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\*All in car features should be used by drivers only when it is safe for them to do so. Drivers must ensure they are in full control of the vehicle at all times.



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Jo Hammonds (left) has managed a near 10-fold increase in the Mears Group fleet and introduced initiatives



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UK's top test event at Millbrook Proving Ground was attended by more than 900 fleet decision makers who took in excess of 5,100 drives



# Uncertainty over ECO schemes is a 'nightmare' for businesses

Fleets advised to postpone taking new entrants to employee car ownership schemes

By Gareth Roberts

**H**MRC is expected to clarify in the next few weeks whether employee car ownership (ECO) schemes will fall under new tax rules.

The Finance Bill introduced legislation designed to remove the tax benefits of Optional Remuneration Arrangements (OpRA). However, while it was clearly targeted at employers who were running salary sacrifice and cash or car allowance arrangements, it failed to clarify whether ECO schemes would be impacted.

"It's a nightmare," said Keith Cook, deputy financial controller at Computacenter.

The IT service provider funds around half of its 1,250 cars through an ECO scheme, saving the firm £1.5 million per year. However, Cook told *Fleet News*: "That is completely under threat."

Computacenter has stopped writing new ECO contracts until HMRC clarifies its tax treatment, but Cook admitted: "As it stands there is a massive question mark over the future of ECO schemes."

Deloitte has been advising employers since last November not to allow new entrants onto any such schemes until they can come up with an alternative structure.

Dan Rees, an associate director and specialist consultant in the Deloitte Car and Mobility Consulting team, said: "There is some confusion in the market around whether or not ECO schemes are caught by OpRA. But in our view, it's



*"As it stands, there is a massive question mark over the future of ECO schemes"*

*Keith Cook, Computacenter*

quite clear that where cash and AMAP [Approved Mileage Allowance Payments] is varied monthly to provide funding to a driver for their private car, then it's caught by OpRA."

KPMG, like Deloitte, has recommended suspending new entrants to ECO schemes until further clarification has been received. It says that

the status of each arrangement as an OpRA, or not, will rest on the merits of each individual scheme. Therefore a review of employer policy, employee contract and any communication wording would be required in order to understand the likely position, based on the legislation as drafted.

Colin Ben-Nathan, a partner at the tax advisory firm, said: "Further HMRC guidance has been a very long time coming and so we hope it will be much more comprehensive than the draft guidance previously issued – particularly around HMRC's view on ECO and similar arrangements."

The number of fleet operators and company drivers that fund their vehicles through ECO schemes is hard to quantify. However, the most recent FN50 data suggested it was the fourth most popular funding choice for the top 50 firms, after contract hire, salary sacrifice and finance lease. Alphabet (GB) is one of the biggest funders, with a not insignificant 10,339 vehicles obtained through ECO, according to the survey.

Rees said: "There are several large schemes and a number of smaller ones that we are aware of. However, the mathematics relating to how these schemes work compared to significant and rising employee benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax in a company car arrangement is actually compelling in terms of employer savings."

ECO schemes can provide both the employer and its employees with a tax-efficient alternative to company cars.

Unlike traditional company car schemes, the employee has legal ownership of the vehicle and neither the employee nor the employer is subject to any company car tax or national insurance contributions (NIC) on the benefit.

An employer will offer employees a monthly salary allowance to spend on a car of their choice. This allowance is generally based on the employee's grade, tax bracket and annual business mileage.

Vehicles within an ECO scheme are sold directly to employees through a credit sale agreement, with contract terms and mileage limits to suit them.

Employees do not pay BIK as is usually required within a traditional company car scheme. Rather, they make a personal contribution to the vehicle via payments deducted directly from their salary each month.

As part of this payment, insurance, accident and breakdown cover and servicing of the vehicle are included and, because employees legally own the vehicle, the fleet operator may benefit from the tax-efficient nature of business mileage reim-

## FLEETS MUST WAIT FOR AMENDED FORMS

Legislation has confirmed when OpRA will apply and what the calculation of the benefit charge will be, but fleets will have to wait for tax forms to be amended.

HMRC systems and processes i.e. the P46 (car) forms used to notify HMRC of the company car benefit amount and P11D forms used to confirm company benefits for each employee at the end of a tax year, will not be amended until April 2018.

Claire Evans, head of fleet consultancy at Zenith, said: "What this means is that where the benefit charge should be based on the salary sacrifice amount/cash allowance and not the company car benefit, there will be no formal mechanism for the employee or employer to declare this and the employee will pay tax in all cases on the company car benefit charge. If the salary sacrifice or cash allowance was the greater value then any unpaid tax would be recovered from the employee into 2018/19 tax year instead."

Employers can declare the correct amount of benefit under OpRA for the 2017/18 tax year from April 2018 (per the usual timescales) and HMRC will use this to calculate any unpaid tax due from the employee and make adjustments to their tax code in 2018/19 tax year.

For cars delivered from April 2018, the new P46 (car) forms will be available which allow employers to declare the cash equivalent value.

Evans said: "To date, HMRC has not communicated what the new forms will look like and, as such, leasing companies will be adapting systems to produce the information they think HMRC will require post April 2018, both to collect backdated tax and to process correctly going forward."

Dan Rees, from the Deloitte Car and Mobility Consulting team, added: "There's nothing that can be done here except to warn affected drivers that this will happen."





bursment on privately owned vehicles, as well as making company car tax and NIC savings.

For companies that have a large field-based workforce with high business mileage, the savings under an ECO scheme can be sizeable.

At Computacenter, the choice of funding depends on the circumstances of each employee in terms of their marginal rate of tax, BIK for the vehicle and business miles. This funding recommendation is managed by Lex Autolease after it has downloaded each Computacenter employee's data.

All employees receive a financial impact statement to show them that the contribution is exactly equal to the BIK tax on the vehicle and an explanation of how the ECO scheme works.

Rees told *Fleet News* that a point frequently brought up by lessors and businesses as to why a scheme should not be caught by OpRA, is that

employees do not have any choice about whether or not they are put in the affected scheme.

The word "optional" of optional remuneration arrangements", they argue, refers to a choice that an employee might make, such as cash or car.

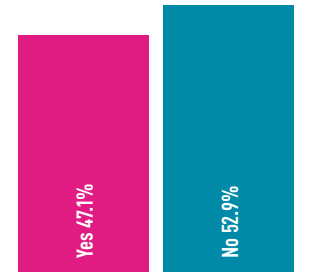
"The reality is that it is actually irrelevant," explained Rees. "From a legal perspective, the employee's agreement can be made expressly, implied, or by performance, which means there is no need for employees to specifically 'sign up' to the arrangement in question for them to be deemed to be in agreement with joining it.

"More importantly, where there is a varying of cash and benefit, it is subject to OpRA irrespective of any choice an employee might make. So, for example, ECO is subject to OpRA, because of the monthly varying of cash and AMAP cash benefit – it has nothing to do with whether or not an employee chooses to enter an ECO arrangement."

## FLEET FACTS AND FIGURES

### OPINION POLL

Would you give up your car for a cash alternative if there was a more convenient way to resolve your transport needs through a mobility solution?



### FleetNews view:

Our poll clearly shows there is an appetite for a cash alternative to the company car if a hassle-free mobility solution was available. Almost half (47.1%) would make the switch, while the remaining 52.9% would prefer to keep their car. *Fleet News* believes mobility will play a growing part in company travel, but the company car will continue to be a valued benefit.

This week's poll: Should rules be introduced to regulate the sharing of dashcam footage on social media platforms?

[fleetnews.co.uk/polls](http://fleetnews.co.uk/polls)

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*La meccanica delle emozioni*



Range of official fuel consumption figures for the Alfa Giulia range: Urban 33.6 – 53.3 mpg (8.4 – 5.3 L/100km); Extra Urban 61.4 – 80.7 mpg (4.6 – 3.5 L/100km); Combined 47.9 – 67.3 mpg (5.9 – 4.2 L/100km). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 138 – 109 g/km. Fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures are obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EC directives/regulations and may not be representative of real-life driving conditions. Model shown is the Alfa Romeo Giulia 2.2 Turbo Diesel 150hp Tecnica at £32,590 OTR including metallic paint at £695.

**LEASYS**

# Government pledges to mandate charging points at fuel stations

Close to third of drivers said they would switch to an EV if proposal becomes law

By Gareth Roberts

**T**he availability and accessibility of charge points could overcome one of the "biggest barriers" to the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs).

That's according to the fleet industry and a *Fleet News* poll which revealed almost a third (29.2%) of drivers would make the switch to an EV if they were able to charge their car at the pumps.

A further one in five (22.2%) said they would consider choosing an EV, while one in 10 (9.9%) said they already drive a plug-in car.

The poll was conducted after the Government announced in the Queen's Speech that it would introduce an Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill which will require the installation of charge points for EVs at motorway service areas and large fuel retailers.

The UK's largest leasing company, Lex Autolease, welcomed the move. "One of the biggest barriers to greater adoption of electric vehicles is range anxiety, so more charging points at petrol stations and motorway services will help to address that fear," said Chris Chandler, the firm's principal consultant.

"The measures are a recognition of the need for pathway charging – essentially making it easier for electric vehicle drivers to get from one end of the country to the other, without worrying about their next charging point. This should broaden their appeal and open up the market for electric vehicles across the UK."

Both Total and Shell had already confirmed their intention to install charge points at their stations (fleetnews.co.uk, October 18, 2016), while earlier this year the head of BP Fuel Cards in the UK, Andy Allen, told *Fleet News* that charge points were a 'logical step' for the fuel giant (Fleet News, March 30).

Currently, there are 6,980 electric vehicle (EV) public charge points in the UK at 4,523 locations, including 1,057 rapid chargers, according to Zap Map, a website which tracks charge point location and information.

Alison Bell, marketing director at Venson Automotive Solutions, said: "Research we conducted recently found that 85% of motorists would consider buying an electric vehicle; however, 69% said that the lack of charging points across the UK would be the biggest deterrent."

"Our research shows there is an appetite for electrical vehicles, but motorists do have their reservations when it comes to the day-to-day running of the vehicle. Hopefully this Bill should move forward plans to invest in infrastructure for electric vehicles."

However, Brian Madderson, chairman of the Petrol Retailers Association (PRA), called for



*"More charging points at petrol stations and motorway services will help to address that (range anxiety) fear"*

Chris Chandler, Lex Autolease

## WILL EV CHARGE POINTS AT MOTORWAY SERVICES AND LARGE RETAILERS PERSUADE YOU TO MAKE THE SWITCH TO AN ELECTRIC CAR?

YES

29.2%

MAYBE

22.2%

NO

38.7%

9.9%

I ALREADY DRIVE A PLUG-IN CAR

## EV REGISTRATIONS JANUARY TO JUNE

Vehicle category	YTD 2017	YTD 2016	% change
Plug-in pure electric	6,228	4,261	46.2
Plug-in other electric	11,676	12,005	-2.7
Hybrid petrol-electric	29,525	20,754	42.3
Hybrid diesel-electric	487	685	-26.8
Cars eligible for the plug-in grant	17,372	15,641	11.1
Total new cars registered	1,158,357	1,164,870	-0.6

Source: SMMT

"clarity" over the definition of 'large retailers'.

