



**April 2017  
Network**

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

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[Acknowledgments: George Legg. Leon & Lembit. Ian Churchlow. Michael Armstrong. FEMA.]

## **Editorial**

I'm going to keep this really short as this month's edition appears to be a bumper one and the last thing you want to do is read through my waffle.

The one thing I did want to comment on is 'Germany wanting to charge Brits £100 a year to use their roads'!

I'm not sure if this will reach fruition and there is a lot I want to say but my professionalism dictates not to!

As someone who used to commute to Germany regularly as a freelance journalist to say I'm pretty disgusted is an understatement and, in my humble opinion, this wreaks of 'sour grapes' because the British public voted to leave the EU.

I may be wrong but, hey, something to think about. Amazing, though, how many people there are who don't really like Democracy or, maybe they like the concept of democracy but when it delivers an outcome they don't necessarily agree with dummies are spat out all over the place which, when you think about it, is quite amusing!

**Ride free, AG**

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

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## **Monthly Update from our Campaigns Team – Leon and Lembit**

### **Political Unit Network Update** - Final Draft 24.03.17

*Much of the work in the Political Unit has focussed on some big consultations and behind the scenes lobbying in London which should ultimately help deliver progress for bikers throughout the UK. Here's a summary.*

1 There's been a consultation about the toll charges on the Severn Bridge. So far, motorbikes have been exempt from these charges and the good news is that this is set to continue. MAG made a submission to the consultation adding our strong support for this sensible measure on the grounds that bikes reduce congestion, pollution and cost. It seems that the benefits are clear to the authorities - so we're likely to continue to be able to cross the River Severn without the burden of charges. 'It's interesting that they understand the case for exempting bikes - as I've spent the last six months trying to persuade Transport for London of exactly the same facts in the Silvertown Tunnel consultation -where, for no clear reason apart from revenue, they're trying to impose charges. I think the Severn Bridge example shows how off-beam TfL can sometimes be, and I'll be making these points as the London consultation continues.'

2 Lembit has also submitted MAG's response to another consultation on MoTs. There has been a proposal to extend the time of the first MoT a vehicle needs to take from three to four years. The National Committee considered this and has opted to oppose the move on the grounds of safety. In preparing our response Lembit discovered that the Government's projections predict that extending the MoT period WOULD lead to more deaths and serious injuries on the road. The number they predict isn't huge but the problem comes from the fact

that this amounts to 'third party harm.' In other words, poorly maintained vehicles kill other people, and this violates our right to ride safely. Therefore, the small saving in costs to vehicle users is outbalanced by the increased risk to others from the change. All of these points have been made in MAG's submission.

3 In a first for MAG's recent history, our Campaigns and Policy Adviser, Dr Leon Mannings was invited to address the All Party Parliamentary Motorcycle Group (APPMG). Leon packed a lot into his ten minute slot. He explained how MAG is operating at a more sophisticated and effective way than ever – and how our Pathways for Progress bullet point list provides a clear and concise basis for action to be taken by all local transport authorities. Moving on to specific campaigns explained how relentless pressure to spread cycle only lanes is cutting road space, safety for bikers and the efficiency of motorcycling as an essential congestion busting mode.

All in the room were shocked by a mini video that Leon put together to show that 'Light Segregation' measures such as Armadillos, Orcas and Mini Orcas really do create Trip Hazards – and that it is only a matter of luck that no fatalities have been caused so far. The presentation was well received and triggered unanimous cross-party support for a debate in parliament about the undervaluing of the positive role of motorcycling – and the pressing need to consider the safety of PTW riders as much as cyclists.

4 MAG has backed the IAM Roadsmart campaign on the dangers of using a mobile phone illegally when driving. Steve Mallett, has led MAG's campaign to reduce illegal phone use while driving and says of the IAM Roadsmart's campaign: 'they've correctly pointed out that using a hand-held mobile phone while on the move is a fatal distraction and it's correct to increase the penalty for those who decide to ignore the risks.' The new rules mean that those guilty of using a hand-held mobile phone while driving will be fined £200 and receive six points on their license, twice the previous penalty. If you'd like more on this, get in touch with Steve Mallett who can share how he's raised the issue in the South East. 'An illegal call can easily become a careless kill,' says Steve, and he's keen to help you get people to think twice before driving and illegally dialling.

5 The Salisbury Surprise motorcycle event looks like it's on again, thanks to big effort by Fin Colson to get the funding and support he needed. This year's event was thrown into doubt due to some local issues with the Council and funding problems, but at the time of writing these seem to be resolved. We'll keep you posted on this, and well done to Fin for getting matters back on track.

6 Lembit is attending another Highways England consultation on 3<sup>rd</sup> April. If you'd like to raise any particular issues about how the 'strategic road network' – meaning motorways and trunk roads – is managed, please let him know before then.

7 Leon's latest meeting with TfL about the dangers of cycle segregation measures seemed unproductive at the time as our calls for an escalation in action to heed warnings appeared to have been dismissed. And this was despite sharing the latest evidence of cycle segregation schemes being removed in London and across the UK from Brighton to Bradford – because they are intolerably dangerous.

However, Leon also served notice of MAG's next steps if an urgent review of these

measures was not recommended to TfL's top brass and actioned. Basically, we will write to Coroners to get them focused on measures that have potential to cause fatalities – and in the knowledge that once Coroners are made aware of such new threats to life, the Chief Coroner has a duty to investigate and publish a 'Prevention of Future Deaths Report'.

The day after that meeting, news broke that Senior Coroner, Dr Fiona Wilcox, had called for an urgent investigation into the hazardously low friction coefficient of paint used on cycle lanes – which followed her judgement at an inquest that this had caused the death of motorcyclist in London.

Contact has been made between Leon and Dr Wilcox who is now aware that the grip levels of cycle lane paint is just one of several aspects of such schemes with potential to cause fatalities. As a result, Leon has been invited to prepare a report for the basis of further investigation by Coroners.

