



A networking tool for Activists and other interested parties

Editorial	2
Political Report - Lembit	3-4
MAG PRs – MAG salutes an Ace Man from the Ace Cafe. MAG represents FEMA in International Working Group. MAG contacts councils and police to plan for Halloween.	4-6
MAG NEEDS YOU – Clubs Liaison Officer	7
AROUND GB – Scotland. Oxford.	8-10
ADVERT – Minute Taker for National Committee	11
FEMA – Retirement of great activist. British ban on combustion engines – what about bikes?	12-15
Highways England to increase motorway road works speed limits	15
Government confirms life sentences for killer drivers. High profile policing and consistent sentencing need to back up life sentences for drivers who kill.	16-18
Spend rising tax increases on improving local roads.	18-19
Driverless cars bring up more questions than answers	19-20
Electric Vehicles – Bill to increase availability of charging points	20
MAG National Training Weekend	20-21
Contacts	21-22

EDITORIAL

Well, its been a strange month here with the Network Team. My proof reader and your Web Research Officer, George Legg, fell off his bike in a car park and broke his right arm and I had a tummy bug for almost 4 weeks. No doubt George has become quite adept at using his left hand (keep it clean, don't let your mind wander in a dirty direction reading that ☺) and I missed AGC and, for the first time, Hoggin' the Bridge.

All of the above being a bit of a bugger, to say the least. George is on the mend but unable to take pain killers and I'm feeling better.

So, under the circumstances, I'll keep this short this month.

Just want to mention the crimes committed by thugs riding motorcycles. Police, the media etc., refer to them as 'motorcyclists'. In my very personal opinion this is an insult. Car drivers who commit crime using their vehicle are not referred to as 'car drivers', they are referred to as criminals and those who use motorcycles to assist their criminality should also be called criminals – again in my humble opinion.

I've included an up to date article on 'driverless cars/vehicles' – still, in my opinion, utter madness.

A bit of good news for those of us who get bored at 50mph on the motorway – there are plans to increase this to 60 where there are road works – yeah.

Have a great month, ride free, AG

[copy date for the December edition will be 25th November latest, please send copy to:- aine@mag-uk.org subject heading Network]

{Acknowledgements: George Legg. Selina Lavendar. Lembit Opik. Plus, of course, anyone else I've forgotten}

POLITICAL UNIT REPORT

Hi there, and here's an update from the world of riders' rights. Get in touch whenever you like if you need more info or help with a campaigning matter.

Goodbye to Doc Mannings: after many years of loyal service to MAG and the biking community, Doc Mannings has moved on from his role in the movement. The Doc decided it is time to focus on other matters and that he's done what he came to do in MAG. Lembit says: 'the L&L collective as it came to be known has been an inspiration to me – in large part because I've never anyone who knows more about policy than Leon. Thanks for everything, including the top level meetings at your club in Central London! It's going to be a lot quieter without you.' The work continues, and normal business is NOT affected by the change, so keep your calls and comments coming in all the usual ways.

AGC delight: The AGC - the annual conference which MAG holds to review the past and assess the future – was a great success, thanks to the organisers and the attendees. The Political Unit presented their work and looked toward at the challenges ahead. Leon delivered his heartfelt eulogy as he bowed out from active service in the MAG frontline. All in all, the collective view is the weekend was a very positive health check for MAG.

New T-Charge in London: the London authorities have introduced a new charge, called the T-Charge, where 'T' stands for 'Toxic.' That's going to cost a tenner for those vehicles which are regarded as polluting the local atmosphere. There's been a keen debate about the validity of the science in all this. Leaving that aside, the key thing for bikers is that it doesn't affect us – yet. Essentially, anyone who wasn't paying the Congestion Charge doesn't have to pay the T-Charge. It also covers the same area because they're using the same camera technology to enforce it. **BE WARNED:** this is the precursor to the NEXT charge, which is called the Ultra Low Emissions Zone Charge. They DO want to slap that onto older bikes, even this is a counterproductive act of lunacy because bikers reduce overall emissions by being small and reducing congestion. It's a campaign we're leading for bikers in London – because what happens there often gets exported elsewhere. If you'd like to get involved in the growing campaign to prevent this attempt to charge bikes, please contact HQ. We've got less than two years...

