



A networking tool for Activists and other interested parties

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EDITORIAL

There is an extremely long article in this edition which I would not normally include in its entirety, however, I feel it's an important issue. It's from Highways England and the subject is Smart motorways.

These are extremely controversial, to say the least and only today (26th) I've read that the BBC included a piece questioning the safety of them and people's concerns.

One of our Regional members, Political Officer Geoff Mills, mentioned at AGC how he and his partner had recently been stranded with a puncture. Despite their call for assistance and even when that assistance arrived in the form of a recovery van the lane remained a live lane.

Recently, there has also been an instance where an HGV ploughed into a car broken down in the, so called, smart lane. The thought of an HGV ploughing into you at 60mph doesn't even bear thinking about.

All this is just unacceptable.

In my humble opinion, there is absolutely nothing 'smart' about this and whoever came up with the idea should really think again.

On our way to AGC my Rep and I noted, when driving along a 'smart' motorway that there is a gully running alongside what was the hard shoulder, and now a 'smart' lane, adjacent to the barrier so if you broke down on a bike you couldn't pull right in close to the barrier. Also, pulling close to the barrier in a car the passenger door could not be opened enabling passengers to scramble to the safety of the banking.

It has been suggested these 'not so smart lanes' came about in order to save the cost of compulsory purchase of lane adjacent which could then be used as a hard shoulder!

This could very well be so – in which case we have a scenario whereby endangering lives is being balanced against the financing of road improvements creating a safe barrier for broken down vehicles to move out of the way of live lanes.

Something needs to change. Drastically change. We've all heard of fatalities on the hard shoulder the possible outcome in the scenario of 'smart' motorways could be extremely shocking.

Changing the subject but still on roads is the introduction, at last, of a nationwide £130 yellow box fines. It really is long overdue. £130 versus ignorance should be 'no contest' but will it? We'll see!

Rant over, Ride safe, AG

[Copy for the December – yes, really, edition to aine@maq-uk.org by 25th November please]

Acknowledgments:- George Legg, Selina Lavendar, Colin Brown, Lembit Opik, Julie Sperling and anyone else I've forgotten

Political Unit – Lembit and Colin

As winter approaches politics couldn't be hotter. While a lot of it is Brexit related hot air, the Motorcycle Action Group Political Unit have been hard at it, keeping the heat on the decision-makers in a number of areas. Colin Brown and Lembit Opik share the latest from the political front line.

MAG to star at NEC

Good news for all bikers: MAG will be well represented at the Motorcycle Live event in the Birmingham NEC this year. MAG's stand will be up and running every day from 16th-24th November 2019. The Political Unit will also be around and about at the show, and calling through the stand as and when we can. Come and meet MAG – and tell us what's on your biking mind. And get your friends to come along to and sign up. MAG is your insurance policy to help you ride free. See you there!

How smart are our motorways?

A curious concern has been raised by road users groups about the wisdom of removing hard shoulders from motorways. Essentially, the disappearance of these refuges has been hailed by the normally sensible Highways England as progress.

Others disagree. The advice, which goes with this change, makes them feel that there is a serious lack of thinking behind the change. Highways England now tells us to stay 'in' our vehicles wherever we happen to stop. That includes the outside lane. We're meant to dial 999 and wait. The emergency recovery services have equally strange advice. They're told not to stop until the police arrive – just to drive around until then.

Think about the implications. If you're a motorcyclist and you break down on the outside lane, you're just meant to sit there, take your helmet off, call 999 and hope nobody kills you in the meantime.

MAG gets on well with Highways England, which claims a reduction in accidents following the introduction of smart motorways. We want your experiences. Have you been caught out with a breakdown on a smart motorway? What happened? Let Colin and Lembit know and we can use your real case studies to get some common sense into this potentially lethal project.

Alas ULEZ

Don't forget to tell us your ULEZ experiences. Have you been fined? Have you had to scrap your motorbike because you couldn't afford to pay the charges? And make sure you let Mayor Sadiq Khan know too at:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/contacting-city-hall-and-mayor-0/queries-about-mayor>

We need your help - to help you.

Sadiq Khan has announced a scrappage scheme that offers £1000 for scrapping your pre Euro3 motorcycle. We are sure that this will not come as a great comfort for those who have already had to financially compromise themselves by scrapping their bike without financial incentive, or been paying the £12.50 per day charge. Opened on 23rd October over 6 months after the implementation of the ULEZ charge, the scheme is not retrospective and ULEZ payments will not be refunded. For those potentially affected by the forthcoming extension of the ULEZ we recommend trying to make claim for the money now as it will no doubt be withdrawn when we win exemption for all motorcycles in the extended ULEZ.

Data dump

Unlike many of our opponents, the Political Unit depends on data to make its arguments. We've been looking at the actual facts behind health claims relating to emissions. As we suspected, there is a lot of data from massive surveys to prove that there is NO correlation between certain pollutants like Particulate Matter (PMs) and mortality.

'This really questions the endless panic-ridden claims that transport pollution, including from motorcycles, are killing us. Right now, that looks like a lie' says Colin Brown, MAG's Director of Campaigns and Political Engagement. 'We'll finish this large piece of research and have an objective view. We do our best to avoid what's called 'selection bias' which means deliberately choosing only that information that supports what you're trying to prove. We pride ourselves on having a truly objective perspective, even when this is challenging to those with a vested interest in talking up the danger of emissions. Motorcycles must not be banned on the basis of wrong information, and that's the threat all this is designed to prevent. We seek the emissions reality because you can't go wrong with the truth.

