



# November 2023 Network

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

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**Acknowledgments:- George Legg. Lembit Opik. Colin Brown. Michael Armstrong. Steve Travis. Dave Pearson. FEMA. Julie Sperling. Louise Osbourne. And anyone else I’ve forgotten.**

## **EDITORIAL**

You’ll see a slight change in this edition. Whereas I normally include a section on ‘websites you may want to visit’ it has a new title ‘websites and on-line content you may wish to view’.

When I took over producing Network my main objective was to ensure you had all relevant info out there. Some on-line stuff crosses my desk that I feel should be passed on.

There is a lot out there on EVs bursting into flames and people are naturally concerned. It doesn't bear thinking about if one of those went up on a passenger ferry, underneath a block of flats something else which would cause major casualties.

Take, for instance, the recent car park fire Luton Airport. I can't recall seeing an official report, which seems negligent in itself, particularly when it concerns public safety, on exactly what vehicle it was – maybe I've missed it. First reports said it was a diesel which burst into flames, however, a friend, who knows about these things, tells me its extremely rare for a diesel to do that. However, we are now reliably informed it was an EV which caught fire whilst on charge.

I've already read of one woman whose car was in that fire and whose insurance company refuses to pay out! For what reason I can't recall especially for something which was out of her hands. However, there were an estimated 1500 vehicles in that newly built car park – a building which now has to be demolished and the public deserve details.

The bill for that one vehicle which burst into flames is going to be phenomenal.

Already, one insurance company is refusing to insure EVs.

I said at the beginning of this rush in turn solely to EVs that it would be the biggest environmental disaster waiting to happen. I still believe that.

Don't get me wrong. We all acknowledge the World is changing. It has been since before the dinosaurs took a hit. And, I, like most people do my bit with recycling, green initiatives, etc., But there is such hypocrisy out there with what I call 'ardent greens' – you know, those who are always telling the rest of us what we should be doing whilst at home they cosy up to their wood burning stoves and jet off on their holidays half way round the World whilst choosing to ignore that kids as young as 4 are digging the cobalt for their electric batteries out of the ground and conveniently disregarding that the raw materials required to make their lithium batteries are an even more finite resource than fossil fuels. You really couldn't make it up.

I still see the future for personal transport as that encompassing all the fuels science can give us ICE, hydrogen, bio fuels, EV ..... An ever expanding list as we move forward.

Well, having bored you long enough with my personal take on the existing sh\*tshow, that's me off my soapbox

Catch you next time. Ride free, AG

***Please let me have copy for the December edition by 25<sup>th</sup> November subject heading:  
Network to [aine@maq-uk.org](mailto:aine@maq-uk.org)***

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## **Political Report – Lembit Opik and Colin Brown**

**With signs increasing problems dogging the carbon dioxide ‘net zero’ agenda, MAG’s Political Unit, Lembit Opik, Colin Brown and Michael Armstrong, are highly focussed on the direction of the threatened ban on the sale of new petrol fuelled motorcycles. In other news, the ever-growing list of allies backing MAG’s own efforts to protect road users’ rights is impressive, and was demonstrated during a major convention held in Central London. Here’s the latest on campaigns from your Political Unit.**

### **Thanks to all at AGC**

MAG held its Annual General Conference (AGC) near Bridgwater in September 2023. The meeting was immensely productive, and the Political Unit was pleased to present our work from the previous year, with a look to the future.

Great praise is due to the local organising team, as well as to delegates who presented great ideas, input and proposals both formally and informally to the Political Unit. We know what you want, and we’ll do our best to deliver it. The AGC confirmed beyond doubt that MAG continues to be THE voice of bikers in the UK.

### **More progress on less net zero**

Following on from British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s shock announcement that he intends to delay the phasing out of the internal combustion engine (ICE), the political parties have been locked in accusation and counter-accusation about who’s selling out on the pseudo ‘climate emergency’ agenda.

Sunak has pushed back the forced introduction of the sale of electric-only vehicles from 2030 to 2035, on the grounds of practicality. He’s merely sticking to the mantra that 2030 is not practical for an end date for petrol and diesel cars – though he hasn’t formally stated anything about new petrol motorbikes, which they are trying to ban between 2030 and 2035. As you know, MAG has been insisting on the continuation of the sale of new petrol (and diesel) cars and motorcycles.

But there remains a piece of contradictory bad news in the Prime Minister’s strategy. Sunak has not decided to junk the ‘Zero Emissions Vehicle’ (ZEV) mandate. This mandate effectively imposes fines upon manufacturers who don’t shift their production across to electric power fast enough. There are specific targets for this process and, at time of writing, there hasn’t been a whisper from the Prime Minister about altering this suffocating edict which was designed to end the sale of petrol cars by 2030. The headlines and rhetoric contradict the actions and mechanisms already in place.

MAG is seeking clarification on this matter. We invite you to do the same. You can do this by writing to your MP, demanding to know if they will demand that the Government confirms the ZEV mandate will also be removed, on the basis that it makes a mockery of the Prime Minister’s promise to postpone the new petrol and diesel vehicle sales ban. Please let us know the response you get from your enquiry.

Incidentally, the Labour Party have stated that they will restore the 2030 date if they win the election.

## **Luton Airport closed due to vehicles fire**

In early October 2023, Luton Airport was closed when one of the car parks partially collapsed following a massive vehicle fire in that multi-storey premises. Initial reports suggested an electric vehicle (EV) had been directly responsible, when its batteries overheated and exploded, causing an uncontrollable incendiary situation. Then, rather curiously, the story evolved to claims that an internal combustion engine vehicle had caused the fire, when its battery overheated somehow.

