



# JANUARY 2024

## NETWORK

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

<b>Editorial</b>	<b>1-3</b>
<b>Campaigns Report – Colin Brown &amp; Lembit Opik</b>	<b>3-6</b>
<b>MAG Press Releases:- MAG focusses on 2024. MAG takes stock of 2023. End Whitby motorcycle discrimination in season of goodwill (+ successful update)</b>	<b>7-9</b>
<b>MAG WhatsApp</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Major new fuels will allow drivers (riders) to enjoy combustion engine cars (motorcycles) for years to come.</b>	<b>10-12</b>
<b>Emission controls will start to bite</b>	<b>12-13</b>
<b>China weaponises net zero</b>	<b>13-14</b>
<b>Recovery operators government guidelines on working with electric vehicles</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>FEMA – Swedish riders: Why do we still have wire barriers despite obvious risks to motorcyclists? Call to action: let's stop road bans for motorcycles together. Motorcyclists present their road safety wish list.</b>	<b>14-20</b>
<b>MAG Notice Board</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>ETSC: MEPs vote on driving licence changes with devastating consequences for road safety</b>	<b>22-23</b>
<b>November powered two wheeler registration stats</b>	<b>23-24</b>
<b>From The House</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Websites and online material you may wish to visit</b>	<b>24-25</b>
<b>Contacts</b>	<b>25-27</b>

**[Acknowledgments:- George Legg. Lembit Opik. Colin Brown. Michael Armstrong. Julie Sperling. The Guardian. FEMA. MCIA. And anyone else I've forgotten]**

### EDITORIAL

First things first. Wishing you all a happy, healthy, peaceful and fun biking year.

Secondly, what can I find to rant about this month.

No sooner do I mention the word 'rant' and something appears via a news channel that requires addressing – the pipe dream that we will be forced into EVs and that the infrastructure will be there.

Apparently not:- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-67858961> \*\*\*. Well, what a surprise! But not so to those of us who witness at our local petrol station which has 3 charging points delivery vans hooked up with the drivers standing around twiddling their thumbs waiting for their vehicle to charge up. I've often wondered just how much revenue is being lost by companies whilst this happens.

Back in 2020/21 MAG predicted exactly that this would be the case. The Government has fallen way behind its target for electric charging which, if it was fulfilled, would cost billions of public money. Not to mention our grid can, in no way, cope with the extra production of electricity to power up these millions of vehicles whilst still keeping our homes, workplaces and factories warm and functioning. And who will suffer for this totally rushed idiocy? All of us who don't have millions in the bank.

Don't get me wrong – I'm not against EVs. What I am against is this totally misguided and ludicrous suggestion that EVs are the whole answer so let's rush it in. They most assuredly are not. What the future is a mix – clean fuels, hydrogen, electric, bio fuels. And, its science that will give us these choices.

Science is a wonderful thing if it is given the resources to do its research. In 2020 we had a pandemic which was killing lots of people. Science, given the resources, provided us with vaccines within 6 months. Anyway, I digress – back to the matter in hand – but 'resources' is the key word here.

\*\*\* ***The following words from Lembit:-*** "Note that this only specifies six charging points per motorway service station. The Govt has dishonestly claimed over half of this target has been met. This is simple untrue.

Also, imagine if they DID achieve their six per service station target. It hardly counts as sufficient, given that they expect all of us to use EVs. A typical petrol station serves 150-200 cars per day on average:

<https://www.pistonheads.com/gassing/topic.asp?h=0&f=23&t=1738348>

So, with six charging points, and assuming you only need an hour per car per charging point, the maximum with six charging points in a 24-hour period MIGHT SEEM LIKE 144 EVs per day – way short of the requirement on a motorway. However, even this ignores the fact that most custom is restricted to busy periods, often assumed to total around six hours. In this case, the charging provision is utterly inadequate.

In addition, there is no plan whatever to supply the necessary extra power in the grid to supply the many extra gigawatts required to do the charging.

MAG was right to highlight the issue of infrastructure failures for EVs. My next prediction is that this will only manifest itself in the public consciousness when people wait in queues for hours to recharge when on their journeys. An obvious scenario is when they are all held up in an accident on a very cold day, and thousands of EVs all show up desperately short of power at a service station. Anybody who's got an EV knows the major effect cold weather plus using a heater has on range.

CONCLUSION: there is no way the EV infrastructure will be ready in time to supply the target set by Labour (new EV only sales by 2030)."

And, from Michael Armstrong:- “My view is this:

Seeing is believing! Look at the petrol pumps and the electric chargers:

Are they working or not? How many are there? Can you re-fuel or re-charge straight away?

How long does it take to re-fuel or re-charge?

Now with asking those questions, the big question is:

How does this affect my journey? Does the Government need to do more? And what am I doing about it? Am I lobbying my MP or just hoping for the best?”

So, people, much food for thought. I’ve thought since this was first muted that we’re being conned and I stand by that. That pandemic gave hitherto democratic governments the opportunity they’d been waiting for – that, through fear, they could control us and that is exactly what is happening – if we let it. We mustn’t let it.

On that note get ready to spring into action for lobbying/contacting prospective MPs because there is going to be a General Election. Don’t know how you feel but I want a mob in there who at least has an inkling of what real people want, a Govt that is not corrupt, a Govt that is not dictatorial but listens to constituents and acts accordingly, a Govt that is honest ..... I could go on but blar de blar and, a girl can dream, but, if I continued what would I have to rant about in future issues?

Ride free, AG.

