

MOTORCYCLE ACTION GROUP



ELECTION HANDBOOK

2021

Produced by Michael Armstrong & MAG Political Team

Version 202103 A

Election Handbook:

A guide to getting candidates to back riders' rights

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) is dedicated to riders' rights, ensuring that motorcycling is included in the transport agenda with all parties, and you can help make this happen. *Elections happen all the time for all sorts of different positions.* Use the time available in the run-up to polling day to attend or organise and run debates to ensure that riders are included in the debate.

The following guide is divided into nine sections:

- 1. Why?**
- 2. What do I do to organise a debate**
- 3. How to do a physical meeting**
- 4. 2021: Making a digital connection**
- 5. Troubleshooting**
- 6. Policy and possible questions**
- 7. Letters and press releases**
- 8. Social media**
- 9. Helpful hints**
- 10. Quick guides**

All the advice given here is relevant for local elections, as well as National Assembly, Parliamentary elections, Mayoral elections and Police and Crime Commissioner elections. So, yes, the roles candidates stand for differ, but the issues that we - as bikers - want to ask about tend to be quite similar.

You can call MAG's Central Office on 01926 844064 if you want any assistance; we're 100% here to help you. And remember, you don't have to do *everything* in this handbook.

Everything you do to promote riders' rights helps the biking community.

Note on terminology: The term 'motorcyclist' or 'rider' relates to all riders of powered two- and three-wheelers, i.e.: a moped, motorcycle, scooter, sidecar outfit or trike. We use the words 'motorcyclist' and 'rider' for the sake of brevity.

Thank you for your support and we wish you every success with getting our rider's voice onto the electoral agenda.

Colin Brown, Lembit Öpik and Michael Armstrong



Section 1: WHY?

Why are we engaging with political candidates at all electoral levels?

Policy decisions made on our behalf by local and national politicians affect our right to ride. If we do nothing, we risk allowing our freedom to ride to become limited – or being taken away altogether. By engaging with the people who want to be elected - at any level and for any position - we make our views heard and can demand clarity from each of them about their plans for riders if they get elected.

Why should I organise political contact before local, regional or national elections

We have the most influence BEFORE an election, because that's when they need our votes. With 1.5 million everyday riders in the UK, and over 5 million qualified motorcyclists, that's a lot of people who have a vote. Influencing people before an election is essential, as this is when they need our support the most. The time between an election being called and polling day is campaigning time for us. Whatever the election is for, we can have a stronger voice by having something to say when they most need to listen and respond, i.e., when they need our votes.

Why do we reach out to the political parties?

Political parties tend to be in charge of the groups that set the policies, for example in Government and in local authorities. Talking with political parties doesn't mean you have to have faith in one, or any, of them. Also, you don't have to support a party to want them to support us. MAG is not aligned to ANY party. Our job is to make it impossible for the parties to ignore us so that whoever wins a seat – or the election – is under an obligation to do the things they agree to do for us. Whether a person is standing for the role of Police and Crime Commissioner, to be the local Mayor or for Parliament they may be a party member or standing as an 'independent.'

Why debates?

Debates are a very good way to ensure candidates are under some degree of obligation to compete for our votes in a public forum. There's a lot of extra pressure on candidates to deliver good answers for bikers, if they can see other candidates doing exactly that. We tested the process out in previous elections, and it worked really well. You can either organise a debate using this guide or attend a debate organised by someone else. Alternatively, you can ask the local candidate or visiting politicians the questions directly or in writing.

Why should we advertise the events in the press?

The media are really important because they're the ones who spread the news about the event and then, afterwards, about who said what. They'll be keen on new stories during the election, and that's good because people will read about what MAG is doing and come along, as well as possibly signing up as members. If you attend a debate not organised by MAG, it's still fine to publicise what you learn.

Why do we do it?

Because we've got very good at engaging with politicians and we're being taken seriously. It's clear that, over the years we've done this, we've massively increased our voice in the corridors of powers, and made some valuable allies along the way. Those who are not keen on motorcycling will also have to think twice about what they say, if they believe we'll follow up on things we don't like. They don't have to like us to respect us, and that respect grows as our profile increases and due to engagement with politicians, not just at election time, but afterwards too.



Section 2: WHAT DO I DO TO ORGANISE A DEBATE

What's MAG's goal with this?

