



# JULY 2022

# NETWORK

**A networking tool providing information for Activists and other interested parties.**

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**Acknowledgments:- George Legg. Lembit Opik. Colin Brown. FEMA. Julie Sperling. Andy Carrott. And anyone else I’ve forgotten.**

## **EDITORIAL**

When reading the FEMA material for this edition the first thing that jumped out at me was the requirement, under Romanian Law (at time of going to press), to carry a fire extinguisher’.

Not wishing to be controversial (!! ) but where do you put it? I’m not asking for answers on a postcard to that question but if you’re a sports bike rider, a rider without luggage etc., where is this item meant to go? Not to mention the danger it poses in an accident.

You may think – ‘it’s Romania it doesn’t apply to me’, however, unless FEMA can get exemption for motorcycles, if you are visiting or travelling through the country you will be required to carry one.

It’ll be interesting to see the outcome of this and if common sense will prevail. Watch this space!

Noting the piece in the Political Report of Lembit’s experience of witnessing an electric scooter rider being stopped by the police, being told the law and that his was illegal but then being allowed to keep it, I’ve observed that here they don’t even bother to pull them over!! I’ve noticed those who hire the legal ones are, in general, more responsible (except maybe when it comes to parking them - laying them down anywhere on the pavement does not seem to me to be responsible at all!!) however the privately owned ones I’d willingly throw on any bonfire .....or maybe that should be their riders, I’m not sure which.

Urge you to read this as it contains some worrying stats CAV: No One Knows How Safe New Driver-Assistance Systems Really Are

<https://www.cavsafetyhub.com/httpswwwwiredcomstoryadvanceddriverassistancesystemsafetyteslaautopilot>.

Particularly in light of the news this week that a Tesla, that had been in a scrap yard for 3 weeks following an accident, suddenly burst into flames and had to be buried in a pit to extinguish the battery despite the use of thousands of gallons of water. Is this the price of so called ‘progress’?

On that cheery note I’ll let you read on.

Ride free, AG

**Copy for the August edition should be with me by 25<sup>th</sup> July. Subject heading:  
Network. [aine@mag-uk.org](mailto:aine@mag-uk.org)**

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## **POLITICAL REPORT – COLIN BROWN AND LEMBIT OPIK**

**Soaring inflation and rocketing fuel prices are adding to the challenges of travelling in Britain. MAG’s Political Unit, Lembit Öpik and Colin Brown, give you the latest update on motorcycling, politics and what happened in Denmark in the name of saving your petrol engine.**

**Denmark debate moves European policy into a review**

On 11<sup>th</sup> June 2022 MAG presented the movements firm stand in favour of petrol powered motorcycles to the Federation of European Motorcyclists' Associations (FEMA). MAG Vice Chair, Ian Churchlow, together with MAG's Director of Communications and Public Affairs Lembit Öpik travelled to Jutland, on the eastern shore of Denmark to make the case against the threatened ban on petrol power, proposed to come into force for motorcycles in the UK from 2035 (and already scheduled from 2030 for cars).

Ian presented MAG's position in a powerful analysis of the utterly flawed thinking behind the ban. He outlined why we believe carbon dioxide emissions from human sources cannot be driving global warming and went on to explain that the proposed ban on Internal Combustion Engines (ICEs) has no scientific, environmental or logical justification.

In the heated debate that followed, MAG stated clearly that we defend our right to ride whatever power mode we prefer, without political interference or 'virtue signalling' agendas that only harm our civil liberties. Ian also pointed out that FEMA's own survey on the subject indicated that the overwhelming proportion of European riders also oppose the ICE ban.

FEMA agreed with MAG that this matter will be pursued at a working group, where a longer analysis of the facts can be made. Science and logic would strongly indicate FEMA should support MAG's position. At the meeting, not a single point made by Ian was countered. As such, MAG has now got the task of convincing FEMA to adopt the UK position. Anything less would mean disregarding solid science and ignoring the will of the majority of motorcyclists across the continent of Europe. At time of writing, we expect the next working group meeting will be in July, and we'll keep you updated on development.

