

AMM

AWARDS: 2026

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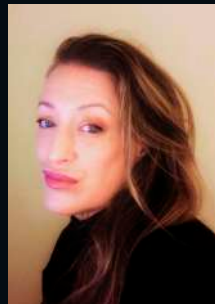
AM JUDGING PANEL



Christopher Macgowan
OBE,
chairman of the judges



Tim Rose,
editor, AM



Aimée Turner,
deputy editor, AM



Sue Robinson,
chief executive, NFDA



Steve Young,
managing director,
International Car
Distribution Programme



Professor Jim Saker, director of the Centre for Automotive Management, Loughborough University



Julia Muir, founder, Automotive 30% Club and chief executive, Gaia Innovation



Sally Fyffe, senior commercial and marketing leader



Paul Bentley, director, AutoSavvy



Richard Siney, managing director, Richard Siney Consulting



Chris Wiseman, founder, Wiseman Automotive Insights



I felt like I was swimming against the current. It was exhausting.

My life felt completely overwhelming. I'd recently been appointed as a director of our family business and I was trying to be a working mum who was also at all the school concerts, a decent wife and someone who occasionally knew what was edible in the fridge.

From the first conversation with the team at Ben, something shifted. There was no judgment. No feeling that I had to explain myself or justify how I felt. Getting support didn't suddenly make life easy. But it made it clearer. Calmer.

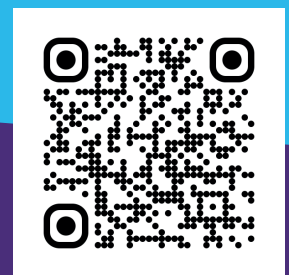
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WELCOME

Welcome to our special report which celebrates all the winners and finalists in the 2026 AM Awards. Our recent ceremony at London's Park Plaza Westminster Bridge Hotel was an exciting evening of inspiration as the talented and successful companies in this industry were rewarded for their hard work and innovation. Celebrity host Joel Dommett ensured that the awards entrants, sponsors and table hosts alike left at the end of the night with smiles and bleary eyes.


At *Automotive Management* we are proud to recognise and champion the achievements of businesses in the UK motor retail sector.

On the pages overleaf are inspiring examples of sales and aftersales strategies, processes driving superb levels of customer experience, business cultures which embrace and encourage high performance, and people driving their business to outperform the norm by far.

While the new and used car markets – and the economy as a whole – are not growing as strongly as many would like, motor retailers are knuckling down. AM Awards winners are committing themselves to resolving the issues they face, doing the best job possible.

Our thanks to all who entered the AM Awards this year, and to our panel of judges for their time and diligence in selecting the strongest submissions.

Read on the following pages why these winners deserve their praise.



Sign up at AM-online to keep up to date with the latest news, interviews and insights in the UK motor retail industry.

Our thanks to
AM Awards auditor

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NFDA chief executive Sue Robinson picked up the trophy from Ian Simpson (right), director of award sponsors Premia Solutions. Looking on is host for the evening comedian Joel Dommett and AM editor Tim Rose

BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

Winner: Sue Robinson, chief executive, NFDA

Our winner of the Business Leader of the Year category has collected this award before – in 2010.

At that time she had helped to shape some of the most critical strategies in support of the UK's motor retail industry. As the country reeled from the impact of the 2008 global financial crisis she and the then Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) chief executive Paul Everitt campaigned endlessly to ensure that hundreds of thousands of jobs within the sector were preserved through the nationwide scrappage scheme.

Now she has done it again. This time it was motor finance commission appeal cases at the Supreme Court last year which posed the greatest potential

threat in decades to motor retailers' viability and business model. The appellants suggested that dealers should put the car buyer's interests above their own commercial interests, and had been 'bribed' by finance companies for years.

Robinson and her team at the National Franchised Dealers Association (NFDA) knew that this was an exceptional instance, and one which required an exceptional strategy to ensure that the courts fully appreciated the role of dealerships and brokers in the motor finance sector.

She and her NFDA team secured the buy-in of dealer group members. They then secured the services of leading barristers Jonathan Kirk KC and Richard Roberts to represent the trade organisation

in the proceedings, ensuring that the dealers' perspective was considered.

In a crucial decision, the NFDA gained Supreme Court permission to intervene at the appeals. Only NFDA and the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) received such permission. Applications by Consumer Voice & Others, the Finance and Leasing Association and HM Treasury were refused.

Influenced by the arguments forwarded by the NFDA's barristers, Lord Reed rejected the bribery claims, and defined that dealers can rightly consider their own interests when brokering motor finance.

Under Robinson's leadership, in yet another moment of significant threat to motor retailers, she ensured that the NFDA protected its members.

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1. SimilarWeb UK traffic report for cargurus.co.uk and pistonheads.com 2. Market Probe International blinded survey of 300 UK automobile dealers, April 2025. Based on 273 dealers who pay for at least 2 listing providers



Rob Wood, managing director, Beechwood Mazda Derby (left) collected the trophy from Barney Dobbs, key account manager at award sponsors Gtechniq

DEALER PRINCIPAL/GENERAL MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Winner: Rob Wood, managing director, Beechwood Mazda Derby

Rob Wood's leadership at Beechwood Mazda has delivered results across every area this category is meant to recognise: commercial performance, customer satisfaction, team development and long-term business improvement.

He won this award with a unanimous vote and what stood out for the judges was the strength of the turnaround under his leadership.

Turnover grew roughly 17% from 2023 to 2024 and was forecast to rise a further 32% in 2025. Operating profit has also moved steadily upwards, while profit before tax was projected to make a major leap in 2025.

These results underline how being a great dealer principal isn't just about maintaining a business, but materially strengthening it.

The AM Award judges were equally impressed by Wood's bold leadership.

Five years ago, Wood identified that the dealership had become too comfortable and acted on an external review that recommended significant management change.

Many leaders would have avoided such a difficult intervention. Instead, he reshaped the senior team, reset expectations and created the platform for a new phase of performance.

That willingness to take uncomfortable decisions, while keeping the business stable, is a hallmark of high-level leadership.

The dealership's customer metrics also reinforce the case. Sales CSI hit 100 in both 2023 and 2025, while aftersales improved from 85 to 92 over the period. Around 76% of sales customers return and 79% come back for servicing, which demonstrates that this is a business built on trust rather than one-off transactions.

Online reputation is equally strong, with more than 1,200 five-star reviews and a 97% recommendation rate. Wood is personally involved in delivering that experience, responding directly to reviews, comments and out-of-hours enquiries.

Operationally, the business shows similar discipline. Used cars average around 31 days in stock, with stock turn of 12 to 14 times a year and margins described as strong. In aftersales, utilisation stands at 95%, efficiency at 108% and first-time fix at 97%. Complaint levels are extremely low and resolved within 48 hours.

Wood has also built an admirable culture within the business. Staff retention is around 92%, average tenure is 12 years, and apprentices have all moved into full-time roles. This is the picture of a dealer principal whose leadership is visible, decisive and deeply effective.

