



Rees Jeffreys Road Fund



Rees Jeffreys Road Fund Objectives Updated Interpretation December 2020

Our Charity is established to take forward and promote for the public benefit the life's work of the charity's founder, William Rees Jeffreys. We do this by fostering **innovation** and promoting **best practice** in the **design, lay-out, construction, maintenance, operation, enhancement and use of roads and associated facilities** (such as lay-bys and roadside rests), to support the economy and improve the quality of life for all, whichever community we belong to and however we benefit from and use roads. Despite the name we are not just concerned with the roads themselves – we are interested in all the many people and vehicles that use them, be that on public transport, as pedestrians, cyclists, motorists or, in days to come, a dizzying array of new vehicles.

Our road network is already extensive – new construction accounts for only a fractional increase in any given year. So, while the **design of new roads** is important to us, including the structures that carry them, such as bridges and viaducts, we are hugely interested in ways to **improve the network** we already have. This can range from engineering projects to make stretches of road **safer** (far from easy when there may be trade-offs to be made in the way we divvy-up road space) through to experimental planting schemes to cut costs and encourage wildlife on roadside verges, and from exploring better ways of funding highway authority activities through to projects promoting safer use by all manner of road users.

William Rees Jeffreys was as concerned as much with **beauty** as he was with functionality. He wanted to promote **quality in the design of roads** and the way they thread into the landscape. He also wanted to foster **an appreciation of the beauty** of that landscape, encouraging the creation of roadside rests and acting to preserve particularly attractive views. Taking this forward, we are interested in projects that explore new ways to **reduce and mitigate the wide environmental impact** of roads and traffic, and also in initiatives designed to enable people to park safely and appreciate the countryside around them, including making opportunities for them to walk, cycle and picnic once safely parked.

Technology has come a long way since the Fund was created in the 1950s. Rolling forward Rees Jeffreys's interest in making roads better today means we are interested in the deployment of new **traffic control systems**, exploiting the **connectivity of modern motor vehicles** and their drivers (for example through the



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smart phones that they carry) to collect and convey information, and in the challenges and opportunities that will come as **automated driving** comes closer. But it's also relevant both to very traditional ways of travelling, using Smart phones to navigate on foot, and wholly new concepts emerging in the field of micromobility.

Rees Jeffreys knew that it was important not to think about roads, or even roads and traffic, in isolation. He wanted to promote more **joined-up thinking and knowledge sharing** between those involved in the **planning, design and management of roads**, those involved in the **design and manufacture of vehicles** (not just cars – Rees Jeffreys was a keen cyclist), those involved in **providing services to road users** (from opportunities to re-fuel or, indeed, to re-charge vehicles through to route information – with hard copy maps in the 1950s, but via satellite navigation today), and in that spirit we have added those involved more broadly in **transport and land-use planning**.

Lastly, but by no means least, William Rees Jeffreys was keen to foster **professionalism, knowledge and skills** amongst all those involved in the activities above.

The means at our disposal

To work towards achieving these objectives, the Trustees of the Fund have identified five avenues for spending the income from the investment of Rees Jeffreys's endowment:

- i) funding a limited number of **bursaries** for students undertaking a full-time masters course in a subject related to highways and transport;
- ii) funding **events** that would promote ideas and bring people together to share knowledge across the highways, engineering, automotive and planning sectors (e.g. lectures, seminars, conferences and workshops);
- iii) funding **research** relevant to our objectives which might be on a topic we identify and commission, for example our study on the case for creating a Major Road Network, or for a study we are approached to fund in whole or part, such as the grant we gave to IAM RoadSmart to carry out research into driver distraction when using in car 'infotainment'. A list of projects we have funded in recent years can be found here at <https://www.reesjeffreys.co.uk/past-projects/>
- iv) funding **physical projects** – the endowment Fund is not of a size to cover the cost of road building, but we are able to contribute to schemes such as in the Brecon Beacons National Park to create a path from a layby towards the Llwyn-onn Reservoir. Another involved experimenting with different planting mixes along roadside verges – we are particularly interested in helping 'pathfinder' projects whose findings could have wider application and who might not otherwise be funded;
- v) funding **educational projects** that spread awareness and understanding about highways, their design and use, particularly aimed at children, for example the grant we gave to DriveSafe and StaySafe Ltd to fund the development of 'The Conies' – an interactive digital platform to educate and empower children to be aware of and manage their own road safety.