our new series starts in Oxford
- **Dacia Sandero**
The UK's cheapest car on test

GEM
MOTORING ASSIST

1932

90th

2022

Anniversary

A warm welcome to the Spring edition of *Good Motoring!*



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It's an opportunity for us to reflect on our heritage whilst also ensuring we are ready for the demands of a rapidly-changing road transport system.

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A very warm welcome to our latest edition – and a perfect opportunity to kick off a year of celebrations as GEM turns 90! I have been looking back at 1932, when the Company of Veteran Motorists was formed, and I have made note of a couple of other events that took my eye from that same year. King George V opened the new Lambeth Bridge, the very first Mars bar rolled off the production line in Slough and the infamous ‘Bodyline’ Ashes test series between England and Australia began.

Ninety years on, it's an opportunity for us to reflect on our heritage whilst also ensuring that we are ready for the demands of a rapidly-changing road transport system. Even faster change is surely just around the corner, but you can be sure that GEM will remain true to its founding principles of promoting courtesy, care and concentration among all road users, while continually developing and improving the service we offer you, our loyal members.

There's a chance that you are the lucky owner of a golden ticket, enclosed with your copy of this edition. We have printed 90 of these special tickets and over the course of the four issues of our 90th year, we will be dropping them into random copies of the magazine. The ticket may not be lining you up with the chance of owning a chocolate factory, but it will entitle you to a £10 voucher you can spend at Starbucks, Costa or Caffè Nero and refuel yourself on us during a long journey. Good luck – and if you haven't found a golden ticket this time, then be sure to check when the Summer edition comes along!

Another exciting initiative we are running this year is The GEM Road Safety Champions Awards. We have three awards for dedicated individuals from any walk of life who have made an outstanding contribution to safer roads in their area. Can you think of someone who deserves a Road Safety Champions Award in our 90th year? Details of how to nominate, and how the process works, are included on page 31 of this edition.

We also have a special President's Award which will be debated and decided on by members of the Executive Council. Our plan is that award winners, with a companion, will be invited to a celebration lunch to be held in the Autumn where they will each be presented with a special award. We look forward to receiving your nomination!

There is plenty to enjoy in the pages that follow. In particular, don't miss the chance to win a fabulous two-night break for two in Herefordshire (see p12), while on the page immediately to the right, our insurance partner Cornmarket is giving away three iPads.

With very best wishes as we embark on the celebrations for our 90th year!

Neil Worth, Chief Executive

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How do you choose which laws to break?

We can't pick and choose which parts of The Highway Code we follow. We all need to work under the same umbrella, with the shared priority of keeping people safe...



Terry Cook

DID YOU know that learner drivers are allowed on motorways before they pass their test?

Of course you did, because you will have read the details in earlier editions of *Good Motoring*. The rule, which came into effect on 4 June 2018, states that ‘provisional licence holders may drive on the motorway if they are accompanied by an approved driving instructor’ (Rule 253 of The Highway Code). Very rarely do I get a student, or student’s parent, who knows this. Just about everyone seems surprised when I tell them they don’t need to wait until they’ve passed a test. Yet it has been in The Highway Code for almost four years.

Of course, the change wasn’t only published in The Highway Code, it was shared on news websites, on the radio and television; there was even news coverage of instructors providing motorway lessons at midnight when the law came into effect.

AWARE

So when I consider the concerns different road users have about The Highway Code being changed to include a hierarchy of road users, my immediate concern isn’t the rule itself, but the fact that very few of the population will actually be aware of it. Those who are aware of it will likely only recall the headlines, such as ‘New changes give more priority to cyclists’ or ‘Drivers could be hit with £1,000 fine for opening door with wrong hand as rules change’.

Even if we were being generous and said that half of road users were up to date with the rules of the road, we would still be looking at 50% of road users driving to different standards.

DULL

Here’s one of the biggest issues: The Highway Code is boring. Even for me as a driving instructor, it’s ridiculously dull. I advise all my students not to read it cover to cover, but to dip in and out of it. As road users we should be doing the same. We should be checking for regular updates. So allow me to offer a few ways to keep yourself updated without having to trawl through every paragraph and section of the book...