SHORTLISTED

■ Malcolm Beattie, owner and director, MB Motors

■ Rob Wood, managing director, Beechwood Mazda Derby

■ Simon Dando, dealer principal, Fish Brothers Nissan

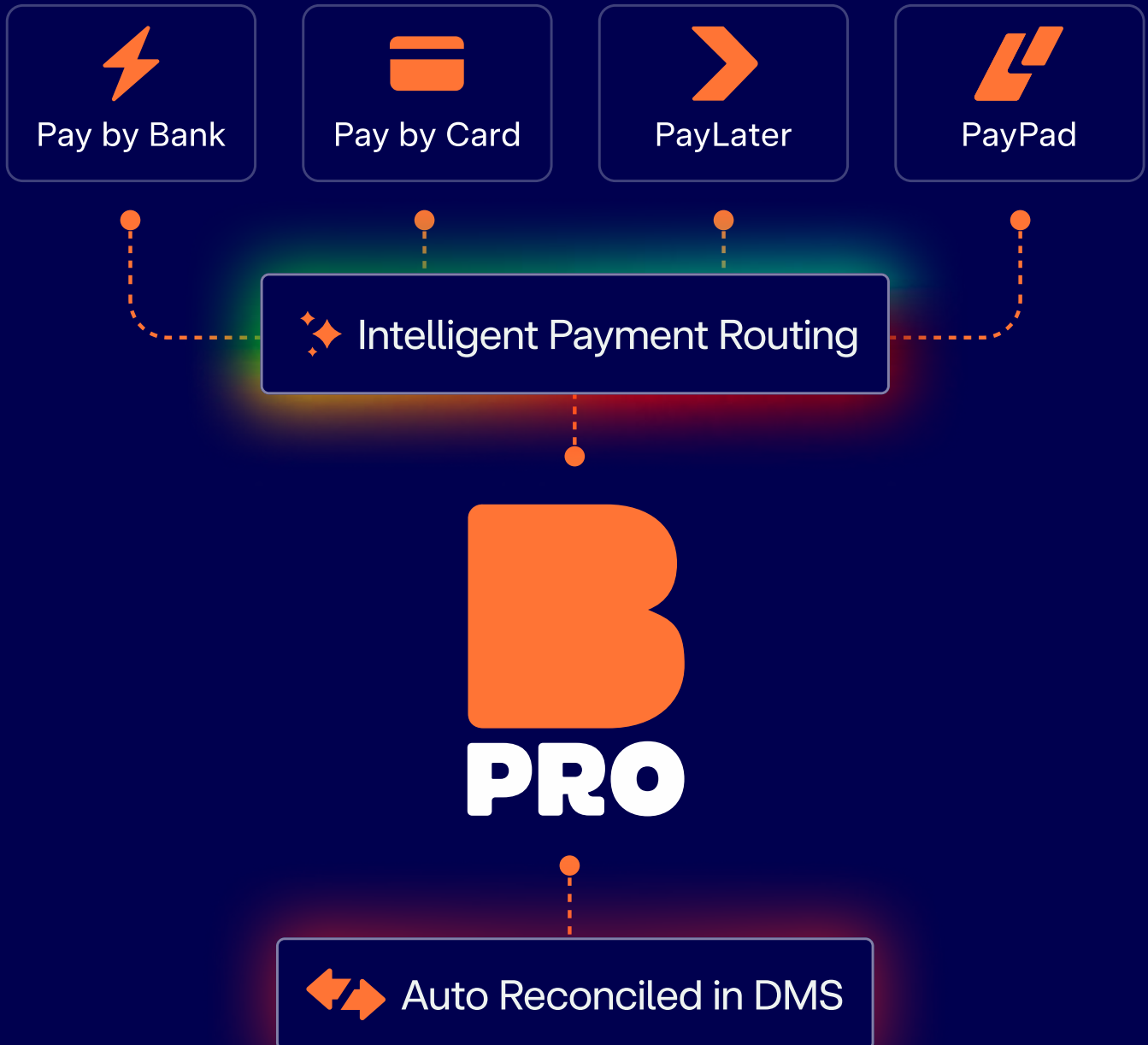
■ Steve Puttock, retail operator, Westcars of Tiverton

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Mark Pardoe, CEO of Wessex Garages' parent company VT Holdings, (centre) collected the trophy on behalf of Leigh Gammon from Jack Allman, CCO and co-founder of award sponsors Bumper

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHAMPION

Winner: Leigh Gammon, customer quality manager, Wessex Garages Nissan Newport

When it comes to dealer customer service, Leigh Gammon is determined that after-sales should not be an afterthought. He believes that the importance of dealer aftersales departments is often overlooked, but that they allow profits to be delivered naturally by building rapport and reputation with customers.

As the face of the manufacturer and dealer that customers see when something has gone wrong, he recognises the vital role they can play in turning around a negative experience and restoring faith in the product. He also understands the importance of the whole aftersales team applying the right attitude – not just those in customer service roles, but also

parts staff, technicians, cleaners and drivers.

With 30 years of industry experience, including for the past 20 years with Nissan GB at dealer level, Gammon has for the past four years been customer quality manager for Wessex Garages Nissan in Newport.

In this role, he is responsible for training new service advisors and looking after all aspects of customer relations in the aftersales department.

The culture of customer service which Gammon has helped to instil has been recognised by customers, with the department having achieved a rating of 4.85-out-of-five in Nissan GB's customer survey, and a Google review score average of 4.7-out-of-five.

It has also been recognised by Nissan GB itself, which has awarded the department several times for customer service, and named it Aftersales Department of the Year for 2025. Both Gammon and colleagues he has helped to train have also received Nissan recognition as Aftersales Ambassadors.

Gammon is proud of how his reputation with customers has motivated some to follow him during his time in the industry. He is also proud of having passed on his processes and attitude to colleagues who have gone on to industry success following his approach based around compassion, patience and reassurance for customers. Our judges offer further validation of Gammon's philosophy with this award.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Megan Tyson, service advisor, Dennis Horton & Son

SHORTLISTED

- Emjay Dela Cruz Arenas, senior sales executive, Culloden Cars

- Lee Evans, service manager, TMS Hinckley Kia
- Leigh Gammon, customer quality manager, Wessex Garages
- Mark Bartlett, sales manager, TMS Leicester Kia
- Megan Tyson, service advisor, Dennis Horton & Son

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Chris Lee, managing director, Howards Motor Group and team, collected the trophy from Andrew Landell, managing director of award sponsors LTK Consultants

BEST IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

Winner: Howards Motor Group

As Howards Motor Group grew from a single family-run garage in 1972, to a multi-brand network of 28 dealerships today, it realised its approach to customer service needed to evolve from one based purely on personal relationships to one that embraced data and technology.

The business's customer metrics are considered weekly at board level alongside financial performance, an approach designed to embed service quality into strategic decision-making.

Senior leaders attend structured meetings to review KPIs covering CSI, complaints, reputation scores, lead management, response times, productivity and customer retention, with actions agreed at these meetings passed on to all sites immediately. All reviews and complaints are logged centrally

and reviewed daily, with root cause analysis and corrective actions tracked to closure. A weekly 'Good, Bad and Ugly' report on all customer reviews, both positive and negative, is shared throughout the business, allowing it to both celebrate success and identify chances to improve.

The success of the Howards Motor Group customer service approach is demonstrated in several ways.

It has achieved the highest Group Reputation Score in the UK among the AM100 for the past two years, with this mark currently sitting at 889, versus a 666 industry average.

It also has a 4.9-star average rating from more than 12,000 verified customer reviews.

Several of its dealerships rank number one nationally with their manufacturer brands. Vauxhall Yeovil achieved a perfect sales CSI score for the full

year, Nissan Weston-super-Mare ranked first in the UK for Voice of Customer, Citroën Weston-super-Mare led nationally for sales CSI, and its Hyundai business ranked top for sales performance.

Proof of success can also be seen in customer behaviour, with used car customer retention having increased to 41%, well ahead of an industry benchmark of approximately 25%, and new car retention reaching 46%.

Howards Motor Group credits its success to an approach that does not depend on isolated, individual efforts, but instead it deploys a structured, measurable and professionally governed system across the group.

It sees customer service as a sustainable commercial growth engine, building loyalty, reputation and profitability at the same time.

SHORTLISTED

- Beechwood Mazda Derby
- Grainger Motor Group
- Howards Motor Group

- Thame Cars
- Thurlow Nunn
- Waylands

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Kellie Good, marketing manager, Partridge of Hampshire (centre) collected the trophy from Amanda Symonds, vice-president and UK managing director of award sponsors CarGurus

THE SUSTAINABILITY AWARD

Winner: Partridge of Hampshire

Partridge of Hampshire is a deserving winner in this category as sustainability is not treated merely as a bolt-on company initiative, but as a core operating principle shaping every aspect of the business.

From governance and procurement through to customer engagement and day-to-day operations, there is evidence of a structured, disciplined and measurable approach to environmental responsibility.

At the heart of the strategy is a well-defined six-step framework, supported by a dedicated sustainability committee and transparent reporting through Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR).

This governance structure ensures accountability and continuous improvement, with performance tracked through clear metrics. The results are tangible, with the business reducing its intensity ratio from 1.6 in 2022 to 0.9 in 2024, demonstrating consistent year-on-year progress.

Operational delivery is strong. The transition to fully paperless sales and aftersales operations has eliminated significant waste, while sustainable procurement policies prioritise local suppliers, reducing transport emissions and supporting the regional economy.

These are practical, scalable changes that embed sustainability into everyday business activity rather than relying on headline initiatives alone.

Energy strategy is a standout strength. The installation of a 200kW solar array, comprising 370 panels, now enables the retail centre to meet 100% of its electricity needs during longer days, with surplus energy exported back to the grid.

This delivers an annual carbon saving of around 65 tonnes of CO₂, underlining the impact of targeted capital investment. Further solar expansion and energy optimisation measures, driven by Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme (ESOS) Phase 3 audits, reinforce a clear commitment to long-term cuts.

What elevates this entry further is the strength of employee engagement and cultural integration.

Sustainability is visible, practical and relevant to staff, supported by behavioural initiatives, transparent reporting and opportunities for employees to contribute ideas which creates genuine buy-in and ensures environmental responsibility is shared across the business.