***Please submit copy for your February edition to [aine@mag-uk.org](mailto:aine@mag-uk.org) with subject heading :- Network by 25<sup>th</sup> of January***

## **CAMPAIGNS REPORT – COLIN BROWN AND LEMBIT OPIK**

**As another year comes to an end, the Motorcycle Action Group’s Political Unit, Lembit Öpik, Colin Brown and Michael Armstrong, reflect on a year of challenges that will define their work in 2024.**

### **2023 – battlegrounds, shifting loyalties and steady as MAG goes**

Throughout 2023, MAG has maintained consistent policy positions and a desire to build our alliance with fellow travellers, at a time when others in the motorcycle world have seemed to falter in their commitment to riders and even in their willingness to stand up to the threats we face.

“If I were to describe 2023 in a single sentence,” says MAG’s Director of Communications and Public Affairs, Lembit Öpik, “I’d say this: MAG is on message, and still on-course, when many others have lost control of their strategy and smashed themselves into the Armco barriers.” That’s why, in this Network, we’ve decided to review what’s been good, bad and ugly about 2023, and the implications for the year ahead.

## **MAG stands at the centre of the fight against the petrol motorbike ban.**

Reflecting the status of the Motorcycle Action Group in defending riders' rights, we can say with confidence that, despite invitations to cave into the temptation to go along with the Government's claimed desire to ban the sale of new petrol engine motorbikes by 2035, we stand firm against this act of authoritarian vandalism against the motorcycle community.

Others in the motorcycle community, including voices from within the industry representative body itself, appear to have raised the white flag and simply given into the pressure from Ministers and green campaigners to abandon our right to buy new internal combustion engine (ICE) bikes. By contrast, MAG's Political Unit has taken every opportunity it can to speak out against the ban threat. Others in the manufacturing side have agreed with us. However, they don't seem to be supported by the Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA), which seems to have accepted a lot of the agenda being forced upon them by the Government.

"It's unnerving to see the extent to which there's a rift between the direct comments by major manufacturers and the MCIA's PLV Action Plan," observes Colin Brown. "Manufacturers say an electric-only future is not their long-term vision, there are many routes to carbon neutrality. They all seem to be exploring alternative internal combustion routes for anything other than small bikes, yet the MCIA plan is to work with Government to achieve an electric-only policy delivery. We therefore find ourselves in the position of looking more representative of bike makers than does the MCIA in opposing the phase out of internal combustion engines."

## **ZEV policy hypocrisy**

In the autumn, MAG was heartened to see a statement from the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, when he appeared to be delaying the implementation of aspects of the aforementioned ban on petrol vehicles. However, the Government went on to contradict itself by introducing a policy that increasingly taxes the sale petrol and diesel vehicles. This is called the Zero Emission Vehicle Mandate (ZEV). That means that, whatever Sunak says, makers will be fined for exceeding declining quotas of ICE machine sales in the future. These fines will naturally be passed on to the consumers buying ICE vehicles in an attempt to further dissuade us from buying the bikes that actually suit our needs.

The ZEV Mandate is a stunning contradiction to the rhetoric- it makes the worthy intentions of the Prime Minister meaningless, given the costs of continuing to petrol and diesel machines. Claims that the delay to 2035 is to align UK policy with what is happening in Europe do not ring true without an EU-style window for alternative fuel technologies.

MAG will be doing all it can to highlight this issue in the year ahead. The public have the right to see the dissonance between what's been promised and what's being done. As things stand, it's clear that there's no aspect of the policy that stands up to scrutiny, if taxation continues to force makers towards the calamitous road towards electrification.

## **New allies for a louder voice**

Transport Reality, the overarching body through which MAG works with like-minded bodies and individuals, has met a number of times in 2023. As it grows, new groups have been invited and have agreed to support us. We've even reached out to three groups in the aviation industry, to seek common ground and a sensible, economically sustainable approach to the future of personal and mass transport.

Looking ahead to 2024, we will continue to widen our membership even further, with anticipated links to the marine sector too. What unites all in Transport Reality is opposition to arbitrary and illogical attempts to force mass shifts to electric power, when this does nothing to even achieve the idealistic – though scientifically illiterate – ambitions of those who seem unaware of the implications of their obsession with abolishing petrol and diesel vehicles in favour of electric power alone.

### **Europe cools on net zero**

While the UK has wrestled with its position on getting to zero carbon dioxide emissions, other European countries have gone into full reverse. Germany has embraced a policy to reopen of coal fired power generation, as others have also watered down their green energy agendas.

This could lead the UK to be the last man standing with its absolutist interest in banning us from riding petrol motorbikes (and other ICE vehicles). In 2024, that is likely to cause a kind of political reflux that will prompt UK citizens to refuse to tolerate the decline and fall of their way of life and standard of living for the sake of reducing CO2. As we reported, the net zero agenda is foundering, not because of high science but because it's undeliverable on cost and any credibly defined timescale.

Looking ahead to 2024, Lembit Öpik and Colin Brown will continue to respond to relevant consultations, and to be the voice of reason in meetings. We will also make this an electoral issue in 2024.

### **General Election prediction – Operation Earthquake**

MAG's Director of Communications and Public Affairs, Lembit Öpik, predicts that the next UK General Election will take place in October 2024. "That's the most likely date," says Lembit, "since leaving it later than that will make them look desperate, and holding it earlier won't give the Conservatives enough time to turn their poll rating around. So October is the date we're working towards."

Enter Operation Earthquake – our commitment to make the threat to our petrol motorbikes into a major election issue. Michael Armstrong has done superb work in this regard. He's reached out to dozens of MPs already, and is keeping up the pressure. "Michael is a live wire, and he's been vital to our initiative to get politicians to understand that they won't get away with ignoring our demand for opposition to the petrol vehicle ban."