Presenting the benefits of motorcycles

At the 2019 Smarter Tomorrows Conference held in Liverpool on 23/24th October, Colin made a formal presentation on the effects of promoting modal shift to motorcycles on reducing air pollution. Colin reports that the presentation was well received and clearly opened the minds of many in the audience to this overlooked solution to improving air quality. The presentation brought questions from the floor and a number of individuals approaching Colin after the presentation requesting more information. Taking this kind of opportunity to get the message out to a wide audience is key to both raising the profile of MAG as the go-to organisation for common sense on all things motorcycling, and helps to defend riders rights by ensuring policies fully consider the transport mode that we love.

DEFRA or Bust with support from the APPG on Motorcycling

MAG is making a formal request for a meeting with DEFRA. The request is to allow us to present the findings of our research into the total lack of empirical evidence and modelling

inaccuracies for motorcycle emissions. Chris Law MP, chair of the APPG for Motorcycling has committed to helping us finally get the meeting that we have been requesting for a number of months. We will be asking DEFRA to commit to publish national guidance to exempt all motorcycles from consideration in any Clean Air Zone, and to commission the necessary research to gain genuine empirical evidence and develop modelling techniques that accurately reflect the behaviours of motorcycles in congested traffic.

Asking for more from the APPG

Lembit attended the AGM of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Motorcycling on 23rd October. We are keen to get the members of the APPG to take some time out from Brexit to actually do some constructive work for the benefit of motorcyclists. Lembit believes we have that commitment from the Group, and we certainly have a long list of areas for the APPG to focus on.

General Election prediction

At time of writing, Brexit continues to grip the British political system. The best guess for a General Election is now 28th November 2019. We'll keep you up to date with all this, and there's an article about what to do when an election happens in The Road. Former MP Lembit Öpik is ready to help at any time. We'll need to work hard to get bikers' voices heard. But it's our chance to make an impact in a desperately volatile election where MPs will be equally desperate for votes.

Weather report

Lembit Öpik, MAG's Director of Communications and Public Affairs, is also feeling motivated to have a go at weather reporting, because he's has been looking at climate related weather matters. At time of writing (20th October 2019) he's ready to make a bold prediction: 'first snow by 17th November, 2019' predicts Lembit. 'I really think we're in for a cold one this year, so watch for ice when you're out on two wheels.' If he's right, stay safe - and he also hopes others will take his predictions on weather and climate seriously.

Road Safety Conference.

We can confirm, Lembit Öpik, MAG's Director of Communications and Public Affairs, will address the National Road Safety Conference in Telford on 13th November 2019 at around 14.45 as part of a panel. We're expecting sparks, but MAG is never afraid of a challenge.

Conference facts are to be found at:

<http://nationalroadsafetyconference.org.uk/2019-agenda/an-afternoon-with/>

And there's more

Not wishing to be outdone by his colleague Colin Brown has also confirmed that he will be presenting MAG's Safety in Numbers Report at the RSGB Conference "PTW Riders: improving safety and reducing collisions and casualties" at the Royal Automobile Club, London on 19th March 2020.

Details can be found at: <http://rsgbevents.org.uk/agendas/>

Recruitment video premier at the AGC!

As promised, MAG has produced its first recruitment videos. These feature volunteers from MAG doing slightly unusual things to bring home the importance of joining MAG. The first one was premiered at MAG's Annual General Conference in Dewsbury at the end of September, to rapturous applause. We can confirm we WON'T win an Oscar, but a Bafta is a possibility... the videos should be ready for 'General Release' at the Motorcycle Live event in Birmingham's NEC. Fears that the cast will leave MAG for a sparkling career in Hollywood will be allayed as soon as you see the adverts. But they're still pretty good – and so say all of us!

MAG PRESS RELEASES

08-10-2019 MAG members call out unworkable policy decisions at Annual Conference

On Saturday 28th September, at their 45th Annual Group Conference (AGC), MAG members generated a strong and uncompromising message regarding what they see as unworkable and unrealistic transport policies that are being promoted by politicians of all colours.

During the Conference, a series of proposals made by former MAG National Chairman, Neil Liversidge, were discussed and put to the vote. All passed; most by an overwhelming majority.

The proposals progress and solidify MAG's position, which promotes freedom of choice in personal transport, and an integrated transport system that works for all members of society, the economy and the environment.

The position defined by these proposals rejects the proposed 2040 ban on the sale of internal combustion-powered vehicles, or any similar ban at any other date. Promoting freedom of choice, the position rejects assumptions that electrification of the entire vehicle fleet in the UK is achievable. It does, however, support electrification and improvement of an affordable public transport network, which will naturally encourage voluntary reductions in the use of private transport. Finally, the introduction of fully autonomous vehicles on UK roads is opposed, due to the evidence suggesting that they will never be sufficiently safe on a road environment that must necessarily accommodate motorcyclists and cyclists without segregation.

A further resolution, brought by Life Member, Stephen Kearney, also reaffirmed the central role of motorcycles in MAG's vision, which promotes motorcycles as the most efficient and least polluting fossil fuel-powered transport mode.