Lembit Öpik, MAG's Director of Communications and Public Affairs, has major concerns about the shifting nature of the story: "even if an electric vehicle didn't cause the actual fire, it's certain that any electric vehicle parked there that caught fire. This is because, once an EV starts to burn, it is impossible for the conflagration to be contained: in the real world, a burning electric vehicle cannot be extinguished. You simply have to wait till it burns out, with all the environmental, property, health and economic damage that brings with it.

"I wait to see what the official cause is identified as," adds Lembit. "But if the report doesn't mention the contributory effect of EVs, we'll know it's misinformation."

Note that this fire occurred when the overwhelming majority of road vehicles in the UK are still not EVs. How much worse will it be if the politicians force us to go all-electric? Luton Airport provides a clue.

## **Anti-ULEZ London Mayoral candidate gains ground**

Following the hated imposition of the Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) expansion by discredited Labour Party Mayor Sadiq Khan, other parties seem to be gaining at his expense. Howard Cox, Founder of Fair Fuel UK and a Mayoral candidate for the Reform UK party, has apparently been rising steadily in the polls, with his promise to abolish the entire ULEZ zone across the whole of London, including in the city centre. The Conservatives have also closed in on Khan.

MAG does not promote specific political parties. But, as part of our commitment to Operation Earthquake – our promise to campaign to protect your right to ride petrol motorbikes – we will never recommend riders vote for anti-biker politicians. Any politician who supports the ban on the sale of petrol motorcycles, is a target for us. As such, we maintain a watching brief in relation to the London Mayoral election – and, for that matter the General Election.

If you're in London, write to any politician you know, especially Labour Party politicians, clarifying how you feel about the fact that because of their Labour Mayor older motorbikes are now unaffordable to use in the city. Also, tell them how you feel about the future prospects of another four years of Khan. We must make ourselves heard – and ensure that those politicians who ignore us lose their jobs.

## **Together Association keeps growing**

The Together Association – the independent movement fighting to return power back to the people – has continued to build its profile in the national political stage. Latest developments are a huge leap in the level of coverage it is getting on the media, plus an increased focus

on opposing 15-minute cities which are designed to imprison you withing 15 minutes' walking or cycling distance of your home.

The Together Association continues to work closely with MAG. Find out more, and join this grass roots organisation at:

<https://togetherdeclaration.org/>

### **Lembit addresses a party conference in “Go Slow Wales”**

Lembit Öpik, MAG's Director of Communications and Public Affairs, spoke at the UKIP party conference in Newport Wales, about the idiocy of imposing a blanket 20mph speed limit across the region. “It's obvious that people are being put off going to Wales, on the basis of this patronising bit of law, which doesn't care one jot about the value of your time – only the value of virtue-signalling, petty and anti-road user nonsense. I await to see how many cyclists who exceed the stupid 20mph speed limit are prosecuted – or does it only count if you've got an engine? This roadside apartheid is causing practical harm to Wales – and the economic and social consequences will prove it.”

Lembit also spoke of MAG's commitment to Operation Earthquake – our campaign to stop any politicians who want to take your right to buy a new petrol motorbike away from winning a seat.

He was greeted very positively, and believes that, in the near future, a number of other political parties will also throw their weight behind Operation Earthquake - thereby increasing the pressure on the old, dysfunctional parties to grow up and start serving the road-using public.

### **See us at the NEC**

Look out for MAG at the NEC during the Motorcycle Live event which runs from 18<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Colin Brown and Lembit Öpik form MAG's Political Unit will both be there with news, chat and friendship, as MAG continues to stand proud as the voice of riders across the UK and beyond. See you there to have your opinions, feedback and suggestions.

We have a ticket giveaway competition – to win a pair of free tickets simply watch the YouTube Video here <https://youtu.be/FNUv3PLETQg?si=tjTHFfWpLNdfYYoH> , subscribe to the MAG YouTube channel and post a comment in the video comments.

### **Fight Motorcycle Theft Meetings Continue**

On 21<sup>st</sup> October we held the fifth Fight Motorcycle Theft meeting, this time in Hull. Humberside PCC Jonathan Evison, Chief Inspector Derek Hussain and colleagues from Humberside Police were given honest feedback by around forty attendees. Both the PCC and Chief Inspector said that the event was useful to them, and we came away with a commitment to form a focus group to improve communication and discuss issues in much more depth. Colin hopes that this will open many doors if we can get the group off the ground and running with consistent and regular meetings.

The next Fight Motorcycle Theft meeting will be in Leeds on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November. Find details here: <https://mag-uk.org/event/fight-motorcycle-theft-leeds-2/>

We are still awaiting a response from the London Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime. If you are a London member please do make some noise through any channel you can to put pressure on the Mayors Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) or the Deputy Mayor to respond to our approaches. London has the highest levels of motorcycle theft in the country by a considerable distance. We must take these meetings into the heart of the national issue.

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## MAG PRESS RELEASES

### **MAG pushing hard for bus lane access and more. (3/10/2023)**

**MAG warmly welcomes the Government announcement on bus lane access but wants more. Plans have been announced for “revised guidance to local authorities on allowing motorcycles to use bus lanes and hold a consultation about whether motorcycle access should be standard.” MAG is calling on the Department for Transport (DfT) to broaden the discussion in line with the wider policy direction.**

The latest Department for Transport policy paper “The plan for drivers” was published on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October. One of the actions listed in the plan is to “refresh the technical advice, making it clear local authorities should use their powers to ensure bus lanes are open to motorcycles, and will launch a consultation on motorcycles using bus lanes as a default”

MAG has campaigned loudly for a consistent default access to bus lanes for many years. With 48% of all bus lanes allowing motorcycle access already, the time is overdue for a consistent national approach.

But whilst MAG is celebrating this apparent victory for motorcyclists, calls are being made to Ministers to broaden the consultation to cover motorcycle access to Advanced Stop Lines and through traffic filters and bus gates designed for traffic management. MAG has proven in Oxford that it is logical to allow motorcycles through traffic filters and want to see this taken forward as a broader policy as part of the

claimed work to “restrain the most aggressively anti-driver traffic management measures”.

