

## Letters to the Editor

# Proactive driver management strategies will save costs and lives under new regulations

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ORGANISATIONS face a raft of new regulations and legislation designed to improve the quality and consistency of driving, not least Driver CPC compliance. Introduced across Europe, the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence is a new qualification for professional bus, coach and lorry drivers and requires drivers to receive 35 hours of periodic training every five years.

The police are also to receive new powers to withdraw licences from short-sighted drivers involved in accidents or caught driving dangerously. The new smart phone-based application will enable the DVLA in Swansea to revoke

licences within hours to prevent drivers posing a risk to other road users.

The business implications of these changes cannot be overlooked. Penalties for non-compliance with Driver CPC will be significant, with fines of £1,000 per driver and £1,000 per operator for each time a driver is stopped and found in breach of requirements. These changes come on top of the existing business costs associated with poor road accident records, from rising insurance costs to lost productivity or the days taken off work to recover from a driving-related accident.

Currently all accidents must be reported to the police, especially where injury to a person or animal, or damage to property or road furniture has occurred. There is a requirement to

inform the insurance company if a claim is to be made and it is the driver's responsibility to report the accident to an employer. The police may also report more serious accidents involving commercial vehicles to the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency. There is, however, with few exceptions, rarely a need to report driving-related accidents to the Health and Safety Executive as part of the standard RIDDOR reporting requirements.

Reporting of road traffic accidents to HSE and insurance companies would provide a far clearer, consistent and accurate view of an organisation's overall accident rate. It would also provide better insight into the associated business costs.

Armed with this insight, organisations

can put in place a far more proactive strategy to managing driver safety. Proactive adherence to Driver CPC training requirements should be a given but there are further opportunities for companies to minimise the risk of accidents, including routine health checks - such as eye, drug and alcohol tests - to ensure drivers are physically capable and encouraging drivers to undertake daily vehicle inspections.

Ensuring all drivers are CPC compliant and healthy will be a cost saving. Those drivers that have received CPC training welcome the additional information and guidance it provides. There are also proven opportunities to reduce insurance premiums. One company has halved its claims ratio by £300,000 in one year by producing a

clear corporate transport policy and providing enhanced driver training.

There are clear benefits from the adoption of a robust driver management strategy. Good, consistent information that reveals the true impact of road traffic accidents on the business is key. By implementing the recording of road traffic accidents alongside other safety at work issues, the overall picture will be clearer and organisations will have the opportunity to determine the best way to minimise incidents and reduce costs.

From improving driver training to reallocating drivers to closer depots and implementing routine health checks, it is those organisations that take a proactive approach that will not only reduce costs but also help to cut the fatalities and injuries that occur daily on the roads.

# 'Super redways' plan will overcome the blues

## Globetrotter has fond memories of College days

**FORMER students and staff members are joining the Milton Keynes College Alumni Association from all around the world.**

The Association has been formed as part of the College's 30th-anniversary celebrations. No one has got in touch from further afield than Simon Keeping, a design student who left in 1995 and whose globetrotting has taken him to live in Australia via the private jet of legendary rock band Kiss.

Simon says: "I studied Design (BTEC Diploma in Design and a GNVQ advanced in design), really enjoyed the courses and found them to be my ideal first steps into my design career. At the time I didn't realise how lucky I was to have facilities like those at Milton Keynes College on my doorstep but looking back now I can really appreciate it and I can see the grounding it gave me to go on and continue learning."

After passing both design courses and a Higher National Diploma in Design, Simon

worked for a number of household named companies including Levi Strauss and Lotus before becoming Art Editor for a leading publisher. He helped to produce a number of large format luxury books for clients including Ferrari, Marco Pierre White, Diego Maradona, Tottenham Hotspur Football Club and Celtic Football Club.

"I was headhunted to work on another large format art book for the rock band Kiss," he says. "That meant going on the road with them around Canada and the United States, speaking regularly to them about the project, which was great fun."

Simon (pictured on the left) says he's delighted with the formation of the Alumni Association. "It's a really positive way of hopefully inspiring people now studying at the college," he says.

"I met my wife through work and I have had a wonderful and exciting career, all because I had the opportunity to study the one thing I wanted, design, at Milton Keynes College."



**Milton Keynes COLLEGE**

Access to the Alumni Association is available to previous students of Milton Keynes College or the Further Education Colleges at Wolverton and Bletchley.

