

BMF POLICY STATEMENT June 2001

INTRODUCTION

Motorcycling is a legitimate means of personal transport and form of recreation. At the present time approximately 1 million motorcycles are registered for use on the roads of Great Britain and this figure is increasing. The object of this document is to illustrate and emphasise the many public interest aspects which affect the motorcyclist, to draw the attention of government at all levels and other official bodies to the significance of motorcycling, and to persuade them to take proper account of this environmentally friendly and sociable form of transport in their legislation, plans and policies.

BACKGROUND

The BMF's primary objective is to pursue, promote and protect the interests of motorcyclists. The BMF is a non-partisan body, seeking to influence authority by being reasonable and vigorous. The statements made in this document are summaries of policy arrived at according to current knowledge. They do not attempt to explain how the policy has been arrived at. Anyone wishing to know more about any of the policy items should enquire to the office of the BMF. This document is intended to be a 'living' document which will change as and when it is necessary for it to do so, in order to reflect current circumstances.

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BMF POLICY STATEMENT

CHARGES FOR ROAD USE

- The BMF will support the abolition of charges for motorcycles on all of Britain's tolled estuarial crossings.
- We will seek the exemption of motorcycles from road pricing charges and workplace parking charges

COMPULSION

- The BMF will work to ensure that motorcyclists have the liberty to conduct themselves in a reasonable and lawful manner.
- We will oppose the imposition of any compulsion which restricts uniquely the liberty of motorcyclists. There are cases where liberty infringing compulsion may be accepted, but only after full and fair consultation with motorcyclists and with account taken of their views. Obedience to the rule of law does not imply that the principle of objection to restrictive legislation has been abandoned on that, or any other, issue

COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS

- The BMF will promote the considerate use of the countryside by all users.
- We will co-operate and liaise with the various countryside recreation and conservation agencies to emphasise the legitimacy of the motorcycle as a non-intrusive means of access to and recreation in the countryside with benefits to the rural economy.
- We maintain that green roads are the most useful resource for country recreation and oppose the depletion of the country's network of green roads, which should be regarded as a very valuable piece of the jigsaw of Britain's heritage.

- We will oppose attempts to reduce the access of motorcyclists to green roads and designated 'quiet' roads.

DISCRIMINATION

- The BMF opposes all discrimination based on unreasoned prejudice.
- We will act to prevent discrimination against motorcyclists in locations such as camping grounds and public houses where the motorcycle is occasionally used as a discriminatory means to eliminate a problem which is not directly associated with motorcycling.
- We will encourage motorcyclists not to take advantage of their mobility to access areas which are clearly out of bounds or inappropriate to motor vehicles.
- We will encourage motorcyclists to be aware of the adverse impact which wet and bulky clothing and safety helmets can have in public places.
- We will encourage motorcyclists attending traditional meeting places to behave with consideration for other road users and local residents and will oppose attempts to ban such meetings where there are no good grounds for such a ban.

ENVIRONMENT

- The BMF encourages the use of motorcycles for personal mobility and recreation as such use has a smaller overall impact on the environment than has the use of any other mechanically powered road vehicle, using less natural resources and creating less traffic congestion
- We will encourage government and highway authorities to aim to maximise the environmental benefits of motorcycles, and not legislate against this minority group of road users.
- We will support manufacturers continually working to reasonably reduce the adverse effects which motorcycles may have on the environment.
- We oppose any proposals which would have the effect of restricting the remarkably efficient recycling of motorcycle parts which currently takes place.
- We will oppose efforts to revise downwards the limits on emissions and noise while existing limits fail to be enforced properly.

EXTERNAL AGENCIES

- The BMF will maintain regular contact with non- governmental organisations and agencies which may, or may not, be solely or directly involved in motorcycling related matters; this is fundamental in ensuring that motorcycling remains a legitimate activity.
- We will seek to maintain influential contact with:- national and international motorcycle organisations (e.g. ACU, MAG, RAC, FIM, FEMA) other joint interest groups (e.g. NMC, LARA, CCPR, B&BT) government departments and quasi governmental organisations (e.g. Countryside Agency, Sports Council) local traffic safety groups, rights of way liaison groups, Regional Motorsport Federations, Local Access Forums.
- As a general guideline BMF National Officers will direct work through national organisations. Regional officers will direct work at county and district level and through specialist National Officers where appropriate.
- We will encourage maximum unanimity of views and action amongst all organisations connected with motorcycling through membership of co-ordinating forums such as NMC, LARA, & PACTS.
- We will support any efforts to get PTWs into any Local Transport Plans and will encourage all members to get involved with the local transport planning process.