Moped muggers and Halloween: MAG is well represented on the Home Office committee setup to try and deal with the scourge of crime using bikes in the capital and beyond. At the previous meeting they seemed to be taking it seriously because two ministers showed up, as did just about every law enforcement agency, the Motor Cycle Industry Association (MCIA) and the Motorcycle Crime Reduction Community (MCPC). At time of writing the next meeting has been announced, and MAG will be there. Also, Halloween looms and last year

this was marred by the antics of a small number of idiots on two wheels, many of them stolen and with no number plates. MAG has been actively engaging with the law enforcement authorities to do what we can to prevent a repeat of last year. Lembit adds 'the important thing is to ensure that we make it clear these thugs are nothing to do with real riding and legitimate bikers. It's still some days away, but whatever happens, please make sure you contact any media outlet to put the legitimate biker's view. As a police officer said last year, they're not riders, they're just criminals who happen to be using two wheels.' Let's plan for the worst and hope for the best.

Motorcycle Live is just around the corner: MAG will, as always, have a stand at the NEC in Birmingham for Motorcycle Live. If you can help, please let us know. If you're just at the show, come and say hello!

Media magic: MAG has upped its production of press releases, on the basis that there's so much going on. We're getting better at turning these around and it's clear they're having a positive effect on our image and profile. If there's anything you'd like to promote, just let us know and we can help. The media are desperate for good stories and we can supply them with an interesting take on biking matters. Also, the likes of Steve Mallett in the South East and Colin Brown in the Midlands are getting themselves on the BBC a lot. That's great for biking as it means we have a voice, rather than just having a diet of road safety organisations telling us how dangerous everything is.

Manhole covers: MAG activists are beginning to roll out the success secured by Cumbria MAG for higher grip covers in their area. Highways England has now taken up the issues and it will next surface at the infrastructure sub-group on November 13th. Please get in touch with your local authority and ask them for a meeting to discuss the dangers posed by slippery manhole covers. The solution is cheap: a higher grip cover to go on top of the metal is around £60 and takes about 15 minutes to put on. The solution is there and it WILL save lives. Let us know if you'd like more info on this.

Come to York: MAG is holding a training weekend in York at the racecourse on Friday 10th to Sunday 12th November. It's potentially a game-changer. We're going to cover everything from how to make influential contacts with the police and local authorities through to the media skills which do so much to promote MAG in the public eye. Everyone welcome and it's free as long as you book and show up! Please come and help MAG make the next step up in our campaigning power for riders' rights.

Lembit Öpik. MAG Political Unit

MAG PRESS RELEASES

MAG salutes an ace man from an Ace Café

The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) has awarded one of its highest honours to Mark Wilsmore, owner of the Ace Café, for services rendered to biking.

MAG presents the Simon Millward Lifetime Achievement Award to a person who, over their lifetime, has made a significant contribution to motorcycling. In 2017 that person is Mark Wilshire. MAG's Vice Chair, Andy Carrott, is in no doubt that the recognition of Mark's contribution is richly deserved: 'Mark's passion for bringing back the Ace Café has turned it into a British icon known all over the world. A visit to the Ace Café has become a rite of passage for any motorcyclist. No wonder, then, that visitors from countless nations head for their counter to order a 'fry-up' at this most famous of motorcycling venues.'

Andy is certain that Mark's visionary leadership has led the Ace Café's reputation for influencing the retro scene: 'we've seen the Rocker culture merge with a new-age urban custom movement. All the major manufacturers have bikes in their range with roots in exactly this culture: the one Mark has resolutely kept alive. Without Mark, there would be no Ace Café and he justly deserves the award in recognition of the part he has played in the history of motorcycling.'

Mark collected the award at MAG's recent annual conference where he thanked the movement and called on its activists to continue to increase the strength and volume of the riders' voice. Greater London MAG regularly meets at the Ace and everyone is welcome to attend.

MAG represents Federation of European Motorcyclists Association (FEMA) in international working group

Ian Churchlow, the Motorcycle Action Group's (MAG) representative on a European bikers' rights federation, represented the movement at a major working group on riders' rights in Brussels.

MAG Director Ian Churchlow has just returned from Brussels, having attended a full day conference held by the Federation of International Motorcyclists (FIM), to discuss issues affecting bikers across the European continent and beyond.

Ian says, "this was a joint working group between FEMA and FIM and we met at FEMA Office Brussels on 18th October (2017). We identified many areas where we have common interests and shared concerns. These include motorcycle exhaust sounds and the balance between the damage irresponsible use of the motorcycle throttle and illegal exhausts can make to the image of motorcyclists versus the right to buy an aftermarket exhaust system without undue restrictions."