9 The most recent intelligence on this front indicates that Leon's work behind the scenes to heighten awareness of the adverse impacts of cycle segregation measures is starting have serious impact. A well informed and trusted source reports that TfL have secretly commissioned an urgent review of the impacts of cycle segregation measures – and as it happens, Leon is on very good terms with one of the consultants who is leading that study...

10 Another meeting of the Motorcycle Safety Forum in Northern Ireland has taken place. We were represented there by Ian Churchlow and Martyn Boyd, our highly active Northern Ireland representative. We are now an integral part of the consultation process for motorbike policy in Belfast, which helps to ensure we don't get ignored when questions related to road policy and policing are raised.

11 Lembit did a '20 Questions' feature with Motor Cycle News. It will be out shortly if it hasn't already been published by the time you read this. We're pleased that MCN has taken the time to promote one of the team. It is widely read with 3 million hits per month on the Internet.

12 As ever, if you need a hand with a local issue that may benefit with some back up from L&L , please get in touch via Central Office and we'll do all we can to help you. News stories are also appreciated!

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## **MAG PRESS RELEASES**

### **MAG asks you to help with a survey on crime involving bikes**

MAG is asking bikers to respond to a request by Merseyside Police for information about illegal use of bikers for criminal activity.



MAG's North West Regional representative says 'they're asking us to visit their Twitter feed and respond to the survey before they have a conference about The Criminal, Dangerous and Anti-Social use of Motorcycles next week. This is to gain the public's views on this issue. The tweets are at <https://twitter.com/merseypolice?lang=en>.

There should have been one go out on the 20th March and another due tomorrow.' If you'd like to help go to that Twitter site and make a contribution. MAG is attending and presenting at the conference so your input now will be very useful all round.

Please retweet the <https://twitter.com/merseypolice?lang=en> messages as well – the more people are involved and informed the more likely we'll get some very good views about what's going on and what we can do to reduce the criminal action that's doing a lot of damage to communities up and down the country.

## **MAG backs 'congestion and pollution smart Severn toll proposal'**



The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), the UK's leading voice for riders' rights, has formally submitted its support for the Severn Bridge toll proposals in the recent consultation regarding arrangements for the future.

Motorcycles are currently exempt from the tolls and the proposals for the future include a continuation of this strategy, which MAG firmly agrees with. 'While you might expect a riders' rights group to be supportive of the exemption for bikes, the benefits extend far beyond the riding community,' explains MAG's Director of Communications & Public Affairs. 'Every bike which is used instead of a car reduces congestion, and with that we also reduce pollution. The Severn Bridge operators are well aware of this, and MAG welcomes this sensible approach, whereby these benefits are reflected in their charging strategy.'

Research has shown that a 10% shift from cars to bikes leads to a 40% reduction in congestion in some traffic scenarios. As such, making riding attractive financially is a good way to promote less car use and more bike use, thereby easing the pressure on one of the busiest road stretches in Britain.

'MAG never expects a free ride – we make our case on the basis of evidence. It's good to know that others have come to the same assessment as we have, and that we're working to a common cause – namely what's best for everyone. This is a congestion and pollution smart toll proposal and it is welcomed by the thousands of riders who

cross the bridge every day, largely to get to and from work. We invite other commuters to leave their cars at home, and enjoy the many benefits of two wheels, including the toll exemption.'

## **Fatal distraction – IAM speaks up about killer calls**



MAG has endorsed the IAM Roadsmart campaign highlighting the dangers of using a mobile phone illegally when driving a vehicle.

Steve Mallett, who has been leading MAG's campaign to reduce illegal driving and dialling has added his personal support for IAM Roadsmart's statement: 'They have correctly pointed out that using a hand-held mobile phone while on the move is a fatal distraction and we welcome the increased penalty for those who decide to ignore the risks.'

From now on, those who are found guilty of using a hand-held mobile phone while driving will be fined £200 and receive six points on their licence – twice the penalty that used to apply. IAM Roadsmart reminded the public of the case in November 2016 when lorry driver Tomasz Kroker was jailed for ten years after an accident he caused killed a family of four in a crash. He was looking for music on his smartphone at the time of the crash. The organisation's research indicates that almost nine out of 10 people felt UK motorists thought distraction caused by mobile phones had become worse in the last three years.

Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart Director of Policy and Research, said: 'Addressing the growing problem of smartphone use whilst driving will require a combination of enforcement and education as well as drivers, passengers, companies and individuals taking more responsibility.' Steve Mallett agrees: 'We may be able to pool our resources on this. A lot of people are sick of other drivers making the roads more dangerous just because they can't wait to legally dial up their friends or family. The law's the law on this one, and it makes a lot of road sense because an illegal call can easily become a careless kill'.

## **MAG presents to All Party Motorcycle Group**

MAG's Campaigns and Policy Adviser, Dr Leon Mannings, presented MAG's riders' rights agenda to the All Party Parliamentary Motorcycle Group (APPMG) in the House of Commons on Wednesday 15th March. The invitation to attend came from APPMG Chairman, Chris Law MP, and the event was organised by Craig Carey-Clinch who provides the secretariat services to the Group.

Dr Mannings explained how MAG is promoting and protecting the rights and interests of bikers across the UK. He also illustrated the way in which MAG is taking more effective action than ever to get policy-shapers to properly consider the positive role of motorcycling.

Dr Mannings contrasted how bikers were being treated in comparison to other 'vulnerable' road users. A key topic was the adverse impacts of some aspects of cycle-lane schemes



such as 'Light Segregation' in the form of Armadillos, Orcas and Mini Orcas. These concerns were underlined by the 'We Ride London' (WRL) campaign group who also gave a presentation.

After the meeting, Leon said: 'the helpful invitation to make this presentation has enabled us to take another step forward for bikers and motorcycling in the UK. It's great to be in a room where everyone really gets the importance of riders' rights and the positive role that motorcycling can and must play in improving mobility and tackling congestion-related problems.'

MAG will continue to work with the All Party Group and with the industry to keep riders' rights in the forefront of people's thinking as policies are shaped for cities and the open road.

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

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## **Germany may charge Brits £100 for road use**

UK drivers heading to Germany may soon have to pay as much as £112 to use its roads, after draft law was cleared in Berlin.

