

## In This Issue

- **Perverting Justice**
- **Thames Valley Speed Cameras**
- **East London River Crossings**
- **Defeat in Barnet**
- **Victory in Westminster**
- **Local Consultations**
- **Johnson versus Livingstone Again**
- **Speed Camera Count**
- **News Snapshots**
- **A.B.D. Information and Contacts**

## Editorial

*This edition contains more on the pernicious abuse of police power and the corruption inherent in the diversion of fees paid for speed camera courses. This is of course not the only case of police corruption being reported lately – the example of payments to the police for news stories is one which has been openly admitted but little apparent action taken on it so far.*

*But a very interesting article in this edition is the best real evidence to date that speed cameras have an insignificant effect on accident rates. This is one of the few independent studies that appears to have properly controlled for the extraneous factors that might affect the rate of collisions. Most of the alleged benefits from speed cameras have arisen simply because injuries have generally been falling – mostly from better vehicle design, improved in-car safety, and road engineering. Increased under-reporting of accidents by the police is also probably a factor.*

*But unfortunately politicians like the simplistic solutions, egged on by misinformed “experts” who have typically irrelevant backgrounds or prejudiced views.*

Roger Lawson, Editor

## Perverting Justice



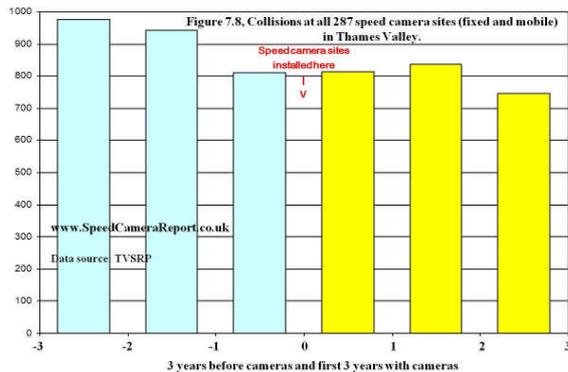
The practice of using money paid by drivers to attend “education courses” is spreading across the country. In effect drivers who opt to take a speed awareness course rather than accept the penalty points or challenge the matter in court are paying to fund the installation and operation of speed cameras.

The latest evidence of this corrupt practice is in the West Midlands where it has been reported that the police obtained £650,000 in income from this source from 18,000 motorists – that’s an average of £36 per driver, obviously much more than could be required for any “administration costs”.

These figures are similar to those in the Thames Valley that we have reported on in previous editions of this newsletter. The next article shows exactly how effective this has been in reduced accidents. In reality not effective at all!

*(Editor: I am of course not opposed to the police using their discretion on minor offences, but this system is in essence wrong. Anyone who has been affected by this arrangement might care to contact me for some advice, and you should also complain to your Member of Parliament).*

## Thames Valley Speed Cameras



The debate on the effectiveness of speed cameras continues. One interesting report recently was from engineer Dave Finney who looked at the actual accident statistics for the Thames Valley area (Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire as covered by the Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership, i.e. the speed camera operators).

What does his analysis reveal? Namely that:

- Speed cameras have not made any impact in preventing road traffic collisions.
- There was no reduction in the number of collisions at fixed (Gatso) camera sites after they were installed and there was no reduction in the number of collisions at mobile camera sites after they started operating.
- Even after compensating for other influences such as rising traffic volumes and safer vehicle design, the cameras are still not demonstrated to have resulted in any reduction in collision rates. In fact, collision rates increased at mobile speed camera sites following deployment relative to all roads in the Thames Valley area.
- There was found to be no relationship between vehicle speeds and the number of collisions. Reductions in speeds at camera sites (both average and above the speed limit) did not result in any reduction in the number of collisions.

Note that the author refers to “collisions” but these are of course accidents involving injury or death as only those get reported to the police – it is their statistics that are used in the analysis.

His full report can be found here:  
<http://speedcamerareport.co.uk/index.html>  
(under the Thames Valley Cameras tab).