To find out more, e-mail [alumni@mkcollegealumni.co.uk](mailto:alumni@mkcollegealumni.co.uk) or sign up at <https://alumni.mkcollege.ac.uk>

Twitter: @MKC\_Alumni Facebook [www.facebook.com/MKCollege](http://www.facebook.com/MKCollege)  
LinkedIn Search: Milton Keynes College Alumni.

MILTON Keynes is well known for its system of redways, a unique network of red-surfaced cycle and pedestrian paths which criss-cross the city and keep the most vulnerable road users away from cars, vans and trucks. Most of the network is between 40 and 50 years old now and is, shall we say, 'coming of age'.

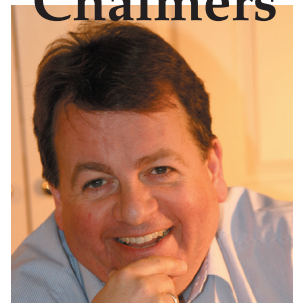
The network as it exists is a staggering 180 miles long. But does it work and is it now being properly extended into new areas and properly maintained, signed and lit? Sadly, the simple answer to all of those questions is 'No'.

The redways are not properly maintained. They are often cracked, litter-strewn, pot-holed, even flooded. They are also very poorly lit or heavily shaded by trees and are rarely if ever treated with salt to help users stay upright on ice. They are badly signed and, because they are usually surrounded with our wondrous and abundant forest-like public domain, navigation by sightlines is not possible. Although efforts are now being made to install them in new areas, often it is too little, too late and a sad afterthought.

A further issue is the less than satisfactory interface between cyclists who generally travel at speeds in excess of 8mph and pedestrians who travel rather more slowly. Pedestrian users are frequently the old and infirm (electric wheelchairs are allowed) or young mothers with schoolchildren, toddlers, pushchairs, prams, and dogs on extendable leads.

If the redways are old and crumbling, poorly lit, poorly maintained and do not really work, why don't we just scrap them? It is a good question. However, when you look at what a marvellous asset they are, how safe Milton Keynes is for pedestrians and cyclists and how relatively simply they can all be improved, objections to their survival crumble.

## Theo Chalmers



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According to the 2011 census, only 2.8 per cent of Milton Keynes respondents used their cycles to travel to and from work. Nevertheless our cyclists are a very keen bunch.

Between October 8 last year and January 6, Milton Keynes Council conducted a Cycling Consultation for Milton Keynes. It received 376 submissions from interested parties, including parish and town councils, stakeholder groups and individuals, showing how strongly people feel about cycling and the redways. Of these, exactly 100 were extremely detailed.

Submissions are now closed and the report from the Transport Strategy Partnership is expected to have been formally adopted as the Milton Keynes Council Cycling Strategy by cabinet member for transport and highways Cllr John Bint under delegated powers on April 23. Among its many recommendations are new rules for the use of redways, new signage and proper maintenance. However of greater interest to me is the proposed cre-

ation of exciting new 'super redways' on some existing routes, with features including a centre line, direction arrows, traffic passing on the left, selective widening and other safety design principles.

As always with infrastructure, money is key. John Bint tells me that there has never been a category of direct government funding for redways - probably because they are unique - so funding for maintenance and improvements has come out of the council's general budget.

Milton Keynes has never qualified for funding allocated for transport route safety improvements, mainly because its roads are already among the safest in Britain, largely because of redways. However Cllr Bint assures me there is now £10 million earmarked for improvements over the next two years to redways, walkways, Sustrans routes, towpaths, cycleways, bridleways and recreational cycling leisure routes. Out of this, Cllr Bint has promised that a "big chunk" will go towards improving the Redways. We can but hope.

Many cyclists currently ignore the redways and use our grid roads and while we must never seek to deny cyclists the right to travel on our grid roads should they choose, it seems to me that often they simply do not know about the redways or because of poor signage and poor maintenance have either become confused about using them or have rejected them as unsatisfactory. All valid points.

However once the planned improvements have occurred, my idea is to have signs placed on the grid roads wherever they are accessible from a redway. An arrow would point to a list of destinations with the words: "Cyclists - have you considered using the redways?"

I would hope that this initiative might save lives. No doubt we shall see, if it is adopted. Cheerio.