If enforced, foreign-registered vehicles driving in the country would need to stump up the new toll to enjoy annual access to the road network.

The Bundestag parliamentary house says the toll has the potential to generate 500 million euros (£430 million) each year in foreign driver revenue.

Proposals, as they currently sit, would take into account the emissions levels of the vehicle being driven – so motorists taking the cleanest cars would not have to pay the maximum annual amount, capped at 130 euros.

In this sense, the scheme has echoes of the newly-launched Crit'Air initiative in certain French cities which requires drivers to display a windscreen sticker declaring their vehicle's emissions level.

Caveats like these have encouraged the European Commission to clear the way for the draft law, after it rejected similar proposals in 2015.

Back then, the Commission vetoed the scheme on discriminatory grounds as it contravened EU rules, but changes to reflect a better deal for greener cars and foreign drivers making shorter journeys, reportedly helped to change its mind.

Although Germany currently operates a toll system for trucks, it is one of the few countries in Europe which doesn't charge cars to use motorways.

France, Austria and Switzerland all have private car tolls, but crucially, ones which don't make the distinction between nationals and foreign drivers.

Famously home to the Autobahn network – with its 'delimited' sections of motorway – many are enticed to bringing their cars to Germany to experience the high-speed freedom.



Before any new plan is implemented though, it needs to successfully navigate the German legislative process and isn't expected to sail through unopposed.

One scenario which could potentially scupper the plans altogether is that they are not implemented before September's federal election.

RAC European Breakdown spokesman Simon Williams said: "While the so-called 'foreigner toll' on autobahns still has to be approved by Germany's upper house of parliament it is a major change any motorist planning a visit needs to be aware of.

"Many countries in Europe make charges for motorway use but this one will link engine size and emissions to toll levels.

"Although the scheme will operate via an annual fee for residents, tourists visiting Germany will be able to buy 10-day tolls from €2.50 to €25, depending on the size and environmental-friendliness of their vehicle, or a two-month toll of between €7 and €50, determined by the same criteria."

RAC: <http://www.rac.co.uk/drive/news/motoring-news/germany-may-charge-brits-100-for-road-use/>

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## **FEMA**

**You may like to go onto the FEMA online website and listen to the interview (with English subtitles) of Norwegian Motorcyclist, Rebekka Andersen, who, in 2016, was rammed from behind by an autonomous vehicle in auto-pilot mode unable to recognise motorcycles!**

<http://www.fema-online.eu/website/index.php/2017/03/21/norwegian-motorcyclist-tells-her-story-after-crash-with-tesla/>

### **One Europe? Not Really... *Written by Dolf Willigers.***

**The European Union is not as united as you may think. National laws and regulations can become real problems for unsuspecting motorcyclists travelling across borders.**

With the end of winter in sight, many people are preparing – or at least thinking of – journeys through Europe. This is hardly an adventure these days, especially when you travel between Schengen countries. Borders sometimes are hardly visible, passports can often stay in the pocket and you don't have to worry about demands on yourself or on your bike. Or do you? If your bike is in the same state as you bought it (but which bike is?), you have a full A-licence and do not tow a trailer the only thing you have to worry about are different traffic rules and signs. But if this is not the case, maybe you should read further.

There are three kinds of regulation that matter when you use a motorcycle (either at home or abroad). The first is the European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval (ECWVTA). All motorcycles and other vehicles, including trailers, that are sold in the European Union and

EFTA countries must have a ECWVTA, or type approval as we commonly call it, before they are allowed on the public roads. If your bike is exactly in the same state as it was when imported to Europe or manufactured in Europe, this is no problem. However, the European Union is not as united as you may think. Any change to the original can cause problems if this modification does not comply to a national regulation on permanent requirements on motorcycles.

These permanent requirements on motorcycles relate to the general technical condition of the motorcycle, sound emissions, minimal deceleration, mirrors, lights et cetera. As the name already suggests these national regulations on permanent requirements differ from country to country. This means that modifications that are allowed in one EU member state may not be allowed in another. An example of this is the (aftermarket) xenon lights. While these cause no problems in for example the Netherlands, as long as other road users are not blinded by it, you can get into trouble with in Austria. Some years ago I received many complains of riders that had to remove the xenon lights on the spot and got a substantial fine. Be aware that modifications that are allowed in your own country may not be allowed in other countries. Another thing that differs from country to country are the demands on a trailer that is towed by a motorcycle. Trailers that are to be towed by a motorcycle are not category O1 or O2 light trailers. This means, that they are not subject to the ECWVTA (type approval). Therefore, every country has its own rules:- <http://www.fema-online.eu/website/index.php/consumer-information/riding-with-a-trailer/> for this type of trailers.

This brings us to the third kind of regulations, the ones that matter your own personal capacities and behaviour on the road. Let's start with driving licences. Two years ago there was a bit of panic. The reason was this: during a meeting of the Driving Licence Expert Group of the European Commission a question was asked about riding abroad on a motorcycle with a trailer. It turned out that this was not regulated in the third Driving Licence Directive. The European Commission therefore concluded that while, in this case the Netherlands, government allowed riding with a trailer behind the motorcycle with an A-licence, the license did not allow riders to go abroad with a trailer and the Netherlands did not comply to European regulations. This meant that riders with trailers were riding abroad with invalid driving licences with all potential consequences for insurances and fines. Some research taught me that not only the third Driving Licence Directive did not include trailers, they had never been part of the European driving licence directives!

Following the reasoning of the European Commission motorcyclists had been riding around in Europe with trailers without a valid permit since 1983. However, if a country allows its own motorcycling inhabitants to ride with a trailer, they usually allow riders from abroad to do the same. We collected this information from the driving licence authorities, our national organisations and public sources. It showed that most European countries do allow riding with trailers, although sometimes there are limitations. For a full overview, go to:- <http://www.fema-online.eu/website/index.php/consumer-information/riding-with-a-trailer/>. Of course this is not a good situation. We should just be able to ride in the same way all over Europe. That's what the EU is for. For this reason, FEMA – together with the Dutch government and other organizations – will demand a modification of the third Driving Licence Directive with the coming review.