Note that Mr Finney has no connection with the ABD or apparently with other pro-motorist groups and no apparent reason to feel disgruntled about the use of speed cameras. But of course he was immediately criticised for being prejudiced, ignoring past reports (such as the RAC Foundation’s one which your editor effectively demolished – see our web site), and for not understanding that “speed kills”. Anyway read the report for yourself (unlike many of the critics) and see if you can see any defects in the approach or the conclusions.

Above is one chart from the report which shows that there is really no impact on the general trend in accident reduction after the introduction of speed cameras – indeed the opposite is true.

*(Editor’s Comments: My view is that speed cameras might have a minor impact on the speed of traffic at a site, but the likely impact on accidents is negligible. There is simply no proof which stands up to scientific scrutiny that they do and this latest report backs up that conclusion. We need the same analysis done nationwide, which the Government should have progressed long ago. They introduced speed cameras without proper evidence of their effectiveness – indeed even before the poorly designed trials they did do were even concluded. All that has happened subsequently is that it has turned into a major industry for speed camera operators and suppliers - generating £100 million a year in fines - for no benefit whatsoever to the public).*

---

## East London River Crossings



Following scrapping of plans for a Thames Gateway Bridge (artist's impression above), some new ideas have just been announced by Boris Johnson.

The Thames Gateway Bridge (TGB) was designed to meet the growing needs for transport between north and south London in the East of the capital. It had been planned for many years - indeed it was talked about over 30 years ago when the Thamesmead development was first built with link roads put in place.

We now have a situation where the Dartford Crossing is overloaded, the Blackwall Tunnel also has long delays in rush hours (not helped by the recent stoppage of the "contra-flow" system) and Woolwich ferries that continually break down from their age. The only other crossings are the Rotherhithe Tunnel which is very narrow and totally archaic, and the prospective "Emirates Cable Car" - which is now running late and may not be ready in time for the Olympics as originally planned.

The latest proposals are for a new tunnel at Silvertown - quite near the existing Blackwall Tunnel but which would not have such a low height restriction. In addition there would be a new ferry at Gallions Reach which would link to the Thamesmead road network (i.e. it is much further to the East). It is suggested this ferry would replace the Woolwich Ferry but the ABD thinks it would be best to keep the latter as it provides a much better link to the South Circular.

Anyway you can put in your own comments, or learn more about these proposals, by going to this web site: [www.tfl.gov.uk/rivercrossings](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/rivercrossings) .

Please ensure you put in your views and support the new crossings. The sooner London gets these new tunnels and ferries, the better. But there is no mention where the funding might come from as yet.

---

## Defeat in Barnet



In a decision by a judge in the High Court, an application for a judicial review of parking policy by residents of Barnet has again been rejected for the second time.

This was quite surprising. The case turned on a very narrow question: whether a Council can set resident's parking charges to raise revenue for things that have nothing to do with resident's parking (paying for travel passes for the elderly and fixing potholes in the case of Barnet).

The applicant (solicitor David Attfield on behalf of Barnet residents) relied on two High Court cases where judgements suggested that parking charges need to address a parking related need (for example, the cost of running a CPZ and the need in some areas to dampen demand might be lawful reasons to increase charges, but that they could not be used as a general revenue raising measure - the judgements were based on the original enabling Acts).

Mr Attfield is currently considering whether to take up a further appeal to the Appeal Court on this matter. See <http://barnetcpz.blogspot.com/> for more information.

*(Editor's Comment: I have urged Mr Attfield to pursue an appeal and raise the necessary funds to do so. This judgement sets a very dangerous precedent which must be overturned if possible. It is very odd that the application was rejected when the one in Westminster - see next article - was accepted).*

---

## Victory in Westminster



Despite the above disappointment, there was a resounding victory in the London Borough of Westminster where another judicial review was in process on parking proposals. Westminster's plans to impose evening and Sunday parking charges proved to be very controversial with active opposition from local traders and churches.

After the opposition won the right to a judicial review, which would have taken place in a few months time, the council suspended its plans. Subsequently Council Leader Colin Barrow, who was the main advocate of this scheme, resigned. The council then promptly announced it was dropping the whole scheme. Mr Barrow suggested he had resigned so as "to devote more time to other areas" of his life.

