

Manifesto for the Office of Chairman of the Motorcycle Action Group

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Almost 40 years on from the time I first joined MAG as a 17-year-old and almost 20 years on from the time I last served as your National Chairman, a role to which you elected me 12 times in succession, I am offering myself once again to lead MAG.

MAG now faces its ultimate challenge, a fight for the survival of motorcycling against those who want to make all personal transport electric-powered, four-wheeled and driverless. My opposition to the proposed ban on the sale and registration of new internal combustion engine vehicles is total and unequivocal and has been since it was first announced, when I knew that the vast majority of motorcyclists, like me, would oppose it utterly. MAG's own survey has now proven me right, much to the disappointment of the surrender advocates.

This is not about being pro or anti-green. This is about being pro or anti-freedom, practicality, and common sense. This is also about a better way to improve the environment and raise living standards. Some in MAG are out to stop me. They are happy to give up on motorcycling but I am not. I ask you to give me your support but with it, you must also give me the tools, the team, and the overwhelming mandate that is needed if MAG is to have any chance at all in this fight. Those who say "it cannot be done" should get out of the way of the man trying to do it.

This is not the place to lay out in full all the reasons why MAG must take this stance. There is not space and most of you know the arguments anyway. I shall therefore content myself with saying that the only way driverless cars will ever work is if motorcycles are eliminated from the transport equation, be they petrol or electric-powered bikes. As regards electric vehicles, I have no objection to anyone buying one who wants to do so and if the market can serve their needs, I shall be delighted. That should, however, be their choice and not one forced on them. Nor should others be forced to subsidise it. Those who can afford a Tesla do not need or deserve to be subsidised by their vastly poorer fellow taxpayers. Taxation is of course the subject that the proponents of battery cars have resolutely avoided discussing. The reason is simple; they need to keep the tax con going until we are beyond the point of no return.

I would not waste my time if I thought this a bad or lost cause and nor would I ask you to do so either. Only fools order Light-Brigade-style charges and bigger fools lead them. We can win, but to do so MAG must think in a radically different way to how it has traditionally. There can be no division between motorcyclists and car drivers. Of the 32 million licence holders in this country, the overwhelming majority drive cars. Only with the mass support of the car-driving populace can we win. Some in MAG see this as a negative. They are wrong. This is actually the best chance MAG has ever had, or will ever have, to drive the transport agenda.

Historically the RAC and the AA purported to speak for motorists but in reality, they never did. They were and are insurance companies run for profit and motorcyclists' interests, if they considered them at all, were at best an afterthought. If motorcyclists lead this fight though, we will not be the afterthought we shall be the thought, the guiding light, the leading voice, and the policy-makers. This is about choice in personal transport and in this context, personal transport embraces public transport. For my entire adult life, I have believed that the country should have a fully nationwide and fully electrified public transport system consisting of trains, trams, and trolley busses fed efficiently and centrally generated power,

affordable to those of modest and small means and which, if built properly, will serve the daily commute for the vast majority who need to make it. Some things work best on the large macro scale and never has that been truer than in the case of electric transport.

The British people have the chance now to stop their government from making a monumental mistake. Instead, we can set it on a better course. We can achieve the greener country that we all want and at the same time show the world an alternative more practical way to safeguard the environment whilst raising people's quality of life, keeping taxation fair, enhancing living standards, and preserving choice in personal transport.

I am not promising you a miracle. I am under no illusions as to the magnitude of this task, the paucity of our resources, or the bitterness of the vitriol that the fanatics on the other side will spew against us. Against us are ranged the toy-town Pol Pots who think they can reset the world to year zero. I do believe though that ultimately, we will win because ours is a reasonable logical, and well thought through compromise that will be recognised as such by the reasonable and common-sense individuals who make up the vast majority of our population. Politics, as any intelligent and successful politician knows, is the art of the possible and relies on compromise. Our strength is that we are the people advocating reasonable compromise. We shall win because 32 million licence-holders are 32 million voters. Politicians are replaceable, freedom is not, and politics is too important to be left to the politicians, by whom the vast majority of ordinary people feel unfairly put upon. The people feel that decisions are and have too long been made over their heads by elites without their being afforded any real say. They are right. Voters, however, are learning that such no longer needs to be the case. Voters have learned that policies can be changed, indeed that the entire direction of their country can be changed. They have made it so that there is no such thing as a safe seat in Parliament any more, that all politicians are replaceable. We shall rally the voters for motors.

Over the course of recent decades, more people have come to realise that blind unconditional allegiance to any political party is beyond foolish, it is downright harmful. When politicians know that they can harvest votes regardless, that they no longer have to listen to those they are supposed to represent, they cease to represent them and end up despising them. Then they go off on frolics of their own, promoting their own agendas and pursuing their ideas of fantastical utopias which invariably take little or no account whatsoever of the way in which the vast majority or ordinary people have to live their lives. The problem with such utopians is that none of them ever seem to comprehend the significance of the fact that 'utopia' is derived from the Greek word meaning nowhere. That is where their absolutism will take us. Nowhere. Certainly not to a greener future.

I am back because I believe in this. I am back because this needs doing and the fight needs leading. I am back because so far, I have seen nobody else willing or able to lead it. I am back because I have been asked to return by a vast number of MAG members, mostly ordinary members like myself who hold no office, but who know this is right and must be done. Above all, though I am back because I am a biker. I love motorcycling now even more than I did when aged 17, in 1981, I put my first bike on the road.

As I have said already, I am under no illusions, but I do believe in the sense and justice of our cause in the service of which I hereby offer myself for election if the Members desire it.

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