Many thanks to the Transport Reality team for providing the information that made the presentation so powerful. It's a great team, and we're making strong points sensibly – and it seems to be working.

## **GB News gives space for debate**

In Mid June, Lembit was able to present the case for motorcycles and against what he regards as bad eco-policies live on air on Nana Akua's show on GB News. He also followed up this debate a week later on Neil Oliver's show, where he had a one-to-one argument with a 'senior lecturer' on Climate Change studies. In the debate, the lecturer appeared remarkably uninformed about his own subject, and ended up stating things that could fairly easily be disproved.

Importantly, the lecturer also agreed to have a more extensive debate on the subject, which will then include transport policy. Neil Oliver, the presenter, is sympathetic to this idea. Lembit hopes this will finally result in a more comprehensive discussion where the facts can be considered in front of a live audience. 'I am happy to discuss all of this in front of the lecturer's own students if he likes,' says Lembit. 'It's not a problem because I'm dealing in facts. As I said in the interview, if he has better data than I do, then I'll change my view. The quid pro quo is, of course, that I'd expect him to make the same commitment.'

Thus, it seems that the climate agenda is finally gaining traction in the media in a way that may introduce a more balanced consideration of the facts, instead of a never-ending procession of emotional climate catastrophe statements in the media.

## **Who's riding for London Mayor?**

The word on the street is that at least one potential Mayoral candidate in London is biker. We can't yet share who it is, but he has expressed a strong desire to give a better deal to riders, and for that matter all road users. This is a breath of fresh air, given the relentless restriction of our civil liberties in the name of 'active travel' – which invariably means cycling and walking. We'll let you know who the mystery candidate is as soon as we have permission to do so.

## **E-scooter clampdown?**

Have you noticed an increase in police activity in regard to e-scooters? Technically, all e-scooters that are used outside prescribed e-scooter pilots are illegal. However, the mess the Government has created in terms of who's allowed to do what has led to the proliferation of these devices across the country, on pavements and along highways.

Lembit happened to observe the police apprehending an e-scooter user on the street. It seemed that the user either didn't know or didn't care that his device was illegal. Interestingly, he was then allowed to depart WITH his e-scooter, and we very much suspect he got back on it once he went round the corner.

E-scooters are like electric bicycles, in that both blur the distinction between 'active travel' two wheelers and scooters and motorbikes. The Government is clearly stuck on the matter. Having quickly commenced these pilots, they now don't seem able to decide what to do next. Whatever they decide will set precedents, some of which may be useful to the interests of riders. MAG has long argued that motorcycling should also be included as a form of active travel.

## **Fuel price protest**

Howard Cox, of Fair Fuel UK, has been running a robust campaign to seek to reduce the burden of high fuel prices in the country. He's already had success with a 5p reduction in fuel duty. He's hoping for more. Note that most of what you pay for petrol is tax. The Government could decide to make larger cuts, but that remains in the balance. It is also apparently supporting an increase in North Sea Oil production. As things stand, prices remain high, and are likely to stay that way for some time. It's a good moment to swap your car for your bike – which is, for most travellers, an effective way of cutting your fuel bills.

## **Better air – but does it matter?**

London's air campaigners are touting a dramatic improvement in air quality at a central location. Here's the article:

<https://airqualitynews.com/2022/06/22/two-london-estates-show-major-improvement-in-air-quality/>

However, the question is: does this matter? Despite repeated claims that 'bad air' kills people, the data is extremely dodgy. Why, for example, is life expectancy highest in some places with the 'worst' air? And why does the London Mayor want people to switch to public transport when particulate matter is up to 30 times higher on the underground than it is at street level?

All of this matters to motorcyclists because we are at risk of being banned for the sake of emissions, part of the argument being that our tailpipes create lethal air. As long as these sorts of stories are used in policy making, our freedom to ride remains in danger of health related prohibitions.

## **Zero vision?**

In yet another conference dedicated to the vision zero agenda to eliminate ALL road deaths, the usual subjects appear to be covered. MAG has previously spoken at a number of road safety conferences, but when we highlight contradictions like promoting cycling and vision zero at the same time, few delegates seem eager to listen. The zero deaths agenda is another example of an extreme policy that can be used to ban just about anything campaigners don't like. Although it can sometimes feel like an uphill struggle, we must remain vigilant for any attempt to ban us for the sake of our own safety – a frequent mantra that is often used by authoritarians to impose their wishes on others.