Neil Liversidge said "We recognise that transport needs to change given the UK's dense population, but dictatorial measures such as banning ICE vehicles are not the way to do it. Put in a proper public transport system so people have a real choice, and let them keep their bikes and cars and way of life. A lot is talked these days about respecting different cultures: well, we have a culture too and we demand that it is respected also. ICE vehicles have brought massive benefits to millions of people that electric vehicles

will never realistically bring.

People have realised in the last few years that they have taken too much for too long from politicians who don't really represent them at all. This is the people pushing back... and it's only the beginning."

Speaking after the Conference, MAG Vice Chair, Andy Carrott, who chaired the event, said "This has been another very successful AGC, where MAG members from around the country came together to celebrate and recognise the work of the many volunteers that make MAG the effective organisation it is today. The meeting faced some tough questions, and there is never unanimity of views, but these resolutions were well debated from a range of perspectives. It was evident that members at the conference support an integrated transport network, with drivers and riders alike free to choose their transport mode (with both ICE and electric vehicles as part of the mix), without increased risk to vulnerable road users such as cyclists and motorcyclists. The fact that we can hold these controversial discussions in such a respectful and balanced way gives great credit to our members and the organisation."

The Motorcycle Action Group appeals to Anne Sacoolas: "do the right thing"

This version: 2019-10-11

On 27th August 2019, the car being driven by Anne Sacoolas, wife of a US Diplomat, collided with a motorcycle being ridden by 19 year old Harry Dunn near to RAF Croughton in Northamptonshire. The car was allegedly being driven on the wrong side of the road at the time of the collision. Tragically Harry died shortly after the collision. Despite informing the police that she had no intention to do so, Sacoolas left the country before an application by Northamptonshire Police to the US Embassy to waive diplomatic immunity had been considered.

This story has been well covered in the media with Harry Dunn's parents appealing to Boris Johnson and Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab to intervene. The response from Donald Trump has infuriated many with its insensitivity.

There are a number of aspects to this story that MAG intends to address at a future point, but out of respect for Harry and his family and friends, we will await the final conclusion of this tragic event before making further comment.

MAG does, however, join many others in calling directly to Anne Sacoolas to do the right thing, return voluntarily to the United Kingdom and face fair and impartial due process.

MAG campaigns for justice for all motorcyclists who fall victim of accidents caused by the actions of other road users.

Shock news on Derbyshire Police Bike Theft Ranking while Thames Valley Police contradict themselves.

This version: 2019 10 14

Derbyshire Police have contacted MAG to apologise for an administrative error that resulted in bike theft stats being quoted incorrectly. The revised figures see Derbyshire tumble in the rankings from 1st to 25th. Meanwhile Thames Valley Police has revealed data that allows MAG to rank them 29th.

Derbyshire Police's Freedom of Information Officer explained in a letter to MAG's central office that:

"As a consequence of further searches by our analysts it has been established that the original figures as supplied are wrong and, therefore, should be disregarded. The revised figures are:

2017 - 437

2018 – 414"

This revelation strips Derbyshire of its top rank in the Bike Theft Rankings, with the new figures revealing a theft rate of 1 in 62 bikes stolen as opposed to the originally published 1 in 776.

Meanwhile, despite communications from Thames Valley Police to MAG stating an inability to provide the data within the constraints of the FOI legislation, a separate FOI request to TVP from MAG Regional Rep, Tim Peregrine, brought a confused and contradictory response. The response that Tim received contained a letter stating "Please note however that the vehicle type is selected by the officer dealing with the report and may not be a completely accurate reflection of the vehicle type". The figures provided in an attached document were inconveniently broken down by financial year as opposed to calendar year. The figures were thus presented as "for the date range 01/01/2017 – 31/12/2018 broken down by financial year". The quoted figures are were:

2016/17: 244

2017/18: 1053

2018/19: 734

MAG has therefore taken the total figure across two years to be 2031, and averaged that to 1015.5 per year. This places Thames Valley Police at 29th in the rankings.

When asked to comment, MAG's Director of Campaigns & Political Engagement, Colin Brown, who has been responsible for collating the ranking data said "it's probably best that I don't."

The new data has now been published in a revised document which can be found at:

https://wiki.mag-uk.org/images/d/db/Rankings_October_2019.pdf

Call for volunteers for Motorcycle Live 2019 in exchange for free entry

We are looking for MAG members who are familiar with promoting MAG and signing up members to assist our stand manager, Bill Green, with the running of the MAG stand at Motorcycle Live Birmingham NEC from 16th - 24th November 2019

Whether you have volunteered on the stand in previous years or never been to Birmingham NEC before, if you are willing to get involved please contact central-office@mag-uk.org

Make the subject of your email

Motorcycle Live, indicate the day(s) you are available on and we will respond to you.

We aim to have three to four volunteers on the stand each day so please feel free to volunteer as a 'team'. Tickets are collected from our stand manager on arrival at the venue, subject to conditions we can also cover parking if you arrive by car. Each individual issued free entry is expected to work on the stand for approximately four hours.

Motorcycle Live opening hours Sat & Sun 9am-5pm, Mon - Fri 10am - 5pm

Bike parking is free and opens one hour before the show, closing one hour after the show.

