



## September 2017 Network

**A networking tool for Activists and other interested parties**

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## EDITORIAL

Driverless lorries being allowed on roads as from next year! How do I feel about this?

Nervous.

There are two pieces in this edition on Learners being allowed on motorways under the supervision of an authorised driving instructor, however, I can't find anything on this subject relating to learner motorcyclists. If anyone else has any information on this and can reference it or, if Leon or Lembit can advise us, that would be great.

We've just had another extremely successful Bike Show in Bristol for the 21<sup>st</sup> year thanks to the efforts of the team who organise it and who liaise with the Council. Anyone who liaises with their Council and keeps their sanity deserves recognition in my humble opinion.

Talking of Shows and liaising with Councils, I got chatting to the Salisbury Rep who is head honcho for the very successful Salisbury Bike Show. Very informative it was too. So far as I understand it, Councils should not charge for road closure if the event is: a) open to the public and b) non money making. I hope, if this is wrong, he'll correct me but it seems very reasonable to me, especially when you think of all the revenue brought into the surrounding area and businesses.

When the October (really!!!) Network hits your screen next MAG's Annual Group Conference will have taken place. That edition may be a bit late as I will be travelling to and from the wilds of Cambridgeshire. Hope to see you there.

Meanwhile, ride safe, **AG**

*[Acknowledgments: George Legg. Selina Lavender. Andy Carrot. Leon & Lembit. Jane Carrot. Julie Sperling. And anyone else I've forgotten]*

Please send copy for the October edition by 25<sup>th</sup> September to [aine@mag-uk.org](mailto:aine@mag-uk.org) subject heading:  
Network

## A REPORT FROM LEON AND LEMBIT

*Here's the latest from MAG's Political Unit. As always, we're here to help and if you need any more info on any of these items, please just get in touch.*

**London Calling:** once again, there's something for you to respond to in London. The Draft Mayor's Transport Strategy is asking what we think about their plans for transport in the capital. There are some really good parts, but it also includes problem proposals – like a £12.50 PER DAY charge for older bikes – those built before 2007. This means that if you happen to ride a 50cc moped that's over 10 years old into London, you get charged that amount. We're asking you to submit your objections to this idea, as it's a barmy and totally unfair proposal. Everyone agrees bikes create almost no emissions and actually reduce congestion – and therefore pollution. We'd be grateful if you could make your views known at:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/transport/our-vision-transport/draft-mayors-transport-strategy-2017>

Deadline for submission is 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017. But please don't leave it till then – we need as many submissions as we can get. And remember, even if you're only passing through the city, you'd still have to pay. Also, these kinds of proposals have a habit of spreading across the country. It's in everyone's interests to try and stop it now. That's why we're asking you to take a few minutes to fill in their online questionnaire.

**Crime crisis:** motorcycle related crime remains at epidemic levels. We're trying to sort out the issue long term with interested parties, including the police, the Motorcycle Crime Reduction Group (MCRG) and the Motor Cycle Industry Association (MCIA). There's plenty going on and we'll keep you posted on developments. One request: please write to your local council and also to your local MP asking if they would support improved access to safe parking for motorbikes and whether they'd be willing to meet to discuss the issues and hear where the biggest local problems are.

**An end to petrol motorbikes in 2040?** The Government has announced that it wants to stop the sale of petrol (and diesel) vehicles in 2040. What do you think? This debate has been going on in MAG for a while. You can read about it in the current issue of The Road. We'd welcome your opinions. Note that there are TWO aspects to emissions. One aspect is about the gases, such as carbon dioxide, which are said to contribute to global warming. The other is about the damage some gases, like nitrogen oxides, might do to human health. The ban touches on each issue but seems mainly focussed on the health point. Tell us what YOU feel about this at:

[theroad@mag-uk.org](mailto:theroad@mag-uk.org)

We'd like to know if you are of the opinion that we should be getting into the wider eco-debate, and perhaps challenging some of the assumptions. Also, should we be teaming up with other groups to do that, or perhaps sticking just to protecting motorcycles from things like emissions charging? Thirdly, any scientific insights you may have would also be gratefully received.

**George Legg: star researcher!** Thanks to George, we're following a lot of different consultations taking place all around the UK. If you hear of a consultation which could affect biking for better worse let us know through HQ please.

