

CLASSIC SCENE



October 2020



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Classic Scene is published on the
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Cover Picture

Back to the Future. Some of the cars
parked at the Dingwall Mart at the
beginning of the Fortrose and Rose-
markie Classic Car Show's substitute
run.

Welcome to the October Newsletter

September was a good month for us. With the Black Isle 50 drive in place of the Fortrose and Rosemarkie Classic Car Show and the Thursday night club run we were able to go on two lengthy organised runs. The gathering at the Dingwall Mart before the BI50 was like a wee private car show and there were some very interesting vehicles there to be enjoyed.

With the nights drawing in that's the end of evening runs and with the likely increase in Covid related restrictions it looks like its going to be difficult to arrange club visits, or group activities. As always, your committee will do it's best.

The next club night is on Thursday the 1st October which will be a Zoom meeting. More on that later in this newsletter. I hadn't realised the newsletter deadline was so soon (I thought I had another week!) so I'm currently writing this on the observation deck of the Stornoway - Ullapool ferry wearing a facemask, travelling back from a work trip in a Force 7 near gale.

As Trish alludes in her bitty on the next page, I'm afraid the Beetle is feeling poorly, lacking in fluids of the petrol sort. This started on the BI50 with a little roadside rest to recover, but sadly this condition has become worse. Again more on that elsewhere in this newsletter.

One of your editors cars isn't in his garage at all. The Ford Sierra XR4x4 is at a body shop near Kiltarlity (known to several members) where it is getting a bit of a paint refresh. The original paint was very tired and although a solid car there were a few rust er, blemishes and lots of dents. I'm hoping it will look spectacular when I get it back. If I'm lacking on what us writers call user generated content, there may be photographs next month. If you don't like Fords, Sierras or both, get writing!

Meanwhile back at the garage I have been working on the Beetle's fuel issue. I haven't had time to give it the attention it deserves though I have all sorts of theories as to what's gone wrong. It's time to get down to some proper diagnostics when I get some time. Maybe that will be an upside to the new lockdown?

In other news the T5 van is now drivable after finally fixing the ABS cable and bleeding the ABS pump. The front end which had been removed for access seems to have gone back on fairly easily. Fortunately the fixings were all in little zip-loc bags, mostly labelled. The engine servicing seems to have had the desired affect and it runs a lot better. The next job is the bodywork which has been badly scraped and dented well, everywhere. As I've said before I plan to turn it into a wee camper but it seems campervans are now seen as the spawn of Satan so maybe some commercial livery will help disguise it. Or maybe a Scooby Doo Mystery Machine vinyl wrap? I'll take suggestions at this months Zoom meeting.

Your editor.

Chairs Bitty

As I mentioned I was not able to make it to the last drive of this season in September, but from stories at our Committee meeting, it was a very scenic drive. Apparently the lit up rigs in the Cromarty Firth put on a bit of a display. Although I wasn't there, I can vouch for that. We stayed in the Invergordon area many years ago and the line up of many rigs in the firth during the winter months was quite picturesque. There was also a hint in the committee meeting about one of our members having a spot of carburettor problems. I hope there is an article about that this month, so I can read up on what I've missed out on.



Whilst we were away we thought that we would see some interesting cars out and about. You know, different area, different sights, which co-incidentally was not far from Arbroath. A little disappointing, we did not see an awful lot in the way of cars, unless you count the farmyard littered with Mercedes cars just down the road from where we stayed. Scrappers by the look of it. On the campsite we had a sad person with rubbish taste, 1) towing a caravan with a Dodge truck and 2) with a picture of certain American president slathered all over the Dodge, fortunately usually parking in a way to make sure that this "advertising" was not visible.

Amazingly we saw 5 trains on the way home, on the line between Perth and Inverness. We've been driving that road for years and are lucky to even see a single train. To see 5 – we're speechless. After we came home an acquaintance mentioned that a large number of Ferrari's were doing the NC. Typical isn't it?

On a trip like this you usually see some silly drivers. This trip was no exception with an idiot doing a u-turn at the start of a dual carriage way. We'd parked up and were having our lunch when this person drove through the layby and lined up on the exit in a very curious fashion. "Is he really...?" I thought to myself. Yes he was. At least he had the sense to wait until traffic on our side of the road cleared. Not bothering with a gap on the other side, merely speeding up on the hatched area and forcing his way in.