We organise debates to make politicians listen to our views and make commitments to us when they need our votes. If you can organise a debate rather than attend someone else's, the idea is to hold the debate with the candidates in the local area to persuade them to commit to MAG's agenda for riders locally and nationally. These debates are called 'hustings' and they are the best way to encourage all the candidates to compete for our votes.

What do I have to do?

It's very simple: find a date and time for the candidates to come along, book a room, advertise the event, tell the press, run the 'hustings' and report what happens. You'll find the step-by-step guide in section 3. Think of it as a chat between local riders and local politicians.

What is my role?

You're organising it, so make sure everything is in place using the step-by-step guide in section 3 for physical events and Section 4 for digital, online events. You can chair the 'hustings' if you'd like to, or get someone else to do it if you wouldn't. You could also use it as a fundraising event by inviting donations, and having a membership stand with details of how to join MAG.

How do I get people to my event?

Once you've confirmed the room booking, start advertising your event. Ask the venue to add the event to their calendar. Create events and post them on social media, ensuring they are public so everyone can see the details. Be sure to update them regularly as candidates confirm their attendance and tag them in. Make a simple flyer or poster with the event type, date, time and venue clearly identifiable. These don't necessarily need to be updated unless something changes. Remember that some people still like a paper reminder to stick on the fridge or share with others. Try and get a mention on local radio for your event. As we approach any elections, local media will be on the lookout for political stories. Just give the news desk a call and let them know. You can find contact details for the news desk online.

What if something goes wrong?

Life isn't perfect! If things don't go as planned, it's still better than having no hustings at all. So, don't worry too much about having a perfect event – having an event at all is great. And if you've got a snag, have a look at the troubleshooting guide in section 5, or telephone us at Central Office on 01926 844064 and we'll quickly help you put things right.



Section 3: HOW?

Here's a step-by-step guide to help protect your right to ride by holding a local meeting.

- 1.** Find local parties on the internet: for example, Google 'Labour Party in Leeds.' Repeat for Conservative, Lib Dem, Green. In Scotland add SNP and in Wales add Plaid Cymru. Include any well-known local 'Independent' candidates too. In Northern Ireland invite DUP, UUP, Sinn Fein, SDLP and Alliance. Make contact and offer two possible dates for a 'hustings' – the name for a debate between candidates. Call MAG's Central Office if you've got any questions.

- 2.** Book a room that can hold the number of people you estimate will attend. *Better a room too small than too large.* Big empty halls look bad, while standing room is OK. **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A CAMERA TO GET PICTURES OF THE EVENT – THE BUSIER IT LOOKS THE BETTER.** You'll use these photos in the press afterwards. It's fine to run the event with a licensed bar, as that often attracts people and makes the event a bit more social, but that's up to you.

- 3.** Decide who chairs the meeting: you or someone else? Then agree times clearly: the Chair needs to keep the formal part to 75 minutes maximum, because people don't tend to concentrate for more than that length of time. On a weekday, start around 7.00 pm. On a weekend, lunchtime's better. Give each candidate two minutes for an opening statement. Be reasonably strict about this, otherwise they can ramble on for too long. Once they've ALL spoken, take questions 'from the Floor.' Don't let discussions begin between the audience and the panel until ALL the candidates have spoken, otherwise it gets messy and disorganised.

- 4.** Feel free to use our policy guide in section 6. You should also feel entirely free to cover the local issues that matter to bikers. Don't dominate from 'the Chair', because you really want the audience to engage with the candidates. However, if you have any concerns about the level of discussion likely to occur, give people questions to read out (see section 6) to make sure the event doesn't go quiet – but with bikers it almost certainly won't!