**Gloves off on French roads:** in fact, the gloves are most definitely ON in France, with regulations that demand all riders wear gloves for any journey, however short. The gloves also have to be European Union approved. You or your pillion can be fined if you don't wear them. This is exactly the sort of compulsion MAG exists to prevent. We're always keen to hear of threats to riders' rights, whether local, national or international. Forewarned is forearmed.

**Highways England and MAG: a good alliance.** MAG is regularly attending various being held by Highways England. In this way we have succeeded in raising everything from road surface issues – such as manhole covers – to the scourge of 'light segregation' – meaning those lumps of material which have been drilled onto the roads to separate cycles from other vehicles, and which have been proven to be a trip hazard. Highways England have agreed to study the evidence and, subject to that, they will advise on whether these should be used or not. This result came from MAG's attendance at the Motorcycle Infrastructure Sub Group in Manchester on 21<sup>st</sup> August and is a significant step forward in the campaign. If you have any examples of accidents you know about which have been caused by either manhole covers of the 'orcas' or 'armadillos,' we'd be very grateful to know of them. Let us know through HQ. On the same matter, please keep us posted if you're willing to approach your local council and ask them to sort out the danger which manhole covers present. Cumbria Council has done it, and that means your local council could do too.

**AGC is nearly here.** The AGC is the annual conference of MAG's people. This year we'll be reviewing the work and achievements since the last AGC and looking ahead to the future. We look forward to a productive session.

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## 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](mailto: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.



## **MAG Position Statement**

### **Motorcycle Crime: Enough is Enough**

#### **History**

Theft of mopeds, motorcycles and scooters has long been a difficult crime to combat. However between 2015 and 2017 there has been a massive increase in such crimes - exceeding 600% - with the perpetrators resorting to new and horrific methods. Motorcycle theft and bike-jacking (the taking of a motorcycle by force, essentially robbery) is a crime epidemic spiralling out of control everywhere - especially in London - and shows no sign of abating. Bikers all over the country are victims of these crimes. Directly, they suffer the loss of their machines. Indirectly, they endure increased insurance premiums as insurance companies seek to offset their losses. The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, Metropolitan Police Superintendent Mark Payne of Operation Venice, and others in positions of authority nationwide have publicly stated that motorcycle theft is partly the fault of the owners for not securing their vehicles properly.

#### **Reality**

More and more bikers are securing their machines but there are not sufficient anchor points provided for them to do so. Local authorities experiencing austerity cuts are unlikely to provide extra anchor points so bikers are, in many cases, anchoring to street furniture as an alternative, but these vehicles continue to be stolen. Even so, the small fall in the theft of machines that are secured has been offset by a corresponding rise in bike-jacking. Bikers are asking: what can we do when we are pushed off our machines and they are stolen from under us, or we are followed home and robbed there, often with weapons? There is no Police Crime Prevention advice or message in relation to bike-jacking. Riders are left to improvise.

#### **Assessment of the situation**

Due to the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) and other riders' rights groups there is an increase in public and rider awareness. However, this crime epidemic will not cease until the authorities stop blaming the victims or punishing them when they take preventative measures, such as running a red light, exceeding speed limits or riding in a prohibited bus lane whilst trying to escape. In the same context, riders are extremely concerned that they try to secure their machines to street furniture to prevent theft, only to receive a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN). Finally, due to potential litigation and negative IPCC enquiries, police

officers are placed in a very difficult position when it comes to chasing suspected thieves. It is often the case that they may subsequently be the subject of an inquiry, leading to a police culture which massively reduces the motivation to seek to apprehend the criminals.

### **MAG Position**

The Police, Government and Judiciary have to take ownership of this problem and do something now. The Motorcycle Action Group is calling for the following measures to be implemented:

- Victim blaming must end, publically and financially.
- Victims must be supported just as any other 'wounded' community and discretion shown to those riders who through taking preventative measures find themselves having to commit an offence"
- Police pursuit policies should be addressed urgently and officers supported.
- Police should issue guidance on preventative measures regarding bike-jacking and on-highway assaults.
- The Judicial system must hand down meaningful sentences that deter others.
- Young offenders must be given a deterrent sentence, rather than cautions or derisory penalties.
- Compensation orders must cover recovery and repair to a bike, plus the increased premiums.

MAG is on the move, encouraging members to continue to push the crime prevention message.

MAG is working to take active steps, directly, to bring these offenders to justice.

