



# APRIL 2023

## NETWOK

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

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[Acknowledgments:- George Legg, Lembit Opik, Colin Brown, Tim Peregrine, MCIA, FEMA, Julie Sperling, NMC, Air Quality News plus anyone else I’ve forgotten]

Please send copy for the May edition to: [aine@mag-uk.org](mailto:aine@mag-uk.org) by 25<sup>th</sup> April. Subject heading: Network

## EDITORIAL

This month I want to devote the whole of this editorial to Andrew Meredith.

During the night of 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> March Andrew suddenly passed away in his sleep.

All who knew him are in shock and devastated at this news.

Andrew has worked tirelessly for MAG for decades overseeing the main MAG server and all that goes with it. I have no knowledge of anything IT specific and I remember during the many years he served as an Officer on MAG Western Region Committee being completely lost during IT speak.

Members often don't know or recognise the dedication of those 'working in the background', however, the service that Andrew performed, in the age of technology, is probably the most important. Its how we all communicate with each other and how MAG communicates with the World. The amount Andrew saved MAG by using his expertise in pursuance of Riders' Rights is immeasurable.

MAG always recognises the hard work of its volunteers and some years ago Andrew was made an Honorary Life Member of MAG in recognition of this consistent work and I remember him saying to me 'now I don't have to pay I'm not letting MAG lose that money, I'm going to sign up Sprout' – this being his pet name for his beloved Son Isaac.

Much of Andrew's motorcycling enjoyment came from his club membership of Ogri MCC who are as devastated as we in MAG who knew him well. We are all going to miss him very much.

Andrew was a devoted husband and Father and on behalf of Western Region and I'm sure many others in MAG we send to his widow and young Son our heartfelt condolences.

I'm going to steal words from Pete Walker and end this by saying, Ride free, Andy, ride free my friend. If anyone deserves it you do. *Aine G.*



# **MAG Political Report from Colin Brown and Lembit Opik**

2023 03 24

**Ministerial meetings, Budget fuel duty announcements and a new kid on the block with a great ability to produce videos: all these characterise recent weeks in MAG's political activities. Lembit Öpik and Colin Brown report.**

## **Minister Jesse Norman meets MAG**

MAG Chair, Neil Liversidge and Colin sat down with Jesse Norman – the minister responsible for transport decarbonisation – on 21<sup>st</sup> March.

We discussed the Government's objections to the CEBR report's findings, though the answers were somewhat vague. Whilst the Minister claimed that the government always does its own economic impact assessment, it became clear that the assessment for the ICE ban has not been done yet. This is a shocking admission meaning that the evidence will be sought only after the policy decision has been made. This is no way to make policy decisions, and is almost certain to lead to a biased impact assessment. We asked for further dialogue on this point.

MAG have been delayed getting ministerial meetings on the issue by the turmoil and revolving door aspect of recent ministerial life spans. The meeting took place against a background of EU struggles over their own legislation to end ICE vehicle sales. In a last-minute change of heart, Germany, Austria, Italy and others blocked the vote. On the day of our meeting with Jesse Norman the EU tabled a proposal that would allow the continued sale of ICE vehicles on the proviso that they only run on carbon neutral liquid fuels.

The EU developments largely reflect the radical plans that we were promoting to the Minister that include rapid expansion and electrification of public transport combined with a diverse suite of technologies for personal motorised vehicles.

Jesse Norman asked that we put our proposals into a fleshed-out document explaining MAG's proposals in more depth. We will of course be doing just that.

We were not naively expecting a policy U-turn from a single 30-minute meeting, but we were able to make the case robustly. It is clear that the fight is not over and MAG's intervention will have had an impact. We intend that the fleshed-out proposal document will be the tipping point in this battle of wills.

## **Operation Earthquake advances**

Continuing the important campaign to prevent politicians riding roughshod over our right to buy and ride new petrol-powered motorcycles – Operation Earthquake has been ably expanded in its reach by MAG Political Unit live wire, Michael Armstrong. Under his leadership, scores of MPs have already been contacted, and forced to reveal their position on whether or not they support the ban on sales of new petrol motorbikes by 2035 – or even earlier for smaller ones.

Responses range from sympathetic to downright uninformed. As often happens in these circumstances, some of the parties have generated a 'standard letter' – which means that bikers are receiving a common reply that clearly wasn't originated by the MPs themselves.

“It’s disappointing to see the level of ignorance on the threatened ban on internal combustion engines,” says Lembit Öpik, MAG’s Director of Communications and Public Affairs. “They seem unaware of the huge knock-on effects which these plans to ban the sale of new petrol cars and bikes will have – especially on the least wealthy. After all, the poorest are least able to afford to buy costly, and expensive-to-charge electric vehicles. MAG is blessed to have Michael taking the initiative to reach out to so many MPs. It’s an essential part of getting Parliamentarians to realise how dangerous it is for them electorally to support a logically, scientifically and politically bankrupt ICE ban.”

Operation Earthquake is the key political focus of the group’s activity. The General Election, which has to have taken place by the beginning of 2025. Please contact your MP, requiring them to answer: “do you support the ban on petrol and diesel vehicles, and give reasons for your answer. Be aware I won’t be voting for any politician who supports such a ban.”

Here’s the link to the campaign materials to help you play a part in turning up the pressure on politicians: <https://operation-earthquake.mag-uk.org/resources/>

As we said last month, we’d be grateful to hear from you when you get a response – and also if you don’t. We’re keeping this information in a matrix, and the MPs will not be able to escape the consequences to their chances of re-election if they try to cling on to a policy that seeks to ban petrol powered motorbikes.

### **Another month, another summit**

Lembit attended a cross-party - and cross-campaigning - group event in Winchester in early March 2023, to discuss the problems facing transport and other people promote the tenets of Operation Earthquake. Lembit has also been seeking even more allies to the push back against idiotic policies emanating from the Government AND opposition parties that seek to restrict our rights as private vehicle road users. MAG is willing to work with people from all parties and from none, where they are aligned with the interests of bikers.

If you know of a group that might help MAG resist the looming ban on new petrol machines, let us know and we’ll do the rest.

### **Party Leader gets edgy**

At the last minute, a political party leader – who we won’t name at this stage - delayed a meeting with Jon Strong, one of MAG’s most informed activists, and Lembit Öpik, on the basis that they considered it a ‘national’ issue, due to MAG’s high-level involvement. The edginess appears to be a case of the politician and his team realising the size of the issue being raised by Jon, which relates to the use of the wrong road surface materials, directly against official guidance.

Jon and Lembit are determined to make the meeting happen. Having agreed to holding it, they cannot back away from it, even if they now discovered the extent of the problem. Furthermore, now that they’ve escalated this matter to the status of a ‘national’ matter, the process can be considered to relate to national policy making – the creation of a position for the whole party.

We will share more once we have held the meeting and heard what they have to say. Until then, we’ll give this particular party every opportunity to have an excellent dialogue with MAG.

### **Support for ULEZ expansion is just not there**

As more and more people realise the implications of the massively expanded Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), local people are reacting with rage about it. It's common knowledge that the majority of respondents to the Mayor's own consultation rejected this expansion. Yet the Mayor – Sadiq Khan – seems unconcerned about ignoring the will of the people.