Other issues matter too – including opposing road space restrictions, supporting access to bus lanes; as well as opposing speed limiters and large capacity motorbikes (one party has threatened to introduce these).

MAG will update and supply an election pack in advance of the general election. We'll also look to create election materials for the Mayoral elections for London and the six existing combined authority mayors (Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, South Yorkshire, Tees Valley, West Midlands and West Yorkshire) and three new combined authority mayors (East Midlands, North East and North Yorkshire). Add to that election materials for all the Police and Crime Commissioners in England and Wales, and we have a busy schedule for 2024.

### **London Mayor's ULEZ disgrace**

Mayor Sadiq Khan, who hasn't kept any of his promises to motorcyclists since being elected, used 2023 to extend the hated Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ), even though it has had no demonstrable positive effect on human health. Bikers caught in the crossfire found their older motorcycles because uneconomic overnight due to the new ULEZ tax. As a result, Khan caused his party to lose a by-election as a result of his loathed policy. It remains to be seen what effect this has in the mayoral election in May 2024. MAG will ensure all of the candidates are challenged about their position on ULEZ.

### **The big stuff ahead**

In summary, 2024 will be characterised by the looming General Election, political posturing over the threatened ICE ban and work to ensure progress on the key areas of focus including road space access, motorbike crime reduction and a possible realignment of riders and the motorcycle manufacturers to work close together, with other organisations that share our common agenda. One thing's for sure: the hunger of politicians to be re-elected will play a centre stage part in the events of 2024, and that provides us with a great opportunity to exert influence in a volatile political environment.

### **Thanks to you**

The Political Unit thanks you for your sterling efforts in keeping MAG's campaigns moving forwards, and raising our profile across the UK. What we do isn't easy, but it's necessary. The more action we cause, the greater the effect. 2024 is our best chance yet to really influence national politicians, and defend our right to ride what we want, without the overbearing interference of politicians who work for us, not the other way round.

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## **MAG PRESS RELEASES**

### ***News from the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG)***

## **MAG focusses on 2024 (2/1/24)**

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the UK's leading voice for riders' rights, prepares for another busy year defending motorcycling.

MAG will continue to robustly defend riders' rights and to ensure that motorcyclists influence local and national government policies in the year ahead.

Looking forward to 2024, MAG's Chairman, Neil Liversidge, said:

"In 2023 MAG celebrated its 50th Anniversary by working harder than ever for motorcyclists and motorcycling. Our aim is to top that in 2024, a year which will see a General Election being fought between parties whose policies will make most people much poorer through their hostility to practical personal transport.

Our Operation Earthquake is ramping up. Climate change is being used as an excuse to exterminate motorcycling as we know it, for no real benefit to anyone and certainly not the environment. We shall never accept the death sentence that all the main parties have passed on our way of life. In 2024 we aim to create a political earthquake. We want electors to vote against all anti-motorist candidates.

Our professional full-time political team will continue to engage with policymakers. Supporting them, our thousands of volunteers will alert the electorate to what the realities of mistaken and so-called 'green' policies will mean to them. I also thank every one of our volunteer workers. Without their expertise, dedication, and enthusiasm, we would not be the hugely effective organisation that we are."

MAG invites riders, dealers, mechanics, racers and manufacturers to join MAG in what is now an existential fight for the survival of motorcycling as we know and love it.

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

## **MAG takes stock of 2023 (21/12)**

***The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the UK's leading voice for riders' rights, reflects on the past year and looks forward to another year of positive outcomes for motorcyclists.***

As 2023 draws to a close, MAG can report significant progress throughout the year, and will shortly be gearing up for another year of action and engagement.

Summing up the past year, MAG's Chair, Neil Liversidge, said:

"As it does every year, MAG has campaigned up and down the country on behalf of its members and the wider motorcycling community. Wherever it sees discrimination against riders, it is challenged. Where bikers are ignored – for example by omission from Transport Plans – MAG engages with the decision-makers to ensure that there is inclusion.

Last year we launched 'Operation Earthquake', and I am happy to report that this initiative has been steadily gathering momentum with significant political engagement.

MAG continues to promote motorcycling as part of the solution when it comes to reducing our impact on the planet. It is a simple and immediate contribution that should – but often isn't – sufficiently encouraged.

Our Political Unit has worked hard on these and many other campaigns, and I am immensely grateful for their hard work, as I am for the tireless efforts of our volunteers, without whom we could not succeed.

MAG has also celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of championing riders' rights, which is a testament to the enthusiasm and tenacity of its members and supporters."

After a short break over the festive season, MAG will be campaigning with renewed vigour to ensure that motorcycling and motorcyclists continue to be taken seriously in respect to their needs.

MAG's Central Office will close at noon on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2023 and reopen on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024.

## **End Whitby motorcycle discrimination in the season of good will.**

**(14/12)**

**The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) are calling for an end to discrimination against motorcycles at Whitby railway station. In an open letter to the Chair of DfT OLR Holdings Ltd, the Government body running Northern Rail, MAG's Chair, Neil Liversidge, has demanded an urgent reversal of policy.**

Anger remains high over the recent move to ban motorcycle parking at Whitby station. Northern Rail remain silent beyond template responses to calls for engagement.

Whitby station is operated by Northern Rail, a franchise taken into public control by the then Transport Minister, Grant Shapps.



DfT OLR Holdings (DOHL) is the holding company established by the Department for Transport to act as operator of last resort for rail franchises that are nationalised. MAG Chair, Neil Liversidge, has written an open letter to DOHL Chair, Richard George, demanding urgent action:

“to ensure that the decision to ban motorcycles from parking at Whitby station is reversed immediately, and commit to working with the Motorcycle Action Group to establish how the facilities at, not just Whitby but all, Northern operated stations can be improved for the benefit of those choosing to travel to those stations by motorcycle.”