Not much happening in our garden at the moment. We are in a bit of a quiet period before the pruning and digging starts in the autumn. Having been away for a week meant that our plants had to fend for themselves for a few days outside. The courgettes survived, but it must have been a dry week at home as they did look a bit poorly when we got back. They are starting to perk up, but being outside, the slugs/snails are taking an interest too.

The committee had a zoom meeting to discuss our options for the winter months. Since that meeting the rules on meeting up with others have changed yet again, so some of our ideas will need a bit of adjusting. Originally we hoped that in October we may be able to meet up, if with some social distancing and all the rules that come with that. However, with the additional restrictions that have since come in, the October meet is not going to be in person as originally intended, but an online meeting. Suggestions for topics are: winter plans for our cars; what is better, petrol, battery or hydrogen; round robin of tall stories. Details of how to join this meeting will be elsewhere in the magazine.

See you there.

Trish.



Fortrose And Rosemarkie Classic Car Drive Saturday 29th August



I set off in good time for the pre-drive gathering at the Dingwall Mart and followed this trio of MG's up the road from Tore Services. They looked great fun, with Lorraine's hair streaming out behind her sheepskin jacket.

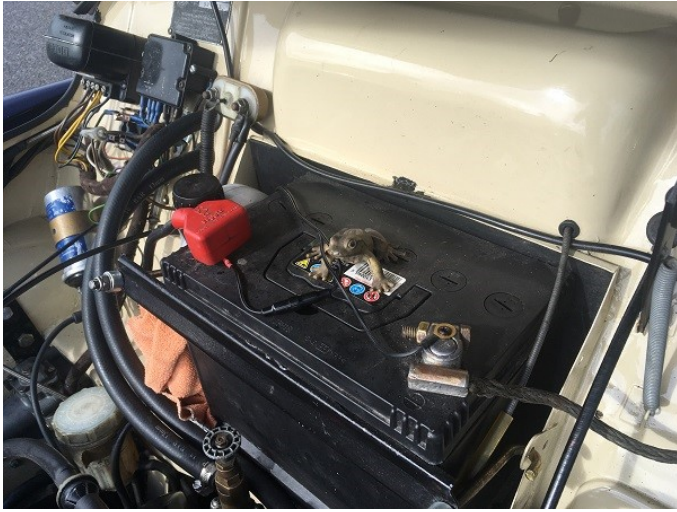


The TD's came up from the central belt and they went on their own drive after the mart. Although the mart looks fairly sparse in the pictures it felt busy. The cars were



just well spread out - which is a good thing for social distancing. The mandatory covid register had just over 100 vehicles on it which is quite impressive.

I did literally bump into John Mackenzie while stepping back to frame up this picture of High Finney's repainted van. It was looking good. The rear door displays are shown on the front cover of this issue.



I see Hugh has a frog on his battery. Handy for a jump start?



Over in Escort corner was this RS1800 which is something special. It's basically a Mexico but with a Cosworth Competition BDA (Belt Drive Series A) engine though this could be a BDE - I get vague about the specifics. These were phenomenal competition engines that could be tuned to give huge reliable power and rally success. I spoke to a pal and he thinks this car is worth about £60k!



This Corvette Stingray made an impressive noise as you would imagine. It looked like it had straight through side pipes connected to its 7 litre V8 engine. It was an impressive piece of petrol guzzling Americana.

This perfect 'Back to the Future' replica DMC Delorean got a lot of attention. I overheard one 40 something saying, "That's my childhood, right there." The car was built in Evanton during lockdown and this was its first trip out. It even had a hoverboard and Grays Sports Almanac inside. On questioning about the tiewraps, I was told they are exactly the right type size and colour! And if you think it's a shame to deface a Delorean in this way everything is completely removable. So it may not be everyone's cup of tea but you have to admire the extreme attention to accuracy and detail.



I learned there is a 'Back to the Future 3' and it's maybe the best film of them all!

There were many other lovely cars and here's a wee gallery of photograph's I took before the off.



I can't but help but think of Cowley and CI5 when I see this Granada and I like the symmetry behind this picture of Alan's Lancia Fulvia.



