

On The Road

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ABD launches Campaign 2015

The ABD is launching its Campaign 2015, which will run up to the general election in a bid to put pressure on politicians to introduce more driver-friendly policies. The ABD will be hard-hitting with its press releases and editorial; we don't intend to spare the blushes whether the topic is bus lanes, fuel taxes, parking fines, speed enforcement – or any number of other schemes designed to 'encourage drivers to walk or cycle'.

You can just picture the scene now; in summer 2015 the newly elected government will announce the privatisation of the Highways Agency and within a few weeks companies will be announcing their interest in taking control of England's motorways and trunk roads. If it were to happen, road pricing wouldn't just become a possibility, it would become pretty much a certainty. And while we'd be the first to admit that predicting the future is always a risky business, all the moves made so far by this and previous governments suggest that such a scenario really could happen in the not too distant future.

The Cook report, written by the former head of the Highways Agency, recommended privatising the UK's road network. Unsurprisingly, numerous big-name companies agree that privatisation could be the best way to finance Britain's roads, allowing greater investment to be made – and also allowing large profits to be generated. And you just know which of those two things are the biggest priority for any potential investor.

As you can see by the article on p3 (and



recent A14 plans), all the indications are that the HA is being fattened up, with Britain's hard-pressed drivers the ones who will lose out. This is despite the fact that the M6 toll lost £49 million last year, or almost £1m each week. With UK drivers paying in £50bn per year, or around £5.4m every hour, there's more than enough money to provide drivers with the high-quality roads this country so desperately needs. Yet only around £10bn is returned to the UK network – and much of that is for measures which make driving more difficult.

The announcements from Eric Pickles that councils must not use parking income to cover shortfalls in other areas of council budgets was probably forced by the success of Barnet residents against their council, as reported in these pages. This is one example of drivers uniting to force local authorities to see reason, and it's only by standing together that we'll shake councils out of their complacency. Which is why you'll be hearing much more about Campaign 2015 from now on.

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The next issue of *On The Road* goes to press on Monday 16 December. Contributions deadline is Monday 2 December.

The ABD needs you

On page 3 of this issue is a plea from Brian MacDowall for more members to get involved. It's a plea that we've run from time to time, but this time you really need to take notice. There are some big challenges ahead, but also big opportunities to influence. Some quite important plans are taking shape, but we'll need a lot more people to help with smaller and more local initiatives if we're to make the impact that UK's drivers deserve. Remember – many hands make light work, and if the ABD is to move forward rather than merely tread water, the contribution you make to the group could be the one that makes all the difference.

To join the ABD
call us now on
0161 408 7070



The ABD campaigns for:

- Improved road user training
- Real transport choices
- Investment in Britain's roads
- Honesty on transport issues

roads action

The Government's recent *Action for Roads* paper offers a useful insight into what drivers can expect in the coming years. Brian Mooney explores.

In July, the government published its latest plans, *Action for Roads*¹, promising large-scale investment in England's major roads – the Strategic Roads Network (SRN). This command paper promises that a trebling of funding for motorways and major A-roads by the end of the decade will lead to the biggest ever upgrade of the existing network. But as usual, the devil is in the detail. The DfT PR promises "a guarantee of a large increase in funding, locked into a long term settlement, backed by law", but how guaranteed is this?



Think of a number

Talk of "£28 billion of investment" may sound a lot, but it's only a percentage of the £50bn or so taken in driver taxes each year. Similarly, is spending "between £30 to 50 billion over a 10-15 year period" (so just £2bn-£5bn a year) on the SRN that dramatic?

Described as "the biggest sustained commitment to road improvements in decades", it will "decisively make up for the underinvestment of the past 20 years. When this is complete, we will have a network that is the envy of the world."

The third world perhaps? The DfT claims that the spending on road enhancements will have tripled from today's levels by the end of the decade. Although a commitment to resurface 80% of the network by 2021 is probably a plus, it might be over-optimistic on clearing potholes. The £6bn plus the £3.2bn previously announced, will not clear the backlog of potholes. The industry estimate for this was previously £10bn, and that figure excludes the costs that will increase exponentially through letting roads deteriorate.

So it's ironic that the DfT notes that "savings on maintenance work are often a false economy".

Managed motorways and expressways

Adding a further 221 miles of extra capacity to our busiest motorways sounds great, until you twig it's 'managed motorways' on the cheap and the hard shoulder being lost. The DfT regards managed motorways as a great success, and their definition of them includes a state-of-the-art communication system – but it's not unusual for drivers to be slowed to 50mph or even 40mph because of congestion that isn't there. In practice, the HA is notorious for out-of-date or inaccurate signage, the dominant message being to slow down.

Managed motorway schemes will become standard on some of our busiest national routes, including a 160-mile corridor along the M1 and M6 from London to the North West.

The DfT plans to treat our most important A-roads as 'expressways', with the SRN seeing "high standards of safety and performance in the way we expect of our motorways". But there

needs to be similar caution over this, as safety policy has too often been relegated to a fetish for reducing speed.

Tackling capacity

The DfT plans to upgrade the majority of non-motorway roads on the SRN, with a large proportion improved to dual-carriageway with grade-separated junctions (where vehicles on the main road are able to drive over or under the junctions), to ensure freer-flowing traffic nationwide. It will address even well-developed roads with sections originally built for vehicles driving at a much slower pace than modern traffic, leaving a bottleneck. A local pinch-point fund is available until 2015, enabling local improvements and upgrades at congestion hotspots. This may not be universally good news, as many schemes are aimed at supporting buses, cycling and walking.

Aggressively green?

There is the predictable mention of minimising the environmental impact of roads. Whereas there may not be many objections to making road surfaces quieter or minimising the disturbance of works to wildlife, the DfT also commits to "an aggressive policy of decarbonisation". What exactly this means is not spelt out. However, on top of the programmed £400m towards the uptake of low carbon vehicles, the DfT will spend over £500m more by the end of the decade.

The DfT moans that the contribution of road traffic to climate change from CO2 emissions remains a major challenge, and reminds us that it supports emission reductions, backed with a series of legally binding carbon budgets. It's ominous that the DfT is discussing with the European Commission how to best work towards goals for the environmental performance of transport, although a recent rebellion in the European Parliament over wider emissions reductions might make EU legislation more difficult to pass.

The DfT faces both ways at once when it says it wants to bring about the decarbonisation of travel in a way that is cost-effective, acceptable to users and makes the most of the economic opportunities

for the UK. Consequently it tries to make out that support for Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles in the UK is key to securing affordable motoring for the long-term. Don't tell the Treasury, which has its eyes set on extorting even more tax out of drivers!

Localism

The DfT adds that it is strengthening the role of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to shape transport policy. LEPs are a scaled down successor to the old English Regional Development Agencies, and often cover one or

two county areas. The representation is roughly half local councils, half local business, although representing local feeling is not guaranteed.

Some LEPs (such as New Anglia, covering Suffolk and Norfolk) know funds are scarce so have looked straight away at approaching the EU for funding (which in reality is just recycled taxpayer money, but given or loaned back with an added dependency to support EU objectives, which may be virulently anti-motorist). It's ironic that the report hints on removing strings attached to funding.

Tolling by stealth?

The DfT vows to continue with developing route based strategies (RBS) for the whole network, to build a next generation of 'improvements and interventions' for local routes. This will bring together interested groups – local authorities, LEPs, motorists' organisations, environmental groups and others – to discuss the future of a section of SRN. So far, the first document towards an RBS (for the A47 in Norfolk) hasn't mentioned road pricing, but it's early days.

OTR102 reminded us that the 2011 Cook Report pushed consideration of tolling, for new connections as well as existing major roads which are currently free. It also suggested developing route-based strategies and co-ordinating "equivalent plans" for the SRN and local roads. At a time when many local authorities are short of cash, there's the danger of creating a local monopoly or cartel to ensure that free roads do not compete with toll roads. It's interesting to note that after the Cook Report (which urges 'asset-sweating'), the DfT believes the local highway network is the country's most valuable public asset, valued at over £400bn. It's also interesting to note that there have since been attempts to move discussion away from tolling just new roads and onto roads that have been 'improved'.

Playing the numbers game

The DfT warns that as we return to economic growth, rising prosperity, substantial population increases and a fall in the cost of car travel from fuel efficiency improvements, traffic and congestion are expected to grow. Even with

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the worst economic circumstances and low population growth, traffic levels on strategic roads are modelled to be 24% higher in 2040 than they are today. It feels a 46% rise is more likely, and that around 15% of the SRN may experience regular peak-time congestion and suffer poor conditions at other times of the day. Major national arteries will start to jam.

But of course this is difficult to prove so far ahead. Quite a few commentators (such as Christian Wolmar, Professors Nash and Metz) have noted that travel demand is tailing off. Even the DfT admits that since 2007, road traffic in England has declined by 4%, and since 2010 overall traffic has been largely static. The DfT's predictions have been out in the past, and there is a growing public backlash over uncontrolled population growth.

Brave new world?

The DfT will be producing a Roads Investment Strategy (RIS) by May 2015. It will take a view of 20-30 years and reflect a wider, integrated approach to all modes of transport. It will be strongly influenced by the local RBS. One potential benefit will be to drive down costs for the HA, and provide a stable footing for construction and maintenance companies to invest in skills. This could provide better value for money for the taxpayer. One danger is that all RIS initiatives must conform to tight environmental standards. CfBT anti-car activist and green road pricing advocate Stephen Joseph has lobbied the DfT for greater involvement of environmental groups in developing the RBS².

The government intends to publish and consult on a policy statement for national roads in 2013. It then intends to introduce legislation in 2014, providing a stable funding basis for investment and legal powers for a reshaped HA.

