

VIEWPOINT

FROM **Mike Rawson (Ret Traffic Sergeant)**

SUBJECT: **POST OFFICE & SMART MOTORWAYS SCANDALS**

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When the **Post Office Scandal** hit the headlines at the start of the year it was apparent there are many similarities with the **Smart Motorways Scandal**.

The Post Office and National Highways are companies wholly owned by the government.

Both companies appear to do as they like with little scrutiny or accountability.

The Post Office has devastated the lives of many hundreds of Postmasters and Mistresses accusing innocent people of theft, fraud and false accounting.

National Highways have been responsible for many deaths, and life changing injuries, directly attributable to the abolition of Emergency Hard Shoulders on 400+ miles of smart motorways.

Both companies have access to unlimited amounts of taxpayer's money.

The Post Office used the public's money to fund the prosecution of hundreds of people who ran sub post offices.

National Highways has used £500,000 of the public's money to defend their indefensible smart motorway policy in Coroners Courts.

Nobody in the Post Office has been held to account but, hopefully, the ongoing Public Enquiry will identify those individuals and they will, one day, face the full force of the law.

The Post Office KNEW of the problems with the Horizon computer system in 1999 and chose to ignore them and prosecute innocent people instead. Those at the top of the company couldn't care less.

National Highways KNEW of the dangers associated with stopping in a live lane used by high speed traffic but chose to continue with the smart motorway (All Lane Running) policy anyway.

Over many years, National Highways (and Highways England) watched the increasing number of people killed, or suffering life changing injuries, on smart motorways but arrogantly continued with the policy (until Rishi Sunak called a halt to anymore smart motorways in April last year).

Those at the top of the company couldn't care less about the devastation they have caused to the lives of so many people.

The Post Office ignored, for many years, the evidence of serious wrong doing on its part and continued to prosecute honest, upstanding pillars of their communities.

National Highways have chosen to ignore overwhelming evidence of the dangers of smart motorways, evidence which includes at least eight, 'Letters To Avoid Future Deaths' from HM Coroners.

Another example of evidence ignored by National Highways was a statement made by a Judge at Chelmsford Crown Court who said, *'If there had been a hard shoulder this accident would not have happened'*.

The case involved the death of two ladies killed by an HGV which struck their unattended car whilst they waited on the grass verge.

I think readers of LPP will agree there are many similarities in the two scandals?

But, as of mid-January, that is where the similarities end.

The victims of the Post Office scandal, described at the biggest miscarriage of justice in the history of our country, will have the opportunity to be heard at the Public Enquiry.

The families of those killed on smart motorways in collisions directly attributable to the Smart Motorway Policy will have no such opportunity and they will continue to be denied justice.

Whilst Public Enquiries often have little practical benefit, a Judge led enquiry into the Smart Motorway Policy would provide grieving relatives with the

opportunity to speak at the enquiry and to see, at first hand, those directly responsible for the policy, including several government ministers who signed off and continually defended the policy along with very senior people at National Highways who actively encouraged government to continue with the policy over many years, whilst ignoring the rising death toll.

Only a Judge led Public Enquiry will suffice because 'Invitations to attend and give evidence to the enquiry' would be ignored by key witnesses.

A Judge has the power to order people to attend and the power to order the production all relevant documentation (National Highways / Highways Agency / Highways England) minutes of all meetings in which the smart motorway policy was discussed.

Minutes of meetings with ministers are crucial if the enquiry is to get to the truth.

To provide the enquiry with accurate statistics relating to deaths, and life changing injuries, on All Lane Running smart motorways every Police Force, with responsibility for sections of smart motorway, MUST be ordered to provide such information to the enquiry.

Collision Investigation Officers, who dealt with smart motorway fatalities, must be required to attend the enquiry and encouraged by the judge to provide an open and honest professional opinion about the safety or lack of it, on All Lane Running motorways.

The **Smart Motorways Kill** campaign will continue to press for a Judge led Public Enquiry because those who have lost loved ones, often in very violent circumstances on smart motorways, deserve nothing less.

Where there is evidence that those who, knowingly and wilfully, compromised the safety of those who use smart motorways those people must face the face the force of the law.