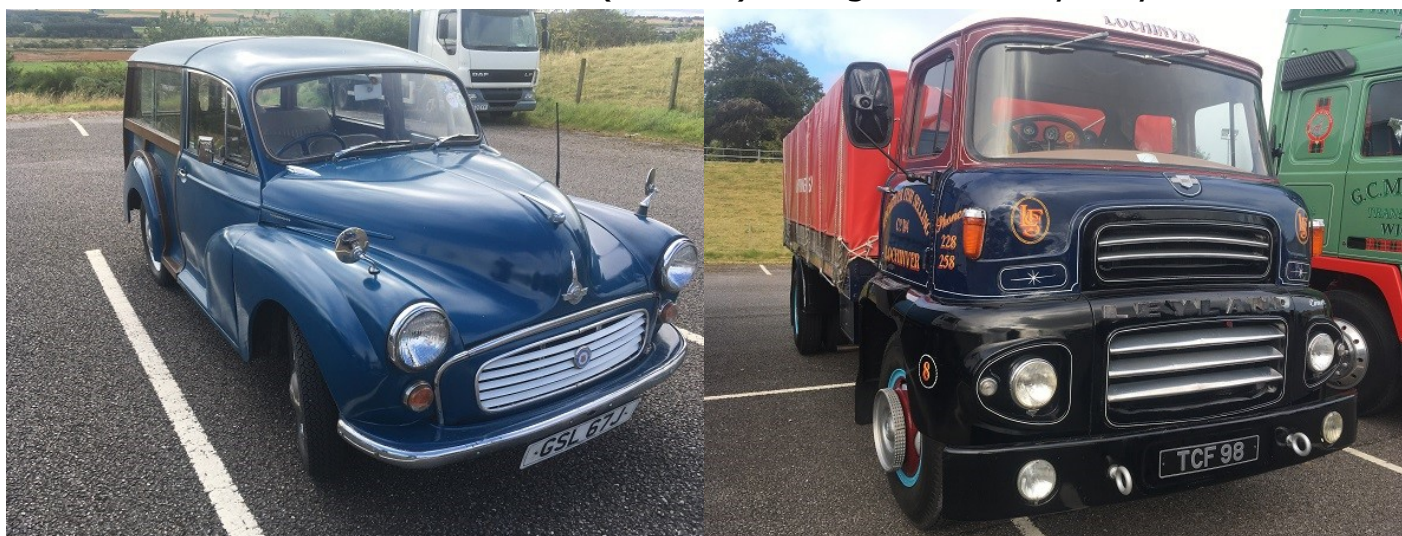
Classic cars. It's all about the shapes as this Hillman Minx Californian and Bristol show.



This late 1970's Volkswagen Passat has a lovely beige interior.



Two Volvo Amazon's in their Prime (Geddit?) Though technically they are 123GT's.



Willie's new Moggie and a Leyland fish lorry with no power steering. And there



were even more cars to admire before we set off on the drive.



The cars left in dribs and drabs and near the back, I led Callum and his Burton out of the car park. I have to confess the drive was a bit disappointing to begin with as there were no Classics in front and just Callum's Burton behind, which (no offence) wasn't a new experience. Fortunately the lorries had set off before us so we soon caught up with the queue of classics at the Cromarty bridge.

On arriving in Cromarty we had a lovely coffee at Slaughterhouse Coffee down by the slipway. I can highly recommend it. We met up with the Volvo gang who were going on a run to Ullapool and had a wee natter.

We set off before them aiming for the finish at North Kessock Pier but fate or mechanical gods were going to intervene. As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter the Beetle broke down, coughing and spluttering like Herbie in a huff. I managed to park off the road and a superficial engine inspection didn't reveal anything obvious. I tried starting her again and she fired up perfectly. Hmm. Meanwhile a convoy of Volvo's passed making me feel a little bit ashamed. Callum and his Burton had come back to assist so I had company and the VW drove perfectly all the way though Rosemarkie, Fortrose, Munlochy, Drumsittal and all the way to North Kessock, where we met up with the tail end of the classics gathering there. As an aside I heard that two of the Volvo's broke down on their run, which made me feel a little bit better. Is that bad of me?

So in summary, was it a good day? It gets a firm yes from me. True, we couldn't have the static show in Fortrose but we did effectively have a private show at the Mart and a good run. The confirmation of success was that a hundred vehicles turned out and made it a special event. We must thank the organiser's who made the best of a difficult year, and managed to get us out in our classics when most other shows nationwide were simply cancelled. Well done.