MAG’s Director of Campaigns & Political Engagement, Colin Brown, said:

“This does appear to be a great victory for motorcycling in the decades long fight to win riders universal access to bus lanes. We have fought long and hard to get to this point, but we will not be complacent. Mark Harper states that he wishes to restrain the most aggressive anti-driver management measures, but we have always stated that motorcycles are part of the solution. When motorcycles are given proper consideration in policy decisions this is widely accepted. We have evidence for this shown in the recent MAG victories in Oxford’s traffic filters and Cambridge’s proposed Sustainable Travel Zone. Motorcycles were exempted from both as the policy aim was to manage four-wheeled transport, not two.

I have written to the Minister asking for the opportunity to raise these points before the consultation is launched. We need a much broader scope of issues included in this discussion, not simply bus lane access.”

ENDS

Contact MAG at 01926 844 064 or [central-office@mag-uk.org](mailto:central-office@mag-uk.org)

#### **Notes for Editors**

DfT Policy paper “The plan for drivers”: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plan-for-drivers/the-plan-for-drivers>

MAG’s Default Access campaign: <https://mag-uk.org/new-mag-campaign-for-default-bus-lane-access/>

MAG’s bus lane stock take: [https://wiki.mag-uk.org/images/6/65/Bus\\_Lane\\_Stocktake\\_2022.pdf](https://wiki.mag-uk.org/images/6/65/Bus_Lane_Stocktake_2022.pdf)

Oxford Traffic Filter victory: <https://mag-uk.org/motorcyclists-to-be-exempt-from-traffic-filters-in-oxford/>

Cambridge STZ victory: <https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambridge-news/revised-cambridge-congestion-charge-proposals-27592755>

## **Leeds Fight Motorcycle Theft meeting back in the diary.**

**(19/10/2023)**

**A new date has been announced for the postponed Leeds Fight Motorcycle Theft meeting. The previous arrangements were postponed due to the availability of West Yorkshire Deputy Mayor, Alison Lowe. The rescheduled meeting will now take place on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November.**

Motorcycle theft in the West Yorkshire Police area continues to increase. According to PNC data, bike thieves were 16% more active in the first half of 2023 compared with the same period in 2022. West Yorkshire has seen double the national average increase.

MAG aimed to hold a public meeting with DMPC Alison Lowe and West Yorkshire Police earlier in the year but unfortunately the meeting had to be postponed. The re-scheduled date has now been announced: Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November.

MAG's Director of Campaigns & Political Engagement, Colin Brown, said:

"I do believe that these meetings help to raise awareness and understanding of the scale of the issue riders face. There are local variations and complexities to be considered, but the fundamental lesson is that more needs to be done to tackle the issue. Motorcycle theft is far from a victimless crime: it is an enabler for a range of further criminal activity. The impacts are far ranging for all parts of society. The frustrations and anger amongst the legitimate riding community is growing and we need to see a more robust response from the authorities."

The meetings are free to attend and open to all. MAG encourages as many riders as possible to attend. We need to push home the message that we want to see the tide turn against this increasing criminality. MAG's Yorkshire region activists have done great work getting more secure parking infrastructure in Leeds and engaging with Councils and West Yorkshire Police. But more can - and should - be done by all stakeholders. Our work will continue and hopefully we will increase support for our efforts from the DMPC with this meeting.

### **MAG says: "riders want a licence to ride." (19/10/2023)**

**"Riders want a licence to ride" is the comment from MAG regarding the MCIA's "Licence to Net Zero" framing. The actual priorities of motorcyclists - not the Net Zero agenda - should inform reform of the motorcycle licensing regime. MAG has long called for reform but seeks to ensure that the interests of riders remain the real priority.**

Earlier this week the MCIA called for reform of the motorcycle licensing regime in the UK, describing their proposals as "a licence for Net Zero". The campaign is supported by the Zemo Partnership and the National Motorcyclist Council.

MAG points out that, as the largest representative body for motorcycle licence holders in the UK, they were not invited to help draft the campaign framing or its proposals, which has resulted in the organisation expressing concern about the framing.

MAG opposes Net Zero being framed as the primary driver and goal for motorcycle licence reform and has long been calling for licence reform for the benefit of new and potential riders. MAG can demonstrate that these new riders are not motivated by Net Zero goals.

Focus group research into the motivations of new riders conducted by the University of Nottingham and MAG showed that the primary motivations mentioned by riders do



not include a desire to “be green”. Referring to the key motivators, the research report states: “It appears that a key driver for wanting to ride PTWs as an adult is early, positive exposure to motorcycling or scootering in childhood. Several of our participants cited contact, in their early years, with relatives who rode as a key influence. Others cited the desire for a practical (and cheap) form of commuting, learning new and challenging skills, the sociability of the bike and scooter scene, and just having fun and a sense of freedom on the road.”

Research released by MAG in November 2022 concluded that the current licensing regime is suppressing the numbers of individuals riding motorcycles. Additionally, it is having an adverse impact on young rider safety. The report recommended a full review of the motorcycle licensing regime and that the review goal should be to increase “the conversion rate from CBT to full motorcycle licence holders.”

MAG is also expressing concern that the current licensing regime disincentivizes progression into legitimate and responsible riding as a full licence holder. This may actually be pushing some individuals towards anti-social riding behaviour and even criminality.

MAG is therefore calling for reformed licensing to promote better safety and to create a welcoming pathway for new riders wanting to enter the legitimate and responsible road riding community. The current system creates a barrier that is a potential driver of antisocial behaviour and petty criminality.