If you're interested in attending the conference, in Harrogate on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2022 here's the link:

<https://roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/national-conference-to-explore-road-to-vision-zero/>

## **Having our say on a Low Carbon Fuel Strategy**

Colin attended a DfT workshop in late May to discuss the Government's Low Carbon Fuel Strategy. Putting to one side the motorcycle situation, even with sales bans on ICE cars and vans from 2030 there are going to be many ICE vehicles on the road for a good few years beyond that date. We can all make educated guesses and predictions on how long, but it is clear that the Government accept that the vehicle parc will not change dramatically overnight on New Years Eve 2029. Low carbon liquid fuels are therefore on the agenda, not least because for HGVs, the transition to zero emissions is far more complicated than simply going for battery electric. This may sound familiar of course because the exact same situation applies for motorcycles.

It was interesting to hear that the comment on motorcycles was that no date has been identified for the end of petrol ICE engines. This was a variation to the usual line that the proposed date for motorcycles is 2035. The continued delays on launching the consultation for phase out dates for motorcycles may well be due to growing evidence and pressure on the Government to accept that battery electric is not the one size fits all solution needed for motorcycles.

Colin made the case for ensuring that motorcycles are placed firmly into the list of parameters being considered in any strategy on low carbon fuels. This is important from the

perspective of distribution networks which could face different challenges for commercial HGV fleets and privately-owned motorcycles.

The takeaway from all this is that the future is far from clear cut for motorcycling – the battle is certainly not lost. It is vital that MAG remains fully engaged on all fronts in the battle to define the future shape of motorcycling. As motorcyclists we should claim the loudest voice in defining it, and MAG will ensure our opinions are treated with respect.

## **Hold the line on bus lanes**

The default access in bus lanes campaign is progressing well. Thank you to all those who signed the petition – we sailed past the 10,000-signature mark on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June which means that the Government are obligated to respond.

Behind the scenes Colin has been communicating with DfT warning them that they will need to give a formal response and offering to help them come up with a meaningful statement. At time of writing we are awaiting a meeting date to discuss the details of what is, and is not possible under current legislation. If necessary we can push for legislative change as a clause in the Transport Bill that was announced in the last Queen's Speech.

Please continue to ask others to sign the petition. There are over three million motorcyclist licence holders in the country. Every one of them stands to benefit from this policy, so 10,000 signatures is a scratch on the surface of potential signatories. If the DfT see the pace that support for the petition continue it will add more pressure. If we can hit 100,000 a Parliamentary debate will be triggered. We may not need to get to that level if Colin is able to achieve a result without it, but like all good boy scouts we should be prepared for all eventualities.

The petition is open until October 11<sup>th</sup>, so keep sharing it and pushing it to the widest audience you can. And remember non-riding friends, family and workmates can sign it too. Don't be shy in asking them to support you by signing.

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/614294>

*see the press release below in the MAG PR section.*

## **Were you there?**

We hope you all enjoyed Ride To Work Day. Did you get any good pictures or videos on the day? We are looking for content for next year's campaign. Ride To Work Day 2023 will be on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023. You can help by sending us your pictures and videos from this year's event which we can use in materials for next year. And there will be a gift in it for you if we use your picture or video.

## **Up next**

Colin is now working on collating the 2021 theft statistics, so stand by your beds for the next phase of campaign activity on motorcycle theft and secure parking.

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# MAG PRESS RELEASES

## PLEASE ACT NOW – Bus Lanes Petition



Petitions

UK Government and Parliament

Petition

### Require local authorities in England to permit motorcycles in bus lanes

We want the Government to implement the necessary changes to enable motorcycles to use any bus lanes in England. The Government should amend the legislation empowering local authorities to create bus lanes, so that they must permit motorcycles to use all bus lanes.

[More details](#)

We believe this would result in the better utilisation of bus lanes, improve safety for motorcyclists and help reduce emissions by reducing congestion.