"We also covered the question of self-driving cars and whether this could lead to further road space limitations, thanks to dedicated autonomous car lanes. We have many position statements on matters including Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), motorcycle accident black spots, dangerous roadside crash barriers, motorcycles in the environment, traffic-calming systems and a great deal more. One of the key areas of common interest is finding a better approach to initial training, licence conditions and tests.'

Ian believes that FIM, FEMA and FIVA (the federation which protects the interests of users of older vehicles) should adopt single-position statements where possible and externally communicate a united position on major motorcycle issues: "Policies like 'Vision Zero' – the goal of achieving no deaths on the roads at all – are logically and practically problematic, and we discussed options. What's certain is that working together we've got a greater chance of influencing such policies than if working separately. MAG is just one voice in this international working group, but I think everyone feels we have a lot to offer. I'm delighted that we now have a place at the table on these strategic groups."

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

MAG contacts councils and police to plan for Halloween

MAG is contacting police in the areas most badly affected by last year's outbreak of hooliganism on the evening of Halloween, to ensure that the motorcycling community is clearly distanced from any lawless behaviour by thugs on two wheels on Halloween night.



MAG has praised the efforts of the police to try to curb the hooligan behaviour of the thugs who created disorder on 31st October 2016 and Selina Lavender, the Chair of MAG, is encouraging members and the biking community to report such behaviour: 'We need to show that legitimate riders do not support these hooligan activities - by providing information about the perpetrators of any crime, reporting what we see and demonstrating that the legitimate riding community does not take part in these activities.'

Selina is determined to make sure that genuine bikers 'aren't dragged down by the stupidity of those who think it's acceptable to disrupt an evening which is primarily intended for children to enjoy themselves. It's wrong for the safety and confidence of youngsters to be compromised by lawless idiots, often on stolen bikes, who have no regard for the communities they upset. If there is any trouble, the police and local councils can be assured of our full support on the evening of Halloween and after it. We are on the side of the affected communities and are disgusted by the actions of these thugs. We know that all genuine riders are too. If there's the slightest sign of a repeat of last year, I think it's fair to say the hooligans aren't going to have it their way in 2017: they can run but they can't hide.'

MAG is already assisting local councils in gaining an understanding of the need to supply more secure parking facilities. Riders' representatives are assisting Council officers with the difficult decision to invest in supplying anchors and rails, which makes it harder for the criminals to steal machines. Unconfirmed reports suggest that some youths are already 'riding scooters like maniacs in Birmingham wearing Halloween masks.' Please contact your local police force and give your support to their important work on Halloween and share what you know about any threats to the peace. It means a lot to MAG for the local communities we are part of to know we're on their side.

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

MAG NEEDS YOU

MAG National Clubs Liaison Officer (NCLO) – Job Specification

Core Objectives

- 1. Recruit motorcycle clubs as MAG Affiliated Members.**
- 2. Encourage individual members of such clubs to upgrade to individual membership of MAG.**
- 3. Provide a link between MAG and its affiliated clubs, ensuring provision of timely information on MAG campaigns and encouraging participation in those campaigns**
- 4. Encourage involvement in MAG events and fundraisers.**

Main Duties

- 1. Ensure that all clubs (including non-affiliates) receive a regular flow of information on MAG activities and campaigns and to encourage participation in these.**
- 2. Liaise with Regional Reps to encourage appointment of Regional Clubs Liaison Officers (RCLO) and, where such officers are appointed, provide appropriate training and work with them to ensure that all clubs in each region receive a regular flow of information from MAG.**
- 3. Develop and maintain the 'Affiliated Clubs Package' and to promote this package to clubs via information media and the RCLOs.**
- 4. Contact, or ensure relevant RCLOs contact, nominated club representatives of any club not renewing its affiliation within one month of the due date, to encourage re-affiliation.**
- 5. Provide high quality communications, including material for clubs, for inclusion in MAG publications and social media outlets.**
- 6. Provide regular reports to the NC detailing activity between meetings and feedback to assist in the future recruitment/retention of clubs.**
- 7. Submit all proposals and materials to the NC for approval before dissemination to the intended recipients.**

SCOTLAND

The number of motorcyclist deaths and seriously injured both rose. Deaths increased by 11% to 30, while the numbers seriously injured rose 4% to 268.

The above is an excerpt from the whole document which can be found at:-

Transport Scotland: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/one-hundred-and-ninety-one-people-killed-in-road-accidents-in-2016/>

Transport Scotland: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/transport-minister-comments-on-reported-road-casualties-statistics/>

[How to close down inner city shopping areas in one easy lesson, resulting in more building on brown/green belt for ‘malls’, closing businesses, loss of jobs. This is just one example, extremely badly thought out – in my humble opinion, of course, AG]:-

OXFORD

Petrol and diesels vehicles will be banned from [Oxford](#) city centre under plans to bring in what officials believe would be the world’s first zero-emissions zone.