MAG’s Director of Campaigns & Political Engagement, Colin Brown, said:

“We all want reform of the motorcycle licensing regime. Our priority is achieving the best outcome for new and potential riders – nothing more and nothing less. We do not want to see any other priority leading the decision-making process. The riders’ voice should be the most influential guide in generating any proposals, not other interest groups. Reform of the licensing regime is not predicated on the green agenda. It was needed before Net Zero became a thing. It is not needed now simply because Net Zero targets have been set. We want reform that works for new riders today and in the future. That has little if anything to do with carbon emissions. We have not had time to gather feedback on the MCIA proposals yet, but we will be doing that. What we can say at this stage is that the MCIA framing is disappointing.”

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#### Resurface Our Roads – Template letter for MPs

This campaign was launched late June and so far we have contacted 25 MPs with the below template letter for extra funding.

Please edit to your own liking and there’s a bit where you can add your own contribution on the state of your own local roads if you like.

Once the email has been sent, please feedback to myself Michael Armstrong to which MP that you’ve sent it to.

Email:

cumbria-region-rep@mag-uk.org

Dear [insert MP name]

I am writing to you as a constituent to ask for your support in tackling the blight of poorly maintained roads in this constituency.

[Insert personalisation by referencing your specific concerns and examples]

I have signed a petition calling on the Government to increase funding for roads maintenance. (<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/634995>)

I am a member/supporter [as applicable] of the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) who have produced a campaign video that I would urge you to review.

<https://youtu.be/e01EAS0GUa0>

I will also be writing directly to my local councillor, but may I ask that you contact MAG to discuss how you can work with the organisation to get the question of national funding on the table for debate?

I look forward to hearing that you have contacted MAG, and any thoughts you may have on the issue.

Yours sincerely

[your name]

[your address and postcode]

Once we have the extra money sorted, we can then focus on your local councillors in getting your roads fixed.

Michael Armstrong  
MAG National Political Officer  
(And Cumbria MAG RR).

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## **Motorcycle Theft Focus Group to be formed following public meeting in Hull. (26/10/2023)**

**Humberside Police offer to form a motorcycle theft focus group at MAG's Fight Motorcycle Theft meeting in Hull. Humberside Police and Crime Commissioner, Jonathan Evison, and Operation Yellowfin lead, Chief Inspector Derek Hussain, are both backing this engagement having heard the concerns of local riders at the meeting.**

The meeting, held in Hull on 21<sup>st</sup> October, was the fifth in a series of meetings being organised by the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) around the country. A turnout of over 40 riders at the meeting saw some honest opinions being expressed about the fear and intimidation faced by local motorcyclists. Many expressed their unwillingness to continue riding into the city due to the level of criminal activity targeted at them. Riders expressed a desire to feel safe when riding and parking in the city. Emotions were high with perceptions around insufficient police response and fears that Operation Yellowfin is an operation "in name only".

Both the PCC and CI Hussain stressed the importance of fully reporting crimes, intimidation and suspicious activity, if necessary through Crimestoppers, an entirely anonymous reporting channel. Attendees were also encouraged to sign up to Humberside's My Community Alert to receive real-time messages about incidents happening in their neighbourhood.

The offer made by CI Hussain - and fully supported by the PCC in the meeting - was to form a focus group to enable better lines of communication, and a route for the riding community to ensure that their concerns are being taken seriously and leading to a robust response.

Speaking after the meeting Jonathan Evison said:

“These engagements are always important because we haven’t got all the answers. There was a very, very passionate response from the people in the room, a lot of passion within the questions and a lot of information. I have a perception, and the participants in the discussion had a perception and it wasn’t the same, so we need to work out how we actually can come together on that. There were some good suggestions that came out from the floor and also from the panel and I think we can move on very positively from this.

If you want to know what the problem is, and also what the solutions are, you need to talk to the people who have the lived experience in these areas. I come from industry so the people you talk to are the people that are actually doing the jobs. In this scenario it’s the actual bikers, they know what the problem is, and often they know what the solutions are as well. Now, if those solutions are not palatable, because they are quite a robust group of individuals, we have to find a workaround or do something different, but a lot of them are common sense and we need to listen to that, and we need to implement that. And collectively, we’re going to form a group to be able to do that.”

Chief Inspector Hussain, speaking about the meeting said:

“Absolutely fantastic, you got a really good group of people, I think about 40 to 45 attended. We had a really honest conversation to understand the feeling of being a victim of crime. My view is you have got absolute commitment from Humberside Police. I have exchanged quite a few contacts already, we’re going to set up a focus group together, and we’re going to start really working together to build up the confidence again that we need to see.”

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## Motorcycling, who cares???

If you are reading this article, I would say that you do but does your MP do? And more importantly, Does their political party also do?

So with the Political Party Conference Season, which happens every September/October time. Let’s find out what they have been saying about motorcycling. I have done the research, so you don’t have to:

The Liberal Democrats were the first ones and their conference passed a Transport Policy Motion and motorcycles weren’t included at all.

Here’s the link:

<https://www.libdems.org.uk/conference/motions/autumn-2023/f27>

The Conservatives were next and so I asked my local MP, Mark Jenkinson “What will the Conservative Party be saying about motorbikes at this year’s conference?” He did quickly respond to my question by saying that he would inform me if anything was said. Mark Harper MP is the Transport Secretary and here’s the link to his conference speech. (It starts 22 minutes in).

<https://www.youtube.com/live/MzhJutmFv0c?si=aZxPUP6YMxr9gxFX>

The spoiler alert is that Mr Harper mentions the word motorbike once at 26 minutes and 30 seconds in as a type of transport for commuting to work.

The Labour Party was up next with Louise Haigh MP, Shadow Transport Secretary addressing conference.

No mention of motorcycling but did mention that they would keep the price of fuel down via the Competition and Markets Authority. Plus putting an end to rip off insurance prices.