**The NPCC, Home Office & the Judiciary must respond to this crime epidemic.  
The current response is not good enough.**

**MAG challenges the relevant authorities to address this problem promptly and robustly.**

## **Bikers have had enough: Enough IS enough**

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### **MAG condemns most recent brutal attacks on motorcycle riders**

This version: 2017 08 25 Embargo: IMMEDIATE

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) has strongly condemned the horrific attacks that were carried out using machetes on three motorcycle riders during the evening of Thursday, 24th August.

Tim Fawthrop, London Regional Representative for the Motorcycle Action Group, is urging anyone with information about these crimes to share it with police immediately. 'These criminals are not worth protecting' stated Tim. 'The problem will simply escalate until the situation becomes entirely out of hand. MAG is appealing to people to do the right thing because there is a limit to how long other, less moderate, individuals will wait before taking the law into their own hands and we don't want that.'

'The injuries to these victims are potentially life-changing' adds Tim, 'and that's a huge price to pay just because you happen to earn a living on your bike. The anger felt by riders is hard to put into words. There's a groundswell building up against these crimes and I have already heard that some riders want to strike back. To be clear, MAG strongly advises against vigilantism, even if the sentiments are very understandable. We need to seek a collective solution before this escalates into a violent backlash.'

Tim is calling on all riders and organisations that care about ending the crime crisis involving these evil individuals on motorcycles to join a demonstration being organised for Saturday, 9th September 2017, in London. The event is being organised jointly with a number of other organisations who share concerns about these vicious attacks. Details of this ride will be shared in the week commencing 28th August.

Contact MAG at 01926 844 064 or [central-office@mag-uk.org](mailto:central-office@mag-uk.org)

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**AGC 2017**                      **30<sup>th</sup> September**

**Main event**

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September

Annual Group Conference

**Starts** 12:00 noon(Sign on from 10:00am)

**Venue:** The Royal British Legion, East Street, Manea, PE15 0JJ

You must be a MAG member or affiliated club delegate to attend

Lunch provided for all delegates – if you have special dietary requirements, let us know in advance.

**After party**

**Band: 'Victims of Time'**

On-site bar, barbecue&raffle

Free entry for AGC delegates, £5 for all others (inc. camping)

**Venue:** camping field, Station Road, Manea

approx. 1 mile from daytime venue - all outside event

Campsite opens 3pm Friday

Bikes, cars, and caravans allowed on camping field

You will need to be self-sufficient on Friday night, there will be coffee, tea & toilets on-site. The village has many amenities – chippy/Chinese, Indian, pub, shop.

If you want to help out as a volunteer, get in touch.

Questions / inquiries

[selinal@mag-uk.org](mailto:selinal@mag-uk.org) 07870792227 or [sarahmitzi@gmail.com](mailto:sarahmitzi@gmail.com)

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## **MAG calls for witnesses to MP attack by 'jobs, not bikers'**

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) is appealing for anyone who witnessed the attack on Labour MP Steve McCabe in Birmingham to come forward with information 'for the sake of justice and the reputation of biking.'

The MP suffered facial injuries when he was hit in the face with a brick thrown by a job, apparently on a used off-road machine. Labour's Steve McCabe MP said two people were riding "really recklessly" in Birmingham's Yardley Wood area, and he shouted at them to stop or he would call the police. The Birmingham Selly Oak MP has given a statement to police, and said he has a "beautiful black eye."

Mr McCabe stated "we've had umpteen complaints about this kind of dangerous behaviour and so I shouted at them to pack it in or I'd call the police. These are really quite nasty, violent thugs."

Colin Brown, MAG's West Midlands Regional Representative, said 'we understand the MP has tweeted pictures of two thugs allegedly involved in the attack. MAG is utterly determined to ensure that the jobs involved with this are brought to justice. That's because MAG does not recognise these idiots as bikers – but simply as hooligans on two wheels. The legitimate riding group is a close knit community. We'll find them and then they'll find justice – and the legal system will hit them in the face like the brick they threw at Mr McCabe.'

MAG has been in contact with Mr McCabe's team and, as well as offering our support for his recovery, has agreed to work with him and his office to catch the culprits. If you have any information regarding the perpetrators of this crime, please contact Mr McCabe's office in confidence on 0121 443 3878, Birmingham Police, or call MAG on 01926 844 064 and we will pass on the information in confidence. Colin Brown adds 'let's stop this mindless thuggery and make it clear that these people aren't bikers, they're common criminals.'

