



August 2016 Network

A networking tool for Activists and other interested parties

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[Acknowledgments: George Legg, Selina Lavendar, Andy Carrott, Lembit and Leon, Julie Sperling plus anyone else I've forgotten]

EDITORIAL

Extremely sorry to see my dear friend, Dave Hammond, has stepped down as National vice Chair due to health problems. Dave gives the nicest cuddles and has the loveliest other half. In his own words - "I'll be back". So you do that Darlin', when you're fully recovered.

However, meanwhile, MAG's 'vice' is in the safe hands of an equally lovely friend who happens to be a Carrot!! Well done, Andy, for stepping up to the mark.

I'll keep this short this month as there's a whopper of a report from Team Double L - you boys have sure been busy.

Well done to Lembit in his negotiations with Northern Ireland Ministers in preventing the implementation of legislation requiring Trike riders to wear helmets. That's a major success.

Directors - yes, we need them. I've included an advert from our lovely Julie Sperling. **Directors** are, of course, an essential part of running a company. Go on - you know you want to. I've done it before - its really rewarding.

Hopefully I'm off to Calne in the morning.

Ride free and safe Guys, AG

Copy for September (really!!!!) edition: aine@mag-uk.org by 25th August please.

Press release: Motorcycle Action Group elects a Carrot as Vice-Chair

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the UK's leading voice for riders' rights, has elected a new Vice- Chair, and he's a carrot – Andy Carrott to be precise. Andy takes over from Dave Hammond, who has stepped aside for the time being for health reasons.

Andy, who has been riding motorbikes since 1977, has actively campaigned for riders' rights since the 1980's. Andy's choice of motorcycles has ranged from Bultaco to Ural – 'I've not quite done the whole alphabet but I'm working on it.'

Andy said of his appointment, 'none of us are glad to learn of Dave Hammond's health issues, but I know he's absolutely right to get those sorted out – it's clearly the sensible thing to do. MAG is hugely grateful for his contribution and I know he'll be back soon enough to continue with that. For me, to be a part of the Motorcycle Action Group at such a dynamic time in the movement's history is a tremendous honour. Our Chair, Selina Lavender, has defined the role of MAG as a campaigning body in a very clear way. I don't think anyone could have hoped for better and more focussed leadership.'

Andy regards his role as centred on supporting the Chairman and strengthening MAG by growing the membership and building on the organisation's increasingly influential political success - both nationally and locally. 'I'm really looking forward to getting on with the job. Most of it isn't glamorous or dramatic – but it's all important. MAG is the voice of riders' rights. I'm proud to serve as the Number 2 in the most effective bikers' group in the UK - and possibly Europe.'

Selina Lavender added, 'there are infinite possibilities for wordplay thanks to Andy's surname. However, this carrot's roots are firmly planted in motorcycling. He's a priceless addition to the team – and given Dave Hammond's need to focus on other matters right now, I can't think of anyone better to fill the important position of Vice Chairman. Exciting times for Andy – exciting times for MAG.'

Andy lives in Lincolnshire, and currently rides a Moto Guzzi.

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

"Hello,

Let me introduce myself. I am Andy Carrott, your replacement bus service, sorry your replacement National Vice Chairman. After about a year and half in the post Dave Hammond needed to stand down from the job. I hope he won't mind me saying that he has to focus on health issues and we wish him a full recovery and offer him a big thank you for his dedication to the Group. I know Dave was sorry to leave the post having been proud to serve the Motorcycle Action Group in support of Selina your Chairman. I don't doubt for one moment that he will be true to his word when he posted Arnie's infamous line "I'll be back".

So, what about me? I'm a life member of MAG, a former regional rep and have been active in riders rights since the late 1980's when I took on a local parking issue and won (before I was even a MAG member). I've done a bit of everything with bikes, on road, off road (pre 65 trials - I was rubbish), rebuilding, customising, run wot yer brung drag racing, instructing, touring, track days, solos, combos, as well as been active in local and national clubs holding a variety of posts (and still do). In work I have to deal with councils, the public and

government bodies. I've been a trade union activist too. I hope that broad experience will help me support Selina and the Group in strengthening MAG both in growing our membership and building on our increasingly influential political success both nationally and locally.

On wards and upwards! Andy Carrott"

Team Double LL's whopper of a report or, in their words: "Summary of recent developments"

London

Leon met Sadiq Khan a few weeks before the Mayoral election and was given a personal promise that a meeting would be arranged between him as MAG's Policy Adviser and Sadiq's Policy Team. Following that meeting, Sadiq sent a list of commitments regarding bikers and motorcycling that we published in The ROAD.

However, instead of a meeting with the Mayor's policy team, Leon was invited to meet the Mayor's Deputy for Transport, Val Shawcross, who was the Assembly member who published a highly critical report on TfL's motorcycling policies before stepping down as an Assembly member in May. But, that meeting included Ben Plowden, the TfL Director who is the prime driver of the deeply flawed policies that the Assembly had criticised. The meeting left Leon with the firm impression that unless things change in City Hall, nothing significant will be done to action the recommendations for improvement in the Assembly Report as promised by the Mayor

Leon has made repeated efforts to get a meeting with the Mayor's policy team, and Lembit has tried too, in order for us to clarify if this is a conscious change of mind by the Mayor – or if Plowden has successfully nobbled the Mayor's team to get us sidelined from the policy strategy process that is due for complete in the Autumn. Those efforts have been unsuccessful so far but Leon has a new angle to try with Lembit following recent developments with Orcas, ULEZ and the DfT as mentioned in separate sections.