[Sign this petition](#)

We are asking all members to act now by signing the ‘Bikes in Bus Lanes’ petition.

The petition is on the official Parliamentary Petitions website and will take up less than a minute of your time to complete.

- Follow the link below:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/614294>

- Click on the green “Sign this petition” button.
- Enter your details and then click the green “Continue” button.
- You will then receive an email with a link that you must follow to confirm your signature on the petition.
- In addition to signing the petition yourself, please ask someone else (e.g. a family member, friend or work colleague) to do the same. They don’t need to ride themselves; they just need to support your request to have default access in bus lanes. It may help to point out the advantages of bikes being in bus lanes (i.e. not taking up space in other lanes).

## Why?

Signing this petition is important and can make a real difference. Colin Brown is pushing for a meeting with the Department for Transport (DfT) to discuss the detail of how such a policy can be introduced. Colin will be highlighting the Petition and noting that the Government will be obliged to formally respond when we break the 10,000-signature target for a Parliamentary response. We are looking for a meaningful result, rather than a formulaic brush off.

## What about Wales and Scotland?

Wales and Scotland could not be specifically listed on the petition due to the devolved nature of transport policy. Northern Ireland already permits access to all of their bus lanes. If we get a positive result for England, it will assist our case in making the same arguments in Wales and Scotland.

Please sign the petition whether the outcome will help you as an individual or not. We need to get this petition over the line for the collective benefit of all riders.

Thank you for your support.

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# FEMA

## France And UK Debate The Meaning Of 'Means Of Transport'



Just when we thought the problems with transporting a motorcycle or a car from the UK to the European Union were solved, new problems arise.

After the European Commission [confirmed](#) that transporting a motorcycle or a car ('means of transport') from the United Kingdom to the continent should not be a problem, a discussion has started among French and British customs authorities about when a motorcycle or car is a 'means of transport'.

***This is an ongoing subject, expect more updates.***

In the latest twist in the issue of customs formalities when transporting motorcycles across the EU/UK border in vans or on trailers, FEMA, [NMC](#) (National Motorcyclists Council UK) and [FIVA](#), the historic vehicle federation, have received updated advice from the UK Government during a meeting held between the NMC and the UK Government's Cabinet Office borders group.

This meeting was held as a result of the letter that the three riders' organisations received from the European Commission, suggesting that there should be no onerous customs formalities for moving bikes in vans or on trailers. The UK Government used the letter to reopen talks on the issue with France and has undertaken further checks with various customs authorities on their understanding of the issue in light of the European Commission's letter.

**'Customs can take the view that a road registered motorcycle stops being a means of transport when it is being carried by another vehicle.'**

Unfortunately, there is an issue with what customs authorities regard as 'means of transport' under various international treaties and regulations. It has now emerged that in technical terms, customs can take the view that a road registered motorcycle stops being a means of transport for the purposes of crossing a border when it is being carried by another vehicle, temporarily becoming 'goods in transit'. This appears to be what has happened in France, where customs have in some cases insisted that motorcycles (and cars) in vans, lorries or on trailers are accompanied by an [ATA Carnet](#).

Talks continue to take between UK, EU and French officials aimed at seeking a final resolution to the issue and riders' groups are maintaining close contact with both the UK and EU authorities.

However, until a final resolution is reached, FEMA, FIVA and NMC are now advising that riders check carefully with customs authorities about individual border requirements when transporting motorcycles to and from the UK and EU in a van or on a trailer. There seems to be varying ways the rules are applied between EU countries.



[Dolf Willigers](#), FEMA's General Secretary: "The letter received from the European Commission indicated that there had been resolution to the issue. However, there is still a problem with the interpretation of international customs treaties and regulations by individual national authorities, with requirements sometimes differing between EU Member States when it comes to how rules are enforced by customs officers themselves on the borders. As a result, we feel that updated advice needs to be issued. In tandem, via the NMC, we have asked the UK Government to publish further advice on the rules for movements of bikes in vans or on trailers into the UK. It seems nonsensical that such technical detail can determine when a road

registered motorcycle effectively is or isn't a road-going motorcycle in customs terms. Once it is offloaded from another vehicle after crossing the border it becomes a means of transport again – requiring no customs formalities. This is an absurd situation, and we call on various customs authorities to resolve the matter as fast as possible.”