There is more background on this matter in our previous newsletters if you wish to learn more, but it is a good example of how public pressure can result in a swift "about-face".

---

## Local Consultations

There has been more than one recent demonstration of the opposition of local boroughs in London to fair consultation on traffic matters. Here are some examples:

### **Lewisham**

Lewisham has a reputation for generally having an undemocratic approach to traffic matters. They have a directly elected Mayor (Labour party representative) with effective sole executive authority, and he delegates all detail decisions to council staff. So any traffic schemes are barely considered by elected politicians. Indeed if it was not for the legal necessity to consult on some schemes – such as traffic calming and speed hump schemes – it is unlikely there would be any public review at all.

Of course even if you do submit a response, it is likely to be ignored as council staff always think they know best, but the council have now gone one step further by actually rejecting consultation submissions!

Your editor recently submitted responses on behalf of the ABD to consultations on speed hump proposals in Avington Road and Taylors Lane. The response back from John Bishop, Senior Engineer in the Transport and Engineering Department, was that "the bulk of the 'evidence' referred to, in support of your objection, appears to be documentation for which you are the author. In our view such 'evidence' represents an expression of personal opinion which cannot be accepted as an objection to a specific proposal on the Public Highway".

My response in a formal complaint to the council was that "Mr Taylor's attitude was quite astonishing and totally undemocratic". In addition I said that "Since when has "opinion" not been a valid objection to a public consultation? On that basis almost every submission to public consultations would be thrown out.

*In any case, the document (of which I attach a copy) does not just refer to evidence from me, although I collated much of it, but also refers to substantial evidence published by third parties – the internet links simply need to be followed through to see the complete story.*

*So on both grounds, the reason for rejection of our submission is not acceptable and I therefore insist that the council accepts the consultation response. As you are no doubt aware, the law courts have consistently stepped in and supported legal challenges to biased consultations and I would hope that the council is not going to persist in rejecting our submissions on spurious grounds."*

Mr Bishop also rejected one of the submissions on the pedantic grounds that I referred to road humps when they were actually tables or cushions.

I await a response from Lewisham Council to my complaint to their Chief Executive on this matter.

## **Lambeth**

There has been a long dialogue with Lambeth Council after I submitted a response to a proposed speed hump scheme in the West Norwood Area. I pointed out that the consultation material circulated to local residents was grossly misleading, was misinterpreting TRL Report 323 on the causes of road accidents, contained a reference to “cycle-friendly” speed humps which is just nonsensical, that there was of course no mention of all the negative aspects of speed humps, plus the response form was designed to get a specific answer.

Ultimately they seemed to rely on the submission to the GLA Scrutiny of speed humps from the London Health Observatory, an unqualified body whose note is a complete compendium of biased and misleading information.

My final comments to them were: *“In summary, like all advocates of humps, you are ignorant of the evidence, and even when provided with it, don’t wish to change your mind”*.

## **Newham**

There has been a lengthy correspondence with the London Borough of Newham after your editor gave a rather spirited response to a proposed extension of a Controlled Parking Zone (“CPZ”) on an “experimental basis”. I pointed out that bearing in mind the cost of extending a CPZ (new signage, etc, required), it would be very unlikely to be removed once installed. So in effect the consultation was grossly misleading. It later transpired that the reasons given for installation were to *“improve pollution, access and road safety”*. How would a CPZ improve road safety? Or pollution? Anyway before I had even pointed that out to them they said that they were removing the ABD as statutory consultees because *“we feel that your organisation is not suitable”*. In other words, complain too much and you get removed as a consultee! That is currently being challenged as it is legally wrong to remove any body that obviously represents road users under some parts of the regulations (for example in relation to speed hump schemes).