In the letter, Neil refers to a near decade old publication by the Association of Train Operating Companies entitled ‘Motorcycle Parking at Rail Stations Guide’. This publication explains:

“Although it is hard to place a financial value on encouraging the use of motorcycles in combination with rail journeys, when building a business case for providing motorcycle parking this should be seen as an essential part of managing parking demand and customer-facing service provision.”

The open letter, copied to the current Minister of State, Mark Harper, states:

“There are no dedicated motorcycle bays at the car park, tariffs do not state a rate for motorcycles and, until the introduction of the Ringo payment system, did not apply outside the hours 6am – 6pm. It is hard to see any genuine justification for this heavy-handed action other than discrimination due to intolerance and disinterest in the needs of certain customers.”

Neil pointed to promises made by Richard George in 2020 to “transform services across Northern’s network, putting the needs of passengers first.” Neil wrote:

“You appear to have failed in delivering anything other than discrimination towards motorcyclists who are passengers.”

The York and North Yorkshire MAG group have vowed to organise demonstrations in the New Year if Northern rail continue to refuse engagement on the issue.

***However, since publication the good news on this is:-***

**<https://youtu.be/m42jPxjuOm8?si=zPuyJalL5JspzcM>**

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A promotional graphic for MAG's WhatsApp channel. The background is orange. On the left, the text 'MAG' is in large white letters, and 'WHATSAPP' is in large blue letters. Below this, it says 'Get notifications via WhatsApp of all new press releases and YouTube videos straight to your phone'. A white arrow points from this text to a hand holding a black smartphone on the right. The phone screen shows the 'MAG Motorcycle Action Group' logo. A large green WhatsApp logo is in the top right corner. A black rounded rectangle contains the text: 'Simply message your name and membership number, stating you would like to receive MAG notifications to the WhatsApp channel: 07498 562826'. At the bottom right, a white rounded rectangle says 'Reply with 'STOP' at any time to unsubscribe'.

*I found the following on GB News. Probably hasn't been on other news channels/media because, imho, those follow government agenda – but hey, what do I know!!!*

## **Major new fuels will allow drivers (*riders*) to 'enjoy combustion engine cars (*motorcycles*) for years to come'**

Story by Felix Reeves • 2d

**D**riving experts and motorsport legends have supported the use of new sustainable fuels after a major announcement would see an expanded rollout of the cleaner fuel.

The Goodwood Festival of Speed has confirmed that its 2024 Revival celebration will exclusively use sustainable fuel during its races.

It said it was doing this to further extend its “Revive and Thrive” ethos with the use of sustainable fuel in classic combustion engine cars.

Drivers will be required to use a fuel which has a minimum of 70 per cent advanced sustainable components, in line with the FIA.

Classic car owners will be pleased to know that no major changes will be needed to the engine system, with the drop-in fuel having no impact on the race performance of the vehicle.

Sustainable fuels have already been used at Goodwood, with a 1925 Bentley Speed Model winning the Rudge-Whitworth Cup, beating out other motorists using standard fuel.

Motoring legends have also weighed in on the new fuel changes, with many having already used sustainable fuels in their career.

Formula One legend Sebastian Vettel, who used sustainable fuel at the 2023 Festival of Speed praised Goodwood for leading the way in the use of cleaner fuels.

Earlier this year, he drove Nigel Mansell's 1991 Williams FW14B and Ayrton Senna's 1991 McLaren MP4/8, both of which were powered by e-fuels.

Jenson Button, 2009 Formula One World Champion, also raced at Goodwood earlier this year, taking part in the Fordwater Trophy at the Revival festival.

He said: "It was great to be a part of the Fordwater Trophy which brought together classic cars and the very latest in sustainable fuel technology.

"What's so exciting about these fuels is that they can guarantee the future of historic racing, enabling us to enjoy combustion engine cars for years to come."

The Duke of Richmond, who founded the Festival of Speed and Goodwood Revival, said he was pleased that all events would take place using sustainable fuels.

He added that he was "proud" to be the first event to mandate the use of sustainable fuels and thanked all participants for their support in making the major changes.

Keen petrolhead Rowan Atkinson has also commented on the use of sustainable fuels, having used it in his racing Jaguar at Goodwood earlier this year.

The Blackadder actor said the sustainable fuel used in his Jaguar was superior to standard unleaded petrol "in every way" in performance terms.

He added: "It's perhaps unsurprising that if you synthesise a fuel from first principles, you're going to make a better product than that produced by just applying heat and pressure to some black gunk you dig out of the ground."

There have been calls for other motorsport events to use sustainable fuels to help reduce the rate of emissions while still allowing for advancements in electric and other fuel technologies.

The first barrels of 100 per cent sustainable fuel, made from bio waste and developed to Formula One specifications, were delivered by the FIA in 2020.

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*From The Telegraph 29/12.*

## **Emission controls will start to bite**

It looks like a tough year ahead for some long-established manufacturers as electric-vehicle sales targets kick in. Andrew English explains

After much toing and froing, the zero emission vehicle (ZEV) mandate starts in the new year. The scheme will gradually mandate car makers to build and sell zero tail-pipe emissions vehicles in increasing totals to 80 per cent in 2030 and a total ban on new combustion engines in 2035.

In 2024, car makers will have to sell 22 per cent of their total sales of new cars as ZEVs, which effectively means they'll be battery electric vehicles (BEVs) or fuel cell vehicles (FCVs) – this new environmental world is rather full of acronyms. Vans have a similar but slightly slower-starting scheme, with a 10 per cent target for next year rising to 70 per cent by 2030 and a ban in 2035.