Manchester

There is better news in Greater Manchester. Regional Rep Tony Cox recommended MAG's attendance at a stakeholder event to launch a draft of Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 which is now out for consultation. Lembit stepped in to

attend as Leon had been temporarily grounded by a clown in a car who had caused a low speed crash.

Lembit's attendance turned out to be a great way to continue the progress started last year as he was able to engage with key Elected Members. This worked well to back up the work that MAG activist Blayz had done last year to get meeting for him and Leon with policy professionals to get bikes in bus lanes and our Pathways Proposals on their agenda. Speaking about the latest meeting Lembit said:

"Everyone from the Mayor down was in attendance. I was able to highlight issues related to motorcycling. They evidently hadn't really considered these before. It's not that they seemed against biking - they just hadn't appreciated the potential for powered two wheelers to make a useful contribution to their transport goals.' In another moment of extreme good fortune, Lembit met the organiser of the event, Steve Connor, on a train. "We had a good two hour talk and I think that Manchester could be the role model for the country in terms of including biking as a valuable form of transport." Lembit is working with Tony and Leon to make the most of this opportunity.

Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ)

MAG Central has had a several expressions of concern about plans to impose a charge of £12.50 per day aka £62.50 during a five day week on riders of non-compliant bikes –which is the same for cars. And although the ULEZ scheme is scheduled in London, other Cities are already planning versions of it.

Up until now MAG's support for direct action to oppose the London proposal was tempered by our knowledge that it could not be enforced on motorcycles – because the Congestion Charge network of cameras face the wrong way. Solving that problem for all cameras would cost many £millions as most would need to be repositioned which would be hugely expensive in London. However, Leon has just heard that TfL have finally identified this potential loophole for bikers and started working on plans to turn some cameras round.

One of the contacts MAG has had is from the owner of Bike Shed Motorcycles 'Dutch' (<http://thebikeshed.cc>). This enterprise is based in Shoreditch (near the City of London) and has excellent connections with a range of bikers who are increasingly motivated to join in with direct action in conjunction with MAG. They also have 636,594 people liking their Facebook page. Leon is meeting Dutch and a handful of his most influential connections at the end of July to discuss options for direct action. "One good thing to emerge from the ramped up plans to charge riders of older bikes is that it has properly riled a wider range of bikers than MAG has reached before." says Leon. "This includes bikers who have not been motivated to protest before such as members of the Distinguished Gentleman's Ride, but they

and other big shots in the City are up for raising awareness of motorcycling as a solution to pollution not the problem".

Harlow

This Council continues to be a concern. The authority introduced an injunction which effectively banned riders from travelling in groups of two or more around the area. The intention was to stop some anti-social behaviour by youths who happened to be on motorbikes. However, the impact of the injunction is far more wide reaching. Lembit has already held one meeting with the Council, but the second one has been postponed - twice. MAG Chair Selina Lavender has got involved, and both of them have warned that demonstrations in the town could be possible. 'The problem is that this sets an extremely dangerous precedent,' says Lembit. 'We can't allow such a restrictive and unfair measure to remain in force - so we have to get it altered. The fact they've postponed the meeting two times suggests that this isn't their top priority. It is for MAG. I'll keep you posted but we can't let this one go unchallenged.'

Orcas and Armadillos and the DfT

We now have hard evidence to prove that 'Light Segregation' measures such as Orcas and Armadillos really are dangerous trip hazards as MAG has been saying from the outset.

There is summary of this in an attached article from Local Transport Today. This was the only media coverage this momentous U-turn has had so far, although Leon is highlighting it in his monthly column in Motorcycle Sport and Leisure.

As a result of this evidence, two radical schemes to make roads nicer for cyclists in The City of London and the ultra pro cycling Borough of Camden were removed - albeit with such stealth that next to nobody knows it has happened. Yet.

The most damning evidence comes in the form of CCTV footage. Within the first 24 hours, 55 pedestrians were filmed being tripped up and some landed in front of vehicles in traffic lanes. Bikers were also involved in incidents and many cyclists expressed outrage about the scheme via social media. Leon has obtained copies of stills from the footage.

In response to proof that MAG was right all along, Leon arranged a meeting with senior officers at the DfT. Lembit attended as well and L&L explained that MAG would have Parliamentary Questions (PQs) tabled for the Minister in September, and our aim was to help the DfT develop answers that would improve conditions for *all* vulnerable road users as well as the few on bicycles. Leon now has a follow up meeting scheduled to discuss the options for urgent progress. To be continued...

