



A networking tool for Activists and other interested parties

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[Acknowledgments: George Legg. Selina Lavendar. Leon & Lembit. Ian Churchlow. Plus, of course, anyone else I've forgotten]

EDITORIAL

So, Wales are talking of reducing 30mph limits to 20mph which could save up to 10 lives a year. We have the same thing in Bristol plus, of course, the inevitable traffic calming.

Whilst I am all for cutting down on RTA casualties I also believe the lives saved taking such measures should be measured against those suffering

asthmas and other respiratory diseases caused by slower traffic.

Some Cities are beginning to realise that the above measures have caused much worse pollution resulting in more respiratory problems.

Controversial!

Of course, Mrs May has called a General Election. Nauseating as that may be to some of us, its happening. Hence, MAG is on the case and it is a chance for you to question the candidates in your constituency. To help anyone with this, included in this edition, is a document MAG has published during the past week -

General Election Handbook - which is an excellent tool.

The highlight of this whole thing, for me, is a clip you may have seen on TV of 'Betty from Bristol' who, when asked by the reporter 'what do you think of Mrs May calling a General Election?' Betty's response was 'what another one?' Indeed, Betty, indeed!

MAG will be publishing its manifesto for this ~~farce, fiaseo,~~ oops, sorry for letting my own personal opinion creep in there, Election imminently so keep a look out for it on our website, email lists etc.

Meanwhile, Ride safe and free, AG

Copy for the June edition to me: aine@mag-uk.org by 25th May please

Network report from our Political Unit – Leon & Lembit (19.04.17)

Here's an update from Leon and Lembit – your Political Unit – on the latest developments in a turbulent Parliamentary period.

General Election – 8th June 2017.

In a surprise move, the Prime Minister, Theresa May, has called a General Election. This is interesting at many levels, not least because we're meant to live in an era of 'fixed term' Parliaments where elections occur every five years. However, she's found a way to hold the election on 8th June this year, leaving little time for everyone to prepare. As far as MAG is concerned, we're going to make the most of it to get bikes on the political agenda. Here's how we're planning to manage it:

- 1 The Political Unit will approach each party centrally to secure a statement of intent regarding motorcycling.
- 2 We MIGHT have access to the party leaders as a result of some work Lembit is doing – more of this to come if it happens. In this case, we need to take the opportunity to share our agenda as briefly and clearly as possible. Promises made now can be cashed in later.
- 3 We're also updating the MAG manifesto for motorcycling as used in the 2015 General Election. A few small things have changed but largely the same themes apply.
- 4 You're most welcome to organise local events to invite the candidates to attend and clarify their position on riding. We have a 'how to' guide which is available from HQ – just call 01926 844 064. It's simple and easy – all it needs is a bit of preparation time and calling around.

- 5 Alternatively, you can attend one of the many debates which will occur all over the country where candidates will have to answer questions from the public. That's the very simplest way to raise biking matters without having to organise something yourself.
- 6 Keep your question specific – about an actual thing you want them to do, not just a general moan which won't deliver a commitment of action.
- 7 Key themes could include: giving bikes a better deal on road tax (technically: Vehicle Excise Duty) on account of bikes' congestion busting and environment friendly qualities; bike parking; motorcycle theft and assaults on bikers; bikes in bus lanes; an exemption on user charging; or a local issue which has come up. Keep it short and simple and if you can provide them with the desired answer in how you phrase the question, that helps too.
- 8 If a big political figure is visiting your area, see if you can meet them or attend in such a way that you can mention biking.
- 9 Success in this election campaign is specific commitments from the major parties on the areas we're concerned about in terms of riders' rights.
- 10 There's so little time that the whole election will have happened BEFORE the next issue of The Road. As such we won't be printing statements in the magazine but we will share what we get via electronic routes.
- 11 Please keep us posted on any statements you may have or comments you hear from party representatives.

An election is a chance to build our profile and get the sort of commitments which will help us across the next five years. We're all wise to make the most of it.

Silvertown Tunnel and user charging

The consultation on the proposed new Thames Crossing in Central London is now over. The Panel is now considering the info they've received – including from MAG. We've made our views clear about the need for an exemption for motorcycles and scooters regarding user charging. The applicants want to charge bikes and we think they're wrong. Lembit feels the Panel has taken MAG's submissions seriously and we'll have to wait and see what they propose.

ULEZ

The Ultra Low Emission Zone – again in London – is open to consultation. Bikes are included in this too. It's being proposed that older bikes are charged the SAME as cars - £12.50. It's an insane charge because it totally fails to understand that even an old bike makes almost none of the emissions which the London authorities are concerned about. Lembit is preparing a formal response but please make YOUR views felt on their consultation website where anyone can submit a comment. You'll find that at:

<https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/environment/air-quality-consultation-phase-2/?intcmp=47032>

If we can ensure hundreds of responses that would make a significant impact on how bikes are seen and treated. If you do just one political thing in the next two weeks, please make a response to this consultation.

Light segregation – Coroners

Leon continues to be heavily involved the process of challenging the use of 'Light Segregation'– aka, Armadillos Orcas & Mini Orcas to 'reallocate'/steal road space from bikers in order to and hive it off for the exclusive use of cyclists. We strongly object for two key reasons:

First, these lumps of hard plastic are potentially lethal Trip Hazards that increase risks of serious or even fatal injury for all vulnerable road users including bikers. Secondly, most schemes involve cuts in road width for bikers to manoeuvre in which also increases our risks of serious or fatal incidents.

Bus lanes

There has been progress in terms of bus lanes with some other local authorities introducing permission for riders to use them. A notable success is in Brent in North London where Tim Fawthrop and Leon have secured an about turn from a local authority which was originally hostile to bikers but now sees the benefits of powered two wheelers. IF you've got any bus lane issues please let Leon know directly or through Central Office on 01926 844 064.