NMC Executive Director [Craig Carey-Clinch](#) said: “Without a doubt the work done jointly by FEMA, FIVA and the NMC has ‘shifted the dial’ on this issue and led to the reopening of talks between the UK and individual EU Member States which had stalled on this issue back in December. The UK Government supports the riders’ groups position on this and have reported that similarly, France may also now be keen to find a resolution. But there are technical issues at play in relations to customs regulations. The NMC have proposed a potential solution which the UK will discuss with counterparts within the EU, but we fear that it could be some months before this is finally resolved. In the meantime, we urge riders to check the rules carefully before transporting their bikes to and from the EU in a van or on a trailer.”

*Top photograph courtesy of shipacarinc.com*

*Photographs by Wim Taal*

*This article is subject to [FEMA's copyright](#)*

## **Romanian motorcyclists fined for not having a fire extinguisher**

FEMA News: May 31, 2022

In Romania the highway code does not distinguish between cars and motorcycles. As a result, a motorcycle must carry a fire extinguisher, a first aid kit and two reflective triangles.

Until recently, the police ignored these provisions and did not impose fines on motorcycle and moped owners. This has changed and the motorcycle community has been outraged by several cases in which fines have been imposed for the lack of the extinguisher and the set of reflective triangles. However, the law is clear and requires the presence of these elements, which makes the fines given by the police to be correct from the perspective of law enforcement. So, it is up to the traffic police to decide whether or not to enforce the law.



Almost 8,000 signatures were collected in 7 days by the online petition initiated by [MotoADN](#), the Romanian motorcyclists’ association – and a member of FEMA – to eliminate the obligation to carry a fire extinguisher, reflective triangles and a medical kit on motorcycles and mopeds.

97% of respondents support the elimination of the obligation to have a fire extinguisher and reflective triangles on motorcycles and

mopeds. 88% also support the elimination of the obligation to have a first aid kit for

motorcycles and mopeds (in fact, this is the only element mentioned in the law that some motorcyclists take with them when they go out in traffic, if they have side bags or other storage spaces). 65% consider that it would not be necessary to introduce the obligation of motorcyclists to wear a reflective vest.

**There are technical and road safety arguments to remove the extinguisher and reflective triangles:**

**Fire extinguisher** – unlike cars, motorcycles are equipped with a power switch, but also power supply. Moreover, in the event of an impact, the existence of a pressure device on a motorcycle poses a real danger to those involved in the accident. This makes the existence of a fire extinguisher unjustifiable.

**Reflective triangles** – The motorcycle and moped are small enough to be moved off-road when they are defective or involved in minor accidents. As a result, it does not require the use of reflective triangles. In the event of a serious accident, when it is forbidden to move the motorcycle from the scene of the accident, the police must intervene, and thus can secure the place, more effectively than by using reflective triangles.

**First Aid Kit** – In the event of an accident with personal injury, the motorcyclist's protective equipment causes minor injuries, such as scratches, cuts, to appear only in combination with other more serious problems, which require the intervention of a rescue service. The medical kit is thus useless or can even be dangerous if used by non-specialized personnel in such situations.



Răzvan Pavel, president of MotoADN, says: “We believe that this provision is a legislative loophole that needs to be remedied. Through this petition we wanted to make the voice of the

Romanian motorcycle community heard, because the message must go further. We therefore request the Romanian Parliament, the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Interior to exclude motorcycles and mopeds from the application of the provisions of Article 8 of the Emergency Ordinance no. 195/2002 on traffic on public roads.”

Source: [MotoADN](#).

## **German road bans: even electric motorcycles are banned**

FEMA News: June 3, 2022



Electric motorcycles are also not allowed to drive on routes that are closed to motorcycles in the popular German region of Hochtaunus.

In the Hochtaunuskreis (Hesse) – and unfortunately not only there – there are currently temporary [road closures](#) for legal motorcycles and for motorcyclists who behave in accordance with the law. German motorcyclists' organisation [BVDM](#) – a member of FEMA – is repeatedly asked whether such bans also apply to electric motorcycles.