Customer-facing activity also strengthens the submission. Sustainability is made visible within the retail environment through EV infrastructure, solar-powered operations and paperless processes, while sales teams provide informed, balanced guidance to help customers make environmentally-responsible choices.

Partridge of Hampshire's credible strategy, strong governance, measurable outcomes and meaningful cultural engagement combine to represent a best-in-class, embedded sustainability programme.

SHORTLISTED

- Ezoo
- Partridge of Hampshire
- Polestar

- Renault
- The Electric Car Scheme
- TrustFord

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Steve Beattie, deputy country manager, BYD UK, was presented with the trophy by Lauren Tinton, business development manager – wholesale stocking at award sponsors Novuna Business Finance

MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

Winner: BYD UK

VOTED FOR BY
AM'S DEALER
READERS

BYD has rapidly established itself as a major force within the UK automotive market, bringing a confident approach to electrification that resonates strongly with both consumers and retailers.

The Chinese brand's expansion has been defined by clear strategic intent, competitive product offerings and a growing presence that is already making a tangible impact on the UK's new car market.

In less than three years, BYD has created a dealer network spanning 132 sites and, in some cases, displacing established marques in key territories. The brand expects to have 150 dealerships open before the end of the year.

Market share reached 2.5% in 2025, with more

than 50,000 cars registered, and BYD continues to grow in 2026, hitting 3.5% in Q1.

BYD's product line-up is also particularly well aligned with UK market demands. Offering a range of well-specified, competitively priced vehicles across key segments, it enables retailers to appeal to a broad and diverse customer base.

While electric vehicles play a major part in the brand's line-up, it also recognises the need for alternative powertrain options and has a range of efficient plug-in hybrids.

The Seal U was the UK's best-selling plug-in hybrid, last year, and is joined in 2026 by the Sealion 5 DM-i, in the medium SUV segment. Equally, the brand's EV offer is expanding with the compact

Atto 2 arriving alongside a revised version of the Atto 3, BYD's debut model.

The brand's emphasis on innovation and technology further strengthens its position. Its in-house battery expertise, combined with its European R&D facility, leads to products that deliver strong real-world capability.

New Flash Chargers will be installed across the UK as part of BYD's own charging network.

These devices are much faster than those currently available, with the ability to charge a car in just five minutes. They will be rolled out to support the introduction of the Denza premium brand, along with the first car compatible with the devices – the Denza Z9GT.

SHORTLISTED

- BMW
- BYD
- Kia
- Lexus
- Omoda & Jaecoo
- Renault

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Susie Ancell, senior account manager, 67 Degrees, picked up the trophy from Stephen Briers, group editor, AM



SUPPLIER CUSTOMER SERVICE CHAMPION

Winner: Susie Ancell, senior account manager, 67 Degrees

Susie Ancell's recognition as Supplier Customer Service Champion reflects an exceptional and sustained commitment to dealer-first partnership, delivered consistently over eight years of growth and change within the sector.

As senior account manager at the 67 Degrees website company, Ancell has played a pivotal role in shaping its customer service ethos while managing relationships with more than 350 dealerships.

What distinguishes her is not simply the scale of responsibility, but the depth of engagement. She has transformed the traditional supplier model into one built on genuine partnership, where dealers view 67 Degrees not as a provider, but as an extension of their own teams.

Her approach is defined by proactive support and

personal accountability. Rather than reacting to issues, she anticipates them, monitoring website performance and engaging with clients before challenges impact results.

This forward-thinking mindset has been instrumental in delivering measurable improvements for dealers while building long-term trust.

Ancell's influence extends well beyond account management. She has directly shaped how 67 Degrees supports its clients, pioneering initiatives that are now embedded across the business.

The introduction of dedicated WhatsApp support groups has redefined accessibility, replacing traditional ticketing systems with real-time, human interaction.

Her advocacy for proactive performance reviews and tailored training programmes has shifted the

company from reactive service delivery to a consultative, insight-led model.

With 124 five-star Google reviews, a 4.9 Trustpilot rating, and consistent testimonials describing her as "always available," "approachable," and "part of the team," Ancell's impact is measurable and deeply felt.

Her leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic stands out as a defining moment. At a time when dealerships faced unprecedented disruption, Ancell worked tirelessly to deliver rapid digital solutions, from online reservation tools to remote sales support, ensuring clients could continue trading.

This was not just service, it was genuine partnership under pressure.

Ancell exemplifies what customer service should be: consistent, innovative and rooted in a deep understanding of dealer needs.

SHORTLISTED

■ Laura Fippen, head of technical & customer services, Autoglym LifeShine

■ Laura Murphy, director of product solutions, RWA Automotive

■ Pete Hirst, client success director, Impel

■ Samantha Herron, head of education & support, MOT Juice

■ Susie Ancell, senior account manager, 67 Degrees

■ Sophie Cockayne, technical support & solutions architecture specialist, Connectivity.cx

■ Samuel Leverton, investor group relationship manager, Inspiro Learning



Boris Huard, CEO, CitNOW Group, collected the trophy from Sara Donald, key account director, AM

SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR

Winner: CitNOW Group

CitNOW Group's solutions are not only widely adopted, but demonstrably improving retailer performance across marketing, showroom operations and customer communication.

It's why the company has been named Supplier of the Year for the second year in a row by AM's dealer readers. It also won this accolade in 2023.

CitNOW has a clear focus on measurable outcomes and return on investment (ROI) for its dealer customers, rather than product claims alone.

These products are used by more than 90% of the AM100, which further highlights how the business is addressing operational challenges across modern motor retail.

CitNOW's Marketing360 proposition, developed through its Salesforce partnership, has helped retailers sell 15% more cars per site each month while delivering returns of between five and 15 times.

The company's imaging tools are helping reduce days to sell by up to 48%, while its two-way messaging tools offer a practical way to improve response times and customer engagement.

Another reason the business stood out has been its breadth of support. More than 40% of AM100 sites are using its solutions to streamline showroom operations through Dealerweb and CRM tools.

This further demonstrates how CitNOW Group is becoming embedded in day-to-day retail processes, rather than being treated as just a bolt-on supplier.

Customer support and implementation are another differentiator. The business has a score of 4.8-out-of-five across its academy, training, onboarding and customer support programme.

This matters because dealer groups increasingly judge suppliers not just by the quality of the software itself, but by the speed, ease and consistency with which it can be deployed and adopted.

For AM's readers, CitNOW Group is delivering more than technology. It is delivering consistent, measurable performance improvements at scale, backed by strong support and rapid adoption.

That combination of proven ROI, operational impact and trusted partnership is what sets it apart and underpins its recognition in this year's awards.

SHORTLISTED

- AutoProtect Group
- Bumper
- Carcare

- CitNOW Group
- Codeweavers
- Diamondbrite

- GardX Group
- Keyloop



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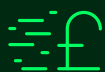
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James Smullen, chief financial officer, Waylands (centre), was presented with the trophy by Chris Stakes, head of vehicle finance, at award sponsors Moneybarn (Vanquis Vehicle Finance)

DEALER GROUP OF THE YEAR (UP TO 20 SITES)

Winner: Waylands

Waylands is a business with a strong track record of AM Awards success, having won the former Dealer Group of the Year (up to 10 sites) category six times, before triumphing in the more than 10 sites category last year after its network expanded.

It's perhaps unsurprising, therefore, to see it topping the pile this year in this newly realigned category.

Its brands now include Volvo, Polestar, Kia, MG, Honda, Omoda and Jaecoo – the latter three having joined the company's portfolio in 2025, following the acquisition of Honda Bristol and Cardiff, Omoda Bristol and Jaecoo Bristol sites. Polestar Bicester was also added to the group last year.

Aside from expansion, Waylands' other initiatives in 2025 included investing in a consolidated insights

platform, allowing it to deliver real-time intelligence to its aftersales management team. This came after the business identified an opportunity in enhancing the way it presented management information.

It has also expanded staff training, with its Waylands Academy doubling the number of sessions delivered year-on-year, and running the second year of its Future Leaders Programme, with the company keen to build on its record last year of 32% of management positions being filled through internal promotion. This is part of a focus on attracting, retaining and developing staff as the business grows, designed to create a shared sense of ownership among employees – a colleague engagement survey found 93% would recommend Waylands as a place to work.

A sustained emphasis on increasing brand awareness and driving enquiries via marketing resulted in an 18.83% year-on-year increase in enquiries, and within this a 31.39% year-on-year increase in enquiries from its website.

All the above helped to deliver a highly successful 2025 for Waylands, which included a pre-tax profit increase of 25.4% year-on-year.

Other highlights from the group's performance included a 32% like-for-like increase in new vehicle volume, a 23.1% like-for-like uplift in used retail volume, and a 21.4% like-for-like boost in service hours.