Here’s a link to her speech:

It starts 6 hrs 46 mins and 30 seconds in.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/cbQWKf1pOdQ?si=aKucqRZaRy0HiHr->

And finally the last conference speech that I’m going to mention is Reform UK. They don’t have a transport spokesperson but they do have Howard Cox. A candidate for London’s Mayoral Election next year but he’s also the Co-founder of Fairfuel UK.

In Howard’s speech, he talks about how he would get London moving again with pro-motorcycling transport policies and here’s his speech:

<https://youtu.be/cBSO-mdf4XY?si=KL6ZZCp9uyB1wt00>

In conclusion, motorcycling isn’t a top priority for the political parties. So I have a couple of top tips for what you to do to help MAG get motorcycling further up the pecking order.

1. Follow your own local MP’s Facebook page. So when they post about transport, just ask them “What are their policies on motorcycling?”
2. Email them with template emails from MAG.

MAG has a current political campaign called Resurface Our Roads and so far we have lobbied 25 MP’s. So if we can all do a big push on sending the template email about additional road funding to your MP, we should be able to get motorcycling mentioned more within the Department of Transport.

The conference season is over but the London’s Mayoral Election is MAG’s next big target, then a General Election will follow shortly. Only lobbying en-masse and one-to-one engagement will have the desired effect needed by the MAG membership will make it happen and the Political Unit is here to assist.

Michael Armstrong  
National Political Officer.

Link to the Resurface Our Roads campaign:

[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=252701324134860&id=100081849821934](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=252701324134860&id=100081849821934)

#bikersarevoters

Michael Armstrong  
MAG National Political Officer.

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# Who cares? Wirral MAG, that's who!

Wirral Borough Council (WBC) announced that they would like to bring in a 'blanket' 20 MPH speed limit for the whole of the Wirral peninsula excluding 40 MPH roads and above.

Michael Armstrong, National Political Officer reports on how Wirral MAG are opposing Wirral Borough Council.

WBC first started with a consultation back in early summer and the Wirral peninsula has approximately 244,00 residents in the area. 946 people responded with two-thirds of the respondents lobbying an objection. So then WBC carried on without pausing for thought and so, the people then raised a petition which had over 5000 signatures on it.

After that, a few members of Wirral MAG arranged a meeting with WBC and met up with the portfolio holder for the roads. On the day of the meeting, that Councillor handed in their resignation in the morning and so a Cllr Richie Pitt stood in. The meeting was amicable but the WBC stance on having a widespread 20 MPH speed limit was on the grounds of safety. Which now brings us up to the present date and on the 9th of October when the WBC were in session at the town hall. Wirral MAG with the support of Empress MCC, Triumph Owners Club and TR3 Owners Club (about 40 bikes in total). Rode up outside the town hall and revved their engines in protest.

This protest caught the attention of the Liverpool Echo and the Wirral Globe and here's the link to the Globe's article:

[https://www.wirralglobe.co.uk/news/23846886.wirral-council-will-not-pause-roll-20mph-zones-despite-protests/?fbclid=IwAR2h73kPQ\\_qu0DexC49iz\\_14pYx0d2j5PacGD64sgKBT-DVR5SSStJitC8s#comments-anchor](https://www.wirralglobe.co.uk/news/23846886.wirral-council-will-not-pause-roll-20mph-zones-despite-protests/?fbclid=IwAR2h73kPQ_qu0DexC49iz_14pYx0d2j5PacGD64sgKBT-DVR5SSStJitC8s#comments-anchor)

MAG isn't against a 20 MPH speed limit but there it must have a sound justification for it and it must have an open and transparent consultation with the local residents and affected parties.

And, so the battle continues, and we will update you as we progress.



At the starting point.



On the barricades.



## Riding Schools Initiative

Yorkshire MAG are trialling a new rider recruitment initiative with participating riding schools. New riders will be offered a 50% discount (for one year only) for a MAG membership upon a test pass (CBT or A/A1/A2) – A 'Welcome to the world of motorcycling with MAG'. They will receive the digital version of the Open Road magazine as part of this deal, although they can upgrade to the printed magazine if they contribute the other 50% of the membership fee should they so wish. The training schools would either fund this themselves (via a modest hike in the training cost), or it's paid for by the fledgling rider themselves.

Selected training schools only will be targeted with this initiative - these will be those who have a very enthusiastic MAG member trainer who will be prepared to actively push this deal to prospective members. This is to avoid the stack of flyers in the corner of the office actively gathering dust because no one is pushing it.

Participating training schools will receive lots of publicity and promotion through Social Media and MAG websites. MAG will also provide guidance to new riders on these platforms as the licencing process isn't particularly straightforward and it is a bit of a minefield if you are new to biking and don't know who to ask. Learn to ride with these MAG supporting training schools, 'Welcome to the world of motorcycling with MAG', with 50% off your first year of MAG membership, which brings all these membership benefits and discounts .....

This initiative is the brainchild of York MAG Rep, Richard Suddaby. He's contacted three local bike schools who have all agreed to participate. In fact, one of those immediately offered a 10% discount for MAG members on their training courses and another already offers a discount for members.



Richard recently attended a York University Motorcycle Society meeting where this new rider scheme was outlined. The members, who were all either new licence holders or going through training, all said they would definitely join MAG at the new rider discount of 50% / £15. There certainly does seem to be enthusiasm from riding schools and new riders to adopt this new rider MAG membership initiative.

### **Request for help**

Richard is looking for details of riding schools throughout the region, so we can contact them and hopefully secure their participation in the scheme – if you are on friendly terms with your local riding school, please mention it to them and pass the response onto Richard, or, send Richard the contact details of the riding school and we will contact them directly.

Richard's email address is: [rsuddaby@mag-uk.org](mailto:rsuddaby@mag-uk.org)

Details of four riding schools in East Yorkshire have already been passed to Richard but we need lots more. The '*what's in it for them*' is all the publicity and promotion they will receive for participating in this scheme, which to a small business is absolutely invaluable.