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## **Minute-taker/Administrator for NC meetings and AGCs**

MAG requires an experienced Minute-taker to take accurate Minutes of its National Committee meetings, which take place on the second Saturday of February, April, June, August, October and December near Warwick. In addition, they will provide a small amount of administrative support in relation to the meetings and Minute the Annual Group Conference, which takes place at the end of September.

Responsible for: None

Responsible to: National Committee

Main duties:

1. Send out timely reminders for Reports prior to each NC meeting and collate the Reports for inclusion in the Minutes.
2. Maintain an Attendance List for each NC meeting, including apologies for absence.
3. Generate an Agenda for each NC meeting, taking into account AOB items.
4. Provide accurate, timely Action Points identified during meetings immediately following each NC meeting.
5. Provide accurate, timely Minutes of all NC meetings.
6. Provide accurate, timely Minutes of Annual Group Conferences.

This is a volunteer role but it is envisaged that commitment will be given to attending all meetings.

If you feel that you have the right skill set for this role and would like to know more, feel free to contact The Lady Rootveg for an informal chat. Contact 01205 357417 after 6.30 pm or email [nrlo@mag-uk.org](mailto:nrlo@mag-uk.org)

## **ANDY CARROT – VICE CHAIR – SAYS IT HOW IT IS.**

The Motorcycle Action Group's President, Ian Mutch, recently came in for a lambasting by some riders on social media. The reposting of an article written by him in 2013 - where he dared to suggest that what goes on between the ears can, in certain circumstances, protect you more than what you are wearing - resulted in a fair degree of vitriol being aimed in his direction. In short, on a hot day whilst riding in shirt sleeves, piss pot and wearing no gloves he was sneered at by a fully -armoured rider who then set off from the traffic lights at a rate of knots only to be on his backside in the road at the next bend. There's a whole school of thinking that believes the safer someone feels, the more risks they are prepared to take. This isn't MAG rhetoric; it's known as the theory of risk compensation and is already being applied in some highway design, where techniques are employed that make drivers feel more vulnerable resulting in a reduction in average speeds. Would the guy have been testing the level of protection of his clothing if he had he been dressed the same as the guy alongside him?

Ian is a founder member of MAG and makes no secret of his opposition to compulsory enforcement in respect to what you can or cannot wear on a motorcycle. He rides by the maxim “Gently Bently” and whilst his speedo *can* display speeds in excess of the national limit, it’s not territory the needle has regularly seen. The mistake some Facebook commentators made was thinking that Ian was saying MAG is opposed to wearing protective gear but when it comes to ATGATT (All The Gear, All The Time) or riding in a pink tutu, MAGs view is that if that is what you want to wear, wear it. MAG accepts that protective clothing can help reduce injury, so why would we see a need to oppose it? We don’t. In fact, MAG supported the Federation of European Motorcyclists’ Associations when it lobbied the EU on clothing standards so that when you buy a jacket that says it is protective it does what it says on the tin.

But equally as valid as one person’s desire to wear the best equipment money can buy, MAG also believes it is equally acceptable that the guy or gal on the cruiser should be able to ride along in a cut-off and fingerless gloves. As riders we know that if we fall off there is a distinct possibility it is going to hurt. It is a fact that in the event of an accident we are more likely to be injured than if we were in a car. Lembit Õpik, MAG’s Director of Communications & Public Affairs, experienced years of pain and discomfort following facial injuries as a result of a paragliding accident, but he would support your and my right to go paragliding. We choose to ride for many reasons but we all experience the joy of two (or three) wheels. We live in a country where we are free to jump out of an aeroplane thousands of feet in the air, where we can climb mountains or get on a horse and gallop across the countryside or take part in any number of other activities that involve risk. It is one thing passing laws that stop us hurting each other but there has to be a limit on legislation that protects us from ourselves. If you don’t accept that, then you accept that ultimately, the Government can stop you doing anything where you might hurt yourself, including motorcycling.

MAG supports progressive training for riders (but not the current regime of re-testing); it welcomes the range of gear that riders now get to choose from; it supports driver education and is campaigning for safer roads, but it remains true to the fundamental principal of *freedom of choice* because to do otherwise accepts that the Government can legislate us off the road. Some people are not comfortable with that sort of libertarian approach but who hasn’t, at some point, moaned about the ‘nanny state’? There will be someone who reads this who still thinks we are somehow opposed to protective clothing. We are not, but we are opposed to any attempt to prevent you from making up your own mind.