Brexit & Getting the Bike Test Back on UK Roads

Huge amounts of UK legislation needs to be changed to reflect our exit from the EU. One upside of this is an opportunity to change legislation that was bad for bikers as a result of EU Directives. Leon has advised that we should focus our efforts on one key issue as lots of lobby groups will be attempting to do the same thing in their fields of interest – and NC have agreed that our goal should be to enable learner riders to take all practical aspects of the motorcycle test on UK roads. This will be a long term campaign and Leon has taken some initial steps to scope out the action needed.

Media

Lembit did a long interview on BBC Northern Ireland about older drivers and the need to recognise the risks which could occur if individuals don't display a sufficient driving ability. Lembit spoke about the idea of having some kind of informal assessment, but more than self-assessment. He also said that it was important to base any such move on accident data. MAG may wish to have a longer discussion on our views on this as it is an increasing debate around the country.

Salisbury Surprise

It's been confirmed that this event IS going ahead on Sunday 30th April thanks to the efforts of Finbar Colson and others in the Salisbury area. It's a good example of mature negotiations with the local authority. Well done!

Here to help

If you need anything from your Political Unit, just get in touch. We're at your service!

MAG PUBLISHES GENERAL ELECTION HANDBOOK, PRICE: FREE

This version: 2017 04 28

Theresa May has announced a snap general election for June 8th, 2017 - but don't fear: MAG has the answer to getting the biker's message across using the updated MAG General Election Handbook 2017.

The Handbook covers setting up a debate, sending correspondence to the political parties and activists and engaging with the candidates. 'We updated the Handbook because of the extra information, helpful tips and experience gained by MAG members during and since the last election,' explains committed MAG activist Michael Armstrong, who has played an active role in improving the Handbook. 'We've also been developing the materials during by-elections and routine dealings with MPs, Councillors and media. The price of the Handbook is zero: we're sharing it for free. All you have to do is follow the link: https://wiki.mag-uk.org/images/9/94/MAG_General_Election_Handbook_2017.pdf or get in touch with MAG HQ using the contact details provided at the end of this release.'

The Handbook explains how to set up a debate, and how to ask the right questions at other debates. This is usually permitted and it can be the fastest way to get the riders' message across.

Michael adds 'in terms of correspondence we have a new option of using a questionnaire, which has been tried and tested. We have a list of questions which can be copied and pasted, including a standard wording for an email to use with the questions. All that's required is to fill in the blanks and press SEND.'

So you can use any one of the options - or all three. Now is the time to make our voice heard at the General Election, so that biker-friendly policies are written into manifestos and changes made to national party policies: because there's a lobbyist in every one of us.

Contact MAG at 01926 844 064 or central-office@mag-uk.org

MAG National Training Weekend

10th - 12th November 2017

MAG is pleased to announce the return of its Activists' Training Weekend. This first event for a number of years will be held at York Racecourse Centre over the weekend of 10th - 12th November 2017.

Arrive Friday evening for a meal and informal chat about MAG, followed by structured training sessions on Saturday and Sunday. Depart Sunday lunchtime.

Accommodation is en-suite twin rooms. A £25.00 per-person deposit is required to secure

your booking (returned when you attend). Priority will be given to serving MAG officers for these limited places.

To register your interest, please contact central-office@mag-uk.org or tel: 01926 844064 with your name, membership number and MAG role including group/region (if a MAG officer).

More details to follow.

PRESS RELEASES

MAG Asks Parties: What Do You Offer 5 Million Bikers?



MAG is approaching the political parties to ask them: what will you do for the millions of bikers who are voters too?

With the announcement of a General Election on 8th June 2017, MAG is insisting on answers to the question: what will your party do for bikers? The question matters because there are scores of seats in which the motorcycling vote exceeds the majority of the sitting

MP.

MAG's Political Unit is already preparing to engage with the parties at the highest level on the basis that the 'biking vote' could swing the result of the entire election. 'We'll be launching our manifesto for biking and inviting the parties to provide an official response,' says MAG Chair, Selina Lavender. 'Given the short time available we'll be handling quite a lot of this centrally. However, candidates can fully expect local bikers to be quizzing them on their biking policies too. Nobody expects politicians to all be experts on motorcycling but what we're looking for is a positive mind-set and a willingness to see bikes as part of the transport solution, rather than part of the problem.'



MAG is also offering support to bikers who wish to organise their own local debates for candidates. 'We have a 'how to' guide which is available from HQ,' explains Lembit Öpik, MAG's Director of Communications & Public Affairs. 'Just call 01926 844 064. It's very straightforward – all it needs is a little preparation time and calling around.'

Alternatively, you can attend one of the many debates which will occur all over the country where candidates will have to answer questions from the public.

Key themes for MAG include: giving bikes a better deal on Vehicle Excise Duty on account of bikes' congestion-busting and environment-friendly qualities; bike parking; motorcycle theft and assaults on bikers; bikes in bus lanes; and exemption from user-charging. 'Elections are the times when politicians have to listen and respond to the public: their careers depend on it,' adds Selina. 'As riders, we're wise to make the most of these opportunities.'

MAG Challenges Polluted Thinking About Motorbikes

MAG invites riders to participate in the crucial consultation over potentially disastrous charges in London for riders who own older motorcycles.



The organisation responsible for transport policy in the Capital, Transport for London (TfL), has revealed proposals to slap a huge charge on riders who use bikes built prior to around 2007. The charge, called 'ULEZ' (which stands for Ultra Low Emissions Zone) is pegged at £12.50 per day, every day you ride in the city: exactly the same as that proposed for old petrol and relatively new diesel cars. It applies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, even if you ride for 20 seconds from one end of your street to the other.