HA today, gone tomorrow?

In the short term, the HA will become a state-owned company with greater operational independence. This is said to work round restrictive civil service rules and offer greater staff incentives. The DfT will continue to look at further changes – without declaring intentions, the document compares three possible types of operation such as a trust, a regulated utility and large-scale outsourcing. The DfT holds that any change needs to be one that motorists can trust, claiming that experience from other sectors and countries might benefit road users. It even adds that new models could give motorists more of a say over how roads are run, without saying how.

However, Cook's original report made strides towards a hive-off of our roads and most of the HA's work, and last year the government backed

The ABD needs you

At our annual meeting this year, acting chairman Brian Macdowall pointed out the ABD's urgent need for new blood to step forward to help the ABD to grow. Some long-standing and hardworking key personnel from the committee, many of them with demanding outside jobs, have retired after years of excellent service to our cause – so far with insufficient replacements.

If you can assist in any way, whether it's with IT, secretarial, speaking to the media (training provided), submitting FOI requests, fundraising, or anything else you think would help us move forward, we need to hear from you. Even if you don't think you're especially skilled, you can help; what we need are people with time and enthusiasm. If you reckon you can chip in, please Brian MacDowall a call at the earliest opportunity, on 01227 369 119.

Meanwhile, our latest patron Godfrey Bloom gave a short, hard-hitting and funny speech at the annual meeting, detailing some of his run-ins with officialdom. As you may know, Godfrey doesn't mince words! Godfrey received a NIP for speeding when he genuinely didn't know who had been driving a vehicle registered in his name. In the end, despite repeated attempts to convince police he had no knowledge of the driver he paid up – something some of us have no doubt also done.

In his talk, Godfrey emphasised the importance of objectively judging speed limits according to the 85th percentile. The ABD has long campaigned for this and the good news is that Godfrey will investigate the possibility of acquiring EU funding for a road safety project for us, proving that he's a useful ally indeed.

most of his recommendations. There are bound to be suspicions that all the investment is 'fattening the calf for market'.

Championing Britain's drivers?

The DfT hints at a new public body to oversee the reformed HA, and one which could act as a motorists' champion. It could have several roles, such as surveying motorists, and taking up their concerns or complaints, as well as tracking the HA's results against contracted performance specification. But the longer the list, the greater the chance of a quango rather than a small independent body, and the more likely its bias towards satisfying government rather than drivers.

A challenge for the ABD

Nationally we have got to be where the action is. There are key consultations looming, such as on national roads policy, the future roles of the HA and its overseeing body. In particular, we should stop the role of motorists' champion from falling to the DfT's Motorists' Forum, which has

been stuffed with anti-motorist and other vested interests. At local level, we need to work with our members and other allies to ensure that RBS are not dictated by hostile interests.

Targets

The DfT quietly released its first SRN 'performance specification' for 2013-15 in April³. Using a lot of governmentspeak, this holds that the HA should maintain its current level of 'customer satisfaction' reported through its obscure national road users' satisfaction survey. It suggests that the HA gradually identifies new 'customer feedback channels' and 'areas of performance improvement'

- For more about the Cook Report and follow up visit www.fairdealforthemotorist.org.uk
- There's been quite a backlash against the HA's plans for tolling the A14. Updates can be found at tinyurl.com/okxb9d

¹Action for Roads tinyurl.com/odjhj66

²Joseph ref: tinyurl.com/knuegej

³SRN performance spec: tinyurl.com/knuegej

Want to get more involved? There are plenty of ways you can help the ABD to move forward. Just check out page 15 to find out how

OTR108 questioned whether the recent change of mood music at Transport for London was too good to be true. Any doubts were dispelled at a follow-up meeting on 10 July, when over 100 delegates attended a short presentation on the report of the Mayor's Roads Task Force (RTF) and TfL's response to it.

Some of the opening messages weren't too controversial, like seeking to spend £30bn-£50bn on London's roads (Paris has just won £30bn funding), or wanting to draw on best practice internationally, particularly when seeking to keep traffic flowing or minimise disruption on road improvements.

Others sounded a bit hyped, such as greater use of technology to allow London to be a 'smart city', or TfL to become a 'global leader' in 'mobility management'.

We had previously been assured that considering any extension of road pricing would only be a last resort. My suspicions were raised when RTF member Prof Peter Jones mentioned the possibility of 'smarter charging', either for moving or parking.

Jones didn't explain this further, but it was raised in my syndicate's discussion. David Leibling (London Travelwatch, RAC Foundation policy panellist) chaired and straight away repeated the tired RACF line about 'some form of national charging being inevitable in the long term as fuel duty revenue waned'. I gave him a hard time over the fairness of overtaxing drivers slightly less.

There had been no advance release of the RTF proposals and delegates were handed only a glossy summary. The decision makers are TfL, though, and the key document is their response¹. It has taken much of the summer to read it; the devil is always in the detail.

Some animals are more equal...

TfL claims to be producing a road network for the 21st century, but such is the bias towards walking and cycling that you could be forgiven for thinking that it yearns for the days before the car was invented. Even Mayor Boris Johnson's comments are worrying: "Being 'pro roads' has been seen as being exclusively 'pro motorist'. In fact, the majority of London's road users are bus passengers, pedestrians, taxi users and cyclists."

He should remember that the car is the preferred mode of transport in outer London; and (with buses) the preferred mode for journeys of 1-3 miles. Above all he should recall his own commitment to equality of road users².

Demanding with menace

Potentially draconian measures are proposed on the pretext that London needs to cope with the 'huge population boom' which will hit over the next few years. Amazingly for an organisation fixated with 'demand management', they and their GLA friends don't seem to be interested in applying the same principles to an unsustainable



population growth.

A London population as high as 10 million by 2030 is forecast, bringing with it the need for 400,000 new homes, and more jobs and business developments. A TfL manager I chatted to admitted the difficulty in making assumptions related to this sort of growth. There may be a clue in other GLA development plans, but that's outside the scope of this article.

TfL's Business Plan sets out a range of further measures over the next 10 years; capacity enhancements at key locations (such as on the Inner Ring Road and in east London) to support planned economic development, but TfL doesn't just intend to respond to 'demand' – they seek to influence it.

There may be room for some 'carrot' in the sense of encouraging teleworking, flexible working and off-peak travel, to reduce demand in the peak periods, but there are also indications of plenty of 'stick', particularly towards discouraging car use. The agenda is not just to shift people from making shorter journeys by car to cycling and walking, but a radical review of 'road space management' that looks to reallocate road space to public space.

TfL intends to commit to using 'best practice' from the London 2012 Games to support a reduction in general vehicle traffic. Whereas some good workarounds were explored, that period was very untypical, with London businesses stockpiling deliveries well in advance, and cancelling non-essential travel, scared by predictions of gridlock. How much of the Olympic 'success' depended on frightening off visitors, barring

normal right turns, blanket parking restrictions and so forth?

Underground, overground

TfL seeks to increase space for what it calls 'living' functions. Examples include unlocking new development areas, or areas for pedestrians to meet and congregate. TfL will consider relocating space for motorised traffic to enable this, maybe leaving the old space for walking and cycling access. Measures might include floating roundabouts for cyclists and pedestrians, bridges over arterial roads and roofing over or tunnelling under particular locations – the replacement of the Hammersmith flyover by an A4 tunnel may be a salient example.

There could also be an agenda to remove roads in sites where prime property might be developed; the Hammersmith tunnel might be paid for by prime property development in the space freed up. Other areas to watch might be around the Inner Ring Road, the A205 and A406.

Spaced out

TfL has warned that an ever-growing population and greater travel by sustainable modes will produce an inevitable squeeze on road space. This is a bit of a half-truth, as TfL is actively pushing the Mayor's ambitious targets for cycling to represent 5% modal share in London by 2025, and 1 million extra walking trips a day by 2031. The proposed approach is to bias and restrict the use of road space away from drivers. Some of the squeeze in recent years has been caused by officialdom, gratuitously removing road space or parking space for political aims.

TfL believes congestion can be addressed by encouraging transport modes that make



efficient use of road space, such as the bus ('the most efficient'), cycling, walking and powered two-wheelers (P2W). Cue increased provision for these modes, and initiatives to manage demand through 'behaviour change'.

The assertion of 'efficiency' is questionable, as it may ignore overall efficiency in terms of journey time and speed, particularly on split and longer journeys, space wasted (under-used bus lanes) and cost-effectiveness.

TfL is working with the GLA to shape London plan policy towards car-lite development as the basis of planning decisions; by default 'car-lite' lifestyles are dictated by prescribing walking, cycling and public transport as the natural and default choice for people living and working in these areas. Interestingly, this does not rule out car club expansion.

Just as local authority 'car-free' days seem to be dying out, TfL is encouraging "Fun and active streets - more informal use of our roads and streets as public spaces with a programme to allow temporary, traffic-free events for public enjoyment in some of London's iconic locations, such as Regent Street in summer and the Embankment. If successful, we will look to manage these as regular events".

Elsewhere, London boroughs are to be 'supported' in delivering local events requiring the temporary closure of roads or high streets and associated public transport provision. This is just a vanity project aimed at denying drivers the use of the road. The recent example of RideLondon (see *OTR108*) had a severe impact on car and bus users and hit some local businesses. The examples given are likely to deter shoppers and tourists.

TfL is also pushing longer term uses of road space in central London – wider pavements and more pedestrian space, and places where children can play. The latter sets a dangerous precedent for playing in the street.

There have been some negative experiences with Trafalgar Square (pedestrianisation saw traffic tailbacks for miles despite assurances from TfL that all would be well) and at King Street,

Stitched up again?