There is more to say about driving licences. In some countries you are, under circumstances, allowed to ride a small motorcycle (less than 125 cc displacement) with a B-licence. This is to my knowledge the case in Spain, Greece, Malta and Germany (with diving

licences from before 1984). Some countries allow motorcycles with a displacement of less than 125 on the motorways, others don't.

Next to the driving licences there are more regulations which relate to your personal capacities and behaviour: the amount of alcohol you are allowed to drink, traffic regulations concerning speed, overtaking, filtering, use of headlights and so on. Information about these rules you can often find on websites from the countries of destination or of the motoring club in your own country. FEMA published this information as well in the past and we will do so again in future. One Europe? Not really.

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***More and more of my friends seem to be taking their bikes to Iceland so here's a piece you may be interested in:***

### **BLS: 'Exclude Motorcyclists From Icelandic Road Tolls'**

The Icelandic minister of transport and local government Jón Gunnarsson took time to meet with BLS representatives on March 8th to discuss parliament's plans to implement road tolls in and around the capital city Reykjavík.

The goal of the meeting for BLS (the Icelandic FEMA member organization - <http://sniglar.is/>) was to make the minister aware of the fact that in other Scandinavian countries motorcycles are exempt from most road tolls.

In Norway, Sweden and Finland powered two wheelers are exempt from road tolls for highways, tunnels and bridges and in Denmark powered two wheelers only need to pay on the bridges crossing Øresund and Storebælt.

The logistics of making powered two wheelers pay are also not the same as for cars, as the procedure of stopping, finding your wallet and so forth can be very time consuming for motorcyclists; electronic pass systems can also be difficult to implement for powered two wheelers.

The added cost and logistics of adding a toll for powered two wheelers is therefore not considered to be cost effective and that goes double for a small country like Iceland where powered two wheelers make up only a small part of road users.

As of today there is only one tunnel in Iceland where powered two wheelers must pay, although a fraction of the price for cars, €2. Therefore, powered two wheelers do not play a large role in the annual revenue of the road toll. When big events take place where it is assumed that many powered two wheelers will use the road, they are allowed to pass without payment anyway, so they don't slow down other traffic.

It is safe to assume that no country wants a situation as in Greece, where a large portion of the roads are owned and operated by private companies. Based on these arguments BLS have called for powered two wheelers to be absolutely exempt from road tolls in Iceland.

## **Vehicle authorities will cooperate with motorcyclists' organizations and conduct their own test program with different brands of semi-autonomous cars.**

In response to the letter (<http://www.fema-online.eu/website/index.php/2016/10/17/fema-and-dutch-motorcyclists-join-forces/>) motorcyclists' organizations FEMA, MAG NL (<http://www.motorrijdersactiegroep.nl/cms/>) and KNMV (<http://www.knmv.nl/>) sent to RDW, with regard to the European type approval of the Tesla by RDW, a meeting took place recently where the motorcyclists' worries were addressed. RDW is the Netherlands Vehicle Authority that issued the European type approval for Tesla.

A driver of a Tesla – and of an increasing number of advanced cars – can leave key actions to the vehicle, while in the opinion of the motorcyclists' organizations this equipment is not or not sufficiently tested with motorcycles and other powered two wheelers. In the discussion about the concerns that motorcyclists have with admitting (semi-)autonomous vehicles on the roads, it soon became clear that many of the concerns of the motorcyclists' community are shared by RDW.

Drivers of vehicles that use Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) such as Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC) or Lane Changing System (LCS) are deemed to always have full control over the vehicle. To support the driver, the car will give a warning, based on the input from the sensors, when a collision with a motorcycle is imminent, so that the driver can intervene in time, possibly assisted by the hardware of the car.

However, it appears that drivers of such vehicles in many cases already appear to rely fully on the technique and are themselves occupied with other things than traffic. And then the question must be asked whether the current technology in the cars takes sufficient notice of the presence of motorcycles in traffic and whether the technique is able to adequately intervene and warn the driver in time.

The joint conclusion of RDW and the motorcyclists' organizations is that properly functioning Advanced Driver Assistance Systems can provide an added value to road safety, but there are also disadvantages when drivers don't use it properly and do not pay sufficient attention to traffic.

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RDW proposes – in cooperation with the motorcyclists’ organizations – to increase the knowledge on this issue by conducting their own test program with different brands of cars with Advanced Driver Assistance Systems. This test program must objectively assess what the current state of affairs is in the technique that should ensure motorcycles and other powered two wheelers are detected by the sensors of the car and whether that technology also responds correctly to the presence of motorcycles. RDW also believes – as do the riders – that testing with motorcycles should be part of the test protocol for European type approval.

In the first quarter of 2017 the test program will be described, the organizations will explore what research in the field of testing motorcycles with semi-autonomous cars is already available and the research questions will be formulated. After that, the field tests will be conducted in 2017.

Dolf Willigers, General Secretary of FEMA: *“We are very pleased with the outcome of this first meeting with the experts of RDW. We are going to act together and we will see in the field tests to which extent the technique takes motorcyclists into account. In the coming years this will continue to be an important issue for FEMA and we want to ensure that motorcyclists literally are not overlooked in the development of the newest generation of cars. The test program can have lasting effects on road safety for motorcyclists in Europe and therefore I am particularly proud that the motorcyclists’ community works together and will cooperate with the authorities responsible for allowing such sophisticated cars on public roads.”*

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**The Cyprus based Motorcycle Rights Club (and FEMA member) is looking for some classroom training in Limassol on advanced riding techniques with the possibility of some practical road training for their membership this summer. If you are an advanced trainer or a UK rider training group who can provide advanced training, then Marios would like to hear from you. There is currently no advanced training available in Cyprus hence the request. Your expenses, accommodation and training fees will be covered. This is an outstanding opportunity to enjoy a working holiday in a beautiful country where of course, everyone rides on the correct side of the road (the left)!**

**If you fancy a trip to the Mediterranean, please contact Marios Constantinides via email to establish the groups training requirements and time frames.**

[cyprusmotorcyclersrightsclub@gmail.com](mailto:cyprusmotorcyclersrightsclub@gmail.com)

Tel +35 (0) 796677300

## **THE PENALTIES FOR USING SCREEN BASED DEVICES ON MOTORBIKES**

A lot of ballyhoo has rightly been made about using 'hand-held' devices on the road. What a lot of people don't realise is that rules also apply to mounted devices such as sat navs and even mounted cameras like Go-Pros.

