



December 2016 Network

A networking tool for Activists and other interested parties

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EDITORIAL

Hi Guys,

You'll find quite a lot in this issue about the use of mobile phones whilst driving. I'm guessing this is in the wake of the terrible accident which killed four people. Why is it, though, that it takes something as terrible as that to bring about change?

I still, personally, don't think doubling the penalties is enough. We all see mobile phone use at the wheel every day and it appears to be on the increase and with far less police patrols I don't really see much of a change.

You'll also see anti mobile use stickers for sale, courtesy of the lovely Tracey Smith, bearing the MAG logo.

I'm not sure when the January issue will reach you as we'd all like a bit of 'down time' around Xmas and New Year. It definitely won't be the 1st of the month!

Meanwhile, have a good one. Be safe and ride free, **AG**.

Copy for the January edition should be with me by 25th December. Subject heading: Network to aine@mag-uk.org

[Acknowledgments: George Legg. Selina Lavender. Leon and Lembit and anyone else I've forgotten]

Report from our dynamic duo:- *Lots to report from MAG's Political Unit – and a few requests for action too.*

Progress in Parliament: A new MP Champion for MAG and bikers.

Lembit set up an informal meeting between L&L and Chris Law MP, who is the new Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Motorcycle Group (APPMG). L&L discussed strategy and tactics prior to meeting Chris in the Strangers Bar and agreed that Lembit would start the ball rolling and Leon would try to limit technical policy talk to avoid sending Chris to sleep. The session went far better than L&L had dared to hope. Lembit had to button hole another MP leaving Leon with a biker MP who was actually really interested in what MAG is doing - and how we can work together to deliver real progress. In Leon's view, having met many 'biker' MPs over the years, we now have a Parliamentarian who is far more interested in getting things done and taking effective action than talking about it. (More on Chris in the next issue of The ROAD)

Low Emission Zone Charging schemes: Improving air quality or toxic taxes?

The debate on transport related air pollution and health took an interesting turn when MAG looked at the claims being made. Repeatedly, we're told around 10,000 people die in London alone from

pollution. But, L&L agree that these claims are totally ridiculous and have no basis in fact. Lembit began a probe of relevant figures and found that the total for ALL respiratory illness in the capital is roughly half that. Leon got confirmation from the Office Of National Statistics that the total figure for 2015 is 6,881. BUT, that total includes; smoking related Lung Cancer, Flu, and Pneumonia. Leon adds that any claim that transport related air pollution can be isolated from all other factors affecting life or death is nothing short of a lie. 'The made-up numbers are just an excuse to impose a new tax on riders of non-compliant bikes – and they've only got away with it because nobody has dared to challenge them until now, but MAG is challenging and will continue doing so.

London's MAG rep, Tim Fawthrop has been highlighting the potential cost of this new emissions tax to bikers, which amounts to £62.50 for a working week. Since motorcycles are part of the solution, not the problem, there's a pressing need to get some sanity into this whole debate. Leon will be drafting MAG's formal response to consultations but asks for all activists to make your views known on this by responding to the consultation at: <https://is.gd/XNEINS>

Bike Shed: WeRideLondon Campaign goes live. Leon has done quite a bit of work this month to help refine the wording and strategy for a multi platform social media based campaign. <https://www.facebook.com/weridelondon>

It will run in supportive tandem with MAG's opposition to the Mayor's plans for taxing non-compliant motorcycles £12.50 per day in a dramatically expanded ULEZ scheme – and TfLs ongoing program of road and junction narrowing to make it either physically impossible or far more dangerous for PTW riders to overtake or filter through jammed traffic.

London MAG: Lembit has continued to work with region rep Tim Fawthrop on the threatened bike charges for the proposed Silvertown Thames crossing. This is a threat to all bikers, as charging for one crossing could lead to charges in other places too. Please share your opposition to charges, on the basis that we reduce congestion, pollution and travel costs and it's nuts to charge us when other, congestion-producing machines such as electric cars, won't be paying the charge. Contact Tim Fawthrop at timfawthrop@hotmail.com or Lembit through his email or head office. Writing to the consultation opposing these charges will also help. You'll find all the info and consultation timetable here: <https://is.gd/MdwqQJ>

Contact Lembit anytime for any clarification or advice.

Halloween: Some disgraceful scenes of irresponsibility and law breaking occurred this year involving idiots who happened to be on two wheels. Even the police said these weren't biking fans but, rather, lawless anti-social hooligans who did not care at all who they frightened or what laws they broke. MAG swiftly responded, and Lembit spoke on BBC's Radio 4 about the real voice of biking. It showed what we can do in a hurry when faced with public relations issues. It's also worth noting that the injunctions that have become so popular with some local authorities did absolutely nothing to prevent the anti-social behaviour. It's a matter of education and enforcement of existing laws, and the reality is that the main problems seem to be a breakdown in community standards plus a shortage of police resources. MAG is working with the authorities to find longer term solutions to the problem.