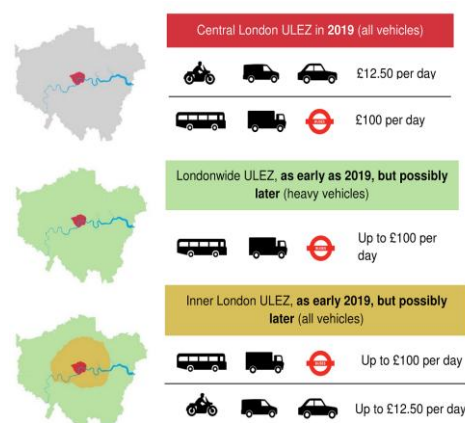
'We've seen a lot of anti-biking moves in London but this one takes the biscuit,' says MAG's Chair, Selina Lavender. 'TfL's only justification for trying to charge riders £12.50 a day is on environmental grounds. But the figures for the emissions they're interested are negligible in respect to bikes. MAG estimates that with Nitrogen Dioxide (NOx), bikes produce at most one three-thousandth of this emission, while gas central heating accounts for almost two-fifths of it in the city centre. As for particulate matter (PMs), even electric cars produce more than bikes do. It looks like TfL are trying to charge us just because they can. MAG is taking a stand and this is a red line for us. It amounts to blatant discrimination against a mode of transport which helps to solve the emissions problem a lot better than even electric cars.'

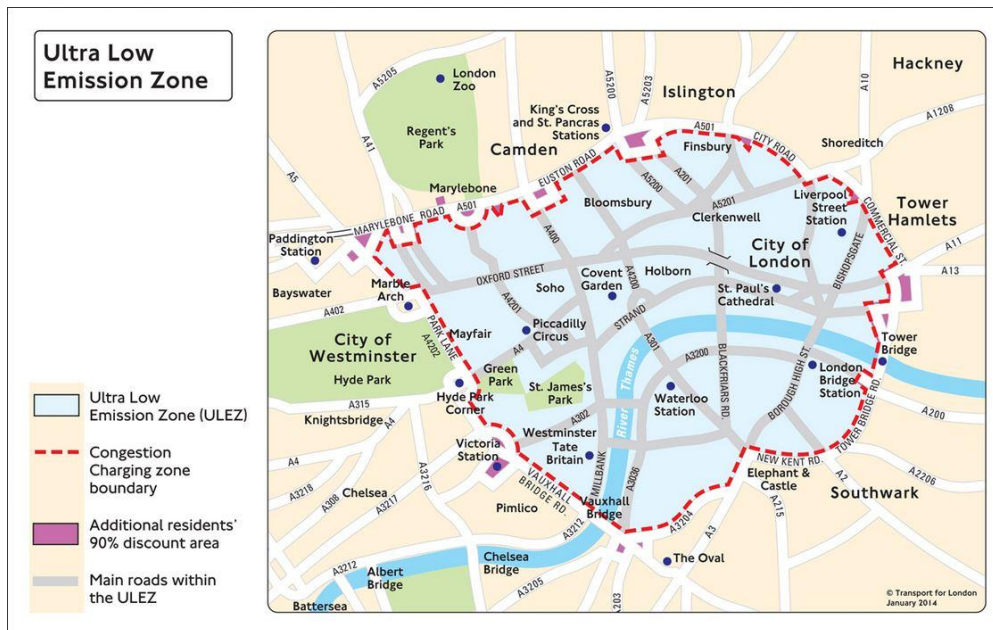
Selina is asking you to respond to the consultation, objecting to the principle of charging riders. 'A discount is not acceptable either, as this simply punishes us less for doing the right thing. The environmental and congestion benefits of bikes – including old ones – are massive. Please add your voice to our opposition to the ULEZ charge on motorcycles and scooters of any age by sending your comments to:

tfl.gov.uk/airquality-consultation

The consultation ends on 25th June 2017 and our objective is to get as many responses in as possible regarding this discriminatory charge.

Contact MAG at 01926 844 064 or central-office@mag-uk.org





MAG asks: is Brent the most bike-friendly borough in London?

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the UK's leading voice for riders, has praised the decision by Brent Council in London to allow bikes in bus lanes for a trial period.

This move was given the thumbs-up by the Highways Committee and received overwhelming support. The decision, which is reported in full on Brent Council's website, contains plans to progress the pilot scheme in the first quarter of the new financial year. 'This project will help the Council let bikers know they're free to use the bus lane on this important route,' explains London MAG's Regional Representative, Tim Fawthrop. 'I told them we'd be delighted to share the good news and give credit to the Local Authority who have come a very long way in terms of their bike-friendly policies over the last couple of years. I'm wondering if this move makes them the most bike-friendly borough in London?'

MAG's Campaigns and Policy Adviser, Dr Leon Mannings adds, 'This is a classic example of how MAG helps Local Authorities tackle problems.' The move follows over three years of dialogue with Brent, following the antics of a handful of individuals on bikes that caused mayhem on the Rainsford Road. 'We agreed steps to stop the hooligan element in their tracks' adds Leon. We also helped clarify the positive role of motorcycling and ways to improve conditions for the vast majority of people who ride motorcycles in or through the Borough responsibly.

Tim has been in regular talks with Sandor Fazekas, Project Development Manager for Highways & Infrastructure at Brent Council, leading to new policy that was implemented on March 27th. The scheme permits bus-lane usage on the A404 Harrow road. Their Brent Rider, Bike Safe, and Good Egg road safety initiatives make biking safer and more accessible throughout Brent. There are also plans for 30 new vehicle-activated LED 'slow down' signs which will include a Think Bike message. 'It's worth noting that we began all this when the council wanted to permanently ban bikes from certain areas,' adds Tim. 'The

final result is more access, not less, and that's fantastic. Brent has been great to work with and have set high standards of constructive engagement that we hope other Authorities will rise to.'

Find out more and read the decision at:

<http://democracy.brent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?id=3719>

Contact MAG at 01926 844 064 or central-office@mag-uk.org
ENDS

Following on from L&L's report on ULEZ, please see below:-

Mayor plans to introduce Ultra Low Emission Zone in April 2019

04 April 2017 Mayor's press releases

The most-polluting vehicles will have to pay a daily charge to drive within central London from 8 April 2019 under bold proposals announced today by the Mayor of London to help combat the capital's toxic air crisis.

Sadiq Khan is proposing to expand this charge, the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), across Greater London for heavy diesel vehicles, including buses, coaches and lorries, in 2020, and up to the North and South Circular roads for cars and vans in 2021.