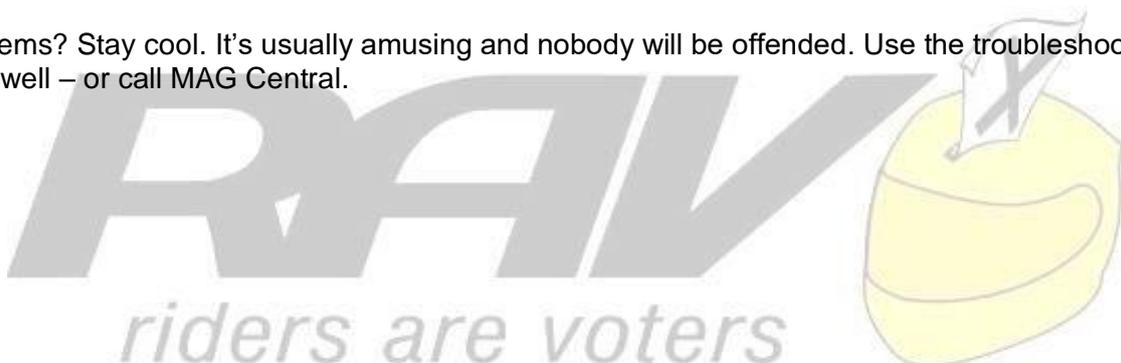
- 5.** Shut down swearing or threats FAST – that kind of behaviour doesn't help our case and makes us look bad in front of the candidates, one of whom will be elected. Also, stop people from making long 'speeches', from either the panel or the audience.

- 6.** It's good to give out a leaflet. Get electronic, printable copies from MAG Central. You might have your own, which is fine too. You can send candidates information in advance but it's not essential.

- 7.** Tell the local papers, television and radio about the meeting in advance. MAG Central can assist with this, and you can also see the suggested press releases in section 7.

- 8.** Afterwards, invite people to have an informal chat with the candidates.

- 9.** Any problems? Stay cool. It's usually amusing and nobody will be offended. Use the troubleshooting guide in section 5 as well – or call MAG Central.



Section 4: 2021: MAKING A DIGITAL CONNECTION

Under 2021 pandemic lockdown restrictions it is unclear how candidates will interact with voters, as hustings indoors might not be permitted. Let's look at ways to reach out digitally instead.

Find local parties and candidates

As with physical meetings, use the internet and social media to find the candidates in your area. For example, Google 'Labour Party in Leeds.' Repeat for Conservative, Lib Dem, Green. In Scotland add SNP and in Wales add Plaid Cymru. Include local 'Independent' candidates too. In Northern Ireland invite DUP, UUP, Sinn Fein, SDLP and Alliance. You can always turn off links to candidates or parties after the election.

Engage with candidates online

You can also make contact with the candidates via email, social media and / or telephone and ask them: 'Will you answer questions from the motorcycling community?' They basically have to say yes! Use their reply to arrange the best way to connect them with bikers' questions. Get questions from fellow riders and send them in on email. Candidates will usually answer questions they know will affect lots of voters, so don't be afraid of asking the same question to each candidate, although it's always a good idea to put it in your own words. Try to give each question a subject title. If a candidate won't cooperate, ask lots of bikers to submit a question with the same title. Also, look out for opportunities via local media, radio and TV to ask your questions, and take time to record the details if your question is asked so you can share it with others.

Host your own virtual hustings

You can organise a 'virtual' hustings. This could take many forms. Select a format that works for you and one that you, or someone you know, has the experience and skills to execute.

Options for live virtual meeting

There are a wide range of platforms out there for live meetings over the Internet:

- Facebook Live
- Google (Hangouts) Meet
- Microsoft Teams
- Zoom

You could have a meeting:

- With multiple candidates and voters
- By inviting candidates individually to your virtual MAG meeting
- One-to-one with each candidate: ask the same questions to each and share their answers
- Or you can interview candidates individually in front of a digital panel

If you want to record the meeting, so you can share it with others, you MUST seek permission from all those attending the meeting before recording. It's far easier if a recording can be made in full, as editing can take a lot of time. Even for national broadcasters, things can go wrong with technology such as poor audio or the signal dropping out. This shouldn't stop the event or put you off engaging with candidates who will want your vote. Read Section 3 of the handbook for guidance that can be implemented whether your event is physical or virtual.

Written Q&A

If video isn't your thing, then create a set of written questions yourself, or with a group of riders. Submit them to the candidate's office, advising them of the other candidates you are also sending them to and informing them you will be publishing the questions and answers, and where.

If you don't get a response it is okay to publish that fact. When quoting responses, make sure you are accurate.

General points

Always remember to thank the participants for their involvement.