- Listen to my podcast – The 5 Minute Theory. It’s not just for learners, and I get some great feedback from experienced drivers who use it to brush up on their knowledge.
- Follow The Highway Code on social media – There are regular updates posted.
- Download a theory app and complete a practice test once a month, revising any questions you don’t know.

Even if you are up to date with the changes (after all, some were discussed in the last issue), we also have the problem of what do you do if you disagree with them. And that brings me to the title of this piece, how do you choose which

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Here’s one of the big issues: The Highway Code is boring.

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The 5 Minute Theory podcast

Terry breaks down The Highway Code into bite-size 5-minute audio segments, designed primarily with learners in mind as they revise for the theory test. But it’s also a perfect resource if you decide to brush up your knowledge! So far there have been 55 episodes published. You’ll find it on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and other hosting sites.

laws to break? I have read and heard plenty of people saying that they will not be stopping for pedestrians when turning left, or giving cyclists priority on roundabouts.

They are choosing to ignore or break the rules because they disagree with them. But what if I decided to do 45mph in a 30 zone, because I disagreed with that rule?

We can’t pick and choose which parts of The Highway Code we follow. We all need to work under the same umbrella, do everything we can to keep all road users safe. Yes, you may get frustrated if you’re stuck behind a cyclist or horse and rider. Yes that may add a couple of minutes to your journey. But we still need to treat that person the way we would want to be treated.

PEDESTRIAN

The most controversial change is perhaps that of drivers having to stop a left turn if there’s a pedestrian waiting to cross. But is it really that controversial? If you were turning left and the pedestrian was already in the road, you would be stopping. If you were turning left and a wagon was blocking the road, you would be stopping. If you were turning left and a child had fallen off a bike, you would be stopping. So, what’s the difference?

In reality, the only difference is that you’ll be stopping to allow someone to cross, rather than stopping to avoid a collision. The most common argument against this I see is the concern about the car behind you. What if that car is too close and can’t stop, so it hits you or swerves around you?

We can’t control the vehicle behind, but we can manage it. For example, if it’s particularly close, we could and should be slowing down a bit earlier if we’re taking a turn. In that way the vehicle behind has more time to respond. If you’re going at a slower pace approaching the junction, you won’t need to stop as aggressively when you reach it, reducing the chance of a collision.

INFORMATION

We should always be aware of what’s going on behind us. It’s that information that helps us decide what action to take looking ahead. Here’s the other thing: approaching a junction we should always be looking into it to see if it’s safe before we turn. On approach we should have a good idea of whether we would need to stop for a pedestrian. If we can’t see into the junction, we should most certainly be slowing down anyway, just in case.

Keeping yourself and everyone around you safe on the roads should always be the priority. One of the best ways to do this is to keep updated with the rules of the road. I don’t agree with them all. I would love to be able to rewrite The Highway Code. But for the safety of everyone, we all need to be singing from the same hymn sheet. ■

Are we ready for future mobility?

There's no doubt we are living through a period of unprecedented change in the transport systems we use. Time to assess what's already in place and how user-friendly it's proving. To do this, we will be despatching Neil Barrett and his electric car to a number of cities over the course of 2022. His journey of discovery begins in Oxford ..

This decade is likely to witness some of the biggest changes in how we get from A to B. Alongside the move to phase out petrol and diesel from propelling our cars, there's a huge shift to active mobility, with investment in pedestrianisation and cycling infrastructure and local authorities supporting the introduction of relatively new forms of transport... such as e-bikes and e-scooters for hire with apps.

There's also the siting of multi-modal hubs, the prevalence of app-based ride-hailing and the move to low – or in some cases, zero – emission zones. Nowhere will feel the effects of these changes more than our city centres. The question is: are they ready? On a cold, bright Sunday morning, I headed into the city centre. An early draft of my plan was to drive to a 'Park and Ride' facility and hop on a bus into the centre of Oxford. The Redbridge Park and Ride will soon be the ideal choice for this, as it'll be the site of the UK's largest EV charging hub,



according to the developers. It is a huge project, with 38 chargers, café, solar panels and a direct connection to the National Grid. It wasn't going to be finished when I visited, so the logical choice was to park closer to the action.

