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## Editorial

*A bumper edition, and even issued before the normal due date instead of being late so you will have time to read it in your summer holidays!*

*On a personal note it's good to see the ultimate success of the campaign in Richmond to defeat the emission based permit parking charges (see page 2). I fondly remember tramping the streets of Richmond, Twickenham and Barnes to deliver leaflets with the campaign culminating in a public meeting where councillors simply refused to listen to their electorate. They have now got their comeuppance.*

*There is also a good letter from one of our subscribers on the subject of the proposed congestion charge changes. Please do send in your own comments on anything you feel strongly about regarding traffic and transport in London.*

*Please note that you can pass this newsletter on to your friends or colleagues without restriction and anyone who wishes to receive it (free of charge) on a regular basis can do so by going to this web page: [www.freedomfordrivers.org/Newsletters.htm](http://www.freedomfordrivers.org/Newsletters.htm)*

*Roger Lawson, Editor*

## Cycle Superhighways – Are They Blue Enough?



For those who have not yet come across the new "Cycle Superhighways" in London, above and overleaf are photographs of the one that runs along Cable Street through Whitechapel to Tower Hill. As you can see in the photograph above, the surface of these cycle paths is painted in a particularly garish shade of blue. Is this to assist visually impaired cyclists, to warn drivers to keep off them, or to ensure they stand out and hence promote their use? I do not know, but Boris Johnson has denied they are "Conservative Blue".

In the above example the cycle lane has been placed where a cycle lane was present before, but widened out, and the road slightly narrowed to accommodate this. As a result, HGVs or other wide vehicles now have difficulty driving down the road without mounting the kerb (not that many would choose to take this road).

In addition, one very questionable feature is the fact that the cycle lane is above the kerb. So any cyclist who veers off to the left is likely to fall off the kerb edge and into the path of motorised traffic.

Another problem is the presence of pedestrian crossings (such as the one outside Shadwell Tube station in the photograph below) and traffic lights elsewhere on the route.

Your editor drew up at this pedestrian crossing to let a pedestrian cross who then almost got knocked down by a manic cyclist who was going too fast and clearly in no mood to be delayed.

In general it looks like these Superhighways have been implemented quickly but with little thought to the design. Sometimes they run through parking bays so parked cars obstruct the route so even cyclists seem not altogether happy with them.



Can you drive into a cycle Superhighway? Yes so long as it is not bounded by a solid white line (so it's like any cycle lane in that respect) – and most of them are not.

### **The Cost?**

According to a BBC report, the first two routes cost a total of £23 million, which must work out at about £1 million per mile. *(Editor's Comments: Clearly paint is expensive these days, but the minor tinkering with Cable Street probably substantially increased the cost there, for very little benefit. Is this expenditure wise one wonders in the current financial climate? What evaluation was done of the cost benefits in terms of road safety or reduced journey times for cyclists? If anyone has seen any information on this please let me know).*

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## **Pie in the Sky?**

Pie in the sky, or cable cars in the sky? Transport for London (TfL) are going ahead with a project to build a cable car which would cross the Thames in East London. This is a short-term alternative apparently to building a road bridge which will take much longer and cost a lot more. Plans for a bridge are still being developed however.

The cable car will run from near the O2 Arena to the Royal Victoria Docks and be able to carry up to 2,500 passengers per hour. It may cost only £25 million and be ready by 2012 allegedly, which would be pretty miraculous if true. It would be privately funded if some sucker can be found who believes that such a scheme can be commercially viable.

For more details and to submit your comments to TfL on this subject, go to:

[www.tfl.gov.uk/corporate/projectsandschemes/15959.aspx](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/corporate/projectsandschemes/15959.aspx)

*(Editor's Comments: As you can tell from the tone of this article, I am pretty sceptical about the passenger traffic this will generate, particularly after the Olympics have closed. It may work if car parking was provided at each end so one could "park and fly" when aiming for the attractions near each terminus (the O2 and Excel venues).*

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## **Richmond Parking Charges**

The new Conservative administration in the London Borough of Richmond is proposing to scrap the emissions related parking charge scheme brought in by the previous LibDem council. This scheme resulted in owners of larger vehicles paying annual permit parking charges of as much as £300, while smaller vehicle owners paid nothing.