Include links to your group or MAG's national website and social media feeds.

riders are voters



Section 5: TROUBLESHOOTING

1. What if I can't find the local candidates?

No problem. Just find ANY representative from the local parties, whether they're Councillors, activists, or even your mates. Ask them. If you're still stuck, call our Central Office and we'll help find someone for you.

2. What if there are loads of candidates?

Make a judgment about the five most serious contenders. With local elections it's usually worth asking most of them, because the numbers are normally manageable. Having more than five on a panel is tricky (unless there's a good reason) because it takes too long to get through everyone. If someone's desperate to be on the panel, and it makes sense to you, then let them do it.

3. What if nobody turns up?

You need to make sure there IS an audience. Nobody at all is embarrassing. Even 10-15 is OK, as long as you haven't got a hall big enough for 300. Tell all the candidates that those turning up are the key activists, and you'll also be sharing their answers with the many more riders in the electoral area they're standing in.

4. What if one - or more - candidates refuse to be involved?

Tell them you'll be reporting on who turned up and who didn't to the local press. Roughly speaking, Parliamentary constituencies tend to have between 2,000 and 3,200 active riders, who are also voters. In local elections, there are still hundreds of bikers in each election area, known as a 'ward'. For regional Mayors and Police and Crime Commissioner elections, the numbers are even higher. You can point out that if they're fine with not meeting voters to discuss the problems and concerns of so many people, that's their call – but you'll let the public know they didn't engage with you.

5. What if nobody in the audience wants to ask the first question?

Prime one, two, or even three people you know with questions. If you don't know who's going to be there on the night, write a few question cards to give to people willing to ask them from the Floor. Most hustings use this format to get the debate flowing. Involving the audience is important, and creates a vibrant hustings. Make sure you don't allow one person to hog the floor.

6. What if it over-runs?

You must be strict with time management. You'll begin to lose the audience after 75 minutes and you'll lose them completely after 90 minutes. Even if you have to shut down the debate, be strong and shut it down before it goes on too long.

7. What if people start talking about things that aren't to do with biking?

That's OK, up to a point. It is a political debate, after all. As a general guide give each subject 10-15 minutes max, and then move it on, whether it's about biking or not.

8. What if there's aggression?

You need to avoid aggression, as it reflects badly. Keep things robust but polite.

9. What about having a vote on who did best?

DON'T DO IT! It's very uncomfortable for candidates and makes us look like we support one or other of the candidates. Let voters make up their own minds, without a show of hands.

10. What if I want more info?

Keep up to date at: www.mag-uk.org

Facebook at: Motorcycle Action Group

Twitter: @magukcentral

Phone: 01926 844064

Email: central-office@mag-uk.org



Section 6: POLICY AND POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Use these questions in your own debates, if you attend another debate, or directly with the candidates. The list that matters to you might differ a little, but it will give you some ideas about what to discuss and ask about. The main thing to note is that walking, cycling and rail can't do what motorcycles, scooters and trikes do. Use your platform to get a better deal for riders based on ecology, economy and liberty. Ask candidates to share their position on any or all of the following matters. Feel free to send this list to the candidates in advance.

Relevance

Subject	Suggested Question	MP	Regional Mayor	Councillor	PCC
Emissions	Decarbonisation of transport is a key goal of transport strategy. What are your views on this, and do you see motorcycles as a benefit in delivering this ambition?	X	X	X	
Emissions	Air quality improvements are another key ambition for transport policy. What are your views on this subject and do you see motorcycles as a potential solution or problem for air quality?	X	X	X	
Enforcement	Do you believe that penalties for careless and dangerous driving are sufficient or should they be made harsher?	X			X
Enforcement	What policies will you promote to reduce levels of vehicle theft and associated criminality?	X	X	X	X
Parking	Much effort goes into providing cycle parking and limiting car parking. What are your views on this subject, and should motorcycle parking be expanded or restricted?	X	X	X	
Parking	Motorcycle theft is most effectively reduced by provision of secure parking facilities. What can/will you do to ensure that the security of motorcycle parking facilities is improved?	X	X	X	X
Road space	Segregation of road space for bus and cycle lanes is supported by some and opposed by others. Where do you stand on the best approach to use of road space, and where should motorcycles fit into that debate?	X	X	X	
Road space	Do you believe that motorcyclists should have the same rights as walkers do to use Byways Open to All Traffic/ unclassified tracks (B.O.A.T's)?	X	X	X	X