The Motorcycle Action Group is the country’s leading organisation when it comes to representing rider’s interests and you can be a member for just over 50p per week! Please call 01926 844064: single membership costs £27; family, joint, affiliated club and corporate memberships also available).

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## MAG UK: ‘Don’t Charge Bikes For Low Emission Zones’

FEMA member MAG UK (Motorcycle Action Group) defends an exemption from user charging of bikes in the Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ). MAG UK has responded on behalf of the 200,000 motorcyclists that ride in London every day.

Selina Lavender, MAG UK's Chair, has shared MAG's determination to ensure an exemption: "The bike charging proposal was part of a package to reduce emissions – even though a shift towards motorbikes reduces emissions. We've made a comprehensive submission to explain why it's utterly counterproductive to tax part of the solution, namely powered two wheelers £12.50 a day."

MAG UK made the following points:

- Commuters on bikes are virtually zero NOx emissions producers – and far ahead of buses. That's why an exemption for bikes (of all ages) is right – because car drivers who shift to motorcycles and scooters reduce overall emissions due to the tiny emissions footprint of a bike.
- Research shows if 10% of motorists moved to motorcycles for their daily commute there would be a 40% reduction in congestion. Air pollution is a feature of congestion. That means motorcycles help achieve air quality targets, so charging them makes no sense.
- Some low wage earners use bikes for financial reasons. Charging them when they produce almost no emissions – or forcing onto more expensive public transport – is a 'tax' on lower wage earners. An exemption is socially fair.

MAG UK is closely following the emissions debate to ensure that bikers are not charged while other vehicles which make no contribution to reducing congestion (and emissions caused by traffic jams), such as electric cars, are exempt. This remains a key element in the campaigning work of the movement.

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## **Pothole-related breakdowns rise despite mild weather**

New figures from the RAC show its patrols attended 31% more pothole-related breakdowns in the second quarter of 2017 than they did over the same period in 2016.

In a press release issued today (1 August), the RAC reveals it dealt with more than 3,500 breakdowns that were likely to be attributable to poor road surfaces - such as broken suspension springs or damaged shock absorbers - between April and June 2017.

The breakdown organisation has labelled the figures as 'unwelcome', adding that it was expecting to see a reduction in the number of pothole-related breakdowns when taking into consideration the mild weather experienced in 2017.

Earlier this year the RAC described the condition of local roads as 'on a knife-edge', after it received more than 6,500 pothole-related call-outs between January and March 2017 - a year-on-year rise of 63%.

The RAC Pothole Index, a 12-month rolling average of pothole-related breakdowns, also indicates a worsening picture after five successive quarters of improvement.

As of Q2 2017, the index stands at 2.2, having begun at a base of 1.0 in 2006. This is an increase on the first quarter of the year when it stood at 2.08 – the lowest figure recorded since Q4 2008 – and the first increase since the beginning of 2016.

David Bizley, RAC chief engineer, said: “After a period of steady improvement, it is disappointing to see an unwelcome rise in the number of pothole-related breakdowns.

“The most worrying aspect is the fact that this year’s weather has been so much milder and drier than in the equivalent six months last year and, for this reason, we should have expected the numbers for the second quarter to be lower.

“We fear it would only take a spell of very cold or wet weather for the improvements of the last year or two to evaporate and for the nation to find itself in a situation when we would once again be seeking emergency funding from Government to address the worst affected roads.”

RAC: <https://www.rac.co.uk/press-centre#/pressreleases/rac-data-shows-road-quality-has-worsened-despite-mild-weather-2089192>

RS GB: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/5749.html>

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## **Councils share £75m for road improvements**

Councils across England have been awarded a share of £75m for 19 ‘essential’ road maintenance projects.

Local authorities were challenged to put forward schemes which could ‘make a real difference’ to road users.

In addition to repairs, resurfacing and junction improvements, other projects to receive funding include bridge refurbishments, flood resilience measures and improved drainage.

Most of the schemes will be delivered within the next 12 months.

One project to receive funding is a £4.6m refurbishment of the A589 Greyhound Bridge in Lancashire, which will enable HGVs to use the bridge.

A carriageway and drainage renewal scheme on a dual-carriageway stretch of the A361 in Devon will improve access to the M5, while in Northumberland £5m will be used to repair and strengthen key routes for the rural and regional economy.

