

Government workers in the city are put to the test



GREENER MOTORING: Advanced driving instructor Justin Pistana (third left), with GOEM workers, from left, Terry Evans, Bill Russell, Julie Hunt, Geoff Millner, Helen Ross, and Ian Porteous. They are learning to drive in a more fuel-efficient way.

By **BRYAN HENESEY**

COMMUTERS are being challenged to cut emissions and improve air quality in Nottingham city centre.

The Energy Saving Trust wants motorists to become smarter and more fuel efficient in an attempt to cut the city's carbon footprint.

The trust is offering motorists tips on how they can reduce the amount of fuel they use while driving in urban areas.

It has put around 100 workers at the Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM) to the test so far.

The office, in Talbot Street, is home to 11 Government departments – including staff who promote ways to meet the UK's target to cut carbon emissions by 80% by 2050.

Ian Porteous, climate change officer at GOEM, said: "We wanted to reduce our CO2 emissions and increase our fuel efficiency. It has been a very positive experience for everyone."

Each of the workers underwent an hour-long advanced driving lesson to learn ways of driving in a more fuel-efficient way.

Advice included planning ahead to avoid getting stuck in traffic jams, using the gearbox efficiently and not accelerating too harshly.

Helen Ross, whose work at GOEM involves the NHS and sustainable development in the East Midlands, said the techniques learnt could be passed on to Department of Health workers across the region.

She said: "If you think about how many people are employed by the NHS in the region, this is clearly something I can learn from and pass on."

"From a health perspective, if people are more eco-friendly when driving, they reduce fuel consumption and emissions, which helps to reduce the impact on air quality. If everyone learns the basics it could be quite significant."

Julie Hunt, 54, of Woodthorpe, a programme co-ordinator at GOEM, said: "I used to

Challenging drivers to be fuel-efficient

Eco-driving is put to the test

Evening Post reporter BRYAN HENESEY put his driving credentials to the test to find out just how eco-friendly a motorist can be.

IT was like any other rush-hour weekday morning in Nottingham – a stop-start affair.

But with the help of Justin Pistana, an instructor from advanced driver training company DriveSense, I found negotiating the city centre not only easier, but better for the environment.

As part of the test, I drove three laps of the same city centre loop.

The route took me from



the GOEM offices in Talbot Street, onto South Sherwood Street, Shakespeare Street and Mansfield Road.

At the Rock Cemetery I turned left onto Forest Road East before negotiating the speed bumps along North Sherwood Street.

A right turn onto the undulating Peel Street before passing the Arboretum along Clarendon Street and finishing up back on Talbot Street.

The first lap saw me average 31.9 miles per gallon (mpg) with an average speed of 11mph.

Mr Pistana said: "City centre driving is the worst-case scenario when it comes to using fuel efficiently. Every

time you press the clutch fuel is pumped into the engine."

He told me to try to plan ahead, to use my gearbox better and not to over-rev the engine.

After a second lap to put the theory to the test, I then gave it a third try and the final readings showed I'd improved my fuel efficiency to 40.9mpg.

Despite the "efficient" driving style feeling a tad slower, my average speed remained at 11mph.

Mr Pistana estimated that if I carried that kind of efficiency into my everyday driving, I could cut a quarter off my £80-a-month fuel bill – equating to a saving of around £500 over the course of a year.

work on the green issues team here and it seemed like a logical thing to do.

"As part of the Government, we need to be whiter than white and follow policies seeking to make the country greener."

Denise Marsdon, centre manager for the Energy Saving Trust advice centre East Midlands, said: "We are very happy to be working with GOEM to increase the fuel efficiency of their staff."

"The advice they receive will help them to reduce emissions and save money, not only for the business, but also for themselves at home."

The Energy Saving Trust estimates that fuel-efficient driving could help drivers reduce their carbon emissions by an average of 15%.

Ms Marsdon added: "If everyone took this advice, this would be equivalent to taking the same percentage of vehicles off the road, which would be a huge step in the fight against climate change."

For more information about eco-driving call the Energy Saving Trust on 0800 512 012 or visit www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Travel/Drivers/Smarter-driving.

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In brief

Take estate walk

POLICE and councillors will be holding a walk around the Coventry Road estate in Bulwell tomorrow.

They will meet at the Lathkill sheltered housing complex at 10am. They will be looking at ways to improve the area and hope residents will talk to them about any issues they have.

Representatives from Nottingham City Homes will also be on hand.

Enjoy wildlife stroll

A GUIDED walk is being held to show people the wildlife of Attenborough Nature Reserve. People are invited to take part in the event on Sunday, meeting at 10.30am at Attenborough Nature Centre. No booking is needed, but people are asked not to bring dogs. For more details, call 0115 972 1777.

Police hold surgery

POLICE will be holding a street surgery in Rufford Walk, in Bulwell, on Saturday. They will be outside the shops from 3pm to 4pm and will give people crime prevention advice and talk to them about any concerns they may have about the area.

Spring fair at hotel

A SPRING fair is being held at Nottingham's Hilton Hotel, in Milton Street, on Saturday. There will be cake and book stalls, face painting, tombola and food at the free event. It will be held between 10am and 3pm.

Revamp for library

WEST Bridgford Library is closed for three weeks and will reopen on Monday, April 26. The closure is to allow improvement works to be carried out, including the installation of self-service facilities and changes to the layout.

Height of fashion

A FASHION show by John Lewis takes place at 7pm tonight in Coddington Community Centre, Beckingham Road, Coddington. Admission is £5 or £3 for OAPs.

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