Armadillos and Orcas: Leon finally got a reply to his request to meet Roads Minister Roger Jones to discuss what he would get his department to do now we have irrefutable evidence that 'Light Segregation' measures do create potentially fatal Trip Hazards. Unfortunately for all concerned, he and his ministry minions still believe they can fob us off by claiming it is; "entirely a matter for each [local] traffic authority". In other words, it's nothing to do with me or us mate so buzz off. However, that is simply not true as the funding for many of these schemes comes from DfT coffers for which the Minister IS responsible and accountable. Story to be continued...

Meanwhile, Leon arranged to meet the Road Safety Manager for ROSPA this month after alerting them to the spread of Orcas and Armadillos – which had up slipped under their radar until then. Encouragingly, the first thing that the RS Manager said when asked what he thought about these measures was this: "They are clearly Trip Hazards". For the time being we are waiting for ROSPA to formulate an official position and our next moves on this front will be made once they have.

Please inform Central Office if plans for these measures emerge in your area, as we need to know where they are help work to stop this dangerous rot.

More consultations have crossed Lembit's desk and in the process of responding, Lembit discovered an interesting fact. On the M6, where the Toll section charges motorcycles, average motorbike usage of that section of road is 0% of the traffic. Thus, charging motorbikes doesn't tend to increase revenue. It simply diverts bike traffic to other routes. This could be helpful if anyone is trying to introduce charges in your area.

Northern Ireland MAG The new team has started attending bike related events and is working closely with Ian Churchlow and Lembit. Martyn Boyd is heading up the team and is already responding to local consultations and promoting the voice of riding in that nation.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority: The next step in Leon's work regarding is a meeting in December in London with the officer who is drafting the strategy – and who is increasingly receptive to and supportive of MAG's input to that process.

Autonomous vehicles: MAG submitted a comprehensive response to the House of Lords investigation into autonomous vehicles, which is available on request from Lembit or Central Office. This issue is set to continue to grow and has safety and liberty consequences for riders. MAG is trying to get to see the relevant officers to discuss our perspective before the end of January 2017.

NEC Bike Show: Lembit and Leon attended the Motorcycle Live event in Birmingham's NEC at various times of the week. Lembit was based on the MAG stand in order to encourage new members to join and discuss a wide range of issues that members and non members are concerned about.

Meanwhile, Leon's mission during the first two days was to meet key figures in the motorcycle industry to spread the word about what MAG is doing and to highlight key threats to biking from Low Emission Zone schemes and reductions in road widths for bikers due to cycling schemes. In practical terms, Leon walks quite a bit between talks and managed to clock up over five and half miles on the first day. His mission was particularly focused on manufacturers of street scrambler and 'Yard Built' models as these types of bikes are attracting a new range of riders who are being drawn

in to supporting campaigning both by MAG and Bike Shed types. Productive informal meetings included Yamaha's Head of Marketing and Events, the General Manager of Triumph, Ducati's Managers of Marketing and Events – and Press and Racing. Leon also had a convivial chat with the Owner of the Brough Superior name along with his co promoter of the 21st century version and both promised to re-join MAG and consider Corporate Membership in the New Year.

National Road Safety Conference: Lembit represented MAG at this even in Bristol, where MAG's position was listened to and, by many people, welcomed as a very interesting counterpoint to certain 'assumed' safety strategies. For example, the idea of 'Vision Zero' i.e. zero risk transport is not credible, and Lembit also pointed out that fashion was currently playing a dangerously large part in road 'safety' policy, for example, towards bicycles. He's been invited to two more conference as a result, both in 2017.

As always, we invite you to tell us about your local stories and activities. You'll find our news on the Big List or by calling MAG Central, 019 2684 4064. We offer a full service to help you share the news on biking locally or nationally. Just ask. Or send an email, starting with the letters 'PR.'

MAG PRESS RELEASES

MAG re-launches in Northern Ireland

This version: 2016 11 15

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the UK's leading voice for riders' rights, has re-launched its operations in Northern Ireland with a well-attended meeting in Central Belfast.

The Motorcycle Action Group has launched a new group in Northern Ireland, to stand up for riders' rights in this important part of the United Kingdom. MAG Director, Ian Churchlow, was delighted with the turnout: 'We've been developing the Northern Ireland regional group for a couple of years and we now have a superb team, headed up by Martyn Boyd, which will make a significant contribution to the voice of riders here. Northern Ireland is very significant to motorcyclists – and this makes the province exceptionally important to our work. I'm really pleased MAG is getting so active over here. It should lead to a big increase in our profile amongst road racing enthusiasts, which is good for everyone, and for the movement as a whole.'