If introduced, the ULEZ tax will add crippling extra costs for the public – especially those with less money who depend on older vehicles that are 'non-compliant.' For many of these people, the additional bill could well be thousands of Pounds per annum.

Demonstrations have continued, with many local people stepping up to be counted. The ULEZ expansion has been likened to 'Sadiq Khan's Poll Tax' – with all the implications that carries with it for him electorally.

If you're in the London area, please contact anyone you can in the Greater London Assembly, the Labour Party or Sadiq Khan himself, to tell them what you think of his ULEZ expansion. We have to do all we can to stop this pointless expansion in health terms – but one which stands to ruin mobility in the city for those least able to replace their car or afford the high cost of public transport in London.

### **More from the Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR)**

Lembit Öpik met with the head of the CEBR, Mr Douglas McWilliams, in relation to the Government's apparent inability to accept the validity of their own way of doing sums! In response to the report, commissioned by MAG and the Alliance of British Drivers (ABD), it seems the only response the Government officials can give is that they don't accept the methodology. The problem for them is that the methodology is the SAME as that used by Government itself.

Lembit is working with Mr McWilliams to understand why they are making such a curious statement, and to require a more mature reply to a piece of research which unequivocally demonstrates the incredibly high cost of trying to shift from petrol and diesel vehicles to electric power instead.

This research approach represents a very important and reliable system that MAG uses to force the Government to make its decisions responsibly, and with regard to facts rather than virtue-signalling temptations that will backfire at the ballot box anyway.

### **Fuel Duty Freeze**

Congratulations to Fair Fuel UK, and specifically Howard Cox, for securing a further freeze in fuel duty. This saves money for any biker who uses petrol to power their motorbike. Mr Cox, who works with MAG on riders' rights and petrol prices, has been described as 'Britain's most effective lobbyist.'

The fuel duty freeze is a practical step that helps people now, and keeps the cost of riding (and driving) down. This is an indication that, sometimes, the Government can make the right decision. It provides some optimism that we can also persuade the Government to do the right thing in other areas, such as the petrol engine ban and other policies that exclude the public from entire parts of towns and cities, on the basis of a noisy lobby determined to herald an end to powered vehicle access to many urban areas.

### **Michael Beake – filmmaker**

A big thanks to Michael Beake who runs Petrol Revolt, a movement designed to stop the creep of 'woke' authoritarianism in road transport policy. He has now generated an excellent video, in which he interviews Ian Churchlow, MAG's Vice Chair, plus Lembit Öpik from MAG's Political Unit, about our current campaigning agenda and what we're doing to prevent the worst excesses of politicians in regard to motorcycle-relevant transport changes. You can watch a lot of different videos – including the one of Ian and Lembit - here:

<https://www.youtube.com/@petrolrevolt/videos>

Let us know what you think!

### **Motorcycle Theft Public Meeting Tour**

Thanks go to Steve Mallett and JC from South East Region for hosting the first Motorcycle Theft Public Meeting. The event was a success with a large audience, lively question and answer session and some promises made that we will be able to follow up.

The Kent meeting will be followed by a similar format meeting in Birmingham on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 3pm at Christ Church Community Hall, Burney Lane, Ward End, Birmingham, B8 2AS. We need as large an audience as possible so please do support the event if you are West Midlands based.

Colin hopes to have a date for a similar meeting in Leeds very soon, and plans are afoot for London, Hull, Cardiff, Nottingham and Edinburgh. If you are in any of these locations and willing to help with logistics please do get in touch with Colin.

### **Ask MAG**

Colin is working to produce a series of Ask MAG videos for the MAG YouTube channel.

The first entitled "How to lobby your MP" featured an interview with chair of the All Party Parliamentary Motorcycling Group, Ian Paisley MP.

Future videos will cover subjects such as "why should you join MAG?" and "What can you do about Potholes" and other regular topics that we get asked about. If you have any thoughts on subjects you would like to see covered, please let Colin know.

You can find the MAG YouTube channel here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRxAljzPhFxMR-uhUtneBg>

Please like and subscribe to the channel. We are in the early days – still – but want the YouTube following to grow.

### **London Assembly Investigate Road Charging**

Colin submitted a response to the London Assembly call for evidence on Road Charging. Needless to say MAG has a very clear position on road charging for motorcycles – NO.

The debate needs to be carefully understood however as there are really two separate arguments. One is should motorcycles be charged in congestion charging zones, ULEZ and Clean Air Zones etc. The other argument is should the national taxes of VED and Fuel Duty be replaced with a pay per mile charge.

The London Assembly were considering a single road charging scheme to replace the Congestion Charge, LEZ and ULEZ. They seem to think that the three charges are so

complex that drivers will welcome a simplified blanket pay per mile style charge to save confusion. This may be true for some, but given that thanks to MAG only a small number of motorcyclists pay any of these charges, we are not going to accept a system where suddenly we all pay all the charges rolled into a single pay per mile charge. We will never accept that and the response makes that clear.

The UK Government have recently confirmed that they have no current plans to introduce pay per mile charging to replace VED and Fuel Duty. However, it does seem inevitable that this will happen at some point as there is no other solution to dwindling Fuel Duty revenue on the table. MAG will monitor this situation and ensure that any proposals are advantageous for motorcyclists. To be fair, the Parliamentary Select Committee in its most recent report on pay per mile categorically stated that any system must entirely replace VED and Fuel Duty, and that all road users should pay the same or less than they currently do in VED and Fuel Duty. We will make sure that for motorcycling it will be the "less" option.

### Ride To Work Day 2023

Ride To Work Day is 19<sup>th</sup> June this year. Plans are afoot for a real push on getting decent motorcycle parking at workplaces. We will be producing a pack for riders to give to their employers and hopefully a case study on how to make it work for you.

We will also be looking at reviving efforts on a consistent approach to bus lane access. More details to come.

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## MAG PRESS RELEASES

### Greater London MAG on the warpath over Islington parking charges

Greater London MAG is set to meet Islington Council to oppose more motorcycle parking charges. Unannounced charges were rolled out in early February with no prior engagement or consultation with riders.



Islington Borough Council rolled out a new £1 charge for motorcycles parking in the borough's motorcycle bays in early February.

The council claims that they didn't need to consult because it was a change to existing charges. This is not true; previously it was free to park in bays in Islington. If you wanted to



park outside of the bays you had to buy a resident's permit. No changes have been made to the residents permit but a new charge of £1 a day for the bays has been introduced.

The council did not publicize their intention to charge: instead, they buried the decision in a 300-page document on the council's general finances. Motorcycle representative organisations were not contacted about a consultation. When Hackney consulted on their parking charges they received thousands of responses. Islington has confirmed that there were no responses to their process.

GL MAG and Save London Motorcycling have already persuaded the council to rectify one flaw in the policy. Residents with motorcycles couldn't use their passes in the bays and were unable to make block bookings for more than one day. This meant that a resident would have been paying £365 a year and having to get up before 8am every day to book a new parking session. GL MAG got Islington to back down and allow residents to use their passes, but MAG is arguing that this is a totally unacceptable way to treat their resident motorcyclists and people who ride to work in the borough.

Further issues with the poorly handled roll-out saw MAG asking for the roll-out to be paused, but the council refused, and is delaying dealing with the issues raised.

