

P-05-745 Increased Provision for Off Road Motorsports

This petition was submitted by Jonathan Barrett, having collected 318 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call upon the Welsh Assembly to provide more support through Natural Resources Wales in making provision for off road motorcycles. We further ask that the Assembly provides direction for local authorities and the police in line with the Welsh Off Road Motors Steering Group (WORMS). We lastly ask that Ministers meet with some of those involved in off road provision to discuss the support that we seek.

Additional Information

The issue of "off road motorcycle" use in Wales has been one that has often polarised views with those in support against others. This has resulted in many legitimate off road users being demonised, treated unfairly and being tarred with the same brush as those that do ride anti-socially.

The issue of off road vehicles in Wales is worth many millions of pounds to the Welsh economy every year. In 2002 the Auto-Cycle Union (ACU) carried out a survey on behalf of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council and it was estimated there were 10,000 off road bikes and vehicles in use in that one council area. Local businesses are seeing constant increases in bike use year on year. Most of those involved in the sport do try and engage legally, however with very few venues and a reduction in the amount of available Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATS) more and more are falling short of the law. Whilst this is ongoing the police are often targeting off road users including those that are conducting themselves legally and responsibly.

The Welsh Off Road Motors Steering group which advises the Welsh Assembly, as well as all 22 local authorities and 4 Welsh police forces, concludes that the only way to stop illegal activity is through a three pronged approach of education, enforcement and provision. Whilst education and enforcement are regularly carried out, it seems little is done in the way to provide for off road users. In South Wales there is currently one motocross track that is open to the general public which is simply not enough and only caters for motocross riders. Many of the BOATs are being closed or put under Traffic Regulation Orders and initiatives to make provision are being stopped by the police or National Resources Wales.

The issue of anti-social use of motorcycles could be massively reduced by making areas which could be used for off road motorcycling. In Merthyr Tydfil, a dedicated mountain biking track has been created by NRW, attracting 66000 visitors in its first year.

Assembly Constituency and Region.

- Bridgend
- South Wales West