INSURANCE

- The BMF will pursue better terms of insurance for motorcycles and motorcyclists, with particular reference to: vehicle cost, age, power, frequency of use, multiple ownership, foreign use, rider experience.
- We will liaise with insurers, manufacturers and police to reduce the level of motorcycle theft which has a substantial effect on insurance policies.

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION

- Through authority granted by the ACU the BMF will represent non-competitive interests of British motorcyclists at international level through the Commission for Leisure Motorcycling and the Commission for Transport and Road Safety, these being Commissions of the Federation Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM).
- We will support and work with the Federation of European Motorcyclists' Associations (FEMA) to represent motorcyclists' interests in the European Community.

LEGISLATION

- The BMF intends to represent its members on all committees or other groups which may consider or make recommendations which may affect any code, standard or legislation which will affect any aspect of motorcycling.
- We will encourage members to influence their political representatives in the UK and European Parliaments in a reasonable, informed and constructive manner
- We will make strong representation through the Federation Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM), Federation of European Motorcyclists' Associations (FEMA) and UK members of the European Parliament in order to influence EU legislation.

NOISE

- The BMF will oppose the further reduction of noise levels, as currently applicable to motorcycles.
- We would support the provision of improved means of enforcement of existing noise regulations.
- We encourage riders to use motorcycles in such a way that legal limits on noise are observed at all times.

PARKING

- The BMF will press for adequate parking for PTWs, free of charge, to be provided by local authorities and for free secure parking where required street furniture can be paid for by sponsorship.
- We will oppose charging for PTW parking, whether secure or not, on the grounds that discouraging the use of PTWs reduces the valuable contribution they can make in reducing traffic congestion.
- We will press for the provision of PTW parking in all future planning applications.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- The BMF encourages all motorcyclists to wear clothing appropriate to the environment in which they are riding.
- We oppose any attempt to make the wearing of safety clothing compulsory.
- We support more and better research into the many aspects of personal protective equipment and better advice for motorcyclists
- We will seek to have the specific and inappropriate advice contained in the Highway Code concerning personal protective clothing and conspicuity replaced by better advice.
- We will seek the removal of any anomalies in regulations relating to protective clothing, such as the application of VAT to replacement visors.
- We will encourage research into the causes and effects of helmet noise and development of designs which will keep it to a safe level.

- We will draw riders' attention to the risks of hearing loss arising from excessive helmet noise and encourage them to take appropriate measures.
- The BMF opposes the ban on heavily tinted visors, believing that PTW users should have the same choice as all other vehicle drivers in sunny conditions.

POWER LIMITS

- The BMF opposes the introduction of power limits where they are proposed for motorcycles only and are therefore discriminatory.

RECRUITMENT

- Membership of the BMF will be promoted to all motorcyclists, either as full individual members or as affiliate members through motorcycle clubs.
- We seek to maximise BMF membership to ensure the best possible representation for all motorcyclists

ROAD USER EDUCATION

- The BMF appreciates that some improvement has already been made by changes to the driving test and the general advice to road users; however the BMF will encourage the DETR to improve the understanding by all classes of road user of the special considerations to be paid to motorcyclists.

SAFE PEOPLE - RIDER AND VEHICLE CONSPICUITY

- The BMF does not support recommendations to use conspicuous clothing, daytime running lights or headlamp use in daytime, because such use has not been proved to reduce the risk of accident to motorcyclists.
- We will oppose attempts to make the use of alleged conspicuity aids compulsory until there is proper research and incontrovertible proof of the benefits.

SAFE ROADS

- The BMF will seek to have greater consideration given to motorcyclists when road layouts, furniture and repair methods are planned, affecting crash barrier design, road nodes, or resulting in overbanding, road planing, raised manhole covers or other road hazards. These in turn make roads unnecessarily more dangerous to motorcycles.
- We support the research into crash barriers currently being carried out by a joint FEMA/FIM/EU Commission.
- We will encourage motorcyclists to take legal action against highway authorities and contractors where danger has been created.