A GL MAG spokesman said:

*"This is a clear attempt by the council to bypass democratic scrutiny. They have seen what happened in Hackney and wanted to avoid the uproar. This is a sign that our campaigning is working, but we need to be on the lookout for other councils doing the same. Cock-up or conspiracy? Either way it's a totally unacceptable way for a democratic organisation to behave, and it goes against all democratic norms. No other council has taken such an under-hand approach".*

Local MAG reps are working hard to try and engage with the council to get them to listen. A meeting with the Council is now scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> March.

## **No time for complacency – MAG comment on FEMA's blog**

[Colin Brown](#)

**FEMA's blog post** points out the increasing signs that the battery electric only policy is meeting stiff opposition. With several member states now saying they will oppose the EU's plan to end the sale of non-zero tailpipe emission cars and vans from 2035. In order for EU law to be rejected, a minimum of four member states must table objections. The 2035 ICE ban has now been challenged by Italy, Poland, Bulgaria, and Czechia, in addition to Germany and Austria, meaning it exceeds the required number. Analysts have also pointed to more countries, including Slovakia, Romania and Hungary, also opposing a law that was trumpeted as one of the EU's most significant green deals.





As Dolf Willigers points out, motorcycles are not mentioned in the EU proposal, just as they were left out of the original UK proposals, but the fact that the policy for cars and vans is facing stiff opposition is a clear demonstration that logic and reality are beginning to bite.

MAG has consistently said that the policy enforcing an arbitrary end date for internal combustion engine technology is wrong – and wrong when applied to any type of vehicle, not just motorcycles.

These latest EU developments need to be recognised by our Government and the disastrous policy should be scrapped by the UK.

There is a place for electric motorcycles, both now and in the future, but MAG is clear that both technologies can and should exist together. The final choice of the best powertrain for the individual's needs should be left in the hands of those individuals. We do not accept the Government interference in this area.

Now is the time to redouble our efforts. Whilst signs are increasingly encouraging, now is not the time for complacency. We need to ensure that UK policy makers come to their senses. Riders made their views clear, both in the UK and Europe. We will not sit as spectators, waiting and hoping. We will continue to putting the Action in Motorcycle Action Group.

## MAG hammers home ICE Ban opposition with Minister

[22/03/2023](#) in [Decarbonisation](#) / [News](#) by [Colin Brown](#)

**Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) Chair, Neil Liversidge, met Minister of State (Decarbonisation and Technology) Jesse Norman yesterday. With resistance to the ICE ban growing in Europe, MAG hammered home the message that the Government should abandon its plan to ban the sale of new ICE vehicles in the UK from 2030. Instead, MAG is presenting a radical alternative that will massively improve transport connectivity to unify the UK, improve air quality, and reduce emissions, whilst at the same time strengthening our country economically.**



MAG National Chairman Neil Liversidge and MAG's Director of Campaigns & Political Engagement, Colin Brown, met Jesse Norman at the Transport Department HQ yesterday. Neil and Colin hammered home the scale of the mistake the UK Government will be making if it mandates the end of internal combustion engined vehicles (ICEVs) as planned from 2030.

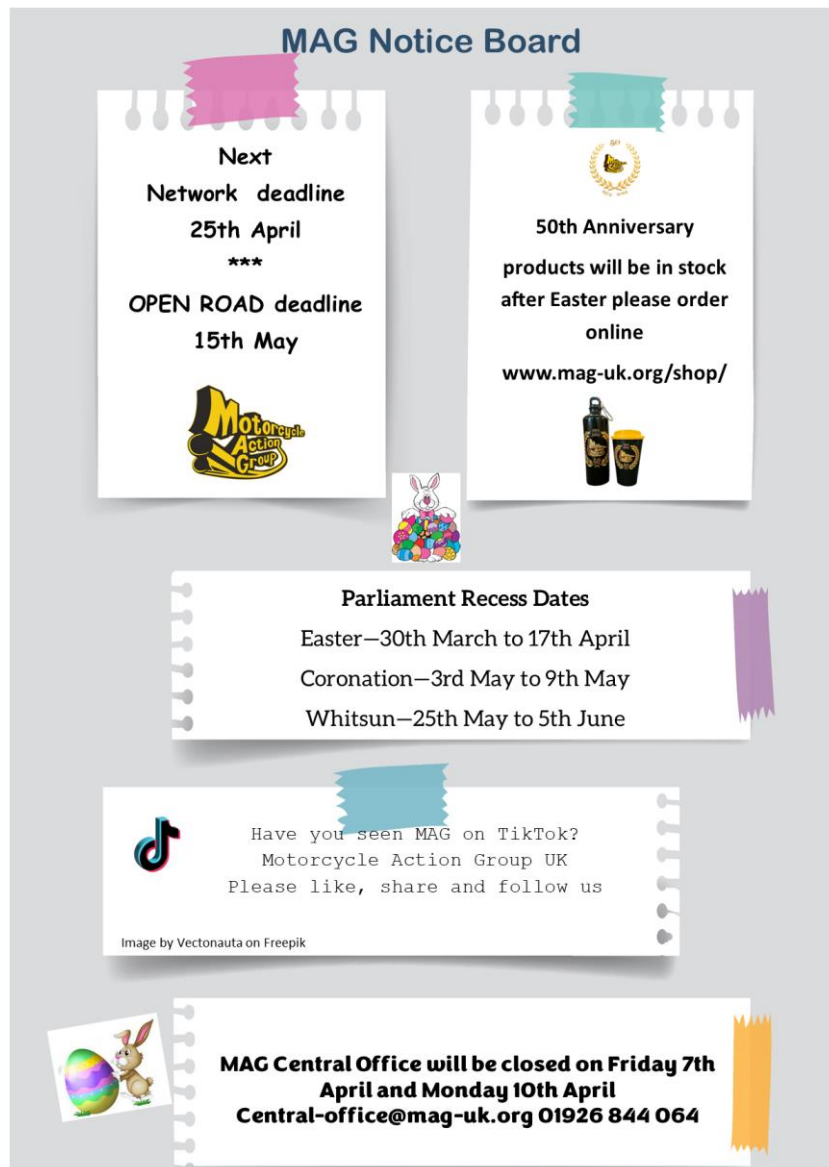
Key points they highlighted included –

- Why MAG's alternative plan makes more sense.
- The threat the Government's forced electrification poses to the UK's long-term economic prosperity and national security.
- How forced electrification will negatively impact most people's standard of living.
- Why policies that work in London don't necessarily work in the rest of the UK.

The meeting took place as news surfaced that the EU's own anti-ICE plan is in trouble, with proposals tabled to create an exception for e-fuelled cars from 2035. Germany, Austria, Italy and other EU nations are opposing forced electrification due to the lack of technology neutrality. MAG has consistently argued that internal combustion engines will be necessary and desirable for the foreseeable future. Net Zero can be achieved whilst this technology continues to supply the clear benefits of carbon neutral, energy dense liquid fuels. There is no logic in enforcing the demise of a technology in a way that will inevitably cause hardship for UK citizens, whilst seriously damaging the UK's economic prospects, and therefore its security, certainly for decades and possibly forever.