TfL seems to have practically accepted the proposals from a task force loaded with vested interests, such as IBM (promoters of congestion charging and 'smart cities'), road pricing lobbyists London First and CILT, Sustrans, two cycling lobbyists – you get the picture.

Drivers were apparently 'represented' by David Quarmby of the pro-road pricing RACF and a former RACF man AA President Edmund King. I haven't seen any objections from the latter pair, and it is interesting that they are the former and current Chairmen of the DfT Motorists' Forum which is supposed to champion drivers' interests.

Parking mad

TfL blandly comments that parking policy decisions are governed by local priorities, missing the opportunity to encourage London boroughs to be more driver-friendly. However TfL wants to extend the time that drivers can park on its TLRN (major routes) to 30 minutes to support stop and shop. After consultation, most boroughs should see this in 2013. This measure implies increased time but not necessarily increased parking space, and there's no guarantee over parking charges.

TfL wants greater use of variable message signs (VMS) for more effective and dynamic roadside driver information by the end of 2018/19. This could save driving around looking in vain for a parking space, but the example given is for coaches in areas of high demand.

The other main initiative seems to be looking at cycle parking standards in new car-lite developments.

TfL warns that possible 'radical' measures

Hammersmith. Here, removal of a road lane affected traffic around Hammersmith Broadway, while the wider pavements created served no useful purpose. Despite this, TfL claims it can ensure residents and visitors are able to access and enjoy town centres, high streets and other destinations "currently dominated by private vehicular traffic".

Several existing gyratories will be removed by 2021/22, and there is the prospect of reduced speed limits. The potential impact of losing thoroughfares on shoppers and businesses might not have been thought through nor might the dangers of "being dominated" by polluting buses, as seen in Putney High Street. So much for "sustainable transport"!

TfL also hints at "better targeted enforcement" with the rules of the road, but the wording "[where] there is potential conflict between road users and competition for road space" might indicate ulterior motives.

Relieving or creating congestion?

TfL plans local measures to address congestion hot-spots, including re-shaping junctions, at 150 sites a year up to the end of 2021/22. However the benefits to drivers might be reduced by additional bus and cycle 'priority points' at key locations.

TfL talks of flexible management of lanes as another way to reduce congestion, but there's no clear prospect of making it easier for drivers to use under-used bus lanes, which points to a greater waste of road space and may aggravate congestion. Some congestion already results from gratuitous 24-hour bus lanes or badly signed bus lane hours, causing other traffic to needlessly line up.



to further manage London-wide demand might include parking restraint. TfL urges that parking policy is fully integrated with 'intelligent systems' (ITS), which could open up a Pandora's box of charging opportunities. In theory, ITS could be used to deny some vehicles parking – or even use of the road.

TfL will undertake future studies to understand the scope for reducing congestion on the network using new approaches to demand management and/or additional capacity, but there's no guarantee that additional capacity will be for drivers.

2013 will see a pilot to demonstrate the potential of logistics information and collaborative ways of working to reduce congestion from the growth of internet shopping.

Eco freaks?

TfL claims that to meet increasingly stringent air quality standards and carbon reduction targets, it might need to restrict both volumes and types of vehicle traffic, particularly in central London. It's considering introduction of an Ultra-Low Emission Zone and restrictions on vehicle access to central London.

Other environmental measures include use of low-noise road surface materials, promotion of electric vehicles and getting drivers out of their cars.

TfL claims its vision might be of "world-class streets, fit for the future", but is more likely to turn London into a sort-of concentration camp for Greens. A clue is given that "high-quality public realm and 'place-making' are considered essential to attract new development, but "reclaiming the streets for high-density housing and property developers" doesn't have the same ring...

The approach may also contribute towards avoiding EU fines (cf. Marylebone Road) and the EU long-term aspiration to ban conventional cars from city centres.

Big brother society?

TfL loves intelligent transport systems (ITS).

Does the membership secretary have your current contact details – including a correct email address? If not, please send an update ASAP!

A speed limit free-for-all?

TfL will "be open" to a range of speed limits on main roads in London, including 20mph and variable speed limits. "Targeted" reductions to speed limits are justified as improving conditions for pedestrians, although the aim of the RTF report is clearly to make central London a blanket 20mph zone, in spite of evidence that blanket zones don't work. A 20mph speed limit could be introduced on almost all residential roads and high streets in London by 2020, according to the mayor's transport advisor³.

They will continue to fund the roll-out of 20mph zones by boroughs (19% of London's roads now have 20mph limits) and trial 20mph speed limits at specific locations on the TLRN, such as the Waterloo Imax roundabout.

TfL will update, maintain, and make freely available a digital speed limit map of all London's roads, and promote its use with technology developers and manufacturers, so "enabling a revolution in intelligent speed technology" – in other words, a longer-term threat of mandatory intelligent speed adaptation (ISA).



TfL will upgrade speed cameras to digital at 600 locations by the end of 2016 and consider average speed cameras "depending

on casualty history". TfL will also engage local communities in monitoring vehicle speeds in their neighbourhoods.

It says they can help to get more out of the road network – improving customer information, journey reliability, and targeting priority for 'more efficient' transport modes. But technology can be a two-edged sword. Journey 'reliability' has been an excuse trotted out for both speed restrictions (managed motorways) and pricing vehicles off the road. On balance, targeted priority looks like being another anti-car measure. In Singapore, ITS has been used to impose a variable road user charge.

On the other hand, good real-time information can help drivers avoid roadworks and snarl-ups, so long as it adds something to what is currently available on traffic programmes and websites like the AA's.

The SCOOT system enables TfL to adjust traffic signals in real time. It has been praised for speeding up traffic, although extending it for pedestrian crossings and cycling intensity by the end of 2018/19 might lose some of the benefits. One stated interest is in reducing the impact on emissions. SCOOT has been useful, but could be abused if perverse priorities are adopted.

TfL is also looking at installing enforcement cameras at the 205 yellow box junctions on the TLRN that are currently unenforceable.

Heir to Livingstone?

TfL has previously given an assurance that the congestion charge will not be extended in the period 2012-16, and the impression that any future extension would only be a last resort. Now it urges pushing the national debate on the future means of paying for road infrastructure, whether through subsidiarity (local retention) of road tax,

the potential for a London vignette (time-based road user charge) or tolling new infrastructure. Other possibilities include the greater use of existing funding such as developer contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Under the heading, Smart Charging, TfL will review congestion charging policy and technology "to ensure they are up to date".

On the plus side...

Perhaps the biggest plus is in managing disruption from roadworks. TfL is looking at opportunities for underground 'utility corridors', which are located beneath carriageways and footways. These allow engineers to access the utilities using pedestrian entrances situated on the adjacent footway, removing the need for roadworks at these locations.

TfL is working at ensuring that roads and pavements are reinstated to a high standard 'first time round' after any works. It's also seeking to reinvest Lane Rental revenue into developing innovative technologies such as rapid hardening material and techniques such as 'core and vac' technology, which typically results in faster completion of works and shorter road closures.

Encouragingly, TfL is creating a Road Fatalities Review Group to bring together road safety experts to learn lessons from fatal and serious collisions. It is also following up the successful trial involving the installation of 100 blind spot safety mirrors for HGVs at signalised junctions.

Propaganda alert

On balance, TfL's response is of concern, given its persistent anti-car flavour. Its commitment

to conduct customer satisfaction and attitude surveys to further improve service sounds rather hollow when related to drivers. During 2013, TfL will be working closely with boroughs and other stakeholders to run a communications campaign. The aim is to ensure that the overall approach gains widespread acceptance in London. TfL hints at "changing the processes by which decisions are made and how people are involved in these decisions". This needs explaining, and could be an opportunity or a threat.

A call to arms

TfL's response is open to feedback, and the ABD intends to meet with TfL at a senior level. The set of documents is so extensive (including detailed local proposals) that it's unlikely that most London MPs, GLA members and councillors would have read them, let alone understand their implications. The ABD is watching out for the imminent communications campaign and will use all media available to air its concerns. Look out for further information on the www.freedomfordrivers.org (ABD London) and www.fairdealforthemotorist.org.uk.

As London might be considered both a national asset and an 'experiment lab' for anti-motorist measures that might be adopted elsewhere, all ABD members should feel entitled to express their views.

References

¹TfL Mayor's Roads Task Force page: tinyurl.com/k9ejbzt

²Mayor's Transport Strategy, 2010

³Evening Standard: tinyurl.com/kbcluw2

Young driver Green Paper stalls

I attended the PACTS meeting recently, the key presentation coming from Jessica Matthew of the DfT, who talked about recent developments. The first of these was the recent release of the 2012 casualty figures. She said the wet weather of last year was probably a factor in the casualty reductions among some classes of road user, and the department is analysing the figures further. For more on this, keep an eye on tinyurl.com/mnso8uh, where you'll find all the official figures.

The anticipated Green Paper on driver training is still scheduled for 'later this year' but Matthew wouldn't be drawn on anything more specific. There are some difficult issues to resolve between restricting young drivers and the freedom of individuals. On drug driving, she said there are 17 substances on the list for which maximum limits are being prescribed, but the technology to carry out roadside tests is still being developed and is unlikely to be ready until 2015.

She also requested suggestions on what road safety issues the DfT should be looking into in its next round of initiatives. One is the need for data on casualty rates (as opposed to just numbers)

by speed limit, especially 20 and 30mph limits. We know that casualties on 20mph roads are increasing while they are falling in all other speed limits. Part of this must be due to the increasing mileage of 20mph limits, but we don't know what proportion, so casualty rates (per million vehicle miles) are essential to make valid comparisons. Another suggestion might be to promote our desire to see an independent road accident investigation board.

