

North Staffs Advanced Drivers

Advanced Dischargers Round 2?



Following on from our successful run with the Kia e-Niro, it was successful wasn't it? Our chairman, Steve, was asked by Sean, from Ken Jervis, if we would like to try out a Soul EV. We, of course, agreed.

So that we could abide by the social distancing still in place at the time of the run only two lucky people got to try it out, on separate days and with everything being sanitised between drives.

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The interior was very well laid out and quite spacious, full leather was nice although Steve felt that the seats could do with a bit more support at the sides and under the knee. One thing that was commented on by both drivers was the position of the Drive Mode Select button, being on the lower centre console this needed eyes to be taken off the road if a change was needed during a drive, on the steering wheel would have been better.

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The 10.25 in. centre touch screen could display a seemingly unending variety of information, you could spend days playing with its different screens and the drivers display also had large amounts of options.

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Another feature is the Heads Up Display, liked by both drivers, this can be limited to showing just the posted speed limit and your speed or changed to include things like navigation information, lane keeping and probably a lot more. Surprisingly it didn't distract from the view of the road ahead as it could be positioned to be just below your normal eyeline.

The performance is, in a word, stunning. With 290lb/ft torque and 200 'horses' you can go from zero to illegal in very short order and in almost complete silence, just a small amount of road noise and that is in normal mode, one of four options. Eco and Eco+ do what they say, preserving you battery life whilst sport mode almost seems superfluous given the performance of the normal setting.

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The handling was positive but in corners it did tend to roll about a bit, one of the penalties of sitting quite high, although this position does give both a good view and a feeling of safety as you are 'above' the majority of cars.

Steering was positive, the car went where you wanted it to go. Both testers made the same comment about the steering and before comparing notes, there was the occasional 'kick' from the wheel, this could be either the 'Lane Keep Assist' or 'Lane Follow Assist'. This we would have to have a look at should we have another opportunity, we were too busy this time enjoying the rest of the car.

The adjustable regenerative braking was very impressive, we found that using our normal 'accelerator sense' to slow down we slowed quicker and earlier, even on one of the lower settings, of which there are four, than we would be doing in a conventional petrol/diesel engine car. The highest setting really did feel like 'heavy' braking and was quite uncomfortable.

Once adapted to the different settings allowed driving with almost no use of the brakes, this also had the benefit of re-charging the battery so extending the range.

On the subject of charging/range Steve found the domestic power supply to seem to take for ever, taking 3 hours to go from 70% charged to 78% charged, a dedicated connector seems to be a must.

Steve's drive was some 69 miles, half on restricted speed dual carriageways and country roads, which gave him a 'miles consumed' of 35. His return, but on mainly national speed limit roads he 'consumed' 58 miles. Proof that the harder you press the pedal the less distance you can go on the same energy.

Phil's drive was on a much more mixed set of roads and involved more use of the regenerative braking, this was reflected in the fact that for 34 miles travelled on the

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road only 31 miles were 'consumed' even though some of the drive was in sport and not being shy about using the power to the full.

Under the bonnet looks like it may have a small internal-combustion engine, the give-away is the bright orange cables and the warnings about 'high voltage'



The 12V battery does still seem to be superfluous, given the size of the battery which drives the car, but the assumption that it provides power to all the auxiliary systems still seems the most logical.

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So in summary both testers liked most of the car.

The shape, being more 'boxy' than most, would only lend its-self to some people, compared to the e-Niro, which may have a wider appeal shape wise.

Power and handling of both cars was, certainly from my point of view, more than I was perhaps expecting from a full electric vehicle and the range reported by the car was pretty true to the actual distance you could travel, unless you were doing a lot of higher speeds when it dropped off.

Producing cars of this quality will keep Kia well in the mix.

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