Speaking after the meeting, Neil said:

*"We were not expecting the Minister to announce a U-turn on the policy in the meeting, but I can say that we have robustly presented the strength of feeling on the ICE ban. We briefly discussed MAG's alternative solution for the future of transport with rapid expansion of an electrified public transport system allied to a diverse range of technologies in the private motorised sector. There are no reasons why electric and ICE vehicles cannot co-exist to create a diverse and resilient transport system. We are seeing Europe edging towards this reality, and the UK could lead the way. We have agreed to submit a fleshed-out proposal to Jesse Norman that will both meet the Government's ambitions and avoid destroying the economy and motorcycling culture in the process."*



## MCIA

### MCIA welcomes 'Fuelling the Future' report but disappointed by omission of powered light vehicles

MCIA News: 3rd March 2023

The Transport Committee's '[Fuelling the Future](#)' report published yesterday is a welcome intervention in the journey to net zero and a zero emissions transport system, both of which MCIA are fully committed to.

Despite omitting powered light vehicles from the report, MCIA welcomes its sentiment and has called on the Transport Committee to look at the phase out plans for the L-Category sector as part of its 'future of transport' inquiry.

**Commenting, MCIA CEO, Tony Campbell said:**

*“It’s encouraging to see the Transport Committee hold the Government to account on the feasibility of its phase out plans, and its focus on electric powertrains and zero tailpipe emission as the preferred solution.*

*However, the powered light vehicle sector has been once again overlooked. We urge the Transport Committee to look at the Government’s phase out proposals for our sector in more detail.*

*Current phase out proposals not only wrongly assume electric to be a silver bullet solution for our diverse sector, but risk major players reviewing their place in the U.K. market until technology and alternative fuel development is such that products can be more easily brought to market”*

MCIA’s ambition, based on the ‘right vehicle for the right journey’ concept, is to continue to offer the market a variety of powertrains, each of which will contribute to decarbonisation.

Whilst CO2 emissions from internal combustion engine (ICE) powered two wheelers (PTWs) continue to be reduced, due to new technology, design and the introduction of e-fuels, the industry will continue to place more electric vehicles on the UK market every year.

PTWs can and must play a key role in the future of our urban and sub-urban transport systems as an affordable and cleaner form of personal mobility. This is especially the case for zero emission variants, something our recently published joint Government and industry [Action Plan](#) shows clearly.

However, the complexity of our sector means what’s feasible for some vehicles isn’t feasible for others. This is particularly true when it comes to ensuring zero emissions at the tailpipe.

For example, L1 mopeds are increasingly fully electric. However, as the electrification of the L1 sector accelerates, the increased range, power, and performance required of the PTWs that make up the L3 sector, provides more of a challenge for manufacturers.

Electric is not a silver bullet to our diverse sector. Key powertrain components such as batteries, motors and controllers are often more expensive to purchase in comparison with internal combustion engine (ICE) equivalents and the technology is not yet fully developed for use in L3 PTWs. This then requires the development of bespoke units by the PTW manufacturer and the adoption of compromised design solutions to make use of components that exist in the market, which results in the inability to meet the user’s demands with regards to performance (especially electric range) and cost.

This can result in further cost being driven into the final product, to the extent that some manufacturers are understandably cautious about introducing zero emission PTWs to their product range until the technology (especially energy density of batteries) reaches a level which allows the electrification of more PTW sectors without compromising the user’s demands and the business case becomes more viable.

Similarly, from a consumer perspective, the current price premium associated with L3 electric PTWs and the limited number available on the market are both limiting factors at present in their widespread adoption. This is why existing fossil fuels and low carbon fuels are important for the foreseeable future to ensure certain segments of the market survive prior to technology enabling a net zero, cost effective and viable longer-term solution.

## **Notes for Editors:**

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

Within regulation they are defined L-Category vehicles (Regulation 168/2013), they are an answer to the traffic congestion and air quality challenges created by personal and goods transportation.

For more information about the work of the MCIA and Powered Light Vehicles, or to interview MCIA CEO, Tony Campbell, please contact Alfie Brierley at [a.brierley@mcia.co.uk](mailto:a.brierley@mcia.co.uk)

## February Powered Two-Wheeler Registration Statistics

MCIA News 7th March 2023



MCIA today released the February month and year to date new vehicle registration figures for motorcycles, scooters, and other L-category vehicles.

February registrations are down by 7.6% compared to 2022 and 7.2% down year to date for the same period. Whilst an uncertain economy, high inflation and rising interest rates will have contributed to this slow down January and

February are both low volume months for the sector and therefore relatively small volume differences have a greater effect on the market trend.

Industry, both within our sector and across other markets, continue to experience supply chain issues and product availability which we believe is creating an additional knock-on effect.

**Tony Campbell, CEO of MCIA said,** “A reduction in registrations for the first part of Q1, whilst disappointing is not what we expect to continue as a trend as we move into the Spring and the main selling season for the sector. Interest in Powered Two Wheelers remains strong whether it be for commuting, last mile delivery or leisure and we are confident of a good year in 2023”.

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

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

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# FEMA

## New hopes for motorcycles with an internal combustion engine

FEMA News: March 17, 2023



Six member states of the European Union will not sign the regulation to ban the sale of new cars and vans with an internal combustion engine from 2035. FEMA's Dolf Willigers says this affects motorcycles too.

Motorcycles are still not mentioned in the plans to decarbonize road transport in the European Union. Still, new developments from March 2023 may also have an effect on motorcycles. On 27 October 2022, the European Commission, European Parliament, and the member states, united in the Council of the European Union, reached an agreement in the so-called [trilogue](#) about the emission limits for cars and vans. After a few steps to lower the emission of the fleet, from 2035 the sale of new cars that emit CO<sub>2</sub> at the tailpipe will be banned in the European Union. There was a very small opening for internal combustion engine in a so-called recital, a non-binding clause in the agreement that asked the Commission to investigate the possibilities for another kind of 'zero-emission' propulsion in the form of e-fuels. However, Frans Timmermans, vice-president of the Commission and responsible for the Green Deal, immediately said he didn't see much in any alternative for the battery electric vehicle.

The next step in the process was the adoption of the agreement by the European Parliament. There it already became clear that the resistance was rising but still, on 15 February 2023, the European Parliament adopted the new regulation with 340 votes in favour, 279 against and 21 abstentions. But doubts were expressed not only here; manufacturers of vehicles with an internal combustion engine found each other in the E-fuel Alliance, that became very active on the social media.

**'FEMA supports freedom of choice: not the governments, but the riders and manufacturers should decide.'**

Less than a week before the EU member states would sign the new regulation, the Italian government declared that they would not sign it after all, soon be followed by Germany, Poland, Czechia, Bulgaria, and Portugal. Later Austria also announced that they could not accept a regulation that focussed on one solution only with the exclusion of all alternatives. The signing of the regulation on 7 March 2023, usually a formality, is postponed.

In the unique situation that has now arisen nobody knows how to act. New negotiations or a change of the agreement seem to be impossible. A solution must be found. In any case, when there are new prospects for cars and vans, then why not for motorcycles? The

availability of new cars and vans with an internal combustion engine after 2035 would also mean the conservation of the fuelling infrastructure.

Especially for motorcycles it is necessary to maintain the possibility to make and buy new motorcycles with a combustion engine for leisure purposes and for long distance travelling and to be able to fuel them. FEMA supports freedom of choice: not the governments, but the riders and manufacturers should decide about the technical solutions to reach the determined goal.