He said: "The measure forms part of a Government push to increase the number of electric vehicles on UK roads. However the PRA is concerned this could place an unreasonable

financial burden on independent fuel retailers who feel there is insufficient market demand to justify the investment at this time.

"The PRA recommends that the Government introduces a centralised monetary fund allowing private businesses to apply for grants which will underwrite such speculative investment in rapid charge equipment."

Newly released data from the Department for Transport (DfT) shows that the number of ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) surpassed the 100,000 mark in March and now stands at 108,641, with 92,414 plug-in cars registered and 3,358 plug-in vans.

Registrations of plug-in pure EVs were up by almost half (46.2%) in the first five months of this year compared to last, according to figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).

The number of petrol hybrid registrations was also up, by 42.3%, while 15,641 cars had been eligible for the plug-in grant (see panel).

The Government offers a plug-in car grant worth up to £4,500 off the price of an electric vehicle, £8,000 off the price of an electric van and up to £1,500 off the price of an electric motorbike.

It announced in December 2015, that the plug-in car grant would continue until at least March 2018, but earlier this year it said that the current rates will continue until October 2017, at which point it will carry out a review.



# Bridgepoint plans 'one-stop shop' solution for Zenith

Private equity firm to exploit fleet outsourcing plus salary sacrifice growth

By Stephen Briers

**S**cale, outsourcing and salary sacrifice are the three big components that convinced Bridgepoint to invest in the contract hire and leasing sector, according to Emma Watford, partner, head of business services sector.

The private equity firm, which acquired Zenith from HG Capital for £750 million in January, highlights the trend towards fleet outsourcing and the popularity of salary sacrifice, plus the fact that Zenith has the scale to maximise the growth opportunities.

Watford, who now sits on the Zenith board, told *Fleet News* that the leasing sector was an "attractive market", adding: "The outsourcing trend from corporates in regards to fleet management and the continued growth in salary sacrifice were compelling.

"Bridgepoint invests in businesses in growing markets that we think are best in class and have best in class management teams. That played into our investment [in Zenith]."

Watford's priority is to continue supporting Zenith's organic growth in funding and fleet management. She points to the company's focus on developing its IT systems, which has helped it to secure much larger fleet contracts.

"The size of the customer Zenith is winning is of a different scale than it would've been able to win 10 years ago, which is testament to its progress," she said. "And its technological improvements lead it to be nicely differentiated in the market."

Bridgepoint has no pre-planned acquisition targets but doesn't rule out making additional investments in the future.

"The right M&A is a sensible move for any of our businesses. So we expect to look at some M&A over the coming years," said Watford.

As a clear signal of those intentions, within a month of the announcement, Bridgepoint acquired truck leasing and fleet management company CVL, adding a new skill-set to the business and enabling it to now fund and fleet-



manage assets from cars to vans to trucks.

Watford explained: "CVL brought something very different – the opportunity to offer the whole automotive solution to the customer, so it is a highly strategic move. We see Zenith as a technology-led solutions player so our focus is on rounding out that solution further to give the customer a one-stop shop for automotive."

She added: "There are also other adjacent sectors that we can look to move into."

Bridgepoint is the fourth private equity firm to own Zenith in the past decade. Each has left its mark: Equistone took Zenith into salary sacrifice in 2008; Morgan Stanley helped it to invest in securitisation in 2011, giving it broader, unlimited funding for vehicle assets; HG's focus was consolidation – Leasedrive and Zenith – and IT investment.

Watford said Bridgepoint's ambition was to make Zenith a one-stop shop as a technology-led automotive solutions provider. The CVL acquisition is a "building block" within that strategy.

"In four or five years' time, it will have even more of a holistic offer to a more holistic group of customers," she added.

The strategy will continue to be driven by the current management team, including chief executive officer Tim Buchan and chief financial officer Mark Phillips. Watford is one of two Bridgepoint directors to sit on the board in a role she described as "engaged non-executive directors".

She added: "We are backers of management teams and we back Tim and Mark to deliver their plan. Our role is to engage strategically in how the business develops."

Zenith has long talked about its European aspirations and has partnership relationships in mainland Europe, enabling it to offer funding solutions in 11 countries. However, Bridgepoint has no plans to formally expand the business outside the UK.

"There is huge potential in the UK market and that's where our focus is," Watford said. "Europe and the US are very interesting markets. Would Zenith be part of a more international business? Probably, but under our ownership, we don't know. We are focused on the opportunity in the UK as it's so compelling."



*"Bridgepoint invests in businesses in growing markets that we think are best in class and have best in class management teams. That played into our investment [in Zenith]"*

Emma Watford, Bridgepoint



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Jeremy Hicks, JLR managing director, wants a more balanced debate about diesel

# Time to put an end to the 'diatribe' of misinformation about diesel

JLR MD wants air quality debate to take into account other sources of NOx

By Gareth Roberts

**T**he UK boss of Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) is warning improvements in air quality could be delayed if the diesel debate continues to be dominated by misinformation.

Speaking at the International Automotive Summit organised by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), Jeremy Hicks argued that diesel cars are being unfairly targeted.

Calling the current debate a "misnomer", JLR's managing director said: "What we've had so far hasn't been so much of a debate, as a diatribe or at best a monologue."

In fact, campaign body FairFuel UK accused "environmentalists and opportunist politicians" of manipulating the argument, damaging residual values, while ignoring significant other sources of NOx and particulate pollution.

Howard Cox, the founder of FairFuel UK, said: "Drivers want solutions to lowering emissions that don't involve ineffectual and malevolent knee-jerk tax hikes."

His comments came as Westminster City Council launched a new £2.45 parking surcharge

*"The impression being given is the way to improve air quality in our cities is simply to ban diesel cars"*

Jeremy Hicks, JLR

for pre-2015 diesel cars in central London. Dubbed the 'D-Charge', it is being trialled in Hyde Park, Marylebone and parts of Fitzrovia (area around the BT Tower), with diesel drivers now having to pay 50% more to park. It costs £4.90 an hour to park in Westminster, but pre-2015 diesel cars will now be charged £7.35.

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan also revealed plans to introduce a zero emission zone in central London from 2025 ([fleetnews.co.uk](http://fleetnews.co.uk), June 21).

Hicks said: "The impression being given is the way to improve air quality in our cities is simply

to ban diesel cars, but it's not quite that simple."

A recent report from the London Assembly's environment committee highlighted how diesel cars were responsible for 11% of NOx in London, compared to gas central heating (16%) and diesel plant and machinery (14%). Hicks said: "There has been a seismic shift in diesel [engine] technology almost eliminating NOx."

Since 2000, NOx emissions from cars have fallen by 62.8% and harmful particulates by 52.7%, according to the SMMT. Under the latest Euro 6 standards, the NOx emissions of petrol and diesel are approaching parity – 60mg/km for petrol and 80mg/km for diesel (limits for previous Euro 5 diesel were 180mg/km), although real-world testing by Emissions Analytics shows wide variances with the official figures.

Hicks said: "If air quality is going to improve, our vision has to be broader than the private motorist." Otherwise, he warned, a dip in diesel sales could starve the industry of funds to plough back into developing new powertrains.

He concluded: "It would be tragic for our environment and our mobility if these developments were delayed because of the negative impact of a mishandled and misinformed diesel debate."

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# THE BIG PICTURE

By Stephen Briers, editor, *Fleet News*



News that London Mayor Sadiq Khan is keen to introduce pay-per-mile road pricing has been subject to the usual litany of scorn, criticism and outrage.

And, yes, if the charging plan simply sits on top of existing charges, drivers' hostile responses would be justified. However, Khan is proposing the scheme would replace the congestion levy as he looks to tackle traffic jams and pollution – so could this concept work elsewhere?

Fleets certainly think so. In the 2015 Fleet Manifesto created by *Fleet News* in conjunction with ACFO and BVRLA, they gave a cautious welcome to the idea – provided it replaced other forms of charging, such as VED – calling for the Government to commit to a feasibility study into a national road pricing scheme.

*“Road charging could help tackle the biggest issue – congestion”*

Their view was that this form of charging was a fairer way to ensure that those who use the roads most frequently, or at the busiest periods, would contribute more. Of course, we already have a form of usage-based taxation – fuel tax, which is more environmentally friendly because it encourages people to choose more economical cars and drive more efficiently.

But road charging could help tackle the biggest issue – congestion. It would also require organisations of all types to reassess their working patterns, introduce more flexible working hours for staff (welcome to the 21st Century!), with more home working where appropriate.

It also needs to be part of a broader discussion around mobility with sustainable, cheaper, reliable alternative transport options within an integrated infrastructure.

Current strategies are not working. The UK has Europe's most traffic-congested roads, and congestion exacerbates pollution. Road charging linked to an integrated transport infrastructure might – just might – be the solution. It's worth a closer look.

## YOUR LETTERS

### QUEEN'S SPEECH

## More EV charge points is step in the right direction

EDITOR'S PICK



**Alison Bell, marketing director of Venson Automotive Solutions, wrote:**

Having read 'Fuel stations must provide EV charge points under new law', (fleetnews.co.uk, June 21), it was reassuring to see in the Queen's Speech the introduction of the Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill.

The UK is already Europe's largest market for zero emission-capable cars, accounting for almost a quarter of European Union electric car and plug-in hybrid registrations in 2016.

However, there are still concerns among fleet managers centred on the whole-life cost and the day-to-day

running of such vehicles.

Research we conducted recently found that 85% of motorists would consider buying an electric vehicle, however 69% said that the lack of charging points across the UK would be the biggest deterrent.

The move, therefore, to install more charging points is a critical and positive step in giving fleet buyers and motorists more confidence to choose EV or hybrid.

Yet there is still a long way to go to achieve total buy-in and reach the goal of zero emissions on our roads by 2050.

■ The editor's pick in each issue wins a £20 John Lewis voucher.

**David Watts added:**

While any government initiative that promotes and makes electric vehicle ownership more accessible is a good thing, in many ways it misses the point.

Fast charging at supermarkets, shopping centres, cinemas, retail parks and town centre car parks would be more useful to the majority of EV drivers, rather than rapid chargers at your average fuel station, motorway services excluded.

### DIESEL DEBATE

## Don't demonise diesel

**Robberg wrote:**

Having read 'Diesel remains the 'only realistic' fuel type for fleets' (fleetnews.co.uk, June 22), based on this and other information I've seen, I can't see why Euro 6 diesel is under threat at all.

Compared to petrol it has lower CO<sub>2</sub>, with almost identical NO<sub>x</sub> and much better miles per gallon. But when did the facts ever change anything when the mass media seem to want to demonise all diesels?



## RESIDUAL VALUES

# Uncertainty damaging RVs

### Guest wrote:

Having read 'Diesel debate could see used car values fall by £35 billion, warns FairFuel UK' (fleetnews.co.uk, June 20), previous UK governments didn't mislead people over diesel. They just responded to a drive to lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and were not focused on all types of emissions.

Now we face a knee-jerk reaction away from diesel – even in areas where diesel is appropriate.

The announcement that a decision on the future tax treatment of diesel vehicles will be revealed in the autumn budget is causing the retail diesel market to stagnate, with buyers sensibly either delaying the purchase until after the budget, or going for a petrol or PHEV, BEV.