Oxford is planning a bold move when it comes to city centre emissions, with its Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ). By the time you read this, a small ZEZ pilot should be up and running. The plan is that by August 2025 a large area of Oxford city centre will be pay-to-drive between 7am and 7pm every day, for almost any vehicle with emissions.

The initial charges will be £2, £4 or £10 per day depending on the type of vehicle; these charges are expected to double when the wider rollout happens.

It also seems to be well thought through. For example, EV exemptions from the charge will be handled by automatic number plate recognition

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EV exemptions from the charge will be handled by automatic numberplate recognition without the need for registration.
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Pics: Amelia Barrett

without the need for registration - unlike with London's congestion charge where an annual process and fee is necessary. Also, the London EV discount ends in 2025.

My car park of choice was inside the Westgate shopping centre. It boasts no fewer than 50 EV charging points, with free charging on a "bring your own cable" basis. Parking charges are in line with what you would expect from a city's shopping centre (in other words not cheap).

I arrived long before the shops opened, so I had the pick of the EV spaces. I parked up, plugged in and headed off on foot to the next part of the day's research. On the way, I noticed e-taxi charging places, with dedicated facilities for local cabs. On that note, the universal ride-hailing apps have not fully landed here yet. If you open Uber in Oxford - which happens 65,000 times per month according to their figures - it helps you book a cab with a local firm. The ride-hailing giant itself doesn't have its own network of drivers here but its pseudo-presence has upset many in the



cab trade. It does, however, make things more convenient for those who travel to many towns and cities and, for practical reasons, make use of widely supported apps instead of having to set up a taxi app for each place.

SUNDAY SCOOTING

E-scooters are being piloted in a range of urban locations across England. The controlled pilots of legal, app-based e-scooter hire are strict, with a driving licence and identity check needed, plus points on that licence for offences. There are technologically-enforced speed limits, slow zones and strict parking controls.

Oxford has gone large with this pilot, for which they have chosen Voi to provide the tech. In the city centre I was always no more than a few minutes' walk away from a bundle of bright orange e-scooters in their marked bays. Having pre-registered for the Voi app to avoid the fiddly admin, it was essentially just a case of popping >>

>> the helmet on and scanning the QR code on the scooter. Off I went!

I chose a straightforward loop which included a bend, zebra crossing, bus stop and fairly steep gradient. It was a flawless ride and, to be honest, it put a smile on my face.

ON THEIR BIKE

Bicycles next - and again, Oxford is good to go when it comes to “hop on, hop off” bike hire. Donkey Republic is a main provider here, offering app-based rental on a pay-as-you-go basis. The bikes are dockless (unlike, for example, the main London scheme) but the ones I saw were in safe, non-obstructive locations.

Hiring and returning a bike was easy. On the road I was using, there was a painted cycle lane but no physical segregation. There are plans for cycle quickways and quietways, so these should make more roads safer for active travel.

I couldn't see any available electric bikes – an online check suggests Donkey Republic is piloting these in some places around the world.

Bike testing done, I decided to pick another e-scooter at random. Unfortunately, it unlocked but then wouldn't go anywhere. There was no indication of a low battery or being in a no-go zone. A minor inconvenience.

After that it was time for a little coffee break. I was impressed with things so far. This is where the second, bigger, blip in proceedings happened.

STOPPED MID-FLOW

An alert on my phone from the car's app: 'charging interrupted'. What was it? A power problem? A connection issue? Someone forced the cable out of the charging port... or worse? I walked back to the car in the underground car park to see what was happening to the car. I sat down inside to see how the restarted effort was going. The estimated remaining time was bouncing wildly – between five and '24+' hours. It seemed like there were some massive fluctuations in the amount of power being squeezed through the cable. By now the shops were open and most EV bays were full, so maybe demand was exceeding supply. Eventually it settled on an estimate which was around what I was expecting. So, away I went, with fingers crossed.

My third attempt at e-scooting, in a different part of the city, went well, with a quick unlocking process, a nice efficient ride and easy 'virtual docking' in the dotted line e-scooter parking box.