Many thanks

Selina, MAG Chair

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Regards

Selina Lavender

National Chair of The Motorcycle Action Group Limited

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FEMA

British Riders Reject Ban On Internal Combustion-Powered Vehicles

• by *Wim Taal* - October 9, 2019



More and more national governments are planning to ban the sale of internal combustion-powered vehicles. Members of British motorcyclists' organization MAG reject the ban the UK government wants to implement from 2040.

On Saturday 28th September 2019, at their 45th Annual Group Conference (AGC), **MAG** United Kingdom members generated a strong and uncompromising message regarding what they see as unworkable and unrealistic transport policies that are being promoted by politicians of all colours.



During the Conference, a series of proposals made by former MAG National Chairman, Neil Liversidge, were discussed and put to the vote. All passed; most by an overwhelming majority. According to MAG the proposals progress and solidify MAG's position, which promotes freedom of choice in personal transport, and an integrated transport system that works for all members of society, the economy and the environment. The position defined by these proposals rejects the proposed 2040 ban on the sale of internal combustion-powered vehicles, or any similar ban at any other date. Promoting freedom of choice, the position rejects assumptions that electrification of the entire vehicle fleet in the UK is achievable. It does, however, support electrification and improvement of an affordable public transport network, which will naturally encourage voluntary reductions in the use of private transport. Finally, the introduction of fully autonomous vehicles on UK roads is opposed, due to the evidence suggesting that they will never be sufficiently safe on a road environment that must necessarily accommodate motorcyclists and cyclists without segregation.

A further resolution, brought by Life Member, Stephen Kearney, also reaffirmed the central role of motorcycles in MAG's vision, which promotes motorcycles as the most efficient and least polluting fossil fuel-powered transport mode.



Neil Liversidge said: “We recognise that transport needs to change given the UK’s dense population, but dictatorial measures such as banning internal combustion-powered vehicles are not the way to do it. Put in a proper public transport system so people have a real choice, and let them keep their bikes and cars and way of life. A lot is talked these days about respecting different cultures: well, we have a culture too and we demand that it is respected also. Internal combustion-powered vehicles have brought massive benefits to millions of people that electric vehicles will never realistically bring.”

MAG is a member of FEMA.

The preservation and use of historic motorcycles matters to FEMA

FEMA: [WimTaal](#) - October 18, 2019



On Wednesday 16 October 2019 the European Parliament Historic Vehicle Group (EPHVG) met for the first time after the start of the new parliamentary period. In this group, members of the European Parliament (MEPs) meet to discuss policy developments which are relevant to historic vehicles.

These meetings are also attended by other organizations that have an interest in historic vehicles. FEMA’s DolfWilligers was there too, because many motorcyclists own one or more historic motorcycles next to the motorcycle and/or car they use every day.

To preserve our cultural heritage the circumstances need to be right: good quality parts and fuel need to be available not in the least to keep the vehicle in its original state, owners need to be able to use them, which means that cities, despite low emission zones (LEZs) must be accessible for owners of historic vehicles, also there should be no thresholds to move them from one country to another, the ownership and use of historic vehicles should be affordable: no unnecessary taxes, high taxation of supposed pollution, etc. and finally the technical knowledge to repair and maintain such vehicles should be preserved.

We are not only talking about cars here. Of course motorcycles are part of the world-wide cultural heritage, just like cars, heavy goods vehicles, agricultural vehicles et cetera. In fact, they are part of a much wider cultural heritage, which contains not only vehicles, but also ships, trains, roads, buildings, even landscapes. The best way of preservation is using it. For mechanical objects like motorcycles not on a daily base, but to preserve a motorcycle you need to keep it running, use it occasionally and show it riding to the public.

The EPHVG was founded to make this possible for all historic vehicles and to emphasize this it will search for alliances with other cultural heritage groups. FEMA is happy and proud to be part of this and will continue to fight for the preservation and use of historic motorcycles.



European Commission recognizes the importance of post-licence training. FEMA: WimTaalOctober 10, 2019



The European Motorcycle Training Quality Label received the Road Safety Charter Award in the category 'voluntary commitments' during an event organized by the European Commission in Brussels.

The European award acknowledges inspirational and innovative initiatives that contribute towards improving road safety and saving lives on Europe's roads. The award was presented by the European Commissioner for Transport, Violeta Bulc, to the Secretary General of the European Association of Motorcycle Manufacturers (ACEM), Antonio Perlot, who received it on behalf of the three members running the European Motorcycle Training Quality Label: ACEM, the International Motorcycling Federation (FIM) and the German Road Safety Council (DVR).

The European Motorcycle Training Quality Label is a voluntary certification scheme for post-licence motorcycle training programmes open to all training bodies. Its main objective is to

help motorcyclists to recognize the best post-licence training options in Europe. The scheme was launched in 2016 and has certified 29 motorcycle training programmes in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden, with more programmes currently under assessment. In 2018 the Swedish FEMA member SMC has been certified and received the motorcycle manufacturers' quality label 'European Motorcycle Training Quality Label': www.fema-online.eu/website/index.php/2016/11/22/quality-label-for-rider-training/

The Road Safety Award is one of the flagship initiatives of the European Road Safety Charter, the most important Europe-wide civil society platform on road safety. The Charter was initiated in 2004 by the European Commission to encourage key stakeholders to take specific and measurable road safety action within their area of responsibilities.



