



British Motorcyclists Federation

**Political and Technical Services
2011: Q1 and Q2 report**

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United Kingdom

New Government



The new government has been in office for over a year and having met with them several times, we now have a good idea of how it operates. Primarily, it doesn't like spending money and therefore anything which costs money such as staff, quangos, research projects and the like tend to suffer badly. However, the minister in charge of roads and vehicles, Mike Penning MP, is a huge fan of motorcycles and our freedom to use the road. And yes, he does ride.

Training and Testing Review

As part of the new government's commitment to sorting out the motorcycle industry, it committed to reviewing the way the motorcycle test was introduced in 2008 and to replace it, preferably with a mostly on road test that can be done anywhere in the UK. This review was supposed to be "quick and dirty", but a variety of delays, all of them from the government side and to the frustration of the minister in charge, Mike Penning, has meant that over a year later, only small changes to the test have been made to improve safety (including a small amount of leniency on the speed requirement of the

swerve and emergency stop exercises). The end date of the process is unknown, but speculation that it could 3 or 4 years before candidates start taking the new test is not unrealistic. The fact that the research required to test the changes has been approved and is likely to start soon is welcome news. The BMF has been involved in all the major discussions and continues to be involved in getting the best deal for future riders.

United Kingdom

Westminster Parking Charges

Despite raising just shy of £100,000 for legal expenses, the No To Bike Parking Tax has lost in its court bid to overturn the parking charges in central London which have contributed to an obvious reduction in the number of motorcycles parking in the area. This means that Westminster and other local authorities in the UK can introduce parking charges for motorcycles on the street without fear of legal challenge. Although the campaign soldiers on with monthly (controversial) demonstrations and plans to take Westminster to the European Court of Justice, the campaign's leader, Warren Djanogly, has chosen to step down. Over the last few months, the BMF has been excluded from being actively involved with the campaign, but we continue to try to support those who fight against these charges. Parking charges across Westminster have been extended to evening and Sundays as well proving that they are a very greedy council indeed.



Red Tape Challenge

Earlier this year, the government invited bodies to make suggestions for legislation to be removed or reformed. The BMF produced a comprehensive list of items which included:

- Lift restrictions on motorcycle licences
- Lift bans on road racing on closed roads
- Lift ban on right-hand sidecars
- Lift ban on 125cc towing trailers
- Lift ban on tinted visors
- Lift ban on bus lane access
- Lift ban on access to advanced stop lines
- Extend the historic vehicle tax exemption
- Remove Vehicle Excise Duty
- Remove requirement to display to tax disc
- Remove annual SORN requirement
- Remove electronic enforcement of insurance requirement
- Rationalise parking rules so riders know
- Modify NERC act to lift bans on some trail routes
- Modify the Type Approval Regulation (EU)
- Rationalise the consultation process for Traffic Orders
- Repeal or modify the power of police to confiscate vehicles without appeal

We have yet to get a response from the government on these suggestions.

United Kingdom

eMCI and TTxGP



Earlier this summer, the eMCI was launched as an organisation to represent manufacturers of electric and alternative fuelled motorcycles and those involved in the business as a response to the fact that manufacturers did not have enough volume to join the regular trade body the MCIA. As members of the MCIA and working on electric motorcycle issues for some time, the BMF has become an active member of the eMCI. Early meetings of the eMCI have highlighted a large number of barriers to taking up electric motorcycles which has been surprising given the market's rapid growth but causes concern for the future.

Also, our involvement with TTxGP continues, with the series now taking leaps and bounds with many national championships and teaming up with the FIM for a few races as well. Regular readers of Rider magazine will have been able to follow developments with TTxGP for some time.

Rider Active

Rider Active was launched earlier this year. The idea behind the campaign was to get members volunteering more actively for the BMF on a set of concerns at a time. The first such campaign was about driver distraction with a survey of over 200 riders showing that mobile phone use by drivers was the top concern. A briefing on how to address the issue was produced by the BMF. A second phase concentrating on road maintenance and design will be launched later this year.

Social Media

For some time, the BMF has been actively using Twitter and Facebook to promote our activities and to keep riders informed of interesting news and developments. To date, over 1400 people are Facebook fans and over 450 are Twitter followers. Due to a variety of technical problems, the Campaigner email died a death and Facebook and Twitter are for the time being our main means of communication. You can follow us on Twitter @BMF_Chris or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bmf1960.

UK Industry

Motorcycle Market

The motorcycle industry across the EU is suffering badly since the recession hit in 2008. In particular, due to currency fluctuations, cheap Japanese imports have disappeared with former European exotica now able to undercut them. In the UK specifically (where we have to consider both the Yen to Euro and Euro to Pound fluctuations), the market has really struggled, almost down a third from the pre-recession peak. In particular, the supersports market has shrunk the most and ironically, the 125 market is only just recovering from a large fall. Part of this is also largely due to the support given to the car industry which has distorted the market and the introduction of the new test which has clearly had an impact on learner numbers. The BMF is lobbying the government both to change the test (successfully, but slowly) and to support the motorcycle industry (with less obvious success).

European Union

Type Approval

To sell a motorcycle for road use in Europe requires type approval by the EU. As part of an attempt to reduce burdens on manufacturers, the EU is introducing a new type approval regulation. However, as part of reducing the burden, more burdens have been added (EU logic, I'm afraid), some which we support and some which we do not. There are many new requirements for making motorcycles greener such as CO2 information (not currently collected or published) and bringing motorcycle pollutants in line with cars. Another requirement is the end to the option of a 100bhp limit as exercised in France. These measures we broadly support. However, mandatory ABS on all motorcycles over

125cc and restrictions to vehicle modification we strongly oppose. There are also many other more technical areas such as on board diagnostics and paperwork requirements for manufacturers and importers which are complicated and much harder to form a clear opinion on. However, the BMF, through FEMA (Federation of European Motorcyclists Associations), has been lobbying to support the bits we like and to remove the bits we don't. Support from members who can speak to their MEPs and, after October, their MPs is much appreciated.

Barriers

Road side furniture is not usually designed with the safety of motorcyclists in mind. Crash barriers are the worst culprits often causing more injuries than the object they were protecting the traffic from. The simple reason for this is that the safety of motorcyclists is not a consideration at the design and testing stage of barriers. For many years, the BMF, through FEMA, has been working to have motorcyclists included in the technical standards. However, there was a recent set back whereby the EU body in charge of setting the standards once again refused to make progress on this issue.