

SMTA Member Update 8 —29 May 2020

To our SMTA members,

When will I see you again!

No this is not me trying to break into song, as my family will attest the last thing you want to listen to is me singing! However the only thing I would like to be writing to you about today is some degree of progress with regards to a date for the opening of our vehicle showrooms, regrettably this not the case.



Below you will read the article that should have been published today in Scotland's Road Record the motoring pull-out within Friday's Daily Record one of Scotland's largest circulation papers. The message is simple, we are ready to open our showrooms for business now!

On Thursday afternoon I received yet another negative response to my request to the Scottish Government to allow the vehicle showrooms to open or to offer "click & collect" so we all have to wait until the SG make their minds up about how and when we are able to open, hopefully by informing the general public we may be able to influence their mindset when I make my next application for consideration (next week). The saga around rates and grants continues to role on with more and more cases coming to light every week, again we will continue to interact with the Scottish Government on this critical matter.

Sandy Burgess, SMTA Chief Executive

Daily Record Article published in Road Record 29 May 2020:

Scotland's automotive industry chiefs have called on the Holyrood Government to allow the immediate reopening of dealerships. Scottish Motor Trade Association chief executive Sandy Burgess told Road Record: "Our message to Ministers is that we're ready to go now. "All dealers have taken very robust measures and are all set for appointment-only opening, and we want to help kick-start the economy."

Mr Burgess has written to both the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, and the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture, Fiona Hyslop. He said the steps taken by SMTA members to make their premises as safe as possible for consumers and staff went way beyond anything customers would experience in a garden centre. He said that, unlike at garden centres, queues wouldn't be a problem for those buying a new car.

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In writing to the First Minister, Mr Burgess had foreseen Prime Minister Boris Johnson's announcement earlier this week that showrooms in England could open from June 1. He pointed out that car retailers were able to embrace proper levels of hygiene and safety and, as large, relatively open spaces, were well equipped to provide ample social distancing and control measures to protect both the workforce and general public.

Mr Burgess wrote: "Clearly, the workshops are already able to function and are very well equipped and prepared to provide a safe environment for all. "The controlled opening of car showrooms is a viable and logical extension of the route back to something resembling normality." He also asked the Scottish Government to allow a "click and collect" system such as that being operated in England. He said this would enable a backlog of cars waiting to be delivered to be shifted from the forecourts. He told Sturgeon: "We urgently need some opportunity to save the new and used car markets, and stimulate positive movement in a major part of the economy." And the SMTA boss pointed to the evidence of a pent-up desire in the car market, as commuters sought an alternative to using public transport. But he feared English traders being able to open up while their Scottish counterparts remained closed gave them an unfair advantage. He explained it would allow those south of the Border to sell used cars at relatively high prices because of demand. Meanwhile, Scots firms would be left sitting with stock that was devaluing, resulting in lower profit margins or even losses.

UK automotive retailers employ 590,000 people, who together work to drive a sector worth about £200billion. It's estimated that keeping showrooms shut has cost the Westminster Treasury £61million a day in lost taxes and furlough payments.

Mr Burgess concluded in his appeal to Ministers: "There is no doubt that this virus has taken its toll on many of our businesses to date and there will be many more affected before we are rid of it. "But the future damage can be minimised by having trust in the responsible actions of dealers across the country who have a passion for 'doing the right thing' and who simply want to get back running their showrooms." Asked about opening car showrooms and large shops at a briefing earlier this week, the First Minister said: "We will be looking at some of the finer detail. We want to get shops open as quickly as possible but it has to be safe. "Retail other than outdoor retail would be in phase two. I can't tell you right now exactly when phase two will begin but it is possible that aspects of phase two could start in Scotland around the middle of June, or slightly after that.

"We will continue to assess all of these things very carefully and very cautiously."

As of yesterday's First Minister's announcement we have no change to this on the near horizon.

ULEV Skills Baseline Study—final report

We have now received a copy of the complete study on Ultra Low Emission Vehicles carried out by Optimat which many of you may have participated in, please see below for links to read the findings along with an infographic

[Final study can be viewed here](#)

[Accompanying infographic can be viewed here](#)



**CORONAVIRUS
UPDATES**

DVSA UPDATES

Test Equipment Calibrations—Vehicle Testing Stations are permitted to continue testing with equipment that has expired calibration – as long as that equipment is believed to be functioning correctly. However, most emission test equipment ceases to function when calibration has expired and in such situations Testing must cease. DVSA and the Garage Equipment Association are aware of this problem. DVSA will be considering whether or not regulations can be temporarily relaxed and the Garage Equipment Association will be working with its members to try to restore normal calibration services as soon as possible.

New VTS Applications awaiting DVSA Assessment-DVSA have now issued safe working instructions for Vehicle Examiners to carry out new site assessments in a manner that enables compliance with social distancing requirements. If you are experiencing difficulty getting a site assessment for a new VTS please let us know.

MOT Tester Annual Training & Assessment-DVSA's extension to the MOT Tester Annual Training & Assessment deadline for 2019/20 has now ended. Access codes for 2020/21 Training & Assessment are now available from the SMTA. [click here for our brand new flyer and details how to book](#)



**CORONAVIRUS
UPDATES**

Out of furlough and back to work - FREE TEMPLATE

Some dealers have aptly adjusted to selling cars in the lockdown, taking on board the imposed restriction on trade and doing business distantly. Essential workers and all those who cannot work from home still need transport to commute, goods need to be delivered. There is, reassuringly, a demand to meet and there are jobs to be done. Dealers and garages may have to start to recalling their staff from furlough.

If you are in this fortunate position and need your staff to come out of furlough to do work, this certainly can be done. Just remember, the minimum furlough duration is 3 weeks. It is the employer's decision which employees remained furloughed and who is coming back to work. This decision must not be in any manner discriminatory. It is worth reminding your staff that on furlough ending, the normal terms of employment resume. [Click here for a template created by Lawgistics](#)