The group also attended the filming of a live broadcast of the Nolan Show, one of the most watched programmes in Northern Ireland, at which a part of the show was dedicated to an interview with Ryan Farquhar, who survived a near-fatal accident at the world famous North West 200 road race. Afterwards, Ian Churchlow and MAG's Director of Communications & Public Affairs, Lembit Öpik, met with Ryan. They discussed the work of MAG and agreed to stay in contact about future campaigns run by the organisation.

'We also met with the Department for Infrastructure,' adds Ian, 'where we offered our assistance to support the transport objectives of the Minister. I expect this to become an important element of our work here and it could, over time, provide a template for similar

operations in the rest of the UK. Martyn is a valuable addition to our team, and Lembit and I are eager to assist him as we build up the local group.'

PR 2016 11 21 MAG KENT PHONE DEMO

Dial 'D' for Danger – MAG highlights risks of driving & dialling

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the UK's leading voice for riders' rights, has held a vigil to highlight the danger of driving and dialling – and has invited drivers to think twice about the potentially lethal risks.

Every year, a large number of motorcyclists are killed or seriously injured by drivers who are distracted by their mobile phones. The situation has become so bad that a group of Kent bikers has held a vigil to invite drivers to reconsider the risks they take by phoning and driving at the same time.

Steve Mallett, Paul Hoskins and Michaela Blackford - all from MAG - were joined by others from Recca's community biker café for the vigil. Steve says: 'we had a meeting recently, and what was striking was the number of riders who had been nearly, or actually, knocked off their bikes by careless drivers who were busy using their phones illegally instead of concentrating on the road. That's why we decided it was time to get drivers to recognise the risk they are exposing other people to by focusing on their phone instead of driving.'

While most drivers were behaving entirely responsibly, the vigil, which took place on 19th November at St Peter's Bridge in Maidstone on the A229 at one point recorded 3 phone users in a 5 minute period. 'We got lots of positive feedback from hooting and waving motorists and the feedback from pedestrians was 100% favourable. They agree that drivers flaunting the law are gambling with the lives of others for the sake of a phone call or text. Knocking someone off their bike and then saying 'sorry mate, I didn't see you' is no compensation when you've been seriously injured with life threatening or life changing injuries. We're happy to co-exist on the roads, but please, let's do it safely. Is that too much to ask?'

MAG MEETS LAW

This version: 2016 11 29

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the UK's leading voice for riders' rights, has met with the new Chair of the Parliamentary All Party Motorcycle Group, Chris Law MP, to discuss the agenda for biking and the way ahead.

Representatives from MAG Dr Leon Mannings (Policy and Campaigns Adviser) and Lembit Öpik (Director of Communications & Public Affairs) travelled to the Houses of Parliament to meet the new Chair of the Parliamentary All Party Group Chris Law, MP for Dundee West

(Law was elected to represent Dundee West in the 2015 General Election). The aim of the meeting was to introduce the work of MAG and to explore the options for working together.

‘Mr Law’s level of experience and commitment to the motorcycling agenda are self-evident,’ says Leon. ‘He’s been riding motorcycles for most of his life – further, longer and at higher altitudes than most riders ever will! He also has high hopes for the All-Party Group. MAG is ready, willing and able to support him, especially when it comes to promoting common sense about regulations.’

Lembit adds ‘Chris Law is one of those people who inspire confidence the moment you meet him. His attitude is honest, his style straight-talking, and his understanding of riders’ rights unsurpassed. I was Chair of the All-Party Group myself. It is a powerful voice in Parliament and can influence Ministerial thinking. Chris will speak up for freedom from overbearing legislation and promote the case for encouraging motorbikes as part of the solution to our congestion and environmental problems. This could also help bring the three big voices for biking closer together: riders, manufacturers and politicians. Leon and Chris had a particularly effective discussion. The real winner will be motorcycling itself.’

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

MAG Article first published in Back Street Heroes, Issue 392 (Dec 2016)

I write this as September comes to an end and what a busy month it’s been: Stormin’ the Castle kicked off my month. What a fabulous weekend that was. Despite the rain everyone I spoke to had a great time and no doubt whilst they returned home knackered they’re already looking forward to next year. The volunteer marshals did a great job which included building up and clearing down the site. MAG real could not function without its volunteers and Stormin’ is another clear example of that.

Much of the work MAG gets involved in is very much unseen. This includes reviewing and writing responses to relevant Government consultations. We regularly sift through these consultations that come out on a daily basis from a wide number of sources. Although anyone can do this, often the number of responses received is exceedingly low. One of the consultations we recently decided it was necessary to formulate a very comprehensive response to related to autonomous vehicles. Regardless of your own individual views of autonomous (self-drive) vehicles they are a reality: there are even two-wheeled variants out there. Lembit (MAG Director of Communications and Public Affairs) invested a lot of time and effort finding out about autonomous vehicles. This involved talking with other interested groups, finding out about the autonomous vehicles and getting a feel for future plans, which may involve their use on our roads. We felt it was very important to be in at the ground level as the potential impact on riders must be considered, along with a whole host of other concerns- not least of which is insurance and liability. I notice that other motoring groups have been carrying out surveys to gauge public opinion; you might have seen a questionnaire from your insurance or rescue provider pop up on-line, for example. Please let us know if you make a response, and when you get the chance to have your say, take it.