These questions were triggered not least by a brief from the traffic authority of the Hochtaunus district. As part of the announcement of the ban on motorcycling on various routes, the authority wrote on March 9th, 2022 (quote): “The term motorcycle traffic includes all motorcycles within the meaning of the StVZO (the German regulations authorising the use of vehicles for road traffic). A motorcycle is a two-wheeled vehicle with a top speed of more than 45 km/h and a cylinder capacity of more than 50 ccm.”.

This wording is probably an unintentional/accidental shortening of the text from the Vehicle Registration Ordinance, because there you will find the following definition (quote): “Motorcycles: two-wheeled motor vehicles with or without a sidecar, with a displacement of more than 50 cm<sup>3</sup> in

the case of internal combustion engines, and/or with a design-related maximum speed of more than 45 km/h”. In this definition, the two conditions are linked by an “and/or”. This means that one of the above conditions is sufficient to speak of a motorcycle.

BVDM has – in order to finally create clarity – inquired at the traffic authority of the Hochtaunuskreis. The response from the authority on June 1st, 2022 (quote): “... the StVO does not distinguish between a motorcycle and an electric motorcycle. The entry of the vehicle type in the registration certificate is decisive. As far as I know, this is always a motorbike, regardless of the type of drive, combustion or electric.”.

## GEMEINSAM FÜR FREIE WEGE



To BVDM this makes it clear: even e-motorcycles are not allowed to drive on roads in the Taunus that are closed for motorcycles.

Source: [BVDM..](#) Top photograph courtesy of Olaf Biethan. This article is subject to [FEMA's copyright](#)

### **Maria Nordqvist retires as FEMA Board member**

FEMA News: June 13, 2022



Maria Nordqvist, from Swedish motorcyclists' organisation SMC, has been presented with a 'certificate of recognition' by FEMA president Anna Zee.

Maria has been a delegate for SMC and a FEMA board member for more than two decades.

The certificate was presented to Maria during FEMA's Committee meeting on 11 June 2022, which was held at the MC Touring Camp in Denmark.



## CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION

PRESENTED TO

**MARIA NORDQVIST**

In recognition of your work for SMC and Swedish motorcyclists,  
your work for the European motorcyclists' community as SMC's delegate to FEMA,  
your work - for more than two decades - as a FEMA Board member  
and your work in the FEMA/FIM Europe working group.

You have been and will be a role model and an inspiration to many.

ANNA ZEE,  
PRESIDENT



DENMARK,  
JUNE 2022

*Top photograph courtesy of SMC. Photography by [Wim Taal](#). This article is subject to [FEMA's copyright](#)*

## Bigger isn't always better

FEMA News: June 21, 2022



The  
Cyprus

Motorcyclists Rights Club (CMRC) – a member of FEMA – has succeeded to have the legal size of motorcycle number plates reduced.

The bill, which includes the change of license plates for motorcycles to a smaller size, has been passed by parliament and is effective immediately.

Over the years, CMRC has conducted extensive research on the subject and sent letters to the competent bodies and rich photographic material with examples of license plate dimensions from other European countries.

The old number plates' size was 24cm x 20cm. The new size is 20cm x 13cm, the same size as a number plate on a 50cc motorcycle.



Marios Constantinides, CMRC's President (photo by Wim Taal).

Marios Constantinides, CMRC's president said: "It was very difficult to make the government understand the problem they created about ten years ago, but the director of the vehicles department of the ministry offered to help. With the help of FEMA and its member organisations, with hundreds of photos with problematic

motorcycles number plates we managed to win. We can now use the 50cc size number plates for all motorcycles. We were able to use all this evidence to convince the members of the parliament too. This success has been one of the goals of our Club since its inception and we are very pleased with this positive development.”