This was one of the high profile policies brought in by Serge Lourie the LibDem leader, who not only managed to lose control of the borough to the Tories but also lost his own seat on the council after many years. The ABD and your editor actively supported local residents in a campaign against these charges.

You can read the full story of how Serge Lourie and other LibDem councillors ignored the democratic protests of residents in our Newsletter No. 2 (like all past newsletters, this in on our web site – see [www.freedomfordrivers.org/Newsletters.htm](http://www.freedomfordrivers.org/Newsletters.htm) ).



The new council have indicated that they are not opposed to environmental policies, but this scheme simply did not have much impact on the vehicles residents chose to own. Indeed it seems that there are now

more cars in the highest polluting category in the borough than when the scheme started. New council leader Nicholas True (photo above) said “We need effective green policies that help not hurt. Richmond’s CPZ tax utterly failed that test”. He also suggested it was a regressive tax that hurt residents who lived in smaller houses that had to park on-road, while letting owners of large properties off scot-free.

*(Editor’s Comments: The CPZ tax was never likely to have a significant impact on emissions as was fully explained to councillors at the time, but which they chose to ignore. It is good that the new administration in Richmond has seen the sense in reversing these policies. It is a pity that TfL and the Mayor are still supporting such misconceived policies in their latest Air Quality and Transport Strategy document. However 8 other London boroughs have already implemented similar schemes. Let us hope that they take note of how disastrous a policy it can be electorally as it was undoubtedly one of the main reasons why the LibDems lost control of Richmond).*

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## Air Quality Strategy

The Mayor’s Air Quality Strategy for London, as covered in our last newsletter, has come under fire from a number of quarters. This is particularly so after the EU again threatened fines for breaches of its guidelines in London and other UK cities, although the Mayor says he expects to avoid fines based on the submissions he has made concerning future action.

The concern was compounded when the Mayor published a study of the health impact of PM2.5 (small particulate) concentrates on life expectancy. This showed that if most of the existing 15 micrograms per cubic metre for London could be removed, then we might save over 4,000 deaths in a year. These are deaths that are brought forward over the death rates that would otherwise apply.

This was translated by the local newspaper in Bromley to “Traffic pollution kills hundreds every year in the borough”, which is somewhat misleading. Other newspapers had similarly questionable headlines. Such particulates do not arise solely from road transport, and a lot of it blows in from outside London, so it is unlikely that most of it could be removed. The study also relies on estimates of the impact of particulates on life expectancy whose accuracy is none too certain. But it certainly makes it clear that particulates, which are mainly emitted by diesel vehicles, need tackling.

Peter Hendy of Transport for London has apparently told Boris Johnson that TfL cannot afford to implement some of the measures in the Air Quality Strategy document. With TfL budgets already under strain, it will require Government support to finance some aspects of the proposals. In any case, some parts of the plan require national Government action.

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## Scrapping Traffic Lights



Transport for London are proposing to scrap 145 traffic lights. Kulveer Ranger, the Mayor’s Transport Advisor said “There are few things more annoying than sitting at a traffic light on red for no

apparent reason.....By getting rid of them, we hope to smooth the traffic flow across London and deliver real improvements for all road users”.

You can see a list of the ones proposed to be removed by following the link from this BBC News report:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/10472683.stm>

Bear in mind however that there are over 5,000 traffic lights in London and the number has risen by over 1,000 in the last ten years. So removing 145 is a pretty feeble step to take.

An interesting study of the economic benefits, or disbenefits, of traffic lights was published by the GLA in 2009, and can be read here: [www.london.gov.uk/mayor/economic\\_unit/docs/traffic-signals.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/economic_unit/docs/traffic-signals.pdf) . It suggest than in many cases there would be major benefits by removing traffic lights, and not necessarily any road safety problems as a result. After all in “shared space” schemes they are often removed and those are known not to have any safety problems in general.