If you could please take the time to help out with this initiative it would be greatly appreciated! Many Thanks.

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## **“We have to bring the ongoing deterioration of our local roads to an end”**

**Road Safety GB: 23 October 2023**



**Anger with the poor state of Britain's local roads has reached a record high, with half of drivers (49%) surveyed by the RAC listing it as a top motoring concern.**

As part of its annual report on motoring, the RAC first started asking drivers for their views on the condition and maintenance of local roads in 2015. The previous high – 46% – was recorded in 2021.

The RAC study also reveals that two-thirds of drivers (67%) say that the condition of the local roads they regularly drive on has deteriorated in the past 12 months, up from 60% in the 2022 report, making for the biggest increase since 2017.

This year only 4% think local road conditions have improved over the last 12 months.

While problems with road surfaces are overwhelmingly to blame (cited by 97% of drivers), there are several other factors contributing to this decline, including faded road markings (61%), litter (35%) and poor signage visibility (34%).

The state of roads has also led to most drivers having to take sudden, evasive action, with a third (35%) reporting they have been forced to swerve quickly to avoid

a pothole and ended up completely crossing into another lane or going on to the other side of the road.

Seven in 10 (69%) say they have been forced to slow sharply to drive over a pothole and 37% have tried to maintain a greater distance from the car in front to give themselves more time to react to road-surface problems.

Simon Williams, RAC head of policy, said: “Many drivers will be wondering why so many potholes appeared on the country’s local roads in the absence of a particularly cold winter.

“Sadly, a long-term lack of funding for maintenance and repair work means our roads are in a such a fragile state that it only takes a little rainwater getting into existing flaws followed by some sub-zero temperatures for them to break down further.

“We have to bring the ongoing deterioration of our local roads to an end by giving councils the certainty of funding they need to be able to plan proper maintenance programmes which include resurfacing roads that have gone beyond point where they can be patched up.”

The RAC is calling on the Government to ringfence 2p from every litre of existing fuel revenues over a five-year period, a move it says “will give councils the funds they need to be able to plan proper maintenance programmes”.

Mr Williams added: “It is plain wrong that drivers who contribute billions in tax every year have to put up with roads that are so far from being fit for purpose.”

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# FEMA

## Do lower speeds lead to less noise?

FEMA News: October 4, 2023





Emotions seem to play a bigger role than science in the discussions surrounding noise emissions from cars and motorcycles, as Thomas Makropoulos from the Danish motorcyclists' organisation [DMC](#) explains.

Due to the noise emissions accompanying cars and motorcycles, we motorcyclists are suffering from discrimination all over Europe. In Germany, motorcyclists are prohibited access to several roads, and some roads have lower speed limits for motorcycles only. In Tyrol, Austria, motorcycles with a standstill noise above 95 dBA, despite being legal, are not allowed to drive on a number of major roads. In parts of Spain's Natural Park of the High Pyrenees, motorcycles with internal combustion engines are banned for noise protection reasons.



Not all roads have restrictions for motorcycles only. Some European roads have reduced speed limits affecting all vehicles, for the single purpose of noise reduction. One such road is the highway 'Holbækmotorvejen', passing through the outskirts of the Danish capital

Copenhagen. Nearby residents complained about noise from the highway. Politicians listened to their complaints, and reduced the speed limit from 110 km/h to 80 km/h.

As reported by Danish news media [TV2 Kosmopol](#), it has come as a surprise to residents, that the change in speed has caused almost no change in perceived noise level, around the resident's homes. Measurements with a sound level meter support resident's perception, as the noise has only been reduced by between 0,5 and 1,8 dBA. And it's barely audible, says chief consultant at the Danish Road Directorate, Jakob Fryd: "That's what we would call 'marginal'. It means relatively much to reduce speed, but relatively big changes are needed, before anything happens in relation to the level experienced."

Despite the minimal changes the mayor of Hvidovre Municipality is adamant that a speed change is the fastest solution to the problem. And the cheapest, he adds in an interview with TV2 Kosmopol, "Because if you lower the speed to 80, it will cause a change in noise if you make sure that people do not drive faster than 80". When the reporter asked: "But isn't the problem really that people don't obey the speed rules?", the mayor answered: "Yeah. But we would still like to lower the speed to 80". Twelve mayors of municipalities surrounding the capital have joined forces and have written a letter to a number of ministers with the desire to lower the speed on the motorways around Copenhagen from 110 kilometres per hour to 80 kilometres per hour. At the same time, the mayors want the surrounding roads to have a speed limit of 50 kilometres per hour instead of 80 kilometres per hour.



DMC's Thomas Makropoulos.

We at DMC have no crystal ball to predict the future, so we cannot say if the speed limit will be lowered even further. Time will tell. Despite the microscopic change in noise level measured and experienced, no politician has yet taken steps to revert the speed limit to the old value. That's why we motorcyclists should do everything we can, to prevent implementation of bans and speed reductions, in the first place. Well, unless there is a proven and sensible reason to implement the ban, which is seldom the case. Asked about the effects of such bans after implementation, residents often say something like: 'It felt good when politicians finally listened to our noise complaints, so I feel like things are better now'.

So, what can we do, to prevent further noise related bans? We can all help. And we all have to, as focus on traffic noise has never been more pronounced. First of all, think about what noise your driving style produces. Secondly, we should all speak up, when we hear family, neighbours or friends mention a wish for bans, or reduction of speed limits. Many people feel like bans and speed reductions are the solution to traffic noise, without knowing what the actual outcome will be. If we do not all speak up, and make people aware, some politicians might smell votes, and thus disregard science and experience from other bans, and continue to implement new bans.