The eagle-eyed amongst you will have seen the joint MAG / BMF statement released on the 26th of August in relation to cycle lane segregation devices, such as Armadillos and Orcas. These continue to be a concern, especially when you consider the vast amounts of taxpayers' money that councils are spending in order to promote pedal cycling - only to then rip these schemes up months later when they are proven not to work. Of course in the meantime they have caused traffic chaos and untold environmental damage, the exact opposite of the intentions when installing them. Leon (MAG Policy Advisor) continues to engage with a variety of departments and officials to alert them to our very genuine concerns – matters which actually affect all powered vehicle users.

Leon (Policy Advisor) has been busy getting riders' views heard - including travelling to the North East where he addressed the North East Combined Authority (NECA). The purpose of the trip was to support local activists on the ground who worked hard to secure an opportunity to present our 'Pathways to Progress' document (if you want a copy please ask). The presentation is always well received and works well to open discussions about positive engagement with riders. Look out for 'combined authorities' coming in to play in your area. These appear to be the latest fashion in council management.

In Manchester, MAG has become a contributor in the consultation into what the city's transport arrangements should look like in 25 years. Tony Cox is highlighting the need to include motorcycles in the plan. It seems some planners have entirely overlooked the fact that commuters travelling into Greater Manchester use mopeds, motorbikes and scooters on a daily basis. We'll be there reminding them that 2 wheeled motorised vehicles provide a practical alternative to 4 wheels - and referencing the Northamptonshire example, where the local authority has taken a visionary approach to this kind of 'modal shift.'

On a less positive note, more councils are looking to go down the injunction route when traditional policing methods fail to control antisocial behaviour. We've seen incidents of this in relation to cars- and even pedal cycles. Most people would agree that this is not a situation that should become the norm. Harlow are, at the time of writing, stalling on meeting with us so I have no further updates regarding their injunction. However we are continuing to push for a meeting to progress our concerns on their injunction and I am receiving weekly updates on from Lembit. This may escalate to direct action if there is no alternative.

Over in Wales we are having an interesting time. Previously, Leon visited Wales and presented the Pathways to Progress document to the Motorcycle Steering Group. As is generally the case, the document was very well received. The benefits of bikes in bus lanes was clearly understood, along with the potentially negative impact of cycle lane segregation devices. Further to this, our MAG activists kept their ears to the ground and waited for news of new guidance being issued by the Welsh Assembly. However, they instead began to hear worrying noises that there would be no such guidance. They have sprung in to action and contacted the relevant officers to remind them of the benefits and threats, as highlighted in the previous meeting with the support of Leon.

London continues to be an area of concern and Tim our Greater London Regional Rep remains enthusiastic about getting the Capital to listen to the needs of riders. There are plans to charge bikes on the new Silvertown Tunnel crossing (a new Thames crossing). MAG have been successfully in securing a meeting to present our objections. If you live or

travel to the capital, why not 'Like' the Facebook page and offer Tim support in whichever way you can.

Now that the nights are drawing in, I find my attentions turning once more to indoor events such as Motorcycle Live at the Birmingham NEC. If you do visit the show, pop by the MAG stand to share your views with us and pick up a copy of The ROAD magazine if you're not already a member.