The proposals aim to slash air pollution in the historic university city, which has seen levels of the harmful pollutant nitrogen dioxide rise above legal limits in some areas.

Under the plans being put out for consultation on Monday, the ban would be introduced in phases, starting with preventing non-zero-emitting taxis, cars, light commercial vehicles and buses from using a small number of streets in 2020.

As vehicle technology develops, the zero-emissions zone will extend to cover all non-electric vehicles, including HGVs, in the whole of the city centre by 2035, according to the joint proposals by Oxford city council and Oxfordshire county council.

The introduction of the zero-emissions zone could see levels of nitrogen dioxide, much of which comes from traffic fumes, particularly diesel engines, fall by up to three-quarters by 2035, the councils said.

Data released by the World Health Organisation last year showed that Oxford was one of 11 British cities to breach the safe limits set for toxic particles known as PM10s. It also breached the limit for PM2.5s.

The city has already won £500,000 of government funding to install charging points for electric taxis, and £800,000 to install 100 electric vehicle charging points for residents, but officials say more will be needed to support the zero-emissions zone. Other schemes being considered to support the zone include reduced parking fees for electric vehicles, electric taxi-only ranks, and electric delivery vehicle-only loading areas.

Councillor John Tanner of Oxford city council said: “Toxic and illegal air pollution in the city centre is damaging the health of Oxford’s residents. A step change is urgently needed; the zero emissions zone is that step change.

“All of us who drive or use petrol or diesel vehicles through Oxford are contributing to the city’s toxic air. Everyone needs to do their bit, from national government and local authorities, to businesses and residents, to end this public health emergency.”

Oxfordshire county council councillor Yvonne Constance said: “We want to hear from everyone who uses the city centre, including businesses, bus and taxi firms and local residents ... Pragmatism will be an important part of anything we plan, but we have set the ambition.”

The mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, called last month for the environment department to amend the Clean Air Act to allow for the creation of zero-emission zones.

Other cities that have tried to introduce measures to tackle vehicle emissions include Madrid, whose city council ordered half of the city’s cars to be banned in 2016, and Oslo, where the authorities eventually backtracked on a plan to ban all private cars in the Norwegian capital.

This is also an interesting article written by an expert in the field:-

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/aug/04/fewer-cars-not-electric-cars-beat-air-pollution-says-top-uk-adviser-prof-frank-kelly>.

And

Plans unveiled for world’s first Zero Emission Zone

Local authorities in Oxfordshire have unveiled plans to introduce the world’s first Zero Emission Zone in Oxford city centre.

Under the proposals, which are to be put out for consultation by Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council, diesel and petrol vehicles would be banned from Oxford city centre in phases.

Some vehicle types would be barred from a small number of streets as early as 2020; then, as vehicle technology develops the restrictions would apply to all vehicles across the entire city centre in 2035.

Oxford's local authorities say the city centre currently has illegally-high levels of toxic nitrogen dioxide, which is contributing to conditions including cancer, asthma and heart disease.

They hope the Zero Emission Zone proposals would cut the nitrogen dioxide level in Oxford's most polluted street, George Street, by 74% by 2035, bringing it well below the legal limit.

Councillor John Tanner, Oxford City Council executive board member for 'A Clean and Green Oxford', said: "Toxic and illegal air pollution in the city centre is damaging the health of Oxford's residents. A step change is urgently needed; the Zero Emission Zone is that step change.

"All of us who drive or use petrol or diesel vehicles through Oxford are contributing to the city's toxic air. Everyone needs to do their bit – from national Government and local authorities, to businesses and residents – to end this public health emergency."

The RAC has described the proposals as 'radical', suggesting that local authorities would be better placed to first identify the most polluting vehicles, rather than simply implementing an outright ban on all non-zero emission vehicles from certain streets.

Nicholas Lyes, RAC roads policy spokesman, said: "Oxford appears to be considering a very radical approach to tackling its air quality problem.

"This will also mean that local residents who have invested in cleaner hybrid vehicles will now be targeted which seems both unfair and an unwelcome disincentive as the use of these vehicles should be being encouraged.

"There is little doubt that air pollution in our towns and cities must be reduced, but this should be done in a way that is fair to drivers, and targets the most polluting vehicles first."

The consultation will launch on Monday 16 October.