Commenting on the European Motorcycle Training Quality Label, the European Commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc said: "We are grateful that the European Motorcycling Training Quality Label has been set up, responding to our call for voluntary commitments. Europe has some high-quality training schemes on offer, and the European Motorcycle Training Quality Label will help motorcyclists to identify the very best of them".

Antonio Perlot, Secretary General of the European Association of Motorcycle Manufacturers (ACEM), said: "I am delighted to receive this award on behalf of the consortium running this programme. The Label is not only part of the motorcycle industry's forward-looking safety strategy but also an excellent example of how cooperation between industry players, NGOs, motorcycle trainers and users' organisations can deliver positive results in motorcycle safety": <https://www.acem.eu/>

Christian Kellner, German Road Safety Council (DVR) CEO: "We are grateful to the European Commission for this award that honours the work of all the people involved in the European Motorcycle Training Quality Label. This recognition motivates us to continue working every day to make Europe's roads safer": https://www.dvr.de/dvr/kurzdarstellung_en/

Jesper Christensen, FIM Director for Public Affairs and general secretary of the Swedish motorcyclists' association SMC: "Receiving this award from the European Commission is an honourable recognition of the joint road safety commitment made by FIM, ACEM and DVR. It shows that high quality post-licence training does play an important role in preserving motorcyclists' safety and should be encouraged. This award is also one more reason for our organisation to continue supporting high quality training for all motorcyclists".

FIM: <http://www.fim-europe.com/>

SMC: <https://www.svmc.se/>

MAG Notice Board

Send copy of
Events poster to
events@mag-uk.org
(applies to clubs as
well as local groups)

**Next ROAD
deadline
10th November**

**Not received the latest edition of The ROAD contact
Central Office
01926 844 064 or central-office@mag-uk.org
to check your address and contact details**

Gift a MAG membership to a mate

**Clubs please send latest website & Facebook
links along with logo to exec@mag-uk.org**

Transport Committee to ‘kickstart conversation’ on road pricing



A group of MPs is starting a ‘national discussion’ on how roads will be funded in the future – with low-emission zones, congestion charges and toll roads among the key areas for debate.

With the £40bn annual income from Fuel Duty and Vehicle Excise Duty likely to decline sharply in the future, a formal inquiry on roads pricing will be launched by the Transport Committee in early 2020.

In advance of the inquiry, the Committee hopes to spark a debate, among drivers and non-drivers alike, about the future of road-based transport:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/transport-committee/news-parliament-2017/national-road-pricing-17-19/>

The issues likely to feature heavily in the inquiry include toll roads, congestion charges, a HGV levy, workplace parking levy and low emission zones.

The Transport Committee says the income from Fuel Duty and Vehicle Excise Duty could end entirely if the Government keeps its pledge to fully decarbonise road transport within two decades.

The Committee adds this income will need to be replaced if the Government is to continue to invest in transport infrastructure and prepare the transport network for a new greener future.

Lilian Greenwood MP, chair of the Transport Committee, said: “We cannot ignore the looming fiscal black hole.

“We need to ask how we will pay for roads in the future and in answering that question we have an opportunity for a much wider debate about our use of road space, cutting carbon emissions, tackling congestion, modal shift and how we prioritise active travel.

“This isn’t about pricing drivers off the road; it’s about making sure that as many people as possible have a say in future plans so that we can manage the changes to come. The Transport Committee wants to kickstart this conversation.”

Should Highways England continue to implement smart motorways?

Smart motorways continue to polarise opinion – despite Highways England’s repeated assurances they are as safe as the wider motorway network.

By Edward Seaman, Assistant editor, Road Safety News

First introduced in 2006 (on the M42), smart motorways use variable speed limits to manage traffic and tackle stop-start congestion.

The hard shoulder is turned into an 'active lane', with gantry signs displaying a 'Red X' when a lane is closed – usually as a result of a vehicle breakdown or in the event of a collision.

Most of the controversy surrounding smart motorways relates to safety, with a number of high-profile collisions this year doing little to enhance public opinion or support:

<http://roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/smart-motorways-a-risk-to-life/>

So much so that earlier this month, GEM Motoring Assist described the situation as 'unacceptable' – calling for roll out of schemes to be halted until a 'proper safety review' has been completed: <http://roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/situation-surrounding-smart-motorways-unacceptable-gem/>

Neil Worth, GEM road safety officer, said: "We are asking ministers and highways authorities specifically to call a halt to their rollout of smart motorways across the country until a proper review of safety has been completed and adequate refuge areas provided for drivers."

But on Wednesday (23 Oct) – while appearing in front of the Transport Committee – Highways England once again insisted the schemes are helping to improve road safety:

<https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/f64f3547-f0b9-4b2d-a107-0347ef5a6693>

What do the statistics show?

Highways England says smart motorways are designed with safety in mind, to be at least as safe as the conventional motorways they replace.

It points to evidence indicating that on the latest generation of smart motorways – of which there are 12 stretches – casualties have fallen by more than a quarter (28%).

This figure is based on three years' data from two smart motorway schemes on the M25 and one year of data from seven other schemes across the country.

Meanwhile, DfT statistics show that nine people were killed on smart motorways during 2018 – compared to 77 deaths on conventional motorways.

A Highways England spokesperson said: "Our motorways are some of the safest in the world; they are three times safer than A roads and six times safer than single carriageway A roads.