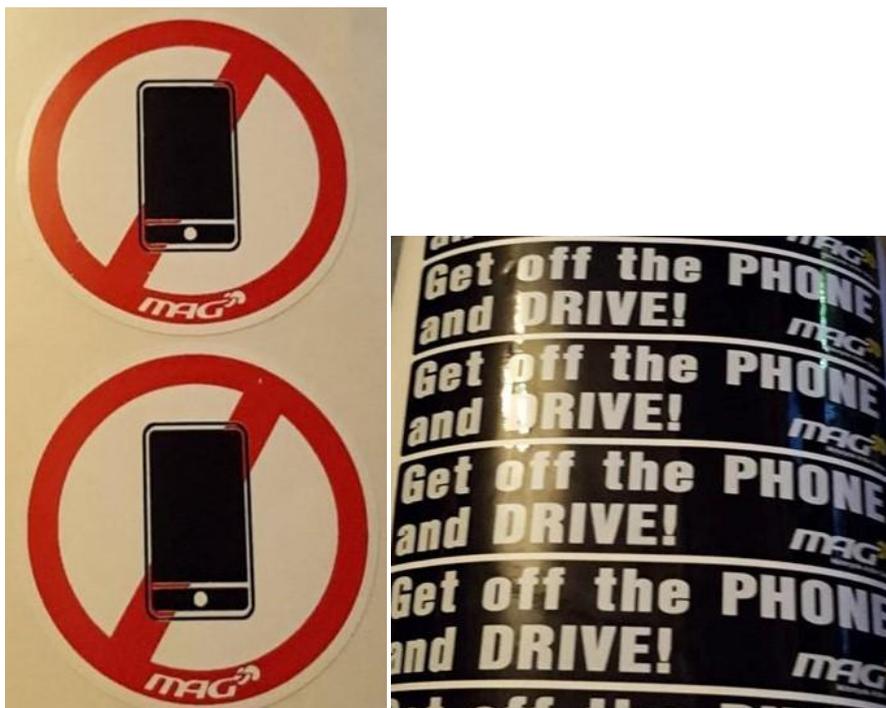
I've got one more request: to get your regular updates and help to get riders' rights in front of more decision makers, join us by calling the office (01926 844 064), visiting our website (www.mag-uk.org - click on 'join MAG') or signing up at a local meeting or MAG stand. Also, to find meetings close to you or events checkout the website and Facebook pages.

We are always happy to hear from riders. If you wish to get in touch directly with me, simply email chair@mag-uk.org

I'm here for you, and so is MAG. Ride Free, Selina, MAG National Chair.

Motorcycle crash helmets in filling stations

If you use a Shell filling station you should not be required to remove your crash helmet according to a new leaflet released by the oil giant. Visit your local filling station to pick up a 'Welcome to Shell' leaflet. We remain hopeful that other forecourts will follow the trend, leaving the rider to decide.



Get off your mobile

These MAG branded stickers are available via the following links on eBay:

http://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/232153139131?ssPageName=STRK%3AMESELX%3AIT&_trksid=p3984.m1555.l2649

and

http://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/232153159364?ssPageName=STRK%3AMESELX%3AIT&_trksid=p3984.m1555.l2649

If you are on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram why not share a picture of where you've stuck yours and help us get the message out.

Autumn Statement 2016: some of the things affecting roads, road users etc.

3. Fuel duty will remain frozen for a seventh year

In 2017, fuel duty will remain frozen for the seventh successive year, saving drivers £130 a year on average.

13. £390 million investment in future transport technology

£390 million will go to future transport technology, including driverless cars, renewable fuels and energy efficient transport. This will include:

- £100 million investment in testing infrastructure for driverless cars
- £150 million to provide at least 550 new electric and hydrogen buses, reduce the emissions of 1,500 existing buses and support taxis to become zero emission
- £80 million to install more charging points for ultra-low emission vehicles

14. A major new investment in transport infrastructure

As part of the National Productivity Investment Fund, this will cover:

- £1.1 billion to reduce congestion and upgrade local roads and public transport
- £220 million to tackle road safety and congestion on Highways England roads
- £27 million to develop an expressway connecting Oxford and Cambridge

There will also be a two-year 100% first year allowance for companies who install electric charge-points, coming in from today. This allows companies to deduct the cost of the charge-point from their pre-tax profits in that year.

And £450 million will also be spent on trialling railway digital signalling technology which will expand capacity and improve reliability.

More at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/autumn-statement-2016-some-of-the-things-weve-announced>

F E M A

Since 20 November 2016 protective gloves are mandatory for all riders and passengers of motorcycles, trikes, quads and mopeds in France.

When the French government announced the obligation, French motorcyclists' organization FFMC (a FEMA member) protested against it and also reacted with a statement, saying that they have always encouraged motorcyclists to wear suitable protective gear but they formally oppose any obligation: "It is not against the wearing of gloves that the FFMC protested, but against the fact that they become obligatory under the threat of a fine of 68 Euro and withdrawal of a point on the driving license."

Sources: FFMC & Motomag
Picture: Katinka Brandenburg

You can find FFMC at www.ffmc.asso.fr

You can find the original French decree at <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do;jsessionid=E2...>

Early day motion 652

MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF TEXTING WHILST DRIVING

Session: 2016-17

Date tabled: 07.11.2016

Primary sponsor: Saville Roberts, Liz

Sponsors:

Williams, Hywel Edwards, Jonathan Cunningham, Jim Stephens, Christopher

That this House recognises that the dangers of texting whilst driving applies to every driver on the road; condemns the Daily Mail's portrayal of foreign drivers in its publication of 2 November 2016, which exploits the serious issue of texting whilst driving to promote a xenophobic agenda; acknowledges the influence that prejudiced cover stories have on a wide audience of readers; further condemns the unethical and poor practices of news outlets that seek to scapegoat migrants; and calls on the Daily Mail to apologise to the individuals and families affected by texting and driving for using the issue to advance its anti-immigration position.