Source: [CMRC](#). Top photograph courtesy of [paphosmotorcycl rentals.com.cy](#)

This article is subject to [FEMA's copyright](#)

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## **OPINION: motorcyclists not keen on Operation Snap**

Road Safety GB; 14 June 2022



**In this opinion piece, MAG's Colin Brown explains why motorcyclists are not overly supportive of Operation Snap – instead favouring “greater roads policing by impartial police forces”.**

I have been asked a couple of times now about Operation Snap, the generic name applied to the process allowing road users to

submit video footage to the police of other road users committing offences on the roads.

It may seem logical to conclude that motorcyclists would be greatly in favour of this initiative. It is hardly unusual to hear riders discussing the SMIDSY response, complaining about drivers on mobile phones or the general poor standards of driving in the UK.

Of course, as we all know the natural tendency amongst most human beings is to claim that any incident was someone else's fault. No matter what level of skill or training the other road user has, a collision it seems is always their fault.

Just listen to the Formula 1 drivers' radio messages following collisions on the racetrack. You will generally see them automatically default to blaming even the undisputed current best driver in the world.

I personally have mixed feelings about Operation Snap. On one occasion when I expressed my concerns I managed to deeply upset someone from the cycling lobby. Whilst at the time my concerns were largely based on gut instinct rather than evidence, I explained to a group discussing the subject that I do not have helmet or bike mounted cameras and have no intention of getting them.

I explained that all my training as a motorcyclist focuses on taking responsibility for my own safety and ensuring that I don't put myself at risk when someone else makes a mistake. The safest course of action is to assume everyone else is going to make a mistake or worse.

This has meant that I have developed a sixth sense that allows me to very often predict the 'mistakes' of other road users before they make them. Naturally I make sure, as a vulnerable road user, that I am not in the way when the mistake is made.

My concern is that any desire to film another road user making the mistake could actually encourage me to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

I was taken aback by the reaction this brought. His ire was based on the question – how can a cyclist possibly predict when a car is going to close pass? (I decided to avoid mentioning rear observation).

I had not been speaking from the position of any other road user, I had simply given my opinion based on my experience as a motorcyclist. I did not enter into the potential imbalance caused by the difficulties in identifying certain road user groups from video footage.

A short while later I had an opportunity to ask for data on what road user groups were submitting video evidence. I didn't really expect an answer, but did get one. Please bear in mind that the figures were from one police force only, so I am not claiming an exhaustive study, but submissions from cyclists to this force outnumbered submissions from motorcyclists by a factor of 400. I cannot see any evidence from casualty statistics to suggest that cyclists are exposed to 400 times more risk than motorcyclists, so I conclude that this differential must be the result of differences in attitude towards Operation Snap.

So, in my role as a representative voice for motorcyclists I have taken the time to ask riders opinions on the subject. It has to be said that in my straw pole of MAG members my gut instinct that riders are not overly supportive of the initiative was more than confirmed. The overriding opinion was that whilst footage may be of use in determining fault in an actual collision, there was little will to start seeking convictions for other road users' poor behaviour.

Greater roads policing by impartial police forces receives far more support than anything with potential for mild vigilantism.

So, will Operation Snap have a big impact on road safety? I suspect not. I will certainly not complain if it does make drivers more mindful, but I think motorcyclists would prefer that the serenity prayer be written into the Highway Code.

Motorcyclists' lack of interest in Operation Snap is perhaps a demonstration of their wisdom in knowing the difference between the things that, as individuals, they can change and the things they cannot.

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## **Pre-CBT workshop 'a great way of kick starting biking career'**

**Road Safety GB: 23 June 2022**



**The Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership is inviting the region's young riders to attend a free workshop where they will gain 'essential' skills for safe riding.**

The pre-CBT workshop sessions are for potential riders aged 15-21 years who live, work, study or train in Staffordshire or Stoke-on-Trent. [The workshop](#)

[provides advice on safer riding](#), rules of the road and an overview of the recently updated Highway Code.

They run until December and are delivered by experienced instructors.

Anyone completing the course is also being offered a £50 voucher off the cost of their Compulsory Basic Training (CBT).

Helen Fisher, deputy police fire and crime commissioner for Staffordshire, said: “Helping improve biker safety in Staffordshire remains a priority for the partnership and over the last ten years we have seen a reduction in motorcycle casualties on our roads.