Failure to comply means a fine of £15,000 for every non-compliant car and £9,000 for every non-compliant van, which rises to £18,000 in 2025. Sell 1,000 non-compliant passenger cars into the market next year and a car maker could be looking at a fine of £1.5 million, which, given the meagre profits in car-making at the moment, would hurt.

The scheme will work as a set of non-ZEV targets given to each manufacturer, which will represent a proportion of their fleet. It means that the rest of their new-car sales will have to be made up of ZEVs.

Even in the first year, this is going to be a tough call. Figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers show that, in 2022, BEVs as a proportion of all new-car sales were 16.6 per cent, falling to 16 per cent for the first half of 2023 – and some car makers are far behind those percentages.

According to Fleet News magazine, only 11 car makers exceeded the proposed 22 per cent target in the first half of this year, and a third of all new EVs sold came from just three car makers.

Electric car makers are clearly ahead of the game here, and as the ZEV scheme is tradable at least in the first years, they will gain even further as legacy car makers “borrow” ZEV allowances from them. They are also almost all either Chinese-owned or building their cars in China, such as car companies BYD, GWM ORA, MG, Polestar, Smart and Tesla. There's also the implication that this “borrowing” process will further feed the EV market leadership of these companies as they use the fees they receive to fuel a price war that is happening already.

Registration figures at the middle of this year showed that legacy car makers with near-to compliant sales included Jaguar, Porsche, Volvo, Cupra and BMW. The Japanese brands with few EV sales could be in trouble – as is Ford, which had just two

per cent EV sales in the first half of 2023 as it struggled to get its VW-based Explorer on sale in Europe.

Some non-compliant companies such as Land Rover, Alfa Romeo, Seat and Dacia should be able to offset their petrol and diesel sales against other marques within their ownership groups.

This is supply-side economics, driven by environmental concerns, pushed on the market at 100mph, with little idea as to whether there is real demand for the battery electric cars that have to be sold, particularly at the small and cheaper end of the market where BEVs struggle to be price competitive.

For fleets and small businesses, there are generous fiscal and operating incentives to buy EVs, which are generally a lot more expensive. But the benefits for private buyers are more questionable, especially if they can't access cheap off-road charging and are forced to charge at the roadside where prices per kWh can make battery cars more expensive to run than petrol or diesel vehicles.

There's hardly time and space for more and indeed ZEV will dominate the industry for years to come, but at least the EU has managed to swerve away from the cliff-edge of post-Brexit rules-of-origin taxes, which would have added a 10 per cent tax hit on UK-produced vehicles sold in the EU mainly from Vauxhall, Toyota and Nissan.

*Comment on the above from someone far more clued in than me – 'Most likely scenario is that manufacturers will add the fines to the sale price of ICE vehicles to create drag in the ICE market. Overall cost of motoring will go up. Incentive for electric vehicle price reductions will disappear. Manufacturers will maintain their margins and the poorest will be priced out of motoring and told to buy a push bike.'*

***Another snippet from the same edition of The Telegraph:***

## **China weaponises net zero**

We are used to warnings about the threat climate change poses to the global economy. Crops will fail, commodity prices will soar, water will be in short supply, transport systems will buckle under the pressure of extreme weather, wildfires will devastate communities, and there will be mass migration as swathes of the world become inhabitable. It is alarming stuff.

But there is another kind of risk emerging. The threat posed by the policies we are taking to mitigate climate change. And of those, by far the biggest is the risk of China weaponising net zero. We have only just started to notice how under President Xi, China has been quietly positioning itself as the crucial supplier of carbon-neutral energy infrastructure. About 80 per cent of the world's solar panels come from China. Half of the materials for battery production, and 60 per cent of the equipment for wind turbines, are also Chinese-made. Very soon the bulk of electric vehicles will be Chinese brands.

Just as the oil cartel Opec was able to hold the world to ransom at the height of its control of the energy industry in the 1970s, China might be able to do the same with

its control of net-zero technology in the 2020s. True, President Biden is trying to counter that by building up American capacity in green energy, and so is the European Union (although so far that is mostly just rhetoric). And yet it may well be too late. In reality, in transitioning to net zero we have handed China control of our energy and transport systems. If it chooses to weaponise that then we may find ourselves in big trouble.

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recovery-operators-working-with-electric-vehicles>:

Details:-

Information for professional recovery operators involved in the roadside recovery of electric and hybrid electric vehicles.

The high voltage (HV) systems used in these vehicles pose different hazards to those you may find on an internal combustion engine vehicle and these need to be considered while working with these vehicles.

This guidance is not exhaustive. It is not intended to be a training document and should not be used as an alternative for undertaking suitable training.

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## FEMA

### **Swedish riders: why do we still have wire barriers despite the obvious risks to motorcyclists?**

FEMA News: December 8, 2023





Swedish motorcyclists' organisation [SMC](#) asks the Swedish Transport Administration to include several recommendations regarding friction, railings and the inclusion of motorcyclists in the design of streets and roads to increase traffic safety for motorcyclists.