*(Editors Comments: What is the factor common to these three boroughs? They are all Labour controlled. In my experience, Labour controlled boroughs in all parts of the UK have a particularly poor reputation for open and fair public consultation. They seem to take the attitude that they know best what is good for you, and the staff they employ follow that lead. Indeed this is very much the attitude of Ken Livingstone (Labour party also of course) who tended to do rigged public consultations when he was Mayor of London, and when he did not get the response he liked, just ignored the results – for example on the £25 surcharge for large vehicles. What did he say about the consultation on the Western Extension of the Congestion Charge – “It’s a complete charade. I think I should make the decisions for London...A consultation is not a referendum”. See the separate article below on Mr Livingstone’s latest bid to regain power).*

---

## **Johnson versus Livingstone Again**

Yes it’s going to be a rerun of the battle to become Mayor of London in May between Boris Johnson and Ken Livingstone. Can Livingstone make a come-back and beat the person who took the job from him? Well currently it seems they are neck and neck in the opinion polls, so this is undoubtedly an issue we should examine, at least so far as transport policies are concerned.

Actually determining what their respective manifestos are for this election at this point in time is not easy from looking at their respective campaign web sites – which tend to consist of sound bites and video clips. Of course both are puffing their past track records, but here is what they are mainly talking about:



Ken Livingstone is attacking the cuts in police numbers in London of late, and the increases in public transport fares (which he complains are above inflation, but so they were in his regime so as to pay for the upgrade of tube lines and major projects like Crossrail). It is certainly the case that rises in transport fares are a big problem for many commuters and London residents in general, so Ken proposes to cut them by 7%.

His critics claim this is simply unaffordable. Ken's response? He said: "*In a budget of £8bn if you can't find the money to have a 7% fares cut, you are breathtakingly incompetent*".

Ken also seems to be thinking of reviving the £25 congestion charge proposal for some vehicles. He said in a Guardian interview that this is "*definitely an idea we will revisit*", despite the fact that this contributed to his defeat last time around.



Boris Johnson relies more on his recent record but he is promising a small reduction in the Mayor's Precept

which will help to control rises in local borough taxes. Mr Johnson's web site actually proclaims "police numbers up" so don't ask me to reconcile that with what Livingstone is saying.

The proposals for East London river crossings covered elsewhere in this edition might also be seen as being aimed at winning electoral support. Indeed he seems to be focussing on more local issues to gain popular support than wider plans, perhaps because a lot of what he plans to do in the next few years have already been well defined in past Mayoral strategy documents.

### **Editor's Comments - The Fare Cost Debate**

Can, or should, either candidate choose to reduce public transport fares? In my view they cannot and should not. While Mr Livingstone was in power, the subsidies to taxpayers (that's you and me) for public transport grew by leaps and bounds – ultimately to a totally unsustainable level. In addition, he relied on central Government funding to a large extent which is now being cut back (as most people are no doubt aware, our national Government is reducing expenditure, just like the rest of us – this is a consequence of excessive borrowing that now needs to be repaid and an insipid economy with high unemployment, which makes tax collection difficult).

Boris Johnson has only partially rectified this dubious financial arrangement – fares are still massively subsidised but less so.

In addition, he has major capital expenditure to pay for which was committed to by his predecessor as mentioned above. So fares must continue to rise faster than inflation for some years.

Ultimately we have public transport fares in London that are perceived to be high due to past profligacy, inefficient management, the unrealistic expectations of transport users and too many "non-payers" with concessionary or free fares which the paying users have to subsidise.

For Mr Livingstone to find his 7% reduction would in my view only be practical if he borrows more money, raises taxes somehow (which you will pay for anyway), or cuts some transport projects. I question the practicality of any of those options. So his 7% offer looks like a typical promise of a politician hoping to win the popular vote – but something that may not be easy to deliver in reality.

---

### **Speed Camera Count in London**



The latest speed camera count in London is 780 cameras - unchanged from our last report in December.

See [www.lscp.org.uk/cameralocations.html](http://www.lscp.org.uk/cameralocations.html) for the details.

We will continue to report these numbers in each newsletter.

---

### **News Snapshots**

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

+ Residents of West London will be well aware that the Hammersmith Flyover was closed totally between the 23<sup>rd</sup> December and the 13<sup>th</sup> January following the discovery of structural defects. It has now partially re-opened but it might take 4 months for a full repair.