New guidelines introduced in March 2017 have doubled the penalties for using a hand-held device on a motorbike. We've taken a look at what we believe you now can and can't do.

### **No touching when you are motion**

Strictly speaking, a rider found to be touching a device when the vehicle is in motion could face a fine, even if the device is a unit attached to the bike and not held in the hand itself, if a police officer believes you are not in full control of the vehicle.

The same goes if the vehicle is stationary at lights and when queuing in traffic. If you use the device and are seen to be distracted, a police officer has the power to issue a penalty.

This would have a severe impact on logistics riders such as couriers and blood bikers who need to consult a navigation screen. Because the law isn't just for mobiles or smartphones but any device, including sat nav and radios.

From the Government website: "You must stay in full control of your vehicle at all times. The police can stop you if they think you're not in control because you're distracted. This includes if you're using devices like your sat nav or car radio."

In fact, technically, the only permissible time to use a device is to make 999 or 112 calls is when it's unsafe or impractical to stop.

You can only use the device when you are parked, and that means in a recognisable parking position, with the ignition off, to demonstrate that you are not controlling the vehicle.

So if you need to touch a device, even adjust the angle of the screen, the only 100% guaranteed way to avoid points and a fine is to pull over.

### **Is that reasonable?**

No, it's not reasonable, which is why so few prosecutions for the use of mounted devices come to our attention, but it pays to know what could happen if you are involved in an incident where using the device could have distracted you.

In these instances, using a hands-free device but 'not in proper control' could lead to three points and a £100 fine, which could rise to £1,000 if you choose to take it to court.

And they'll take you up on it if you are travelling along in busy traffic, filtering say, and the officer believes your actions are dangerous because you are distracted from concentrating on the road and your surroundings.

However, we believe that in circumstances like being stationary at lights and you tap a mounted screen to wake up a device, but nothing more, it's more likely that you'll get a caution than the book thrown at you.

But, you are entirely at the mercy of the officer who spotted you. If it was a CCTV traffic camera, you may not be so lucky, as the operator is under no obligation to take in any reasonable circumstances.

### **Absolutely no hand-held devices**

However, if a police officer observes you using a hand-held device when you are in control of the vehicle, you will be liable for six penalty points and a £200 fine.

In clearly inappropriate circumstances, say where you are holding the device in your hand, using it when stopped and then speeding off with the device in your hand, you could face disqualification from driving and a fine of £1000.

What isn't so clear at the moment is what happens when a device, say a smartphone is tucked inside an open face or flipped-front helmet, as so many fast-food delivery riders do. We say don't risk your livelihood, invest in a cheap hands-free cradle and Bluetooth headset.\*

### **The chances of being caught are rising**

If you do feel the need to use a device on the move, you face an increasing likelihood of being caught.

Many UK forces are now deploying unmarked bikes, and there is even an unmarked police lorry touring the country, where the higher vantage position makes it easier to spot a device being used.

Both the police and the Government are being very clear that they see using a hand-held device as dangerous as drink driving and they are determined to take the practice out of the UK's driving culture.

### **Do you actually need to take the call?**

Leaving aside navigation aids for the moment, there is considerable worldwide evidence that shows even hands-free conversations in moving vehicles significantly contribute to accidents.

ROSPA are firmly against ANY type of call being made when you are driving/riding. They would like to see a total ban, including using completely hands-free devices. There is little appetite from Government for this, though.



In the UK, while it's not a specific offence, if you are involved in an accident and have been found to be using a hands-free phone you are potentially still open to a charge of careless and even dangerous driving.

### **Get yourself sorted:**

Only use properly mounted devices and hands-free kit, never when you are in motion and only absolutely when you have to.

*\*These items were found on Amazon and were particularly good value thanks to significant discounts. These discounts may not apply at the time you are reading this.*

<https://bikerandbike.co.uk/using-screen-based-devices-on-motorbikes/>

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**From little acorns come mighty oaks.**

**Or**

**Cumbria MAG does politics/campaigning and you can too!**

**Or**

**Cumbria MAG political road to success.**

Below are a few bullet points of events of which we have involved MP's, Councillors, Elected people within their political parties and of course the local press.

- September 2014 held the first "Make the Debate Happen". The Road issue 55 Nov/Dec 2014.
- Took up Sue Hayman's offer of meeting (October 2014) with Cumbria County Council Roads and Transport (The Road issue 56 Jan/Feb 2015). Sue also joins Whitehaven MAG on her first "Two Tins" charity run
- May 2015 – Sue Hayman becomes MP for Workington.
- July 2015 – Sarah Robinson gets the Media Award. The Road issue 60 Sept/Oct 2015.
- Tim Farron MP joins MAG on Saturday March 28th 2016 at Grange-over-Sands on the promenade. Sue Hayman joins MAG too.
- John Woodcock MP was the guest judge at Furness MAG bike show at the Dead End Rally July 2016 and always inviting Sue Hayman our local MP on the charity runs.
- January 2017 – Jamie Reed steps down and the Copeland by-election race begins!

So this write up will generally not be on how to set up an meeting because that it all covered within Lembit and Leon's word document "Make the Debate Happen", either contact your Regional Rep or central for details. This is mainly a good tip guide on how I finally got all five

political parties to answer my by-election questionnaire on motorcycling, so this is how I campaign.

So the beginning is always a good place to start and for me it was from scratch.  
Step 1 Build Contacts.

So mid 2014 I came up with the idea of an Question Time event because the next year was the General Election. So I started with contacting the two local MP's which covers West Cumbria both at the time were Labour and of course our very own Lembit who would be the voice of MAG, so that I could concentrate on being Chair.