Unfortunately, the car stopped charging again, so back to the starting point I went. This time, it was terminal. The lights had gone out on my charging box and, interestingly, on a whole group of them. A large collection of EVs were not charging at all. It looked like the situation wasn't going to change in the short term, so it was time to move on.

I had already looked into charging availability

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On the road I was using there was a painted cycle lane but no physical segregation.

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elsewhere in the city. One of the main providers of local charging points went into administration late in 2021 and there is a new owner of those assets. There is also lamp post-based on-street charging, which I was planning to try. However, all three locations that I visited were occupied.

By that time I'd had enough of the hunt, so I headed to the motorway service station to use the tried and tested rapid chargers – and then home. ■

Neil's summary and score out of 100:



EV charging aside – and there are ambitious plans to do something about this – Oxford is making big strides and can boast some solid achievements already, when it comes to embracing the future of mobility. Overall: we reckon it's a city heading in the right direction.

Online information to help plan journeys	7
EV charger convenience (location, number and reliability)	6
App-based ride hailing	5
App-based bike provision	9
App-based e-scooter provision	10
App-based e-bike provision	0
Cycle/scooter infrastructure (e.g. dedicated lanes)	6
Low/zero emission zone or clean air zone	10
Connected mobility (Park & Ride, transport hubs)	7
Walking routes / pedestrianisation	6
TOTAL SCORE:	66

SPRING

ON THE ROAD



You may not get something for nothing, but you can get quite a lot for surprisingly little. Value for money has always been Dacia's key selling point, and the new Sandero is priced from just £11,245.

That makes it the most affordable new car on sale. Is it a true bargain, or do you get what you pay for? Our editor, James, has been finding out.

If your pockets are rather deeper than his, have a read of our BMW i4 review (page 46). The German manufacturer's new coupé may be pricey, but it's one of the finest electric cars we've driven.

David Motton

ROAD TESTS

- 44 Seat Arona
- 46 BMW i4
- 54 Jeep Compass
- 60 Dacia Sandero
- 62 Hyundai Bayon

PLUS...

- 48 Used Land Rover Discovery
- 50 Classic Citroën conversion
- 56 Electric home chargers
- 64 Motorcycling update
- 66 Puzzle answers

What is it?

The baby of Seat's three SUVs, the Arona has been given a tech and styling revamp to maintain its place as one of the best small crossovers.

How green is it?

The diesels have been dropped due to

plunging demand, which leaves three petrols. It's worth noting that the 110hp 1.0-litre is a touch more efficient than the 95hp version.

Who should buy it?

It suits younger couples, small families and empty-nesters.

Seat Arona

Driving and performance

The Arona is one of the best-handling cars in a class not renowned for a fun driving experience, with the notable exception of the Ford Puma in particular.

Like its Ateca bigger brother, Seat's little SUV manages to both ride comfortably and change direction with poise and a lack of body roll. It deals well with speed bumps and urban potholes, while also settling down to a comfortable motorway cruise. Refinement levels are good and there's only a little wind noise.

The three engine choices start with the 95hp 1.0-litre, only available in the bottom two of the six trim levels. It's a touch lacklustre compared with the 110hp version of the same engine. The extra 15hp doesn't sound like much, but the more powerful 1.0-litre is a much better option that saves having to work quite so hard to gain or maintain speed. It's also slightly more efficient thanks to it having a sixth gear whereas the lower-powered version only gets a five-speed manual gearbox.

There's also a 150hp 1.5-litre petrol that comes with two of the spec levels,

and a seven-speed automatic gearbox. It's a temptingly small £285 price walk from the 110hp 1.0 automatic. The 1.5 is a great engine, and for the extra performance it's not hard to justify spending the extra, even though it's a touch less efficient than the 1.0.

The 110hp comes with either a manual or slick-shifting DSG auto gearbox. The automatic does have an impact of at least 4mpg on fuel efficiency, as well as adding £1,120 to the price.



Space/practicality

For a compact car, the Arona has generous leg and head room in the rear. The 400-litre boot is big enough to cope with a family weekend away. On the other hand, the luggage area is not as large as the Ford Puma's or the Skoda Kamiq's, and doesn't feature sliding rear seats to adjust room for people versus load space. It does feature a moveable boot floor to increase versatility.