Waylands is aiming to continue this success in 2026 and beyond via improved use of technology, and recruiting and retaining the best talent.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Grainger Motor Group

SHORTLISTED

- Arbury Motor Group
- Grainger Motor Group

■ Thurlow Nunn

- TMS
- Waylands

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John Clark, chief commercial officer, Arnold Clark Automobiles (centre), picked up the trophy from Matthew Bleasby, Operations Manager of award sponsors EnergyForce

DEALER GROUP OF THE YEAR (MORE THAN 20 SITES)

Winner: Arnold Clark Automobiles

As a giant of the automotive retail world that now represents a whopping 35 car brands, you might think Arnold Clark Automobiles could find it challenging to connect with customers.

Instead, by putting customer experience and feedback at the heart of its operations, it's achieved financial success, rave reviews and our Dealer Group of the Year (more than 20 sites) award.

Much of the group's work in 2025 focused on improving its mobile app, which it describes as the cornerstone of its strategy.

It identified a need to bridge the gap between customers' physical and digital experiences. For example, it addressed customers' frustration at repeatedly having to re-enter information when

comparing different prospective deals on cars.

In 2025 the app gained a new 'save my deal' feature on its deal builder tool, allowing customers to return to their personalised deals and carry forward valuations and preferences.

The app also gained new self-service upgrades, with customers now notified when they are strongly placed to change their vehicle without needing to speak to staff, and able to receive valuations in around 60 seconds.

Also, a digital dashboard integrated with the app allows customers to complete finance, ID and document tasks directly on their mobile devices.

Other group initiatives include implementing 50-point pre-delivery quality checks to ensure vehicles meet a consistent standard before they

reach the showroom, with journeys overseen by 170 new vehicle progressor roles, and a new Ready to Retail initiative reinforcing early vehicle preparation, addressing customers' desire to receive cars in the condition they expect as quickly as possible.

Arnold Clark Automobiles achieved sales and aftersales CSI scores in 2025 of 97.28% and 96.54% respectively, both up on 2024.

On Trustpilot, 92% of its reviews are rated 'great' or above, and its average Google review score is 4.8-out-of-five. In 2024 its turnover was £5.15 billion, up from £4.96 billion the year before, and its pre-tax profit was up from £116 million to £120.7 million.

It's an all-round picture of success which means, in our judges' view, that one of the biggest groups in the AM100 is also the best.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Howards Motor Group

SHORTLISTED

- Arnold Clark Automobiles
- Howards Motor Group

- Steven Eagell Group
- TrustFord

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*Findings taken from a nationwide consumer survey commissioned by Autoglym and conducted by OnePoll in March 2026 amongst 1,000 adults who have bought a car in the last year.

SCAN TO GET STARTED





Howards Motor Group managing director Chris Lee collected the trophy from Anna Houldsworth, head of paint protection at award sponsors Autoglym

THE COMMUNITY HERO AWARD

Winner: Howards Motor Group

Howards Motor Group is a standout winner in this category given its community engagement is not discretionary or campaign-led but embedded within the way the business operates.

This is a programme designed to scale in line with commercial success, governed at board level and delivered across the group, creating meaningful and measurable social impact.

The scale and consistency of investment are particularly compelling. Over the past three years, Howards has contributed more than £316,000 to community initiatives, supporting 157 beneficiaries across Dorset, Somerset and Devon.

Crucially, this is underpinned by a per-vehicle community levy, ensuring that every sale contributes directly to social value and so its impact grows in line with business performance.

What distinguishes this entry is the breadth and relevance of its community reach. Investment is

carefully targeted across key areas of need, including healthcare, emergency services, education, vulnerable children and food poverty.

This includes significant contributions to organisations such as air ambulance services and hospices, alongside funding that has supported patient care, bereavement services and life-saving equipment.

The installation of public-access defibrillators and bleed kits at every site further demonstrates a proactive, infrastructure-led approach to community safety. These are permanent, life-saving assets available not just to customers and colleagues but to the wider public, reinforcing Howards' role as a genuine community anchor.

The programme is equally strong in education and social inclusion. Investment in schools, technology, young carers and inclusive resources highlights a long-term commitment to supporting future generations, while seasonal initiatives such as the Shining Stars programme provide immediate, targeted

support to families and food banks during periods of greatest need.

Governance and leadership engagement add credibility. The Howards Family Charitable Partnerships Programme provides a structured framework for funding, supported by clear criteria, an open application process and active board-level oversight.

Employee engagement is another key strength. Colleagues are empowered to nominate causes, lead fundraising and participate directly in community initiatives, creating a grassroots-driven approach that reflects genuine local priorities. This ensures the programme is not only scalable but deeply connected to the communities it serves.

With strong governance, measurable outcomes, sustained financial commitment and clear cultural integration, Howards Motor Group has developed a mature, values-led community strategy that delivers real regional impact and sets a benchmark for community engagement in automotive retail.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Henty Group

- Howards Motor Group
- Partridge of Hampshire
- Thurlow Nunn
- TrustFord
- West Coast Motors

SHORTLISTED

- Henty Group

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Russell Borrie, CEO, and team collected the trophy from Mitesh Kotak, director key accounts – automotive at award sponsors Assurant

RETAILER OF THE YEAR

Winner: Arnold Clark Automobiles

Arnold Clark Automobiles is no stranger to winning this ultimate headline award from AM. It has taken the trophy home on multiple occasions.

Industry peers and the AM Awards judges alike never fail to be impressed by the way that this AM100 dealer group combines large-scale stability with innovation and a very operational, performance-driven culture.

Commercially focused, the business is built around high volumes of new and used vehicle sales, tight operational control, and immense strategic understanding of what customers need and desire.

Over the past three decades there's been significant

diversification in the business model, into leasing, rental, motor auctions and training, as well as its core car and van sales and servicing operations.

Now it has added public charging for electric vehicle drivers to its portfolio, through its AC Charge brand, which has the potential to keep Arnold Clark in the minds of this growing segment of motorists for years to come and foster a relationship that should bear fruit when they come to buy their next car.

It's just one example of how the scale of Arnold Clark – and the substantial profits it makes annually – allow it to invest and adapt as the marketplace changes. Other examples include acquiring properties to lease to other motor retailers, taking on new

entrant manufacturer brands, and enhancing its online customer experience and back office systems through the work of its extensive digital development team.

The Arnold Clark app, now downloaded by more than 1.5 million people, allows the group to continue to offer useful and timely deals and services for consumers and, in 2025, it gained even more customer-focused features, including a new 'save my deal' option on its deal builder tool.

New self-service upgrades also allow customers to be notified when they are strongly placed to change their vehicle, with equity in their current car, and to receive valuations in around 60 seconds.

SHORTLISTED

- Winner of Dealer Group up to 20 sites: Waylands Automotive
- Winner of Dealer Group more than 20 sites: Arnold Clark Automobiles
- Winner of Used Car Performance: Grainger Motor Group

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Today is about the people driving our industry forward and celebrating their achievements. We look forward to supporting your continued success.



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 AM
AWARDS 2026



FRANCHISED DEALERSHIP OF THE YEAR

Winner: Waylands Volvo Oxford

Waylands Volvo Oxford's combination of financial strength, customer satisfaction, marketing awareness and staff engagement made it a clear winner for this year's Franchised Dealership of the Year.

The dealership's profit growth over the past 12 months is impressive. The site delivered a strong improvement in operating profit, rising by around 70% between 2023 and 2025, all while adapting to a new agency retail model.

Profit before tax increased by about 88% over the same period, while net assets almost doubled. This is a dealership that is not simply busy, but is becoming stronger, more resilient and better managed.

There's a balance across the business that stood out strongly to the AM Award judges. Used cars

remain the commercial engine of the business, with used turnover up roughly 23% from 2023 to 2025 and used department net profit rising around 70%.

Aftersales performance was equally compelling, with service turnover up by 30% and parts turnover up by 18% over the same period.

Net profit in service and parts also moved ahead strongly. For the judges, that demonstrated a dealership delivering results across sales, workshop and parts rather than relying on one standout area.

The business is also delivering strong results for customers. Volvo new sales CSI reached 96.6%, well ahead of the national average of 87.8%, while used sales CSI stood at 92% against a national average of 87.3%. Overall dealership CSI was also ahead of the brand average. The dealership is close to perfect

with a 4.8 Google rating from nearly 1,700 reviews and a 97% recommendation score through JudgeService.

Waylands Volvo Oxford has addressed some of the location's operational constraints, including limited parking for customers. The business has invested in off-site compounds, improved vehicle movement management and enhanced waiting areas, increased Wi-Fi capacity and expanded collection and delivery. This shows a clear understanding that customer experience is often shaped by practical detail as much as headline sales performance.