Written by [Thomas Makropoulos](#) (DMC). Top photograph courtesy of Boosted Magazine

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## Norwegian motorcyclists left in the cold

FEMA News: October 11, 2023



The Norwegian government has allocated money to a number of road safety projects, but motorcyclists are completely ignored. Motorcyclists' organisation NMCU is not amused...

In the state budget for 2024, the government ignores road safety work for motorcyclists again. [NMCU](#) – a member of FEMA – applied for funds to continue to carry out road safety work for motorcyclists, in line with the decisions of the National Transport Plan for which NMCU has been given responsibility. However, NMCU did not receive any funds, which it is very disappointed and surprised by.



“How are we to achieve results without effort? If the government should be in doubt, it is limited how much can be achieved without funds. Over several years, NMCU has had a close dialogue with the authorities?”, says Ole Jørgen Dønnestad of NMCU's central board. [“The National Transport Plan 2022-2030](#) deals with road safety, where

motorcyclists are also highlighted as a highly accident-prone group that must be worked on specifically. It is very regrettable that the government deliberately fails to include NMCU in the state budget so that we would have had the opportunity to strengthen our intensive work for safer traffic conditions for motorcyclists in the country. In the [National action plan for traffic safety on the road 2022–2025](#), NMCU alone or together with other actors is responsible for 7 of the measures mentioned. This is more than any of the other road safety organisations.”

How the grants for 2024 are divided:

- 65.8 million NOK (€5,743,993) for [Safe Traffic](#)
- 4.5 million NOK (€392,826) to the [Cyclists' National Association](#)
- 2.6 million NOK (€226,966) to ITS Norway–0.6 million DKK for the [Transport Economics Institute Traffic Safety Handbook](#)
- 2.3 million NOK (€200,777) to [Young in traffic – No friends to lose](#)
- 5.0 million NOK (€436,473 ) for the grant scheme for traffic safety measures
- 1.0 million NOK (€87,294) for the Traffic Safety Municipality of the Year award.

“If you spend your entire budget on measures that do not target motorcyclists, and without allocating funds to the group that has the best expertise in motorcycling, and then complain that motorcyclists are not getting better, then it is something that is jarring, says Ole Jørgen Dønnestad of NMCU's central board, “Road safety for motorcyclists should be included in the state budget.”

*Written by Wim Taal. Source: [NMCU](#). Top photograph courtesy of Dominique Faymonville*

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## European driving licence proposals under fire

FEMA News: October 12, 2023



With almost 800 amendments, the proposed new European driving licence directive is turning into a bit of a nightmare. Future motorcyclists will probably face a tough time when they want to get their licence.

On the 1st of March 2023, the European Commission published the long-awaited proposal for a Fourth Driving Licence Directive (4DLD). It did not differ too much from the previous one. Some main changes were the introduction of a digital driving licence, a probation period of at least two years for novice drivers, and a zero-tolerance rule on drink-driving. Allowing young people to take their test and commence accompanied driving of cars and lorries from the age of 17, adapting driver training and testing to better prepare drivers for the presence of vulnerable users on the road, and a more targeted assessment of medical fitness.

Perhaps more important for us is what was not in the proposal: nothing about trailers behind motorcycles which from the point of view from the European Commission is still illegal, nothing about riding a small motorcycle with a B licence and additional training, nothing about abolition of a useless stepped accession to the A licence. We communicated our support for the proposed 4DLD and our disappointment about the missing elements to the European Commission and to the European Parliament Committee for Tourism and Transport (TRAN).

See also our [article](#) on the FEMA website about this.

**Direct access to full A motorcycle licence at 24? Forget it, that will no longer be possible, if it is up to Karima Delli.**





Rapporteur Karima Delli MEP member of the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance (photo: European Parliament).

So far, there is nothing special about this. But here it comes. The transport committee (TRAN) appoints its chair, the French Green MEP Karima Delli as rapporteur on this topic. On 28 July 2023, she publishes her [report](#), that

consists of 198 amendments and an explanatory statement. A remarkable detail is that the report is only published in Bulgarian, later followed by Hungarian, Maltese and Gaelic. The English (and other) translation follows only early September, a few days before the report was debated in TRAN. The 198 amendments are mostly harmless, but many of them propose restrictions. All in the name of road safety, as Delli later said in the transport committee.

The most important are: no accompanied driving (the Commission had proposed accompanied driving from 17 years for holders of a B licence), no possibility for member states to set a lower age than the EU standards on which someone can get a driving licence. E.g., in France, a person can get an AM licence at 14 years, that would no longer be possible. In many EU countries the minimum age for A1 is 16 years: in the proposal from Delli that would be 18 years in the whole EU. The different stages for A and a probation period for B would also come with different maximum speeds: when you have an A1 licence, are would not be allowed to ride faster than 90 km/h, with A2 that would be 100 km/h and with full A you would never be allowed to ride faster than 110 km/h.

By the way: direct access to full A at 24? Forget it, that would no longer be possible. That would also be the maximum speed of holders of a B licence. Which brings us to another new element: the B+ licence for cars above 1800 kilograms. A new licence, especially for the SUVs that so much hated by the Greens. Only holders of a normal B licence that have at least two-year experience and are at least 21 years of age can apply for this driving licence. Once in possession of it, they are not only allowed to drive a car that weights more than 1800 kg, but are also allowed to drive 130 km/h. Where this is allowed by the national highway code, of course.

Another important change is the introduction of a maximum administrative validity of a driving licence (A or B) of 10 years (Commission proposal: 15 years) for drivers and riders under 60 years. This is to be combined with a mandatory medical check on physical and mental state when applying for the first time for a driving licence and after that with every renewal. When you are over 60 years of age, you will have to renew your driving licence and undergo a medical check every 7 years, with 70 years of age every 5 years and when you are over 80, you must renew your driving licence and have a medical check every two years.