Remembering Tommy Knox.

It was with great sadness, this week, that we learned our friend, long-standing Classic Car enthusiast, Tommy Knox had died.

I will always remember him fondly for waving me over at many a local Car Show, to have a chat and ask after my family, while sat next to his lovely Rover P6. I was even lucky enough to enjoy a good run in his Rover one year, when he rescued me from a Dunrobin Rally and gave me a lift all the way home to Inverness after my Reliant Scimitar broke down and had to get recovered to Brora for fixing.

More recently, I would frequently come across Tommy, emblazoned in Hi-Vis, slowly cycling his E-Bike around Inverness in his daily effort to stay fit. A toot of the horn and a shout of his name would always get a wave.

Tommy was also happier than most to have a chat about his car over the microphone at the Inverness Classic Car Show, which made my job a lot easier when trying to interview the drivers parked on the High Street in order to entertain the waiting crowds before the Parade.

He will be greatly missed and our thoughts are with his family and close friends at this difficult time.

Miles.

Three Firths Run - September Club Night



So at 7.30pm there were nine, brightly coloured motors lined up outside PC World, looking not unlike a spilled packet of Skittles, ready for the HCMC "3 Firths Run." At Bryan's request, I led off in my Escort Van and headed out onto the old A9, trying to keep a reasonable pace so that everyone could keep up.

We trundled around our first Firth, as far as Beaulieu itself, where I began to suspect that all was not well as I could only see six cars following me. Then my phone pinged with a message, so I pulled into a lay-by while gesticulating to Bryan that we should stop...

...Bryan carried on, taking the others with him, including Richard in his Opel Senator who had coincidentally been waiting for us in the exact lay-by that I had paused in.

It transpired that Calum's Beetle had refused to leave the car park and that Graeme and Callum had stayed behind to ensure that he was appropriately humiliated for the Bug's failure to proceed, sorry, assist him and make sure that he and his passengers made it home safely! Apparently.

Having established that we shouldn't wait for them, Bryan must be psychic, I then set off in hot pursuit of the rest of the pack. This didn't take long because, as previously mentioned, Richard had joined us and I came up behind his Senator sedately approaching Conon Bridge and could see the others not too far ahead.

Through Dingwall we went next and then after taking the old A9 up to Evanton, doubled back on ourselves, joining the Southbound A9 briefly to cross our second firth, via the Cromarty Bridge and turn left onto the Black Isle.

I was then briefly entertained by Dan in his 1275 Mini, seeing how long he could leave his indicator on for. He didn't cancel it as we turned off the A9 and managed a good two or three miles until we turned left again at Munlochy, before stopping it from flashing. Well it amused me.

Dan, who turned out to live in Drumnadrochit, two doors down from John in the green 2CV Bamboo, had joined us for the run after seeing our Facebook Post about the run. The power of Social Media.

Now in darkness, the route down the north side of the Black Isle afforded us a spectacular view of the light show being put on by the Oil Platforms moored in the Cromarty Firth plus Alness and Invergordon. I would highly recommend a trip down there after dark to see it. Not quite the Aurora Borealis but still very pretty. As it was now getting late, Bryan halted us just shy of Cromarty and after checking with a few of the drivers up front, decided to take the shorter route over the top, so we set off again in convoy.

I followed the Opel Senator that was following the MG Midget, I followed them over to Rosemarkie. I followed them into Rosemarkie. I followed them into the car park in Rosemarkie. I then reversed out of the car park after a voiced in the dark shouted "It's OK, he's just going for a pee!"

After this I caught up the Mini following Mike in his wee Fiat 500 and enjoyed a smashing little chase all the way out to the Tore roundabout where Mike then continued West.

Once on the A9 dual carriageway, I thought I'd continue the run South with Dan but without a Fiat 500 to hold the 1275 Mini up, he left me in his dust and was never to be seen again. I couldn't keep up with him, even after my TerraClean treatment at Bitz of Nairn last year, so I crossed the Kessock Bridge alone and returned home to find out what had happened to Calum, Callum and Graeme but I'll let one of them tell you all about that.

Miles



If only everything in life was as reliable as a VW

Well what can I say after a hiccup on the Black Isle 50 run mentioned earlier in this newsletter, I gave the Beetles carburettor a wee service, and also did the plugs and points. Nothing looked much amiss. I went for a local drive and she drove perfectly but with any intermittent problem and no hard evidence there's



always that element of doubt .