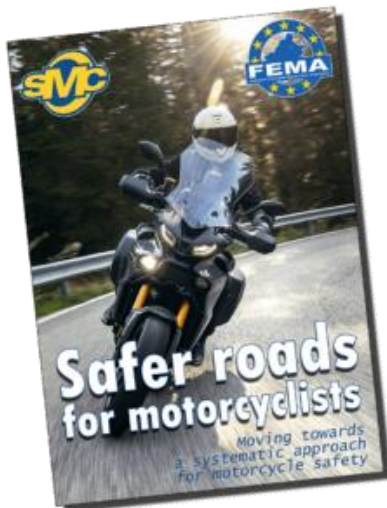


The Swedish Transport Administration's rules for how roads and streets should be designed, [VGU](#), are to be released in a new version by the summer of 2024. In its consultation response, SMC was critical of several points, including the placement of protective devices half a meter from the roadway. A railing directly adjacent to the road gives no room for turning for either the cars or the motorbikes and is not a safe space for vehicles that have to stop for any reason. SMC regrets that wire barriers remain as an alternative protection device despite the obvious risks to motorcyclists, higher maintenance costs and the placement of dangerous objects along the carriageway

such as posts that rust over time.

Dominique Faymonville, SMC's Public Affairs Manager, said: "Guard rails with underslip protection for motorcyclists can be found in VGU 2024 and SMC is working with the Swedish Transport Administration and representatives from the industry to get a standardization in place in Sweden so that it will be easier for producers to know what requirements are set and to develop products that can be installed along our roads in Sweden. That is important work to improve our safety as motorcyclists."

In 2023 SMC and FEMA compiled a document, '[Safer Roads for Motorcyclists](#)', which is the result of a motorcycle safety expert group, which included representatives from motorcycle clubs, the manufacturers, riders' organisations, transport and infrastructure specialists at research institutions and professional organisations and national and regional road authorities. SMC asks the Swedish Transport Administration to include several recommendations ([chapter 10](#)) from the report regarding friction, railings and the inclusion of motorcyclists in the design of the streets and roads in Sweden to increase traffic safety for motorcyclists and all other road users.



Click on the image to download an illustrated version of the report (pdf, 86 pages, 8.79 mb).

SMC also invites the Swedish Transport Administration to take a closer look at chapter 9 '[Guidance before curves](#)' as well as the possibility of developing a new sign and introducing new road markings in blind left curves in the form of bars or ellipses. Several countries in the EU already have introduced these new road markings and the new signage with notables progress in road safety for motorcyclists and cyclists. SMC looks forward to developing a joint working group to get such a project in place shortly.

Jesper Christensen, SMC's general secretary, said: "Bringing those who travel on two-wheelers more clearly into the Swedish Transport Administration's requirements is a positive development, but there is a long way to go to reach the goal of a road infrastructure that includes motorcycles, everything from planning and design to operation and maintenance."

Source: [SMC](#). Photography courtesy of SMC. This article is subject to [FEMA's copyright](#).

## Call to action: let's stop road bans for motorcyclists together

FEMA News: December 20, 2023





Road bans as a result of complaints about excessive noise are a serious problem in countries like Austria and Germany. Regina Stiller, chair of [Bikers' Voice](#), the Austrian motorcyclists' organisation, calls on all motorcyclists to stand together in the fight against these road bans.



Regina Stiller

What if the unfortunate 95 dB stationary noise regulation in Austria (90 dB in Germany) remains and even expands to other parts or all of Europe? Because we own vehicles that could not have been registered for the European market or even sold without the EU homologation process, I and many, many other consumers would like to have my/their money back or compensation payments, including interest.

The consumer has no influence on the approval process. The criteria for this procedure are being developed behind closed doors between EU political leaders, noise emissions experts and other experts and should be met by the manufacturers. This process is subject to independent quality control and the end consumer, the motorcyclist, should therefore be able to assume that the product purchased in Europe and left in its original condition complies with these requirements. If it doesn't, the question arises: who neglected their part in the procedure, perhaps tricked or even consciously manipulated it? Were false reports accidentally created on which the homologation process was based? Who takes or has responsibility now? We as road users are currently being attacked and neither drivers nor cyclists would submissively accept that.

**'We can only defend ourselves with professional lawyers and experts if the motorcyclists' community provides us with the means to do so.'**

79% of bikers are affected by a 90 dB stationary noise regulation. Since buyers of e-bikes in Germany are now also subject to a driving ban on various routes, this can no longer be justified by noise emissions and excessively loud stationary noise. Together with our lawyer, we are thinking about possible legal steps to get to the bottom of all this nonsense and put a stop to it.

For the sake of all bikers, please stop talking about a hobby! You make it too easy for those in charge and for residents; it is easier to ban or limit a hobby than it is to ban or limit fully-fledged road users that are part of our mobility system. Many bikers already use the motorcycle to get to work or school. Many commuters ride every day, even in winter (except when there is snow/ice). For these riders, a driving ban or a 95/90 dB stationary noise regulation is a true catastrophe.



Your support is extremely important now. Whining on Facebook doesn't change anything, it just robs us all of the much-needed energy. We can only defend ourselves with professional lawyers and experts if the motorcyclists' community provides us with the means to do so, because we are only strong together, so [join your national motorcyclists' organisation today!](#)

Written by [Regina Stiller](#). Top photograph courtesy of News5/Merzbach.

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## Motorcyclists Present Their Road Safety Wish List

- **FEMA news**

December 14, 2023



When it comes to reducing casualties among motorcyclists, it is essential to get the riders' views on road safety.

In the world of road safety it is quite common that people talk about motorcyclists, but it is not common that we are talked with. To change this, motorcycle experts presented members of the road safety community with feasible solutions for road safety issues.

During the seminar 'Reducing road deaths among motorcycle riders', organised by the European Transport Safety Council ([ETSC](#)), motorcycle experts were given the

opportunity to present their views to a large audience of over 240 members of the road safety community.

