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## Editorial

*The main article in this edition is on the fight to become the next Mayor of London where we have profiled the main candidates' standpoints on the key issues, particularly those on transport in London which this publication attempts to cover.*

*This edition also has the common topics we tackle: shared space schemes, speed humps, parking issues (one of the minor items of debate in the Mayoral election), taxis and pollution from buses. Incidentally I attended a presentation recently by a company that fits equipment into buses and discovered that the UK has more buses than most other countries – for example more than the whole of the USA if you exclude their “yellow school buses”, and more than every other country in Europe except Turkey. You might ask why that is so – simply because they are so heavily subsidised.*

*The costs of these subsidies in London are enormous but it is not an election issue. They were increased massively by Ken Livingstone when he was in power and like all hand-outs to the public, once there are difficult to get rid of. So regrettably this is not in Boris's manifesto.*

Roger Lawson, Editor

## Boris versus Ken Debate Continues



Residents of London can hardly have missed the big political debates taking place in the run up to the London Mayoral elections on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May. The three previous main party candidates of Boris Johnson (Conservative), Ken Livingstone (Labour) and Brian Paddick (LibDems) are all standing again. Boris of course won the last contest, but it's certainly not a foregone conclusion this time with Boris only slightly ahead in the opinion polls, so don't forget to go and vote. But it's clearly a Boris versus Ken contest primarily as no other candidates have much chance of winning (photos above).

There are four other candidates representing these parties: BNP, Fresh Choice (aka UKIP – see next page) and the Green Party in alphabetic order and one independent (Siobhan Benita).

When you do vote you will not only find a confusing ballot paper for the Mayor's election where you can also give a second choice vote (which is taken into account if your first one gets little support), but two other voting forms for London Assembly Members. The latter is to elect a local constituency Member and London-wide Members based on parties which gives the minority parties some representation if they get enough votes.

These are important because the London Assembly has some power over budget approval and the Green party has in the past managed to have significant influence by gaining seats in those elections even without winning any actual constituency.

So pick your candidates carefully (tactical voting is encouraged by these arrangements of course).

### **Public Transport Fares the Main Issue**

Although the topics of crime, housing and council taxes feature as usual in many of the manifestos, the hot topic this time around is public transport.

Ken has promised to cut fares by 7% this year (I presume he means bus and tube fares but his manifesto is not clear on this point). He will also freeze fares for 2013. Boris simply says this is unaffordable, and none of the other candidates seem to agree with Ken on this.

Ken claims there are surpluses in the TfL budget that would enable him to do it, but others claim no such surpluses exist because the money is already committed to other things. At least that's a simple summary of the arguments which are quite complex when examined in detail.

Boris has of course claimed that his regime has saved enormous waste in City Hall and hence has been able to freeze the Mayor's "precept" in our council taxes. He suggests that if Ken is allowed to get away with his populist stance on fares, it will be back to the same old regime as when he was last in power – when council taxes went up every year.

### **Other Transport Issues**

Boris favours a "Boris Island" in the Thames Estuary rather than expanding Heathrow, while Ken pans that idea on environmental grounds and supports expansion at Heathrow so as to protect jobs in that airport. He suggests an airport in the East would cause "total collapse of the west London economy". (Editor: this seems to be a "fear, uncertainty and doubt" ploy to get some votes from those living in West London as it is surely unlikely that Heathrow would be decommissioned and the timescale to build a new airport is very lengthy). Ken has also made it clear that he will reinstate the proposal for a higher congestion charge for larger vehicles, which is one reason why he lost the previous election.

### **UKIP**

Just to confuse everyone, the UKIP candidate Lawrence Webb is listed under the "Fresh Choice for London" party banner on the ballot paper. How silly is that!

### **Green Platform**

Jenny Jones is standing for the Green Party this year (editor: none of the main candidates are exactly beautiful but this is a particular handicap for the Green's. Not that I would wish this to be a "beauty contest" but it might be a disservice to her to include a photo of Ms Jones). Her pitch is that she "will ensure public transport is always cheaper than driving". She seems to be a bit more realistic than Ken on reducing fares so I think this means she will make sure that driving is made more costly to ensure it's more expensive than using public transport. So for example she supports a wider congestion charge scheme. But the main "green" element of her platform is that she will "give everyone access to nature" and "plant more street trees" – one surely cannot argue with those. Like most of the candidate's declared "election statements" that have been distributed to all Londoners, it is full of worthy phrases but little details of the cost implications of what is being advocated.

### **Tax Returns**

A hot topic between the two main candidates was the subject of how much they have earned in the past and how they pay their taxes on income. This degenerated at one point into Boris calling Ken a ".....liar" on LBC radio. The allegation originally against Ken was that he had used a "personal service" company to reduce the tax he paid as against being paid as an employee or individual. Ken suggested Boris had done the same which he denied. The candidates have now promised to disclose their tax affairs, (Editor: if you examine the details of this matter, it certainly looks to me as though Boris is a lot whiter than Ken. There seem to be questionable, even if legal, reasons for Ken using a personal service company to avoid paying tax on some payments made into and out of his company vehicle which might be considered as personal expenditure).