The Government has said it is not looking to "punish" those who decided to choose diesel in good faith. So we will see. It is true that the uncertainty is causing RVs to drop a little, and, oddly, the RVs of petrol vehicles doesn't seem to have increased.

## SAFETY

# Clear guidance needed

### Winston wrote:

Having read 'Ford trials connected technology to warn drivers of approaching emergency vehicles', (fleetnews.co.uk, June 22), while this would be very useful, it seems to me that drivers need more clear guidance on what action they should take when hearing, or seeing an emergency vehicle.

I have seen drivers freeze and effectively block the path of the oncoming vehicle or try to pull onto pavements, gateways and the like, potentially causing further confusion.

The Highway Code (rule 219) offers guidance that probably needs wider advertising. In essence, it says don't panic, do what you can to allow a clear path, but don't break the law.

## EMISSIONS

# Mayor's plans aren't ambitious enough

### Amd wrote:

Having read 'Mayor wants zero-emission zone in central London by 2025' (fleetnews.co.uk, June 22), the headlines sound admirable, however the timeframes targeted by the mayor aren't exactly ambitious in my opinion.

According to Transport for London (TfL), it has an operational bus fleet of more than 9,600, of which 7,000 are diesel, with less than 1% full electric.

I note from the report that from next year all new buses bought will either be hybrid, electric or hydrogen. However, TfL has experienced numerous issues with its hybrid buses to the point where they are effectively diesel. I hope these issues are resolved so they're not just hybrid on paper. Furthermore, there doesn't seem to be much reference to ramping up the charging infrastructure for cars, without which there is little incentive for drivers to go electric.

There are plans for approximately 300 points to be installed by 2020, but this is but a drop in the ocean compared the number of vehicles travelling into the capital each day.

A good starting point would be multiple charge points outside all rail stations to encourage take-up of the new generation of electric black cabs, especially as their diesel counterparts emit more than 200g/km CO<sub>2</sub>.



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What is the nicest thing anyone has done for you?

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# FleetNews PORTFOLIO

WHAT WE DO IN YOUR INDUSTRY

## Fleet News magazine

The leading business publication for the fleet sector, offering insight, analysis, best practice and in-depth profiles of fleets and suppliers every fortnight. But don't take our word for it: 96% of readers say *Fleet News* is the most useful fleet publication (*Fleet News* reader survey). Every issue is packed with information that helps companies to run efficient and effective fleets – and our readership of 16,000 is restricted to named decision-makers, running fleets of 10-plus vehicles.

## Commercial Fleet magazine

*Commercial Fleet* offers insight into the world of light commercial vehicles and trucks to provide operators with detailed analysis on key topics such as operations, safety, remarketing and the environment. Case studies in every issue provide best practice advice to help you to improve your efficiency. The magazine is supported by the [commercialfleet.org](http://commercialfleet.org) website and events.



## Fleet events

*Fleet News* events are the biggest and best in the sector. Our annual awards night attracts more than 1,500 people; the FN50 Dinner sees 950 leasing, manufacturer, rental and supplier companies networking and *Commercial Fleet* Summit provide insight into key areas of fleet operation; monthly roundtables enable 10-15 fleets to discuss issues and share solutions.



## Driving Business magazine

This quarterly magazine is sent to managing directors and finance directors at 25,000 small to medium enterprises (SMEs) that are running fewer than 50 vehicles. Focusing on the key elements of running cars and vans, *Driving Business* provides practical advice to reduce cost and improve safety with a minimum of time and effort.

## Websites and newsletters

The *Fleet News* website is an extensive library of best practice advice, fleet case studies, news and tools. Compare car and van running costs, check how much tax employees will pay and find out which models use the least fuel with our easy-to-use tools. We also send *Ignition*, a monthly newsletter which contains car reviews and interviews not included with our print magazine.

## Fleet Leasing magazine

*Fleet Leasing* provides insight and analysis to board level executives, senior management and regional sales staff at contract hire and leasing companies. Its objective is to inform and educate about fleet trends, new models and technological developments, once a quarter, supported by a website regularly updated with the latest leasing news.

## Bespoke publications

Magazines, supplements, brochures and digital products are produced for commercial partners. These bespoke publications inform fleets about companies and topics relevant to their business. They include manufacturer and supplier reports, in which *Fleet News* journalists interview key personnel to unearth the developments of interest to fleet operators.



## ASK NIGEL

In our regular feature, Nigel Trotman, *Fleet News* Hall of Fame member and two-time *Fleet News* Award winner, gives advice on your fleet challenges and queries.

## MULTI-TASKING STRUGGLE

**Q** Fleet managers are often encouraged to take on additional responsibilities to protect their role. However, since adding facilities management to my existing fleet responsibilities I fear I have bitten off more than I can chew. I am struggling to find time to do even basic fleet tasks such as sending the updated rates to company car drivers. We already use a leasing company and I am not sure how much more I can outsource to them as ultimately I want to have the final sign-off on decisions. One suggestion is that I remove company cars and give everyone a cash allowance but I don't agree with this for duty of care reasons, and I don't believe it will necessarily reduce the work involved. What is your advice?

**A** This is a challenge that I can very much identify with, and one that has faced many fleet managers in recent years. In my case, I inherited fleet together with a variety of other contracted-out services at day one, and had to find a way to balance their often-conflicting demands. But I also had the opportunity to identify common features, and this is the first piece of advice I would offer. Look for ways in which services overlap, and try to avoid 'double-handling' aspects. For example, I had responsibility for fleet, mobile phones and the company telephone directory. Clearly there was common data, and we combined them into a single database which meant changes required only a single update.

Like you, I would resist a move to a cash allowance across the board – anyone who says this is simpler just doesn't understand what managing a fleet involves and the greater challenges posed by the lack of control a cash-only approach can provide. Instead, I believe it is a question of finding the right balance.

I know only too well as an ex-facilities manager myself this area can often provide more conflict and challenges than the world of fleet. Facilities affect literally every employee, plus anyone who enters your premises. As well as the legislative and regulatory challenges, you are faced by personal concerns – staff who are too hot or too cold, and those infernal misbehaving toilets! Sometimes fleet seems much more manageable.

In my view, that balance is achieved by ensuring that you have the right people actually delivering the services – whether directly employed or contracted out. I can understand you wanting final sign-off on fleet decisions – I would too, as abdication of responsibility

*“Facilities can often provide more conflict and challenges than the world of fleet – they affect literally every employee”*

does not lead to outsourcing success. Rather, I suggest that you identify the key areas where you feel you **MUST** have the final say, and in all other areas provide guidelines within which your provider should operate. Then they come to you only where there are exceptions, or you have specified they must. This should apply to all your areas of responsibility. Allied to regular meetings and feedback, I believe that this will allow you to achieve the right balance and retain control of your fleet.

My other suggestion affects how you work. Look at labour-intensive tasks and find a more efficient way to do them. Do you really need to send out updated rates to drivers – isn't there a quicker, more efficient method you could use? Saving time on daily admin can free up time to focus on the things that really matter.

These worked for me in a similar situation – I wish you success!

■ The next Ask Nigel will be in the August 3 issue.

Nigel Trotman has more than 25 years' experience in the fleet industry.

As fleet manager at Whitbread, he scooped two *Fleet News* Awards – fleet manager of the year (large fleets) and UK fleet of the year – before making the switch to consultancy at major leasing companies Lex Autolease and Alphabet. He entered the *Fleet News* Hall of Fame in 2013.

Formerly he was secretary of ACFO Midlands and was an ICFM board member.

Do you have a fleet challenge you would like Nigel to answer?

Visit [fleetnews.co.uk/asknigel](http://fleetnews.co.uk/asknigel) or email [fleetnews@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:fleetnews@bauermedia.co.uk)



# PRACTISING WHAT YOU PREACH

Chargemaster uses electric vehicles on its own fleet to prove to companies that plug-in cars make good business sense, *John Maslen* discovers

**T**he company behind the country's biggest electric vehicle (EV) recharging network is now using its fleet to prove the significant potential of zero-emission

motoring in business.

Chargemaster is used by thousands of private owners, businesses and councils, with more than 50,000 customers across the UK and Europe. In the UK, it operates the Polar network, which has more than 5,000 recharging points.

It is also the official charging partner for most of the leading plug-in vehicle manufacturers, including BMW, Kia, Mercedes-Benz, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Renault and Toyota, along with a range of other fleet providers, such as leasing giant Alphabet.

For Chargemaster's founder and chief executive officer, David Martell, the company's own vehicle choice is a public vote of confidence in the future of electric vehicles within the fleet market.

He says: "We are showing customers through our vehicle choices that we are serious about the potential growth in the

market. We are also giving them confidence that plug-in vehicles are a viable fleet choice."

Chargemaster operates a fleet of around 40 electric cars, including battery electric vehicles (BEV), range-extenders and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs).

They are used for everything from management cars to vehicles for sales staff and pool cars, with models including the BMW i3, Nissan Leaf, Mitsubishi Outlander, Renault Zoe, Vauxhall Ampera, Volkswagen e-Golf and Tesla Model S.

From its Luton headquarters, the company serves customers throughout the country, so different types of technology are allocated for different types of usage.

For example, drivers who cover higher mileages, such as sales staff, will receive range-extenders or PHEVs, while managers with lower mileages can operate BEVs.

This reflects the limited range BEVs can cover on a single charge, although Martell is keen to be an early-adopter as technology increases the distance they can travel.

Martell, who drives a Tesla, says: "It is interesting how the market is changing and we are not far away from saying we will move to BEVs rather than PHEVs."

"Cars such as the Nissan Leaf will develop

significantly longer range, while the Tesla Model 3 also has a battery that will provide substantial range."

Martell suggests that a range of around 160-200 miles is the tipping point at which BEVs can become the sole fleet choice for most companies.

He adds: "My view is that, for sales guys and support teams, they need a genuine 160-mile range for it to make economic sense. For the sales team, we require range extenders or PHEVs, as the BEV range of around 110 miles is not quite there."

"You have to match the technology to the role. There is not a one-size-fits-all solution, but with a range of choice, a fleet can run a substantial number of plug-in cars."

For the first quarter of 2017, the UK was one of the leading markets for plug-in vehicles throughout Europe. With sales of more than 12,000, it was ahead of key economies such as Germany and France, although demand still only accounts for less than 1.5% of the new car market.

For Martell, who previously launched telematics and congestion monitoring firm Trafficmaster, rising demand for plug-ins will generate more interest in





Chargemaster founder  
and CEO David Martell (front)  
with commercial director  
James Jean-Louis



## FACTFILE

**Headquarters:** Luton

**Chief executive officer:** David Martell

**Car fleet size:** 40 (battery electric and plug-in hybrids)

**Van fleet size:** 35 (all diesel)

**Funding methods:** Outright purchase, manufacturer partnership

**Brands on fleet:** BMW, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Renault, Tesla, Vauxhall, Volkswagen



Chargemaster's services and, in turn, lead to expansion in its fleet as more employees are required.

New staff members, who may not be familiar with electric vehicles, receive an induction that ensures they understand the different driving dynamics.