The scale of the problem is serious: over 45,000 users of powered two-wheelers lost their lives on European roads in the last ten years. And even with numerous road safety programmes in place, the deaths among motorcyclists are declining more slowly than among moped riders and other road users.



Jesper Christensen

One of the presenters at the seminar was Jesper Christensen, general secretary of Swedish motorcyclists' organisation [SMC](#) but also a member of the Board at FEMA and Mobility Director at [FIM](#) (a member of ETSC). Jesper talked about the dynamics of motorcycle crashes and the importance of Advanced (Anti-lock) Braking Systems in his presentation of the results of an extensive survey among motorcyclists that experienced a crash.

- 1578 motorcyclists from 30 countries replied to the survey.
- 36.3% of the motorcycles had Advanced Braking Systems, 12% had traction control.
- 35% of the riders did not use their brakes prior to crashing and of these, 46.8% had ABS brakes fitted.
- Only half the riders on ABS-equipped motorcycles reported braking before they crashed compared to two-thirds of those on a motorcycle without ABS.
- 65% of riders admitted to hospital were traveling under 70 kph (44 mph).
- Speed does not appear to have a strong effect on injury severity.

**Jesper concluded his presentation by showing the motorcyclists' wish list, which sums up a number of relatively easy steps for authorities to take:**

- Governments and road owners must focus on and show that motorcycles are part of Vision Zero.
- Road authorities must follow their own book of rules:
  - Ensure predictable friction
  - Ensure a smooth, clean road surface
  - Ensure that there are no dangerous roadside objects
  - Ensure run-off zones or 'good for all' guardrails
  - Facilitate good visibility
  - Let motorcyclists use bus lanes
  - Create safe parking facilities
- Update the driving licence directive with risk- and accident-based focused education, including a general understanding of other vehicles for all.
- Enforcement should not just target speed violators but also target riders and drivers without a valid driving licence.

Asked about recent proposals to introduce differentiated speed limits for holders of A1, A2 and A motorcycle licences (90 km/h for A1, 100 km/h for A2 and 110 km/h for A), regardless of the general speed limits, Jesper was very clear: "That is the most dangerous proposal I have heard in a long time. There should not be different speed limits for cars and motorcycles and there should certainly not be different speed limits for different categories of motorcycles."



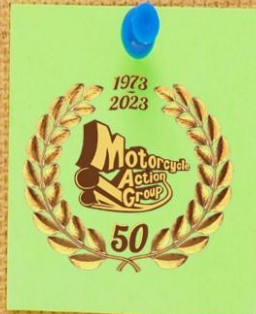
Other important presentations: Martin Winkelbauer from the Austrian Road Safety Board KfV presented the results of research into motorcycle crash causation in curves and he showed how the number of motorcycle accidents in curves can be seriously reduced by applying road markings that 'guide' motorcyclist through a curve. Kay Schulte from German road safety organisation DVR explained the importance of a European Training Quality Label for high-quality post-license training programmes. Jessica Truong of the 'Towards Zero Foundation' made the case for Anti-lock Braking Systems on all powered two-wheelers (it is currently mandatory on all new motorcycles over 125cc).

*Written by Wim Taal. This article is subject to FEMA's copyright.*



## MAG Notice Board

**Next**  
**Network deadline**  
**24th January**  
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**OPEN ROAD deadline**  
**15th January**  

**Open Road**  
You may have noticed  
a slight change  
recently this is in an  
attempt to keep costs  
down. Don't worry  
the content remains  
the same just the  
cover has changed



**Happy**  
**New Year**

**Parliament Recess Dates**  
Returns on 8th Jan 24  
February—8th to 19th  
Easter—26th March to 15th April

\*\*\*  
**Into The Valley**  
**Farmyard**  
**Yorkshire Pudding**  
**Tickets now on sale**

\*\*\*  
**Stormin' the Castle**  
**On sale in March**  
\*\*\*

## **ETSC: MEPs vote on driving licence changes, with devastating consequences for road safety**

<https://etsc.eu/meps-vote-on-driving-licence-changes-with-devastating-consequences-for-road-safety/>

*I'm including this because it could mean that we have 17 year olds from Europe driving HGV's over here which I think is positively dangerous. So, in my humble opinion, the ETSC makes a lot of sense and it shows how contentious it is with a mere majority of 1. Fingers crossed common sense prevails.*

*From the European Transport Safety Council:* In a contentious vote this morning, adopted with a majority of one, the European Parliament's transport committee has formally agreed its position on proposals to reform driving licence rules in the European Union. ETSC says the committee's position would have devastating consequences for road safety if the amendments agreed today make it into the final legislation.

MEPs backed the European Commission's requirement that in future, all EU Member States must issue driving licences to 17-year-olds to drive heavy goods vehicles under an accompanied driving scheme. ETSC says this has the potential to massively expand the number of teenagers driving lorries – and that would have very negative consequences for road safety. Today, only five countries allow teenagers as young as 18 to drive a lorry: Finland, Germany, Ireland, Poland and Spain. Data from Finland, Germany and Poland clearly show that the youngest lorry drivers (18-19 years) are much more likely to cause a crash.

On Monday, EU transport ministers set out their position on the rules and said Member States should not be forced into allowing such young drivers to get behind the wheel.

ETSC says that from a road safety perspective, the minimum age in the EU for lorry drivers should be 21 – that is today's 'recommended' minimum. The safety advocates see no justification for encouraging teenagers as young as 17 to drive lorries.

The committee also supported the idea of allowing children aged 16 to drive speed-limited cars, an idea which originated in Finland. The Commission's own impact assessment on this idea said : "the measure may pose an additional road safety risk, notably for vulnerable road users".

