

November 2008

Why Devon is making it's rural roads safer by a Country Mile

The Country Mile project was born out of existing data which confirmed that on Devon's rural network, some road user groups tend to be over-represented in accident figures. The County's situation mirrors Britain's accident record in general, which means the whole country could benefit significantly from accident reduction work undertaken within the Country Mile project. Those using the roads on business, for example, are involved in almost 33% of incidents which come to the attention of the police. This is one of the reasons the Country Mile team is already looking closely at getting new messages across to drivers on main roads in the project area - including those on a daily commute.

Another area of interest is motorcyclists, who make up just 1.5% of all traffic - a tiny amount compared to vehicle use generally. Yet annually in Devon, motorcyclists account for between 25 and 30% of all road fatalities, and as the Country Mile area was chosen to include some particularly popular routes for riders, motorcyclists and their accidents will be another focus for the project.

Other groups to receive attention will include less experienced drivers - who also tend to be relatively young - who show up in existing statistics as more vulnerable to crashes, meaning that passengers travelling with them can also be at risk. There will also be a move to communicate "Country Mile" messages to seasonal visitors, as some roads, like the A361 North Devon Link, see higher numbers of incidents involving people living more than 12 miles from their crash site.



Photo showing the successful launch of the Country Mile project where local communities had their say

If you have experience of using the A377, the A361, the A396, the A3072 and all the roads that lie between them, then we would like to hear your views about what is good, what is less good and what improvements can be made email us at countrymile@devon.gov.uk.

You can read more about the background to the Country Mile project at www.devon.gov.uk/countrymile.

The Devon Country Mile – delivering better business

Various types of road users have shown up in recent analysis as being at risk on Devon's rural roads. One such group includes those driving on Devon's roads as they go about their daily business, for whom a new series of courses has been specially developed. This suite of half and full day courses highlight the problems faced by business drivers (and their managers) are available through the Devon Drivers' Centre, promoted through the County Council's recently appointed Country Mile Community Driving Instructor. All use current health and safety legislation as a foundation, but with a significant amount of practical training.



For those regularly at the wheel as part of their daily business routine, Country Mile courses concentrate on a more comprehensive understanding of how to undertake common tasks encountered in rural driving. Included are topics such as visibility, approaching and braking before a bend, safe following distances in rural situations, and dealing with some of the vast range of possible hazards on country roads. Supplementing these hands-on sessions, subjects covered by courses for more desk-bound managers include increasingly important areas such as corporate manslaughter issues and related legislation, and providing workplace systems capable of identifying and addressing the risks associated with at-work driving.

The first Country Mile fleet client is a Barnstaple-based construction company with 100 drivers and managers. Project area crash data suggests that targeting their 17-29 year old employees will be especially beneficial and the project's driving instructor will conduct all training on the Country Mile's higher risk routes.

If your business is based within, or frequently uses the Country Mile project area and you would like training support for your personnel, write to us at countrymile@devon.gov.uk.



Devon Motorcyclists ride a safer Country Mile

Bikers, enforcement officers, trainers, dealers, engineers and road safety officers recently got together to discuss motorcycle safety on Devon's rural roads with a special emphasis on Country Mile routes popular with riders. Across Devon injuries to bikers remain a real concern and the project is keen to address the extra risks associated with routes popular with leisure and commuting riders.

The day involved presentations from safety experts, workshops examining the crash history of the A377 and an open discussion so that concerns, experience and ideas could be shared.

The day was a great success and the feedback very good indeed. One delegate wrote to say:

Thanks for the invite to join the Peninsula Motorcycle Forum.

It was well attended and well structured with interesting and informative guest speakers. It was a good opportunity to meet other riders from around the region especially those with a professional interest. Nich Brown (Motorcycle Industry Association ed.) says that Devon & Cornwall County Councils have a very good reputation for leading the way with road policy and planning, especially where bikes are concerned. I have now seen some of this for myself and am impressed. Long may your work and that of your colleagues continue. Hopefully this will be noted by other regions and acted upon.

The practical work done by delegates will form part of the pool of intelligence used by Country Mile project managers to determine what can, and should be done for this important but vulnerable group of road users.

Contact us

If you would like any further information on any aspect of the Country Mile project then please do email us at countrymile@devon.gov.uk or you can write to us at:

Devon Country Mile Project, Road Safety and Travel Awareness, Devon County Council, Lucombe House, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4QW

Why not forward this e-newsletter to a friend or colleague who may also be interested in our work?



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