Mobile phone use at the wheel

Government confirms plans to double mobile phone penalties

The Government has confirmed it is planning to double the penalties for those caught using a mobile phone while driving.

Announced today (8 Nov) as part of a response into a consultation on the issue, the move means that those found committing the offence will be docked six points and receive a £200 fine.

The increase in penalty points would mean an immediate ban for newly-qualified drivers who have a ceiling of six points for the first two years after passing the test.

The move has been welcomed by stakeholders, including the RAC and IAM RoadSmart.

In January, the Government launched its consultation seeking views on proposals to increase penalty points and fixed penalty notice (FPN) levels for the offence.

In September, it was widely reported that the penalty was to double from three points and a £100 fine - a decision that was confirmed by today's response.

Also confirmed in today's response is that the DfT will launch a THINK! campaign highlighting the dangers of using a mobile phone while driving. The campaign will aim to raise awareness of the changes in order to stimulate a change in behaviour that road users are looking for.

The DfT is also planning to conduct a roadside observational survey to monitor the effectiveness of the changes. The department says this will help it consider whether further measures need to be taken, for example further behaviour change programmes such as a larger scale awareness campaigns.

Stakeholder reaction

IAM RoadSmart has welcomed the move, saying that drivers need to learn that their actions could kill.

Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart director of policy and research, said: "Addressing the growing problem of smartphone use whilst driving will require a combination of enforcement and education as well as drivers, passengers, companies and individuals taking more responsibility.

"IAM RoadSmart is disappointed that the government did not support our calls for first time offenders to be sent automatically on a re-education course specifically tailored to mobile phone use and breaking our apparent addiction to being constantly connected. We also want to see car companies, mobile phone makers and social media providers working together to develop technical solutions to hand held mobile phone use in vehicles."

The RAC is also welcoming the stiffer penalties for handheld mobile phone use, and believes the move will send a very strong message to motorists.

Pete Williams, RAC road safety spokesman, said: "We welcome stiffer penalties for handheld mobile phone use and believe this will send a very strong message to motorists.

"However, we believe this has to be done in conjunction with a heavyweight road safety campaign so we therefore welcome initial proposals for a new THINK! initiative. The RAC's Report on Motoring 2016 identified that the problem is at epidemic proportions as almost half (48%) of motorists admitted to using a handheld phone at the wheel to talk, text or use other apps in the last year."

- See more at

Response to Consultation:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/565099/hand-held-mobile-phone-driving-consultation-response.pdf

IAM: <https://www.iamroadsmart.com/media-and-policy/newsroom/news-details/2016/11/08/higher-penalties-for-hand-held-mobile-phone-drivers-welcomed-by-iam-roadsmart-but-more-action-needed-to-stop-further-casualties>

RAC: <http://www.rac.co.uk/press-centre#/news/rac-reacts-to-immediate-points-and-fine-proposals-for-drivers-caught-using-a-handheld-phone-196157>

RoSPA: <http://www.rospa.com/media-centre/press-office/press-releases/detail/?id=1490>

Welsh police crackdown on illegal phone use

Police in Wales are cracking down on motorists who use their mobile phone while driving as part of a new campaign.

The enforcement campaign, which runs until 20 November, urges all road users to 'keep their eyes on the road', with police officers speaking to drivers about the dangers of being distracted by mobile phones.

The campaign, which involves all four Welsh police forces with support from Road Safety Wales, has been launched in response to a national rise in the number of motorists making calls, texting or social media updates when driving.

The campaign heralds a clamp down on 'distracted driving', which Road Safety Wales says has been the biggest cause of death and injuries on Welsh roads in 2016.

During a similar campaign across Wales in 2015, more than 500 motorists were caught using their mobiles.

Chief inspector Huw Jones, Gwent Police, said: "Smartphones are a key part of modern life and we are also seeing drivers being distracted whilst checking social media, reading their emails or accessing the internet.

"Drivers need to be aware that these actions carry the same danger and the same penalty."

Susan Storch, chair of Road Safety Wales, said: "Driving a vehicle requires us to multi-task so anything above and beyond that needs to wait until we are safely parked up or until our journey has finished.

"Campaigns such as this demonstrate the resolve of all the Road Safety Wales partners in tackling this issue and we will continue to work together to drive home the message of not using your mobile phone behind the wheel."

- See more at: Road Safety Wales:

<http://www.roadsafetywales.org.uk/news/posts/2016/november/campaign-targets-phone-use-behind-the-wheel/?Language=undefined>

And, finally:

Police lack powers to probe mobile phones crashes

A new study has found that police officers are worried they lack the right powers and resources to properly investigate whether a mobile phone was being used by a driver at the time of a crash.

The University of the West of England (UWE Bristol) study into the reporting and recording of mobile phone involvement in accidents, published today (23 Nov), surveyed 134 road traffic collision investigation officers.