Many of the lights to be removed are on “pelican” pedestrian crossings which immediately raised objections from some groups. In addition over 1,000 signals have had their timings reviewed.

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## Kulveer Ranger and Cycling



For those not familiar with Kulveer Ranger who is quoted in the above article, there is a photo left. He was

profiled in a recent FT Magazine article and is apparently a keen cyclist. He said in the article that he and Boris Johnson are committed to delivering a cycle revolution in London. This is one reason why he is launching a cycle-hire scheme with 6,000 cycles at the end of July “*that will be the best in the world*” he said.

The new cycle hire scheme will provide bikes from 400 locations, 24 hours a day, and 365 days per year. The first half hour will be free, the charge will be £1 for between 30 minutes and one hour, £4 for up to 90 minutes, £6 for up to two hours, or £45 for an annual membership.

*(Editor’s Comments: to paraphrase Norman Tebbit, if the economy does not improve, and with the encouragement of Boris and Kulveer and the new cycle hire scheme, we will all be getting on our bikes soon).*

For those who are not ABD members, there was an interesting article in the latest OTR newsletter by John Ryle that showed how active exercise by cycling probably generates more CO2 per mile than driving the same distance. That’s after taking into account the food consumed to generate the required additional calories and such matters as the personal hygiene and clothes washing needs. But cycling does not of course generate much in the way of other emissions such as particulates.

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## Your Freedom



Want to scrap all speed cameras, speed limits, and make cannabis legal? There may now be a way. Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister, has launched a Government call for suggestions on which laws should be scrapped. The idea is to improve freedom by doing away with unnecessary laws or those that people think are pointless, excessive in impact, or simply wrong (or at least that seems to be the idea as the criteria is not totally clear). It may be LibDem populism, but it’s certainly worth looking at.

A new web site has been set up to enable you to record your own ideas, or rate others, at <http://yourfreedom.hmg.gov.uk/> . The photograph above of Mr Clegg was taken from the video on that web site where he explains what it’s about.

There are already thousands of suggestions, although some people seem to have got the wrong idea and are actually proposing new laws rather than scrapping old ones.

There is a whole section devoted to motoring which seems to be one of the most popular “tags”. The most popular among all submissions so far seems to be “Scrap the Digital Economy Act” but I suspect there is some active campaigning behind this.

Here’s some you may wish to support related to motoring and which are already quite popular (use the site search facility to find them):

**Speed Limits - Restore The 85th Percentile Rule.  
Remove Fixed Speed Cameras.  
Remove speed humps.**

How the Government is going to make sense of all this I do not know. But it’s certainly an example of democracy in action which one can only applaud.

Perhaps the most amusing comment on this was the cartoon in Private Eye. It showed Moses talking to the people after coming down from Mount Sinai with the tablets, and saying “*Now which commandments would you like me to scrap?*”.

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## Motorcycles in Bus Lanes



The Mayor has extended a trial of allowing motorcyclists to use bus lanes. The first trial showed that there was no apparent safety impact on pedal cyclists or pedestrians, but accidents to motorcyclists rose where they mostly collided with cars and other vehicles turning into or out of side roads.

One very amusing aspect of this was when Boris Johnson happened to cycle into a traffic jam caused by motorcyclists protesting about parking charges in Westminster.

He told them to stop protesting if they wanted to keep using bus lanes. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVA9pgCYwx0> for a video clip taken by the protestors (a photo from it is shown above). The video got widespread coverage on that evening’s local television news which can’t have done the campaign any harm. However the same protestors recently lost an application for a judicial review in the High Court on this issue (they claim the council raises 7 times more revenue from the charge that it expends to provide such parking). See this web site for more details: [www.notobikeparkingtax.com](http://www.notobikeparkingtax.com)