Subject	Suggested Question	MP	Regional Mayor	Councillor	PCC
Safety	What are your views on road safety and how it should be addressed?	X	X	X	X
Safety	What policies will you pursue to improve safety for all road users? What stakeholders will you work with?	X	X	X	X
Safety	What are your views on testing and training of vehicle drivers and riders? Is it fair and balanced, or does it need reform?	X			X
Taxation	Road user charging takes many forms, from tolls on specific bridges or roads to wider zones such as Clean Air Zones. What are your views on this policy and, in particular, how do you view charging of motorcycles?	X	X	X	
Taxation	There has been a consultation on Vehicle Excise Duty, but the results are yet to be published. What are your views on VED: should it be a lever to encourage electric vehicles and how will revenue be balanced if the policy achieves that goal?	X			
Technology	Technology is advancing toward fully autonomous vehicles. What are your views on autonomy for vehicles, and do you see any pitfalls in their deployment?	X	X		X
Technology	What are your views on the future of private motorised vehicles? Are Battery Electric Vehicles the only solution or are there other options?	X	X	X	
Technology	Connected vehicles bring both challenges and opportunities. Do you feel that the potential benefits outweigh any threats to privacy and liberty?	X			

In addition, consider your local area and prepare to ask questions that are specific to where you live. Only **you** will know these, so think ahead and plan those questions. Don't feel you need to stick with questions about one general subject or on-road riding; you may want to ask questions relating - for example - to green lane riding or to a local racetrack.



Section 7: LETTERS AND PRESS RELEASES

On the next four pages are two suggested letters for before and after the debate, which you can modify in any way you wish and use as emails, a script for a phone chat, or as a posted letter.

There are also two sample press releases, where you just need to fill in the local details.

We've also included a letter that you could use - together with the questionnaire - to send to candidates.

Any problems? Contact us at MAG's Central Office on 01926 844064 or at central-office@mag-uk.org



Letter to candidates prior to the event

If you've already agreed an event with them by phone, you can modify it to be a confirmation letter. Also, this letter works whether the event is going to be online or in a hall. Just make sure you're clear about where, when and how you're asking them to be involved.

Dear [INSERT NAME OF CANDIDATE]

I'd like to invite you to attend our Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) election hustings debate at [TIME] on [DAY, MONTH, YEAR], at [LOCATION]. As you'll know, there are a very significant number of active motorcyclists in our area, and almost one in 10 electors is a fully qualified rider.

Those who use motorcycles, scooters and trikes are particularly influenced by the impact that politicians have on their activity and, as such, tend to be very keen to know what commitments you can make on their behalf prior to the election.

Our most dedicated riders and activists will be attending the event, and we'll be sharing the outcome of the hustings to the wider public through the media.

You may find it useful to have a look at the [enclosed document].

[MAG document 'Pathways for Progress' available at https://wiki.mag-uk.org/images/9/96/Pathways_For_Progress_v2.0_2019_10_30.pdf]

MAG works openly with others to benefit, not just riders but the whole of society, in terms of the positive effect that riders play on the economy, the environment and reduction in traffic congestion.

I very much look forward to seeing you at the debate, and if you could just drop me a formal confirmation to [INSERT YOUR EMAIL, OR POSTAL ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER], that would be most appreciated.

Best regards

[INSERT YOUR DETAILS]



Letter to candidates when enclosing a questionnaire

Modify this letter to reflect what you need to ask the candidates to do. Feel free to put it in your own words.

Dear *[INSERT NAME OF CANDIDATE]*

My name is *[INSERT YOUR NAME]* and I'm *[INSERT MAG MEMBER OR POSITION]* for *[INSERT YOUR AREA]* MAG. Firstly, let me congratulate you on being selected as a candidate and wish you all the best with your campaign in the forthcoming election.

I have enclosed a questionnaire on motorcycling, which I invite you to reply to. Please be aware that we would like to publish your answers on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/\[insert your own group page\]](http://www.facebook.com/[insert your own group page]) and also in our nationally distributed magazine, The Road, www.mag-uk.org As a part of your campaign we also extend an invitation to you to attend one of our local meetings.