The Mayor is committed to taking ambitious action to protect Londoners from the damaging health impacts of air pollution. He has more than doubled funding spent on tackling air quality to £875 million over the next five years. Today he set out his vision of tackling toxic vehicle emissions across Greater London.

The Mayor has already confirmed the £10 T-Charge, which will start in October this year. He is now proposing, following a public consultation he is launching today, that this will be replaced by the introduction of the world's first Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) in central London from Monday 8th April 2019. The ULEZ in 2019 will cover the same area as the existing congestion charging zone.

Petrol vehicles that don't meet Euro 4 standards and diesel vehicles that do not meet Euro 6 standards will have to pay a ULEZ daily fee (£12.50 for cars, vans and motorbikes; £100 for buses, coaches and HGVs) to drive in the zone, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Approximately petrol cars more than 13 years old in 2019, and diesel cars more than 4 years old in 2019, will not meet the new standards. The total cost, with the congestion charge added (during the times of day it is applicable), for motorists with non-compliant cars will be £24 a day.

The ULEZ will apply to all vehicle types, except black taxis. It is estimated that introducing ULEZ in central London will result in nearly a 50 per cent reduction in road transport NOx emissions in 2020.

Once the Mayor has finished consulting on the current ULEZ proposals in June, he wants to start consulting on actions that go even further. This would include expanding the ULEZ across a larger area, to cover nearly all of Greater London. This expanded zone would apply to heavy diesel vehicles such as buses, coaches and lorries and it would be implemented in 2020.

Following that, the Mayor wants to go even further still and consult Londoners on extending the ULEZ area applying to light vehicles, such as cars, vans, minibuses and motorcycles up to the North / South Circular road. This would be implemented in 2021.

These timescales would provide Londoners, motorists coming into the capital from elsewhere and businesses which will be affected, sufficient time to take the necessary steps to prepare for these new standards. They also reflect the minimum amount of time needed for TfL to consult on and implement such technically complex schemes over such large parts of London.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan said: “The air in London is lethal and I will not stand by and do nothing.

‘Today I’m announcing bold proposals which are critically needed to safeguard Londoners from our air quality health crisis.

“I am introducing a new T-Charge this October and subject to consultation, I want to introduce the Ultra Low Emission Zone in central London in April 2019. This alone will mean the capital has the toughest emission standard of any world city.

‘But the scale of our air quality challenge is so big that I need to go further. I want to expand the ULEZ from 2020 for heavy vehicles such as buses, coaches and lorries so that all of London will benefit from cleaner air. Then from 2021, I want to expand it up to the North and South Circular roads for light vehicles, including cars and vans. These measures will help improve the air that millions of Londoners breathe.

‘I want to announce my intention to consult on these proposals in good time so that business and those affected by new charges will have time to make changes they need to adapt to our low emission requirements.

‘Now I urge the Government to step up and match my ambition to transform the appalling air we breathe. Ministers need to deliver a national vehicle scrappage fund, reform fiscal incentives like vehicle excise duty and pass a powerful new Clean Air Act to Act end the toxic smog in London once and for all.”

Each scheme will be subject to consultation and the Mayor is committed to listening to Londoners’ views. The consultation on the Mayor’s proposal on bringing forward the start date of the central London ULEZ will launch on 4 April 2017 and run until 25 June 2017. Other proposals will be consulted on later this year.

The Mayor is working with TfL to ensure London’s public transport fleets lead the way in low emission technology. TfL will no longer procure double deck pure diesel buses from 2018 and instead only buy hybrid, electric or hydrogen buses. All new taxis will need to be zero emission capable from next year and new private hire vehicles will need to follow suit from 2020.

The Mayor announced his plans at the Museum of London this morning where objects from the 1952 Great Smog were on display.

Alex Werner, Head of History Collections at the Museum of London, said: “We know from the Great Smog of 1952 that London has a history of polluted air and the smog eventually led to Government legislation, introducing the Clean Air act of 1956 bringing ‘smokeless zones’ to London and other British cities. It’s an ongoing issue, especially for people living and working in Central London, and a topic that we’ll be exploring this year as part of our City Now City Future season.”

Cllr Julian Bell, London Councils' executive member for transport and environment, said: "London Councils supports measures to continue to address poor air quality in the capital, which we know is a major concern for many Londoners, and welcomes the Mayor's pledge to listen to the consultation responses received. It is vital for national, regional and local governments to work together, alongside our residents, to help clean up our city's filthy air and improve health and quality of life."

Jonathan Grigg, Professor of Paediatric and Environmental Medicine, Queen Mary University of London said: "The Mayor of London is to be congratulated in bringing forward the date of the ULEZ. Reducing diesel emissions in the congestion charge zone will reduce exposure to toxic soot particles and gases. To maximise the effectiveness of this initiative, the Government must now act to remove the current toxic fleet of diesel cars, vans and buses from all our roads"

Notes to editors

1. The public consultation launches on 4th April for more info visit www.tfl.gov.uk/airquality-consultation
 2. The T-charge will begin in October 2017. It is the toughest enforced emission standard of any world city that will run continuously during congestion charging hours until the Ultra Low Emission Zone is delivered
 3. The ULEZ will replace the T-charge. There will be a "sunset period" when the charges won't apply for residents of the zone, starting in April 2019 and running until April 2022, in recognition that residents with vehicles are unable to avoid driving into the zone. There will also be a sunset period for vehicles with a disabled or disabled passenger tax class (i.e. they have been especially adapted for use by a disabled person) from April 2019 until September 2023, in recognition of the limited alternatives for these vehicles, which may have had substantial modifications. The total sunset period for these vehicles will therefore be 4 years and 5 months. For more information on ULEZ visit <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone>
 4. The ULEZ will require cars, motorcycles, vans, minibuses, buses, coaches and heavy goods vehicles to meet minimum exhaust emissions standards. A vehicle that does not meet the ULEZ standard would still be able to drive in central London but would be required to pay a daily charge to do so. The charges for non-compliant heavy vehicles including HGVs, buses and coaches would be £100 per day. Light vehicles for non-compliant including cars, motorcycles, vans and minibuses would pay a daily charge of £12.50. ULEZ would apply 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Motorists can pay the charge online or over the phone, there is also an option to sign-up for automatic billing.
 5. As further evidence that London is open and leading global efforts to tackle climate change, the Greater London Authority is today hosting the second annual C40 Financing Sustainable Cities Forum at London City Hall. The event – hosted with Citi Foundation and World Resources Institute – brings together executives from financial institutions, the private sector and more than a dozen city governments to secure financing for green policies and sustainable infrastructure in cities around the world. Full details and a live stream of the event can be found [here](#).
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Motor racing boost to English tourism (DfT 7 April 2017)

New laws come into force on 10 April 2017 which will allow motor racing events to take place on closed public roads in England.