Martell says: "We provide an induction course when someone joins, covering how to drive an EV and things like regenerative braking [a system that uses momentum from the car to recharge the battery when slowing down] and optimum speed. The difference between 60mph and 70mph is huge in terms of energy consumption. We also look to ensure they are comfortable with charging and running the vehicle."

Running a plug-in vehicle requires a change in mindset compared to operating a petrol or diesel, but, with the right approach, it can easily fit into a busy business schedule.

James Jean-Louis, group commercial director for Chargemaster, who has day-to-day management control of the fleet, says: "With a car using an internal combustion engine, you would just set off in the morning without thinking what was in the fuel tank. With an electric vehicle, it requires an adjustment in the way you think.

"Drivers need to plug in the night before to ensure they are starting the day on a full battery. Your behaviour then changes on the road, as you think about opportunities to charge. You don't need to focus on keeping the battery fully charged during the day, you

just need to top-up. So, you might charge during a break in your journey or during a meeting. Even an extra 20 miles charge makes a difference. You just change your behaviour from 'fill-up' to 'top-up' and make sure you plan ahead, based on the charging infrastructure."

The most important element is assessing employee mileage requirements and

ensuring the right vehicle is chosen for the right job.

For example, if a staff member typically has a long journey to a particular area, but then several days with little mileage between customers or sites, a PHEV would be ideal.

Jean-Louis says: "The outward journey may require the internal combustion engine, but then once they arrive, they may be driving



## INNOVATIVE IDEAS TO REDUCE RISK

**A driver training programme at Chargemaster has been developed to manage both on and off-road risks.**

While many companies focus their risk management policies on minimising on-road incidents, companies also have to ensure vehicles are kept safe when they are parked, particularly when it comes to commercial vehicles.

James Jean-Louis, group commercial director for Chargemaster, says: "It is an annual driver training programme and it is not just based on safe driving. It is also focused on preventing break-ins as we have had several vehicles targeted in the past."

**Chargemaster is considering expanding the scheme to its car fleet in future.**

The company operates 35 commercial vehicles and has around 60 operated by GB Electrical, an electrical contractor that was acquired in 2014.

Other initiatives include the potential introduction of 'no tools left in this van overnight' stickers, though this may draw more attention to vehicles than if they were left blank.

Stickers asking 'how is my driving?' could also be added to encourage safe driving.

The company is carrying out trials of telematics, although the focus behind its

use is the efficient allocation of resources during installation and maintenance of the charging network, by booking drivers who are closest to the customers' premises.

Driver risk management is more of a hands-on approach, with regular licence checks and assessments for car and van drivers.

Employees provide Chargemaster with a DVLA code so the company can electronically check their licences, while if drivers are involved in an incident, there is an internal debrief to identify what went wrong and if the employee could have done anything differently.





Jean-Louis and Martell  
are passionate about the  
future for electric

solely on electric power for several days.

"The key thing is putting the right person in the right vehicle for the work they are doing. There is just no point putting someone in a pure EV if they are doing 300 miles a day."

All drivers have a Polar access card, so they can charge when required and the experience has meant that some staff have

started using electric vehicles for private motoring, including taking on ex-fleet cars.

Fleet funding is mixed, with some cars provided by manufacturers on short replacement cycles, although the majority are outright purchased. Defleet mileages can vary from a few thousand to more than 60,000, so there isn't a fixed replacement cycle.

## CHARGEMASTER AWAITS ERA OF PLUG-IN VANS

**If a manufacturer started doing a plug-in hybrid van, Chargemaster would be first in line, the company says.**

James Jean-Louis, Chargemaster group commercial director, says: "Our vans do mileage of around 100-150 miles each day and diesel is currently the only option."

"If a manufacturer could provide a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle then we would take it tomorrow."

Chargemaster's vans have to adapt to a variety of journeys, from short to long distances with multiple client stops of varying lengths, in order to install and

maintain charging points.

This means journeys are often too unpredictable to rely on battery-electric vans, where range may also be affected by the payload that has to be carried.

Currently, the range offered by a pure EV solution doesn't meet the company's requirements, but a combination of a fossil fuel engine and electric power would provide a perfect balance of flexibility and low emissions, it says.

Ford is currently developing a PHEV, but trials to develop a final model have only just started with a few fleets in London.

*"We really need at least five years of clarity from the Government"*

*David Martell, Chargemaster*

Martell is confident in his decision to buy vehicles outright, including their batteries, because they have been problem-free.

The company's use of a wide-range of models over substantial mileage has shown that batteries are robust and reliable, with little degradation in range, while SMR costs for items such as brake pads are low, because regenerative braking systems mean there is little wear and tear.

Disposal routes include manufacturer returns, sales to staff or retailing to dealers and the public through online platforms.

Running costs are consistently about £2 per 100 miles, compared with around £14 for diesel or petrol.

Jean-Louis says: "Employees are often excited about the prospect of using new technology. Generally they love it, particularly the experience of instant acceleration."

"As we travel the country meeting customers and servicing charge points, we provide a lot of advice about operating electric vehicles to other fleets."

This advice doesn't yet extend to commercial vehicles, as the 35-strong fleet of vans is currently diesel-only, but Martell is keen to introduce a switch to zero-emission capability when plug-in hybrid models become available (see panel below left).

He says: "There is not a PHEV van that is available, but as soon as there is we would move into one. You have EV vans that have an extended range, but currently that is not enough for our requirements."

"However, we are on the cusp of a move away from diesel."

The essential element in driving the next stage of fleet growth in the market will be a long-term commitment from the Government to supporting EVs.

Martell says: "We are going in the right direction, but it will require consistent policy towards the expansion of the physical network and the use of plug-in cars."

"We really need at least five years of clarity from the Government. Benefit-in-kind tax still represents a significant benefit, but the policy needs to be very clear in the long term in order to generate consistent demand."



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# MORE THAN 5,100 DRIVES AT THE UK'S TOP TEST EVENT

Just over 900 fleet decision makers descended on Millbrook Proving Ground on June 13-14 to test drive more than 300 cars and vans – in glorious sunshine!

## JAGUAR LAND ROVER

**Fleet News: What models have fleets been excited about on your stand this year?**

**Jon Wackett, UK fleet and business general manager at Jaguar Land Rover:**

We've had excellent feedback on the new Discovery and F-Pace and we have the new Range Rover Velar on display ahead of its launch next month. Having these new additions at CCIA, alongside trusted models like the Discovery Sport, Evoque, XE and XF gives us a chance to showcase the full and growing portfolio from Jaguar Land Rover

**FN: What are your hopes for 2017?**

**JW:** We are planning steady, consistent growth across the whole of our portfolio in the next 12 months, and we're looking forward to bringing these to our customers. There are incremental models and new engine options for existing models due in both marques that we know our customers will love.

**FN: What's the biggest challenge for fleets this year?**

**JW:** The industry is facing a multitude of challenges, taxation and legislation changes and the economic situation post-Brexit to name a few. For us, the negative perception of diesel-powered vehicles is a concern. While our customers continue to enjoy the benefits of efficient Euro 6 diesel-powered vehicles, there is a general mis-education about NOx and diesel. We hope this will soon be resolved and the image of diesel is rightly restored.



## NISSAN



**Fleet News: What models have fleets been excited about on your stand this year?**

**Iker Lazzari, fleet sales director at Nissan Motor (GB):** We saw a shift this year with attendees wanting to experience and drive the Nissan Leaf. This shows the positive market shift towards EVs and is reflected in our growth in sales. We also showcased the new Qashqai giving the first opportunity for attendees to see and experience the refinements we have made to both the interior and exterior.

**FN: What are your hopes for 2017?**

**IL:** We have four short-term priorities for the upcoming year. Making Nissan easy to do business with – by ensuring we have seamless processing, accurate invoicing and prompt payments. Product awareness – with such a deep and broad mix of products, we have something for most fleet needs, including the introduction of the new Qashqai and X-Trail. Sales team – we now have more than 50 people in our fleet team with a real EV specialism. We need to make sure we are consistently challenging and adding value so that we can help our customers to design and tailor their fleets to deliver efficiencies and effectiveness. EV strategy – we are number one in the EV sector not only with Nissan Leaf but also with the e-NV200, our electric van. We will build on these industry-leading strengths in FY17 with the introduction of the new Leaf later in the year.



## INFINITI

**Fleet News: What models have fleets been excited about on your stand this year?**

**Jonathan Reynolds, head of fleet sales at Infiniti:** We've bought the Q30, QX30 and our new halo product the Q60. We are also offering a high-speed lap in a Q50 hybrid. We don't expect the new Q60 to be a big fleet seller but it's a great model to attract people to the stand and might appeal to those taking the cash in lieu of a car.

**FN: What are your hopes for 2017?**

**JR:** The focus is really on growing our volume and building awareness of the Infiniti brand. We've just finished building our fleet team who are now out and about visiting fleets and leasing companies.

**FN: What's the biggest challenge for fleets this year?**

**JR:** Fuel choice is always going to have people scratching their heads. We haven't seen a shift from diesel yet though. The 1.5-litre unit in the Q60 is the most popular with fleets and we expect this to stay.



## TOYOTA/LEXUS

**Fleet News: What models have fleets been excited about on your stand this year?**

**Jon Hunt, manager, Toyota & Lexus Fleet Marketing:** The i-Road has been creating a lot of interest. It shows the versatility of the electric powertrain. It's relatively cheap, it will do 25-30 miles on a single charge; it's a convenient urban vehicle. We've had a lot of interest in the commercial vehicles [Proace and Hilux] and for Lexus, the LC 500h, which isn't formally launched until late July.

**FN: What are your hopes for 2017?**

**Neil Broad, general manager Toyota & Lexus Fleet and Remarketing:** Our hopes for 2017 are continuing the progress we've made to date. We're off to a very sound start and it's continuing the momentum and furthering our localisation strategy. We're less exposed to any diesel issues than anybody in terms of percentage diesel penetration.

**FN: What's the biggest challenge for fleets this year?**

**NB:** The biggest challenge is instability in the marketplace. We don't know where legislation is going to go.



## RENAULT



**Fleet News: What models have fleets been excited about on your stand this year?**

**Mark Dickens, head of fleet sales operations and remarketing at Renault:**

The all-new Koleos clearly generated significant interest and positive comment. On the off-road course, it drew positive comments not only from customers, but also from other manufacturers.

It was clear it is a perfectly packaged vehicle, especially when the temperature reached 28 degrees, and customers were able to take advantage of the advanced climate control and air conditioned seats. The other star of the show was the Zoe. We received really positive feedback, particularly as both cars were out on test all day, back-to-back, with no opportunity to be charged up. No other EVs achieved that.

**FN: What are your hopes for 2017?**

**MD:** That the success of Koleos at the show is realised in orders. Also that our new local fleet strategy continues to support our accelerated growth in that area – in 2016 we recorded an increase of 25% year-on-year. We hope we can add value to the subject of electric vehicles by our investment in the specialism in the fleet team, and realise our volume ambitions with the new Zoe with its 250-mile range (NEDC) as a result.

**FN: What's the biggest challenge for fleets this year?**

**MD:** Electric vehicles. We have the product and fleets have the desire, but there's a gap in knowledge about EVs. That's why we are appointing EV specialists to support fleets, and assist with the transition.