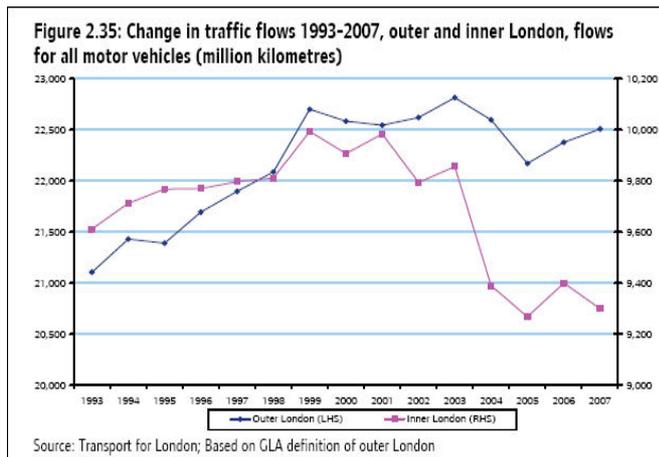
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## Road Tolls in Outer London

The Outer London Commission has produced a wide ranging report on the economic and planning issues facing outer London, including transport problems. Never heard of this group? Yes it’s one of those unelected quangos set up by the Mayor of London which I thought the Conservatives were keen to get rid of. The board hardly seems very representative of the views of Londoners and includes such people as Serge Lourie (formerly Richmond council leader and mentioned above). See [www.london.gov.uk/olc/](http://www.london.gov.uk/olc/) for more information and to read their full report.

Anyway it’s an interesting read if you want to learn how your local borough compares to others in London. For example your editor apparently lives in the least densely populated borough which is full of oldies, but I probably knew that already. Whereas, Greenwich has the worst pass level for GCSEs and the second worst rating for numbers of working age people on benefits (17.8%, second only to Barking and Dagenham on 20.4%), which is rather more surprising.

It contains some interesting data on travel modes and traffic volumes. For example the following chart shows traffic flows in Inner and Outer London up to 2007 (Inner London is the lower line which may have been affected to some extent by the Congestion Tax).



They accept that outer London will remain very dependent on the motor car, but suggest that growth in outer London will lead to more congestion unless public transport capacity and “connectivity” is improved. They also as a result suggest that “demand management” or “road user charging” needs to be considered and would like to impose tolls on Heathrow airport to discourage car traffic.

**Boris Rules Tolls Out**

However soon after publication of the provisional report, Mayor Johnson ruled out suburban road tolls in a response to Questions from the London Assembly. He agreed that road user charging would be “a retrograde step” and would “not be the way to go”.

But Boris was no doubt pleased to see that the report supports his enthusiasm for cycling.

**Parking Policies More Liberal**

They had something to say on parking policies also where they suggested that a common approach to inner and outer London was inappropriate. For example, they believe that relaxation of parking restrictions on town centre developments in outer London would be beneficial, particularly for office developments. There is currently a perverse incentive for offices to be located outside London (e.g. outside the M25) because of much more generous parking provision. Existing policies have taken jobs from outer London with the result that office workers who live in outer London now have to commute into central London to obtain work – this does not improve their “quality of life”.

**Greenwich Town Centre**



As indicated in a previous newsletter, Greenwich Council is planning a scheme to pedestrianise Greenwich Town Centre. The scheme might also improve traffic flows, and hence reduce congestion and air pollution which is a major problem in this area. They did some consultation on various options six months ago, and are now consulting on the final proposals. The roads to be closed would be College Approach and King William Walk (see photo of the latter above, where multiple buses halted at the bus stop often cause congestion). Nelson Road would be made two-way with a giant circulatory system introduced around Greenwich High Road, Norman Road and Creek Road. See map below for the new arrangement.



The cost of the first phase of the scheme, which is the introduction of the new traffic arrangements, is about £3.5 million and it is hoped to get it introduced before the end of 2011. Funding from Transport for London has apparently already been obtained for this. The enhancement of the pedestrianised roads and improvements to Cutty Sark Gardens to improve the amenities and visual appearance might take longer and cost another million or more.