80% of respondents indicated mobile phone involvement in non-fatal accidents is under-reported, with half agreeing the role of phones is even overlooked in fatal crashes.

75% were unable to report the full proportion of collisions in their force area linked with mobile phone use each year. A similar percentage indicated that better mechanisms to quickly analyse and investigate phone usage would be most likely to improve data collection.

The research was led by Dr Paul Pilkington, a senior lecturer in public health at UWE Bristol, working with the National Roads Policing Intelligence Forum.

For his research, Dr Pilkington asked officers across the UK about the procedure they follow in the aftermath of a collision. He was told phones are only routinely seized and analysed in fatal and life-changing injury crashes.

Responses from officers included:

“Due to the costs and timeliness of such enquiries this is an area that, in my view, is under-investigated...if properly investigated each and every time, the proportion of RCTs where phone use was contributory would increase significantly.”

“We take persons to court where we have seen them on their mobile phones and it gets thrown out. That is with a police witness, so it wouldn't go through on 3rd party evidence.”

Dr Pilkington says the survey findings raise serious questions about investigation tactics, and describes the under-reporting of mobile phone use in collisions as a 'massive problem'.

He said: “Police officers recognise that using mobile phones while driving is an important risk factor for being involved in a road traffic crash. This is consistent with global estimates of the burden of road traffic related deaths and injuries caused by using a phone while driving.

“But officers in our survey consistently registered concerns about having enough power or resources to investigate whether a mobile phone was being used at the time of a road traffic crash.

“Because of resource and legal considerations, only in fatal and life-changing injury crashes are phones seized and analysed. In all other crash types, including those involving serious injuries, use of mobile phones is usually not investigated.

“To me, this is a massive problem. If the police can't detect the full extent of this behaviour then we are missing an important part of collision investigation.

“It leaves a significant gap not only in terms of enforcement, but also monitoring of the role of phones in crashes. The result is significant under-reporting of the role of mobile phones in road traffic crashes, as well as inadequate justice for the victims of those affected by the actions of drivers using their phones behind the wheel.”

- See more at: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/5432.html#sthash.f5bYTOtl.dpuf>
UWE Bristol: <http://info.uwe.ac.uk/news/UWENews/news.aspx?id=3516>

Manufacturers must share autonomous vehicle crash data: ABI



Cars of the future will need to collect a basic set of core data to prevent drivers being unfairly blamed if technology goes wrong, according to the Association of British Insurers (ABI).

In a speech at the organisation's annual conference today (22 Nov), the ABI will say in circumstances where faulty technology was shown to have caused a collision, insurers should be able to recover the costs from the manufacturer.

The ABI says British insurers are leading efforts to make data easily available in the event of an incident involving a highly automated vehicle, including whether the vehicle was operating autonomously or not at the time, and what technology was in use.

This information would be used to establish liability for anything that had gone wrong, inform emergency services' investigations, ensure insurance claims could be processed promptly and help vehicle manufacturers improve their products.

The ABI adds that the information insurers want to see universally collected only concerns the autonomous systems and driver interaction – it is not proposing that any information measuring driver performance should be gathered.

The data would cover a period from 30 seconds before to 15 seconds after an incident and would include:

- A GPS record of the time and location of the incident
- Confirmation of whether the vehicle was in autonomous or manual mode
- If in autonomous mode, whether the vehicle was parking or driving
- When the vehicle went into autonomous mode, and when the driver last interacted with the system
- Any driver activity such as braking or steering
- Whether the driver's seat was occupied, and whether the seatbelt was fastened

The ABI's call is backed by Thatcham Research, which says that determining where the liability rests is 'one of the key battlegrounds' when it comes to the future of automated cars.

Huw Evans, ABI director general, said: "As part of insurers' commitment to getting automated cars on the road and dramatically improving road safety, there will need to be basic data easily available to make sure customers are looked after if something goes wrong.

“This would offer public reassurance by protecting motorists from being incorrectly blamed if something fails with their car, helping police investigations and supporting prompt insurance pay outs.”

Peter Shaw, chief executive of Thatcham Research, added: “Future legislation needs to protect the consumer so that in the event of an accident, responsibility for the accident and who pays can be quickly determined. Was it driver error or a failure of the automated driving system?”

“This can only happen if their insurer has access to key data about the crash. We are calling on car manufacturers and legislators to work with the insurance industry to develop a framework to make this happen.”

- See more at: Association British Insurers: <https://www.abi.org.uk/News/News-releases/2016/11/Driverless-cars-must-share-crash-data-if-something-goes-wrong>

New partnership aims to increase focus on motorcyclists’ safety

A new partnership is calling for motorcycles and scooters to be included in mainstream transport policy and for rider safety to be consistently factored into national road design.