## KIA

**Fleet News: What models have fleets been excited about on your stand this year?**

**John Hargreaves, Kia head of fleet and remarketing:**

The car people have been most interested in is the Niro SUV. It's currently available only as a hybrid but we will be launching a plug-in hybrid version in the summer, which we expect to grow fleet interest. People have also been particularly interested in the new Picanto, even though it is not majorly a fleet vehicle, Sportage and the Optima Plug-in, which has CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 37g/km.



has increased [fleet share is up around 0.7% year-on-year], our volumes are down. We hope the market will recover to similar levels to those at the start of year and we will maintain our share.

**FN: What is the biggest challenge for fleets this year?**

**JH:** One of the challenges is whether a fleet wants to be seen as a leader of operating ultra-low emission cars which will get good PR but sacrifice an amount of practicality because of the refuelling options. Or does it want to be a follower where its fleet is as efficient as possible but perhaps not as good on the emissions side?

**FN: What are your hopes for 2017?**

**JH:** It has been an interesting market for us because we had pretty high expectations for the first three months and we completely surpassed them: the market was up and we were outperforming it. Since then it has been something of a different picture – the market is down and although our share

## LIVE TESTING AT CCIA

There were more than 300 vehicles to drive at CCIA from 26 manufacturers. We assembled a team of fleet managers from some of the country's biggest fleets to help us assess four of the latest and most popular models at the event.

## VAUXHALL INSIGNIA GRAND SPORT

**Model tested:** 1.6-litre Turbo D EcoTec 110PS



Perhaps one of the most important cars at CCIA was the new Vauxhall Insignia Grand Sport. The old model was a big hit with corporate buyers and Vauxhall expects this model to achieve a 90% fleet mix.

We tried the most efficient model in the range, having already tested the 136PS and 170PS versions.

Stewart Lightbody said the engine felt underpowered and struggled on the more demanding sections of the hill-route. However, on the high-speed bowl he thought the Insignia felt more at home cruising at motorway speeds.

The car emits 105g/km of CO<sub>2</sub>, which is high considering its status as the eco-champion.

Vauxhall says this is because the car has been developed for the upcoming real-world driving tests, where it is expected to excel. Still, it returns an average of more than 70mpg if driven carefully.

"Cosmetically it's a big step forward, but the interior isn't a million miles away from the existing model," said Lightbody.

Paul Tate added: "I like the interior but the air con controls are a bit fiddly and require you to press buttons and use the touchscreen. It's not intuitive."

The new Insignia is larger than before and Vauxhall has designed it to compete in a more premium arena. Despite this, the list price is competitive, starting at £17,115.

In Tech Line trim, the Vauxhall Insignia Grand Sport 1.6 Turbo D 110PS costs £21,025. Company car drivers will pay £967 per year in benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax and the car will cost 30.93 pence per mile (ppm) to run over four years or 80,000 miles.

## VOLKSWAGEN GOLF

**Model tested:** 1.0T SE NAV 110PS



Volkswagen introduced the new Golf at the beginning of the year and the facelift model is another excellent evolution of the one that preceded it.

Inside it's a case of business as usual and anyone familiar with past Golfs should be able to get quickly acquainted.

There's a brace of engines available including an ultra-frugal 1.6-litre diesel, but we opted to test the three cylinder 1.0-litre turbo petrol unit.

Keith Cook was staggered to find out it was powered by a 1.0-litre engine when he came back from his test drive.

He said: "Having driven the 2.0TDI variant for the past few years I would say there wasn't much difference between

them. The performance and handling was excellent."

Stewart Lightbody added: "The engine is a delight and the exhaust note is more positive than in diesel versions. It engages people back to driving."

All our fleet managers felt the 110PS output to be more than enough for the car. By ditching a heavy diesel engine the Golf feels light and nimble, offering a great driving experience.

The petrol-powered Golf becomes more interesting when you compare its running costs with the diesel. At £20,065 it's £1,800 less than the 1.6 TDI in the same trim. It also saves the driver £200 per year in BIK tax, costing £800 for the 20% taxpayer. Running costs are lower, too, at 29.32ppm versus the diesel at 30.26ppm.

Lightbody said he has been looking at the viability of petrol on fleet, as did Cook. Both said the Golf 1.0T is a great example of how fleet could shift from diesel in a cost-effective way.

## SEAT

**Fleet News: What models have fleets been excited about on your stand this year?**

**Justin Costello, Seat national fleet sales manager:** We have had lots of interest in the new Ibiza. It is officially launched in July, so this was one of the first opportunities for people to drive it in the UK. The Ateca continues to be a big pull for us and has been a real catalyst for driving awareness of our brand in the fleet sector.



**FN: What are your hopes for 2017?**

**JC:** We are really pleased with our growth this year: the brand is up 10% and true fleet is up 70% year-on-year. This year we will continue to broaden our product portfolio by launching our Arona small SUV in Q4 which will give us more than 75% segment coverage.

**FN: What is the biggest challenge for fleets this year?**

**JC:** There are a couple – a lot of company car drivers are confused about what the changes to taxation and salary sacrifice mean to them. The other one that strikes a chord for me is the issue over fuel – do fleets look to petrol, diesel, electric or hybrid?

## VAUXHALL





## OUR FLEET ROAD TESTERS



**Stewart Lightbody**  
head of fleet  
services at  
Anglian Water



**Keith Cook**  
deputy financial  
controller at  
Computacenter



**Paul Tate**  
commodity  
manager  
at Siemens

### PEUGEOT 3008

**Model tested: 2.0 BlueHDI 150 GT Line**



We decided to give the Peugeot 3008 a try as it offers a more driver-focused package than traditional SUVs in the same price bracket.

The 2.0-litre BlueHDI engine delivers 150PS and is combined with a nimble chassis and light body. Performance is strong but the 3008 is also frugal. It emits 114g/km of CO<sub>2</sub> and manages to achieve 64.2mpg on the combined cycle.

Stewart Lightbody and Paul Tate both agreed that the 3008 has great styling but for Tate it was the seats that he found most impressive. The entire cabin is set up to feel like a sports car so the centre console sits high, cocooning the driver. Lightbody was less

impressed and felt the gear lever was too high.

The oddest thing about the 3008 is its small steering wheel which is flat at the bottom and the top. It's a bit like using a games console wheel. It does give excellent steering feel though, making the 3008 drive like a go-kart.

Tate likened the dash-mounted toggle switches to a piano, they do give a minimalistic feel to the interior but are not clearly marked and are used to control all the main functions such as radio, navigation and climate control.

The digital instruments won more praise and were likened to those in the latest Audis.

Our GT Line test car was priced at £29,030. It comes with 18-inch alloy wheels, LED headlights and a sports styling kit. BIK tax starts at £1,393 per year for a 20% taxpayer while running costs average out at 38.63ppm over four years or 80,000 miles.

### BMW 5 SERIES

**Model tested: 530e iPerformance M Sport**



The plug-in hybrid version of BMW's newest 5 Series is the latest derivative to be launched. It uses a 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine twinned with an electric motor.

On battery power alone the car can achieve a range of around 30 miles but the real selling points of this car are its 9% BIK rate and combined power output of 250PS.

"I'm genuinely surprised by how good that is," said Keith Cook. He added: "The driving experience is delightful."

Stewart Lightbody confessed he isn't a big BMW fan but he was won over by the 530e.

"It's effortless. Super quiet and super smooth," he said. Both fleet managers had

concerns over the achievable fuel consumption though. BMW claim an average of 141mpg but it's likely the realistic figure is closer to 40mpg for drivers who don't use the battery range to its full potential.

"People will like the low BIK rates but some, especially those with fully expensed fuel cards, are liable to abuse it," warned Cook.

Lightbody added: "In the right hands it makes a lot of sense. I could definitely see some of our directors swapping out their 520ds for these."

The 530e is discreet about its hybrid status. The only visual giveaway is the charging point flap on the passenger side front wing. When you start the car it sets off in silent fully electric mode and can reach 87mph before needing to fire up the petrol engine.

Give the 530e a firm prod with your right foot from standstill and it can hit 60mph in just 6.2 seconds.

#### **Fleet News: What models have fleets been excited about on your stand?**

**Richard Roberts, Vauxhall fleet marketing and Motability manager:**

It's all about two key models: an opportunity to see the new Insignia Grand Sport and the first chance to drive the new Insignia Sport Tourer. Fleets have made a beeline for those. But it is also their first opportunity to see and drive the new Crossland X. Fleets know what the Insignia is – they've owned or driven one before – so this is a chance for them to benchmark the new car against their knowledge and they have recognised the developments we have made in the premium feel, additional interior space and the design and ride characteristics.

#### **FN: What are your hopes for 2017?**

**RR:** It's a continuation of our plan to focus on each of our channels. We have to make sure we balance the right mix within rental and that we work with our customers and prospects to ensure they understand and appreciate the benefits of the new Insignia.

#### **FN: What is the biggest challenge you face this year?**

**RR:** The challenges haven't changed. It's about making sure we work with customers and prospects so they can make informed decisions to fund the best solutions for their businesses. Other industry challenges will go on, but we will always continue to focus on delivering on fleets' requirements. And with our vehicle life-cycling, we will always have something to talk about.

## FCA

#### **Fleet News: What models have fleets been excited about on your stand this year?**

**Simon Wheeler, fleet planning and corporate marketing manager at FCA Group:**

The Alfa Romeo Giulia range is by far the most popular on our stand this year and we are attracting many test drives. We are taking people for test drives in the Quadrifoglio and explaining some of ITS cutting-edge technology. The Fiat range is also proving popular. The Tipo, Fullback and Spider have all been well received.



#### **FN: What are your hopes for 2017?**

**SW:** We are on target to achieve sales objectives with the Giulia and Tipo. Later in the year we will launch the Alfa Romeo Stelvio, showcased today. We are having conversations about the new Jeep Compass and hoping for a successful launch.

#### **FN: What's the biggest challenge for fleets this year?**

**SW:** There is uncertainty in the market around taxation, Brexit and business. Uncertainty is not good for long-term growth but we have as much of a robust plan as we can at this point.

## SUZUKI

**Fleet News: What models have fleets been excited about on your stand this year?**

**Graeme Jenkins, head of fleet for Suzuki:** The new Swift with a 1.0-litre petrol engine has been in demand, alongside the Ignis which, again, has a small petrol engine. Of course we have the Vitara and SX SUVs driven by petrol booster-jet engines. For the first time we have four or five vehicles that people in fleet are raising an eyebrow at.

**FN: What are your hopes for 2017?**

**GJ:** Suzuki has truly entered the fleet market in 2017 and our aspiration is to grow our car sales to 7,500 this year and 10,000 in 2018. We will do that through the release of new products. In addition to that,

we are launching a Suzuki business charter. It is based on five different ingredients: the people, the brand, the product, the network and the affordability. Sitting behind those five pillars is some rationale as to what we are going to bring to the market, in terms of dealing with the leasing industry accordingly.

**FN: What's the biggest challenge for fleets this year?**

**GJ:** There are a number of challenges. One of the largest is technology and the petrol/diesel argument that continues. The market is moving towards small cars and starting to move back to petrol. The manufacturing of small frugal petrol engines ticks the box.