We meet *[INSERT YOUR GROUP MEETING DETAILS]*, and it would provide a timely opportunity for you to have contact with the riders in the *[INSERT YOUR AREA]* electoral area, all of whom are potential electors.

For further information please contact *[INSERT CONTACT DETAILS]*

Riders are Voters: 10% of driving-licence holders have a motorcycle category on their licence, and there are 1.5 million everyday riders in the UK. Riders are politically motivated in terms of their right to ride, and their concerns about these freedoms tend to be far more motivating than party affiliation because they depend on their motorcycles as their primary means of transport. Thank you in advance for your reply to our questionnaire, which I will be pleased to receive at your earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely

[INSERT YOUR NAME, ADDRESS AND CONTACT DETAILS]



Letter to candidates after the event – whether your debate or one you attended

Use this after the event, to continue the dialogue with the candidates. This will help over the post-election months and years ahead, and builds our credibility as being genuinely interested in that dialogue. This letter works whether you held a physical meeting or a digital one, and whatever format you used.

Dear [INSERT NAME OF CANDIDATE]

Many thanks for discussing motorcycle policy at the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) election hustings debate on [INSERT DAY, MONTH, YEAR]. With so many riders in this area, your views will be very valuable to the large number of people who take rider-related matters seriously.

We've made a note of the commitments you've expressed to us [AND LIST THEM HERE IF YOU HAVE TIME]. With almost one in ten electors fully qualified as motorcyclists, we'll do our best to share what has been said with the wider motorcycling community. As stated above, our most dedicated riders and activists attended the event, and are even now sharing what they heard with their fellow riders.

If we can assist you with any rider-related matters, now or after the election, please don't hesitate to get in touch. We're here to help you help us, and that's at the core of our inclusive approach.

We look forward to working with those elected in [INSERT ELECTION DETAIL AND DATE] in the collective interests of the economy, the environment and the reduction of traffic congestion.

Best regards

[INSERT YOUR DETAILS]



Modify this press release to make it relevant to your event. Feel free to put it in your own words.

Bikers rev up for election

This version: [INSERT DATE]

EMBARGO: Immediate

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) is revving up to challenge election hopefuls to take their interests and concerns seriously, at a key debate in *[INSERT LOCATION]* at *[INSERT DATE AND TIME]* which is being organised by *[INSERT GROUP - WHETHER MAG OR SOMEONE ELSE]*.

Local MAG spokesperson *[INSERT NAME]* has highlighted the huge voting power that riders represent:

“In the UK, over 5 million voters are also fully qualified motorcyclists. Of these, almost a third are regular users of motorcycles, scooters or trikes. We believe that motorcycles will continue to play an important part in transport and leisure in the future. Politicians must therefore heed the opinions of riders and develop policy positions that support and promote this vital part of all our futures. Any wise candidate – and political party for that matter – will be eager to engage with us. That’s why MAG is hosting these events; quite simply, to give voice to the opinions of one tenth of the electorate and to offer politicians the chance to tell us how they will represent our needs.”

The event will be chaired by *[INSERT NAME]*, and is open to the general public, not just riders. All the main parties have been invited to send a panelist to ensure that they can outline their position on transport policy as it applies to motorcycles, scooters and trikes. The MAG Spokesperson added:

“the motorcycling vote is big enough to make or break a candidate’s chances of getting elected. MAG’s new political approach is focused, precise and fair. In return, we expect politicians to take an informed and positive attitude to engaging with riders. We’ll be sharing the outcome of our discussions after the debate.”

For more information contact *[INSERT NAME, PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL]*



Modify this press release to make it relevant to your event. Feel free to put it in your own words.

Bikers engage with election hopefuls

This version: [INSERT DATE]

EMBARGO: Immediate

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) engaged with our local election hopefuls in the run up to the forthcoming election. The meeting, conducted at [INSERT LOCATION] on [INSERT DATE AND TIME], was attended by [INSERT NAMES AND THEIR PARTIES].

MAG activist [INSERT NAME] is pleased with the level of recognition of motorcycling matters and said:

“Almost 10% of the electorate are fully qualified motorcyclists. Their votes can make or break a candidate’s chances of getting elected. Almost a third regularly use motorcycles, scooters or trikes, and the event helped them understand who’s on their side. Political parties have everything to gain and nothing to lose by taking our interests seriously. MAG will ensure that the commitments made at the meeting are followed through after the election. We are a powerful element in British society, and we’re glad to be getting involved so directly in working with our next elected representatives.”

