

tread LINES

WINTER'S on the way and its looks like being another nightmare on the roads. Weather forecasters are predicting another hard winter, but even before the snow arrives the Local Government Association is suggesting that grit suppliers fear they can't meet demand from every local council. You have been warned.

RENAULT were the big winners in the key September 60 reg plate month — recording an extra 4,000 sales compared to 2009.



A FOUR-SEAT version of the Smart is coming back, above, based on the new Nissan Micra. Mercedes and Nissan have formed a small-car partnership, and Nissan will build the Smart for the US market to go on sale in early 2012. Sales of the original four-seater ended here in 2007, and the new version will be in Europe before 2013.

FIRST-CLASS DEAL FOR BSM SCHOOLS

VAUXHALL have clinched one of the best fleet deals in the country to supply the BSM (British School of Motoring) with a fleet of 3,250 Corsas over the next few years. The deal is one of the best shop windows for a manufacturer's car.

Fleet sales director Maurice Howkins said: "It's fantastic that we can help learner drivers."

While Vauxhall will be celebrating its bad news for Fiat, who have been supplying their 500 model to BSM, but the contract ends at the end of the year.



THE big question with new electric models is what resale values will be. Well, the new Nissan Leaf, above, will retain 40 per cent of its value after three years and 30,000 miles according to trade price experts CAP. That would mean £11,596 based on its full price of £28,990.

SKODA already have one of the best reputations for customer service, but they intend getting even better. Their Customer Promise package covers everything from booking a service to follow-up contacts with new car buyers.

TWO thirds of Brits have changed driving habits because of higher fuel prices, according to a moneysupermarket.com poll. Some 57 per cent cut the amount of time they spent driving, and eight per cent have stopped completely.

By PHIL LANNING, Motors Editor
GLASGOW is home to the world's greenest vehicle hire — and now the City Car Club is set to get BIGGER.

Launched just a fortnight ago, the Glasgow City Car Club has an all-hybrid fleet, split between the Toyota Prius and Auris. Both models deliver emissions of less than 100g/km, making it not only the greenest commercially operated car club in the UK, but across the world.

The system is simple — it's short-term car hire with designated parking bays. City Car Club started in Edinburgh before launching in Glasgow. Now MD James Finlayson, below, is targeting a third Scottish city. He said: "We are delighted to get Glasgow going because we had the most requests from that area."

"More than 60 people joined the club before we had even launched it. Since then we've had a steady flow. We've known since day one it would be a huge success. "Edinburgh has been fantastic for us. "We will look to see how Glasgow reacts and, depending on that, will look at a car club in Aberdeen in perhaps 12 months.

Experts

"The clubs have been received so well. Our business has increased by more than 90 per cent for the past three years — and our turnover is up £1million in the last 12 months. We'll hit around £3.5million by the end of 2010."

Finlayson admits the tough economic climate has boosted the firm over the past few months — they expect interest to increase as VAT goes up to 20 per cent.

According to the AA and thisismoney.co.uk, the total annual cost of running of a second-hand Vauxhall Corsa is £2,902. A City Car Club car doing the same mileage over the same period costs just £1,065 — saving £1,837.

With a City Car Club membership, you don't have insurance, tax, servicing, parking permits or even cleaning worries.

Independent research by vehicle hire experts Carplus shows that an average of 25 private cars are taken off the road for every club car. This is because new members often sell their own car or defer buying one. That means more than 12,500 cars have been taken off the road by the Car Club fleet.

On average City Cars emit 37 per cent less CO₂ than those they replace.



But would you sell you car and just use a City Car Club to get around? We gave the club a go last week to find out how simple it is to use. I phoned City Car and the yearly membership is £50. Five minutes later, including a conference call with the DVLA to confirm my licence details for insurance, I was a club member.

They sent out a PIN number by email then my membership card arrived in the post next day. Booking a car takes one more call to arrange time, location and length of hire. I got an email to confirm the booking.

Then you turn up, place your membership card over the receiver in the windscreen and that opens the car. In the glovebox is a small

City firm aim to clean up with more hybrid drives



Pictures by TOM FARMER



computer rather like a shop PIN machine, type in your number and the key unlocks from the machine. It costs £4.95 an hour to hire the Auris and £5.95 for the Prius. The downside is a lack of city centre designated parking spaces but the special parking bay near Byres Road is handy.

It is a useful system for people who live in cities and travel by public transport, but occasionally need a car to see relatives at the weekend who live in the country.

Nine cars are available in the west end of the city — for any time of the day or night. In the New Year they will add 11 cars available from the City Centre and South Side. A van will also be added.

The City Car Club in Edinburgh has almost 4,000 members and a fleet of 100 cars located in and around the city centre and at the airport. Members have access to cars in all other cities — there are 13 in England.

Gary Bell, 50, from Edinburgh, reckons the

HIRE LOVE



first drive TOYOTA AURIS HYBRID

THE Auris Hybrid is a classy way to get about — and it's just £5 an hour in the City Car Club.

But it's also a vital car for Toyota after their nightmare year of having to recall eight million cars across the world due to safety problems.