Northern Ireland (see *Press Release subsequent to this report*)

At time of writing Lembit is scheduled to meet with Northern Ireland transport Minister Hazzard to establish whether the Northern Ireland Assembly intends to introduce a mandatory trike helmet law. This has been the subject of intense lobbying by MAG - and it has been made clear to the Assembly officers that there is no possibility of MAG standing down in the issue. 'I was successful in convincing the previous Minister not to implement this restriction on personal liberty. We need to make sure the current new Minister will honour the commitment made by his predecessor.' On a more promising note, Lembit and local rep Paul Wilson are keen to help the Department with their roads agenda as far as motorcycling is concerned. This is one of the most serious issues to face biking in many years. We'll update you as soon as we know the situation. If necessary, MAG will take direct action and also evoke anti-discrimination laws to challenge any attempt to implement a mandatory helmet law.

Motorcycle Crime Reduction Group

This is a rather technically minded committee that meets every two months or so, but it includes key players from the industry, police, insurance firms and riding groups. MAG tends to be the only riders' voice at the meeting, so it's important we're there. Lembit feels there is a need for a single message to come from all those groups about rider security. 'If we can generate a key set of requests, such as secure parking, then there's a much higher chance of achieving this. I have the view that we aren't doing that to a sufficient degree just yet.'

New Government

The new Prime Minister has changed the Minister in charge of the Department for Transport. Leon and Lembit are still assessing the implications and may seek a meeting with the new Secretary of State for Transport - Chris Grayling. MAG has more access and contact with the Department than it has ever had before. It's important we maintain good relations with those in charge at the department now.

Autonomous Vehicles***

There are two consultations about autonomous vehicles from the DfT. Lembit is keeping a keen eye on these developments. The issue here is that nobody has a clear idea about how self-driving vehicles can share road space with manually controlled ones. Also, who is liable in the event of an accident? All these matters are the subject of the consultations. MAG will remain closely involved as the consultation process progresses.

Brent

Fresh progress is being made in the ongoing saga of the bike ban on Rainsford Road in Brent. Following a series of meetings last year, MAG's new London Rep Tim Fawthrop and Leon have negotiated a way for legitimate riders to use the road. Better still, the good relationship MAG has built means that Brent's senior officer is so convinced about the merits of bikes in bus lanes that he has set up a meeting to discuss a trial scheme. Ends.

*** **Post report** – you may like to read an article Neil just alerted me to:- The first 2 paras read “After the [recent crash](#) of a Tesla Motors Inc. (TSLA) car that was on autopilot, many have warned about the dangers of self-driving cars. The most recent criticism has come from an unlikely source—the aviation industry. As recently reported by the Wall Street Journal, aviation experts recently advised the auto industry to proceed with caution in its attempts to build up autonomous technology. (For related reading, see: [SEC Investigating Tesla for Potential Violations](#).)

This makes sense considering the development of autonomous flight in the airline industry. Aviation experts have urged the car industry to proceed slowly with the new technology and to focus on driver education, something that the aviation industry has learned firsthand. Autonomous flight is much more advanced than self-driving cars, but there have also been hiccups along the way. Several accidents in the industry have resulted in new standards and regulations. Many of these have surrounded the pilot's role in flight and how to better engage pilots that are monitoring the plane.

Read more: [Aviation Experts Warn Self-Driving Cars to Stall \(TSLA\) | Investopedia](#) <http://www.investopedia.com/news/aviation-experts-warn-selfdriving-cars-stall-tsla/#ixzz4Foh0mAgP>

Follow us: [Investopedia on Facebook](#)

Also:- Read article further on in this edition.

Press releases Motorcycle Action Group:

5th July 2016.

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the UK's leading voice for riders' rights, has been asked by Safer Scotland to help identify other rider organisations to contribute to their campaign.

Safer Scotland is a Scottish Government lead initiative looking at a wide range of

road safety issues. They have contacted MAG with a view to identifying and engaging as many motorcycling focused groups as possible to come together and make a significant contribution to the road safety agenda in Scotland.

MAG Scotland spokesperson, Steve Wykes, believes a united front will massively improve the volume of the riders' voice in this process. 'MAG is a team player when it comes to making improvements to the way riders are treated. We all share the same concerns and, often, the solutions are fairly easy to work out by engaging with riders from the outset. By working through to a united message, we have a vastly better chance of achieving common goals – and helping to shape how biking is treated in the medium to long term.'

Under the campaign headline 'don't risk it,' Safer Scotland has created guides for everyday motorbike riding. 'Whether it's tackling bends or driving at night we've got some tips and techniques to help you be a safe motorbike rider.' The police have also been running 'Operation Zenith,' primarily in the North East of Scotland. This has involved engaging with riders and raising awareness of the risks associated with motorcycling. It also includes a hard hitting campaign regarding drink driving and its consequences.

MAG has already identified representatives from several organisations to join the Safer Scotland talks, however if you are reading this and can think of a Scottish based riders group that could play a role, do get in touch. MAG understands 'safety' is a concern to many riders, and is more than willing to play its part in finding intelligent answers to dangers facing riders. 'Safer Scotland's initiative makes sense,' adds Steve, 'and we'd be failing in our responsibility to protecting bikers from avoidable peril if we didn't step up to the plate. I'm looking forward to working with others alongside Safer Scotland on this.'

MAG is keen that as many rider organisations in Scotland as possible are involved to make the best of this opportunity of working together on the Safer Scotland agenda.