The challenge fund is one part of £6.1bn of central Government funding being provided to local highway authorities in England (outside London) between 2015/2016 and 2020/2021. Gov.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/councils-share-75-million-for-major-road-improvements>

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## Learner drivers will be allowed on motorways from 2018

Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency Published: 12 August 2017

Learner drivers will be allowed to take motorway driving lessons with an approved driving instructor in a car with dual controls from 2018.

Traffic sign

Allowing learner drivers to have lessons on motorways will help to make sure more drivers know how to use motorways safely.

At the moment, you can only have driving lessons on motorways after you've passed your driving test. Some newly-qualified drivers take lessons through the voluntary Pass Plus scheme.

How the change will work

The change will apply to England, Scotland and Wales.

Learner drivers will need to be:

- accompanied by an approved driving instructor
- driving a car fitted with dual controls

Any motorways lessons will be voluntary. It will be up to the driving instructor to decide when the learner driver is competent enough to have a motorway lesson.

Trainee driving instructors won't be allowed to take learner drivers on the motorway. Motorway driving will not be included in the driving test changes coming into force on 4 December 2017.

The change will only apply to learner drivers of cars - learner motorcyclists won't be allowed to have motorway lessons.

When the change will happen:

The exact date in 2018 will be confirmed nearer the time.

The change will be well-publicised so driving instructors and learner drivers are prepared for the change, and other road users know what to expect. The Highway Code rules on motorways will also be updated.

Until the law is changed, it's still illegal for a learner driver to drive on a motorway.

Driving instructor vehicles and training

Driving instructors will be allowed to decide whether or not to keep their driving school roof-top box on during motorway lessons, based on the manufacturer's instructions.

However, the car will still need to display L plates on the front and rear if the rooftop box is removed.

Driving school car:

It will be up to the instructor whether or not they keep their driving school roof-top box on - but the car will still have to display L plates on the front and rear

Guidance for driving instructors

DVSA won't give driving instructors extra training on providing motorway lessons, but learning materials and the car driving syllabus will be updated to incorporate motorway lessons.

DVSA will also work with driving instructor associations and Highways England to provide extra guidance and advice for driving instructors.

Preparing drivers for a lifetime of safe driving

The changes are being made to allow learner drivers to:

- get broader driving experience before taking their driving test
- get training on how to join and leave the motorway, overtake and use lanes correctly
- practise driving at higher speeds
- put their theoretical knowledge into practice

Gov.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/learner-drivers-will-be-allowed-on-motorways-from-2018>

***And from the DoT on this subject:***

## **Green light for driving lessons on motorways**

Department for Transport Published:13 August 2017

Learner drivers will be able to have lessons on motorways in a bid to improve road safety, Transport Secretary Chris Grayling announced today (13 August 2017).

The law change will be active from 2018, when learners will be allowed on motorways with an approved driving instructor in a dual control car. This will provide a broader range of real life experiences and better prepare learners for independent driving when they pass their test.

Currently learners cannot drive on a motorway until after they have passed their test. This means the first experience of motorway driving for many is as a new driver without the guidance of a driving instructor or the safety of a dual control car.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

“The UK has some of the safest roads in the world and we want to make them even safer.

“Younger drivers are up to 7 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured compared with drivers over twenty-five and lack of experience is an important factor.

“Allowing learners to drive on motorways in a supportive environment will help them develop a practical understanding of how to use motorways safely before driving independently.

Improving road safety is a priority for this government, and allowing learners on motorways with an approved instructor will better protect young drivers and other motorway users. It will ensure the current generation of adults about to start their driving career have the best possible introduction to what should be a lifetime of safe driving.

RAC road safety spokesman Pete Williams said:

“We welcome the news that learner drivers will be allowed to take lessons on the motorway under the supervision of an approved driving instructor in a dual-controlled car, something that motorists we surveyed were overwhelmingly supportive of.

“While motorways are statistically our safest roads, it can be daunting using them for the first time after passing the driving test. Giving learners the option to gain valuable experience on our fastest and busiest roads should further improve safety and enhance the confidence of new drivers.

The Department for Transport consulted on these changes earlier this year, receiving wide support from both learner drivers and approved driving instructors. These changes apply to England, Wales and Scotland only.