First response from Labour was both MP's couldn't attend, one was already busy and the other was stepping down but the constituency office gave me the contact of a Cumbria County Councillor who was willing to represent Labour on the panel, more about Sue later. So with one confirmation I then contacted the Conservatives and the Lib Dems. I got a reply off the Lib Dems saying they weren't able to attend and nothing off the Conservatives. So I decided to forward all the emails to the National Chair of the Conservative Party and my reply was that he couldn't attend! Then a break through moment was in the local paper naming the people for Parliamentary Candidates for the Constituency of Workington. Off to a good start, Labour already confirmed - Sue Hayman. I then contacted UKIP and then got confirmation off their candidate a Mark Jenkinson but then he suggested their UKIP Cumbrian Chair John Stanyer who was delighted because he is a biker himself. I then re-sent the invites again but with the people who had already confirmed and with a thank you for the ones who did. I finally got a reply from the Conservative party saying that their Parliamentary Candidate was able to attend.

Hustings attendees: Me as Chair ,Sue Hayman Labour, Stephen Haraldsen Conservative, John Stanyer UKIP, Lembit M.A.G. and my bike instructor Stephen Palmer for Cumbria Motorcycling Training

Top tips and lesson's learned:

- MP's have staff- Get to know them and copy them in on future email's. They have the MP's diary so they can confirm if they can attend or not. Also they can sometimes provide an alternative if the MP can't make it.
- Accept an offer from a County Councillor or an elected position within a party because they could be the next Parliamentary Candidate/Member of Parliament or even the next Shadow Secretary of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Could I be talking of my local MP Sue Hayman- oh yes. Sue has always been willing to help me if she can because over the years, you'll build a good working relationship.

Step 2 Build Relationships

So now you keep the momentum going, so out of the debate we took up the offer from Sue to help me and Paul Turner to set up a meeting with key members of the Cumbria County Council Roads Committee. There we discussed road issues and safety concerns of which motorcyclists face, all written up for The Road magazine. I then invited Sue on our "Two Tins Run", we got a good photo which was used on her campaign website and was also put in our local paper because in any relationship you want a win-win situation. Whitehaven MAG has been doing charity run's for over twenty years and we have dealt with different journalist over that time until we started to get to know Sarah Robinson who has done accurate, balanced and informed articles on motorcycling i.e. charity runs and When Lembit came to Town (coverage of the Question Time event). So we nominated Sarah for MAG's Media Award.

In the meantime with the help of Lembit, Cumbria MAG recruited Tim Farron MP and shortly afterwards Sue Hayman MP. Then I got John Woodcock MP for Barrow-in-Furness interested in coming to be the guest Judge for the bike show at the Dead End Rally. Thanks to MAG North East for doing the rally write up :-)

Top tips and lesson's learned:

- You have to keep in touch- invite them to your local rally's, rock night's and charity run's.
- If they accept, do a write up for The Road or better still see if the local paper would be interested in covering the event. With a politician attending it raises the events profile, which is good for them and us.
- Keep the press on your side because when it comes to writing articles, size does matter and that includes the photo too but ask if you can use their article to be published in The Road (See Ed for details).

Step 3 Just keep it up and stick to what works.

So just recently we have just had a by-election for Copeland. So I had a look at our national campaigns' and picked the ones suited to Cumbria and picked the top five then I tailored them why they would affect Cumbria MAG members. I then I sent them to Lembit just to peer check them for accuracy and he added two extra question's - Would you like a safe ride on a motorbike and Would you like to join MAG? I then sent them to all the candidates and copied in previous contacts associated with the respected parties. With the working relationship I had built with Labour and the Lib Dems, they were the first to reply. So I thank them as soon as and sent off a reminder in two weeks time stating that I had two replies already and that they could be seen on our facebook page. I soon received a reply from the Green Party, I waited to the last week of the by-election campaign and re-sent my previous email and reminders to all parties but thanking the three parties who had already replied. Within the final days of campaigning I got a reply from the Conservatives (which won) and UKIP.

To see the replies please have a look on [www.facebook.com/whitehavenmag](http://www.facebook.com/whitehavenmag)

So what's for the future - Furness MAG Dead End Rally is coming up shortly, so I'm inviting the four MP's which covers Whitehaven and Furness MAG area's to come to be the guest judges and I'm getting the local paper to cover the story. Some have accepted, some sending an alternative and some I'm still waiting for a reply but I'm sure we'll get there! But the big one is the General Election in 2020 to start all over again but I'm sure it will be easier the second time around.

And remember there's a hidden lobbyist in every one of us.

Michael Armstrong, Cumbria MAG Regional Rep and Political Officer.

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***You may like to complete this survey:-***

### **“BIKERS + DRIVERLESS CARS?**

Hi guys, we're a local motorcycle tool manufacturer based in Bristol, and we're working with the press to find out what motorcyclists think of driverless cars.

Do they make you feel safer or more at risk? Please let us know by completing our short survey!

Thank you so much for your help, from all at Tru-Tension”

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## **GEM calls for overhaul of driver eyesight regulations**

ROAD SAFETY organisation GEM Motoring Assist says better regulation of eyesight tests for drivers would cut collisions and make Britain’s roads safer.

The only eyesight test at present is when you take your test and have to read a number plate at 20 metres.

GEM says a detailed test of a driver’s visual acuity and field of view should be required every 10 years.

The call follows a survey of more than 1,000 GEM members<sup>1</sup>. An overwhelming 87 per cent said compulsory eye testing would lead to safer roads.

GEM road safety officer Neil Worth commented: “If you can’t see effectively, you shouldn’t be driving, but the truth is that there are many drivers whose eyesight has deteriorated to very dangerous levels.

“In an ideal world, we would want compulsory eyesight tests every two years, particularly for drivers 40 and above. But the most practical measure would be a test of visual acuity and field of view every 10 years, which would fit in with licence renewal, making it practical and enforceable.

“Even DVLA guidelines to medical professionals state that eyesight can decline gradually and unnoticed, with people losing up to 40 per cent of their visual acuity without being aware of deterioration.”

GEM believes that regular mandatory eyesight tests for drivers would offer more than just a simple and effective way of reducing collisions caused by defective vision.