The partnership, formed of Highways England, the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) and the Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA), made the call in a jointly authored whitepaper: ‘Realising the Motorcycling Opportunity: A Motorcycle Safety and Transport Policy Framework’.

The framework identifies seven key areas which ‘would make roads safer for riders’, along with practical actions as to how this can be achieved. These include: safer infrastructure, expanding road user education and increasing awareness and training.

It incorporates the ‘safe system approach’ which, the partners say, is now ‘widely accepted’ as a guiding principle among road safety professionals. This is underpinned by the understanding that humans are fallible and will make mistakes, which can be mitigated through ‘forgiving’ design.

The first edition of the framework was launched by the NPCC and MCIA in 2014, following acknowledgement from police and motorcycle road safety experts that the only way to reduce vulnerability of riders was to properly incorporate their use and needs into mainstream transport planning.

With congestion continuing to rise, the partnership says it is likely many more people will opt for two wheel transport - therefore with new partner Highways England, it has produced an updated version of the framework.

The new framework also advocates unlocking the benefits of motorcycles and demonstrating exactly how they offer a practical solution to congestion, as well as improving personal mobility for people without access to other forms of transport.

Mike Wilson, Highways England’s chief highways engineer, said: “Safety is our top priority and we believe no one should be harmed when travelling or working on our road network.

“We are committed to reducing the number of motorcycle incidents and casualties on our roads and to improving the experience motorcyclists have on those roads; this influential partnership with the industry and police supports that commitment.”

Deputy chief constable, Tim Madgwick, national motorcycle lead for the NPCC, said: “The police service is on the front line, dealing with the devastation that is caused to families and the greater community by road traffic collisions.

“The opportunity to work with Highways England and the MCI gives us far greater scope to make our roads a safer place, not only for those who use powered two wheelers, but for all road users.”

Karen Cole, MCI director of safety and training, said: “Highways England brings significant resource to this ambitious project; financially and in terms of influence, expertise and evidence-based decision making; add this to police backing and we have an unprecedented opportunity to make a huge difference to riders.

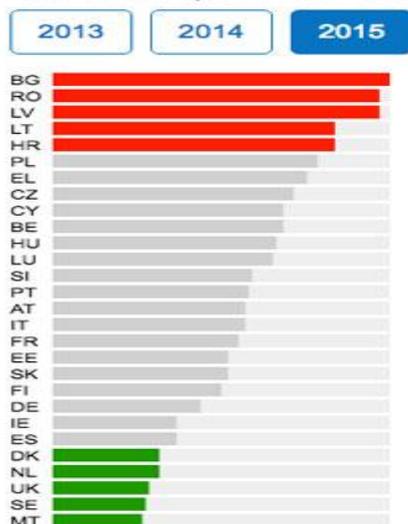
“For too long, motorcyclists have been at the bottom of the pecking order in terms of priority for traffic management and road planners.

“Often ‘safety advice’ is a thinly veiled attempt to keep people off motorbikes and scooters, rather than a genuine attempt to reduce their vulnerability. It is important to recognise the transport choice of riders and address their needs appropriately. Ignoring motorcyclists increases their vulnerability.”

- See more at: MCI: <http://www.mcia.co.uk/Press-and-Statistics/Press-Releases/Article/Roads-to-become-safer-for-motorcyclists-through-new-partnership.aspx>

UK road safety record ‘excellent’ in 2015

Road fatalities per million inhabitants ⓘ



The UK continued to enjoy an ‘excellent’ road safety record last year, according to a grading system published by the European Commission.

The EU Transport Scoreboard, which compares all 28 EU member states, shows that in 2015 only Malta and Sweden had less road fatalities per million inhabitants than the UK.

At 28 road fatalities per million inhabitants, the UK figure is almost half the EU average (52). At 36, Ireland is also below the average.

However, in terms of road congestion, the UK really struggled, coming bottom of the 28 countries. Measured in 'hours spent in road congestion annually', UK motorists spent 41.45 hours in congested traffic, compared to the average of 29.49 hours.

Focussing on the 'quality of roads', the UK ranked 12/28. Based on a survey by the World Economic Forum and using a scale from one (extremely underdeveloped) to seven (extensive and efficient), the UK scored 5.13, slightly above the EU average of 4.77. The Netherlands topped the table with 6.14.

Another area where the UK struggled was 'new passenger vehicles using alternative fuels', such as electric cars. At 1.1%, the UK fell well below the EU average of 2.9%, and was dwarfed by Italy (12.8%) and the Netherlands (12.59%). It's overall rank was 11/28.

On a related topic, the UK also fell below the EU average in terms of electric vehicle charging points. Measured against 100,000 city inhabitants, the UK had 20.4 charging points, compared to the average of 26.3. The Netherlands topped that particular chart with 145.4.

- See more at:

EU Transport Scoreboard: https://ec.europa.eu/transport/facts-fundings/scoreboard_en

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