“While this is encouraging news, we know that newly qualified and young riders are particularly vulnerable which is why this course was developed.

“Not only do riders get lots of useful tips on better riding, they also have the chance to learn from very experienced riders. It’s a great opportunity for young people to learn new skills and build their confidence on the roads and I’d encourage them to sign up.”

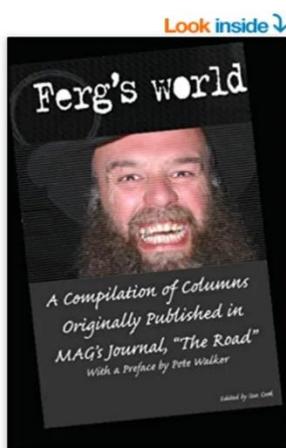
David Williams, cabinet member for highways and transport at Staffordshire County Council, said: “For many young people, getting on a motorbike can seem a daunting task but taking the pre-CBT workshop is a great way of kick-starting their biking career.

“Getting those basic skills is essential to safer riding and will give them more confidence. The courses are also running in three different locations to make it easier for people to attend.

“I’d encourage anyone learning to ride to take advantage of the free course and the £50 voucher.”

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***For anyone who never met Fergus. He was a true legend. I thoroughly recommend this book. RIP Ferg.*** [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Fergs-World-Fergus-OConnell/dp/B0B45L3TXL/ref=mp\\_s\\_a\\_1\\_2?crd=1ZRJDQ5LIGHIW&keywords=fergus+o+connell&qid=1656072243&sprefix=fergus+o%2Caps%2C151&sr=8-2](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Fergs-World-Fergus-OConnell/dp/B0B45L3TXL/ref=mp_s_a_1_2?crd=1ZRJDQ5LIGHIW&keywords=fergus+o+connell&qid=1656072243&sprefix=fergus+o%2Caps%2C151&sr=8-2)



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## Ferg's World Paperback – 2 Nov. 2013

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In 2005, a well-loved maniac and staunch member of the Motorcycle Action Group, one Fergus O'Connell, started a series of columns for MAG's new bi-monthly magazine "The Road". These columns became one of the most popular items in the magazine and the page which was turned to first by many readers. In October 2012, Fergus' first book "Is That You Angus?", received much popular acclaim when published on Kindle, and readers were clamouring for the follow-up. Sadly, Fergus died in November before he could write any more. This book is a posthumous anthology of his Road columns, which ran from Issue 1 in November 2005 to Issue 44 in December 2012 (the Christmas Edition). So, Fergus left us with the Christmas message "I never realised just how dangerous Christmas could be"...Goodnight

## WEBSITES YOU MAY WISH TO VISIT

Press release: National Highways announces £167m investment to improve roads across South West of England

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-highways-announces-167m-investment-to-improve-roads-across-south-west-of-england>

NMC: Transporting Motorcycles Across the UK/EU Border – Fresh Developments

<https://www.uknmc.org/news/transporting-motorcycles-across-the-uk-eu-border-fresh-developments>

AQN: New Lithium-ion batteries overcome issues linked to extreme cold

<https://airqualitynews.com/2022/06/08/new-lithium-ion-batteries-overcome-issues-linked-to-extreme-cold/>

ICCT: Market analysis of two- and three-wheeler vehicles in key ASEAN member states

<https://theicct.org/publication/asia-pacific-lvs-ndc-tia-23w-market-asean-countries-jun22/>

AQN: Is ammonia the next big hope in renewable fuels?

<https://airqualitynews.com/2022/06/09/is-ammonia-the-next-big-hope-in-renewable-fuels/>

MCIA: May Powered Two-Wheeler Registration Figures

<https://www.mcia.co.uk/posts/may-powered-two-wheeler-registration-figures>

RAC: Crit'Air clean air stickers – your guide for driving in France

<https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/news/motoring-news/law-change-for-uk-drivers-in-french-cities/>

ETSC: Lithuania awarded road safety prize after deaths fall more than 50% in a decade

<https://etsc.eu/lithuania-awarded-road-safety-prize-after-deaths-fall-more-than-50-in-a-decade/>

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