“Compulsory eyesight tests would not only make our roads safer, saving lives, disability and many millions of pounds through the reduction in the number of crashes, but they are also a valuable tool for the early diagnosis of many other costly medical conditions, irrespective of driving,” added Neil Worth.

“The time has come to accept that the current driver eyesight test simply isn’t fit for purpose. What’s more, it is certainly no longer acceptable for drivers to self-certify.

“Many more people are staying behind the wheel into their eighties and beyond. This, coupled with the greater volume of traffic and an increase in distractions, both inside and outside the vehicle, points to the clear need for more regular and detailed eyesight testing.”

### About the test

The eyesight test was introduced to the driving test in 1937 and has only been amended in minor ways over the years to reflect changing number plate sizes. It is the only eyesight test drivers are required to undertake until they reach the age of 70.

Field of view testing is a requirement in many US states, to check whether motorists can see and react to what's happening around them.

Many campaigns over the years have attempted to persuade the government to introduce measures that would make drivers take a more responsible view on the subject, but so far governments have declined to change the current regulations.

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## **Motorcyclists can now benefit from electric vehicle subsidy**

Motorcyclists looking to purchase an electric motorcycle can now benefit from a Government subsidy designed to increase the uptake of electric vehicles.

Since its introduction in 2011, the Office for Low Emission Vehicles' (OLEV) 'plug in' subsidy had only been available for electric cars and vans. But as of yesterday (1 March) it now applies to electric motorcycles and scooters, so long as they meet certain quality criteria including a battery with five year warranty and a 'good range'.

£3.75m has been made available for riders who want to want to 'go green', providing them with up to 20% off the cost of an electric motorcycle or scooter. Buyers will be able to claim a maximum discount of £1,500.

The move was announced as part of a wider £35m Government package which also includes a commitment to seeing thousands more electric vehicle charge points installed on streets and at workplaces across the UK.

In a press release issued yesterday (1 March), the Motorcycle Industry Association (MCI) named Fred Murphy (pictured right) as the owner of the first electric motorcycle to be bought with the new 'plug in' subsidy.

Mr Murphy bought a Zero FXS, which has an average range of 60 miles, a top speed of 85mph and costs the equivalent of a penny a mile to power, from the 21st Moto dealer in Kent. His new bike can be charged using a household three pin plug, with faster charge options which can reduce full charging time to two hours.

He said: "As an 'electronics geek' and an early adopter, I have always been interested in electric bikes and tried my first zero back in 2012, so when the 'plug in' grant finally came in, this was enough to justify my jump to electric."

Steve Kenward, CEO of the MCI, said: "Whether electric or not, a motorcycle, scooter or moped benefits from reduced journey times, easier or free parking, no congestion charge and is normally cheaper to run and insure.

"There is also the added benefit that it's just more fun than other modes of transport."

- See more at: Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/plug-in-car-van-grants/what-youll-get>  
MCI: <http://www.mci.co.uk/Press-and-Statistics/Press-Releases/Article/First-UK-customer-to-benefit-from-plug-in-grant-for-e-motorcycles-takes-to-the-road-today.aspx>

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## **Government urged to create Road Collision Investigation Branch**

The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) is calling on the Government to create a UK Road Collision Investigation Branch to boost efforts to reduce the number of road collisions and casualties.

In a press release issued today (22 March) to coincide with its annual conference, titled 'Collision investigation: how can we learn more?', PACTS is seeking an amendment to the Vehicle Technology and Aviation Bill to pave the way for the new body.

The road safety charity Brake has applauded PACTS for highlighting 'a vital issue at a pertinent time', when the decline in road casualties has stalled.

Taking place in Westminster today, the PACTS' conference will put the spotlight on road traffic investigations, and how the road safety sector can learn more from them.

Speakers will outline the case for improvements to current collision investigation systems, including the new challenges presented by driverless cars and increasing degrees of automation.

David Davies, decision-making director at PACTS, says the DfT already has dedicated accident investigation branches for air, rail and maritime - but not for road accidents.

He said: "The UK carries out some excellent collision investigation but it is fragmented and inconsistent.

"We need to learn from air and rail, harness the new technical opportunities, and bring together the efforts of researchers, police, coroners, local authorities and others more effectively. Other countries, such as the USA and Sweden, have such investigation bodies.

"It would not look at every collision but would focus on the most serious and those where lessons for preventing repeats seemed most likely. This is the approach of other investigation bodies.

"It would be about learning and would support, not replace, the crucial work of police collision investigators who are looking to see if there are grounds for prosecution."

Brake says it has long-called for the establishment of a road casualty investigation branch in the UK and is wholly supportive of the immediate funding of this branch by Government,

Gary Rae, campaigns director, said: "Britain, with its reputation for road safety, has an opportunity, through the creation of this branch, to be at the forefront of global work in collision prevention through academic-led investigation into causes and countermeasures to stop deaths and serious injuries on Britain's roads.

"This is the foundation of an intelligent approach to road collision reduction, at a time when, globally, the spotlight is on the unacceptable extent of road casualties and deaths."

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## **New VR video highlights importance of motorcyclist observation**

Central Bedfordshire Council's road safety team has launched a 360-degree virtual reality video to highlight the importance of positioning and observation on a motorcycle.

The film, 'Evel on the Roads', puts the viewer in the rider's seat in a bid to emphasise how easy it is for a motorcyclist to miss what's happening around them.

To achieve this, the viewer is set the challenge of spotting 'legendary' stunt man Evel Knievel.

The video, launched last week, is narrated by the 1981 British Superbike champion and former BBC MotoGP commentator Steve Parrish, who described it as 'a really good idea'.

Steve Parrish said: "I have been a motorcyclist for 45 years now and if something like this is around to make people safer on the road then I am pleased to help. It's really good and I might even learn something myself."

Amanda Graydon, senior road safety officer with Central Bedfordshire Council, said: "It's great to have Steve on board with the project, which is really exploiting new technology to get our messages across.

"Virtual reality has become really popular and we hope that it helps to make a difference to keep people safe on our roads."

The film is publicised on the 'Motorcycling Matters' website, which is run by Bedfordshire and Luton Casualty Reduction Partnership. The website has all the latest information for bikers in the region, including advanced training.