The Auris Hybrid is the first petrol/electric hybrid model to be made in Europe — it's being built at

Burnaston near Derby. It's a significant car because it's the first affordable hybrid mainstream family hatchback customers at under £19,000.

After a first test-drive, I'm equally convinced they have a car that is an environmentally-friendly breakthrough for family motoring — one that is instantly relevant. The hybrid looks almost identical to the standard Auris, but comes with a handful of subtle design tweaks.

Serious

But the real breakthrough is what has happened under the skin. The Auris gets the same 1.8-litre engine and electric motor from the Prius. The engine is also built in the UK.

The car has the dream ticket of 74mpg and the same performance as a 2-litre diesel engine.

Plus it has the ability to run for 15 miles on pure electric which means 89g/km or 93g/km of CO₂ emissions, depending on the wheel options.

OK, the 74mpg is from perfect driving conditions and with a very light right foot, but 60mpg will be easily achievable. That's a serious saving with the rising price of petrol. The other plus is that the Auris

Hybrid is a nice drive, with well-balanced steering, a good comfortable ride and it feels equally competent in the city or on motorways.

There are four driving modes including ECO, Electric and Power that are all fairly self-explanatory and there are various diagrams that flash on the screen to tell you how you are driving and how much power you are using.

From start-up and up to speeds of 31mph in normal mode, the Auris runs automatically and silently on its electric motor.

The petrol engine cuts in automatically if the system thinks that extra power is needed.

Inside, the hybrid gets the same trim and layout improvements as the facelifted 2010 model, but the driver's main instrument panel sees the tachometer replaced by the ECO drive Assist monitor.

The centre panel includes additional hybrid info such as energy power flow and ECO drive figures, plus a hybrid blue push-button start control switch.

The interior is smartly finished in dark grey with a blue check cloth upholstery just for the hybrid — leather and Alcantara seats are an option.

This Auris is a funky way to go to hybrid motoring. And even better for £5 an hour!



STEP 1 Wave pin card over the car transponder



STEP 2 Put in PIN number and that unlocks the car key



STEP 3 Drive off and enjoy cut-price motoring

2010 Fiat 500
1.2 Pop 3 Dr



Road Tax only £30

UP TO 65.7 MPG

from **£7988**

10 Nissan Pixo
1.0 Visia 5 Dr



save **£1155** on cost new

from **£5995**

Arnold Clark .com

- EDINBURGH BANKHEAD DR, SIGHTHILL ☎ 0844 815 4147
- BROXBURN 70 WEST MAIN ST ☎ 0844 815 4087
- KIRKCALDY CARBERRY RD ☎ 0844 815 4229
- DUNFERMLINE HALBEATH RD ☎ 0844 815 4128
- FALKIRK FALKIRK RD ☎ 0844 815 4168

Arnold Clark .com

- STIRLING KERSE RD ☎ 0844 856 3074
- PERTH DUNKELD RD ☎ 0844 844 7171
- DUNDEE KINGSWAY EAST ☎ 0844 844 6913
- LIVINGSTON C'DEAN CENTRE DEANS ☎ 0844 499 0968

NISSAN

tread LINES

BMW have held on to their Green Fleet Manufacturer of the Year title. Beemer were recognised, for the third year in a row, as the car firm that had shown the greatest improvements in emissions, had expanded their range of low-emission vehicles or offered alternative fuel vehicles to customers.

Angela Pisanu, Editor of Green Fleet, said: "BMW was continued to raise the bar for class-leading reductions in emissions while maintaining exceptional vehicle performance."



THIS is the bold new Ford Ranger pick-up, which was revealed at the Sydney Motor Show last week. Set to be sold in a staggering 180 markets, the new Ranger will be available in three different cab body styles, 4x2 and 4x4 drivetrains, two ride heights and four equipment levels when it goes on sale here in 2012.

CLEAN UP FOR CASH ON SALES

MOTORISTS are losing up to £500 when it comes to selling their car, research by Manheim Auctions has shown.

One in ten motorists fail to prepare their motor before they sell, and with every dent, scratch and scuff translating into cold

hard cash, sellers will find their car is worth less than they thought.

For example, damage to alloys could reduce the value by as much as £150 a wheel and a damaged windscreen can devalue a car by between £100 to £300.



VW have revealed that prices for their new Passat, which went on sale yesterday. They'll start at £18,470 for the saloon, above, and £19,745 for the Estate. The 1.6-litre TDI 105bhp beats the economy of the outgoing BlueMotion model with 65.7mpg and emissions of 114g/km.

POP babe Katy Perry and Twilight heart-throb Robert Pattinson have come top in a poll to find the UK's ultimate passengers.

Katy in a Lamborghini Gallardo was top totty for Britain's male drivers in the survey, by MPH the Prestige & Performance Motor Show. Pattinson in a Ferrari 458 was the best cruising companion for the girls. The show is at London's Earls Court (November 4-7) and Birmingham's NEC (November 11-14). Tickets are at mphshow.co.uk or call 0871 230 5588.