

2018 04 27

News from the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG)

Highways England, MAG and others turn concerns into action

This version: 2018 04 27

Embargo: IMMEDIATE

Highways England continues to be a role model for action following its Motorcycle Infrastructure Sub-Working Group meeting on 17th April 2018.

Lembit Öpik, MAG's Director of Communications & Public Affairs, regards this as 'amongst the most productive project groups in our Political Unit's calendar. Rarely have I seen a team which delivers so much and so well – in this case with a task list 28 pages long.' These include:

- Recommending a review of roadside advertising, which can easily draw the attention of drivers – after all, that's the purpose of advertising. Highways England already refuses advertising within their highway boundary.
- Assessing the danger of signposts and trees present near the roadside - with a request for inclusion of clear standards in safety planning. Data shows 91% of impacts with trees by motorcyclists led to death or serious injury.
- Highways England is assessing the extent to which 'armadillos' and 'orcas,' present a danger. They've been raised with the Safer Roads Team Specialist.
- 'Turbo roundabouts,' which introduce raised separation of lanes, will not be included in the plans of Highways England.
- On potholes and manhole covers the committee recommends clear standards of repair and a review of the frictional qualities of manhole covers. Law already exists but possibly isn't being enforced (Street Works Act, Section 81). Other legislation says 'Ironwork must (have) similar friction qualities to that of the road surface (TD 54/07 Paragraph 4.9).' Safety inspection protocols were also covered.
- They're issuing advice on differential heights on road surfaces where rutting and raised edges present a danger to riders. Slippery joints between road sections – known as 'overbanding' - were also discussed.
- 48% of rider accidents at roundabouts and 47% of rider accidents at T or staggered junctions result in death or serious injury. The group recommends guidance in the 'Guide to Road Safety Route Treatments.'
- A notable statistic is that, on the Strategic Road Network, 14% of rider accidents are caused by vehicles pulling out on bikers.

'We got through a lot,' adds Jimmy Torrance, another MAG supporter and fellow member of this sub-group. 'You know, they actually listen to riders. Road surface issues are a direct test – if Highways England does repair more dangerous potholes and resurfaces slippery manhole covers, that would prove the group's usefulness.'

If you have specific concerns about major roads, please let Lembit or Jimmy know, and they can raise these issues at the sub-working group.

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

ENDS