At one point the Road Environment Working Party stated that the roll-out of managed motorways needs to PACTS intervention – but I pointed out that the next generation of managed motorways will be very different, with gantries and emergency refuges at much greater intervals. In South Yorks, where the first of the new-style managed motorways is to be installed, both the police and council have serious safety concerns. I was supported by another delegate, who suggested PACTS should get involved in finalising the standards for further managed motorway schemes since, once they have been decided, it will be very difficult to change them. What action will be taken remains to be seen.

Malcolm Heymer

Help keep Kent CC in check

We in Kent have been concerned over the last year with an experimental traffic system in Canterbury, aimed at preserving the ancient Westgate Towers, relieving congestion in the St Dunstons area, introducing pedestrian space in same area and reducing air pollution. It was a disaster; it so restricted traffic (except buses of course) that congestion increased, including on alternative roads nearby not previously congested. A lot of businesses suffered, air pollution moved to adjacent streets and got worse. A lot of the air quality was down to the amount of queuing at a railway level crossing in the middle of the area.

The scheme was the City Council's, but at the end of the experiment the County Council pulled the plug and ended the scheme. Things went back to the way they were, with one difference. New bigger buses couldn't use the Westgate Towers and so Stagecoach withdrew services from part of the area. Surprise, surprise: without buses, congestion and air pollution dramatically decreased.

It later transpired that Stagecoach had secretly been in cahoots with the City Council in introducing the scheme all along. The City Council has refused to admit it was wrong or that the scheme failed, and has launched a steering group to reconsider traffic in the area; another secret group involving Stagecoach and excluding business groups, which we only know details of from leaks to the local paper. This group has produced five options, four of which are nearly the same as the failed scheme.

There's now a 'consultation' going on, and if you'd be prepared to participate, it could be a very useful exercise. You may need to study the proposal if not local, as it asks for addresses (no problem if you class yourself as a visitor) and the answers insist you give a reason for them; but the background information above should provide you with most of the details you need. The key thing is to go for option 5, which is for no change from the present set-up.

The only viable long-term answer to Canterbury's traffic planning is to build a by-pass, improve access to and from the A2, and demolish a few buildings to complete the inner ring road, planned years ago but abandoned halfway through. In certain directions it's impossible to travel through to other towns without going through the city.

You can see the consultation on Kent County Council's website at www.kent.gov.uk

Ian Taylor

Calling all London members...

Stephen Hammond is Minister for Roads and transport in London. The ABD is encouraging his constituents in Wimbledon to tell their MP what they think of current and emerging anti-driver

policies. This is a golden opportunity to influence, so if you can help out, especially with leafleting in the area, please email Brian Mooney at fairdeal@abd.org.uk or call him on 07976 414913

Alice Fishburn's guilt trip

When ABD London Regional co-ordinator Roger Lawson saw an article in the *Financial Times*, he swooped in with this letter. The piece was a column by Alice Fishburn, who appeared to have a guilt complex because she'd bought her own car...

I was glad to read that Alice Fishburn has succumbed to the joys of owning her own car ("On a road to nowhere", August 17/18). No more waiting in the rain for a bus or cramming on to those overheated Tube trains. Instead she'll be able to rest in air-conditioned luxury without the smell of her fellow passengers.

But it seems she has some guilt about this. She complains that cars are a relic of the past and argues that they are falling out of use in London. But their use is declining only

because both the current and previous mayor adopted policies to deter them. As a result we have minimal expenditure on the road network while there are massive subsidies to cycling and buses. Both have reduced the road space available to cars and goods vehicles and have substantially slowed traffic and increased congestion.

The reason why London is an exception to general traffic trends and car usage in the UK is simply because of the 'demand management' adopted by Transport for London to reduce car use. This even extends lately to manipulating traffic light timings to favour cyclists over cars.

I advise Ms Fishburn not to feel guilty about buying a car. She should just enjoy it before it is made illegal by the "levellers" who hate personal liberty and the freedom to choose one's transport mode.

Roger Lawson



The ABD needs more active members. Whatever time or skills you can offer, you can be of use. Contact Brian MacDowall (details on p16) if you can help

DfT forecasts traffic growth of up to 67%

The DfT has rejected the theory of 'peak car' and is forecasting road traffic in England will grow by 43% between 2010 and 2040. Car traffic is forecast to grow by 39%, light goods vehicle traffic 80%, and HGVs by 19%. Growth is predicted to be highest on the strategic road network (Highways Agency roads) – 46% – compared with 41% on local roads. The results of six sensitivity tests are also presented in which assumptions about population, GDP and oil prices are adjusted. The lowest forecast traffic growth is 23% and the highest is 67%.

The DfT predicts sluggish traffic growth up to 2015 in line with projected low GDP growth and high fuel costs. As England then moves out of the recession and rapid fuel efficiency improvements significantly decrease the fuel cost of driving, traffic is expected to rise by 19% from 2015 to 2025. As the rate of improvements in vehicle fuel efficiencies declines after 2025, a slower growth in traffic is forecast. The DfT outlines its assumptions for three key drivers of road traffic between 2010 and 2040:

- Population growth: the Office of National Statistics projects a range of 10% to 30%, with the central traffic forecasts based on 20% growth (representing an extra 10.5 million people)
- Economic growth: the Office of Budgetary Responsibility projects growth of 37%–101%, with the central traffic forecast assuming 66% growth.
- Fuel costs: the fuel cost of driving per mile



is forecast to fall 24% for cars and 7% for light goods vehicles but increase by 36% for HGVs (as increases in fuel prices for the latter outweigh improvements in fuel efficiency).

Last December's *On the move* report was written by a team led by Professor Peter Jones of University College London. It found that between 1997 and 2010, driving licence holding amongst young men had fallen, company car mileage dropped sharply, and traffic in London fell faster than the rest of the UK. But the DfT says these groups make up less than 30% of the population; the other 70% increased their car mileage right up to the 2007 recession, and as economic growth returns, it expects to see a return to nationwide traffic growth.

The Department concedes however that traffic trends are not uniform. Traffic grew much faster on the strategic road network than on the local road network between 2000 and 2007. "Since

2010, while traffic has dropped on local roads, it has increased by more than a billion vehicle miles on strategic roads," the DfT adds. "The biggest urban areas, particularly London, are seeing very different trends from the rest of the country".

The DfT admits that the National Transport Model has not accurately represented traffic trends in the capital. Between 2003 and 2010 the NTM predicted a fall in London car traffic of 1.5% but traffic counts suggest it actually fell 7.8%. The DfT identifies a number of factors to explain the discrepancy:

- Car ownership: "while we have different car ownership saturation levels for different area types, including London, these may need to be re-estimated".
- Public transport: "we will need to revise our modelling on the impact [public transport investment] may have on car travel".
- Road capacity, car parking space, cost and availability: "There is evidence to suggest that in recent years London road capacity has been significantly reduced due to bus lanes, congestion charging and other road works. There is also a significant constraint and cost to parking in London which could reduce the demand to travel by car. We will need to revisit our modelling on the impact this may have on car travel."

Road traffic forecasts 2013 is available at tinyurl.com/kslon7l

New guidelines issued for CCTV use

A code of practice on the use of surveillance cameras by bodies such as local authorities and police forces has come into effect in England and Wales. The Home Office introduced the code after concerns over the potential for the abuse or misuse of surveillance by the state in public places. The code says the cameras must be used "in pursuit of a legitimate aim" and when it "meets a pressing need". Campaign group Big Brother Watch says the code doesn't go far enough.

The code of practice also restricts access to and retention of data, and encourages private operators to apply the code as well as public bodies. The code says: "Where used appropriately, these systems are valuable tools which contribute to public safety and security and in protecting both people and property. The purpose of the code will be to ensure that individuals and wider communities have confidence that surveillance cameras are deployed to protect and support them, rather than spy on them."

The code of practice has been introduced under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, which

also established the post of surveillance camera commissioner. The 12-point code says the use of a surveillance camera system must:

- Always be for a specified purpose which is in pursuit of a legitimate aim and necessary to meet an identified pressing need.
- Take into account its effect on individuals and their privacy.
- Have as much transparency as possible, including a published contact point for access to information and complaints.
- Have clear responsibility and accountability for all surveillance activities including images and information collected, held and used.
- Have clear rules, policies and procedures in place and these must be communicated to all who need to comply with them.
- Have no more images and information stored than that which is strictly required.
- Restrict access to retained images and information with clear rules on who can gain access.
- Consider any approved operational, technical and competency standards relevant to a system and its purpose and work to meet and maintain those standards.

• Be subject to appropriate security measures to safeguard against unauthorised access and use.

• Have effective review and audit mechanisms to ensure legal requirements, policies and standards are complied with.

• Be used in the most effective way to support public safety and law enforcement with the aim of processing images and information of evidential value, when used in pursuit of a legitimate aim.

• Be accurate and kept up to date when any information is used to support a surveillance camera system which compares against a reference database for matching purposes.

The code applies to CCTV and automatic number plate recognition systems. But Nick Pickles, director of Big Brother Watch, said: "With only a small fraction of cameras covered and without any penalties for breaking the code there is much more that could be done to protect people's privacy from unjustified or excessive surveillance. Ultimately the regulator needs real powers to enforce the rules and the code should apply to every CCTV camera, irrespective of who is operating it".

The ABD used to have an environmental spokesman called Ben Adams, who would get incredibly annoyed by academic papers that were supposedly a cost/benefit analysis – but which looked only at the first part of that equation. So I'd be intrigued to know what he'd make of a paper recently published online called *Are cars the new tobacco?* Published on the *Journal of Public Health* (you can read it at tinyurl.com/ormtu8s). The paper looks into 'car dependence' and talks about obesity, crashes, noise, pollution, climate change and even severance – but at no point is there any mention of any of the benefits that cars bring to millions of us every day. The bias is absolutely astonishing!