Oxford Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) (Consultation) <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/zez>

Oxford CC: <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/zez>

Minute-taker/Administrator for NC meetings and AGCs

MAG requires an experienced Minute-taker to take accurate Minutes of its National Committee meetings, which take place on the second Saturday of February, April, June, August, October and December near Warwick. In addition, they will provide a small amount of administrative support in relation to the meetings and Minute the Annual Group Conference, which takes place at the end of September.

Responsible for: None

Responsible to: National Committee

Main duties:

1. Send out timely reminders for Reports prior to each NC meeting and collate the Reports for inclusion in the Minutes.
2. Maintain an Attendance List for each NC meeting, including apologies for absence.
3. Generate an Agenda for each NC meeting, taking into account AOB items.
4. Provide accurate, timely Action Points identified during meetings immediately following each NC meeting.
5. Provide accurate, timely Minutes of all NC meetings.
6. Provide accurate, timely Minutes of Annual Group Conferences.

This is a volunteer role but it is envisaged that commitment will be given to attending all meetings.

If you feel that you have the right skill set for this role and would like to know more, feel free to contact The Lady Rootveg for an informal chat. Contact 01205 357417 after 6.30 pm or email nrlo@mag-uk.org

FEMA

Retirement of a great activist:-

Morten Hansen, Role Model And Inspiration To Many, Retires

Article by *Wim Taal* - October 10, 2017



During the FEMA committee meeting in Brussels on the 7th October, we said our official goodbyes to Morten Hansen, who is retiring as general secretary for NMCU, our Norwegian member organization.

FEMA president Anna Zee presented Morten with a Certificate of Recognition, in recognition of his work as general secretary for NMCU, for his work for the European motorcyclists' community as NMCU's delegate to FEMA and for his work as chairman of the FEMA/FIM Europe working group.

Morten was also presented the first David Dingley Memorial Award for outstanding services to motorcycling by Jim Freeman, president of the British Motorcycle Federation (BMF).

Morten Hansen: "I am so moved and so proud by this! A big thanks to all my friends and good colleagues in FEMA . It has been an honour and a true pleasure working with such fine people."

Earlier this year Morten was made **honorary member** of the Swedish motorcyclists' organization SMC.



So what is the best way to get you to work quickly? We tested it in fourteen European cities.

Volunteers from FEMA members and [FMI](#) repeated the European Mobility Test that was done in 2014. This year the mobility test was held in 7 countries and 14 cities all over Europe.

With cars, motorcycles, mopeds, speed-pedelects, e-bikes, conventional bicycles and public transport a route from a place outside a city to an office inside the city was followed. The tests were performed between May and September 2017. during the morning rush hour. As we saw in 2014. in all situations except two, the motorcycle was the fastest mode to commute into the city with the moped as number two.

Already over 70% of the European citizens live in urban areas and the number is expected to increase to over 80% in the next decades. This means that congestion, parking problems and air quality will be a growing problem in the future. Many commuters still prefer to travel in their cars and spend much time in traffic jams and looking for parking spaces. Public transport, walking and cycling are promoted by the European Union, national governments and local councils as the preferable alternative. This is mostly a result of the environmental effects of cars, especially cars that run on diesel fuel, in the cities. The effects of a switch from car to other modes of transport on the time the commuter will lose or gain with, it is never part of the discussion.

Typical commute travels by motorcycle take on average 53% less time than with public transport, which is really the big loser in this test.

Click here for all results. <http://www.fema-online.eu/website/index.php/library/mobility-test-2017/>

British Ban On Combustion Engines: What About Bikes?

Article by [Wim Taal](#) - September 28, 2017

The British government has [announced](#) its intention to ban sales of new diesel and petrol cars and vans from 2040. Motorcycles have not been specifically mentioned.

The British Motorcyclists Federation (BMF), a FEMA member from the United Kingdom, looks into the matter and asks some [relevant questions](#).

While hybrid and electric cars are beginning to mature, current battery technology means they still have restricted ranges and the charging infrastructure is limited. Similarly, electric motorcycles have a long way to go, and hybrid models are likely to be impossible to implement within a typical bike frame. However, 2040 is still a long way away – time for vehicle and battery technology to mature. Indeed, the government's decision has been seen by some as lacking urgency despite many cities already exceeding legal levels of nitrous oxide pollutants.

The BMF believes the government's announcement produces more questions than answers:

What about electricity demand?