The move could see small races hosted by local communities, bigger European rallies or even a future Monaco-style Grand Prix in an English city, offering huge economic benefits to local communities.

Transport Minister Andrew Jones said:

Britain is a world leader in the motorsport industry and this will further cement our position. There are already races of this kind in some areas of the British Isles which are incredibly popular, attracting thousands of spectators. New road races will boost local economies through increased tourism and hospitality, and offer community opportunities such as volunteering.

The Motor Sports Association and the Auto-Cycle Union, the respective governing bodies for four- and two-wheel motor sport in the UK, will be authorised to issue permits for the races. They must consult the council, police and other local bodies and be fully satisfied that the event will be safe. Local authorities have the final say over whether a race can go ahead, and may require additional safety measures before, during or after the event as a condition of allowing a race to take place.

Roads Minister Andrew Jones and Ben Taylor, Managing Director, International Motor Sports, with a Porsche 911 GT3 Cup race car and a Mygale-Ford Formula 4 car.
Roads Minister Andrew Jones and Ben Taylor, Managing Director, International Motor Sports, with a Mygale-Ford Formula 4 car and a Porsche 911 GT3 Cup race car.

Rob Jones, Motor Sports Association Chief Executive, said:

This is a seismic shift for UK motorsport, and one that the MSA and the wider motorsport community have pursued determinedly for many years. We can now take motorsport to the people, and in turn those local hosting communities have the opportunity to benefit from the economic boost that these events may provide.

Gary Thompson MBE BEM, Auto Cycle Union General Secretary and Clerk of the Course for the TT, said:

A lot of hard work has gone into making this happen. Working with the MSA and the Department for Transport, putting this legislation in place will make a big difference to road racing in this country. Obviously this will make road racing more attractive as new opportunities come along but also will have a positive economic impact on those areas staging closed public road racing which can only be a big plus for motorcycle racing and those areas wanting to host such an event.

Roads Minister Andrew Jones with Porsche driver Tom Sharp.
Roads Minister Andrew Jones with Tom Sharp, Porsche 2015 Rookie champion.

Nigel Mansell CBE, former F1 world champion, said:

I have seen first-hand the very significant impact of motor sport on the economy of the Isle of Man and Jersey, so this is a great move forward for the sport and will bring visitors and pride to parts of the country that wish to stage such events. I am delighted that this government is embracing motorsport, which will assist the UK's world-leading position and improve the sport's ability to help provide opportunities and focus for young people.

The government consulted on changing the law to allow racing on British roads in 2014. There were 6,077 responses from individuals, local authorities, police forces and other organisations, with an overwhelming majority in favour of the proposals.

Gov.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/motor-racing-boost-to-english-tourism>

FEMA

MAG UK director Ian Churchlow wrote an opinion piece on the motorcycle taxation system in the United Kingdom. Ian Churchlow is also MAG UK's delegate to FEMA.

My friend Andy and I were discussing the concept of fairness when it comes to the governments' environmental taxation policy on motor vehicles. Our conversation was the sort of exchange that often develops in the convivial atmosphere of a wine bar after good food and a few glasses of alcohol. Andy rides a fabulous six cylinder BMW 1600GT which he mainly uses for two-up touring abroad but being UK based, he expressed some concerns about the tax he is forced to pay to ride his motorcycle.



The author, Ian Churchlow

How much should a motorcyclist pay in 'road tax' when the driver of a similar capacity car pays substantially less tax or no tax at all? Is the amount of Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) a motorcyclist pays, 'fair' when the government has declared that the reason for the current vehicle tax regime is that the biggest polluter should pay the most?

The requirement for vehicles to pay and display tax discs in the United Kingdom began in 1921 with the implementation of the 1920 Roads and Finance Act. It was originally intended that revenues raised from Road Tax would pay for the upkeep of UK roads but by 1937 this concept had unravelled and Road Tax revenue was no longer exclusively used to pay for road maintenance.

Motorcycles are currently charged VED on the basis of engine capacity and not on their environmental credentials, despite the fact that a motorcycle is, on nearly every occasion, the much more environmentally friendly transport option. Bikes are lighter, they use less raw materials in their construction, they use less fuel, take up less road space and when we arrive at our destination they require only a fraction of the parking space occupied by a car. They also reduce traffic congestion for other vehicles when used instead of a car. Despite all this, our disproportionately high VED remains, either as a reflection of the ignorance of our

politicians or a subliminal message that motorcycling is essentially wrong and that we should be discouraged from owning or riding a motorcycle.

The existing UK motor tax regime has a number of fundamental flaws, which make it structurally unfit for purpose. Put simply, the UK tax on motorcycles conflicts with the wider European trend of including environmental and safety incentives on all motor vehicle taxation and the UK's current system absolutely violates the concept of equal treatment for all road user groups. The present tax levy has become nothing more than a fiscal tax on motorcycle ownership and it has nothing to do with the comparative benefits that a motorcycle brings to the environment.

Motorcyclists already pay more than their fair share of tax, contributing to the public purse when registering a new motorcycle, paying VAT on the price of a motorcycle, VAT on motorcycle parts, VAT on accessories and services, fuel taxation and the greatest imposition of all, tax charged on tax via the 20% VAT charged on the total price of fuel which includes the fuel duty (this equates to around *67% of the price we pay for each litre of fuel (*figures RAC Foundation 2016)) not to mention the additional 9.5% tax we pay on insurance premiums!