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

To access the Safer Scotland materials, go to: <http://dontriskit.info/motorbikes/>

Motorcycle Action Group: Harlow hassles update

25 July 2016.

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the UK's leading voice for riders' rights, is lobbying Harlow Council for a change in the terms of an injunction directed at preventing anti-social behaviour in the local area. MAG has already been in close communication with the Council, but the issue has yet to be fully resolved.

MAG's Director of Communications & Public Affairs, Lembit Öpik, has had two

meeting arranged – both of which were postponed at short notice by the authority. A new date has been arranged - on 16th August – but MAG is concerned this is some time away.

MAG's Chair, Selina Lavender, has expressed worries that this delay could fuel unrest among the law abiding motorcycling community. Selina says, 'so far, MAG has been able to secure the patience of riders, on the basis of discussions taking place between MAG and the authority. This is a key reason why Lembit is very keen to have the meeting as soon as humanly possible is to secure meaningful progress in regard to the injunction and its wording so that the matter can be put to rest.'

Selina has written to the authority, asking for the meeting to occur well before the 16th August – more specifically, in the week beginning the 25th July. Selina adds, 'I am acutely aware of the level of unease the current situation is causing. I'd be very grateful for the local authority's assistance with resolving the matter as soon as possible.'

MAG will keep the riding community updated on developments as they happen. Lembit says 'this is a key priority for me, and I'm acutely aware that we simply have to separate the content of the injunction and what the authority is trying to do in terms of dealing with antisocial behavior. The problem isn't bikers, it's hooligans who just happen to be using bikes. It's unfortunate that the injunction appears to discriminate against powered two wheelers, which I know wasn't the intention. We'll get this fixed amicably. But it does need to be fixed.'

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

18 July 2016 Oakdene Café Incident -Stinger device concerns

MAG has been in contact with Kent police following the appearance of a worrying film clip on YouTube suggesting that police might be using a stinger device to stop motorcyclists indulging in anti social behaviour outside the Oakdene Café in Kent.

MAG Chair Selina Lavender explained "The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) is very clear that our mission is to defend riders' rights, not anti-social behaviour. It is regrettable that some who choose to ride motorcycles and scooters choose to behave in manner that MAG and the general biking community find unacceptable as do the general public. We do not condone this behaviour and support the police in protecting the safety of the public whilst bringing the perpetrators to justice."

29 July 2016 Trike Helmet Law Success for MAG!

Authorities in Northern Ireland were all set to implement a law forcing trike riders to wear helmets despite no evidence to show that trike riders were over represented in accident statistics or were at risk.

Following a meeting today between MAG's Lembit Opik and the Minister responsible MAG can announce that the law is not being implemented. This is a fantastic success for MAG's team in NI and everyone who wrote letters and emails to the minister and lobbied against the law. If enacted it could well have set an unpleasant precedent for riders in the rest of the UK so this is a great result.

Want to be a Director? MAG needs YOU

The Motorcycle Action Group (**MAG**), the UK's leading voice for riders' rights, is **looking for new volunteer Directors**. MAG has two vacancies, one of which is for the specific role of Finance Director. The appropriate individuals will have an interest in MAG's riders' rights agenda, experience of motorcycling and, in the case of the Finance Director role, relevant experience in financial matters.

MAG Media is also planning to appoint **three individuals** to help with MAG's publishing and marketing. Specifically, this group will manage house magazine The Road. Applicants should be able to demonstrate experience in publishing, marketing, design or printing.

The time commitment amounts to a few hours a month. Extra commitment in addition to this will, of course, always be welcomed.

If you'd like to help MAG help bikers, why not apply and make your contribution to the UK's leading voice for riders? To apply, simply email: exec@mag-uk.org

Or write to: *Julie Sperling, MAG, Unit C13, Holly Farm Business Park, Honiley, CV8 1NP.*

Explain your interest, which position you are applying for and include any experience, ideally in the form of a C.V. Closing Date is 31st August 2016.

Suitable applicants will be invited to meet the Board on 7th October 2016.

For more info contact MAG at 01926 844 064 or central-office@mag-uk.org

MAG ARTICLE APPEARING IN BSH

I write this whilst we are in the middle of dealing with an injunction taken out by Harlow Council that has enraged bikers across the UK. On the evening of Saturday

21st May, my mobile was glowing as various people tagged myself and messaged the MAG Facebook page with a link to an ITV news story entitled 'Injunction taken out against bikers in Harlow'. I will layout the whole story for those of you not familiar with the Harlow injunction case and the story to date from the MAG side.

On the 19th of May Chelmsford County Court granted an injunction order between persons unknown and Harlow District Council. The injunction forbids 'person unknown' (whether by themselves or by instructing, causing or permitting any other person):

From organising, participating or otherwise encouraging unauthorised ride outs within the district of Harlow.

It includes a map showing Harlow's boundaries and the following schedule.