Up front, there's a reasonable amount of storage, including cupholders that will take a decent-sized water bottle and a cubby that is also the wireless charging pad for mobile phones, fitted as standard to all models.

Moving up to any trim above the basic SE improves the touchscreen from a basic 8.25-inch layout to the smarter 9.2-inch, positioned high on the dashboard. A neat touch on FR trims and upwards is ambient lighting that illuminates the air vents, giving the car more character when driving at night.

Safety

The high-spec Arona models now get a semi-autonomous driving aid, thanks to the addition of adaptive cruise control to the lane assist system that's standard across all Aronas. It's important to remember that the system must be monitored by the driver at all times. The top two specs also get high beam assist and road sign display systems, a combination available as a £235 option on the middle FR and FR Sport specifications.

Equipment

Seat offers minimal options, with even metallic paint included in the list price. The entry-level car gets alloy wheels, although no sat-nav or rear parking sensors. The bad news about the lack of options is that if you want a specific feature, such as heated seats, you have to go up to the trim level that has them as standard, which with this example is only two of the six.

Costs

The price gaps between engines are commendably small. All three engines are fuel-efficient, with the 110hp 1.0-litre manual returning 48.7-52.3mpg. The FR trim, third up, is the one where a decent slew of equipment is added, although the SE Technology that's one up from the entry-level SE at least gets all the basics. Insurance groups start from group 9E of 50, rising to 19E for the 150hp FR Sport.

Infotainment and connectivity

Connectivity is much improved, thanks to the introduction of the Seat Connect system that gives drivers access to the car via an app for remote locking and unlocking, driving data, car position and anti-theft, location and speed alerts. It is on subscription though, with the first 12 months for free, and Seat doesn't make the renewal cost clear. As mentioned, all trims above the entry SE get a nicer, larger touchscreen.

For/against

- ✓ Engaged driving experience
- ✓ Stylish new LED lights
- ✓ Metallic paint is standard

- ✗ Inflexible specification
- ✗ Limited free connectivity
- ✗ There's only a five-speed gearbox on the entry level model

The numbers...

Price:	£26,730
Performance:	0-62mph in 10.8 secs
Economy:	44.1mpg
Insurance:	13E
Tax:	£220/£155

Figures for the 1.0 110 Xperience Lux DSG.

Best deals

The keenest bargain we found came from iCarLease, offering this Arona for £277 per month with a £2,492 deposit based on a three-year, 10,000-mile per annum basis. This personal contract hire deal did not include maintenance and had a total cost of £12,184.

What will it be worth?

After three years and 30,000 miles, this Seat Arona will recoup 43% of its new price, which is average for the class.



Review: Paul Barker

WE SAY: Improvements keep the Arona near the top of the compact crossover segment.

EV CHARGING

a beginner's guide

Sandra Macdonald-Ames outlines what you need to know if you're fortunate enough to be able to consider an electric car charger for your home

WE CANNOT go on polluting our planet by burning fossil fuels. That much has become clear over recent years. Our present government has now declared that sales of internal combustion-engined cars will have to cease by 2030. The move to electric vehicles is discussed almost every day and it would be difficult to argue against it in principle.

From a more practical view it is not that simple, as for many there are a number of important stumbling blocks such as the high cost for a new model and the lack of infrastructure in many places. When I last checked, there were 11,274 connectors and 4,982 rapid devices in 3,147 locations. London now boasts more chargers than petrol pumps.

Technology

It is possible to buy second hand EVs, but range and battery technology is moving so quickly that these older vehicles would perhaps be more suited to low-mileage local drivers. Several new vehicles can now achieve distances of more than 300 miles on a single charge.

If you have decided to make the purchase you may be looking to install a charging point at home. This is only possible where owners have access to dedicated off-street parking so that cables are not left trailing across pavements. The issues for those without driveways are being addressed and a number of innovative solutions are starting to filter through.

For a home charger there are several things to consider, and we will try to simplify the choices.

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...several new vehicles can now achieve distances of 300 miles on a single charge...

