

“ PPP ”

People for Proper Policing in North Wales

North Wales Police is to continue with Operation Focus

This story current on NWPF website 26/02/10

At the request of **Chief Constable Mark Polin**, a review of Operation Focus and associated tactics was undertaken. That review concluded that Operation Focus has been a great success and has contributed greatly to the tremendous reductions seen in the number of motorcyclists killed or seriously injured.

In 2003, 18 motorcyclists lost their lives on the roads in North Wales. In 2009 that number was reduced to three. More recent comparisons show that when compared with the casualty figures of 2008, the number of motorcyclists killed is down from eight to three (62%) and the number seriously injured is down from 209 to 143 (32%).

Despite the success of the 2009 operation more needs to be done to protect the interests of the law abiding responsible rider as well as the wider public and affected communities, from the minority of motorcyclists who choose to abuse road traffic law and endanger their own lives and the lives of others.

Superintendent Simon Shaw said *“Operation Focus will continue in 2010 with the same level of commitment and resources as seen in previous years. However, this year enforcement tactics will be amended to make the best use of the officers’ time as they dedicate more time **to targeting those that pose the greatest risk to themselves and others.**”*

An ‘intelligence led’ approach will mean the end of the large number of motorcyclists routinely stopped each weekend to check the legality of bike and rider as the officers will be deployed to spend more time conducting overt and covert patrols and monitoring rider behaviour along the more problematic routes.

In addition, more minor offences will be dealt with by issuing warnings and words of advice rather than filling out lengthy prosecution forms freeing up valuable officer time to conduct more patrols and monitor rider behaviour.

Superintendent Shaw added: *“2010 will also see greater efforts made to work with our partners and the motorcycling community as we seek to improve still further the safety record of our roads through targeted engagement and education initiatives.”*

Councillor Ian Roberts, the Chair of North Wales Police Authority, said: *“The review has demonstrated that Operation Focus has helped to save lives in North Wales and we are therefore pleased that this important road safety campaign is to continue in 2010.*

Our research shows that the Police Authority is also reflecting the views of most of the communities across North Wales. The majority of the town and community councils we consulted were in favour of Operation Focus, particularly the high visibility approach used to prevent injuries and deaths caused by road traffic collisions. The results of the consultation exercise were considered in the review.

We will always welcome motorcyclists who ride responsibly, within the law and our priority is to make North Wales a safer place for residents and visitors alike.”

Notes:

The change in prosecution policy will bring the force in line with the ACPO Motorcycle Enforcement Strategy.

In practice this will see the prosecution policy change for the following offences:

- **Illegal exhausts** - in cases with no noise annoyance, the Vehicle Defect Rectification Scheme will be used with appropriate advice given. Where noise annoyance is a factor, prosecution will be considered and consideration will be given to the use of Section 59 Police Reform Act 2002 for persistent offenders or excessive noise nuisance.

- **Tinted visors** - if used during daylight hours, advice will be given. During the hours of darkness or conditions of reduced visibility prosecution will be considered where there is an obvious danger.

- **Vehicle Registration Marks** - Enforcement action will be taken in all cases where a registration plate does not meet existing regulations but alternatives to prosecution will be considered in cases where the plate is clearly legible and it is clear that the breach of regulations is not an attempt to evade automated reading equipment.

The PPP comments ...**We applaud CC Polin's approach as it represents sense and reason in place of the growing abusive and arrogant response of the previous regime. We are fully aware and witness to the problem of rogue motorcyclists (and others!) with their risky driving endangering the motoring public and themselves. We particularly applaud the intention to follow ACPO and government guidelines on Motorcycle enforcement Policy. It is unfortunate that the massive public protest by motorcyclists was necessary prior to this response. Ian Robert's comments are particularly disingenuous as his 'watchdog' patently failed to curb the previous policy. The epitome of this failure was the horrendous affair of the headless biker and the sham of an inquiry that followed it. One wonders whether he was even aware of the 2005 Government/ACPO guidelines which we publicised in ...**

<http://www.properpolicing.org.uk/articles/ACPO%20Motorcycle%20Enforcement%20Strategy2.pdf>

We echo Supt Shaw's statement about targetting which is the essence of all Police management and operations. AND we don't mean mindless box ticking. As pressure on funds and resources grows so must the emphasis on targetting and prevention.

We expect a positive response from all motorcyclists as individuals and their organisations and the Motorcycling press.