Unauthorised ride out:

1. Unauthorised ride out means a congregation of the drivers or riders of two or more motor vehicles including motor cycles between the hours of 10am and 12am on a public highway or any place to which the public have access within the district of Harlow, the boundaries of which are shown on the map at Schedule 1 at which such driver, any passenger of any vehicle present perform any of the activities set out below:
 - i) Excessive noise;
 - ii) Danger to other roads users including pedestrians;
 - iii) Damage or risk of damage to private property;
 - iv) Any nuisance to other persons not participating in the unauthorised ride out.
 - v) Driving at excess speed;
 - vi) Driving in a convoy;
 - vii) Racing another motor vehicle;
 - viii) Performing stunts;
 - ix) Sounding horns;
 - x) Playing loud music;
 - xi) Dropping litter;
 - xii) Shouting or swearing at, or abusing, threatening or otherwise intimidating another person.

The reasons behind this injunction were that Essex police had logged an unusually high number of complaints (121) relating to illegal or antisocial activity involving motorbikes, quads, pit bikes and mopeds during a two month period (compared to 74 for the same time period in 2015). The injunction coincided with a planned second memorial ride for a local lad, named Marcel Bellairs-Honniss, who enjoyed motorcycling and passed away aged 16 on the 6th of March 2016. An earlier memorial ride on the 12th of March attracted hundreds of youngsters on motorbikes

and bicycles who rode in convoy round the town. Police had been trying to communicate with organisers of the second event without success, and fears that things would get out of control and someone would end up hurt led to the injunction application.

The issue with the injunction is the very ambiguous wording which, in effect, bans any two vehicles being on the road together if someone else doesn't like it. The wording is so open that anyone travelling within the boundaries of Harlow could find themselves failing foul of the new restriction. Armed with a few examples of 'things you haven't considered' and a 'can I reassure our members that should they travel through Harlow in a law-abiding way that they will not be served with an injunction', I put a call in to Harlow Council first thing on Monday morning as, after all, council offices aren't manned at weekends. At first it seemed the number I had for them didn't work but a little later it did ring and was answered by a very polite operator. I struck up a conversation with the lady who answered my call. She told me that they had been advised to expect calls on the injunction. The only advice she was able to offer was to watch the website. I did ask if it was possible to talk to anyone regarding specific concerns but despite checking with her supervisor the response was still 'check the website'; not very helpful but that was all I was going to get from this line of enquiry.

I reported back to MAG's National Committee with a proposed, polite letter to see if that would get us any further. This was duly sent by email and post the following day. I also put a call in to a legal eagle who had shown an interest in taking on the council with a view to having the injunction revoked. By the time I got home from work on Tuesday a 'clarification' statement had been released by Harlow Council, via their website (this was emailed directly to me by the Council the next day). Whilst the 'clarification statement' was enough to settle many, it was not enough for MAG. The injunction was still there in its poor format and therefore could be used to restrict the freedom of you or me to ride with a friend for a coffee in Harlow.

Lembit spent several hours on the telephone and eventually managed to schedule a meeting with representatives from Harlow Council and Essex Police to discuss riders concerns. This duly took place on Friday 27th of May, just one week after the granting of the injunction. He had a very clear message to carry forward on behalf of MAG. The meeting went on for much longer than planned as each side was keen to impress upon the other their own viewpoint. We understood that the council and police have a duty to protect the residents of Harlow, many of whom have found themselves victims of mindless behaviour by a few illegal and irresponsible riders of motorcycles and other motor vehicles. What we needed to push home was how the injunction was discriminatory and not, to our mind, fit for the purpose intended.

Our message did get through and we are currently engaging with the council and the police to resolve the issue in Harlow in a way that is satisfactory for all parties involved.

For us this is not just about Harlow, it is about every council and every rider. We believe in freedom of choice: you have the freedom to decide to ride a bike / scooter / trike and, if you've followed the laws of land by having a licence, having it tested, insured and taxed, then you should have the choice of riding it on any road in the country.

I am hopeful that things will have improved dramatically by the time this article goes to print.

Remember you can support us by becoming a member, be that as an individual, affiliated club or corporate.

Until next time, Ride Free

Selina, Chair of The Motorcycle Action Group

To join MAG, or find out more, you can contact our central office on 01926 844 064 (Monday – Friday, 9 – 5), visit a local meeting, talk to us at an event or find us via the Internet at www.mag-uk.org

The Oakdene Cafe Incident.

Bikers visiting the traditional wednesday Bike Night at Oakdene Cafe in Wrotham, Kent on 6th July were amazed and angered to see a "stinger" (tyre deflation device) apparently about to be deployed by a Police Officer. Postings on the internet clearly show the stinger device unpacked and on the floor although the Officer when approached and filmed by riders put the device back into his vehicle. If deployed against a motorcycle the rider is almost certainly going to lose control and crash. The prospect of potentially lethal force being used to enforce traffic laws has understandably angered motorcyclists causing a backlash against the Police. According to reports on the internet a spokesman from Kent Police said: *"At 8.22pm police received reports of dangerous driving on London Road, Wrotham and officers were on the scene to ensure public safety. A stinger device was not deployed or put on the road at any time, and there was no intention to deploy it. This was simply a visual deterrent to prevent any unlawful activity. Kent Police will not deploy stingers on vehicles with less than four wheels except in exceptional circumstances, which are based on threat posed to the rider or the general public."*

MAG Chairman, Selina Lavender, contacted Kent Police for an explanation and received an email stating that there was no intention to deploy the stinger device and quoting national guidance reproduced in part below:

'Engagement with quad bikes and motorcycles presents additional challenges to those involved in pursuit management. The acceleration and manoeuvrability of these vehicles make it difficult for officers to engage with the subject vehicle for

sufficient time to develop and implement tactics. Furthermore, given the lack of physical protection provided by the vehicle, the vulnerability of the rider is a serious consideration. Motorcycle and quad bike pursuits clearly present higher risks for suspects than conventional vehicle pursuit. Only trained and authorised staff should engage in motorcycle and quad bike pursuits and tactics.'