DVSA Chief Driving Examiner, Lesley Young, said:

“ DVSA’s priority is to help you through a lifetime of safe driving.

“Our roads are among the safest in the world, but we’re determined to do more to improve safety for all road users.

“We want to modernise driver training so that novice drivers gain the skills and experience they need to help them and everyone else to stay safe on our motorways.

Jasmine Halstead, head of learning and development for British School of Motoring, said:

“Per mile travelled motorways are our safest roads.

“If learners aren’t allowed to practise on motorways under supervision then some will avoid motorways, and others will use motorways incorrectly when they have passed their test.

“Hence it is great news for road safety that learners will be able to drive on motorways under supervision.

Gov.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/green-light-for-driving-lessons-on-motorways>

## TfL using ‘virtual bumps’ to discourage speeding



Image: BBC

Virtual speed bumps are being used to discourage drivers from speeding on London roads (The Mirror).

The Transport for London (TfL) initiative uses perspective to create the illusion of speed bumps, even though the surface of the road is flat.

The idea was first trialled on the A117 in Newham in November 2014, and has since been rolled out at 45 locations across the capital, The Mirror reports.

The aim is to bring traffic down to speeds of below 20mph, according to TfL.

Nigel Hardy, TfL's head of sponsorship, road space management, said: "We are working hard to create a road network which is free from death or serious injury.

"This Vision Zero approach to reducing road danger includes testing the effectiveness of 20mph limits on parts of Transport for London's road network.

"As part of these trials a number of different measures - including new signs, road markings and painted speed bumps – are being introduced to reduce traffic speeds.

"We will continue to try new speed reducing ideas to save lives and prevent injury on our roads."

Speed humps have been prominent in the news in recent weeks after the Government's new plans to tackle air pollution controversially hinted at their removal.

In an open letter to environment secretary Michael Gove, Living Streets, Cycling UK and the Campaign for Better Transport said that the measure is, at best, 'an expensive diversion from addressing air quality' and at worst 'dangerous and retrograde'.

London is not the first place to test 'optical illusion' speed bumps. Philadelphia introduced the novel traffic calming measure in 2008.

At the time, Charles Denny, Philadelphia's chief traffic engineer told the Telegraph: "The goal is to change the mind-set."

The Mirror: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/tech/virtual-speed-bumps-used-slow-10951252>

RS GB: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/5902.html>

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## **Motorbike glove law in France (I think we already knew this but better safe than sorry)**

If you are one of the thousands of British bikers who, each summer head to the excellent French roads, glove law will have been introduced since your last trip. It is now against the law on France to ride any motorcycle or scooter without CE certified gloves. Passengers also have to wear gloves on a motorcycle.

Approved gloves will have a label mentioning European directive 89/686 / EEC.

It's unlikely that any biker is going to set off on a tour without a pair of gloves. However, the new motorbike glove law may catch out those doing a quick ride from the campsite to the beach or local shop.

New motorbike gloves law fines

If you are caught riding without gloves you will be fined 68 euros. Your pillion will also be fined if they are without the correct motorcycle gloves. If you pay within 15 days, the fine is reduced to 45 euros.

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**LOOKS LIKE BRISTOL MAG HAVE THEIR WORK CUT OUT!!**

## **Bristol ULEZ?**

Polluting cars could be charged to enter Bristol  
HTV 15 August 2017

Council leaders are set to approve plans which could lead to charging polluting vehicles to enter Bristol.

Pollution levels in some parts of the city are now double the recommended national limits.

Cabinet members will vote this afternoon on four options for clean air zones, with a final decision expected next year.

The council has launched a joint 'clean air zone' feasibility study with South Gloucestershire Council.

Once complete next year, the study will inform the action plan which could see the introduction of a London-style congestion zone.

The latest council report recommends that Bristol Mayor Marvin Rees approves the development of a clean air zone for Bristol and applies for additional funding to create an action plan.

HTV: <http://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/update/2017-08-15/polluting-cars-could-be-charged-to-enter-bristol/>

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## **Survey suggests 34% of drivers ignoring mobile phone laws**

A new survey has suggested that a third of drivers are still using their mobile phone while at the wheel, despite the introduction of stronger penalties.

Published on Wednesday (2 August), the results of the Kwik Fit survey suggest that 26% of drivers use their satnav or GPS on their phone, while 19% of respondents confessed to taking calls. 17% admitted to reading text messages.