The debate was organised by [INSERT GROUP], and was open to the public, not just riders. MAG will follow up this discussion with the parties after the election, to make sure that the words said to riders become action for riders. MAG’s representative added:

“It’s in everyone’s interests to have more motorcycles on the road, as long as the approach is politically responsible and well informed. We’re going to make sure that is the case – and this time we’ve got the commitments from the candidates to prove it.”

[YOU CAN ADD THE SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS MADE AT THE MEETING - YOU’LL BE ABLE TO HIGHLIGHT THESE AGAIN AFTER THE ELECTION]

For more information contact [INSERT NAME, PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL]



Section 8: Social Media

Most groups and regions will use social media, as do most MAG members. But do you use it to its full potential to campaign and engage with decision makers?

Find candidates online

Whichever social media platform(s) you use, look for the digital sites of your MP's, Councillors, Parliamentary Candidates, Police and Crime Commissioners, and the candidates hoping to take the positions. This isn't hard and won't take you very long. If you have trouble finding any of the candidates, you can be fairly confident they're not going to win anyway!

When an election is called

When an election is called, all the serious candidates will have their own election campaign strategy and they'll have their own social media sites and a team to administer them. They'll post on multiple issues, and transport will be one of them. That's when you should ask the question: "What are your policies for the increased use of motorcycling?" Alternatively, you can ask something more specific.

Once you have put your question(s) to the candidate, you then need to share this with your fellow riders so they can 'like' your question on the social network you've used.

This will identify your question and will make it stand out for the candidate's social media team to answer.

Note: if they don't know the answer but the question has enough 'likes', they'll forward your question to their own regional/national committee for an answer because they'll feel it's important.

At a local level, social media is a valuable tool to build contacts / relationships / profile.

This technique can be used at any time, not just during Elections.

Social media is a useful tool to advertise an event (not just hustings), and link with other local motorcycle, scooter and trike pages.

To do this:

- Create a specific event post for your hustings.
- Update the post with the candidates as they confirm their attendance.
- Check the post regularly to respond to comments as necessary.



Section 9: HELPFUL HINTS

Building a good relationship with critical people will reap rewards in the future. Using your contacts, relationships and the media together, will help make riders' rights difficult to ignore and an attractive way for politicians to get positive profile.

Build contacts

- MPs have staff: get to know them and copy them in on correspondence.
- Staff will maintain their MP's diaries, so they can confirm if they can attend an event or not.
- Staff can sometimes provide alternative personnel if the MP isn't available.
- Meet Councillors and elected personnel in a party: they could be MPs one day.
- In local elections, Councillors tend to maintain their own diaries so contact them directly.
- Mayoral candidates usually have staff – so you can find and contact them too.
- Maintain up-to-date contact details: some of them could eventually be Cabinet Members!
- Police and Crime Commissioners can help with motorcycle crime concerns.

Build relationships

- When you contact politicians, remember that you are competing with other groups for their time.
- Invite your leaders to your local rallies, rock nights and charity runs.
- If they accept, write a review of the occasion for the local paper.
- Always consider that politicians at all levels love to get media profile locally.
- A successful visit is good for them and will make them more likely to work with MAG in the future.

Build profile

- Local papers are always looking for strong local stories, so getting copy accepted should not be hard.
- Don't forget to send the stories to The ROAD as well.
- Keep the press on your side because every lobby group needs a favourable media.
- Always give them a strong, clear photo that is as large in megabytes as possible (minimum 1Mb).
- As a courtesy you might ask them if you can use the same article in The Road.



Section 10: QUICK GUIDES

A quick guide of what you as an individual, or a group, can do to get involved in the next election happening in your area.

Quick Guide for Individuals

- Attend a hustings debate and ask questions
- Write to all candidates asking them your questions
- Share all answers with your friends
- Discuss the answers with your friends

Quick Guide for Groups

- Organise a hustings
- Offer to interview all the candidates
- Write to all candidates with an agreed set of questions
- Seek promises from all candidates to meet your group should they be successful
- Share the hustings or written answers on websites and social media
- Encourage discussion of the answers

