

## 'Mindboggling' red tape threatens classic car industry, owners warn

Classic car sector fears it will be legislated off the roads, putting up to 113,000 jobs in jeopardy

By Alan Tovey, INDUSTRY EDITOR  
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Despite their old technology, classic cars are less polluting because they are driven less | CREDIT: Paul Grover

A village fete is rarely complete without an array of vintage cars parked on the grass for motoring fans to admire. But now historic car owners are warning the [switch to electrification](#) and the red tape resulting from Brexit threaten the survival of businesses that keep these classic vehicles on the road.

The vintage car sector has formed a new group, the Historic and Classic Vehicles Alliance (HCVA), to protect an industry it says has an annual turnover of £18.3bn and either employs or supports some 113,000 jobs, including engineers, restorers, craftsmen and parts suppliers.

HCVA estimates there is a fleet of some 1.54m historic vehicles, defined as those over 30 years old, on UK roads. There are a further 1.47m classic cars, which are aged 15 to 30 years old, bringing the total value of these vehicles to £12.6bn.

Despite their old-fashioned technology, these cars are less polluting than expected as they are driven so rarely, covering an average 1,200 miles a year over the average of 16 times they are driven, a fraction of the 7,000 miles most cars cover.



Aston Martin's DB5 is an iconic classic car | CREDIT: Andrew Crowley

According to HCVA, a classic car generates 563kg of CO2 a year, which equates to 20pc of the emissions from powering a computer for a year.

Bureaucracy resulting from Brexit is also putting the brakes on the sector, as vehicles are often sent from Europe to the UK for specialist work not available elsewhere, and parts are also sourced from the EU.

Henry Pearman, a director of HCVA and boss of specialist E-Type Jaguar restoration business Eagle, said: "There is no specific legislation yet, but the great fear is that internal combustion engine vehicles will be taxed or legislated off the roads because of the [push towards electrification](#)."



A classic Jaguar E Type | CREDIT: David Rose

"Brexit has also meant that the red tape around the industry is becoming mind-bogglingly difficult, as bonds are having to be put up for cars coming into the UK, and the paperwork around exporting parts is so complicated that it is getting so expensive that people are not bothering."

Legendary Formula 1 designer Gordon Murray backed the calls to protect the sector. "The restoration and preservation of classic cars keeps our rich history in the automotive sector alive for future generations," he said.

"As we move towards electrification and ever more stringent regulations, it will become even more important to support and protect our classic automotive heritage."

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