Ellen Townsend, Policy Director at ETSC commented:



*“This legislation was introduced under the banner of a ‘road safety package’ – but frankly if we end up encouraging large numbers of teenagers to drive lorries the consequences will be devastating. Ahead of the plenary vote in the European Parliament in January, we hope policymakers will take a step back and reconsider the consequences of these changes, before voting on plans that will make our roads more dangerous for everyone. “*

In a complex vote, covering an array of proposed changes to licensing rules, there was one silver lining for safety. MEPs backed the concept of an EU-wide zero-tolerance limit for alcohol for novice drivers. This would see newly-qualified drivers subject to a low 0.2 g/l blood alcohol concentration limit across the European Union. However, this change would only affect Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark and Finland, because **all other EU Member States** already set a limit of 0 or 0.2 for novice drivers. Spain’s limit for this group is 0.3.

Following a plenary vote in the European Parliament in January, the final shape of the revised EU Driving Licence Directive will need to be negotiated by MEPs, together with EU Transport Ministers and the European Commission.

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## **November Powered Two-Wheeler Registration Statistics**

MCIA News: 7th December 2023



MCIA has today published the market data for November and full year-to-date, for new motorcycle, scooter, and other L-Category registrations.

The November total market closed with a minus 5% compared to 2022, which in turn impacted the year to date trend, closing at the end of November minus 2%. The scooter segments experienced another strong month of growth closing at 3.4% up compared to

2022. Although the last couple of months have been positive for Scooters, the year-to-date picture remains challenging where the scooter market is trending at just under minus 12%.

The total market for the year has now reached over 108,000 units, where we expect the full year volumes to get close to or exceed 113,000. Whilst slightly down on 2022, the 2023 market will be the 2nd highest in the last 5 years meaning the sector is performing well during these challenging economic times.

Tony Campbell, CEO of MCIA, said: “Motorcycle Live proved to be another major success for the Industry, the event hosted international launches of new models,

along with a chance for visitors to see many new bikes for the first time. We welcomed 90,000 visitors to the event with many attending for the first time. As the year draws to a close, we expect 2024 to be another strong year for the sector as the economic indicators are looking more positive than they did this time last year.

As consumer demand remains strong for our sector MCIA continue to work closely with Government at all levels, now gaining energy and momentum with the licence review campaign. Additionally we are now starting to forge early relationships with the shadow ministerial team ahead of a general election year in 2024."

More details on the November registration figures can be [found here](#).

**Please credit MCIA when quoting this information.**

Notes for Editors:

MCIA is the body that represents the UK L-Category vehicle industry. L-Category vehicles can be defined as motorised lightweight scooters, motorcycles, tricycles and quadricycles, typically with zero or low-emission power.

Within regulation they are defined as 'L-Category' vehicles (Regulation 168/2013) and are a great solution to the congestion and air quality challenges we all face. They are also sometimes referred to as powered light vehicles (PLV).

For more information about the work of MCIA and L-Category vehicles, or to interview MCIA's CEO, Tony Campbell, please contact Gina Evans at [g.evans@mcia.co.uk](mailto:g.evans@mcia.co.uk).

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**FROM THE HOUSE** – *I've included this because I think including causes of collisions in accident reports is something we should endeavour to change.*

[Written Answers - Department for Transport: Motorcycles: Death](#)

15 Dec 2023

**Lord Davies of Gower:** DfT reported road casualty statistics reports numbers of personal injury road traffic collisions in Great Britain that were reported to the police using the STATS19 reporting system. STATS19 does not record the causes of collisions. However, attending police officers can record up to six factors that they believe contributed to collisions as part of the STATS19 dataset. Officers do not need...

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## **WEBSITES AND ONLINE MATERIAL YOU MAY WISH TO VISIT**

NI: Road Safety campaigns to reduce careless driving and speeding

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/news/road-safety-campaigns-reduce-careless-driving-and-speeding>

Official Statistics: Driver and rider testing and instructor statistics: July to September 2023

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/driver-and-rider-testing-and-instructor-statistics->



[july-to-september-2023](#)

EU: EU driving licence rules update: press conference on Thursday at 15.00  
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20231206IPR15698/eu-driving-licence-rules-update-press-conference-on-thursday-at-15-00>

MCIA: MCIA Chief Charts Path for Mopeds & Motorcycles As Key Transport Solution  
<https://www.mcia.co.uk/posts/mcia-chief-charts-path-for-mopeds-motorcycles>

National statistics: Vehicle excise duty evasion statistics: 2023  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/vehicle-excise-duty-evasion-statistics-2023>

**Finally, someone who actually gets it – mind you they shouldn't need telling. We all know that trees are our biggest weapon to improve air quality!!:** AQN: Trees could more than halve air pollution in urban hotspots, MPs told  
<https://airqualitynews.com/health/trees-could-more-than-halve-air-pollution-in-urban-hotspots-mps-told/>

Scotland: Motorcycle safety drive wins prestigious award  
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/motorcycle-safety-drive-wins-prestigious-award/>

Policy paper: UK hydrogen strategy (Last updated: 14 December 2023)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-hydrogen-strategy>

ROADPOL: EU Moves A Step Towards Digital Driving Licence, End Of Offender Impunity  
<https://www.roadpol.eu/index.php/eu-moves-a-step-towards-digital-driving-licence-end-of-road-offender-impunity>

**Judging by the amount of EVs bursting into flames let's hope the Fire Service have a big recruitment plan:** Press release: Families could use electric vehicle batteries to power homes and save on bills as government backs new charging technologies  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/families-could-use-electric-vehicle-batteries-to-power-homes-and-save-on-bills-as-government-backs-new-charging-technologies>

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