Anyway I decided to go out on the three firths club night drive and Mrs editor and our two Labradors decided they would like to come too. No problem says I ignoring the little voice from the mechanic in my head.

On arrival at PC World the car started coughing and spluttering. "That sounds a bit rough," said someone, and it did. So we did our socially distanced socialising and it was past time to leave. I thought I would just nurse the Beetle home. "Ach it'll be alright," said another someone. " I don't think I'm even going to get out of the car park," says I. Callum and Graeme volunteered to follow me round the firth just in case. Eight other cars fired up there engines. Poppy the Beetle spluttered and died. Six cars headed off on the run.

Mrs Editor and the dogs weren't happy as like normal people they were a bit distressed at being broken down. Not me! I'm loving it. Out came the tool bag and lifting the lid off the Solex carb showed the problem. No fuel in the float chamber. I checked the pump output which poured petrol into a fuel can on cranking and there was pressure in the fuel pipe to the carb, so I thought, it must be that needle valve. Callum and Graeme were assisting from behind masks and there wasn't too much mocking. I cleaned out the needle valve as best I could, reassembled and we were off!

Callum set off on his own run and Graeme kindly volunteered to follow me home just in case. We were going well until the summit of the Kessock Bridge, then cough, splutter and the engine died again. I just managed to get to a lay-by for safety but after a moments rest I could start the engine again. This time we got almost as far as the North Kessock junction, getting slower and slower with Graham behind with his Hazard lights on. We just made it over a wee rise then free-wheeled all the way round a roundabout to a nice big parking area.

Mrs Editor was not enjoying the drama and danger so all masked up we got a lift home and I picked up a tow rope. Graeme and I returned to give the Beetle a very smooth 25mph tow home. In turns out that cruise control is a useful towing aide. Who knew?

Safe home thanks to Mr Bremner and the drama was over. I was fairly sure it was the needle valve again, though Mr Beveridge suspects the fuel pump as it wasn't squirting out fuel as forcefully as he expected. He could well be right.

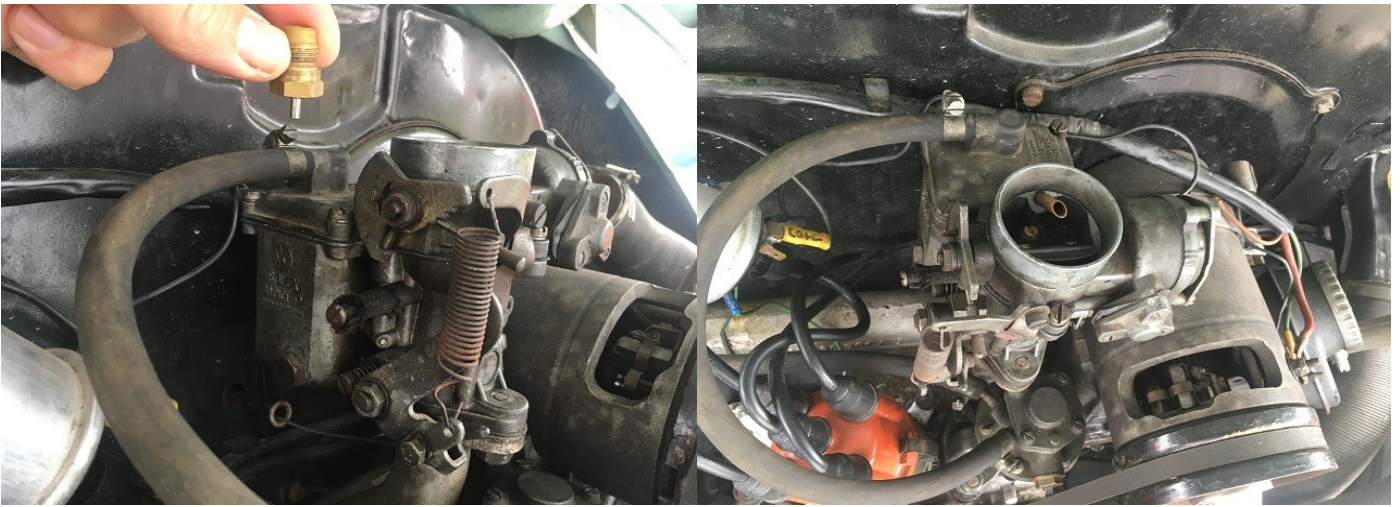
Days later in the garage I had the carb apart again. This time I gave the needle valve a better clean with carb cleaner and compressed air. I also cleaned out the other jets and the carb innards. There were no obvious signs of a problem. I reassembled it and left the car idling for a while. Still no problems. I drove around locally. No problems. I went on my own three firths drive no problem. ... until the Cromarty Bridge. You've guessed it. Cough. Splutter. Stop. I just managed to get to the end of the bridge and two wheels up on the verge. Something about blocking the traffic and making the BBC News for the Highlands and Islands was unappealing to me. After a wee wait I managed to get enough 'go' to get right off the road and try a repair. Again there's no petrol in the float chamber. I blew out the