Waylands Volvo Oxford is the UK's best franchised retailer because it combines strong numbers with thoughtful leadership and a relentless focus on making the customer journey easier.

SHORTLISTED

- Beechwood Mazda Derby
- Cambridge Kia, part of Grainger Motor Group
- Lexus Ipswich, part of Steven Eagell Group
- TMS Hinckley Kia
- TMS Leicester Kia
- Waylands Volvo Oxford

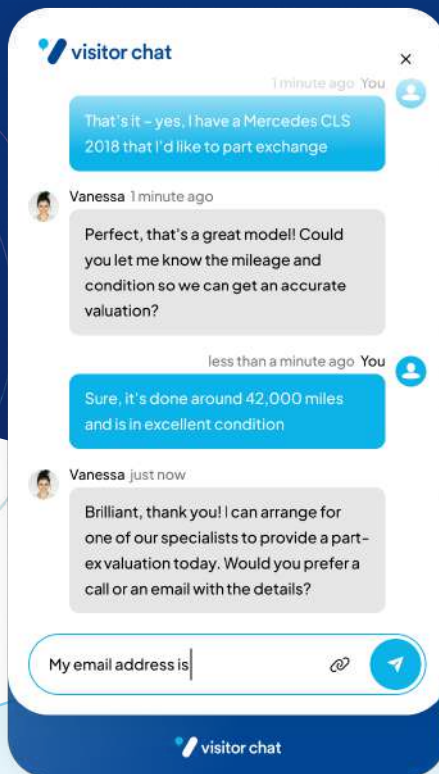
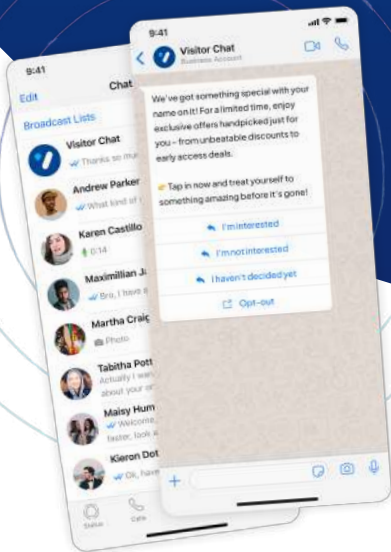
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Simon Joyce, managing director, (second from right) and Jamie Batchelor, marketing manager (second from left), both of Anchor Motor Group, picked up the trophy from Chris Wateridge, managing director of award sponsors Visitor Chat

INDEPENDENT DEALER OF THE YEAR

Winner: Anchor Motor Group

Anchor Motor Group has been named best independent dealer in the UK after demonstrating a clear, group-wide focus on profitable used car retailing, backed by disciplined processes and strong execution.

What impressed AM Award judges most is that Anchor's performance is not growth for growth's sake. The business has increased used car sales volume steadily and is forecasting a further step change, with unit sales set to rise by around 48% year-on-year.

At the same time, average unit margin is also forecast to improve, up by nearly 13% versus the previous year. That combination of scale and improving margin is what this category is designed to reward.

The judges were also struck by the strength of its

stock model. Anchor uses a broad sourcing mix that includes part-exchange, auction channels and direct-to-consumer buying platforms, giving it flexibility and reducing dependence on any one route to market. It has built a process that screens vehicles for commercial viability before preparation spend is committed.

The Reading-based business' stock management discipline also stood out. Average days in stock are tightly controlled, with cars averaging 40 days and the business highlighted strong electric vehicle (EV) annual stockturn, regularly above 10 and sometimes reaching 12. The judges also noted the group's ferry-style preparation system, which is designed to keep vehicles moving through the pipeline from acquisition to showroom without delay. This ensures a high percentage of stock is always retail-ready.

Anchor's digital and sales processes are also a key highlight. Keeping 100% of stock advertised until invoice helps maintain a strong digital shop window and consistent lead flow. The business combines that with accurate merchandising, clear specifications and in-house technology tools, including proprietary dashboards and verification systems. This demonstrates Anchor's position as a modern independent retailer using process and technology to create an edge rather than relying on instinct alone.

Crucially, customer reviews remain strong across Trustpilot (4.9), Auto Trader (4.9) and Google (4.6). This combination of customer satisfaction, sustainable and profitable growth, as well as intelligent tech-first operations helped Anchor to stand out in a highly competitive category.

SHORTLISTED

- Anchor Motor Group
- Carvender
- Culloden Cars

- Oakdene Collection
- Thame Cars

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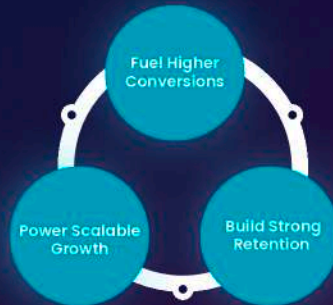




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Vicky Hart, marketing director, Waylands, picked up the trophy from Jeremy Evans, director marketing services of award sponsors TekCor4

MARKETING STRATEGY OF THE YEAR

Winner: Waylands

Waylands' approach to marketing has been through a significant transformation, with the business challenging itself to think differently about its methods.

It has focused on data-driven decisions and local market insight, and developed a distinctive tone of voice.

Having identified the importance to the business of regional market penetration, it has worked to build a consistent and trusted brand within its territories, allowing it to win a disproportionate share of local customer demand.

Strategic decisions begin with senior leaders considering opportunities and challenges in the context of market conditions and customer behaviour insight, the latter including historic transaction data. Waylands has seen customers

focusing on convenience, reinforcing the importance of its local market position. Facing increased competition, it saw the need to clearly articulate its value proposition and its strong customer service.

Waylands is now deploying a more personalised approach to its marketing, with tailored communications for all showroom events, including model launches.

This was inspired by a VIP sales event for which it brought back direct mailing for the first time in several years, but to carefully selected customers based on demographics, and saw finance renewal conversion-to-sale rates rise from 46% to 68%

Waylands' marketing channels include paid search, which allows it to capture high-intent local searches – an effort supported by a strong focus on local organic SEO.

Paid social media activity targets potential customers based on geography, and also their demographic similarities to Waylands' existing customer base, while Sky AdSmart also allows localised targeting.

Waylands also builds visibility in local areas through community partnerships, such as with grass roots sports teams and local events, which it sees as an important part of building its brand.

Waylands' marketing strategy has delivered results such as a 47% year-on-year increase in like-for-like website traffic, a 13.54% increase in sales enquiries, and a 32.17% cost-per-sale reduction.

It says the success of its approach is in achieving results that exceed business expectations, while emphasising its values as a local, privately-owned dealer group.

SHORTLISTED

- Anchor Motor Group
- Culloden Cars
- eStar Truck & Van

- Rossetts Commercial Mercedes-Benz
- TrustFord
- Thame Cars
- Waylands
- TMS

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THE NIGHT
IN PICTURES





Gary Higgins, chief digital officer, Arnold Clark Automobiles (centre), collected the trophy from Kane Hardy, general manager of award sponsors Green IP

ONLINE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE OF THE YEAR

Winner: Arnold Clark Automobiles

Arnold Clark has built a genuinely end-to-end digital experience that goes well beyond a strong website, creating a fully integrated omnichannel journey that reflects how customers now want to buy and own vehicles.

Rather than forcing a single path to purchase, the AM Award judges praised how Arnold Clark's online experience helps customers to move seamlessly between digital and in-dealer touchpoints, completing as much or as little of the journey digitally as they choose, while retaining high-value physical interactions such as test drives and handovers.

This is highlighted by features such as Arnold Clark's app-based registration scanning tool, which allows users to scan number plates and shortlist vehicles, with more than 300,000 cars captured in 2025. This effectively links physical browsing with the digital journey.

A key strength is the depth of personalisation embedded across Arnold Clark's platform.

AI-driven search, tailored vehicle recommendations, saved preferences and cross-device continuity remove friction from the buying journey and help customers reach relevant vehicles faster.

The fact that more than half of users are adopting the AI-led search functionality shows it is addressing a real customer need, supported by strong engagement with personalised recommendations.

Social media is also fully integrated into the digital strategy rather than treated as a standalone channel. Platform-specific content combining entertainment, product showcase and brand storytelling has driven strong growth in followers, views and engagement.

In aftersales, the Online Work Approval app allows customers to approve servicing work remotely, generating tens of millions in revenue across the group while improving efficiency and convenience.

Accessibility is another differentiator. With live chat, WhatsApp and an AI chatbot available as options to customers, the business has effectively created a 24/7 retail environment, capturing demand outside traditional trading hours and converting it into measurable sales.