Written by [Dolf Willigers](#)

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## British motorcyclists meet minister for decarbonisation

FEMA NEWS: March 23, 2023



The British Motorcycle Action Group told the minister for decarbonisation that the UK government should abandon its plan to ban the sale of new vehicles with an internal combustion engine (ICE). MAG chair Neil Liversidge: "There are no reasons why electric and ICE vehicles cannot co-exist."



Minister of State Jesse Norman (l) and Neil Liversidge.

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**Key points they highlighted included:**

- Why MAG's alternative plan makes more sense.
- The threat the Government's forced electrification poses to the UK's long-term economic prosperity and national security.
- How forced electrification will negatively impact most people's standard of living.
- Why policies that work in London don't necessarily work in the rest of the UK.

**'Net Zero can be achieved whilst this technology continues to supply the clear benefits of carbon neutral, energy dense liquid fuels.'**

The meeting took place as news surfaced that the EU's own anti-ICE plan is in trouble, with proposals tabled to create an exception for e-fuelled cars from 2035. Germany, Austria, Italy, and other EU nations are opposing forced electrification due to the lack of technology neutrality. MAG has consistently argued that internal combustion engines will be necessary and desirable for the foreseeable future. Net Zero can be achieved whilst this technology continues to supply the clear benefits of carbon neutral, energy dense liquid fuels. There is no logic in enforcing the demise of a technology in a way that will inevitably cause hardship for UK citizens, whilst seriously damaging the UK's economic prospects, and therefore its security, certainly for decades and possibly forever.



*Motorcycle Action Group*

Speaking after the meeting, Neil said: "We were not expecting the Minister to announce a U-turn on the policy in the meeting, but I can say that we have robustly presented the strength of feeling on the ICE ban. We briefly discussed MAG's alternative solution for the future of transport with rapid expansion of an electrified public transport system allied to a diverse range of technologies in the private motorised sector. There are no reasons why electric and ICE vehicles cannot co-exist to create a diverse and resilient transport system. We are seeing Europe edging towards this reality, and the UK could lead the way. We have agreed to submit a fleshed-out proposal to Jesse Norman that will both meet the Government's ambitions and avoid destroying the economy and motorcycling culture in the process."

Source: [MAG](#)

Top photograph courtesy of [thecoldwire.com](#)

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## **Governments and employers should promote motorcycling**

FEMA News: March 22, 2023



Politicians want us to walk, cycle, or use public transport. Motorcyclists however have different ideas when it comes to commuting, traveling to work. Better ideas, FEMA's Wim Taal believes.

FEMA's survey on the commuting habits of motorcyclists shows that they use several different vehicles and different ways of travel. This way they adapt to their needs and possibilities on any given day. By investing in different types of vehicles – not just motorcycles – they show a great sense of responsibility and of practical insight. Something that, according to FEMA, should be stimulated and rewarded.

For commuters, the year-round motorcycle costs are nearly three times less than operating a car, with gas averaging €545 for riders and €1,435 for drivers.

Motorbikes are also better for the environment, emitting around 99g CO<sub>2</sub>/km as opposed to the 210g CO<sub>2</sub>/km released by automobiles. Those riding a sub-250cc bike, which accounts for 62 percent of Europe's two-wheelers, enjoy an even lower emissions rate at 62g CO<sub>2</sub>/km.

Source: [The economic importance of motorcycles to Europe, Oxford Economics.](#)

### **Why take a motorcycle to work?**

Not only do almost all motorcycle commuters consider riding their bike the most pleasant way to travel, they also praise the travel time, the lower costs, and the convenience of parking a motorcycle. And let's not forget the hassle of traffic jams, which are easily overcome by motorbike.

### **Why not?**

Motorcyclists are very clear when it comes to reasons to not take their bike to work. Of course, bad weather plays a big part in the decision how to travel to work, and that is understandable and also impossible to fix. What is possible to fix are two of the most mentioned reasons not to choose the motorcycle: the lack of safe parking facilities at the destination and the problem of where to store your motorcycle clothing and helmet. Employers can – for example – easily transform a couple of car parking spaces into motorcycle parking spaces and include the possibility to lock your bike to an anchor or pole. Providing simple but secure lockers for motorcycle gear should not be a problem either. After all, the advantages for the employer are huge, because not only will the employees be at work on time because motorcyclists typically don't waste time in traffic jams, but motorcycle parking spaces also take up a lot less expensive space in the parking lot.

### **Road safety**

It's positive to see that the danger of riding a motorcycle in or through traffic jams is not considered to be a great risk and is not often seen as a reason not to travel by bike. Generally, the accident risk during the ride to work is not seen as a reason to choose another vehicle or another way of transport of the motorcycle.

### **Promote motorcycling!**

What we need from local governments and from employers first is the recognition of motorcycles and other powered two-wheelers as a part of the solution for urban traffic problems. By providing safe parking spaces and storage facilities for motorcycle clothing and helmets, up to 30 percent more riders would consider taking their bike to work, thus improving the traffic flow in our cities, and significantly reducing the need for space dedicated to parking cars. There are large economic benefits to be gained by actively promoting and facilitating the use of powered two-wheelers.

#### **From 3 until 18 February 2023 FEMA conducted an online survey on the mobility choices motorcyclists make to commute (travel to work).**

- 1.941 people from 28 countries responded to the survey.
- 89.18% of the respondents is male, 10.61% is female, 0.21% other.
- The average age of the respondents is 50.2 years.
- Respondents that commute on average travel 27.93 kilometres from home to work.
- 52 Respondents do not commute because they work from home, 17 are retired.
- Of the respondents that commute, 35.26% walk, cycle, or use public transport.
- Of the respondents that commute, 93.38% use a powered two-wheeler.
- Of the respondents that commute on a powered two-wheeler, 73.4% does so on a petrol motorcycle > 125 cc.
- Of the respondents that commute, 70.99% use a four-wheeled vehicle (car/van/truck).
- Of the respondents, 12.67% owns a (partially) electric vehicle.
- Of the respondents that commute, 11.11% does so with a (partially) electric vehicle.

Click [here](#) for the full results of the survey (pdf file).

Written by [Wim Taal](#)

Top photograph courtesy of [Yamaha](#)

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## Why are cable barriers still hurting motorcyclists?

FEMA News: March 28, 2023



Cable barriers are banned in some countries, while others still install them, despite the inherent risks for motorcyclists.

The main problem with cable barriers – or wire rope fences – are the uprights; in the event of a motorcyclist's fall, these uprights will catch the motorcyclist, with all its horrible consequences. This is no different from other crash barrier variants. One difference is that a motorcyclist who is still on his bike and hits the cable barrier will be led to the uprights, where a standard guardrail has no protruding parts.

The argument that cable barriers are a good solution for roads where there is not enough space in the side or central reservation for a 'normal' crash barrier (preferably with motorcyclist protection) is not valid in FEMA's opinion. A fallacy in road design should not be 'corrected' with a solution that could be extremely harmful to a specific group of road users, like motorcyclists.



Photograph courtesy of SMC Sweden.

In Sweden, where the cable barrier has been used on a large scale, authorities are slowly coming to the realization that it is not the best solution. Not because of the potential danger to motorcyclists, but because of the (too) high costs for repairs and replacement. Unlike regular crash barriers, it is not possible to quickly replace a damaged part. Additional problems with cable barriers: it is not possible to realize a simple passage for emergency vehicles and it is not possible to provide cable barriers with motorcyclist protection.