## BMW/MINI

**Fleet News: What models have fleets been excited about on your stand?**

**BMW – Steve Oliver, general manager corporate sales:**

There are two key trends. Lots of fleets have experience our iPerformance cars for the first time. One said that of all the cars he'd driven today, the 330e was the one we'd like to drive home in. The second is everything Mini. The range is more fleet orientated than ever before and it has been just as busy as BMW.

**FN: What are your hopes for 2017?**

**SO:** We look forward to getting back to 'business as usual' after the elections and autumn statement that impacted on fleets and their policies. We get a sense this is now happening. We expect a strong second half, but we usually do at BMW. We have the new 5 Series saloon and Touring and the Mini Countryman plug-in has just arrived. There is lots of good product and we are very optimistic.

**FN: What is the biggest challenge fleets face this year?**

**SO:** Complexity – fleets have a lot to contend with. They have to take a broad perspective and introduce the right solutions of product and powertrain. There is still a fantastic opportunity for diesel which has a massive future.

## PEUGEOT/CITROËN

**Fleet News: What models have fleets been excited about on your stand?**

**Neil Hunter, head of corporate sales – north, Peugeot, Citroën and DS Fleet:**

Our new 3008, which launched earlier this year has been out constantly. That has created a lot of interest for us and lots of new contacts. It's a completely new car from the ground up; the old vehicle and the new one in effect have no real relationship apart from the name. We've had lots of interest in the award-winning new C3 for Citroën. For DS, with the weather being so nice, people have been taking advantage of the DS3 Cabrio.

**FN: What are your hopes for 2017?**

**NH:** Our hope with our new structure [PSA now has one fleet team for the three brands, see [fleetnews.co.uk](http://fleetnews.co.uk), January 5] is that we deliver the very best possible service we can.

**FN: What's the biggest challenge for fleets this year?**

**NH:** Diesel is a hot topic for sure. We continue to try to pick the right type of fuel with our customers, whether it be petrol or diesel. We're fortunate in that we've got a good message at the moment because our 1.2 petrol engine has won engine of the year [at the International Engine of the Year Awards] two years in a row.

## PORSCHE

**Fleet News: What models have fleets been excited about on your stand this year?**

**Peter Mahon, general manager, operations, Porsche Cars Great Britain:**

The Panamera is all-new – the most sophisticated car we've ever produced, comprising a diesel model, two plug-in hybrids and two petrol engines. It's set to be joined by a new variant – the Panamera Sport Turismo – later this year, making it a stylish and versatile new addition to the range. The new car is the most luxurious, most efficient and fastest Panamera ever created.

**FN: What are your hopes for 2017?**

**PM:** We have already launched three new model variants on the 911 range alone – so it's already been an exciting and busy year. The

next six months will see the Panamera Sport Turismo arrive as well as one or two more surprises elsewhere in the range.

**FN: What's the biggest challenge for fleets this year?**

**PM:** Change. The period of change we're about to enter is going to be fascinating. We're getting ready for our first fully electric car – the Mission E – as well as introducing more hybrid models to the range. Electrification will transform our business and is an impressive challenge, but one we're enjoying tackling.



## VOLVO



### **Fleet News: What models have fleets been excited about on your stand this year?**

**Selwyn Cooper, head of Financial Services, Volvo Car UK:** As well as our now complete 90 series, the new XC60 generated considerable interest from corporate customers. The current XC60 has been such an important car for fleets. In fact, it was our biggest selling car to businesses last year. The new car is another true premium competitor from Volvo. It will introduce to our top-selling SUV all of the advanced technology and premium design we've seen on the 90 series cars. The reception to date has been overwhelmingly positive, and I'm confident it will be hugely successful in the corporate sales market.

### **FN: What are your hopes for 2017?**

**SC:** By 2020, Volvo aims to almost double its annual sales to 800,000 globally, and 60,000 in the UK. Fleet sales will play a significant role in this growth.

In 2017, our focus will be on delivering the orders for the new XC60, which will continue the momentum created by the S90, V90 and XC90 over the past couple of years.

### **FN: What's the biggest challenge for fleets this year?**

**SC:** Fleets have had to get used to the changes to Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) rates earlier this year. I don't think the effect will be huge, however, as VED is just one of several costs involved in running a vehicle. For fleets in particular, once the total cost of ownership has been worked out, the impact is relatively small.

## FORD

### **Fleet News: What models have fleets been excited about on your stand this year?**

**Owen Gregory, Ford director of fleet operations:** The Focus ST and ST Line have taken the top spots and then the Mondeo ST Line – in fact all our ST Line cars [which offer sporty styling touches and suspension tweaks] have been very popular. We have also seen lots of fleets take the Ranger and Edge out on the course.

### **FN: What are your hopes for 2017?**

**OG:** Our view is that the overall industry will be broadly stable, and similarly into next year for both cars and vans. True fleet is quieter but the rental industry is buoyant and slightly stronger than we expected. Key for us is the new Fiesta, which will be with us shortly. As far as we can tell, it's the most technologically advanced small car in the world.

### **FN: What is the biggest challenge fleets face this year?**

**OG:** The issue on everybody's mind is the media debate on diesel. It is over-simplified coverage and not reflective of all the available data. So, it is incumbent on us to support the debate with conversations with legislators to ensure diesel isn't demonised. Euro 6 diesel has a very strong environmental role to play in our industry. Every individual and company will have a different optimal solution to the question of air quality. We can help people understand where we are with the latest in diesel technology, the opportunities with petrol engines, hybrid with the Mondeo and full electric with the Focus. And we have our plug-in trials with the Transit Custom. Our message is: 'Diesel isn't bad.'



## VOLKSWAGEN

### **Fleet News: What models have fleets been excited about on your stand this year?**

**Mark Johnson, Volkswagen national fleet sales manager:** The number of test drives over the two days exceeded last year's total, which was great. Our line-up was focused on the most relevant fleet models. Models on offer included the Tiguan, Golf and Passat, with the GTE plug-in hybrid versions of Golf and Passat generating particular interest. We expect interest in these models to continue to grow as more drivers and fleet managers consider alternative fuelled vehicles. Finally, we also featured a display-only new Arteon which is Volkswagen's most advanced car yet, and goes on sale later this year.

### **FN: What are your hopes for 2017?**

**Michael O'Shea, head of fleet:** Volkswagen

UK's cautious expectation for 2017 is to exceed last year's sales volumes and market share in the true fleet channel. The revised Golf has been very well received and we have a strong order bank which should help achieve our sales volumes.

### **What is the biggest challenge for fleets this year?**

**MO'S:** We think the biggest potential impact on user-choosers and all company car drivers will be the introduction of worldwide harmonised light vehicles test procedure (WLTP), although



our current understanding is that this will not have any benefit-in-kind tax impact until at least September 2019.



## SPONSOR COMMENTS

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles Fleet and Business is proud to sponsor the Fleet Manager of the Year category in the *Fleet News Awards 2017* and extends its congratulations to Jo Hammonds.

We at FCA understand the challenges of fleet management and have grown our department to support our customers and meet the challenges that come with managing a fleet, no matter the size.

As the winner of the most improved Fleet Manufacturer of the Year award, we appreciate fully the hard work and determination it takes to win a *Fleet News Award*. Jo's trophy is well deserved.

Our team are keen to demonstrate FCA's awarding winning service and range of cars, from the stylish and spacious Fiat Tipo which offers exceptional value for money, to the beautiful All New Alfa Romeo Giulia through to the tough and capable Fiat Professional Fullback.

To find out more, call our business center on 0800 0147879 or email us at [Fleet.Info@fcagroup.com](mailto:Fleet.Info@fcagroup.com)



FCA FLEET & BUSINESS

## WINNER: JO HAMMONDS

# 'Speed limiters had the single biggest impact on our fleet'

A constant desire to innovate and lead the way over a 17-year career lands the top award for Mears group fleet manager

By Stephen Briers

**J**o Hammonds has overseen a near 10-fold increase in fleet size during his 16 years with Mears, through both organic growth and business acquisition.

When he joined the Gloucester-based company in August 2000 after a career in leasing and rental, it had 570 vehicles – still a sizeable fleet for the area. The fleet peaked at just over 5,000 in 2015, although it has since reduced slightly due to changing business contracts.

When he asked the finance director what he should do first, he was told to find out where all the vehicles were. "Mears had made some small acquisitions and didn't have any control over its vehicles, so my first job was to locate them all and find out what we had," he recalls.

Once he had done that, he was able to begin implementing policies and a fleet strategy, a process which culminated in the *Fleet News Awards 2017* fleet manager of the year.

## Fleet News: What challenges did you face in managing growth in the fleet?

**Jo Hammonds:** Growth has been 50-50 organic-to-acquisition. The organic growth is easy because it is contract wins and you know when it will start, how many vehicles you need and for how long. They are your own vehicles, your own livery and they are being managed to your standards. Acquisitions are more challenging. They have their own vehicles, their own terms, different vehicles, ages and funding, and different cost bases. And when you serve notice on suppliers, very few have a grown-up approach to the support you get as that business is taken away. They start to do things to the letter of the contract, for example damage, and you have no leverage on the relationship. It's much more challenging.

## FN: So how did you manage the growth in the fleet and how does it differ now versus 2000?

**JH:** We didn't do everything ourselves. There are companies that are far better placed to do some services. We focused on getting value through our deals with manufacturers and contract hire companies – the right vehicles with the right profile and service and maintenance packages. We put the building blocks in place for growth.

When I joined, it was just me. Within 12 months, I got a second person and eventually we had seven in the fleet team. The regional team was key to the integration of acquired fleets. But apart from the add-on processes, the work in the fleet office hasn't changed much. It's just the volume. We had a policy so nothing changed in how we ran the fleet or its complexity as we grew. If everything is embedded, it's easy to manage.

## FN: Were there any challenges getting all the processes embedded in the business?

**JH:** There were when we removed private fuel around 10 years ago. It was difficult to convince people to give up the benefit. I work to the 80-10-10 rule: 80% of people were fine once you explained they were better off without the benefit; 10% weren't better off so you have to pay them some money to compensate; and 10% were borderline. They were the ones we had to focus on. With half of them, I sat down face-to-face or on the phone to explain how it worked and what it meant for them. It never ceases to amaze me how many people don't understand how company car tax works and what they are paying. Now the policy is in place, it's a different story – it works fine and everyone is happy.

## FN: What initiatives had the biggest impact on the fleet?

**JH:** Speed limiters. For a single action there are so many tangible benefits: better fuel consumption, less CO<sub>2</sub>, lower speed, fewer accidents, fewer third party claims – all from one simple addition. Ten years ago we introduced reversing sensors, another simple but hugely beneficial programme. More recently, we changed our fuel card provider from AllStar to BP and went to a Platts Plus deal. That is saving us around 5% on our fuel. We also get the same price everywhere, including motorways, which has been an intangible benefit to our drivers.

## FN: Is there anything you would've done differently if you had another chance?

**JH:** I wouldn't have been so reluctant to try something different. We got a big kick with fuel, but it was something we could've done a long time ago. 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it' is a way of managing, but it isn't necessarily effective. Now I have more time to look at these opportunities so we can do them sooner and get the benefits sooner.