+ Traffic lights have been removed at 20 sites in London so far. A further seven will be definitely removed and 52 are still under investigation with a further 24 being also subject to review, according to Transport Commissioner Peter Hendy.

+ Parking warden Hakim Berkani won his claim for unfair dismissal by Kensington & Chelsea parking operator, NSL. He claimed he was fired for being too polite and not issuing enough tickets to meet targets laid down by the firm. One specific claim by his bosses was that he “*informed the owner of a car that a PCN was being issued with apparent disregard for the safety and wellbeing of the issuing enforcement officer*”. They considered that gross misconduct.

+ Justice Minister Ken Clarke wants to raise fixed penalty fines from £60 to £100 (for example for speeding) so as to finance “victim support” schemes.

### **Registering to Receive This Newsletter**

This newsletter is free of charge and is sent approximately bi-monthly to anyone who cares to request a copy. It is sent via email (as a link to a web page from which you can download it). To register for a free copy simply go to this web page: [www.freedomfordrivers.org/Newsletters.htm](http://www.freedomfordrivers.org/Newsletters.htm) and fill out the box to be added to our mailing list.

### **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)

### **Contact Information**

This Newsletter is published by the London Region of the Association of British Drivers (A.B.D.), PO Box 62, Chislehurst, Kent, BR7 5YB and is distributed free of charge to ABD Members in the London area and to those Members of BBRAG who formerly received the Bromley Borough Roads Action Group newsletter. All material contained herein is Copyright of the A.B.D. or of the authors and may only be reproduced with permission. Any opinions expressed herein are solely those of the author of the article or that of the Editor which do not necessarily represent the official policies of the A.B.D.

A.B.D. London Region Co-ordinator and Editor: Roger Lawson (Tel: 020-8467-2686, Email: [roger.lawson@abd.org.uk](mailto:roger.lawson@abd.org.uk) ). Contact the above for information on the aims and objectives of the A.B.D. or for membership information (membership costs £25.00 per annum if paid by cheque, debit or credit card; or £20.00 if paid by standing order (however there is an additional charge of £5 if you wish to receive the ABD national newsletter on paper rather than electronically). The A.B.D. would be happy to advise or assist anyone who is concerned about any traffic, transport or road safety issues in London. Complimentary subscriptions to this newsletter are available on request to elected politicians or those with a professional interest in transport matters.

Our internet web address is: [www.freedomfordrivers.org](http://www.freedomfordrivers.org) (or [www.abd.org.uk](http://www.abd.org.uk) for the national ABD web site). This newsletter is supplied in electronic form which can be displayed and printed via the free Adobe Acrobat reader. The Adobe Acrobat reader can be downloaded from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat> . All past copies of our newsletters can be obtained from the [www.freedomfordrivers.org](http://www.freedomfordrivers.org) web site.

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 other members would like to keep an eye on local news and advise on local transport issues then please let me know. Roger Lawson

<b>Contact person</b>	<b>Borough</b>	<b>Email</b>
Les Alden	Southwark	<a href="mailto:LHA@looksouth.net">LHA@looksouth.net</a>
Paul Hemsley	Ealing	<a href="mailto:ph@hemsleyassociates.com">ph@hemsleyassociates.com</a>
Hillier Simmons	Hounslow	<a href="mailto:hilliersimmons@compuserve.com">hilliersimmons@compuserve.com</a>
Brian Mooney	Hammersmith & Fulham	<a href="mailto:fairdeal@abd.org.uk">fairdeal@abd.org.uk</a>
Roger Lawson	Bromley, Barking & Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Greenwich, Hackney, Haringey, Havering, Islington, Lewisham, City of London, Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest	<a href="mailto:roger.lawson@abd.org.uk">roger.lawson@abd.org.uk</a>
Peter Morgan	Croydon, Camden, Enfield, Harrow, Hillingdon, Kensington & Chelsea, Kingston, Lambeth, Merton, Richmond, Sutton, Wandsworth, Westminster	<a href="mailto:southlondon@abd.org.uk">southlondon@abd.org.uk</a>