Crucially, the experience continues well beyond the point of purchase. Arnold Clark's own app acts as a central ownership hub, integrating servicing, documentation, finance, upgrades and EV charging into a single platform.

This not only improves convenience but also drives retention, with features such as in-app upgrade journeys directly linked to thousands of repeat sales.

This performance is underpinned by a substantial in-house digital team of more than 200 specialists, supported by selected strategic partners.

This enables the business to maintain control of its platforms while continuing to innovate at pace.

SHORTLISTED

- Anchor Motor Group
- Arnold Clark Automobiles
- MB Motors
- The Electric Car Scheme
- TMS Motor Group
- TrustFord

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Paul Wilson, aftersales director, Mantles Kia, collected the trophy from Karen Rotberg, co-founder of award sponsors BookMyGarage

WORKSHOP OF THE YEAR

Winner: Mantles Kia

Mantles Kia's all-round transformation makes it just the type of business this category has been designed to recognise.

The strength of its commercial performance makes the business a clear stand out.

Workshop turnover increased by 75% in two years, while operating profit rose by 62%, demonstrating that growth was being delivered in a controlled and sustainable way.

Parts performance also strengthened significantly, with parts turnover rising sharply over the period, underlining the fact that this is an aftersales success story across all elements of the workshop.

The AM Awards judges were also struck by how quickly the business addressed capacity and availability. Since Grainger Motor Group acquired Mantles in early 2023, the workshop has expanded from a small team into a much larger operation with 14

technicians, added ramp capacity and extra MOT resource.

There is now one workshop structure, one diary and one set of processes.

This operational discipline has translated into a major improvement in customer access, with average lead times cut from six-to-eight weeks in 2023 to less than five days in 2025.

Customer satisfaction was another decisive factor. CSI rose from 84.3% in 2022 to 93.5% in 2025, while Mantles climbed 87 places in Kia's balanced scorecard rankings over three years. The workshop also moved from outside the top 40 in the Kia aftersales excellence league to fifth by 2024.

Those gains indicate a business that has improved both consistency and quality of service at pace.

The judges also noted Mantles' willingness to welcome work that others may have treated as

inconvenient. Warranty work was actively embraced rather than avoided, helping the site win trust and attract customers from neighbouring dealers.

Its 'always say yes' approach, backed by an out-of-hours shift model paid per unit, shows a workshop prepared to match customer demand with practical solutions.

Mantles also impressed with its investment in long-term technical capability.

Its partnership with Cambridge Regional College has created a genuine talent pipeline through work experience, internships and direct recruitment, helping the business develop technicians rather than simply compete for them.

Mantles Kia represents a workshop that combines profitability, customer care, capacity planning and future talent development in a way that sets a benchmark for the sector.

SHORTLISTED

- Beechwood Mazda Derby
- Mantles Kia, part of Grainger Motor Group
- Soul Garages
- Steven Eagell Toyota Oxford
- Thame Cars
- TMS Hinkley Kia

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John Rayment, director, Cambridge Kia part of Grainger Motor Group (centre), received the trophy from Warren Edwards, customer operations manager at award sponsors Movex

EV PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR

Winner: Cambridge Kia, part of Grainger Motor Group

Cambridge Kia has established itself as a benchmark for electric vehicle retailing in the UK, delivering a commercially successful EV strategy that combines strong growth, outstanding customer satisfaction and a culture of deep product expertise.

In 2025 the dealership increased its BEV mix to 28%, underlining both strong consumer demand and the team's ability to guide customers confidently through the transition to electric mobility.

That performance is matched by exceptional customer experience results. Cambridge Kia achieved a remarkable 100% EV sales Net Promoter Score (NPS) across the entire year, alongside an EV aftersales NPS of 86.7%, more than 22% higher than the national network average.

Central to this success is an education-led approach

to EV retailing. Every member of the Cambridge Kia team is trained to become what the business calls an EV 'professor', combining OEM and external training with regular knowledge testing to ensure staff can provide clear, confident guidance to customers exploring electric ownership.

The dealership has also invested heavily in real-world customer engagement with community events that help spark conversations around EV technology, while 24-hour test drives allow customers to experience EVs first-hand.

A dedicated EV service fleet further supports this strategy by giving internal combustion engine (ICE), hybrid and plug-in hybrid customers the opportunity to explore electric driving.

Cambridge Kia has also taken proactive steps to address common barriers to EV adoption.

In 2025 the business invested in advanced battery health testing technology, providing customers with a level of transparency that helps build confidence in the used EV market while reinforcing the dealership's reputation for expertise and trust.

Partnerships such as its collaboration with home charging specialist Ohme further demonstrate a commitment to supporting the entire ownership journey, helping customers understand charging options, tariffs and installation.

Backed by manufacturer endorsement from Kia UK and a string of national dealer excellence awards, Cambridge Kia stands out as a retailer that has fully embedded EV thinking across its entire operation.

The result is a dealership that not only sells EVs successfully but actively builds lasting confidence in the technology among its customers.

SHORTLISTED

- Big Motoring World
- Dennis Horton & Son
- Cambridge Kia part of Grainger Motor Group
- Partridge of Hampshire

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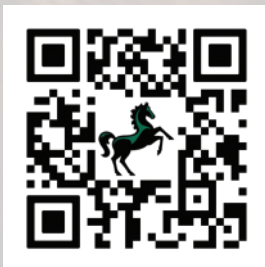
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EV ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

Winner: Arnold Clark Automobiles

Arnold Clark stands out as a clear winner in this category because it has turned electric vehicle advocacy into a fully integrated, large-scale strategy that supports customers before, during and long after the point of sale.

This is not a business simply retailing EVs. It is investing in the infrastructure, expertise and support systems needed to make EV ownership practical, affordable and reassuringly mainstream for customers across the UK.

The scale is compelling. With turnover rising to £5.15 billion in 2024 and a workforce of more than 11,000 employees, Arnold Clark has the reach to influence EV adoption nationally.

More importantly, it is using that reach effectively. EV and hybrid sales grew from 19,395 units, or 8.17% of overall annual sales, in 2023 to 53,942 in 2025,

demonstrating major growth in penetration and genuine momentum in consumer uptake.

What particularly impresses is the depth of investment behind the strategy. Arnold Clark has committed more than £30 million to Arnold Clark Charge, building a network of ultra-rapid charging points, supporting grid upgrades and improving site infrastructure.

Alongside its £2.5m acquisition of charge point installers Bumblebee, this gives customers access to a genuine one-stop EV ecosystem spanning vehicle purchase, home charging installation and public charging support.

Its people strategy is equally strong. EV confidence has been embedded across the business through Level 1 EV awareness training for all employees, IMI Level 3 qualifications for more than 400 technicians, and a custom-built Electric Vehicle Selling Skills

programme that has already accredited more than 2,000 staff. This ensures Arnold Clark can meet consumer hesitation with knowledgeable, practical and reassuring guidance at every stage of the ownership journey.

The results are measurable. In 2025, Arnold Clark Charge delivered 45,950 booked sessions, supplied 1,469,035kWh of ultra-rapid charging and achieved 68% repeat usage through the Arnold Clark app.

That kind of engagement shows this is not a theoretical strategy but one already changing real-world behaviour.

Combining workforce capability, charging innovation, accessibility, consumer education, capital investment and measurable outcomes, Arnold Clark has created one of the most comprehensive and scalable EV advocacy programmes in the market, placing it firmly at the top of this category.

SHORTLISTED

- Anchor Cars
- Arnold Clark Automobiles
- Ezoo

- Harris Maxus UK
- Motorfinity Group
- Polestar

- Stellantis Performance Academy
- TrustFord

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Sharon Ashcroft, human resources director, TrustFord (centre), collected the trophy from Lottie Roberts, operations director of award sponsors Direct Affinity CX

LEADER IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Winner: TrustFord

It is difficult to imagine that further praise could be heaped on TrustFord in this category, with 2026 marking an incredible fifth year in a row that the dealer group has been named as AM's Leader in Diversity and Inclusion. However, that would be overlooking the company's relentless drive for improvements in this field.

In 2025, based on feedback from the company's 2024 Great Place to Work survey, it put a strong focus on mental health and wellbeing.

TrustFord now has trained volunteer Mental Health Wealth Champions at each of its sites, and says its success with this topic is demonstrated by employees at all levels sharing personal stories during 'lunch and learn' sessions for managers and supervisors.

Recognising the importance of employee feedback, in 2025 TrustFord also began measuring one-to-one activity, with all business leaders required to give monthly updates, and those with 2025 Great Place to Work survey engagement scores below 76% having sessions with HR to establish where gaps in working culture could be addressed.