- See more at: Evel on the Road: <http://www.motorcyclingmatters.org/evel-on-the-roads>

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## **Moves towards driverless cars must not produce lazy drivers reliant on gadgets, says IAM RoadSmart**

IAM Road Smart Posted on 16/03/17

IAM RoadSmart has expressed concern that cars with growing levels of autonomy could make motorists lazy and over reliant on gadgets – with far reaching implications for the potential reduction of people killed and seriously injured on the roads.

IAM RoadSmart, the UK's biggest independent road safety charity, strongly supports this conclusion from yesterday's (15 March) House of Lords Science and Technology Committee report Connected and Autonomous Vehicles: The future?

The report sets out recommendations for the government to ensure it makes policy and investment decisions that enable the UK to receive maximum economic and safety benefits from autonomous vehicles.

IAM RoadSmart also added that there is widespread concern from the charity's members about the ease with which a driverless car could be hacked (reference 1) – with research showing there are many places security could be breached in a modern vehicle on sale today (reference 2).

Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart director of policy and research, said: "When it comes to driverless cars, IAM RoadSmart members are not keen to give up full control and are also very concerned about hacking, so we welcome the House of Lords Technology Committee's view that cyber security is an important issue.



“The implications for future driver competence and training as we become more reliant on technology are still far from clear, and it is vital that the government supports the committee’s call for further research in this area.

“IAM RoadSmart is already responding to this call by providing research grants and organising a conference in October on how we safely manage the transition to autonomous cars.”

The House of Lords’ committee said in its report: “Autonomous cars could have negative implications for drivers’ competence, making drivers complacent and overly reliant on technology. This is of particular concern in emergency situations, where a driver may react slowly to taking back control of a vehicle.

“The Government should give priority to commissioning and encouraging research studying behavioural questions and ensure it is an integral part of any trials it funds.”

Reference 1: <https://www.iamroadsmart.com/media-and-policy/newsroom/news-details/2016/09/09/insure-us-against-hackers-say-74-of-drivers>

Reference 2: [https://uk.norton.com/yoursecurityresource/detail.jsp?aid=car\\_computer](https://uk.norton.com/yoursecurityresource/detail.jsp?aid=car_computer)

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## **Preventing Drug Driving in Europe: PACTS and ETSC launch new report**

PACTS March 8, 2017

PACTS and ETSC have launched their new report into Preventing Drug Driving in Europe at the European Parliament in Brussels today (8th March 2017).

500 people a week die on European roads; 26,000 annually. Drug driving is responsible for a significant share of deaths. Psychoactive drugs are detected in around 15% of killed and seriously injured drivers. Between 3 and 16% of drivers say they have driven under the influence of drugs within the last 12 months. The EU average is 11%.

The effects of different psychoactive drugs are complex and varied. However the overwhelming majority have the same net effect, which is a decrease in the quality of mental and physiological effort dedicated to the driving task, which sees a decrease in performance and an increase in the risk of involvement in a collision.

Commenting on the report, Antonio Avenoso, Executive Director of ETSC said:

“Drug driving destroys thousands of lives every year. It’s a complex problem, but one that must nevertheless be tackled. Technology can help, but enforcement, rehabilitation and research are also vital to understanding and tackling this evolving challenge. Governments can learn from each other, and the EU also has a role to play in promoting common standards, better data collection and research.”

The report builds on the in-depth DRUID (Driving Under the Influence of Drugs) project and is aimed at policy makers in the UK and wider Europe. The full report, which can be downloaded below, looks at the current drug driving situation in Europe and a range of policy measures for national and EU action. It also considers the recent changes to UK drug driving.

Report: [http://www.pacts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/WEB\\_drug\\_driving\\_report.pdf](http://www.pacts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/WEB_drug_driving_report.pdf)

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## Give drivers a greater say on traffic restrictions - ABD

The Alliance of British Drivers (ABD) is calling on the Government to give drivers a greater say when it comes to traffic restrictions.

In a press release issued on 3 March, the campaign group says all too often drivers are 'suddenly confronted' with a new traffic restriction they were unaware of, such as a reduced speed limit.

The ABD is calling on traffic authorities to do more to ensure that all road users are made aware of proposed traffic restrictions, including, 'as a minimum', signs of adequate size to be provided along affected sections of road.

The ABD says that many local authorities only carry out the 'bare minimum level of consultation that is legally required', meaning the 'people most affected do not have a chance to give their opinions'.

The campaign group says this can lead to 'a vociferous minority of residents or anti-car activists' having undue influence over the decision making process.

The group says signs should show what type of restriction is proposed (e.g. 'Proposed 20mph Speed Limit'), with a telephone number and/or website address where further details can be obtained and objections can be made.

To support its campaign, the ABD has launched an online petition which to date (6 Mar) has received 59 signatures. 10,000 signatures are needed for the Government to respond.

Brian Gregory, ABD chairman, said: "The road network performs a vital economic function for the whole of society.

"This is especially true where roads provide more than just local access, so it is essential that a balance is struck between the desires of residents and the needs of the wider community.

"By ensuring that all users of a road are given the opportunity to comment on proposals that would affect them, a more balanced and less parochial range of views will be obtained."

- See more at: ABD: <http://www.abd.org.uk/>

Petition: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/186407>

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### Early day motion 1008

BE PHONE SMART CAMPAIGN

Session: 2016-17

Date tabled: 01.03.2017

Primary sponsor: Knight, Greg

Sponsors:

Hopkins, Kelvin McCartney, Karl Cunningham, Jim Barron, Kevin Main, Anne

That this House welcomes the BePhoneSmart.UK website which encourages drivers to not use their handheld mobile telephone whilst driving; notes that statistics from the 2016 RAC

Report on Motoring shows that the levels of telephone use at the wheel has now reached epidemic proportions with one in three now admitting to using their telephones whilst driving; and further notes that whilst increasing penalties may deter this, a proactive campaign like Be Phone Smart raises awareness of the dangers of using a handheld mobile telephone at the wheel and can play a positive role in changing driver behaviour.

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