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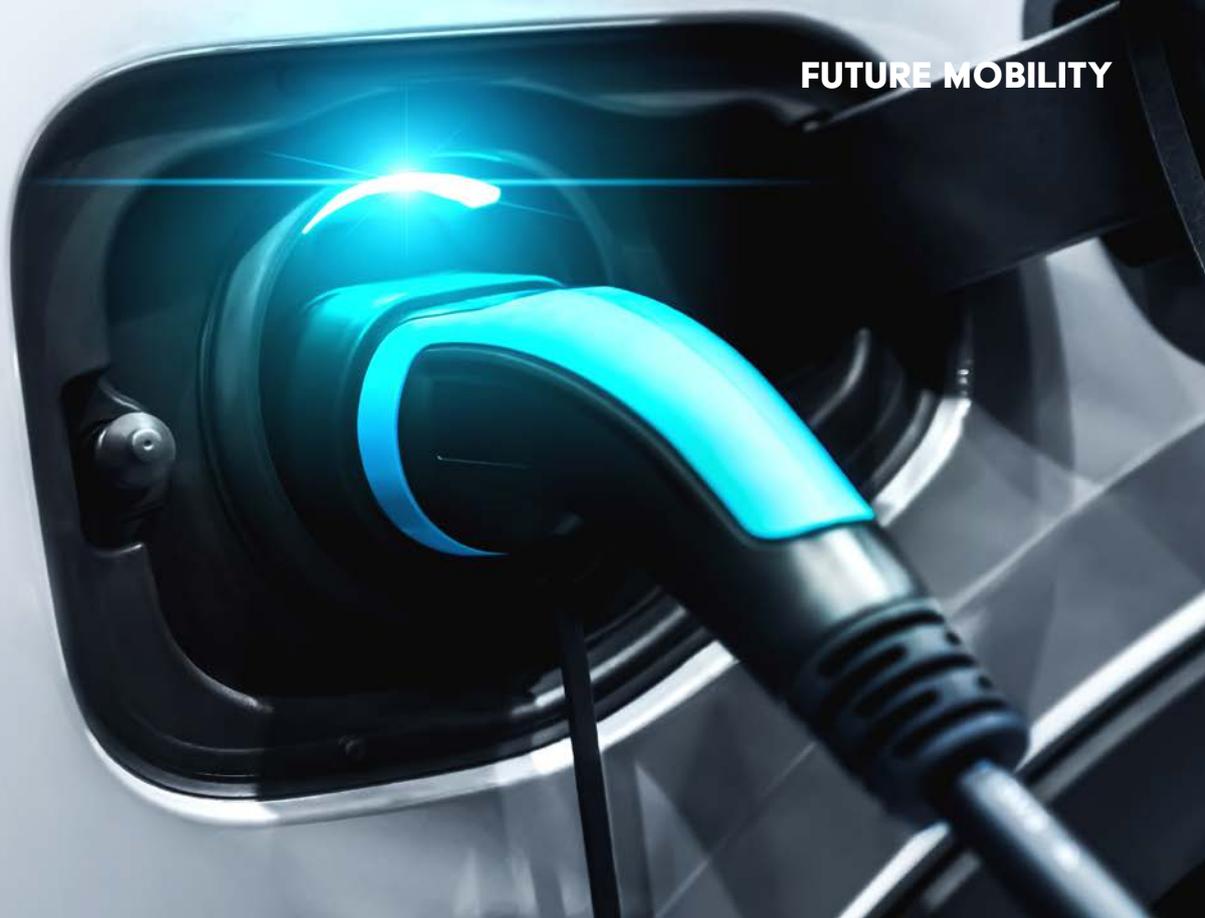
Home chargers are usually classed as 'fast charge' which means that they have a charge capacity of between 7KW and 22KW. They can take a few hours to charge a vehicle, which is fine as we often plug in overnight. For example, the Hyundai Ioniq would take 5.5 hours for a full charge this way. The rapid (25KW – 99KW) and ultra-rapid (100KW+) chargers are found at public sites such as supermarkets and service stations and can charge 80 per cent in as little as 40 minutes.

Tethered?

We then need to decide whether the home charger will be 'tethered' or 'untethered'. A tethered charger is where the cable is attached to the unit already and just needs to be hooked up to the car itself. Once charging has finished the cable is hung back up.