"Smart motorways include more safety features than conventional motorways, including signs and signals, CCTV, and places to stop in an emergency every 1.5 miles."

Findings 'hardly a ringing endorsement'

Despite the Highways England evaluation, road safety stakeholders have doubts about the schemes.

IAM RoadSmart describes Highways England's evaluation as 'hardly a ringing endorsement for the millions of pounds spent so far'.

Neil Greig, policy and research director at IAM RoadSmart, said: “We have read with interest the substantial performance analysis published by Highways England on their new smart motorways, in particular the M25 sections completed so far.

“These reports show they are just as safe as existing motorways with hard shoulders and are delivering congestion benefits.

“While the reduced journey times are welcome these findings are hardly a ringing endorsement for the millions of pounds spent so far.”

The RAC Foundation says attention should be given to the number of ‘near-misses’ – as well as the casualty statistics.

Philip Gomm, spokesperson for the RAC Foundation, said: “The key question is whether the data shows that smart motorways are safer than traditional motorways with permanent hard shoulders.

“Highways England insists that it does. However, these are still relatively early days and a sharp eye must be kept not just on accident statistics but all breakdowns, each of which might be thought of as a near-miss.”



Image: Highways England

Public perception ‘crucial’

One of the biggest obstacles faced by Highways England is gaining public support for smart motorways.

More than half (53%) of respondents to a Twitter survey carried out by Road Safety GB did not believe that smart motorways are safe – although the small sample size should have course be taken into account.

Opinion can be swayed by the national media, with fatalities on these stretches of road being attracting significant coverage.

In September, the Sunday Telegraph labelled the schemes ‘a risk to life’, following the deaths of four people on a section of smart motorway on the M1 in just 10 months:

<http://roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/smart-motorways-a-risk-to-life/>

The RAC Foundation believes stricter enforcement of Red X lanes is key to gaining public support.

Philip Gomm said: “Do people feel safe? The anecdotal evidence suggests that many do not.

“Central to turning around public opinion will be strict enforcement of the Red X and wider use of stopped-vehicle detection systems, though it is worth noting that such technology is not common on old motorways.”

In contrast, Highways England says feedback from road users shows a clear majority feel confident driving on a smart motorway.

In a survey published by Transport Focus – an independent watchdog – 64% of respondents said smart motorways provide ‘safer journeys’, with just 13% believing they are less safe.

Time for an awareness campaign?

Another factor which causes concern is the lack of knowledge among drivers.

Highways England’s own analysis of two sections of smart motorway on the M25 suggests that up to 20% of drivers are ignoring Red X signs: <http://roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/smart-motorways-up-to-one-in-five-ignoring-red-x-signs/>

Both IAM RoadSmart and RAC Foundation are calling for Highways England to implement educational campaigns.

Philip Gomm said: “There is the issue of driver awareness.

“People should know intuitively what to do when they use a smart motorway – especially when they have problems with their vehicle.

“But the vast majority of drivers will have passed their tests long before all-lane running and dynamic hard shoulders were ever thought of and Highways England needs to keep up its information campaign.”

Neil Greig said: “IAM RoadSmart are not calling for a moratorium on smart motorways but we do want to see them built in the way they were originally outlined to us and the travelling public.

“The lack of knowledge among drivers on key aspects such as Red X compliance is frightening.

“This means we expect 100% CCTV and traffic flow detector coverage, far more frequent refuges, high profile enforcement and ongoing education campaigns.”

What next for smart motorways?

Highways England says it remains committed to further improving the safety of smart motorways.

At present, smart motorways have emergency refuge areas a maximum of 1.5 miles apart – around 75 seconds of driving. The refuge areas have an emergency telephone and are wider than the hard shoulder to enable drivers to get further away from traffic.

However, Highways England has committed to reducing this distance to one mile apart on new smart motorway schemes (beginning construction in 2020).

Highways England also says it is enhancing emergency areas by installing extra signage, using the internationally recognised SOS text and marking the bays in a high-visibility orange colour to make them as easy as possible to spot.

A Highways England spokesperson said: "We remain committed to further improving safety.

"This will include, in smart motorway schemes starting construction from 2020, making places to stop in an emergency one mile and systems to detect stopped vehicles being standard.

"We also urge all drivers to check their vehicles before setting out on a journey and if they do get into difficulty to follow breakdown advice."

Some smart motorways too clever by half 23 Oct 2019

Dynamic hard shoulder "too complicated to use"

RAC Foundation: 23 October 2019

The boss of England's strategic roads says some stretches of motorway where the hard shoulder is occasionally opened to traffic can be "too complicated to use".

Jim O'Sullivan – chief executive of Highways England – said there would be no more sections of road with a so-called dynamic hard shoulder added to the network.

The design is already in use on lengths of the M1, M4, M5, M6, M42 and M62.

Mr O'Sullivan told the Transport Select Committee that there is confusion over when the hard shoulder is and is not open to traffic: <https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/f64f3547-f0b9-4b2d-a107-0347ef5a6693>

"We get people who stop there when it's a running lane. What we also find is because people aren't sure if it's a hard shoulder or a running lane, even when it is open, the usage of that running lane is much lower because people aren't sure whether it's a hard shoulder or not."

Steve Gooding, director of the RAC Foundation, said:

"The rules, regulations and layouts of roads should be easy to comprehend whether people are driving along them at 70mph or 7mph.