Motorcycle businesses employ thousands of tax-paying staff. Travel and tourism businesses forward VAT and income tax revenues generated from sales to motorcyclists. So why does the government, chose to further penalize motorcyclists by insisting that we are liable for a disproportionately high VED compared to car drivers? One can only surmise that the reason they have chosen to do this is because they believe they can get away with it – motorcyclists are a minority and it is always much easier to impose an unfair tax on a small group of individuals than on the majority of a population. Due to the additional VED motorcyclists are forced to pay, the result, not surprisingly, is a reduction in motorcycle related discretionary spending. So contrary to popular wisdom and the politicians' hopes, the current situation actually reduces overall tax revenues (because money is no longer spent on motorcycling activities). Thus high motorcycle VED rates harm motorcycle businesses and the industry in general. Motorcycle VED also slows the renewal rate of the motorcycle fleet, which seriously conflicts with both the environmental and safety targets set by the government in its transport policy.

The current motor vehicle tax regime in the United Kingdom creates a failure of trust in the parliamentary system because riders perceive the regime as unjust.

Other countries have accepted the facts and recognise motorcycles as a valid form of transport. Our own politicians need to be guided towards the truth of the detrimental consequences of our so called environmental motor taxation system. British motorcyclists and the voting public at large should not accept such political arrogance and the enforcement of an explicitly harmful tax law.

Written by Ian Churchlow, Director TMAG UK

And,

SMC, the Swedish FEMA member organization, is working in all fields concerning motorcycle safety. SMC has just released guidelines which show how roads can be improved for motorcyclists.

SMC's Maria Nordqvist: "Today there are few initiatives of adapting the roads to other users than those travelling by car. Our guidelines include advice to all road authorities on how to include motorcyclists when roads are planned, built and maintained. The guidelines are based on accidents in Sweden, research, facts and regulations in Sweden and similar initiatives in other countries."

Maria continues: "These guidelines are essential to include motorcyclists in the Vision Zero concept since there are no guidelines about the inclusion of motorcycle safety in the regulation for infrastructure. This is the reason for SMC to write the guidelines about safer roads and streets for riders. The guidelines are printed and will be sent to SMC's 67,000 members with the membership magazine in the end of April with a request to spread the information to everybody involved in roads and road safety."

SMC will also send the guidelines to all stakeholders involved in road safety in Sweden; road authorities in Sweden, all local authorities and regions, the government, the Swedish Transport Administration, the Swedish Transport Agency and many more. SMC also offers personal contact with motorcyclists all over Sweden in order to start cooperation for improved safety for all vulnerable road users, including motorcyclists.

Wales: reducing 30mph limits to 20mph could save up to 10 lives a year

New research has suggested that if all 30mph limit roads in Wales became 20mph limits, up to 10 lives and 2,000 casualties could be prevented each year.

Published in the BMJ Journals' 'Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health' on 23 March, the research is authored by Public Health Wales' Sarah J Jones and Huw Brunt.

The research concludes that a default 20mph limit is the 'solution to increasing public health problems in Wales', adding that road traffic injuries, air pollution and obesity are 'an inter-related, interdependent triad'.

Identifying interventions that will impact positively on road traffic injuries and air quality, and encourage active travel, has been described as 'a significant public health challenge'.

The Public Health Wales paper set out to explore whether 20mph limits could be an effective intervention. The researchers reviewed the available evidence to identify the effect of 20mph limits on health and well-being, and then estimated the effect of a change to a 20mph limit on road traffic casualties and air pollution.

They found that between six and 10 lives would be saved and 1,200-2,000 casualties avoided each year, at a 'value of prevention of £58-£94m'.

In terms of air pollution, the researchers estimate that deaths attributed to nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) may increase by 63, and 'years of life' lost by 753. However, deaths attributed to particulates (PM_{2.5}) - the mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets in the air - may decrease by 117 and years of life lost by 1,400.

Dr Adrian Davis, who was a founding member of the Transport & Health Study Group (UK), says this is the first time that researchers have been able to assess, at a country-wide level, the likely health impacts of a switch from 30mph to 20mph.

In an 'essential evidence' paper on the Travelwest website, Dr Davis says 20mph limits could be 'an extremely important public health intervention'.

- See more at: BMJ: <http://jech.bmj.com/content/early/2017/03/23/jech-2016-208859>
Travel West: <https://travelwest.info/project/ee-no-159-switch-30-mph-20mph-achieve-across-whole-countrys-population>

And, in Wales again:-

South Wales Police calls for footage of traffic offences

A second Welsh police force has launched 'Operation Snap', which encourages members of the public to submit footage and images of road traffic offences being committed.

Announced on 3 April and working in partnership with Go Safe (the Wales Road Safety Casualty Reduction Partnership), South Wales Police has followed in the footsteps of North Wales Police who developed Operation Snap and launched it last October.

South Wales Police says Operation Snap will provide a 'safe alternative way' to share footage of road traffic offences.

Assistant chief constable (ACC) Jeremy Vaughan of South Wales Police says the operation will enable communities to help keep the region's roads safe, which he described as 'a key policing priority'.

Police are calling for footage showing evidence of dangerous driving, driving without due care and attention, contravening solid white lines, mobile phone use, improper control of a vehicle and contravening red traffic lights.

To submit footage, members of the public have to complete a form available on the Go Safe website. Once the footage has been reviewed, officers will update the individual as to what action will be taken.

ACC Vaughan said: “The operation will enable our communities to help us assist in a key policing priority, to continue to keep the roads of South Wales safe.

“Our officers will still be policing the roads 24 hours a day, seven days a week but we know that members of the public are keen to help, and I am pleased that we can provide an easier way to submit footage and images either whilst travelling as a passenger, or using the footage of dash cams that can be submitted at a later date when the driver has finished their journey.”

Chris Hume, partnership manager, GoSafe said: “Operation Snap will allow us to work together and help simplify the way motorists can report motoring offences.”