We are aware of the subjective nature of many of the opinions about cable barriers, but a subjective feeling of insecurity is also important in traffic. Anyone who continues to point out the lack of data that shows the unsafety for motorcyclists would be better off investing their energy in the (further) development of infrastructure that is also safe for motorcyclists.

**How road restraint systems should be improved**



- Road restraint systems, of whatever type, should only be installed where there is a real risk for a collision with an object or oncoming traffic and no other solution – like removing the objects – is possible.
- New, safe, types of barriers need to be developed after extensive research of collisions of powered two-wheelers (PTWs) with barriers. New standards for roadside and median barriers should be adopted to make them less dangerous for motorcyclists. The existing Technical Specification CEN/TS 17342:2019-10 should be further developed and turned into an EN standard.
- New standards must include protection against hitting unprotected posts and top-side protection for PTW-riders. Discontinuous protection of posts only improves the safety of PTW-riders when the collision speed is very low. Therefore, only continuous protection of the posts should be allowed.
- No new cable barriers (i.e., wire rope fences) or other barriers with unprotected posts should be installed. When old unsafe barriers need to be replaced, they must be replaced by a safer barrier type.
- Whenever a barrier is installed, the distance from the road should be as large as possible to allow for evasive manoeuvres and maximum emergency braking in the event of a collision which might reduce the force of the collision impact with the barrier.
- Existing barriers in outer curves or other locations with heightened risk must be retrofitted with Motorcycle Protection Systems (MPS).
- Introduce a common European classification system for crash barriers, based on vulnerable road users (VRU) collision friendly features.

Source: [FEMA/FIM Europe position papers](#).

Written by [Wim Taal](#)

Top photograph by Wim Taal

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## NMCU & Bikelife: Working Together For Norwegian Motorcyclists

March 6, 2023



Norwegian motorcyclists' organisation [NMCU](#) has joined forces with [BikeLife](#), which focuses on the 'feelgood' side of motorcycling, to strengthen the voice of Norwegian riders. NMCU celebrated its 50th anniversary last year and is the only nationwide motorcyclists' organisation. NMCU works to ensure that Norwegian motorcyclists are politically represented. This happens through actively influencing directorates, ministries, and politicians.



“We are good at political work, but to constantly strengthen our impact NMCU has been keen to establish and develop good collaborations with other players within motorcycling”, says NMCU’s chairman Odd Terje Døvik. The agreement with BikeLife represents a breakthrough in this work. BikeLife has succeeded in areas where we need to renew ourselves, therefore this will be a very exciting collaboration. BikeLife has managed to utilize new communication platforms in a very effective way. They have also managed to attract new generations of motorcyclists in large numbers.”

“We have invested in spreading joy, being positive and engaged. It has caught on”, says BikeLife’s Thomas J. Winther. “We have many volunteers who, among other things, moderate our ever-growing [Facebook page](#), which now has 31,300 followers. Above all, we have been successful on our social platforms, Facebook, web, [YouTube](#) and podcasts. We have invested in driver development to strengthen motorcyclists’ skills and encouraged women to ride motorcycles.”

“We need many and strong motorcycle voices in Norway, and we hope that the cooperation with BikeLife will make NMCU an even stronger political force in the years to come”, says Odd Terje Døvik. “This is a win-win, NMCU must further develop and refine its profile as an interest organisation and BikeLife will strengthen its position as the preferred meeting and gathering point for Norwegian motorcyclists.”

A membership in NMCU is a membership in BikeLife – and vice versa – and gives full benefits from both organisations, and the list of member benefits is still growing. And NMCU will continue its political work, with a strengthened economy and a larger membership backing NMCU.



Photo by BikeLife

#### About NMCU



The Norwegian Motorcycle Union (NMCU) was established in 1972 as a nationwide organisation for motorcyclists and has around 10,000 members. NMCU has a head office in Oslo with one full-time employee. NMCU is represented in the European umbrella organisation FEMA (Federation of European Motorcyclists’ Associations). NMCU uses this arena to influence and learn from our European sister organisations, and the challenges they face in their countries.

## About Bikelife



Bikelife produces podcasts, YouTube material, runs a Facebook group and has a website that distributes news and information about motorcycling. The focus is on good driving experiences, Zero vision and the joy of driving a motorcycle in Norway and abroad.

Written by [Wim Taal](#)

Source: [NMCU](#)

Top photograph courtesy of Are Kjersem

## New Driving Licence Proposal Ignores Motorcyclists' Demands

March 1, 2023



FEMA is very disappointed with the proposal for a new driving licence directive, which completely ignores riders. FEMA will fight to get a better directive, which will include our needs and demands.

The European Commission has published its [Road Safety Package](#). Part of it is a proposal for a new Driving License Directive. The new elements are mainly the introduction of a digital driving licence and harmonization of renewing licences.

In general, FEMA asks for a change of direction from the present focus on technical skills at low speeds to higher skills that leads to better risk awareness and preparation to handle unexpected situations. This can be done without raising the threshold to obtain a full A-licence by making different choices and to make it easier to go through the stages from A1 to A.

We also draw attention to the present structure of the Directive regarding training- and test motorcycles which makes that that women and smaller men are still unnecessarily excluded. A change on the demands on trainings- and test motorcycles could change that. Finally, we ask for a further harmonization with respect of trailers and the possibility to ride a light motorcycle with a B-licence in all member states.

FEMA has sent its views on driving licences to the European Commission before, click [here](#) to read the full document.





A disappointed FEMA General Secretary Dolf Willigers said: “With respect to the driving licences for motorcyclists there are no changes. It shows that the European Commission has done nothing with our comments and recommendations during the years that we have discussed this. This is a very disappointing conclusion. However, this is just a proposal. It will go through a long legislation process in which the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union are also involved. This means that this is not the end of the road for us. FEMA will fight to get a better directive, which will include our needs and demands.” (photo by Wim Taal).

Written by [Wim Taal](#)

Top photograph courtesy of [KNMV](#)

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*Both the following articles are from the Air Quality News website:-*

## **German and Italy kick back against complete ban of Internal Combustion Engine vehicles (1 March)**

Less than a week before the EU vote to force European car manufacturers to cut their cars' carbon emissions by 55 per cent by 2030, the German Transport Minister Volker Wissing has thrown a spanner the works. He has announced that Germany will abstain unless explicit provision is made that will allow Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles to be registered after that date if they run exclusively on synthetic fuels produced using green electricity.

Wissing said: ‘Against the background of the enormous existing fleet of passenger cars that we have in Germany alone, for the FDP ( Free Democratic Party) there can only be a compromise on fleet limits if the use of e-fuels is also made possible.’

No sooner were the words out of Wissing's mouth than Italy, another car manufacturing behemoth, voiced their support, an alliance of sufficient size to scupper the vote.

There is however, nothing in the proposed legislation that refers to ICE, it simply references emissions targets, indeed Porsche began synthetic fuel production late last year, which is just one avenue for automakers looking outside of battery-electric vehicles.