"The simpler motorways are to understand the safer they will be, as motorists concentrate on the hazards ahead rather than grappling with which lanes are available to them and which are not."

Mr O'Sullivan also defended the safety record of smart motorways which includes not just those sections with a dynamic hard shoulder, but also controlled motorways with variable speed limits and all lane running (ALR) motorways where the hard shoulder has become a permanent running lane: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/highways-england-statement-following-publication-of-dfts-reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-2018-report>

He said that in 2018, 77 people had died on traditional motorways in England and seven more had died on smart motorways.

The committee heard from Highways England that 38% of breakdowns occur in live lanes rather than on the verges or in the emergency refuges which are spaced anywhere 600m to 1.5 miles apart.

However, there were no figures immediately available for what proportion of breakdowns occur in live lanes on traditional motorways.

Mr O'Sullivan said that stopped vehicle detection systems were now present on 18% of the ALR network though from 2020 all new stretches of all lane running motorways will have it. The M3 will be the first part of the current ALR network without the detection system to be retrofitted. He admitted that the detection system would have prevented a number of deaths, though he pointed out that the so-called MIDAS system can detect slowing traffic and automatically adjust speed limits.

The Highways England boss was critical of drivers who stop on motorways in non-emergency situations such to go to the loo or because their children were car sick. He said 50%-70% of cases people were stopping for non critical reasons.

The committee was told that warning letters had been sent to 130,000 drivers who had ignored the Red X which indicates that a lane is closed on a smart motorway because of a hazard. Highways England expect police enforcement of the Red X to start this autumn.

At the start of the committee hearing Mr O'Sullivan told members that the three biggest issues sitting on his desk were: air quality, Brexit, and the current and next road investment strategies (RIS1 and RIS2).

Smart Motorways Network:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/836639/BHM17_0054_MGW.PDF

‘Bikes repair easier than bikers’ – Highways England

Highways England has launched a new motorcycle safety campaign, aimed at those most likely to be killed or seriously injured: leisure riders.

The BikerTek campaign is centered around a spoof pop-up shop, which has been set up at bike shows and cafes across south east England: <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/biker/>

The BikerTek shop sells new bike parts – which customers initially believe are genuine – until it is revealed that the ‘parts’ are in fact used to help repair the broken bones of injured riders.

More than 2,600 bikers have visited the shop, operated by ‘sales staff’, all of whom are bikers who have been involved in a collision.

Once engaged in conversation, the staff focus on four key behaviours: cornering, overtaking, speeding and fatigue.

'Customers' were filmed, showing their reactions when they realise what the parts are actually used for: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chLUezSR3DE&feature=youtu.be>

Highways England says riders are attracted by the striking similarity between the genuine motorcycle parts and their medical counterparts.

A successful formula?

BikerTek follows a similar format to a 2017 Highways England campaign, which highlighted to young powered two wheeler riders the consequences of not wearing protective clothing

The Distressed campaign – again based on a pop-up shop – explains to young riders why not wearing the right gear could 'cost more than you think':

<http://roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/n-a-6131/>

Evaluation among the campaign's target audience – young motorcycle and moped riders – showed:

- A 70% increase in young rider riders being more likely to check traffic thoroughly at junctions and roundabouts, and when filtering through traffic
- A 6% increase in the number of young riders saying they would wear protective clothing – with more than 75% saying they were 'more likely' to do so

The campaign also received the 'Best Content Marketing Campaign' award at the Chartered Institute of Marketing's (CIM) Marketing Excellence Awards earlier this year.

Operation Snap launches in Northampton

Northampton Police has become the latest force to enable members of the public to report driving offences by uploading video evidence.

'Operation Snap: Northamptonshire' allows people to submit dashcam and mobile phone footage via an online portal, which can then be used to take action against drivers who have broken the law: <https://www.northants.police.uk/news/northants/news/news/2019/october-19/new-video-submission-service-aims-to-keep-countys-roads-safer/>

The initiative is run by the force's Safer Roads Team, who is calling for evidence of offences including: dangerous driving, careless driving, using a mobile phone while driving, not wearing a seatbelt and failing to stop at a red light.

During the introductory test period, action was taken against 37 drivers – from a total of 59 video submissions.

PC David Lee, Northamptonshire Police Safer Roads Team, said: "Operation Snap lets the public help us keep our county's roads safer by enabling us to take action on driving offences we otherwise wouldn't see.

"When people see a marked police car they tend to drive carefully and behave, but we know members of the public see bad and dangerous driving all the time.

"This new service allows people to share evidence of that with us quickly and easily so we can take prompt and appropriate action."

Operation Snap was first piloted by North Wales Police in October 2016 – and has since been rolled out across Wales: <http://roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/wales-operation-snap-is-extended-nationwide/>

Similar initiatives are also in place across England, including in Essex, where the Extra Eyes campaign has been running since December 2017: <http://roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/extra-eyes-will-help-keep-essex-road-users-safer/>

Ridefree recognised with Prince Michael Award



A young rider project, which aims to help the Government look at how to deliver motorcycle training in the future, has been recognised with a prestigious road safety accolade.

Ridefree, developed by Agilysis and Driving Research in partnership with Highways England, compared four training approaches which could be used to change the compulsory basic training (CBT) taken by riders: <http://www.ridefree.co/>

Under Ridefree, young powered two wheeler riders across the east of England were offered the chance to take an enhanced CBT free-of-charge, in return for contributing to the research project.