**Fleet manager of the year**  
Jo Hammonds, group fleet manager for Mears Group (left), collects the award from Fiat Chrysler Automotive fleet and remarketing director Francis Beasdale

**FN:** Three years ago, the company took the decision to outsource fleet management. Why, and what impact has this had on the fleet and your role?

**JH:** We had choices to make around investment. There was a scalability issue with the size of the fleet, especially IT. We were using an internal system which I developed with our IT department and we still do use it as an information tool. But it was only for the fleet team; it didn't provide management information (MI) for the broader business. So, three years ago we outsourced our fleet management to Zenith, including data management, vehicle ordering, collection and disposal and maintenance issues. There have been some successes, such as accident management, which is a defined process so it works well with outsourcing, and the IT reporting portal which works well for the branches and for management. Call handling is also well dealt with, as is vehicle ordering and daily rental management with robust processes which challenge people if there are other vehicles available to use. Now the fleet team is just me and one other person, and we have an implant from Zenith which is helping them to better understand our business, and makes it easy for us to have a conversation or ask questions. It has changed my role. I'm less involved in the day-to-day which means I can focus more on policy, ensuring people adhere to our procedures and spend more time with manufacturers. I can also spend more time looking at other projects and on the MI and physical numbers of the fleet, so I can identify any issues, such as mpg reports, that have tangible benefits to the business.

**FN:** How do you ensure you are getting best value from supplier partners?

**JH:** It needs good management information, reporting and analysis on the invoices to ensure that happens. We will challenge where we feel we aren't getting best value. The

challenge for both us and Zenith is to understand each other's cultures. We also do our claims handling through an external supplier that is separate to our insurance company, which has had a huge impact in the speed of turnover and settlement of third party claims. That has reduced our credit hire claims. Last year we introduced third party claims for non-fault accidents and that has improved recovery of costs. These services can stay in place irrespective of who we insure with, which gives us good standard processes for scalability.

**FN:** What do you think about companies which outsource and then get rid of their fleet manager?

**JH:** Once you have gone down that route, it is hard to bring the services back in-house unless you employ a fleet manager again. My role hasn't been just fleet for eight-plus years – I'm also involved with the insurance side and maybe the role doesn't sit on its own any more. If you are purely a company car fleet, do you need a fleet manager? No, but you need someone to have the relationship with the outsource company. But for commercial vehicle fleets, you do – it's job critical. There is the need for expertise and to check your management company is doing the correct job for you. It's still your risk, not the leasing company's!

**H**ammonds elected to sign a five-year contract with Zenith, longer than the usual three-year terms. He did this, he says, to have full sight on an entire vehicle lifecycle.

"We wanted a full cycle of vans going through the contract and coming back so we could test the whole process. It gives us a full picture, especially as de-fleet is the most painful part of the process," he explains.

He adds: "We won't really know if it's a good deal until we go through the whole cycle."

## FACTFILE

### Group fleet manager

Jo Hammonds

**Time in role** 17 years (last five as group asset manager)

**Fleet size** 4,500 – 3,750 vans, 750 cars

**Operating cycle** four years

**Funding method** contract hire

## JUDGES' COMMENTS

Despite a near 10-fold increase in fleet size since Jo Hammonds joined Mears, he has been able to handle new integrations while implementing a multitude of initiatives. He displays outstanding command and ownership of his fleet, from managing external suppliers to influencing internal stakeholders.

# RENAULT KOLEOS

Exceptional levels of standard features along with a favourable driving experience



By Stephen Briers

**R**enault has dispensed with the mind-boggling complexity commonplace in the SUV sector and opted for simplicity in the new Koleos model line-up, combined with exceptional levels of standard equipment.

Fleets can choose from just two trim levels (Dynamique S Nav and Signature Nav) and two engines (130hp 1.6-litre dCi and 177hp 2.0-litre dCi). With diesel accounting for 85% of the UK's SUV sector, Renault has no plans to offer petrol – available in other markets – although “if we see the trend changing, we will look at introducing additional engines”, said Valerie Mispole, Koleos brand manager, Europe.

Meanwhile, the list of standard equipment encompasses safety (electronic brake-force distribution, blind spot warning, lane departure warning, traffic sign recognition), comfort (dual-zone climate control, hands-free keycard) and entertainment (R-Link2 multimedia system with

## 579

**Boot capacity in litres of the Koleos – increasing to 1,795 when the seats are folded**



For full running costs, visit [fleetnews.co.uk/running-costs](http://fleetnews.co.uk/running-costs)

sat-nav, live traffic updates, Bluetooth, Android Auto/Apple Carplay smartphone applications). And all for a starting P11D price of £27,285.

In what is possibly the UK's shortest list of options, the only additional equipment gains are a climate pack (ventilated/heated front seats, heated rear seats, heated windscreen/steering wheel) at £400, hands-free parking (£350), 13-speaker Bose sound system (£600), leather interior upgrade (£400), metallic paint (£545) and spare wheel instead of inflation kit (£120).

The Koleos is available to order with first deliveries in July. It enters a highly competitive field, going head-to-head with established models such as the Volvo XC60, BMW X3 and Ford Kuga, and newcomers like the Skoda Kodiaq, Peugeot 5008 and Land Rover Discovery Sport. It is positioned above the Captur and Kadjar in Renault's crossover range.

Based on the Nissan Qashqai/X-Trail platform, the Koleos sits mid-market in terms of efficiency with the 1.6-litre diesel – available in front-wheel drive only – achieving paper figures of 128g/km CO<sub>2</sub> and 57.6mpg. The four-wheel drive 2.0-litre diesel returns 148g/km and 50.4mpg as six-speed manual; 156g/km and 47.9mpg in Auto X-Tronic.

More efficient SUVs are available, such as the 2.0-litre XC60 at 117g/km and 1.5-litre Kuga at 122g/km, but the Koleos's competitive entry price will part-offset the higher benefit-in-kind percentage.

Befitting a large SUV, the Koleos has huge boot capacity of 579 litres (1,795 with rear seats folded), plus an additional 35 litres of storage elsewhere, including an 11-litre glovebox and seven-litre cubby hole in the centre console.

It is available with five seats only, unlike the seven-seat options of several rivals. The reason? Design and comfort, according to Renault executives, who also point to the fact five-seat large SUVs account for 65% of the UK market.

“We appreciate comfort more than the occasional need for use of seven seats,” said UK managing director Vincent



The Koleos is set to push the Renault brand on to fleet choice lists





The interior is packed with a host of features as standard

*"The Koleos has light, direct steering and a smooth ride, which absorbed some tasty ruts on our test route"*

Tourette. "If they want seven seats, we have the Scenic."

Instead, Renault confidently claims "record room" for occupants of the Koleos, with ample head, shoulder and knee room (aided by the inward curving back of the front seats) for rear passengers, plus comfortable armchair-aping seats in the front.

Neat touches include a front cup holder than can be chilled or heated, optional heated rear seats and the portrait layout for the 8.7-inch tablet touchscreen (landscape for the seven-inch in the Dynamique S). From a safety point of view, we also liked the speed camera alert which urges you to "reduce your speed" if you are exceeding the limit, supported by a pulsating speed limit symbol near the speedometer.

Driving impressions are favourable. The Koleos has light, direct steering and a smooth ride, which absorbed some tasty ruts on our test route. The 177hp engine is the pick thanks to its rapid power delivery, although the 130hp is a decent engine offering ample power for most (it will be the fleet pick due to the fuel/emissions advantage).

The seats are outstanding with excellent lumbar support ensuring no hint of a backache after almost three hours of solid driving.

The Koleos also displayed its capabilities off-road, dispatching severe alternating undulations, rough terrain, water (up to 21 inches), steep inclines and rocks with ease. Fleets with such needs can add this car with complete confidence, although user-choosers are the likely customer base. It can even tow up to two tonnes with the optional electric-operated towbar.

Volume expectations are low – Renault is leaving the mass market to the Nissan Qashqai – which has helped to push residual values among the sector leaders.

The new Koleos is a stylish car with impressive standard specification levels. By completing the Renault SUV line-up, it should put the brand on to more fleet choice lists.

## COSTS

P11D price	£27,285
BIK tax band (2017/18)	27%
Annual BIK tax (20%)	£1,473
Class 1A NIC	£1,017
Annual VED	£160 then £140
RV (4yr/80K)	£8,425
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.28
AFR (ppm)	9
Running cost (4yr/80K)	37.66ppm

## SPEC

Power (PS)/torque (Nm)	130/320
CO <sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km)	128
Top speed (mph)	115
0-62mph (sec)	11.4
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	57.6

## KEY RIVAL

Ford Kuga 1.5TDCi 150hp Titanium
P11D price: £26,930
BIK tax band (2017/18) 26%
Annual BIK tax (20%) £1,400
Class 1A NIC £966
Annual VED £160 then £140
RV (4yr/80k) £7,800
Fuel cost (ppm) 8.90
AFR (ppm) 9
Running cost (4yr/80k) 37.43ppm

Running cost data supplied by KeeResources (4yr/80k)

# THINKING CAP



By Martin Ward, manufacturer relationships manager

cap hpi

**Monday/Tuesday** Over to a warm Turin for a Fiat 500L day (see review on page 32). It gets an all-new interior, and I mean all-new. The exterior receives some changes but only minor. The naming has changed, so the Trekking becomes Cross, and the seven-seat MPW is now badged Wagon. The 500L is not to everyone's taste in terms of design, but is designed to do a job, and it does that job extremely well. Those who do not like the current car will probably still not like the new one. Those who like the current car will love the new one, as it is just so much better. There were not enough cars to have one each, so we had to 'car-share'.

*"Those who like the current car will love the new one, as it is just so much better"*



**Wednesday** A day trip to Berlin for the all-new VW Polo MK6 premiere with 350 invited guests

from over 20 countries. The design shocked a few as it is a revolution, not an evolution – very different in all aspects to the current car with very clever crisp, strong side lines. It has grown in size by 81mm to about the same as a MK4 Golf. It is full of technology normally associated with more expensive larger cars, but above all, it looks brilliant. First deliveries in the UK in January 2018.

**Thursday/Friday** Up to Inverness to drive the new Mazda CX-5, a fully revised SUV, with many enhancements. We drove for around six hours across the Cairngorms. The first day we drove the 2.0-litre 165PS petrol and achieved 42.3mpg and the second day, we drove the 2.2 150PS diesel with an average 44.6mpg. It now has more sound insulation, improved materials throughout and an even larger front grille and slimmer lights which give it a bold look. Despite the poor weather, it was a great drive – a very competent car. The one I would choose would be the 2.0-litre petrol 2WD Sport-Nav at £26,695.



# FIAT 500L

Inner beauty improves dramatically but 'ugly duckling' is still no swan



The 500L's exterior changes are not as noticeable as those to the interior

By Andrew Ryan

**O**ften considered to be the ugly duckling of the Fiat range, the 500L has still been a sales success for the Italian car manufacturer with more than 430,000 registered since its 2012 launch.

It has now undergone a mid-life refresh and, although Fiat says 40% of all components are new, this hasn't transformed the mini-MPV into a beautiful swan.