16% of respondents said they make phone calls without a hands free set, with around 12% sending texts.

The Kwik Fit survey suggests that drivers aged 18-24 years are nearly three times more likely than the average motorist to believe it's legal to use your phone when stopped at traffic lights, and twice as likely to say you can answer calls but not make outgoing ones.

The survey also suggests it is the youngest drivers who are most likely to have experienced trouble on the road due to mobile phone use.

40% of 18-24 year olds have either had a collision or near miss, or got involved in an argument because somebody was using their mobile phone, more than double the figure for all drivers.

8% of drivers aged 18-24 years say they have had a collision because they were distracted by their mobile phone, with a further 8% saying they have almost done so. This compares with figures of 2% and 3% respectively for all drivers.

The survey also explores awareness of the increased penalties for mobile phone use, which came into effect on 1 March.

43% of respondents didn't know that the penalty for using a hand-held phone when driving is six points. 53% were not aware that those caught using a phone in their first two years of driving would lose their licence as a result of picking up six points.

Roger Griggs, communications director at Kwik Fit, said: "The findings of this study are very worrying indeed. While car manufacturers have made great strides in improving safety, it is vital that drivers remember that they are the most important safety feature in the vehicle.

"Any form of distraction can have serious consequences, as sadly, the statistics clearly show.

"It is especially important for inexperienced drivers to be fully focused on what they are doing. The fact that this report has found that younger drivers have less knowledge of the rules and are more likely to take risks means more needs to be done to educate them in the very first weeks and months of driving.

"Kwik Fit is working with schools and colleges around the country to hold events aimed at improving the safety of those drivers who are new to the road and education on the use of mobiles is an important part of that."

Kwik Fit: <https://www.kwik-fit.com/press/a-third-of-drivers-ignoring-mobile-phone-rules>

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## **Roads could be 'tunnelled' to absorb pollution**

Highways England is investigating the viability of developing a new tunnel-like structure designed to cut vehicle emissions and improve air quality.

The idea is outlined in the government agency's new Air Quality Strategy, published yesterday (2 August), in which Highways England says it will 'explore new and innovative approaches to improve air quality'.

According to a news report on the Guardian website, Highways England officials are studying a Dutch scheme in which cantilevered canopies are constructed over the most polluted sections of roads to prevent local residents breathing in noxious car fumes.

The RAC has questioned whether this is the right approach to deal with the problem, suggesting instead that the focus should be on increasing the take up of ultra-low emission vehicles and creating better traffic flow.

Highways England says it has historically been at the forefront of air quality research and investigation - pointing to existing trials of two different types of barriers.

The first trial features wood panels between four and six metres high fitted to the M62 near junction 18 in Manchester. A second trial, which is ongoing, features a three metre high fence coated in a mineral polymer material capable of absorbing nitrogen dioxide.

A Highways England spokesman told the Guardian: “The results from the monitoring of this trial will help us understand if this has been a success with the potential to implement it on the rest of our network.”

The spokesman added: “The best solution to accommodating the extra traffic on our roads, without negatively impacting on air quality, is cleaner low-emission vehicles. In the meantime we are investing £100m to test new ideas including less-polluting fuels and road barriers which can absorb harmful emissions.

“We have identified that a cantilever barrier or canopy, which is a tunnel-like structure designed to prevent vehicle emissions, might be a possible solution, though the air quality benefits of this are still to be fully understood. We are now working with the Dutch Roads Authority to measure air quality around an existing cantilever barrier on their network.”

Nick Lyes, RAC spokesman, said: “We question whether constructing tunnel-like canopies, even if they are made from a material that can clean the air, is the right way to deal with the problem.

“All this will do is concentrate potentially toxic air over the road which will have an impact on those inside their vehicles who breathe in the trapped pollution.

“The solution should be about reducing levels of pollution by accelerating the transition to ultra-low and zero emission vehicles and encouraging better traffic flow through variable speed limits – something Highways England has started doing on smart motorways.”

Highways

England: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/634933/N160081\\_Air\\_Quality\\_Strategy\\_Final\\_V18.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/634933/N160081_Air_Quality_Strategy_Final_V18.pdf)

The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/aug/03/roads-could-be-covered-with-polytunnels-to-absorb-pollution>

RAC: <https://www.rac.co.uk/press-centre#/news/rac-comments-on-motorway-anti-pollution-tunnels-proposal-253522>

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