



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

The following is a news bulletin from North Wales police

Bikesafe scheme goes from strength to strength

An innovative scheme that aims to reduce motorcycle casualties and provide education to riders on road safety is going from strength to strength in North Wales.

Bikesafe North Wales now facilitates up to 10% of the UK's market for Bikesafe education, and are providing more education per head than any other police force in the country, apart from the Metropolitan Police.

The scheme, which is facilitated by North Wales Police and supported by all six local authorities, offers **free two-day workshops for up to 600 bikers a year.**

Since the inception of the North Wales Local Authority Rider Scheme last year the **six authorities of North Wales – Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham,** have supported North Wales Police's Bikesafe scheme by helping to fund two-day workshop for motorcyclists who are residents of North Wales.

The workshops – which are normally £100, offer practical advice about road safety and educate riders by passing on knowledge and skills to try and help motorcyclists become safer riders. **The workshops also include FBoS training (First Bike on Scene) which means first response and first aid training for bikers.**

This scheme has fused the North Wales Road Safety Group - which includes North Wales Police, the NHS, and the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service to deliver a quality and high quantity risk awareness course with on road practical demonstration and assessment. It is also supported by the volunteer observers who are sometimes off duty police officers and civilian advanced riders.

Paul Cheshire, North Wales Bikesafe Co-ordinator said: *“So far this year, those **killed or seriously injured by biker crashes have fallen by a massive 46%** compared to the same period last year, but we are not complacent and North Wales Police continue to be concerned at the level of collisions involving motorcyclists.*

Bikesafe has now become a well known police initiative that engages with bikers to educate them in better road management skills. This is all about providing enforcement balanced with education.”

In summer 2009, Gwynedd County Council were so impressed with the scheme that they purchased a motorcycle, which will assist in delivering sessions and help to develop the Bikesafe facility within Gwynedd. North Wales Fire and Rescue Service have also been providing 'biker drop-in surgeries' at venues across Gwynedd.

Paul Cheshire added: *“This is not all about hard hitting enforcement. It's about offering a range of training opportunities to motorcyclists of all abilities to help reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries on our roads.”*

Chief Inspector Gary Ashton said "North Wales Police has developed a joined up approach to reduce the numbers of people killed and injured whilst riding motorcycles, which involves enforcement against those intent on riding unlawfully, engineering out some specific risks to motorcyclists and educating riders through the Bikesafe scheme.

"By making Bikesafe free to residents of North Wales through the Local Authority scheme, we're seeking to engage with as wide an audience of motorcyclists as possible to ensure they become more thoughtful and responsible riders."

If you are a resident of North Wales and would like to participate in a free Bikesafe course please contact **Paul Cheshire, North Wales Bikesafe Co-ordinator on 01492 804155 or email – psdbikesafe@nthwales.pnn.police.uk**

Places are limited and course dates will be confirmed on application.
Further details regarding the Bikesafe scheme can be obtained via the national website – www.bikesafe.co.uk

Notes:

*Operation Focus was launched in 2003 and its objective is to reduce motorcycle casualties and deaths. Officers engage with motorcyclists to educate them of the dangers, but also actively prosecute those who ride dangerously.

In 2007, 12 motorcyclists died on the roads of North Wales and 80 were seriously injured.

In 2008 a further eight motorcyclists died and 88 were seriously injured.

So far in 2009, two motorcyclists have been killed and 41 seriously injured.

4.9.09

The PPP comments ... we are primarily interested in prevention whether it is of road incident casualties or crime. This scheme is aimed at prevention by education and persuasion and we are totally supportive of such initiatives. For whatever reason the casualties are decreasing and we are encouraged. The NWPF records however show an apparently very low rate of summons for dangerous driving with 3 (of 23 charged) so far this year up from only ONE (of 20 charged) last year. With the technology available to NWPF this indicates poor targeting despite very large numbers of motorcyclists being stopped on the highway under operation focus...see below from NWPF website

Operation Focus is a seasonal enforcement operation run each Saturday and Sunday between Easter and October using money **accrued** through the **Speed Awareness Course**. Officers **engage** with visiting motorcyclists at Force gateways **to advise of dedicated resources** policing popular routes intent on detecting and enforcing any offences disclosed. Riders are sign posted to Bikesafe, which is fully subsidised for North Wales' residents, whilst offenders are given the opportunity to attend the RIDE course in lieu of penalty points.