- See more at: S Wales Police: <https://www.south-wales.police.uk/en/newsroom/operation-snap/>

Digital driving licence could arrive by 2018

A digital version of the driving licence may be available for use as soon as next year, the DVLA has announced.

In its 2017/18 business plan, published on 30 March, the DVLA confirmed it will be developing a ‘quick, easy and secure service to allow customers to view a representation of their driving licence on their smartphone’.

DVLA intends to have a trial version of the new digital licence up and running by September 2017, but the new licence will not replace the full driving licence.

The RAC has broadly welcomed the move, while adding that some drivers will need to be reassured that it is ‘totally safe’ and will not lead to ‘increased fraud or abuse’.

The digital licence will only be available to drivers who have authenticated themselves on the DVLA website.

The DVLA says the driver ‘will be in control of their data’ and will be able to ‘share and validate driver information with trusted third parties through a secure website’. The new service will be available 24/7.

Plans for a new digital driving licence were first revealed in a tweet by Oliver Morley, chief executive of the DVLA, in May 2016.

Pete Williams, RAC spokesman, said: “The majority of motorists will welcome this advance as a positive step embracing technology and making it easier and more convenient.

“Drivers will just need to be reassured that it is totally safe and will not lead to increased fraud or abuse. It is also important to note that this electronic licence is not a replacement for the plastic licence and it will still be necessary to carry this with you as it will only be available where you have a web connection.”

- See more at: DVLA:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/604721/dvla-business-plan-2017-18.pdf

If they can do it in Dulwich – why not approach your Council:

Motorcyclists in East Dulwich have been encouraged to apply for free ‘anchors’, as a unique way of warding off growing numbers of bike thefts.

Bike owners need to apply to their local ward councillors and arrange for an appointment to have an anchor installed in their driveways.

Lib Dem councillor for East Dulwich ward, James Barber, said: “There has been an increase in motorbike thefts, and often the stolen bikes are then used to commit further crimes. The anchors need to be attached to something substantial like a concrete block.

“We have had 25 installed so far in my ward. We’re the only ward in the borough that’s installing them, and we have yet to have one stolen. It’s been really successful and we’re looking to install lots more.”

A pot of £10,000 has been provided by the council, and anyone who wants one for their driveway need only apply directly to Cllr Barber, and the council will send out an application form. The applicant pays nothing. “They cost £500 to have them installed, with the concrete to be lain and the contractor to do a quick survey,” James said.

“But when you factor in the cost of losing a bike, and the investigation that needs to be carried out by the police, it actually saves money to the public purse as a crime-prevention scheme.”

Local resident Adam Moore said: “I have always been concerned about leaving my motorbike outside my house in East Dulwich due the terrible bike theft problem we have in the area. We regularly have gangs of bike thieves circulating the area on mopeds, looking for motorbikes to steal.

“A neighbour advised that James Barber was trying to help local residents by offering a free Motorcycle Ground Anchor. Not only was the anchor free, but professionally installed for free too. I was aware there were limited numbers available, but delighted to have secured one very quickly when I approached James Barber. Since the installation, there have been attempts in the road, but no bikes have been taken. I’m really pleased with the peace of mind the anchor gives me.”

The anchors are currently only available in East Dulwich because James and his ward colleagues are the only councillors who have asked for funding from the council.

A few interesting links you may wish to take a look at:-

Register to vote

GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

New Permanent Secretary at the Department for Transport

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-permanent-secretary-at-the-department-for-transport>

Who DVLA shares data with

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/who-dvla-shares-data-with>

Driving test changes: 4 December 2017

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/driving-test-changes-4-december-2017>

European Parliament Committee on Transport and Tourism

DRAFT REPORT on a European Strategy for Low Emission Mobility (2016/2327(INI))

Committee on Transport and Tourism

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=COMPARTL&reference=PE-602.934&format=PDF&language=EN&secondRef=01>

Driving licence WARNING – Failing to do THIS one thing WILL land you a £1,000 fine

By Luke John Smith

Express PUBLISHED: 08:02, Tue, Apr 11, 2017 | UPDATED: 13:32, Tue, Apr 11, 2017

DRIVERS who fail to do this one simple thing could find themselves with an eye-watering £1,000 fine.

Failing to inform the DVLA when you change address could land you with a £1,000 fine.

UK drivers must inform the Government agency whenever they relocate – even if it is temporary, like a move to university during term time, for example.

Changing an address with the DVLA does not cost you a penny – but it is vital to avoid getting stung with a fine.

Updating your licence information can be done online using the V5C vehicle log book via the Gov.uk website.

“Drivers are required by law to let the DVLA know if they change their name or address,” said a DVLA spokesperson.

“The DVLA then issue a new licence for free.

“Keeping DVLA informed ensures that drivers can be notified promptly with important information affecting them such as reminders when their licence is due for renewal.

“If a driver fails to notify the DVLA of changes they could face a fine of up to £1000.”

If you apply online the new licence will arrive between one to three weeks.

New licences will be issued for free by the DVLA after you have provided the requisite information.

In addition to keeping their licence address up to date, drivers must also keep their photo is not out of date or they risk another £1,000 fine.

Money Saving expert Martin Lewis revealed on ITV's This Morning last month that drivers who fail to update the '4b' photo on their licence could received up to £1,000 fine.

"If you've a photo driving licence, get it out and check the 4b date on it. That's the date your photo expires, and 2.2m of them are out of date.

"If you're stopped by police it can result in a fine of up to £1,000.

"Now the DVLA does write to you, but many miss it.

"If yours is out of date, don't worry, you won't be fined for renewing it, so get it sorted."

Photo card licences must be replaced every ten years.

The news comes days after the DVLA revealed plans to introduce digital licences which be accessible on smartphones.

The digital licence is being introduced and is said to offer a 'quick, easy and secure' service which means that drivers would never be without their licence.

A test version of the service will be introduced in September this year before a planned unveiling in April 2018.

Express: http://www.express.co.uk/life-style/cars/790448/DVLA-driving-licence-change-address-fine?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=DX%2FDVLAlicenceaddresses&utm_term=DX%2FDVLAlicenceaddress&utm_content=DX%2FDVLAlicenceaddress

Could speed bumps become a thing of the past?