needle valve with WD40, reassembled everything and off it went. Not wanting to risk the A9, I went home via Culbokie which was just as well. I had two more breakdowns but by now I had now discovered a gentle tap on the side of the carburettor got me going again. I regularly cycle on these back roads, and a bit I can freewheel down at 26mph on a bike I can do at 40mph in a Beetle in neutral.

As you can imagine, I was a bit disappointed in my skills but I decided to have another go. Maybe other Callum was right, so I swapped out the fuel pump and now the engine won't start at all. That's progress. It's no longer an intermittent fault. I have a few thoughts and I need to go back to first principles when I get time.

One thing is for certain. Mrs Editor won't want to come on any more club runs.

Calum



Out and About



The spot of the week has to be this Morris seen by our regular out and abouter, Jim Mackay. "The Morris 8 is new to the area as the owner drove down to deepest England-shire and trailered it behind his campervan. He was taking it for a run to blow off the cobwebs so to speak. It sounded good and the car is in very good usable condition. He knows about our club so we may see more of him - used to work at Pedigree Cars." Jim.

More Out and About



"The Riley Pathfinder is very scarce. The Pathfinder was the last of the Rileys with a Riley engine which was the 2.4 twin overhead cam turning out a very healthy 110 bhp. BMC then stuck in the C series 6 cylinder which was heavier and less powerful.

The owner of the Pathfinder bought a new spade fuse for the inline fuse on the ignition. The inline block had fallen apart so he just connected the new fuse directly with the two spade ends hanging down around the steering column. The engine fired up, he engaged gear using the floor mounted gearstick on the right and off he went. It was like something my father would have done in the fifties. Cheers Jim."



Also spotted by Jim, a VW Corrado, a Rover 418 estate, unusual these days and an MGBGT that looks as though it has been there for some time.



Your editor spotted this Daimler Dart and MG Midget in Ullapool and this sporty Imp from the Highland Car Club near his house. It could be a Hillman Californian, a Sunbeam Stiletto or a Singer Chamois. I never could get my head round the badge engineered variants.

LOCAL EVENTS

As that's pretty much then end of the car show season and coronavirus restrictions start to come back, there aren't many events to report.

October Club Zoom Meeting

The proposed October Club Night at the Old North Inn on the 1st October has been replaced with an online Zoom meeting. This is because of the Covid 6/2 rules making a gathering impractical.

We (the committee) know a Zoom meeting isn't ideal, but it does give members from further away the chance to join in, and it looks like the AGM may be a Zoom meeting too, so it could be good practice.

The meeting will be hosted by me, your editor, Calum. (No, the other Calum). The format will be a round robin of everyone looking for a short update on their Classic lives. A trip, work done, ambitious work planned for the winter, an interesting breakdown? Some banter or even abuse if it's entertaining. BYOB.

I have tried to email the link for the zoom meeting to everyone on the club mailing list, though this doesn't appear to work perfectly. I will also try to remember to include the link in the newsletter email. Perhaps you can even cut and paste this link into a browser...

[https://bbc.zoom.us/j/91749103556?
pwd=WWpGcGVlNGovSmcvaFp0VFEycFpsdz09](https://bbc.zoom.us/j/91749103556?pwd=WWpGcGVlNGovSmcvaFp0VFEycFpsdz09)

You shouldn't need this info, but just in case, or for advanced users... Meeting ID: 917 4910 3556 Passcode: 093252

For those who aren't familiar with Zoom here's a wee starter

<https://takeclimateaction.uk/resources/how-join-zoom-meeting-first-time>