

MINI - Lumpy steering feel



A regular check and lubrication would have prevented the problem

When an early MINI (R50) comes in for a steering problem, it can often be connected to a failing electric steering motor, these can (and do) often overheat and fail. On this 2007 MINI Cooper, I was asked to check that the cooling fan for the steering motor was operational, hoping this may explain the problem. The fan was spinning freely and was not going to fail. The steering though was a little on the heavy side.

The first place I looked was at the base of the steering column, to check the lower universal joint.

Sure enough, it was dry and rusted. When disconnected, it was very stiff. I have been successful freeing these joints up before, so I soaked the joint in a mixture of penetrating oil and thin hydraulic oil overnight. The next morning, a few movements of the joint was enough to free everything up and I was happy that the smooth operation would continue, saving the cost of any new parts.