A massive increase of electricity demand, which a wholesale switch in vehicle energy supply represents, would place enormous strain on a system which is struggling to meet projected demand. In October 2016, the National Grid's energy margin had risen to 6.6% – an increase over the previous year's "tight but manageable" 5.1%. Part of that improvement was the reprieve for the Eggborough coal power plant – the recent investment in renewables has not been matched by a proportionate gain in useful electricity supply.

Can critical infrastructure cope with the change?

There are believed to be around 110,000 plug-in EV or hybrid cars in the UK – the vast proportion of these are hybrids. As of July 28 2017, the supply of charging points –

according to zap-map.com – was 13,155 connectors, at 4,582 locations. In the preceding 30 days, 295 new points had been added. If the numbers of charging points increase at that rate, there will be an additional 81,500 charging connectors by 2040. Most internal combustion cars can be refuelled in less than 10 minutes. The fastest electric connectors can typically take 75 minutes (at a fast-charging rate which is not recommended for good battery life). A full charge at home will usually be overnight.

What effect will this have on motorcycle culture?

A recent [survey](#) of European motorcyclists by FEMA revealed that if riders were given the choice between buying a more expensive non-emissions bike than an internal combustion engine (ICE) equivalent, 87% said they would not. In fact, 76% said that if ICE bikes were banned from cities, they would find an alternative – most likely a car.

Despite all the unanswered questions right now, one thing that's clear – whatever happens, this debate will be raging for decades.

Written by [Robert Drane](#)

Highways England to increase motorway road works speed limit

Highways England is to increase the speed limit deployed at motorway road works, according to various media reports over the weekend.

The move follows trials at two motorway locations which showed that drivers' heart rates were lower when the road works speed limit was 55mph or 60mph, rather than the 50mph which is currently used at these sites.

Although there is no official announcement on the Highways England website, Jim O'Sullivan, chief executive of Highways England, told The Times that the 60mph limit was "something that we want to introduce to (at) as many road works as possible".

While the move has been broadly welcomed in some quarters, the trade union which represents road workers has expressed safety concerns. A spokesperson for Unite told BBC News the move will "make potentially lethal accidents even more common".

The RAC described the move as "good news for motorists".

Simon Williams, RAC spokesman, said: "Where safe to do so, increasing the limit through road works will provide better, more reliable journeys for drivers – many of whom become frustrated with a 50mph limit when there is no work going on.

"Highways England has listened to motorists and found through these trials that safety will not be compromised."

Under the headline 'motorway gladness', The Sun says Highways England is introducing the move with the country at 'tipping point' with regard to the number of road works on the country's motorway network.

The move appears to be part of a drive by Highways England to reduce the inconvenience caused by road works.

On 19 October, the agency amended its £15bn road improvement programme to 'reduce the impact of road works on motorists and minimise congestion while improvements take place'.

In an unrelated move that also affects motorway drivers, it was announced last week that motorists who ignore red 'X' signs on smart motorways are to be given £100 fixed penalty notices from early next year.

The Times: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/motorway-roadworks-misery-to-be-stopped-j77xv79t8>

BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-41704392>

RAC: <https://www.rac.co.uk/press-centre#/news/rac-comments-on-plans-to-increase-the-speed-limit-through-motorway-roadworks-269163>

The Sun: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4734312/50mph-speed-limits-at-roadworks-on-englands-motorways-to-be-scrapped-as-people-felt-safer-going-faster/>

Gov.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/15billion-road-upgrade-plan-updated-to-minimise-congestion>

motorcycle : 1 Commons debate

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Oral Answers to Questions - Home Department: Motorcycle and Moped-enabled Crime (16 Oct 2017)

<https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2017-10-16a.565.0&s=Motorcycle#g565.5>

Amber Rudd: We recently brought together ***motorcycle*** insurance industry leaders, law enforcement partners, the Local Government Association, charities and representatives from the ***motorcycle***-riding community to have a full and open discussion about the issue. All parties agreed to work together to devise a comprehensive action plan to tackle this type of crime. As a first step, we have announced a review...

Government confirms life sentences for 'killer' drivers

The Government has confirmed that drivers who cause death by speeding, racing, or using a mobile phone could face sentences equivalent to manslaughter, with maximum penalties raised from 14 years to life.

Offenders who cause death by careless driving while under the influence of drink or drugs will also face life sentences, and a new offence of causing serious injury by careless driving will be created.

The move comes after an ‘overwhelming’ response to a Government consultation which revealed substantial backing for the plans from a wide range of people including victims, bereaved families and road safety stakeholders.

Stakeholder reaction

Dominic Raab, justice minister, said: “We’ve taken a long hard look at driving sentences, and we received 9,000 submissions to our consultation.

