High-tech road studs can help tackle accident trend

INNOVATIVE LED studs can help reverse a startling rise in the number of serious accidents on Britain’s road network.

That’s the message from a road safety expert whose local authority has become the first in the country to install the technology on a major route.

Recent figures show deaths and serious injuries on UK roads increased by 17 per cent in the first three months of this year compared to the same period in 2013*.

But incidents on a stretch of the A719 in East Ayrshire have been reduced by 100 per cent since LED Active Studs, supplied by Rennicks UK, were introduced.

And road safety engineer Alan Vass reckons such remarkable results are too good to be ignored.

He thinks East Ayrshire Council could have set the blueprint for a new approach to highway markings and believes it won’t be long before other local authorities follow suit.

Mr Vass, from the Traffic and Road Safety section of Ayrshire Roads Alliance, says the active studs, which use LED and solar technology to create delineation shown to be far more effective than traditional retro-reflective studs, could hold the key to a brighter future.

He said: “There had been a number of accidents on the A719 near Waterside village in Ayrshire and the council wanted to do all they could to address the issue.

“The road is predominantly straight but also has a series of fairly sharp bends and we were keen to enhance safety whilst limiting impact on the environment in a rural area.

“We installed LED Active Studs and statistics prove we’ve seen dramatic results.

“I think it won’t be long before other authorities look at what East Ayrshire Council has done and realise the technology could have similar positive implications for them.”

Studies showed four injury accidents on the major semi-rural road in just three years prior to the studs being installed and there have been no reported incidents since.

Mr Vass added: “It’s clear the scheme contributed towards a fantastic reduction in the number of reported injury accidents and the site continues to perform well in all weather conditions.

“The studs remain bright and clearly highlight each lane, enhancing safety by aiding night-time driving and particularly during rainy, snowy or foggy weather.
“Ayrshire Roads Alliance has received very positive feedback from local residents and commuters and the studs will without doubt be considered for future road safety schemes.”

Some 180 of the solar-recharged battery-powered SR-15 Active Road Studs were installed over a period of just four hours in a project which has since been shortlisted for the Road Marking Project of the Year in the Highways Magazine Excellence Awards.

The units, which contain two bi-directional LEDs, highlight both the horizontal and vertical geometry of the road and help improve visibility of the centre and carriageway edges, while a rumble effect warns drivers who encroach on to the opposite carriageway.

Bright delineation and advance warning of bends creates a safer driver experience and John Swift, of Rennicks UK, believes the SR-15 studs are a cost-effective and sustainable solution.

“The SR-15 units were the first in Europe to be tested to a new DfT draft performance standard in May this year, having already achieved full Type Approval for the existing standard.

“That opened the door to local authorities and management contractors searching for ways to improve delineation on UK roads.

“Traditional retro-reflective studs have been a default method in the past, but East Ayrshire Council wanted something better and the results tell their own story.

“We hope other local authorities will see what they've done and follow their lead.”

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* Figures from ‘Reported Road Casualties In Great Britain’, released by Department for Transport - August, 2014.


Notes to Editors
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