According to a council spokesman, “under normal conditions, traffic flows will be improved”. At present, long delays tend to occur on Creek Road where it meets Greenwich Church Street (see photo above) and on Nelson Road, particularly during rush hours. The council has done traffic simulations using computerised models and they say that the new arrangements “are expected to operate satisfactorily without excessive congestion or long delays”. That does not mean that there will not be problems during rush hours or if the Blackwall Tunnel is closed! They even had visual displays of traffic flows at the exhibition they ran for this scheme.

Bus routes are obviously having to be considerably changed, and there still remains a problem with the 199 route for which a solution is still being worked on.

*(Editor’s comments: This looks to be a good scheme, even though it is expensive. It may enhance the attractiveness of the town centre, and should not apparently make traffic congestion any worse – it might even improve it. The only slight concern is the use of contraflow cycle lanes on some of the roads. In general I am favour of this proposal).*

For more information go to the council web site at:  
[www.greenwich.gov.uk/Greenwich/YourCouncil/HaveYourSay/GreenwichTownCentre.htm](http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/Greenwich/YourCouncil/HaveYourSay/GreenwichTownCentre.htm)  
(but the consultation ends on 15<sup>th</sup> July).

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## Councils Duty to Road Users

An interesting legal case was reported recently in the press. Dalston resident Pervin Yetkin sued Newham council after being hit by a taxi while crossing a road in Stratford in 2004. She claimed her view of the road was obstructed by shrubs in the central reservation and hence the council was liable even though she ignored a red traffic light. The Court of Appeal upheld this claim despite her own negligence, and said the council had failed in its duty of care by not trimming the hedges. Some people now fear that councils will be chopping down trees as a result. *(Editor: This is interesting on two grounds. There was a fatal accident not many years ago in Bromley where a tree is located on the corner on a bend with an adverse camber and right next to the kerb. The young driver was blamed for running into the tree of course, and the tree was left in place. An analogous problem is when councils install speed humps without any recognition of the potential dangers they cause, of which I have lots of examples. They may no longer find they can reject claims as a result because one of the judges said “the highway authority owed a duty of care to all road users, whether careful or negligent” – the usual excuse from councils is that anyone who drives faster than is shown to be safe over a speed hump only has themselves to blame).*

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## London Accident Statistics



The road traffic accident statistics for 2009 in London were recently published (see <http://londonroadsafety.tfl.gov.uk/> - look under “Data & Research” for the details).

Fatal accidents were down 10% over the prior year and serious accidents down 8%, but the overall total of reported casualties was only down 0.6%.

This either reflects a concentration of efforts on “KSIs” or possibly even worse under-reporting of minor accidents which is known to be a problem. Reported accidents (as opposed to casualties) actually rose 0.5% overall.

KSI cyclist casualties fell by 3%, but overall casualties rose by 17% which probably simply reflects the increased popularity of cycling. This had some impact on the overall accident figures as well, and will likely have an increasing influence as cycling is encouraged more widely.

Powered two-wheeler casualties were also up overall by 6.6% but fatal accidents were down 22% and made a big contribution to the overall fall in fatalities. Just how dangerous motorbikes and cycles are in comparison with cars though is shown by the fact that there were 39 motorbike fatalities, 13 pedal cyclists and 41 car occupants when the number of trips by the last mode is much, much greater.

There was a lot of variation between boroughs in terms of performance, but it is not clear why.

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## Parking Charges in London



London Councils (the body that represents the London Boroughs), in conjunction with TfL, are undertaking a consultation on “additional parking charges”, ie. parking penalty charges, bus lane infringements and other moving traffic offences. It does not necessarily mean that there will be increases. For more details or to respond go to:

[www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/Transport/Transportpolicy/APCConsultation.htm](http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/Transport/Transportpolicy/APCConsultation.htm)

The ABD will be submitting a response on this matter (which will probably emphasise that these charges are generally too high anyway), but if you have any specific comments you would like to have included then please advise us.