“Based on the seriousness of the worst cases, the anguish of the victims’ families, and maximum penalties for other serious offences such as manslaughter, we intend to introduce life sentences of imprisonment for those who wreck lives by driving dangerously, drunk or high on drugs.

Talking about the new offence of causing serious injury by careless driving, Dominic Raab added: “We will introduce a new offence of causing serious injury by careless driving, punishable by imprisonment, to fill a gap in the law and reflect the seriousness of some of the injuries suffered by victims in this category of case.”

The measures were confirmed in a Government response to a consultation which will be published tomorrow (16 Oct).

The consultation sought views on whether current maximum penalties available to the courts should be increased, and received more than 1,000 replies in just three days when launched in December 2016 – and more than 9,000 by the time it closed in February 2017.

The proposals confirmed by the Government include:

- ☐ Increasing the maximum penalty for causing death by dangerous driving from 14 years to life.
- ☐ Increasing the maximum penalty for causing death by careless driving while under the influence of drink or drugs from 14 years to life.
- ☐ Creating a new offence of causing serious injury by careless driving.

Gov.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/life-sentences-for-killer-drivers>

High profile policing and consistent sentencing needed to back up life jail sentences for drivers who kill says IAM RoadSmart

New legislation that could put drivers behind bars for life for causing death by speeding, street racing or while on a mobile phone has been welcomed by leading road safety charity IAM RoadSmart – but it warned that the threat of jail alone is unlikely to make people drive in a less dangerous way.

The Government launched a consultation on the issue last December, with thousands supporting tougher penalties for the most serious road offences.

IAM RoadSmart’s own survey in February this year (reference 1) found nearly 80% agreed there should be a new offence of causing serious injury by careless driving – which is now part of the Government’s plans.

Many respondents in the IAM RoadSmart survey also felt the current maximum penalty of 14 years in jail for causing death by dangerous driving wasn't nearly high enough; with almost 50% saying the penalty was not set at the right level.

The Government will now proceed with the measures, which will see life sentences introduced for those convicted of causing death by dangerous driving and causing death by careless driving while under the influence of drink or drugs.

The issue was brought into sharp focus with the jailing of Tomasz Kroker for 10 years in October 2016. Kroker killed a mother and three children when he was distracted by changing music on his smartphone and ploughed into a line of stationary traffic in his lorry.

Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart director of policy and research, said: "The public has been calling for stricter penalties for those who cause death by driving recklessly, and the moves today by the Government are wholeheartedly welcomed.

"However we feel that visible policing, and a high likelihood of being caught, is the surest way of making people drive better. If people don't think they will be caught, they simply won't drive in a safer way."

Neil added: "It is also vital that courts reflect society's view on the impact of dangerous driving and use the maximum available sentences – something they have so far not demonstrated on a consistent basis. While a toughening of the law might make people feel better, on its own it is sadly unlikely to reduce the number of cases of really selfish driving which end in tragic results."

Spend rising tax income on improving local roads

Councils are calling for more funding to improve local roads, after new analysis suggests the Government is receiving an additional £400m a year from rising fuel and motoring taxes.

The Local Government Association (LGA) analysis, published on 13 October, concludes that if the Government matched the increase in fuel and motoring tax income generated over the last decade, town halls would have an extra £418m to spend on local roads each year.

The LGA, which represents local authorities across England and Wales, says additional funding would help councils reduce congestion, improve air quality and contribute towards tackling the country's £12bn road repairs backlog.

The analysis also shows there are now 151 vehicles, per mile, on UK roads - compared to just 119 vehicles per mile in 2000. Travel speeds are also down with the average speed on local 'A' roads at 25 miles per hour, a year-on-year fall of 1%.

Cllr Martin Tett, LGA transport spokesman, said: "The vast majority of journeys start or end on a local road – the impact of almost 30% more vehicles cannot be overstated. Congestion, wear and tear of our roads, and air quality are all affected.

"With eight-and-a-half million more vehicles on our roads since 2000, it's no wonder our local roads are facing a growing congestion crunch and it would now take £12bn and a decade to clear the nation's road repair backlog.

“The Government needs to develop a fully funded plan to help councils deliver the desperately-needed local road improvements we need. This should include matching the extra growth in tax take with the funding it provides councils.

“This would see councils given an extra £400m a year to spend on filling potholes, easing congestion and protect vital bus routes. Only with long-term funding can councils deliver roads truly fit for the 21st Century.”