### **Conclusion**

Yes the populist Livingstone has hit on the hot topic for many Londoners – the rising costs of public transport fares. But he will miss out on votes from those with Freedom passes and those who commute by surface trains or drive cars. I suspect that as he continues to offend so many (jews and homosexuals lately) he may find it's a case of people deciding to vote for "anyone but Ken" as happened last time. But make your own mind up and vote accordingly.

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## Exhibition Road Shared Space Scheme



There was recently a demonstration against the shared space scheme in Exhibition Road, Kensington, organised by Gordon Taylor (shown above speaking to his supporters). The photograph was taken very near the spot where a 71 year old pensioner was struck by a vehicle and suffered severe head injuries.

Is this group standing in the road? No – the road is to the right, but you can see there is no clear demarcation. This is even less apparent if you look at the photograph below which is further north on this road.



You may not be able to tell, but the “pavement” is to the left, and the “road” is to the right (the other side of the lampposts). It is very confusing for pedestrians and drivers alike.

The overall cost of this scheme was £22m, and the use of granite setts for the whole surface will cause very expensive maintenance costs in future.

Blind people have particular concerns because there is minimal tactile demarcation between road and pavement and guide dogs may not differentiate and hence get confused.

*(Editor: I am not in principle opposed to “shared space” schemes where traffic volumes are reasonably low and the design is done so as to avoid confusion to drivers and pedestrians. This is clearly not the case here. It looks pretty, but is in essence dangerous and dysfunctional. It is also enormously expensive in relation to the potential benefits when a simpler, cheaper scheme would have been more appropriate).*

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## Speed Humps Successfully Challenged

In our December 2011 edition we covered the case of a disabled person who was having difficulty driving over speed humps in Oakhalls Estate, Bromsgrove within the area covered by Worcestershire County Council. After submitting complaints based on the Equalities Act and Human Rights Act, the council conceded that there was a problem eventually after an initial rebuttal. They have now decided to modify or remove all of the speed humps and speed cushions on the whole of the estate.

The moral is surely that it pays to complain, but you also need to be persistent or councils will fob you off with excuses so as to save money.

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## Bromley News

Many of our readers reside in the London Borough of Bromley, which has the third highest level of car ownership of all London boroughs. Only Harrow and Hillingdon have fewer households without a car and 52% of all trips made in Bromley are by car (only 9% use a bus, 1% cycle, and 28% walk).

The council recently decided based on the need to save money to withdraw all school crossing patrols – likely cost saving £233,000 per year. Needless to say some schools are exceedingly concerned about this proposal. However the borough might look at installing zebra crossings where appropriate.

The council has also recently adopted a new “Parking Strategy” document (available from their web site no doubt), and has also implemented increased parking charges – both off-street and on-street. The increases are significant but not as high as some other London boroughs and the charges will remain substantially lower than in some of the adjacent boroughs. For example, off-street parking in Bromley Town Centre will be £1 per hour with a daily limit of between £6 and £11.



Incidentally above is a photograph of one of the less beautiful car parks in Bromley, the one behind the sub-post office in Chislehurst. Your editor would like to see this improved as part of the changes being advocated by the Chislehurst Society to enhance the High Street.

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### **CCTV Camera Cars**

There are many complaints about the use of CCTV camera cars where drivers are issued with tickets by post rather than having one placed on their vehicles. Often they claim they were not technically parked (for example loading/unloading), but there is no opportunity to explain at the spot and later representations are automatically rejected. The use of such cars is seen as simply another money making ruse by councils.

This newsletter has suggested before that the use of such CCTV cars is contrary to guidance issued by the Government where cameras should only be used where other enforcement means are impractical and hence any penalty notice issued by them could be challenged.

A case in Southend highlights the issue. In this example, a motorist named Roger Hutchinson was issued with a fine for parking on a single yellow line outside his home while swapping the vehicle for one on his driveway. The driver of the CCTV car actually got out of his car to check that the vehicle did not have a blue badge on it. When Mr Hutchinson appealed to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (similar to PATAS in London, but covers the rest of the country), the adjudicator ruled that this showed that a traffic warden could have carried out the enforcement and hence this was contrary to the rules.

*(Editor: Anyone issued with a ticket by CCTV – mobile or stationary – when a traffic warden could have done so safely, should always appeal. It is in reality illegal to do this, but councils are simply ignoring the guidance laid down by the Secretary of State to which they are legally bound to adhere).*

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### **Buses Blamed for Poor Air Quality**



A study by TRL, commissioned by the London Borough of Wandsworth, showed that buses on Putney High Street generated much of the pollution despite making up only 10% of the traffic.

Putney High Street is one of the most congested, and hence polluted, streets in London. Buses generated two-thirds of the NO<sub>x</sub> and 21% of the particulate emissions.

Picture above is of a similar street in London – Oxford Street where bus “jams” regularly occur, pedestrians regularly collide with buses and pollution must be similar.

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## Minicabs in Bus Lanes

John Griffin of Addison Lee, who are the largest minicab company in the UK and whose vehicles are a common sight on the streets of London, is challenging the banning of such vehicles from bus lanes via a Judicial Review. He thinks they should be treated the same as black cabs and hence allowed to use bus lanes.