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## Congestion Charge Consultation Deadline Near

For those who have not yet responded to the Congestion Charge consultation mentioned in the letter below, the deadline is August 2<sup>nd</sup> so there is no time to spare. You can do so on-line using this link: <http://tinyurl.com/398hjk8> and here are some suggestions for how to respond from ABD member Peter Morgan:

**GOOD** One major change proposed is the Removal of Western Extension.

**BAD** Another is to increase the daily charge from £8 to £10.

**GOOD** The option to register in advance and be charged the daily fee automatically would be extended to all - the Auto Pay system.

**BAD** However the daily charge by this method would be increased from £7 to £9.

**BAD** The discount for paying monthly or annually in advance would be removed.

**POOR** Everyone entitled to a discount, including residents and those using Auto Pay, would have to pay a £10 annual fee, ie some pay 2 fees.

**BAD** The entire scheme is a local tax on travel, and we should resist it whenever we can.

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## Letters to the Editor

Here’s an interesting letter from R. Batchelar commenting on the ABD submission on the Congestion Charge changes:

*“An excellent submission. Minor comments only are:*

*My preference would have been not to say that the Congestion Charge should be called a Congestion Tax. That, I feel, concedes ground unnecessarily to the mendacious Livingstonian anti-car agenda guiding TfL's every action. I believe that the tax is actually motivated by a desire to reduce car use, not to tackle congestion.*

The wealth of congestion-causing measures introduced by Livingstone at the same time show this demonstratively (capacity-halving bus lanes, chicanes and other obstructive architecture in roads, road closures, multiple restrictions on turning opportunities etc). I would say that the Congestion Charge should be called something like a Central Area Road Use Tax. That is what is actually is.

Congestion is an imbalance between supply of road space and demand for road space. The entire focus of the public debate tends to be on demand (the number of vehicles) when it should really be on the many artificial supply restrictions that have been incrementally imposed over many years. One can reduce congestion either by deterring demand (the Livingstone method) or by improving supply (in particular, by reversing Livingstone's 8-year vandalism of our road infrastructure network).

Livingstone was canny enough to see that he could do a balancing act between demand and supply. On the one hand, the imposition of a whacking charge (some of us thought even £5 was extortionate, Roger!) would deter some drivers. TfL avoided publishing specific predictions before go-live date of what percentage reduction would ensue, and it has always been unclear as to the quality of the demand elasticity research that TfL conducted before Feb 2003. Ken could then go ahead with measures that increased congestion, so long as the increase was less than the drop caused by fiscal deterrence. I am consistently amazed by the lack of public comment and debate on this aspect of the balancing act, which has been absolutely central to Ken's strategy for culling the car. KL has been allowed to get away with massive vandalism of the network; the serious snarl-ups they would otherwise have caused have been masked in severity by the deterrent fiscal measure. I feel that if anybody should be hammering this point home, it is the drivers' representative organisations.

Montague Place (London Univ / B. Museum) closed to westbound traffic, forcing vehicles north to the busy Marylebone Rd or Howland St routes or south to jammed up Soho. (Westbound traffic in central London in general is a total pain, and as an issue merits a specific campaign in its own right).

Numerous poorly consulted, hastily imposed road closures and barrier blockages around Finsbury (eg Myddleton St, which was a useful route for getting to Rosebery Avenue from the A1).

Numerous closures around Kings Cross, totally unreasonable. No northbound traffic for many years up Midland Rd. No southbound continuation from Camley St or 90 degree turns from Goodsway. Right turns from Goodsway eastbound into York Way barred, and U-turns barred after a left turn for 130m, enforced by money making cameras.

I feel we should be noisily opposing these money-grasping distortions of what should be solely traffic management objectives. There is no sound traffic management objective to any of these measures, just traffic denial and inconveniencing, more delays and congestion, more stacked up queues and traffic fumes. Why is it that Camden and Islington have been allowed to get away with these TfL-backed measures with no debate?