An untethered charger is the unit only. The car will often have a cable included (they can be bought separately if not), one end connected to the car and the other to the charger. The reason for the differences is that there are a number of different connectors. If you know what you have for the particular car you may choose to go for the tethered option, but if you think you need options in the future then untethered would be better. Just as with phone chargers, different phone makes have different connectors and it is the same with EVs. By the way, there are four main charger types in the UK: CHAdeMO, CCS, Tesla and Type 2. The different connectors will determine the charging rate.

Home chargers are expensive at the initial



outlay and can cost around £1,000 to install. However domestic grants are currently available for £350 using the Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme (or EVHS for short) and are reclaimed by the approved installer so you only pay the difference. Note that the prices quoted will be after the grant has been claimed by the installer. There are a few forms to complete and some details from your electricity bill are required, but nothing too onerous. This is expensive initially, but with a full charge working out at around £6 at home, the offset to the cost of fuel can be recovered quickly.

If you live in Scotland, the Energy Saving Trust will provide up to £300 in further funding on top of the EVHS grant detailed above, with an additional £100 available for those in the most remote parts of the country. Unlike the initial grant, you would need to pay the installer the balance and then claim the additional grant back yourself. Details can be found on the Energy Saving Trust website.

Criteria

In order to find out more about the installation and grant scheme criteria, search for 'OZEV' (Office for Zero Emission Vehicles) and it will take you to the UK Government site. As you move down the page you will find installer requirements and a link to an EVHS authorised installers list. These are all approved to fit the charging point. You can also approach electricity suppliers who are happy to quote and will give an approximate guide price on their sites for comparison. If you find an



installer by internet search, just make sure they are on the approved list before you order from them.

And when all that is done, enjoy your new electric car! ■

Chapter and verse ■ charging

- An inactive car battery will lose 0.1V of energy every month and, if your parked car is also running an alarm system, onboard computer, remote locking etc, the continual drain on the battery will be much more than that.
- Nipping out on lots of short journeys, particularly in urban areas, also drains the battery, as it takes between 150 and 350 amps of battery power just to start the car, and on short trips the alternator won't have the time or capability to replace this charge.
- Be ready. Get your car battery into shape before temperatures start to drop, as it's much harder to start your car in freezing temperatures. It can take as much as 2.5 times more power to start a cold engine.
- Be aware that cold weather conditions can have an adverse effect on car batteries. A battery can lose as much as 35 per cent in performance when temperatures hit freezing, and up to 50 per cent if temperatures sink below that.
- Look out for any signs of change, such as the way the car starts, or the operation of the electrical system in general, as these can be indications of a weak battery.
- Charging your car battery at least once a month prolongs its life by up to three times, so buying a reliable battery charger, and getting yourself into a regular battery maintenance routine, makes perfect sense, year round.
- Regular charging is even more important in the colder months, as components such as heated screens and seats, headlights and an increase in short journeys put additional strain on your battery.

Data from ctek.com

**WIN A £10 COFFEE
SHOP VOUCHER**

if you **find a golden
ticket** with this
magazine!

We are thrilled to be **CELEBRATING OUR 90TH ANNIVERSARY!**



We've been looking after our members since 1932, a long-standing heritage that we're very proud of. Whilst staying true to our founding mission of keeping our members safe on the roads, we're also celebrating this milestone by making some positive changes to our products and member benefits.

Join GEM to receive your copy of Good Motoring magazine and gain access to these great benefits:

- ✓ Free and unlimited motoring, road safety and technical advice
- ✓ Exclusive competitions, member offers and discounts
- ✓ Refer a friend to GEM and **earn a £20 gift voucher**

Our 90th anniversary pledge

**You join GEM – we donate 90p –
together we help to make the
roads safer**

Joining GEM goes beyond breakdown cover and membership benefits...we donate 90p to the GEM Road Safety Charity for every new member, providing funding towards road safety initiatives.

So you're helping to make the roads safer for yourself and other road users, just by joining us.



GEM
MOTORING ASSIST
— Founded 1932 —

Follow us on social media and watch our videos for motoring tips and road safety advice