Councils across the UK could be encouraged to phase out speed bumps and other traffic-calming measures as part of a new Government plan to cut air pollution.

According to a report in the Telegraph on Sunday (9 April), the Government has been forced to reconsider its proposals for improving air quality after the High Court ruled that its existing strategy did not meet legal requirements.

Ministers have come up with a raft of new ideas including advice to local councils on how to keep traffic flowing steadily, rather than stop-start driving which increases fuel consumption and harmful emissions.

One area to be targeted is speed bumps, with councils set to be encouraged to replace them with other options including road cushions.

According to the Telegraph, speed bumps force drivers to slow right down to avoid damaging their vehicle, whereas cushions, which are normally placed in groups of two or three across the road and have a shallower slope, require less deceleration.

The news report points to research by Imperial College London which suggests that driving over speed bumps in a diesel car produces 98% more nitrogen dioxide than driving over road cushions.

Other options likely to be put forward include better sequencing of traffic lights to ensure that drivers arrive at green lights rather than red ones if they drive within the speed limit.

The DfT and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) will present the new plan to the High Court on 24 April.

- See more at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/04/09/speed-bumps-could-disappear-uk-roads-part-new-plan-cut-pollution/>

Parliamentary Questions

PACTS April 19, 2017

'Hit and Run' Incidents

Q Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb : 13 March 2017

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people were killed or injured in road traffic accidents where the driver failed to stop at the scene of the accident in (1) 2015, and (2) 2016; and how many such offenders were convicted in each of those two years for causing death or injury by a motor vehicle.

A Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

The table below provides information on people who were killed or injured in road traffic accidents where the driver failed to stop at the scene of the accident.

Casualties involved in accidents where at least one driver failed to stop at the scene, Great Britain, 2014 and 2015

Year	Severity of casualty			Total
	Killed	Serious	Slight	
2014	69	1,592	17,688	19,349
2015	81	1,638	18,239	19,958

Figures for 2016 will be available from June 2017.

The Department for Transport does not hold information about motoring offences or prosecutions. Prosecution information is held by the Ministry of Justice. It is not however possible to link reported road accident data to prosecution data.

DVLA and eyesight reporting

Q Asked by Mr Mark Hendrick : 23 March 2017

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will direct the DVLA to ensure that opticians are required to report drivers whose eye test has revealed that their eyesight, even with glasses or lenses, is below the standards needed to drive safely.

A Answered by: Andrew Jones

All drivers have an ongoing legal responsibility to ensure that they meet the vision standards for driving, wearing glasses or corrective lenses if needed. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) makes the eyesight standards for driving clear in leaflets, forms and on GOV.UK.

Opticians and optometrists already have a duty of care to their patients and the general public. On this basis they can already inform the DVLA of instances where they consider a patient to be unfit to drive. This is supported by guidance issued by the Royal College of Optometrists.

The DVLA's "Assessing Fitness to Drive: A Guide for Medical Professionals" clarifies medical professionals' obligations to notify a condition to the DVLA if their patient is unwilling or unable to report it themselves.

There are no plans to introduce a legal requirement for opticians to inform the DVLA if a driver is unable to meet the required eyesight standards for driving.

England and Wales: tougher new speeding penalties in place from 24 April

TISPOL Published Mon, 24/04/

Motoring groups have welcomed tougher new punishments for the most serious speeding offences.

Drivers caught excessively exceeding legal limits will now be hit with harsher penalties in England and Wales.

Magistrates will be empowered to fine motorists caught doing 51mph in a 30mph zone, or 101mph on a motorway, 150% of their weekly income rather than the previous level of 100%.

AA president Edmund King said the changes were "an effective way to penalise offenders", while the Sentencing Council said the move aims to ensure there is a "clear increase in fine level as the seriousness of offending increases".

Some 244 people died on Britain's roads in 2015 in crashes caused by a driver speeding.
TISPOL: <https://www.tispol.org/content/2017/04/24/07/07/england-and-wales-tougher-new-speeding-penalties-place-24-april>

Motorcycle campaign asks 'whose world are you?'

A new police-led motorcycle campaign is making a personal plea to riders in an effort to encourage them to 'take a little extra care' on the roads.

Developed by Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Police and launched ahead of the summer months, 'Whose world are you?' delivers the message to bikers that 'to the world they're just one person, but to one person they're the world'.

As part of the campaign, motorcyclists are encouraged to share pictures of themselves with that special person on social media, using the hashtag #WhoseWorldAreYou. It also reminds them of the importance of remaining alert on the road and mindful of their own safety.

On the flip side, it also sets out to make riders 'more meaningful' to drivers of other vehicles by demonstrating they are 'a range of people, with names, personalities and families, just like car drivers'.

Police across the three counties are using the campaign to remind drivers to watch out for bikers, and always look carefully when pulling out of junctions, manoeuvring and changing lanes.

PC Simon Burgin, from Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire (BCH) Road Policing Unit, said: “Motorcyclists are among the most vulnerable road users and this is why it is so important that they remain alert on the road and mindful of their own safety.

“Last year four motorcyclists were killed and 47 seriously injured on Cambridgeshire roads.

“You can never be too good and I encourage all motorcyclists to continue to train throughout their riding years and not just stop once they have passed their bike test.

“Over the coming weeks, as the weather improves, we expect to see an influx of bikers returning to the roads. Drivers are reminded of the importance of watching out for bikers and to always look carefully when pulling out of junctions, manoeuvring and changing lanes.

“We want the roads to be a safe place for everyone and ask that all road users help us to achieve this.”

Matt Staton, from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Road Safety Partnership, said: “We are very pleased to support this campaign and encourage people to get involved by sharing their photos on social media.

“We are committed to reducing the number of serious and fatal collisions on the county’s roads and I would urge everyone to play their part by looking out for one another.”

- See more at: Cambridge Police:

<http://www.cambs.police.uk/news/newsitem.asp?NewsID=9523>

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