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News from the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG)

MAG meets West of England Regional Mayor in breakthrough summit

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The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) met Mayor Tim Bowles in Bristol to ask: why aren't motorbikes in his transport strategy?

MAG's Western Region Political Officer, Geoff Mills, teamed up with MAG's Director of Communications & Public Affairs, Lembit Öpik, to meet the Mayor of the West of England Combined Authority, Tim Bowles.

Geoff says 'the main question we had was: "Why have motorbikes been reduced to a footnote in the latest West of England transport study? Is it a deliberate marginalisation or just an oversight?" We got our answer. It turns out that the Mayor is more than willing to include us as part of the solution to the congestion and access problems of the sub-region, and that's very encouraging.'

Geoff is inclined to take the Mayor at his word. 'It's not so important why we weren't recognised. What matters now is that we will be. I'm already on a committee which is discussing these points. With Mayor Bowles' endorsement, we can make sure that sensible and relevant inclusion of powered two wheelers will happen. That's why we went to engage with him; so you could say the meeting was 100% successful.'

Looking ahead, MAG has agreed to provide a summary of key facts about motorcycling, which Geoff and Lembit will be preparing. They're also submitting a specific set of amendments to ensure inclusion of motorcycles and scooters. It seems clear that MAG will occupy an advisory role from now on, in the same way it does in many other parts of the UK. 'This is how politics is supposed to work,' observes Geoff. 'To be honest, I was impressed with the Mayor and I do feel that if we do our part for bikers, he will do his.'

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

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