'Where possible, it is preferable to use pre-emptive tactics to prevent motorcycle and quad bike pursuits. The use of tactics given in the tactics directory (internet link removed) including tyre deflation devices may be proportionate and necessary to mitigate risk to the public, officers and subjects. It is accepted that the pre-emptive use of tactics carries some risk to rider(s), however, this risk is likely to be significantly lower than allowing the vehicle to be driven at speeds to avoid capture, regardless of the intention of the police to engage in a pursuit.'

The guidance goes on to mention the risks associated with using such devices but clearly does not rule them out. One also has to ask the question did the Officer actually intend to use the device in error or ignorance of the guidelines?

Bike nights all over the country occasionally attract riders who ride at silly speeds and like to show off pulling wheelies. This behaviour attracts complaints from residents and ultimately the Police have to take action to control those riders who miss-behave. However the use of potentially lethal force in such matters is unacceptable. MAG does not condone the use of stingers for the purposes of enforcing road traffic and anti-social riding issues. MAG recognises that in today's world the Police may have to consider their deployment in order to preserve public safety when presented with other security considerations (you only have to watch the news to understand that there may be incidents where such action is required) but not for speeding through a built up area or riding like an idiot.

MAG is in on-going discussions with the Police in respect to the use of stingers and will update members when more information is available.

Andy Carrott
MAG National Vice Chairman

14 July 2016 ABD Launches Campaign Against Speed Awareness Courses AMPOW Campaign Against Misuse of Police Waivers Fed up with seeing the growth in the number of speed cameras?

Perhaps you have been offered a speed awareness course when you were slightly over the speed limit? If so, you need to be aware that the growth of the number of speed cameras has been driven by money. Namely, the desire by the police to raise funds in this way. Without their ability to finance more cameras, this whole edifice would collapse.

The Alliance of British Drivers (ABD) has launched a campaign against the misuse of speed awareness courses (named AMPOW) because the actions of the police in

offering such "Education Courses" as an alternative to prosecution for speeding and other offences are distorting road safety policy.

It is leading to the proliferation of speed cameras and threatened prosecutions because the police now have a direct financial incentive to maximise their activities in this area. This is wrong.

In our view there is no statutory support for this activity and it is contrary to law. What we now have is an enormous industry dedicated to raising money to pay course operators, the police and other organisations who benefit from these arrangements. You can learn more about this campaign and the evidence of our claims from a new web site set up here: http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001SQAUKYDgWwPk2PtePXotOsOP_CQpezpZmV9On4_HJKUVIKI4AL39eo0UHL1a762ZPxW323ISFFgSWazEC6W8FQDzLTgGEZk6NE0zL1csVcNmrJAdP0Dswdyk5DyBAETS2RPHZTrJmPKX-BelTOOt9qkS_aczgsntOzdy478s3pQqsSsL2aWBFxw==&c=uuHcX2P5QxCfF3EcBx6EPPVPtrmKeJ_nmZqeoGzXFJgpiVypYlKjpw==&ch=bsoYuAlyOu1VJ4gKjGrOvX0YrICxlgcdsmXjJV9I_v-ivtTSM1R89g==. Members of the public can register their support for the campaign and sign a petition here: http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001SQAUKYDgWwPk2PtePXotOsOP_CQpezpZmV9On4_HJKUVIKI4AL39eo0UHL1a762ZPR9TpDQFopBfvN3Rfs44rvJ38E9apO1mhUVo9F04fUqSqwNCxPb0kStUDjez7ne9hnhcbUOa9GfY2hQuAGgmNSXx5l_kx3TIDtudsamHoinWaHD_CFly2lrD4kkBIsBxW&c=uuHcX2P5QxCfF3EcBx6EPPVPtrmKeJ_nmZqeoGzXFJgpiVypYlKjpw==&ch=bsoYuAlyOu1VJ4gKjGrOvX0YrICxlgcdsmXjJV9I_v-ivtTSM1R89g== Stop the slush fund that finances more cameras - sign the petition now.

Roger Lawson, Campaign Director

Motorway hard shoulders shouldn't be used as permanent lanes – Transport Committee

The Government should not proceed with motorway 'all lane running' schemes while major safety concerns exist, the Transport Committee has warned.

In its report on the issue published today (30 June) the Transport Committee says that while Highways England may 'consider the matter settled', the Transport Committee believes that 'the argument has not been won'.

Under 'all lane running' the motorway hard shoulder is used as a live lane of traffic. Previously, the hard shoulder has only been used at peak times or to deal with congestion.