Indeed he went one step further and advised his 3,500 drivers to use bus lanes and said he would reimburse them for the costs of any fines. But TfL applied for an injunction to prevent him doing this pending the Judicial Review and they won that injunction.

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## Brian Coleman to be Ejected?

**SACK BRIAN COLEMAN**  
on Thursday  
3<sup>rd</sup> May  
Use your vote in  
the London  
Assembly election  
to remove  
Brian Coleman  
from City Hall.

**Coleman is the Barnet Councillor who:**

- Caused parking chaos in Barnet
- Brought in 'pay by mobile' parking
- Put residents parking permits up from £40 to £105.
- Put visitor vouchers up from £1 to £4.17

It's as simple  
as ABC  
**ANYONE  
BUT  
COLEMAN** on 3<sup>rd</sup> May

Barnet CPZ Action

Published by Barnet CPZ Action, 88 Summerlee Avenue, East Finchley, N2 9QA

Obviously the London Borough of Barnet is one of the boroughs where parking is a major issue and this might affect the elections in May. We have reported previously on the campaign against sharply raised charges by campaign group Barnet CPZ Action who are pursuing their legal challenge further via an appeal.

But they are also actively running a campaign to attack Brian Coleman, the Barnet councillor who they see as the main culprit for the raised charges. He is also a member of the London Assembly and above is the poster being circulated to persuade the electorate to vote him off that group (we cannot vouch for the accuracy of the content).

Opinion polls suggest he may well lose his seat, and this might be one factor that would result in an Assembly out of sympathy with the Mayor (if Boris gets re-elected).

*(Editor: Mr Coleman has only himself to blame if this is the outcome. Despite my respect for his stance on speed humps, he has a very abrasive manner and his handling of the parking charge issue in Barnet was particularly insensitive. The charges he wishes to impose are difficult to justify to begin with, and the way he went about it and his public comments simply inflamed the opposition).*

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## Speed Camera Count in London



The latest speed camera count in London is 780 cameras (based on sites and including red light cameras) - unchanged from our

last report.

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.

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## News Snapshots

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

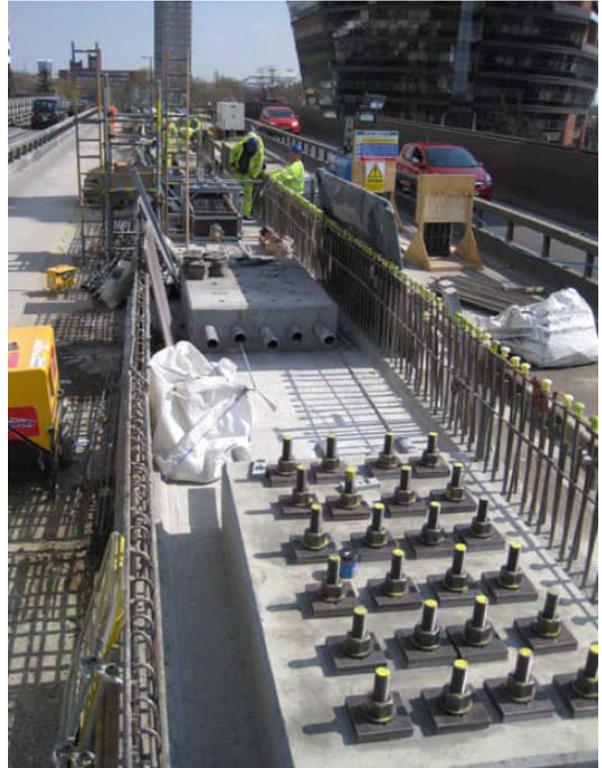
+ The volume of road traffic on London's A roads is now about 8% lower than it was in 2006/7 according to figures reported by TfL. Indeed there seems to be a trend for a consistent fall, apart from any temporary impact produced by the recession. *(Editor: so much for the likely "gridlock" due to increased vehicle ownership and higher populations as claimed by many people. Both the latter have been rising rapidly in London as traffic volumes fall).*

Irrespective of this news, the Department for Transport (DfT) continues to predict that traffic volumes in London will rise by 43% by 2035 in comparison with 2010. Professor Phil Goodwin has been arguing lately that we have reached a “peak car” point where there will now be a long term trend to falling traffic volumes due to the high cost of petrol and insurance. Even in the USA, the number of young people acquiring driving licences is falling.

+ In June a pilot lane rental scheme to try and reduce traffic congestion caused by road works will commence in London. Such roads as Lower Thames Street in the City of London (one repeatedly disrupted by road works) will be the first ones on which it may be imposed.

+ TfL is to try out an “early start” traffic light priority system for cyclists to try and reduce accidents. This will be at the Bow roundabout in East London and will give cyclists a few seconds head start.

+ Work on the Hammersmith Flyover (A4) has been going on “around the clock” to fix the recent problems that caused it to be closed. Some of the work to reinforce the structure is shown in the photo to the right. The road has now partially reopened to light traffic and it is hoped the work on this main London artery will be finished by early June.



## 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 BBAG 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). 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

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### 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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