Again, this is only in the proposal of Ms Delli, not in that of the European Commission. Finally, she wants road safety lessons in schools, during which the pupils are encouraged to use 'active' ways of transportation instead of motorized ways of transport. Of course, there is much more to write about this draft report, but these are, for us, the main items. It goes without saying, that we at FEMA have reacted immediately and have rejected the proposals.

After the Rapporteur, the turn was to the other Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) of TRAN. They came with another 595 amendments. I will not tire you with the content of all those. Generally speaking, there are those (especially the Greens, Left and Social Democrats), who follow the line of Delli, that road safety (and perhaps a hardly hidden green agenda?) needs more restrictions, higher ages for new drivers, three year probation period for new drivers, more enforcement, a European system of penalty points, more control and lower and different speed limits for holders of different driving licences.

On the other hand, there are those who do not think that we need more restrictions or lower ages for new drivers and riders, or a special driving license for SUVs, or different speed limits, or shorter administrative validities for licences or mandatory medical checks every ten years. They more or less support the proposal from the Commission with some small adjustments. Some of them have even taken note of the opinion we sent earlier this year and incorporated them in their own amendments. Those MEPs are mostly from the liberals, EPP and from some right-wing parties.

### **Lawmakers file almost 800 amendments to the proposal for a new driving licence directive.**

The rapporteur and shadow-rapporteurs must now streamline all 793 amendments in just a few and bring them together in 'compromise amendments' on which first TRAN and later the plenary parliament can vote. The voting in TRAN is scheduled on 7 December 2023. Separate from the European Parliament, the EU member states are discussing the Commission proposal too in the Council. They will later vote upon the proposal from the Parliament and come with their own amendments.

It goes too far to explain the whole process here, but the draft new Driving Licence Directive and the amendments will be discussed several times in the parliament and the Council, and finally Commission, Parliament and Council will try to find an agreement in one or more 'trilogues'. The last hasn't been said about the new directive yet and much can change before the new directive is finally adopted. Of course, FEMA will fight until that end to get the best out of it for current and new riders.

*Written by Dolf Willigers. Top photograph courtesy of Intermot.*

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## WEBSITES AND ON-LINE CONTENT YOU MAY WISH TO VIEW.

<https://www.petrolprices.com/news/number-of-people-wanting-to-buy-an-ev/>

[Major recall issued on hundreds of electric cars over fears batteries could explode \(msn.com\)](#)

It is NOT just about the 20mph limit - watch it right to the end.) :-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPRYOVzu06A>

[September Powered Two-Wheeler Registration Statistics | MCIA](#)

An electric car takes 'self-driving' a bit too far. :-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tm3gvN3oSrM>

It just keeps on getting better! :-

['I was kidnapped by my runaway electric car' - BBC News](#)

Here's what a REAL climate scientist says:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0PQ1cOICJI>

Not sure if this might work in a motorcycle but it illustrates how big players like Toyota are not totally sold on BEVs. Note they stress the joy of the engine sounding like a traditional one:- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTawvzH0MQ4>

I'm an expert EV mechanic - there's an elephant in the room with electric cars and no one is talking about it:- <https://www.thesun.co.uk/motors/24277075/expert-ev-mechanic-elephant-room/>

RAC: Prime Minister Rishi Sunak could limit use of 20mph speed zones in England

<https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/news/motoring-news/prime-minister-sunak-could-ban-20mph-limits-to-help-gain-voters/>

News story: Government launches plan to put drivers back in the driving seat

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-plan-to-put-drivers-back-in-the-driving-seat>

AQN: LTNs and 15-minute cities in the sights of the Government's 'Plan for Drivers'

<https://airqualitynews.com/cars-freight-transport/ltns-and-15-minute-cities-in-the-sights-of-the-governments-plan-for-drivers/>

Guidance: Rights of Way order information: Decisions and maps published in 2023 (Last updated: 3 October 2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rights-of-way-order-information-decisions-and-maps-published-in-2023>

AQN: Active travel groups express concern over the Government's Plan for Drivers

<https://airqualitynews.com/headlines/active-travel-groups-express-concern-over-the-governments-plan-for-drivers/>

RSGB: Plan ensures drivers "have the freedom to travel how they want"

<https://roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/plan-ensures-drivers-have-the-freedom-to-travel-how-they-want/>

AQN: Stockholm to ban all petrol and diesel cars from city centre

<https://airqualitynews.com/headlines/stockholm-to-ban-all-petrol-and-diesel-cars-from-city-centre/>

ABD: ABD Launches GoFundMe Campaign To Ensure Motorists Are Heard in Run-Up to Next General Election

<https://abd.org.uk/abd-launches-gofundme-campaign-to-ensure-motorists-are-heard-in-run-up-to-next-general-election/>

Guidance: Motorcycles that can be used for motorcycle riding tests (Last updated: 12 October 2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-motorcycles-that-can-be-used-for-riding-tests>

RSGB: Campaign outlines need for significant reform of motorcycle licencing

<https://roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/campaign-outlines-need-for-significant-reform-of-motorcycle-licencing/>

ROADPOL: Self-driving Cars To Remain Exotic Until 2035

<https://www.roadpol.eu/index.php/self-driving-cars-exotic-until-2035>

RAC: Drivers' anger at condition of Britain's roads reaches record levels

<https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/news/motoring-news/drivers-anger-at-condition-of-britains-roads-reaches-record-levels/>

EU: Right to repair: incentives for consumers to repair rather than replace

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20231023IPR08160/right-to-repair-incentives-for-consumers-to-repair-rather-than-replace>

[Electric Bicycles Legally Not Motorcycles, Says EU Court Of Justice \(msn.com\)](#)

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# MAG Notice Board

Next

Network deadline

25th November

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OPEN ROAD deadline

15th November



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NEC

Birmingham

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