TrustFord approved 130 flexible working requests in 2025; the business advertises all roles as flexible to encourage open conversations about working hours. Sessions delivered through [M]enable last year were designed to create honest conversations about the importance of work/life balance. TrustFord has also introduced maternity and paternity pay improvements.

Among the metrics that measure its progress, in

2025 TrustFord saw improvements in both its overall staff retention rate, from 79.66% to 80.6%, and its female retention rate, from 82.34% to 83.6%. It is a Level 2 Disability Confident Employer, and in 2025 was recognised by Great Place to Work in the Best Workplaces for Women and Best Workplaces in Retail, Hospitality & Leisure categories.

TrustFord says it sees a direct correlation between diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies and its business performance, having retained its position at number eight on the AM100.

It says inclusivity is integral to its leadership strategies and actions, and that it continues to work closely with employee groups to ensure lived experience informs its policies – proof that, despite five wins in a row, its desire for improvement continues.

Highly Commended

- Steven Eagell Group

SHORTLISTED

- Legacy Cars
- Steven Eagell Group
- TrustFord

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Russell Borrie, CEO, Arnold Clark (second from left), collected the trophy on behalf of Eddie Hawthorne (inset) from Billy Coutin, CEO at award sponsors GardX Group

AM HALL OF FAME

Inductee: Eddie Hawthorne, former chief executive and group managing director, Arnold Clark Automobiles

Integrity, strategic thinking and sheer hard work have always been synonymous with this year's inductee into the AM Hall of Fame.

A chartered accountant by trade, colleagues say that while our inductee naturally has an analytical mind, what makes him stand out from other directors is the ability to create a vision and then apply excellent project management skills to lead a team to see that vision to fruition.

While working for the group's independent auditor, he was drawn to join Arnold Clark in his mid-20s. In

1998, at the age of 32, he became managing director. Of course, he had one of the best mentors in the business, Sir Arnold Clark, and together with the remaining board members, they made a formidable leadership team.

In 2014, Hawthorne won the AM Award for Business Leader of the Year as the group continued to streak ahead of competitors in numerous disciplines, from new and used car retailing to investment in training and supporting communities.

Today, Arnold Clark Automobiles is regarded by many as the true one-stop-shop for motorists, and

it is committed to helping motorists in the transition to electric vehicles.

Our inductee has gone from joining a business with a 1,200-strong workforce to helping build it into a group with 11,000 employees. And, crucially, it's a business that makes good profit and reinvests it to drive growth.

Having handed over the chief executive role in 2025 to his own mentee, Russell Borrie, Hawthorne remains engaged with the group as a director, ensuring his skills and knowledge continue to be put to good use.

PREVIOUS INDUCTEES

- 2025 – Steve Nash, former IMI chief executive, and Dale Wyatt, former Suzuki GB director of automobile
- 2024 – John Clark OBE, John Clark Motor Group
- 2023 – Daksh Gupta, Marshall Motor Group and BEN
- 2022 – Stuart Foulds, TrustFord

- 2021 – Professor Richard Parry-Jones, Marshall Motor Group
- 2020 – Graham Day, CEM Day
- 2019 – Tony Whitehorn, Hyundai
- 2018 – Jack Tordoff MBE, JCT600
- 2017 – Michael Smyth, Swansway Group
- 2016 – Mark Squires, Benfield Motor Group and NFDA

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John O'Hanlon, CEO, Waylands (centre) was handed the trophy by Ian McMahon, national head of automotive, audit and assurance partner of award sponsors Cooper Parry

STRATEGIC SUCCESS AWARD

Winner: John O'Hanlon, CEO, Waylands

This award enables AM and our awards audit partner UHY Hacker Young to give special recognition for the long-term strategic leadership of a motor retail business.

Waylands hasn't been trading for a decade quite yet – the milestone anniversary of purchasing its first dealership happens in 2027 – but its chief executive has made quite a mark.

John O'Hanlon has a track record in this industry. He spent some 18 years with Ridgeway Group owner David Newman helping to build it up from a two-site

Volkswagen Group franchisee to a £750m turnover multi-brand AM100 dealer group.

After Ridgeway was acquired by Marshall Motor Group, O'Hanlon wasn't ready to retire before he'd reached his 50th birthday. He knew there was scope for a new, high-performing dealer group, and built one which has gained a cabinet full of AM awards.

At Waylands, O'Hanlon and his leadership team have fostered a culture of care for colleagues and customers, hard work and continuous improvement, and, importantly, a sense of fun in the workplace. They also have a commitment to providing the facilities

and tools their workforce needs to do excellent work.

It's a dealer group which he's previously described as "large enough to invest, small enough to care".

O'Hanlon is a highly visible, always positive, engaging leader whose team brilliantly manages a complex multi-brand dealer group, makes sound investment decisions in facilities and systems and guides its workforce through a rapidly changing sector with confidence.

And despite Waylands climbing further up the AM100 ranking annually its focus on being a 'local hero' to its customers looks set to continue.

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COOPER PARRY



BEST NEW PRODUCT OR SERVICE

Winner: Nexbotix – The Autonomous Dealership

In a hotly contested category, the votes from the AM Awards judges gave this trophy to The Autonomous Dealership. With this solution, Nexbotix is targeting the operational backbone of dealerships: the administrative, financial and data-heavy processes that keep the business running but often slow it down. Its premise is simple: dealerships are burdened by fragmented systems, repetitive manual tasks and rising costs, all of which erode profitability.

At the heart of the concept is a platform designed to act as a dealership’s “AI brain” and integrate with existing tools and use software bots to handle routine administration tasks and even assist with used car sourcing.

The aim is to allow employees to focus their time

on customer-facing and revenue-generating work.

Launched in 2025, with proof of concept work and then extensive user acceptance testing to validate the dealer workflows its development team had devised, it is now in use by several AM100 dealer groups.

One significant group has already saved more than 8,500 hours of staff time through automated invoice processing with the AutoACCOUNTS solution. Another dealer group has been using its automated stock sourcing, AutoBUY, and while reducing the administration time by 50% it has also increased its stock volume acquired to drive a revenue increase.

Central to Nexbotix’s support is AutoNIAH, a business intelligence core which provides dealer group management with a real-time command centre to monitor performance and approve actions.

The judges also appreciated that our winner offers a fully managed partnership, to ensure non-disruptive integration.

This hands-on guidance ensures a smooth transition to an autonomous operation with results visible in as little as two months.

As the winner states: “The industry didn’t need more chatbots; it needed a way to bridge the execution gap between high-level strategy and daily manual output. The opportunity lay in an agentic AI stack that could handle the exhaustive heavy lifting – moving beyond simple alerts to autonomous execution. We saw a need for a system that could perform multi-department data and market scanning, apply criteria-based filtering and carry out automated bidding and acquisition.”

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- StackCX

SHORTLISTED

- Bumper Pro
- Carcare’s Intelligent Inspection
- CiINOW Marketing 360

- iVendi’s Finance Navigator
- Nexbotix’s The Autonomous Dealership
- Pinewood.AI’s CARS
- Rallye Digital by Portfolio Display

- Roadsafe MOT & Recall Reminder by MyCarNeedsA and ADS
- Stack CX
- UVeye

Congratulations to all the winners of the AM Awards 2026.



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Russell Bull, director, Grainger Motor Group, picked up the trophy from Michelle Reid, sales director of award sponsors Cazoo

USED CAR PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR

Winner: Grainger Motor Group

Grainger Motor Group's victory reflects one of the most significant used car transformations seen in the automotive retail sector in recent years.

The scale alone is extraordinary, but what truly sets the group apart is the discipline, structure and clarity behind the growth.

In just two years, used car turnover has surged as the group has grown both organically and by acquisition, supported by 7,067 units sold in 2025 and an average stock holding of 1,500 vehicles.

Overall group turnover has risen to £323m, underpinned by a strengthened balance sheet and net assets of £13.1m. This is not opportunistic growth, it is engineered performance.

At the heart of the success is a clearly defined five-

point strategy focusing on advert quality, sales process, pricing, sourcing and staffing.

Each area has been backed by targeted investment and measurable KPIs. From Autoloadit imaging and dedicated content teams to AI-powered call monitoring and repricing APIs, Grainger Motor Group has embraced technology not as a bolt-on, but as a core enabler of performance.

Operationally, the results are equally impressive. Stock days have reduced from 60 to 45, improving turn and capital efficiency, while F&I income has grown significantly as sales volumes grew, with penetration rising to 28%.

Customer satisfaction remains exceptional, with customer satisfaction index (CSI) scores consistently above 96%, demonstrating that rapid growth has

not come at the expense of customer experience.