While only last year, over in Italy, Lamborghini CEO Stephan Winkelmann told *Tech Crunch*: ‘It's a bit difficult, because the European Parliament decided earlier in the year that they will ban gas engines and diesel engines by 2035, and the smaller manufacturers like Lamborghini by 2036, so we don't need to decide now. We still have the opportunity maybe to go into synthetic fuel with those types of cars.’

The campaign Group Transport & Environment said: ‘Wissing’s threat to overturn the internal combustion engine phase-out at the last second shows that the FDP is prepared to endanger Germany as an automotive location for party-political motives,

*and*

## Motorcycle group call on government to abandon plans to phase out internal combustion engines

(27 March)

**The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) have met with Jesse Norman, the Minister of State (Decarbonisation and Technology) to make a case for the government abandoning plans to ban the sale of vehicles with internal combustion engines (ICE) from 2030.**

The group have listed their key points as:

- Why MAG’s alternative plan makes more sense.
- The threat the Government’s forced electrification poses to the UK’s long-term economic prosperity and national security.
- How forced electrification will negatively impact most people’s standard of living.
- Why policies that work in London don’t necessarily work in the rest of the UK.



The group appear to have been energised by the recent [German and Italian objection](#) to an EU ban on the sale of new cars with ICE which would have taken effect in 2035. The two countries were demanding a provision be made that would allow ICE vehicles to be registered after that date if they run exclusively on synthetic fuels produced using green electricity.

MAG’s National Chairman Neil Liversidge said: ‘We were not expecting the Minister to announce a U-turn on the policy in the meeting, but I can say that we have robustly presented the strength of feeling on the ICE ban. We briefly discussed MAG’s alternative solution for the future of transport with rapid expansion of an electrified public transport system allied to a diverse range of technologies in the private motorised sector. There are no reasons why electric and ICE vehicles cannot co-exist to create a diverse and resilient transport system.’

We are seeing Europe edging towards this reality, and the UK could lead the way. We have agreed to submit a fleshed-out proposal to Jesse Norman that will both meet the Government’s ambitions and avoid destroying the economy and motorcycling culture in the process.’

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## Report paints “bleak” picture for condition of local roads

### One-time catch-up costs

Average additional one-time catch-up cost required to clear carriageway maintenance backlog per authority, £m (2021/22 in brackets)



**Road Safety News: 29 March 2023**

**The one-time cost to fix local roads in England and Wales has reached £14 billion for the first time – the equivalent of £68,000 for every mile.**

That’s according to the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA), who commissions an annual survey of highways departments in all local authorities in England and Wales to build a picture of the general condition of local roads.

[The latest edition of the Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance \(ALARM\) survey](#), published on 23 March, saw a record 75% of local authorities respond.

It concludes that £14.02 billion is now needed to fix the backlog of carriageway repairs.

This is the amount needed as a one-off investment to bring the network up to a condition that would allow it to be managed cost effectively going forward as part of a proactive asset management approach.

The AIA has described the findings of the survey as “bleak”.

The aim of the ALARM survey is to highlight the connection between local road maintenance funding and conditions, based on information provided directly by those responsible for their maintenance.

The report finds that while average highway maintenance budgets have increased by 4.5% to £25.8 million per authority, this does not keep pace with the impacts of rising inflation and represents a cut in real terms.

Additionally, not all local authority highway teams saw an increase in funding: 53% of authorities actually reported a cut or freeze in their highway maintenance budget, even before inflation is taken into account.

Meanwhile, the average percentage of highway maintenance budget allocated to the carriageway dropped slightly to 50%, the lowest it has been for a decade.

The report says this reflects the need to balance the maintenance of other parts of the highway asset, such as structures, signage, street lighting and drainage.

In terms of road condition, the report finds there has been a drop in the number of roads classed as green (in a good state of repair) and a corresponding increase in those classed as AMBER (showing some deterioration).

Roads classed as RED (poor overall condition) have remained stable with one in every nine miles (11%) of the local road network likely to require maintenance in the next 12 months. This equates to around 22,600 miles.

In total, 1.4 million potholes were filled – down from 1.7 million last year – but still equivalent to one every 22 seconds. Overall, £93.7 million was spent filling potholes in 2022/23 and the total spent over the last 10 years is more than £1 billion.

Rick Green, chair of the AIA, said: “The findings of this year’s survey make for bleak, if not unsurprising, reading.

“Local roads underpin all other local services, but findings show a worsening picture in their overall conditions and the means to improve them.

“Resurfacing now takes place, on average, less than once every 100 years; local authority highway budget shortfalls in 2022/23 were up to record levels and the cost of the backlog of repairs to bring the network up to scratch is, at just over £14 billion, the highest it has been.

“Rising costs due to inflationary pressures mean that despite a moderate increase in overall local highway maintenance budgets, engineers can do less, and many have been forced to postpone or cancel road schemes to make savings.

“This will only store up problems and additional costs for the future – and have a negative impact on network resilience.”

The report recommends that to ‘really improve conditions and create a safe, resilient and sustainable network, what’s needed is a longer-term funding horizon from central government with more highway budget ring-fencing’.

It adds that this ‘would help local authority engineers to plan effectively and be able to implement more efficient works to protect and enhance the resilience of the local road network’.

Mr Green added: “Highway engineers can only do so much with the resources they’re given and should be applauded for the steps they take to keep roads safe.

“It’s clear from the column inches and social media posts devoted to potholes that the condition of our local roads remains a key issue for the public. Materials innovation and technical advances can only go so far: they are not a silver bullet.

“Without a change to the funding structure and the amount allocated, local road conditions can’t – and won’t – improve.”

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## **Congestion charge and historic vehicles exempt**

Concerns were raised by members of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club (VMCC) who were worried that the charge can be levied if riding into the Congestion Charge Zone. This is because the Historic Vehicle class is not exempt from the charge. This raises an anomalous scenario where pre Euro 3 emissions motorcycles would, on the face of it, become exempt from Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) charge upon being reregistered as historic vehicles at 40 years old - only to become subject to the Congestion Charge at the same time. The NMC raised the issue with TfL so that clarity could be sought and it has been confirmed that Classic motorcycles in the Historic Vehicle registration class are not subject to the Congestion Charge after concerns raised by riders of motorcycles which have been registered in the Historic Vehicle class of vehicle by the DVSA, the National Motorcyclists Council has received confirmation from Transport for London (TfL) that motorcycles of all ages are not subject to the Congestion Charge.

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## **WEBSITES YOU MAY WISH TO VISIT**

ETSC: Call to make ABS brakes mandatory on motorcycles under 125cc as well as practical tests and a minimum age of 16 for mopeds

<https://etsc.eu/call-to-make-abs-brakes-mandatory-on-motorcycles-under-125cc-as-well-as-practical-tests-and-a-minimum-age-of-16-for-mopeds/>

Official Statistics: Driver and rider testing and instructor statistics: October to December 2022

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/driver-and-rider-testing-and-instructor-statistics-october-to-december-2022>

PACTS and ETSC set out safety recommendations for e-scooters and their riders

<https://www.pacts.org.uk/pacts-and-etsc-set-out-safety-recommendations-for-e-scooters-and-their-riders/>

PACTS submits oral evidence to Transport Select Committee on E-scooters: Follow-up Inquiry

<https://www.pacts.org.uk/pacts-submits-oral-evidence-to-transport-select-committee-on-e-scooters-follow-up-inquiry/>

Guidance: Waste batteries: producer responsibility (Last updated: 20 March 2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/waste-batteries-producer-responsibility>

Statistical data set: Motorcycle riding test data by test centre (Last updated: 22 March 2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/motorcycle-riding-test-data-by-test-centre>



PACTS response to the Government's consultation on the MOT.