► This isn't the only piece of blatant propaganda that's come to light recently; the *Oxford Mail* is also guilty of producing one of the least balanced articles ever, on the subject of 20mph speed limits. You can read it at tinyurl.com/m7zyncl. In the article, writer Ben Wilkinson (the crime reporter no less) asserts that:

"Oxford's streets have seen a sharp drop in the number of accidents since 20mph zones were brought in. Comparing the 46 months before and since the controversial zones were rolled out to all but the main arterial city routes, there has been a fall of 18% in the total number of accidents."

But read on and you'll soon see that fatal and serious accidents have remained static; it's only slight accidents which have decreased – and

even then, four of the 10 sites which have seen 20mph zones installed since 2009 have seen a rise in accidents...



► Meanwhile, the anti-car hysteria continues with a new tool created by Axa car insurance, in conjunction with Road Safety Analysis. You can see the tool at tinyurl.com/kpdrf4x – the idea is that you put in the postcode of your child's school and you can see how many collisions have taken place on the roads are around it. But the tool isn't sophisticated enough to take into account which of those collisions have occurred in school time. What's especially intriguing is that a casualty appears to result in only around a fifth of the collisions that take place – which suggests there's a lot of paperwork being filled in, even when there's no nobody hurt...

► I had to drive through Germany recently, covering hundreds of miles, almost exclusively using the autobahns. While many stretches had no speed limit, a surprising amount was subject to an 80kmh limit because of roadworks. What was interesting though was how few people drove at more than 70-80mph in the unrestricted sections. While there was a significant minority who sat at 100mph or so (but rarely much more), much lower speeds were the norm. So when we hear that raising the UK motorway speed limit to 80mph would lead to everyone driving at 90mph+, I can't say I'm convinced...

► The Liberal Democrats recently unveiled proposals to allow only ultra-low carbon vehicles on UK roads by 2040. The controversial

measures would mean millions of petrol and diesel cars being forbidden. Only electric vehicles and ultra-efficient hybrid cars would be allowed on UK roads under the Lib Dem plans. However, petrol and diesel vehicles would still be allowed for freight purposes. What a joke though – at our expense. There are currently no viable technologies waiting in the wings to take over from the internal combustion engine in its current forms, and we can't assume that by 2040 that will have changed. It may well have done, but to waste time proposing legislation that may or may not be introduced in 27 years' time illustrates only too clearly how clueless politicians are on matters that affect us all.

► Meanwhile, Norman Baker, Liberal Democrat transport minister, claims that for too long cars have been given "free rein" in town centres in a "failed policy of the 1970s". He reckons banning cars from high streets, while at the same time investing in public transport, cycling and pedestrian access, will help ailing retailers to recover. He said: "The worst thing you can do is give free rein to the car. The idea of giving free rein to the car and excluding or marginalising pedestrians does not work economically, does not work environmentally and is a failed policy of the 1970s. There is a case for limiting the car in the city centre. But it has to be combined with sensible investment in public transport, and sensible investment in the public space to encourage cycling and walking." Quite right too; the obvious way to get shoppers into towns, spending their money, is to make access difficult for them. It stands to reason, doesn't it? Well, in the mind of the average politician it does...

► Energy Secretary Ed Davey recently made an unprecedented attack on climate change sceptics. In a speech, the Lib Dem minister complained that right-wing newspapers are undermining science for political ends. He accused climate sceptics of nimbyism, publicity-seeking, and "blinker... bloody-mindedness". Is any further comment from me really necessary...?

► A recent chat with a neighbour proved interesting; he'd not long had to do a speed awareness course having been nabbed on the M6 in Cumbria for doing 76mph (in a 70). He reckons all was well until the scam camera van suddenly appeared over the horizon; the lead driver slammed on his brakes, the next one swerved to avoid a collision (and succeeded) while my neighbour, who was keeping his distance, reckoned the best course of action was to take no action. Reasonably enough he assumed that he was safe doing 76mph on a free-flowing motorway. Seems not – and the irony is that he drives a car which is electronically restricted to 174mph. But remember, it's all about saving lives.

Chris Medd

People power

I'm afraid to say that I'm as guilty as most drivers when it comes to fighting back. I'm too busy trying to earn a living and getting on with my life, to take part in protests, write letters and get involved in meetings. After all, local authorities scheme and lie to get their own way, imposing rules to suit themselves and moving the goalposts should it look as though they might not get their own way. And even if all this fails, they'll just resort to the age-old tactic of ignoring public opinion; over the years, these pages have documented plenty of cases exactly like this.

But sometimes local authorities go too far. Recent protests and legal challenges in Barnet, reported in these pages, saw local residents

coming out on top. There have also been plenty of lower-profile victories for common sense too, and it's only by applying pressure on councils that they can be kept in check.



So it's going to be interesting to see what happens in Bristol, where residents are up in arms over a road closure which has been foisted upon them. What used to be a through road is now a two-way bus lane, and as you can find out by reading the excellent summary on tinyurl.com/lh3hcku, things will shortly be coming to a head.

The residents involved are now angry and united in forcing their local authority to climb down. But there's too much at stake for that to happen, which means some sort of compromise must be reached. And as we all know, local authorities don't like compromise...

letters

Opinions expressed are personal views and not necessarily those of the ABD. Please note letters may be shortened.

Write to OTR: Chris Medd, PO Box 248, Manchester M41 4BW or send an email to otr@abd.org.uk

Parking fines are not just about taking money from us: it is but one part part of the social control programme. It's about reminding us constantly, regardless of whether we transgress, that we are not free but are subject to control.

Other facets of the control programme include SORN and continuous insurance whereby it is not enough to obey the law – now we have to write to the DVLA to confirm we are obeying the law. Then there are ANPR and speed cameras, surveillance cameras, ever lower speed limits, the legal requirement to incriminate oneself when the police send you a letter in the post, MoT failures for non-safety related items, byzantine laws on child seats as well as compulsory crash helmets and seat belts, bus lanes, a ridiculous number of traffic lights (especially on roundabouts) and speed awareness courses to reprogramme our minds.

And that's just for starters on some of the control of motorists. Don't get me started on harassment warnings, the abuse of police cautions, CRB checks on flower arrangers, wheelie bin fines... I could go on, but I think you get the picture. Feel free to add to the list.

James Carbery

Driving through Scotland, I commented to a garage owner that there seemed to be an excessive number of speed cameras locally. He agreed, but added that local people were fighting back by putting black bin liner bags over the cameras. Sure enough, the next two cameras had bin liner bags over them. Just thought I'd mention it...

Sarah Hutton

There's a campaign group called Twenty's Plenty (www.20splentyforus.org.uk), which wants a blanket speed limit reduction from 30mph to 20mph on all minor/residential roads across the whole UK. Behind this is the insidious EU which wants to tear up our Highway Code and implement their own motoring laws. The following links are relevant:

- tinyurl.com/6gy3pso
- tinyurl.com/qzhsnuq

Less than 1% of parking fines are appealed because most people know it's a waste of time, not because – as we are frequently told – the wardens have "got it right". Interesting to note that a parking fine is in fact, officially at least, not a fine, yet even government officials still refer to it as such.

What is shocking is the blatant profiteering that goes on in respect of parking fines. Go into any town centre and just about every road (that doesn't have parking meters) is blighted with double yellow lines (DYL). You can't park anywhere, except of course in council-controlled car parks.

DYLs are there in many cases simply to raise revenue from drivers "illegally" parking there or force them into car parks. Nationwide there are unused lay-byes, remote cul-de-sacs with

nothing either side except fields, and little-used back roads that are wide enough for the largest vehicles to pass each other even with traffic parked on both sides – all with DYLs.

The time has come for all this to change. We have been lied to for years; I distinctly remember a local council promising that CCTV wouldn't be used for parking enforcement, and we've been scammed for years by the very people who are supposed to protect our civil interests.

Enforcement too is shocking. I had a tow-truck arrive once to tow away my car after my resident's permit had run out and the council offices closed early on the day before the Easter holidays so I couldn't renew it on time. The result was that I got a ticket on each of the four days between Good Friday and Easter

Give us a quote

"Like every other radical movement in history, the environmental lobby is at its most vulnerable when exposed to the Truth for a significant period of time. In the end, the facts will set us free".

Joshua Livestro



This is yet another example of the Nanny State syndrome; trying to interfere in every aspect of our daily lives, telling us what to do, what to think, what to eat, how to drive etc. I have driven for over 40 years in areas where the lowest speed limit is 30mph and I haven't killed or injured any pedestrians or any other drivers, and that's true for the vast majority of motorists. The 30 mph limit has been in place for decades and has served us well. Can you imagine the cost of changing the signage to 20mph across the whole UK?

We do not need our country crippled by 20mph limits on all non major roads to prevent there ever being a road traffic incident. It's a totally disproportionate response. If zero accidents are a priority then it's obvious that we should ban all vehicles or go back to the man with the red flag walking in front.

However, I do support a lower speed limit in a high-risk area such as at a school on a major road, or an accident black spot etc. But if the lower

limit is for a school it doesn't need to apply when it's school holidays or out of school hours. So lower limits should only be implemented where there is clear evidence of the need.

But it's still generally all a waste of time. The people who speed in a 30mph limit, or drunk and texting on their mobile phones will do it in a 20mph limit as they don't care about a speed limit. The police don't want to be enforcing 20mph limits either as they have better things to do with their limited resources and also it will only worsen their relationship with the motoring public.