The group's sourcing capability is another defining strength. A multi-channel approach spanning auctions, remarketing partners, digital platforms and a bespoke B2B2C relationship with Arval ensures consistent supply, while a forward-thinking EV strategy positions the business strongly for future demand.

Manufacturer recognition further reinforces credibility, with standout performances across Kia, Mazda and BYD networks, including multiple Dealer of the Year podium finishes and major national awards.

Overall, Grainger Motor Group delivers a masterclass in how structured execution, investment and leadership alignment can transform used car performance at pace. The key challenge ahead will be sustaining profitability at scale.

SHORTLISTED

- Arnold Clark Automobiles
- Grainger Motor Group
- MB Motors

- Steven Eagell Group
- Swansway Motor Group
- TMS

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Adam Wood, managing director, Renault UK (centre), collected the trophy from David Patterson, managing director of award sponsors Supagard

NEW CAR OF THE YEAR

Winner: Renault 5

VOTED FOR BY
AM'S DEALER
READERS

The Renault 5 stands out as one of the most significant new car launches in recent years, successfully redefining expectations around electric vehicles and bringing much-needed enthusiasm to the small car segment.

Before it went on sale, Renault received significant expressions of interest, providing valuable sales leads to retailers. Since, it has become the best-selling EV in the B segment.

By combining bold design with a clear focus on affordability and everyday usability, the 5 delivers a package that resonates strongly with both consumers and retailers.

The car has picked up more than 30 awards already, including World Car of the Year, and has helped elevate Renault's market share in the UK.

Using Renault's new small car platform, the 5 sets a benchmark for driveability with agile handling, keen performance and a balanced ride.

The car is offered with two battery packs: 40kWh or 52kWh, providing ranges of 190 miles and 250 miles, respectively.

Charging speeds of up to 100kW mean mid-journey top-ups take around half an hour, but the 5 works best in urban areas where its compact dimensions and eye-catching looks make city driving enjoyable and stress-free.

The car comes well equipped, as standard, with four trim grades and there's plenty of accessories available to provide further personalisation.

Inside, the 5 continues its retro theme, combining design details from the original Renault 5 with modern technology and infotainment. Sustainable materials are used throughout, maintaining quality without unnecessary environmental damage.

Building on the 5's success, Alpine has transformed the 5 into the sportier A290 with enhanced acceleration and an uplift in interior quality.

Nissan has also used the 5 as a base for its new Micra and Ford has signed a deal to utilise the platform for the next Fiesta.

SHORTLISTED

- Alpine A290
- Jaecoo 7
- Kia EV5

- Renault 5
- Toyota BZ4X

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Nicole Melillo Shaw, managing director, Volvo UK, picked up the trophy from Andrew Radi, chief operating officer of award sponsors Car Care Plan

USED CAR OF THE YEAR

Winner: Volvo XC60

VOTED FOR BY
AM'S DEALER
READERS

When Volvo introduced the XC60 in 2008 it opened the door to a whole new customer base and elevated the brand to being a key premium player.

It's hard to believe that the second generation car, launched in 2017, is now nine years old. It still has the look and feel of something more contemporary.

The XC60 is the best-selling Volvo, ever. More than 2.7 million have been sold, and demand shows no signs of slowing down. Its enduring popularity is a testament to Volvo's ability to deliver a product that retains its relevance and value.

Strong residual values, consistent demand and a reputation for safety and reliability make it a

confident choice for used car buyers and retailers.

The XC60 offers a compelling combination of premium appeal and everyday practicality. The current model line-up offers mild hybrid and plug-in hybrid engines, but petrol and diesel options were offered initially.

From the entry-level D4, all the way up to the Polestar-engineered T8, there's something to suit everyone. Whether it's for towing, the school run or motorway commutes, the XC60 makes light work of modern motoring.

Desirable features such as heated front seats and LED headlights come on all models, while a high-end Bowers and Wilkins hi-fi system and semi-autono-

mous 'Pilot Assist' feature on many examples.

With proven reliability, efficient powertrains and all-wheel drive on most versions, the XC60 continues to stand out in a competitive sector. Then there's Volvo's relentless commitment to safety, ensuring occupants are effectively protected from harm.

Its refined design and premium interior ensure the XC60 remains very appealing, with high-quality materials, intuitive technology and a focus on comfort that create an ownership experience that continues to meet modern expectations.

This sustained desirability is key to its success in the used market, where customers are increasingly seeking value without compromise.

SHORTLISTED

- Ford Fiesta
- Hyundai Tucson
- Land Rover Defender

- Nissan Qashqai
- Toyota Corolla
- Volvo XC60

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Adam Wood, managing director, Renault UK (centre), collected the trophy from Lance Boseley, marketing director of award sponsors Diamondbrite

NEW EV OF THE YEAR

Winner: Renault 5 E-Tech

VOTED FOR BY
AM'S DEALER
READERS

The Renault 5 marks a significant step forward in the electric car market, bringing a highly desirable product at an affordable price.

It combines standout design, everyday practicality and useable real-world range in a way that few newcomers have achieved. Drawing on the spirit of its iconic nameplate, Renault has delivered a car that is both familiar and refreshingly modern.

It's underpinned by the brand's latest AmpR Small platform, which also serves as the base for the new Renault 4.

It's optimised for agility, weight-saving and refinement – leading to a class-best driving experience.

For automotive retailers, the Renault 5 represents a highly compelling proposition. At a time when price remains a key barrier to EV adoption, the 5 is genuinely accessible, without sacrificing quality, technology or appeal. This balance is crucial in helping dealers broaden their EV customer base, attracting not only early adopters, but also more price-conscious, mainstream car buyers.

The Renault 5 is available in four trim levels with prices starting at £21,495, allowing for the Government's electric car grant.

There are two powertrain options: Urban Range and Comfort Range. The entry-level model has a 40kW battery, for up to 190 miles of driving, and a

power output of 120PS. The latter has a 150PS motor and a 52kWh battery, giving 250 miles of range.

The battery can be charged from 10%-80% in around half an hour, using a 100kW rapid charger, or in around eight hours on a typical home wallbox.

Beyond its pricing and performance, the Renault 5's distinctive styling creates immediate visual impact, helping it stand out in an increasingly competitive EV landscape, while its neat interior, intuitive technology and spacious boot ensure it fulfils the needs of buyers.

A selection of bold exterior colours complement the retro-styling, while a wide range of accessories allows for extensive personalisation.

SHORTLISTED

- Alpine A290
- Ford Puma Gen-E
- Hyundai Ioniq 9

- Kia EV5
- Renault 5
- Toyota BZ4X
- XPeng G6

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Ashley Andrew, president, Hyundai and Genesis UK (centre), picked up the trophy from Wayne Duxbury, dealer sales director of award sponsors Warrantywise

USED EV OF THE YEAR

Winner: Hyundai Ioniq 5

VOTED FOR BY
AM'S DEALER
READERS

The Hyundai Ioniq 5 quickly established itself as one of the most identifiable electric vehicles on the market thanks to its bold design and spacious interior.

These strengths carry confidently into the used sector, where the car's proven reliability, long warranty and high specification offers outstanding value to buyers.

While its shape makes it look like a small hatchback, the Ioniq 5's dimensions place it firmly in the larger segments. It offers the practicality of an SUV combined with the refinement of an executive saloon.

There's more than 500 litres of boot space and particularly generous legroom in the rear, thanks to the car's flat floor.

The futuristic styling remains a key differentiator, ensuring it continues to draw attention and still looks modern despite being five years old.

Technology is plentiful, from the electrically-retracting door handles to the semi-autonomous driver assistance systems, the Ioniq 5 is still at the forefront of functionality. Some models even feature digital door mirrors, using cameras and displays instead of conventional units.

Inside, a central touchscreen merges seamlessly with the digital instrument cluster, for a clean and modern appearance. The user interface is simple and easy to operate, but Hyundai also provides physical switchgear for most of the key functions.

Early cars came with three powertrain options,

starting with a rear-wheel drive 58kWh model that offers 240 miles of range. The 73kWh variant promises 300 miles and there's also a twin-motor all-wheel drive that sacrifices some range (273 miles) for greater performance.

A 2024 facelift saw larger battery options of 63kWh and 84kWh. The smaller unit achieves up to 273 miles of range, while the larger manages 354 miles.

Hyundai also offers the Ioniq 5N, a performance-tuned variant with custom suspension, brakes and a significant power upgrade to more than 600PS.

All variants support ultra-fast charging, using advanced 800-volt technology. This means a 10%-80% charge can be completed in just 18 minutes at a compatible charging point.

SHORTLISTED

- Ford Mustang Mach-E
- Hyundai Ioniq 5
- Kia EV3

- Tesla Model 3
- Volvo XC40 Recharge

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