Right turns into Brick Lane (Osborn St) barred from A11 Whitechapel Rd, enthusiastically enforced by TfL (not Tower Hamlets). How people are meant to turn in to the southern reaches of Brick Lane is anyone's guess. Hyperspace button? It's just a cash register.

TfL was sufficiently scared of day one of the Charge being pandemonium that it chose the school holiday week for the first day so as to maximise its ability to claim a hefty reduction in road use.

I feel we ought to be making a point that flows from all of the temporary traffic reduction (10 to 20%?) having been exhausted, and journey times being back to pre 2003 levels. Car factories have been closing, and the Labour Government actually panicked at one point into subsidising car replacement purchases to stimulate demand! Councils keenly sharing the Livingstone anti-car agenda, such as Waltham Forest, openly admit that the number of vehicles on the roads has stayed essentially constant.

In other words, to get to a net level effect, the malign architectural measures introduced by TfL under Ken have caused some 10-20% increase in congestion. Why is no-one saying this? We could cut congestion by 20% just by reversing Ken's damage and we wouldn't even have to install an expensive spy camera network and charge drivers for journeys in order to do it. Something for nothing!

On page 3 you say "In reality congestion is self-regulating so any temporary reduction in traffic by imposing taxes on vehicles is soon offset as less congestion generates more traffic because there is enormous unsatisfied demand for road space."

*I feel this is a really good point that deserves repeating on many occasions.*

*We should definitely oppose any increase in the charge to £10 when it was originally sold to the public on the basis that it would be only £5.*

*Was it? I only saw public announcements of this high £5 price once Ken was in and the Charge was a done deal. Were people aware of this charge level during the 2000 election? I think not.*

*As regards 'Auto Pay', I don't support this (as a lesser evil). A fairer system would be that instead of sending people penalty notices, TfL should send people an invoice pointing out that a charge has arisen, and they should then pay the charge plus the cost of an auto generated letter - let's say 50p, or a generous £1 admin charge. Only if they then fail to pay within, say, 7 days should a penalty arise. I certainly don't want the likes of TfL getting any of my money on an automated basis."*

Feel the urge to respond to the above? Send your letters to [roger.lawson@btclick.com](mailto:roger.lawson@btclick.com)

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## News Snapshots

Sundry news in the last few weeks that is worth a mention is as follows:

+ Elaine Downes, a driver in Bromley, had her car clamped by a private clamping firm and was forced to pay £350 after over-staying by ten minutes. She kicked up such a fuss about it that it got onto the front page of a local newspaper. *(Editor: I would like to see all such clamping made illegal as it is in Scotland. It's simply extortion to impose excessive charges by detaining your property).*

+ Merton Council is back peddling on promises made by the Labour party during the recent elections to cut expenditure, including slashing parking charges. It now turns out that with the expected reductions in central Government funding, they are having to rethink their budgets. Conservatives accused them of making promises they knew were unrealistic to win the election.

+ As regards the proposed changes to the Congestion Charge system which includes a new "Autopay" option, it is worth noting a report in

Private Eye on how this system does not work for business users at present. Under the title "IBM – It's a Bloody Menace" they said that many fines had been issued to businesses who registered their vehicles because the registration had been mistakenly deleted, or had been charged twice for the same vehicle. TfL suggested these were "teething problems" after IBM took over the Congestion Charge contract.

## About The Association of British Drivers (ABD)

The ABD is the leading independent organisation which represents the interests of private motorists in the United Kingdom. We campaign to protect the rights of individual road users and believe that road transport is a beneficial and essential element in the UK transport infrastructure. We oppose excessive taxation of motorists and are against tolls and road usage charging. We also campaign for more enlightened road safety policies. The Association is a "not for profit" voluntary organisation which is financially supported primarily by its individual members. More information on the ABD is available from our web site at [www.abd.org.uk](http://www.abd.org.uk)

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## Contact Information

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Note that the ABD maintains a list of members who are familiar with individual London boroughs and may be able to help with information on local issues in those boroughs. The current list is below. If any members would like to keep an eye on local news and advise on local transport issues then please let me know. Roger Lawson

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