Whilst there will be some people who support the 20 mph limit, I haven't yet spoken to one who wants it implemented as a blanket change. I believe the vast majority of motorists would oppose it if they knew it was happening. I have raised an petition regarding this, at <http://petitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/52747>.

Ian Smith

Monday for being "illegally parked" outside my own home. They didn't tow it – I got in the car and drove it away – and I eventually got the tickets overturned on a technicality. But the same would apply if you don't pay your parking "fine"; bailiffs can come along and tow your car and there's no justice whatsoever in using such draconian measures for what amounts to nothing more than owing a bill. Remember, it isn't even an offence!

There really need to be major changes because it amounts to little more than legalised fraud. Incidentally if you're ever threatened with your car being towed, sit in it. It's illegal to lift or tow a vehicle if there's somebody in it, and there is sod-all they can do because you're not committing an offence by doing so.

Alan Pargeter

Does the membership secretary have your current contact details – including a correct email address? If not, please send an update ASAP!

The IAM recently sent out a press release proclaiming that motorway service areas are a rip-off, but in the process the IAM missed quite a big point; that MSAs are obliged by law to provide free parking for everyone for two hours and free toilet facilities. Let's see "a popular high street newsagent" having to provide free toilets and a big car park where people can park for two hours and see what happens to their prices.

The IAM even admitted what the issue is, though they failed to realise it; the release said "The survey also found that 65% of respondents are most likely only to stop at Motorway Service Areas just to use the toilet facilities". So all those people are parking for free and using toilets which are provided, heated, cleaned, and supplied with water and bog roll and not paying for it. I'm no apologist for the MSAs, but all those freeloaders using the loo have to be subsidised by the paying customers. I'm sure the IAM (and us) would be up in arms if the government announced that MSAs were going to be allowed to charge



for parking from the moment you arrived and could charge you 20p to use the loo.

If you don't want to pay the MSAs prices for chocolate and sandwiches then stock up at Morrisons before you leave, and if you don't want to pay their fuel prices then fill up at Morrisons while you're there.

Chris Lamb

(Retail parks have free parking and toilets, and while few visitors will go just to use the latter, the cost of providing these can't be justified by the hugely inflated prices charged by MSAs. Surely? Ed)

The Freight Transport Association has complained that its members have been fined over a million pounds a year for box junction and parking infringements, mainly in Central London. If you have any reasoned suggestions for remedying this, please send them to fairdeal@abd.org.uk and we'll pass them on, with due confidentiality.

Also, if you need a concise overview of the various transport bodies and a better idea of how transport in the UK is funded, there's a surprisingly readable publication available online, which spells out who does what and traces the changes under the Coalition. You can see read it at www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05735

Brian Mooney

Pedestrians should be made more aware of the Highway Code, especially Rule 195 concerning pedestrian crossings. Many people seem to be of the opinion that pedestrians have the right to simply walk onto pedestrian crossings, often forcing cars to jam on the brakes, even when clear gaps in the traffic are available to cross.

Vehicles *must* stop when a pedestrian is actually on the crossing. Pedestrians should only go onto the crossing when vehicles have clearly stopped or in situations when no traffic is approaching. The Highway Code does not state that vehicles *have* to stop to let pedestrians cross when they are still on the pavement. It's all online at tinyurl.com/q75fpag

Peter Laing

I live in York, where the council has decided to implement city-wide 20mph limits - even though there

was support from just seven people from the 13,000 residents surveyed. The survey drew just 97 responses, 87 of which opposed proposals for reduced speed limits on their streets. Three gave neutral responses.

Despite this, the council still intends to press ahead with the plans for Acomb, Holgate, Dringhouses, Woodthorpe and Westfield, claiming that the low number of total responses shows there is "no significant opinion against the idea of 20mph".

Labour plans to ultimately roll out the 20mph zones across the city, having included the plan in its 2011 election manifesto. The scheme has a £500,000 budget, but opponents say the consultation results mean it should be axed in favour of a more targeted approach. That's democracy in action for you.

Simon Day

Spain was once lauded for having a large network of first class-privately financed toll roads. Now it looks like many of those roads were commissioned by government, and built by the private sector based on overly optimistic forecasts of growth on the back of Spain's property-led boom –which has since turned to bust.

Two highways, Radial 3 and Radial 5, opened in 2004 at the height of Spain's construction boom. Now the company owes €660m to the bank, €340m to the builders and €400m to residents evicted to build it. Six toll roads have entered bankruptcy proceedings since May 2012, the Madrid-Toledo (AP-41) toll road being the first. It was managed by Grupo Isolux Corsan SA, Comsa SA, Azvi and Banco Espiritu Santo SA, and owed over US\$646m. Many more are also heading for bankruptcy.

It isn't just roads, as Spain built high-speed railways and airports, with some of both of those now looking like woeful investments. The

OTR glossary

- ACPO: Association of Chief Police Officers
- ANPR: Automatic Number Plate Recognition
- Brake: Vocal anti-car group
- CfBT: Campaign for Better Transport (previously Transport 2000)
- CPRE: Campaign to Protect Rural England
- CPS: Crown Prosecution Service
- DfT: Department for Transport
- DVLA: Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency
- EC: European Commission
- ECHR: European Court of Human Rights
- FoI: Freedom of Information (Act)
- FTA: Freight Transport Association
- Gatso: Speed camera that measures a car's speed at a single fixed point.
- IAM: Institute of Advanced Motorists
- IPCC: Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (pushes man-made CC view)
- ISA: Intelligent Speed Adaptation
- KSI: Killed or Seriously Injured
- LTP: Local Transport Plan
- MART: Manchester Against Road Tolls
- NAAT: National Alliance Against Tolls
- NIP: Notice of Intended Prosecution (usually a speeding ticket)
- RHA: Road Haulage Association
- PACTS: Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety (of which the ABD is a member)
- PCN: Penalty Charge Notice
- Scamera: Speed camera
- SPECS: Speed camera that measures a car's average speed between two or more points.
- TfL: Transport for London
- VAS: Vehicle-activated sign

Spain's motorways are desperately under-used



craze drove Spain to break records; it became the country in Europe with the most kilometres of motorways and the most commercial international airports, and was second only to China in the world for the length of its high-speed train lines.

Meanwhile, the government upgraded existing roads too. At a time of deep recession, it's clear that Spaniards are preferring to save money over time, so are avoiding the toll roads in favour of the untolled government roads. Motorway traffic is now at levels not seen for over 15 years. On the Accesos de Madrid roads, where there were supposed to be 35,000 vehicles a day, there are 10,000. This experience mirrors that of the M6 Toll road operators, yet the current UK administration is talking about more roads being built here using private money...

Joe Anderson



in brief...

▶ Motorists have accused Sheffield Council of taking them for a ride after the authority's profits from parking charges leapt by almost 40%. Figures show the council's profits from parking fees and fines after costs rose from £1.793m in 2010-11 to £2.493m in 2011-12. Sheffield's increased profit came from expansion of bus gate enforcement, residents' permit zones and increased on-street and car park parking charges.

▶ Recommendations made to improve the condition of Scotland's local roads two years ago have not yet led to any significant improvements, a report says. The Accounts Commission urged changes in 2011 to tackle road conditions and improve value for money in maintenance. But the percentage of roads in acceptable condition has increased only marginally since then, it has found.

▶ A bid to make smoking in vehicles when children are present illegal has been launched by South of Scotland Liberal Democrat MSP Jim Hume. He wants to introduce a members Bill at the Scottish Parliament which would bring in a ban. He has opened a public consultation on his proposals which he says would safeguard the rights of children. Several health organisations back the ban but smokers' campaign group FOREST said the law would be unenforceable.

▶ Westminster Council plans to remove 50 of its 179 traffic enforcement cameras despite issuing 458,388 tickets generating £23 million last year. The council said it wanted a more "common sense" approach to parking in the area by employing traffic marshals and a new parking locator app.

▶ The London Borough of Haringey is a partner in a proposed European project to reward 'positive' travel behaviours. The Positive Drive project would use mobile phone tracking to monitor the travel behaviour of project participants. "Positive behaviour may constitute taking less congested routes, eco-driving or using alternative modes more frequently such as public transport, walking, cycling, car sharing or car-pooling," said Paul Curtis, senior European project officer at the London European Partnership for Transport. "Based on their positive travel behaviour, individuals are rewarded and score points that can be used to win prizes and obtain discounts in local shops."

▶ The boom in shale gas and shale oil production in the US is prompting people to rethink future fossil fuel supplies, according to an analyst. The International Energy Agency's head of oil markets, Antoine Halff, claims that concerns about an approaching peak in oil production had "moved to the back burner". "Just a few years ago, everybody thought US production was in permanent decline, that the nation had to face the prospect of continuously rising imports – and now the country is moving towards self-sufficiency. In the last few years, many forecasters have had to revise their forecasts upwards continuously."

Nearly five million PCNs for London

Almost five million penalty charge notices were issued to drivers in the capital last year, according to figures released by London Councils. The total number of PCNs issued across the full range of parking and traffic offences in 2012 13 was 4,895,252, a slight fall from the 4,931,816 in 2011-12.

Parking accounts for the lion's share of the penalties – 4,041,423. Since 2007 a two-tier parking penalty system has operated in London. The data shows that 3,038,822 of the PCNs were issued for the more serious offences, such as parking on double yellow lines, stopping on a pedestrian crossing or bus stop and double parking. The remaining 1,002,601 were issued for lower level contraventions such as overstaying on a parking meter, and not parking within the markings of a parking bay.

Over 800,000 PCNs were issued for driving in bus lanes or other moving traffic offences. Bus lane PCNs totalled 242,541 and moving traffic PCNs totalled 608,156.