SAFETY

- The BMF will encourage the production of statistics which truly reflect the risks attached to motorcycle riding.
- We will oppose any motorcycling safety legislation based on shallow and flawed research.
- We encourage objective research into the causes of PTW accidents because accurate knowledge is essential before concerned parties can introduce measures which will truly reduce the accident rate
- We will seek to ensure that safety planning recognises motorcyclists as vulnerable road users, together with other vulnerable groups such as pedal cyclists.

SAFETY ON MOTORCYCLES

- The BMF encourages the advancement of safer vehicle design.
- We oppose the introduction of hitherto largely untried 'good ideas' in vehicle safety, or the use of public money in campaigns to promote such ideas, where there is little or no supporting research and riders would effectively be guinea pigs. There are clear indications that some design changes, which on initial inspection appear to be positive safety moves, are counter productive when researched more thoroughly.

- We will oppose any discriminatory legislation or other constraint on the freedom of motorcyclists intended solely to demonstrate that action is being taken to reduce road traffic accidents.

SPEED LIMITS

- The BMF supports the review of speed limits on certain stretches of road in order to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion.
- We will support the reduction of a speed limit only where there is clear evidence that it will improve road safety. We oppose arbitrary reduction when it is unnecessary and inappropriate.

TAXATION

- The BMF opposes the evasion of vehicle excise duty and supports increased efforts to prosecute road-tax evaders.
- We will lobby for VED rates on PTWs to reflect their low demand on transport infrastructure.
- We will continue to lobby for the exclusion of VAT from any accessory or service that is a compulsory requirement when a person uses a motorcycle.
- We will examine carefully any proposals to transfer road tax to fuel prices. At first sight such proposals may appear attractive to multi-vehicle and/or low mileage owners but proposals must be carefully drafted to avoid discrimination.

TECHNICAL

- Through constant liaison with manufacturers, trade and legislative bodies, and any other means available, the BMF will promote necessary technical research.
- We will aim to monitor the quality, price, performance and design of motorcycles, components and accessories as of considerable importance to the safe use of motorcycles.

TELEMATICS

- The BMF will press for the needs of motorcyclists to be taken into account during the design and development stages of telematics systems.
- We will not oppose the introduction of systems that can be shown to provide safety benefit without disadvantage to any road user.
- We will oppose the introduction of any system preventing motorcyclists from using certain roads.

THEFT OF MOTORCYCLES

- The BMF will encourage the incorporation of effective anti-theft devices into motorcycles at manufacture.
- Members will be advised to use good quality shackles, locks and chains as secondary protection against motorcycle theft.
- We will encourage the provision of well lit motorcycle parking bays with security posts.
- We will seek the introduction of legislation which prohibits the sale of registration documents with badly damaged vehicles to help prevent the 'ringing' of stolen vehicles.
- We will co-operate with governing bodies of competitive motorcycle and motor sport to promote regular checks to discourage the use of stolen PTW parts. We will support appropriate action taken against offenders.

TOURING

- The BMF will promote motorcycle touring as a healthy, skilful and adventurous way of travelling.
- We will provide an advice service to motorcyclists who wish to extend their knowledge and understanding of places and people and cultures through use of motorcycles.
- We will develop and maintain contact with rider and motoring organisations in other countries in order to improve our touring service.

TRAINING

- The BMF supports the proper training of motorcycle riders in the practical skill of safe riding and management of their vehicle in all respects. We have demonstrated our commitment to this policy through the BMF Rider Training Scheme, created in 1980.
- We consider that compulsory preliminary training for motorcyclists only is discriminatory, but in view of the benefits would support any measures to extend such compulsory training to all would-be private motorists.

TYPE APPROVAL

- The BMF supports the application of Type Approval regulations which genuinely help to remove barriers to trade, but oppose such regulations where in doing so restrictions are placed on an individual's possibility to modify and improve vehicles.
- We support the enforcement of approved high quality safety standards for original equipment, retailed accessories and components.

CONCLUSION

The British Motorcyclists Federation will pursue and provide for all that is seen to be in the best interests of motorcyclists at any one time, and calls upon all official bodies and government departments in the UK and European Community to make generous and positive provision for motorcycle based transport and recreation in all policies and actions.