Participants first completed the training and then answered questions about how the course went, and motorcycling in general.

The project, which had the backing of the DVSA, has been recognised with a Prince Michael International Road Safety Award (PMIRSA): <http://www.roadssafetyawards.com/>

Established by HRH Prince Michael of Kent in 1987, each year the ‘most outstanding’ international road safety initiatives receive public recognition through the awards’ scheme.

The awards are presented in five main categories based on the five pillars of the Global Plan for a Decade of Action: road safety management, safer roads, safer vehicles, safer road users and post-crash response.

Commending the programme, the awards judging panel said: “RideFree is a new road safety intervention aimed at improving the safety of young motorcyclists.

“This is a truly multi-sectoral evidence-based approach to developing a new behavioural road safety intervention.”

Lorraine Wills, regional road safety coordinator for Highways England, said: “The success of Ridefree comes from the way that a whole region embraced an approach to intervention design and a project with young riders.

“Highways England are delighted to receive this prestigious award on behalf of the many committed professionals that worked so hard to make Ridefree happen.

“If road users lack knowledge about road safety or have poor attitudes towards riding, it doesn’t matter if they are using local or Highways England roads and often journeys straddle both types of network.

“Instead, improvements in behaviours are of benefit to all by reducing risk across the road network.”

PMIRSA winners are invited to the awards’ luncheon held at The Savoy in London – which this year takes place on 10 December – where Prince Michael announces his Premier Award winner.

In 2018, the Institute of Road Traffic Management (IRTE) Delhi – an Indian-based research organisation – picked up the top accolade, recognising the ‘major contribution’ it has made across the globe.

ULEZ Scrappage Scheme



MCIA Press Release: 23 October 2019

The role of Powered Two Wheelers (PTWs) and other Powered Light Vehicles (PLVs) in reducing transport congestion and subsequent air pollution cannot be overstated, as their small physical footprint and low or zero emissions help counter the effect of single-occupancy cars and lightly laden vans on our cities.

The benefits of PLVs are highlighted in the MCIA’s policy document *The Route to Tomorrow’s Journeys* and have been at the forefront of the productive working relationship that has developed between the MCIA and Transport for London.

We are therefore very pleased to see that following our input, PLVs are included in the Mayor of London's ULEZ Scrappage Scheme, announced today.

Under the scheme, Londoners who received certain benefits are now eligible for a £1,000 grant when they scrap a non-ULEZ compliant PTW/PLV and purchase a new, ULEZ compliant PTW or PLV. If they scrap a non-compliant car, they can claim £2,000 against a new, compliant PLV or other eligible vehicle.

Notes for Editors

The MCIA is the body that represents the UK Powered Light Vehicle (PLV) industry. PLVs can be defined as lightweight scooters, motorcycles, tricycles and quadricycles, typically with zero or low-emission power.

Also known as L-Category vehicles, they are an answer to the congestion and air quality challenges created by personal and goods transportation.

The Route to Tomorrow's Journeys is the MCIA policy document highlighting the vital role that PLVs can play in future transport. Of particular relevance to the Mayor of London's announcement is an action point contained in The Route to "Encourage the replacement of older PLVs with zero emission alternatives"

For more information about the work of the MCIA and Powered Light Vehicles, please contact Nick Broomhall, Communications Manager, at n.broomhall@mcia.co.uk or call 07590 168714

Websites you may want to visit:-

Official Statistics: Road conditions in England to March 2019
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/road-conditions-in-england-to-march-2019>

Collection: Road network size and condition (Last updated 3 October 2019)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-network-size-and-condition>

Statistical data set: Road condition statistics: data tables (RDC) (Last updated 3 October 2019)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/road-condition-statistics-data-tables-rdc>

RSGB: Government set to revisit motorway speed limits?
<http://roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/government-set-to-revisit-motorway-speed-limits/>

Guidance: Vehicle tax rates (V149 and V149/1) (Last updated 4 October 2019)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rates-of-vehicle-tax-v149>

LGA: LGA responds to RAC report on driver fines for idling engines
<https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/lga-responds-rac-report-driver-fines-idling-engines>

RAC: You should be fined for leaving your engine on when parked, say drivers
<https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/news/motoring-news/you-should-be-fined-for-leaving-your-engine-on-when-parked-say-drivers/>

RAC: 80mph motorway speed limit could be on the way thanks to electric cars
<https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/news/motoring-news/80mph-motorway-speed-limit-could-be-on-the-way-thanks-to-electric-cars/>

FIM: We, the Riders: one movement for everyone
<http://www.fim-live.com/en/article/we-the-riders-one-movement-for-everyone/>

RAC: £130 yellow box fines to hit whole of UK
<https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/news/motoring-news/130-yellow-box-fines-to-hit-whole-of-uk/>

Call for Traders

We are always looking for interesting trade stalls to attend our events, including the 'big three' MAP rallies: Into the Valley, Farmyard Party & Yorkshire Pudding. The stall does not need to have products for sale; it could be that products are on show with orders being taken. We are keen to promote, for example, British engineering: products that might be of interest to rally goers but individually manufactured, or items that are not suitable for transporting home on a motorcycle.

If you are, or know of, a trader, that is looking to attend events, please get in touch central-office@mag-uk.org

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