Instead, exterior changes are restricted to a new grille to bring the car in line with the rest of the 500 family (which includes the 500 city car and 500X SUV) with additional chrome trim and the repositioning of fog and reversing lights to the underside of the bumper.

Internal changes are far more noticeable: the cabin benefits from improved materials giving the 500L a greater perception of quality, while the dashboard has been updated with new instrument dials and styling features.

It is now available in three variants: the standard five-seat 500L Urban, a longer, seven-seat 500L Wagon and a 'rugged' Cross version.

This offers 25mm more ground clearance than Urban and three driving modes – Normal, Traction+ and Gravity Control – to improve grip, dependent on the terrain. It also features new bumpers and front and rear skid plates to give it more of an 'off-roader' look.

However, the most popular version of the 500L will be the Urban, which comes in two trim levels: Popstar and Lounge.

Standard equipment on Popstar includes climate control, cruise control, power-adjustable heated door mirrors and Bluetooth connectivity.

Lounge adds improved upholstery and dashboard materials, automatic and dual zone climate control, a fixed glass sunroof and a seven-inch touchscreen media system which incorporates satellite navigation, Android Auto and Apple CarPlay connectivity.

Engines available are three petrols (95PS 1.4-litre, 120PS 1.4-litre and a 105PS 0.9-litre TwinAir) and two diesels (95PS 1.3 MultiJet and a 120PS 1.6 MultiJet).

## COSTS

<b>P11D price</b>	£21,000 (est)
<b>BIK tax band (2017/18)</b>	24%
<b>Annual BIK tax (20%)</b>	£1,008 (est)
<b>Class 1A NIC</b>	£696 (est) £695
<b>Annual VED</b>	£160 then £140
<b>RV (4yr/80k)</b>	n/a
<b>Fuel cost (ppm)</b>	n/a
<b>AFR (ppm)</b>	9
<b>Running cost (4yr/80k)</b>	n/a

## SPEC

<b>Power (PS)/torque (Nm)</b>	120/320
<b>CO2 emissions (g/km)</b>	112 (est)
<b>Top speed (mph)</b>	117
<b>0-62mph (sec)</b>	10.7
<b>Fuel efficiency (mpg)</b>	67.3 (est)

## KEY RIVAL

<b>Citroen C3 Picasso 1.6 BlueHDI 100 Platinum</b>	
<b>P11D price:</b>	£19,355
<b>BIK tax band (2017/18)</b>	22%
<b>Annual BIK tax (20%)</b>	£852
<b>Class 1A NIC</b>	£588
<b>Annual VED</b>	£140
<b>RV (4yr/80k)</b>	£4,675/24%
<b>Fuel cost (ppm)</b>	7.39
<b>AFR (ppm)</b>	9
<b>Running cost (4yr/80k)</b>	47.84ppm

Running cost data supplied by  
KeeResources (4yr/80k)



The cabin offers improved materials giving the perception of greater quality



The dash has been updated with new instrument dials

Fiat has not yet released CO2 or fuel economy figures for the facelifted range, but the 500L is mechanically unchanged from the current model so they should be similar.

The most efficient model in the current range is the 1.3 MultiJet diesel which produces 104g/km of CO2 and has an official combined fuel economy of 72.4mpg.

We drove the 1.6 MultiJet diesel model at the launch. Its driving characteristics are suited to an urban environment. With 120PS and 320Nm of torque, performance was ample and its steering was light, while its elevated driving position and large glass areas gave excellent all-round visibility.

Its soft suspension gave a comfortable ride, although refinement suffered through its intrusive engine noise.

First deliveries will take place in September. Pricing will be confirmed closer to that date, although Fiat said it will be consistent with the current model.



# LAND ROVER DISCOVERY SPORT

2.0-LITRE TD4 HSE  
E-CAPABILITY

Many positives and few negatives in our six-month run



## COSTS

**P11D price** £35,980  
**BIK tax band** 27%  
**Annual BIK tax (20%)** £1,943  
**Class 1A NIC** £1,341  
**Annual VED** £160 then £140  
**RV (4yr/80k)** £12,975/36%  
**Fuel cost (ppm)** 9.86  
**AFR (ppm)** 11  
**Running cost (ppm)** 43.39  
*\*Price as tested £46,420*

## SPEC

**Engine (cc)** 1,999  
**Power(PS)/Torque(Nm)** 150/380  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km)** 129  
**Manufacturer mpg** 57.7  
**Real-world mpg\*** 40.4  
**Test mpg** 37.2  
**Max speed (mph)** 112  
**0-62mph (sec)** 11  
**Current mileage** 10,800

*Running cost data supplied by  
KeeResources (4yr/80k)*

*\* Data supplied by Equi Index*

By Stephen Briers

**W**e've greatly enjoyed our time with the Discovery Sport. It is a competitive – make that compelling – model in the SUV sector, which combines comfort, a quality interior and excellent on-road manners with outstanding off-road capabilities.

Its main audience in fleet will be user-choosers and they will receive a car with 'go-anywhere' navigation, from muddy traverses to snow and ice. And every journey will take place in supreme comfort, with a cushioning driver seat offering excellent lumbar and side support.

The Discovery Sport has been a huge success for Land Rover. Last year, it sold almost 24,000, up 44% year-on-year (2015 was its launch year), of which 9,474 were to fleets.

Many buyers are new to the brand. From a fleet perspective, the appeal of adding it to the choice list includes a competitive running cost.

The past six months have been

largely fault-free. The only cost was to refill the AdBlue.

We've lived with the intermittent screen judder although a simple software fix would resolve this – no doubt Land Rover will soon sort it.

Positives include: reasonable 40mpg with longer journeys close to 50mpg; generous space for all occupants; quality interior and excellent sat-nav; comfortable ride with decent steering; off-road ability.

Negatives – there aren't many. However, a potential biggie is the electronically-operated boot lid. It has a lack of sensors to prevent it hitting something when you push the key fob to open. Several times, I have hit the boot release by mistake (it sits just below the door unlock) and hurriedly had to press the button again to leave it poised disturbingly close to a garage door or concrete post. Fortunately, we have stayed prang-free, though.

So, our conclusion: anyone in the market for an upper-sized SUV should consider the Discovery Sport. It's a real contender.

## FORD S-MAX 2.0 TDCI AWD TITANIUM



Our Ford S-Max is proving to be an exceptionally practical car

– as you would expect from a seven-seat people carrier – but disappointingly costly to fuel.

In normal use, it averages between 39mpg and 41mpg per tankful, compared to its official combined fuel economy of 52.3mpg.

While this may not seem too big a shortfall, I've recently returned to the S-Max after a spell in our long-term Vauxhall Zafira 1.6 CDTi, in which I achieved 54.5mpg.

The Ford's fuel consumption is undoubtedly hindered by its all-wheel drive system.

The equivalent front-wheel drive model has official fuel economy of 56.5mpg, with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions benefiting too; the standard model emits 129g/km compared to the AWD model's 139g/km.

**Andrew Ryan**

## RENAULT MEGANE 1.5DCI DYNAMIQUE S-NAV



A mid-morning trip to Heathrow gave the perfect opportunity to

see just how much mpg the Megane could return.

I engaged 'eco' mode which floods the cabin with green ambient lighting and replaces the digital rev counter with an eco-guide which encourages you to drive within a set rev limit.

Throttle response is weakened to discourage hard acceleration and the climate control reverts to a more efficient setting.

I shifted in sync with the gear change indicator and coasted as much as possible without holding up traffic by travelling under the limit.

The result was 63.2mpg – a reasonable increase from the 52mpg I've been getting. But I was disappointed that, despite all my efforts, I still failed to get anywhere near the official figure of 76.4mpg.

**Matt de Prez**

## TEST TIMELINE

Start ————— End

AT A GLANCE – THE REST OF OUR FLEET ([fleetnews.co.uk/car/reviews](http://fleetnews.co.uk/car/reviews) for more)



**Honda Civic**  
1.0VTEC  
Turbo SR



**Vauxhall Zafira**  
Tourer  
1.6CDTi  
SRI Nav



**Mazda6**  
2.2D 150  
SE-L Nav



**Fiat Tipo**  
1.6 Multijet

# PETER BONNEY

FLEET CONTROLLER AT THE SALVATION ARMY

Literally 'the last word', Bonney is set for retirement after 44 years, taking with him his tatty thesaurus and fond memories of a trip to see Dr Zhivago

My earliest memories associated with a car are laying across the back seat of my parents' cars on journeys in the mid-to-late 1950s. Also cleaning the condensation off the inside of the rear screen with a cloth – no seatbelts or heated rear screens in those days!

The book I would recommend to others is Roget's Thesaurus. I know there's a thesaurus online nowadays but I've had the same one on my desk for about 30 years, looking quite tatty but invaluable when trying not to be too repetitive when writing reports.

The advice I would give to my 18-year-old self is don't prevaricate or delay doing things because time is not your friend. At 18 there seems to be so much time but just watch it fly by.

I can't claim to have a favourite film of all time; I rarely go to the cinema. Dr Zhivago stands out. It was brilliant but I'm not sure if it's memorable for the film itself or my date for the evening!

Soon I'll be needing some new hobbies but currently I read a lot. I was given a Kindle as a present and it's brilliant. Also, I spent about a decade buying collectibles – now it's time to declutter.

If I were PM for a day I would let the despicable regimes we cosy up to – for trade and political expediency – know exactly what the majority of the British people think of them.

They only car in my dream garage would be a MK2 Jag 3.8. A car for everyday use and a ride-on mower would occupy the other spaces.

I'd like to be remembered as... well actually, I'd just be happy to be remembered by colleagues, peers and others I've known in a long career in fleet.

The pivotal moment in my life was having children. Apart from all the great things that come with being a parent, it was a real dampener for me on career risk-taking but I'm naturally quite cautious anyway.

**First fleet role** Office dogsbody at an embryo leasing company. That was in 1973 and I had no idea at the time that I would be 'in fleet' for the next 44 years.

**Career goals** I started working at The Sally in 1995 as the fleet controller and I retire in 2017, still in the role of fleet controller. It would be impossible for me to claim to have had a career path mapped out, apart perhaps from survival!

**Biggest achievement in business** With the next stage of my career being retirement and with no aspirations to become a fleet consultant, thankfully I don't have to try to come up with some impressive BS answer to this question, so my answer is simply: 'I was there and I took part.'

**Biggest career influence** It's not a person, it's the fleet press, *Fleet News* in particular. I can't be alone in this respect. Countless times over the years I've got a heads-up on some change affecting fleet, whether it's the market, legislation, taxation or whatever, seen how it will affect my organisation and taken mitigating steps that make me look good! Thanks for all the good work.

**Biggest mistake in business** No comment – some may not have been discovered yet!

**Leadership style** My direct reports over the years would probably say that it was lacking, but I like to believe that I managed to motivate them sufficiently to get the job done well.

**If I wasn't in fleet?** Historically, I've no idea as it's hard to remember a time when I had any aspirations in any other direction. For the future it's easy: retirement.

**Childhood ambition?** Thankfully, I never had a particular childhood ambition. If I had, it would be unlikely that I would have stumbled into fleet and had a mostly very enjoyable 44-year career.



**Next issue:** Marc Samuel, fleet sales operations manager at Honda



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