The Transport Committee rejects the Government's notion that this is an 'incremental change' and a 'logical extension of previous schemes'.

Instead, it concludes that the permanent loss of the hard shoulder in all lane running schemes is a 'radical change and an unacceptable price to pay for such improvements'.

Louise Ellman MP, chair of the Transport Committee, said: "The permanent removal of the hard shoulder is a dramatic change. All kinds of drivers, including the emergency services, are genuinely concerned about the risk this presents.

"It is undeniable that we need to find ways of dealing with traffic growth on the strategic network. But all lane running does not appear to us to be the safe, incremental change the Department wants us to think it is.

"While 'smart motorways' have existed for years, this is fundamentally different. Government needs to demonstrate that all lane running schemes do not make the road any less safe than the traditional motorway with a hard shoulder.

"The Government has a model which has worked. The scheme on the M42 has a track record of safety and performance but subsequent versions have gradually lowered the standard specification.

"The most recent incarnations of all lane running have less provision for safety measures than original pilot schemes.

"The Committee heard significant concerns about the scarcity, size and misuse of emergency refuge areas. We also heard about worryingly high levels of non-compliance with Red X signals.

"Levels of public awareness and confidence about using these motorway schemes are unacceptably low.

"Government needs to demonstrate considerable improvement in this area, including more emergency refuge areas, driver education and enforcement, before the Committee will endorse the extension of a scheme which risks putting motorists in harm's way."

In 2015, the DfT forecast that traffic on the strategic road network would increase by up to 60% by 2040. The Government sees smart motorways as a way of addressing this growth without incurring the costs of traditional motorway widening.

Plans are in place to permanently convert the hard shoulder into a running lane on around 300 miles of motorway. Highways England has a programme of 30 all lane running schemes to the value of around £6bn over the next nine years.

Stakeholder reaction

The RAC has welcomed the report and has used it to again express its concern over the use of the hard shoulder as a permanent running lane.

David Bizley, RAC chief engineer, said: "Whilst supporting smart motorways as a cost effective and relatively rapid way of increasing motorway capacity, the RAC has repeatedly expressed concerns about the latest design which turns the hard shoulder on motorways into a permanent running lane.

"We therefore welcome the Select Committee report and are pleased that this influential group of MPs has concluded that the decision to adopt 'all lane running' on all future smart motorways may be premature.

The safety of motorists must come first and therefore new designs need to be trialled for sufficiently long to demonstrate their safety before they are introduced more widely."

However, the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) says all-lane running motorways are no less safe than other motorways.

Alan Stevens, chief scientist, transportation, said: "The volume of traffic on our motorways is increasing, so we need to take steps to increase capacity, improve traffic flow and ease congestion in a safe and pragmatic way.

Smart motorways allow this to be achieved usually within the highway boundary, limiting land use and disruption from road widening while ultimately providing drivers with shorter, more predictable journeys and less stressful driving.

Whilst the Transport Select Committee has raised valid concerns over the need for sufficient evaluation, TRL believes that the implementation of technology, such as smart motorways, is vital in keeping our networks flowing and can be achieved without increasing overall risk.

We have conducted several research projects using our driving simulator to see how people respond to both dynamic hard shoulder and all-lane running motorways and found both to be no less safe than other motorways.

"Of course, like with all new transport innovations, implementation will need to be continuously monitored to ensure the predicted and desired outcomes are achieved with any safety implications immediately identified and addressed."

- See more at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/transport-committee/news-parliament-2015/all-lane-running-report-published-16-17/>

RAC: <http://www.rac.co.uk/press-centre#/news/all-lane-running-inquiry-rac-reacts-to-transport-committee-report-172071>

20mph limits have lowest level of compliance

84% of car drivers and 83% of LGV drivers exceeded a 20mph speed limit during 2015, according to new figures from the DfT.

Published yesterday (30 June), 'Free Flow Vehicle Speed Statistics' reveals that 20mph roads had the lowest level of speed limit compliance in 2015. 16% of car drivers broke a 20mph limit by more than 10mph, while 31% exceeded the limit by between 5-10mph.

30mph limits were the second most flaunted, with 52% of car drivers exceeding the limit during 2015.

This DfT Statistical Release presents estimates of traffic speeds in free flowing conditions on roads in Great Britain. The DfT says the statistics 'provide insight into the speeds at which drivers choose to travel and their compliance with speed limits'.

The estimates are based on speed data collected from a sample of the DfT's automatic traffic counters (ATCs), excluding locations where external factors might restrict driver behaviour (junctions, hills, sharp bends and speed enforcement cameras etc).

Despite the figures for 20 and 30mph limits, the bulletin says that since 2011 the percentage of vehicles exceeding the speed limit has generally declined. It also shows that average free flow speeds for all vehicle types across each road type have remained 'broadly stable'.

On motorways, 46% of both cars and light commercial vehicles (LCVs) exceeded the speed limit (70 mph), a 'small and steady' decrease from 2011, when the figure was at 49% for both vehicle types.

Of all road types, national speed limit single carriageways had the highest level of speed limit compliance, with 92% of cars not exceeding the 60mph limit.