The London Councils data also breaks down the



PCNs by issuing authority. The highest number were issued by Transport for London – 553,056 – followed by Westminster City Council with 456,763. The London Borough of Ealing issued more PCNs for bus lane offences than any other – 28,795 followed by 25,708 by TfL and 25,659 by Lewisham. A number of boroughs including Westminster issued none.

TfL issued the highest number of moving traffic offences – 155,199. The second highest was Hammersmith and Fulham, which issued 70,652, followed by Harrow with 47,417.

Councils ignore guidance on parking

Town halls, who are set to make £635m profit from parking this year, are ignoring Whitehall guidance on enforcement. The Traffic Penalty Tribunal, the body set up by the Government to consider motorists' appeals against parking tickets, has voiced its concern to the Transport Select Committee. Eric Pickles, the local government Secretary, rounded on councils for exploiting motorists, accusing them of "bending the law to fill their coffers with taxpayers' cash".

Questionable practices include routinely using CCTV to dish out parking tickets, despite the DfT saying CCTV should only be used when it's impractical to use traffic wardens. Councils are also refusing to use their discretion to waive tickets when, for example, a car has been stopped in a no-waiting area for safety reasons. One driver was penalised for stopping after his windscreen shattered.

Now town halls, under the guise of local democracy, are inviting voters to back moves to balance their books by pushing up parking



charges and fining more motorists. In all 301 councils in England, about 80% of the total, now have the power to control parking in their areas and keep the income they make from fines and charges. Under the Traffic Management Act they can only use these powers to ease congestion and control traffic. Councils are banned from using parking as a source of revenue, but despite traffic volumes falling, local authorities have seen this income rise in recent years.

UK councils make £565m from parking

Figures analysed by the RAC Foundation show the vast majority of local authorities in England generate a surplus from their parking activities. In 2011-12, English councils had a total current account surplus of £565m from their on and off street parking operations. This figure is a £54m increase on the £511m surplus seen in 2010-11. Even where huge 'profits' are absent, the picture is still largely one of surplus rather than deficit with just 52 (14%) of the 359 councils reporting negative numbers.

And even after capital charges are taken into

account, the combined surplus in 2011-12 was still £412m. The data, studied for the RACF, comes from the annual returns that councils make to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The authority with the biggest income is Westminster Council in London which made a surplus of £41.6m in 2011-12. Only Brighton and Hove, and Cornwall councils break into a top ten dominated by London authorities.

•For the full list of who makes what, log on to tinyurl.com/pzqygt

Cheaper fuel for rural communities?

Motorists in rural areas could benefit from cheaper fuel under Treasury plans to extend the existing island fuel rebate to many more parts of the UK. The scheme enables retailers to cut the cost of fuel to consumers by allowing them to claim back 5p per litre of fuel sold from HM Revenue & Customs. The Treasury is now considering a huge expansion of the scheme to encompass:

► Six English council areas: Cornwall, Cumbria, Devon, Herefordshire, North Yorkshire and Northumberland

► Much of Scotland: Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll & Bute, the Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, Highlands, Moray, Perth and Kinross, and South Ayrshire.

► In Wales: Gwynedd; Isle of Anglesey; Monmouthshire; and Powys.

► Much of Northern Ireland. Nearly 1500 retailers in these areas have been asked to provide details of how much they charge for petrol and diesel. The Treasury will pass the



data to the European Commission, which must approve any scheme.

Chief secretary to the Treasury Danny Alexander said: "We will need to prove that there are areas which are similar to the islands in terms of pump prices and distribution costs. While it won't be easy to get this agreed with the Commission, I want to do everything I can to make this happen." The current scheme covers the Inner and Outer Hebrides, the Northern Isles, the islands of the Clyde and the Isles of Scilly.

Drivers fined in error

Hundreds of drivers convicted for not updating their driver's licence photo ID may have been incorrectly prosecuted, a Lincoln solicitor claims. Michael Pace recently won a case by arguing the wrong section of the Road Traffic Act 2010 was used. He said points may have been added to licences and insurance invalidated, as a result of the error.

Lincolnshire Police said it was "of concern" that motorists might have been dealt with incorrectly. Ch Insp Stewart Brinn said: "We have issued clear guidance to all our staff to rectify this situation and we have also raised the issue at both regional and national forums."

Pace, an ex-traffic policeman and specialist in traffic law, said Section 87.1 of the Act deals with driving without a valid licence, but Section 99 deals with updating a photo ID, which must be done every 10 years. Under Section 99, a fine of £1000 can be imposed but points can't be levied, vehicles can't be seized and the offence doesn't affect the validity of a driver's licence or insurance.

Birmingham signs up for 20mph limits

Birmingham plans for 90% of its roads to have a 20mph limit. The UK's biggest transport authority with over one million residents has confirmed the extent of city-wide 20mph limits just a week after the City of London made its decision – with Cardiff and Edinburgh also having agreed to implement city-wide 20mph schemes.

Birmingham City Council has said the default should be 20mph, introduced through limits rather than zones. Suitable for inclusion in the scheme are all residential roads, those with a designated high street function (defined as primary or secondary shopping frontages), A- and B-roads with school entrances or schools, and roads with other local trip attractors such as parks or leisure facilities, health centres, hospitals and public transport



hubs or interchanges).

The cost of introducing the limits is currently estimated at £7m, primarily funded through Local Transport Plan (LTP) Integrated Block Allocations, which are ring-fenced for transport schemes. Money will also come from other funding such as the recent Cycle City Ambition Fund bid, which secured £0.8 million towards 20mph schemes.

Lib Dems oppose 20s

Liberal Democrats in York have criticised the Labour-run council's plans for citywide 20mph speed limits on residential roads. The Lib Dem group has expressed its unhappiness with the plans in response to the council's consultation on implementing 20mph limits in the west of the city.

"We continue to support a targeted use of 20mph limits at known accident blackspots and in areas such as outside schools and shopping areas," say the Lib Dems. But they say evidence for the effects of blanket 20mph limits is "very mixed in regards to accident levels, reducing speeds, helping produce a modal shift away from car use and in reducing emissions. The evidence from the UK's first city-wide 20mph scheme [Portsmouth] showed that serious accident levels went up slightly, the average reduction in speeds was just 1.3mph, and the scheme made little different to the majority of respondents in the amount they travelled by their chosen mode."

Discussing the specific plans for 20mph limits in York, the Lib Dems say: "The folly of the current approach is shown in the speed and accident data ... showing that average speeds on many of the roads proposed for the new limit are already below 20mph and accident rates on the roads proposed are either zero or very low. This means that in many areas the £600,000 cost of the project will make little discernable difference on the ground, except to increase street clutter and spend taxpayers' money."

The Lib Dems say there remains confusion about how 20mph limits will be enforced. "The evidence is that locally and nationally the police do not have the resources or inclination to enforce all new 20mph limits," they say.

Official: more wealth ≠ more traffic

The relationship between economic growth and road traffic levels is weakening over time, according to a new DfT report which identifies three key influences on road travel demand – population, GDP, and fuel cost – but says the impact of each is less than it used to be. "The impact of these three key drivers of travel demand is decreasing over time, mostly because of advancing degrees of maturity of the market," says the Department.

"Many more people own a car today than in the 1960s," it says, before also citing the impact of "congestion and crowding, government policies on public transport and environmentally sustainable travel patterns, such as cycling". The Department says the changing relationships are reflected in the outputs of the National Transport Model. The new road traffic forecasts produced by the NTM were published last month. In the central traffic forecast:

► A 1% rise in GDP per capita is predicted to generate a 0.28% rise in car traffic in 2010 but only a 0.19% rise in 2035.

► A 1% rise in fuel costs is predicted to result in a 0.3% fall in car traffic in 2010 but only a 0.17% fall in 2035.

► A 1% rise in population is forecast to cause a 0.95% rise in car traffic in 2010 and a 0.92% rise in 2035. The DfT says changes in technology and society could also affect traffic levels.

"The development of smart phones and social networks could reduce the need to travel for social reasons, as people rely more on virtual communication, or have substituted fancy cars as social status symbols." But it adds: "Self-driving cars could make travel more attractive in the future as people could be able to do more activities while driving, therefore being less concerned by time spent in traffic jams."

in brief...

► Prof Richard Parncutt of the University of Graz seriously suggested that the death penalty is an appropriate punishment for influential global warming (GW) deniers. However this could be commuted to life imprisonment if the accused admitted guilt and "participated intensively in programmes to reduce the effects of GW" (from jail). The rant remained on the University website for weeks and they only took it down when it became a real embarrassment.

► The ABD's Steve Haley (author of Mind Driving) has published an absorbing new article on teaching young men to drive; it's at tinyurl.com/neqeb6q

► Boris Johnson is to consult next year on introducing a "substantial" charge on HGVs operating in the capital without basic safety equipment to protect cyclists. The Freight Transport Association has called the plans "unprecedented and authoritarian" and the Road Haulage Association says the charge sounds complex and is likely to deliver few benefits. Both organisations have called on the mayor to tackle poor cyclist behaviour.

► Most electric vehicle charging points in London are never used, according to data released by the Mayor's office. The figures show that in the last three months of 2012, just 198 of the 800 electric vehicle charging points were used at all. Furthermore, most had an average daily use amounting to just one or two minutes. Only 37 of the 800 charging points had been used for an average of two hours or more a day. The most heavily used was at the O2 centre in Greenwich.

► Communities and local government secretary Eric Pickles has told local authorities in England to "ditch their anti-car dogma" and make town centres more friendly to motorists. "Town halls need to ditch their anti-car dogma," he said. "Anti-car measures are driving motorists into the arms of internet retailers and out-of-town superstores, taking their custom with them. Trying to find somewhere to park has been an obstacle course in too many of our towns, cities and seaside resorts. Confusing and difficult car parking practices are undermining the economic vitality of the high street and tourist destinations and over-zealous parking wardens have been inflicting real damage on local economies."