LGA: <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/spend-rising-fuel-and-motoring-tax-income-improving-local-roads-councils-urge-government>

Driverless cars bring up more questions than answers and training will be crucial, finds ‘Driver Ahead?’ Conference

Driverless cars could create a highway to confusion unless training and coaching catches up with the fast pace of change and helps drivers cope with a whole new set of demands.

That is the overall conclusion reached by a collection of industry experts who converged on London for the IAM RoadSmart/RAC Foundation/Pirelli ‘Driver Ahead?’ Conference last week.

More than 100 experts in the industry and beyond it talked about their findings and research for the conference, which sought to “map a safe route to the driverless car.”

During the Conference, speakers discussed how the next generation of autonomous cars will record much more information than ever before. This data can be used to resolve any post-crash insurance claims but also, critically, to inform and personalise future driver training.

Opening the conference, guest speaker Victoria Coren-Mitchell entertained delegates with a thought provoking speech. She introduced the concept of “death by code,” challenging us to decide if deaths caused by a computer are better or worse than those caused by human error. She pointed out that: “What would I do in a driverless car?” The answer is ‘Scream!’ What is driving this thing?”

Simon Thompson, Human Factors Specialist at Jaguar Land Rover, said: “Without the driving, there will be the desire to do secondary tasks – but how does the car engage with the driver when it needs him or her? There is a lot more that needs to be done in designing cars so that controls are easier to find, when asking the driver to take over control again.”

Other experts added that some drivers would inevitably misuse the vehicle systems, or simply find a way round them because they find it too complicated.

Professor Nick Reed, head of mobility research at Bosch, said: “Any system needs to be aware of the effective use or misuse of it.”

Professor of Human Factors at University of Nottingham Sarah Sharples, added: “People will break unbreakable technology if they find it inconvenient. What’s more, people pranking and having fun will cause security risks.”

Professor Neville Stanton, Professor and Chair of Human Factors Engineering at Southampton University pointed out there is a danger of switching the driver from underload

to overload – where he or she has had nothing to do, then has a sudden requirement to intervene in an emergency situation, and ends up panicking and creating a tragedy.

He said: “The problem with automation is that it is not currently powerful to render the driver completely redundant. It requires the driver to monitor continuously and intervene occasionally. The car needs to support, not replace the driver.”

Nic Fasci, lead engineer for vehicle engineering and homologation at Tata Motors European Technical centre, said: “The key to autonomous vehicles is training, training, training! The skill of driving must be robotic before the software can be developed. The skill of driving is being eroded and this can be seen every day.”

Neil Greig, director of policy and research at IAM RoadSmart, concluded: “Having the views of so many experts in the industry for our conference was very valuable. It showed that the driver will require a great deal of re-educating before entering the world of the autonomous vehicle.

“There is a myth that the car will do everything for the driver. It is clear the driver will always have a part to play – but is the driver ready for his new role? Clearly not. That’s the reality we have to prepare for.”

Electric vehicles: Bill will increase availability of charge-points

Motorway services and large petrol retailers will be required to install charge-points for electric vehicles, the Government has announced.

The plans are part of the Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill which received its first reading in the House of Commons on 18 October.

The Bill sets out to increase the access and availability of charge-points, while also giving the Government powers to make it compulsory for charge-points to be installed across the country.

[Above is just an excerpt from the original document. Personally, I can imagine the lines of vehicles waiting to charge-up, especially after hearing a taxi driver, who tested one, say that it takes 30 minutes to charge a full battery. Plus, of course, can the national grid cope or are we all going to have to go without a cup of tea just because of what I consider sheer lunacy. I’m a firm believer that, cradle to grave, the pollution/effect on the environment of battery driven cars causes far more harm given production, use of electricity and manufacture/disposal of batteries than a petrol driven vehicle – but, hey, what do I know? AG]

Gov.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/boost-for-electric-and-driverless-car-industry-as-government-drives-forward-green-transport-revolution>

MAG National Training Weekend

10th - 12th November 2017

MAG is pleased to announce the return of its Activists' Training Weekend. This first event for a number of years will be held at York Racecourse Centre over the weekend of 10th - 12th November 2017.

Arrive Friday evening for a meal and informal chat about MAG, followed by structured training sessions on Saturday and Sunday. Depart Sunday lunchtime.

Accommodation is en-suite twin rooms. A £25.00 per-person deposit is required to secure your booking (returned when you attend). Priority will be given to serving MAG officers for these limited places.

To register your interest, please contact central-office@mag-uk.org or tel: 01926 844064 with your name, membership number and MAG role including group/region (if a MAG officer).

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