44% of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) exceeded the speed limit on 30 mph roads, while on motorways 99% of HGVs complied with the 60mph limit.

The bulletin also gives details of collisions where 'exceeding the speed limit' was reported as a contributory factor.

In 2014, for all accidents, 2.5% of vehicles had exceeding the speed limit as a contributory factor allocated, while for fatal collisions this rose to 9.7%.

The report also reveals that there were 743,000 fixed penalty notices (FPNs) issued for speed limit offences in England and Wales in 2014, a year-on-year increase of 4%.

FPNs for speed limit offences accounted for 73% of all motoring FPNs in 2014, with the majority (90%) detected by speed cameras.

In 2015, more than 1.2m drivers attended a speed awareness course in the UK. The bulletin says attendance has increased year on year since 2011 'due to more police forces joining the scheme, and not solely due to more offences being committed'.

- See more at: DfT: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/533244/free-flow-vehicle-speeds-great-britain-2015.pdf

Government launches public consultation on autonomous vehicles

A consultation has been launched by the Government as it looks to continue its push to help Britain lead the way in developing driverless technology.

Published today (11 July), the public consultation centres around two key areas: updating the Highway Code and changing insurance laws.

The Government says the consultation, which remains open for nine weeks, will be the start of a 'rolling programme of reform on the roadmap to fully automated vehicles'.

According to roads minister Andrew Jones, driverless cars are the future, and not science fiction. The Queen's Speech in May 2016 included a modern transport bill which encourages investment in driverless and electric cars, and ensures that insurance will be available to users of driverless vehicles.

The UK Government is expecting the development of driverless cars to play a vital role in the country's economic future and as a result, has repeatedly expressed its desire to take a world lead in the area. It predicts that cars with advanced driver assistance features, such as remote control parking and motorway assist, will be on sale in Britain within four years, with automated and driverless vehicles expected from the mid-2020s onwards.

With the UK's first public autonomous vehicle trials set to get underway later this year, the consultation will focus on changing the Highway Code to support the safe use of remote control parking and motorway assist features. It will also seek views on changing insurance laws so that motorists who have handed control to their 'self-driving' cars can be insured properly.

Patrick McLoughlin, transport secretary, said: "Driverless car technology will revolutionise the way we travel and deliver better journeys.

"Britain is leading the way but I want everyone to have the chance to have a say on how we embrace and use these technologies.

"Our roads are already some of the safest in the world and increasing advanced driver assist and driverless technologies have the potential to help cut the number of accidents further."

Separately, the government will next month launch a competition for a further £30m from the Intelligent Mobility Fund, for research and development of innovative connected and autonomous vehicle technologies.

Sajid Javid, business secretary, said: "Britain's auto industry has always been at the forefront of innovation and research.

“This additional £30m of funding for research and development (R&D) is a further sign of our commitment to making sure we’re creating opportunities for UK businesses to thrive and attract global investment in world-class technology.”

- See more at:

Gov UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-measures-to-help-britain-lead-the-way-in-developing-driverless-technology>

Consultation: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/advanced-driver-assistance-systems-and-automated-vehicle-technologies-supporting-their-use-in-the-uk>

Transport Bill: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/5068.html>

Driverless Trials: <http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/5065.html>

Chris Grayling appointed transport secretary

14th July 2016

Chris Grayling has been appointed transport secretary by the new prime minister, Theresa May - despite earlier reports suggesting that the Department for Transport may be shut down.

Mr Grayling, who held the role of shadow transport minister from 2005-07, replaces Patrick McLoughlin after he was named the new Conservative Party chairman in the cabinet reshuffle. Mr McLoughlin had served as transport secretary since September 2012.

As at the date this was published, there is no news as to whether the current roads and road safety minister, Andrew Jones, will remain in post.

Not saying I told you so but - OK I will, Ed:-

DVLA reports £93m loss in revenue following abolition of paper tax disc

The RAC says its fears about loss of revenue following the abolition of the paper tax disc have proved well founded following the publication of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency’s (DVLA) annual report.

The DVLA's newly published annual report and accounts show revenue from vehicle excise duty has fallen by £93m in the year following the abolition of the paper tax disc - from £6.023bn at the end of March 2015 to £5.930bn a year later.

The RAC says the loss is even greater than the Government’s own estimate of £80m over the course of 2015.

While the RAC acknowledges there may be other factors affecting the DVLA’s revenue loss - including ‘cheaper to tax’ low carbon emission vehicles - it is concerned the figure may continue to rise in the coming years as a result of increased evasion.

Simon Williams, RAC spokesman, said: “It is worrying that the reduction in revenue from vehicle tax has exceeded the Government’s own estimate - and far exceeds the £10m savings arising from no longer issuing tax discs. This loss is a significant sum and one that merits further investigation.

“We urge the DfT to carry out another roadside survey of unlicensed vehicles this year to fully assess the untaxed vehicle situation.

“We hope that this doesn’t prove to be the tip of the iceberg and that the figure does not keep on rising.”

- See more at: RAC: <http://www.rac.co.uk/press-centre#/pressreleases/dvla-annual-accounts-show-a-ps93m-loss-in-revenue-following-the-abolition-of-the-paper-tax-disc-1486258>

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