The following two letters are written by retired NWPF Police Officer Paul Cheshire....
(PPP **emphasis**)

Please note the below reply to MCN for your interest. I am mindful that the effort applied by MCN will encourage many to attend the demo. My concern is that the interest in the event is being fuelled by perception brought about by some little truth. I support the right to demonstrate legally but I see that the MCN are not quite portraying the balance of opinion which I have monitored in the forums and as I see from those who should know best i.e. living in Wales they are not overtly concerned with the present situation. In deed, some are worried that this unnecessary action and that **there is sufficient evidence, if we were honest, to suggest that there is a fair percentage of those that do not comply to the law when riding motorbikes.** As with all sections of society there will always be those that feel unjustly treated and in some cases with cause. However, in this country we can be comforted in the fact that we can enjoy a freedom to address issues and in reality conduct our lives in a comfortable environment. We do have to remember that the roads are shared and the reason why certain attention has been given is as much to do with statistical evidence. I am certain that some may disagree and of course we are able to debate this which is our right. I am sure that the MCN event will come and go and hope that it achieves something positive. I note that there will be MCN 'T' shirts on sale for almost £16.00 each. The paper is encouraging you to purchase these**could be considered a savvy business move! Shame the profits are not being donated to the Air Ambulance** or some other worthy cause etc BikeSafe and all provision of education from the police is none income generating.

My main concern is to do with giving a choice to become a safer road user and maintain motorcycling as a true alternative activity. Education to any level will increase awareness and therefore the ability to make an informed decision over how we ride rather than other bikers who rely on natural ability only. **I hope that once again certain comments and actions from others in a position to influence the situation do not contaminate the worthwhile efforts of those in the business of making a constructive contribution to road safety and enjoyment of biking.** I wish to thank all those that support BikeSafe especially under these challenging circumstances.

Paul Cheshire

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From: Cheshire, Paul

Sent: 02 September 2009 10:44

To: 'mcn.news@bauermedia.co.uk'

Subject: Reclaim the Roads of North Wales

Dear Editor,

*I am the North Wales BikeSafe Coordinator and representative for the Wales Region on the National BikeSafe Steering Group. **I have been monitoring the response to the MCN encouraged demonstration ride on the 13th Sept.***

*I can see why this topic has raised interest. It is obvious that there is a split in the level of concern over what is suggested as overt policing of the roads where bikers are concerned. **I support the right to lawful protest** but also the lawful act of police duty. This is of course the issue under dispute. I am sure that whatever section of society you represent there will be those that feel unfairly treated by the police. It is not surprising that most of those quite often have been booked for an offence. You know some bikers really do not do themselves any favours.*

*The current state of affairs has arisen over time. Although the reason why North Wales Police being seen as the instigator of adverse enforcement is much to do with a perception and **due to the vocal stance** we have taken rather than any actions which have been taken over and above any other police force. The police have a right to be concerned regarding this particular vulnerable*

section of road users as they represent the highest percentage of those killed and seriously injured. In North Wales in 2007 33% of all those who were fatally or seriously injured were bikers and that despite only representing 1% of registrations and at an average of only 3.5K per annum!. It should be interesting to note but rarely advertised by the media, that **North Wales Police also provide by percentage more than any other single force in BikeSafe education other than the Met.** We operate with a partnership not only with Road Safety organisations but the biker community at large including many volunteer motorcycle observers not employed by the police. The motorcycle collisions were steadily and worryingly increasing extensively since 2005. This year we can demonstrate that probably due to the present strategy of enforcement, engineering, engagement and education, killed and seriously injured motorcycle collisions have been significantly reduced by **46%** for the equivalent period from last year. **Motorcycle traffic within North Wales seems steady.** Other parts of Wales or neighbouring counties cannot demonstrate this decrease in deaths and injuries and although we are concerned about any injuries sustained we are quietly confident that the issue is being addressed. **Resident and regular riders to N Wales in general have not found any reason for concern.** It is also clear that many bikers have changed their attitudes to how we ride the roads and treat risk. With all this evidence I can not really qualify any reason to change our strategy. I am sure that the protest meeting will attract many hundreds if not thousands of riders and hope that the event takes place without serious incident. I ask that you consider this article for suitable editorial exposure. '

Paul Cheshire

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The PPP comments ... Paul Cheshire knows how many Motorcyclists are stopped across North Wales and how many (or very few!) of these have been found guilty of any sort of crime or traffic regulation infringement. We believe the extent of the stops is excessive and we also believe that most of the really foolish and dangerous riders (or drivers) are not being dealt with. This type of Police Activity in the past alienated whole groups of the population including ethnic minorities and resulted in the massive and EXCESSIVE swing in the CJS towards the protection of the rights of the criminals and antisocial groups.

Government Policy on Motorcycle road safety and enforcement led to the ACPO guidelines, this document and others of interest are accessible by entering [strategy](#) into [News Articles](#) [search](#) on this site.

We believe NWPF under Brunstrom broke all the rules and the spirit of this legislation and NWPF remains in denial as it continues these abusive activities.

In conclusion because of the above attitudes the PPP are supporting the protest and very many of our members will be monitoring and recording the situation on the day.

"The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding."

[Justice Louis D. Brandeis, US Supreme Court, 1928](#)