<https://www.pacts.org.uk/pacts-response-to-the-governments-consultation-on-the-mot/>

GEM offers tips to help drivers as national pothole crisis deepen

<https://www.motoringassist.com/news/gem-offers-tips-to-help-drivers-as-national-pothole-crisis-deepen>

Guidance: Vehicle tax rates (V149 and V149/1) (Last updated: 27 March 2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rates-of-vehicle-tax-v149>

All-electric vehicle maker Tesla is facing a potential class action lawsuit over claims that some of its cars suffer from a defect involving false collision alerts that not only inconvenience the driver, but could also represent a serious safety hazard. The complaint was filed in Cook County, Illinois, by a plaintiff claiming that his Tesla vehicle exhibits a serious defect in the forward collision monitoring system. [https://www.theregister.com/2023/03/17/tesla\\_sued\\_over\\_faulty\\_collision/](https://www.theregister.com/2023/03/17/tesla_sued_over_faulty_collision/)

[Caravan parks 'can't cope' with rising numbers of electric cars - BBC News](#)

## MAG Central Office:

[MAG, Unit C13, Holly Farm Business , Honiley, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 1NP.](#)  
[Tel: 01926 844064 Fax: 01926 844065 Email: central-office@mag-uk.org](#)

Executive Officer	Julie Sperling	<a href="mailto:exec@mag-uk.org">exec@mag-uk.org</a>
Membership Administrator	Louise Gibson	<a href="mailto:membership@mag-uk.org">membership@mag-uk.org</a>
Director of Communications & Public Affairs	Lembit Öpik	<a href="mailto:public-affairs@mag-uk.org">public-affairs@mag-uk.org</a>
Director of Campaigns & Political Engagement	Colin Brown	<a href="mailto:campaigns@mag-uk.org">campaigns@mag-uk.org</a>
<b>NATIONAL OFFICERS</b>		
National Chairman	Neil Liversidge	<a href="mailto:chair@mag-uk.org">chair@mag-uk.org</a>
National Vice-Chairman	Ian Churchlow	<a href="mailto:vice-chair@mag-uk.org">vice-chair@mag-uk.org</a>
National Finance Officer	<i>Position Vacant</i>	<a href="mailto:finance-officer@mag-uk.org">finance-officer@mag-uk.org</a>
Network Co-Coordinator/Vice President	Anne Gale	<a href="mailto:aine@mag-uk.org">aine@mag-uk.org</a>
President/ <i>TheROAD</i> Editor	Ian Mutch	<a href="mailto:theroad@mag-uk.org">theroad@mag-uk.org</a>
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National Research Officer	George Legg	<a href="mailto:glegg@mag-uk.org">glegg@mag-uk.org</a>
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National Reps Liaison Officer	<i>Position Vacant</i>	<a href="mailto:nrlo@mag-uk.org">nrlo@mag-uk.org</a>
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Events (Shows and Stands)	<i>Position Vacant</i>	<a href="mailto:events@mag-uk.org">events@mag-uk.org</a>
Director of TMAGL	Jane Carrott	<a href="mailto:central-office@mag-uk.org">central-office@mag-uk.org</a>
Director of TMAGL	Ian Churchlow	<a href="mailto:central-office@mag-uk.org">central-office@mag-uk.org</a>
Director of TMAGL	Neil Liversidge	<a href="mailto:central-office@mag-uk.org">central-office@mag-uk.org</a>
Director of TMAGL	Selina Lavender	<a href="mailto:central-office@mag-uk.org">central-office@mag-uk.org</a>

Director of TMAGL	Steve Wykes	<a href="mailto:central-office@mag-uk.org">central-office@mag-uk.org</a>
Director of TMAGL	<i>Position Vacant</i>	<a href="mailto:central-office@mag-uk.org">central-office@mag-uk.org</a>
Director of TMAGL	<i>Position Vacant</i>	<a href="mailto:central-office@mag-uk.org">central-office@mag-uk.org</a>
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Cumbria	Michael Armstrong	<a href="mailto:cumbria-region-rep@mag-uk.org">cumbria-region-rep@mag-uk.org</a>
East Anglia	<i>Position Vacant</i>	<a href="mailto:east-anglia-region-rep@mag-uk.org">east-anglia-region-rep@mag-uk.org</a>
Eastern	<i>Position Vacant</i>	<a href="mailto:mailto:eastern-region@mag-uk.org">mailto:eastern-region@mag-uk.org</a>
East Midlands	<i>Position Vacant</i>	<a href="mailto:east-midlands-region-rep@mag-uk.org">east-midlands-region-rep@mag-uk.org</a>
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North East	Dave Wigham	<a href="mailto:north-east-region-rep@mag-uk.org">north-east-region-rep@mag-uk.org</a>
Northern Ireland	Martyn Boyd	<a href="mailto:northern-ireland-region-rep@mag-uk.org">northern-ireland-region-rep@mag-uk.org</a>
North Wales	<i>Position Vacant</i>	<a href="mailto:north-wales-region-rep@mag-uk.org">north-wales-region-rep@mag-uk.org</a>
North West	<i>Position Vacant</i>	<a href="mailto:north-west-region-rep@mag-uk.org">north-west-region-rep@mag-uk.org</a>
Scotland	Steve Wykes	<a href="mailto:scotland-region-rep@mag-uk.org">scotland-region-rep@mag-uk.org</a>
South East	Steve Mallett	<a href="mailto:south-east-region-rep@mag-uk.org">south-east-region-rep@mag-uk.org</a>
Southern	Tim Peregrine	<a href="mailto:southern-region-rep@mag-uk.org">southern-region-rep@mag-uk.org</a>
South Wales	Phil McFadden	<a href="mailto:south-wales-region-rep@mag-uk.org">south-wales-region-rep@mag-uk.org</a>
South West	<i>Position Vacant</i>	<a href="mailto:south-west-region-rep@mag-uk.org">south-west-region-rep@mag-uk.org</a>
Thames Valley	Peter Seymour	<a href="mailto:thames-valley-region-rep@mag-uk.org">thames-valley-region-rep@mag-uk.org</a>
Western	Anne Gale	<a href="mailto:western-region-rep@mag-uk.org">western-region-rep@mag-uk.org</a>
West Midlands	<i>Position Vacant</i>	<a href="mailto:west-midlands-region-rep@mag-uk.org">west-midlands-region-rep@mag-uk.org</a>
Yorkshire	Steve Travis	<a href="mailto:yorkshire-region-rep@mag-uk.org">yorkshire-region-rep@mag-uk.org</a>
<b>OTHER CONTACTS</b>		
MAP Ltd: Yorkshire region event organiser	Pete Walker	<a href="mailto:maphq@maphq.karoo.co.uk">maphq@maphq.karoo.co.uk</a>
Official MAG merchandise	Louise Gibson	<a href="mailto:central-office@mag-uk.org">central-office@mag-uk.org</a>
The MAG Foundation – Trustee contact	Tony Cox	<a href="mailto:info@mag-foundation.org">info@mag-foundation.org</a>