► Nottingham City Council, which now charges employers £334 for each space they provide in their workplace car park, is having to deal with a glut of commuters' cars being left on the streets. Although the levy was supposed to be imposed on the companies, many have passed the cost on to their staff – who have opted to park for free on residential streets instead. Unsurprisingly, the Council's strategy to deal with the problem is to introduce Controlled Parking Zones; now who could have foreseen this course of events taking place...?

A9 to get 136 miles of average speed cameras

The Scottish Government is to install average speed cameras along a 136-mile stretch of the A9 from Dunblane to Inverness – by far the longest stretch of road in Britain to be so equipped. The scheme will cost about £2.5m to install and is being promoted as a way to cut road accidents. There were 24 fatalities on the A9 between Perth and Inverness in the four-year period 2009-2012.

The road is largely single-carriageway, with stretches of dual-carriageway. Transport minister Keith Brown said: "While the Scottish Government believes that dualling will be the long-term solution to the safety issues on the A9 we also want to make the immediate improvements that will bring positive changes to driver behaviour."

Long tailbacks can develop behind HGVs on the single-carriageway sections, but Transport Scotland says the vast majority of HGVs on

the road exceed the 40mph single carriageway limit. Ministers have rejected hauliers' calls to pilot a 50mph HGV speed limit on the single carriageway sections if average speed cameras were introduced. The first cameras are due to be installed early next year and the full system should be operational next summer. An estimated 100 cameras will be installed at 40 sites around four miles apart.

Transport Scotland claims a 46% fall in fatal accidents and a 35% fall in serious injury accidents was recorded on the section of the A77 in Ayrshire where average speed cameras were installed in 2005. Asked whether all the fall could be attributed to the cameras, a spokeswoman said: "The average speed cameras will have made a major contribution to that reduction, but as with the A9, it was part of a wider package of engineering, education and enforcement measures on the route."

Potholed roads lead to speed limit cuts

The Highways Agency has reduced speed limits on sections of dual-carriageway and motorway badly affected by potholes – instead of making the necessary repairs. Sections of the M11 in Essex saw limit cuts, along with sections of the A11 and A12 in Essex.

After a series of harsh winters, Britain's roads are in a mess; the backlog of potholes waiting to be repaired is growing, but budgets aren't growing to keep up. Many councils are having to divert money from the road maintenance fund to pay compensation to motorists whose cars have been damaged by big potholes. The latest move is an attempt to reduce the amount of damage



badly potholed roads cause, and things aren't looking promising for the future. The Highways Agency says it's invested £420m in road repairs last year – but the estimated backlog of pothole repairs in Britain already stands at £10.5bn, and that figure isn't going to reduce.

Welsh scamera debate heats up

The ASA has rejected a complaint that a road safety partnership's website is misleading by reporting raw casualty reduction figures from speed camera sites. In the latest development in the heated debate about scameras, the ASA has ruled that the Welsh Road Casualty Reduction Partnership's website can continue to carry the statement: "At camera sites across Wales there has been a 72% reduction in the number of people being killed or seriously injured."

The ASA's decision has been ridiculed by the complainant, road safety campaigner Ian Belchamber, who runs the Dorset Speed website. Belchamber says this implies cameras are the cause of the casualty reduction whereas, in reality, the majority of the fall is the result of other factors.

The ASA recently rejected a complaint brought

by Belchamber against similar material on the Scottish Safety Camera Programme Office's website. Belchamber has asked the ASA for an independent review of the Scottish case and is awaiting the outcome of this before deciding what to do about the Welsh case.

In the Welsh case the ASA said it considered consumers are likely to interpret the claim about the reduction in KSIs "as a factual reporting of the data". "We considered the claim would be read in that context and not as a claim that safety cameras solely resulted in saving lives," it said.

But Belchamber rejects the ASA's line of argument. "The ASA say it believes a consumer reading, on a page headed 'Cameras Save Lives', 'At camera sites across Wales there has been a 72% reduction in the number of people being killed or seriously injured' would consider this only as a mathematical statement not suggesting camera safety benefit. What complete and utter nonsense!"



Stay informed

Social media

Keep abreast of ABD-related news, and what the ABD is up to on a daily basis, by following us on Twitter (twitter.com/TheABD) or 'liking' us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/associationofbritishdrivers). Please retweet or share one of our updates occasionally to help promote us to your followers or friends.

Forum

You can discuss issues with other members by registering on our online forum. The forum is split into both topics and regions, so whether your concern is a particular topic such as speed limits, or something happening in your local area, you can easily find other members to advise and assist you. Full details of how to register can be found on the members' website.

Website

The main ABD website (www.abd.org.uk) is available to everyone, and there's a members' site at members.abd.org.uk – both contain mountains of information on a diverse range of subjects, with dozens of links to other websites which may help you in your research. Log on to find out more or email the ABD webmaster – Chris Ward – at website@abd.org.uk

OTR on iPad

If you have an iPad and want to read OTR on it, it's easy. Once you've downloaded OTR from the members' site, just drag the OTR file to the 'Books' Library in iTunes, then sync your iPad. OTR will appear on the 'PDFs' collections page in iBooks.

OTR in cyberspace

OTR31 onwards are now available as PDFs, which you can obtain from Chris Medd or download from the ABD website.

Speed limit objection packs

The ABD has prepared an informative action pack which sets out in detail the process by which local authorities set speed limits, and the rights that every member of the public has to object to the imposition of new or reduced limits. The pack costs £5 to non-members, but is available free to current members. Please send a large SAE (30p) to:

**3 Wheatcroft Way
Dereham
Norfolk NR20 3SS
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Help out

ABD publicity material

If you'd like copies of any ABD literature please contact Sean Corker (details overleaf), but please don't over-order as printing costs are high.

Affiliated organisations

The ABD runs an affiliation scheme, allowing groups which support the ABD to formally recognise the work we do. Overleaf is a list of the groups currently affiliated, along with contact details for Terry Hudson, the affiliations contact. If you're a member of an organisation which you think should support the ABD, please let Terry know and we'll endeavour to sign them up.

Complain

Object about proposals for traffic calming and speed limit reductions. Few people do, which is why they happen.

Facebook

Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/associationofbritishdrivers where you can comment on posted articles, find out about press articles you can comment on, and by sharing some of our updates, encourage your friends to support us too.

Fighting fund

The ABD has a fighting fund to which you can donate any amount at any time. You can also donate by standing order if you wish to give a regular sum. Please contact the membership secretary for more information; she'll send you the relevant form to fill out.

Joint memberships

These are free and help us to increase the size of the group easily. If your partner/spouse isn't a joint member, please sign them up if you can – just contact the membership secretary to do so.

Local/regional contacts

Have you been in touch with your local co-ordinator recently? Advise them of anything local you see, find out how you can help campaign locally. You can find out their details on the members site (<http://members.abd.org.uk>). If there's no local co-ordinator for your area, perhaps you can take on the role – more details on what is involved can be found on the members site.

National committee

The ABD's national committee is always keen to increase its effectiveness, which means getting more members involved. An ability to function effectively and diplomatically in committee email discussions across a wide range of issues is essential, and ideally, after an acclimatisation period, new recruits would eventually become a media spokesman too. There are usually around four committee plus (up to) two members' meetings each year, which you'd ideally be able to attend. If you reckon you could get involved, just contact Brian Gregory (brian.gregory@abd.org.uk), Brian MacDowall (brian.macdowall@abd.org.uk) or Bob Dennish (national@abd.org.uk) and they'll do the rest.

Twitter

Follow us at <http://twitter.com/TheABD>, where you can stay up to date on what's happening. Find out about press articles you can comment on and retweet our posts to spread the word. You can also use Twitter to update us on things you see, if you make sure we're following you. If you're in Essex, Herefordshire, Kent, North Wales, North West, Rutland, Scotland, South West of England, Staffs, Surrey, Sussex, Warwickshire or the West Midlands, we have a local Twitter account too: <http://twitter.com/TheABD/local>

Write to the press

Take the time to reply to anti-car articles and letters in the local press. Not only do you get to respond to information already published, but you may be able to get a debate going – and could even become a local point of contact.

Contact your MP

Write to your MP regularly, reminding them of their duty to stand up for drivers. MPs are listed by name & constituency on the Parliament site (parliament.uk/directories/directories.cfm). Many MPs have their own email, but if you use the Parliament webpage to email them, it's involved. It's often better to check their constituency website (if they have one) for contact info. Make sure you state clearly you're a constituent to get priority in a reply. Conservative ministers are listed at conservatives.com

national & regional contacts

We are always pleased to hear from members who can offer support or need help. But remember that the ABD is a voluntary organisation – funded only by its members' subscriptions – and is staffed by unpaid volunteers who do their best to help members. **So please, no phone calls after 9pm!**

Affiliated organisations

▶ *American Automobile Club*
▶ *BMW Car Club*
▶ *CIPS (Choice in Personal Safety)*
▶ *Citroen Car Club*
▶ *Driver Awareness*
▶ *Jaguar Drivers' Club*
▶ *National Motorists' Action Group*
▶ *NO2ID*

▶ *Parkingticket.co.uk*
▶ *Professional Drivers' Association*
▶ *Repeal the Act*
▶ *Safe Speed (safespeed.org.uk)*
▶ *South East Lotus Owners' Club*
▶ *Subaru Impreza Drivers' Club*
▶ *The Independent Porsche Enthusiasts' Club*
▶ *Triumph Stag Enthusiasts' Club*

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