

ABD London News

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Editorial

You might say the focus of this edition is on environmental “gestures” and the associated hysteria that surrounds them.

So we have articles on wide area 20mph speed limits which a number of London boroughs are either considering adopting, or have done so. That’s despite the fact that there is really no good scientific evidence that they reduce accidents, and particularly not in a cost effective way bearing in mind the expense required. Other road safety expenditure is diverted into these schemes by TfL and better solutions simply ignored. This is of course a national mania driven by the belief that a 20mph speed limit in your local road will turn it into a green and pleasant land, and enable children to play in the street. But the City of London have just found it is no panacea. Perhaps the real reason why accidents rose in both London and the rest of the UK in 2014 stem from poor use of available cash? See page 8.

In essence expenditure is being wasted on pointless but politically attractive schemes (at least to the inexpert eye of the man in the street).

Yes as ever, it’s about money and its use. Other articles in this edition are on the subject of parking fines, and how they are driven by financial objectives rather than traffic regulation or moral principles.

Lastly I have to admit to being one of those destroyers of the planet and our children’s health by driving a diesel car. I beg forgiveness but the Government encouraged me to do so and Jaguar had a very poor choice of petrol models. I promise I am saving up for a Tesla, but it may take me a few years. See the article on diesel and air pollution hysteria on page 9.

And I have not space here to even talk about the mania for cycling!

Roger Lawson
(Editor)

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Quotes of the Month

“The provisional data indicates there has been a continued increase in the number of slight injuries to people walking and cycling” From the report published by the Corporation on the results of the City of London 20 mph scheme—see article on page 2.

“Pedal cyclists are the only road user group with casualty numbers of most severities above the 2005-2009 average”.....DfT Report on Road Casualties in 2004. See article on pages 8 and 9.

“Health experts warn that vehicle emissions are causing 12,000 deaths a year in Britain”. Headline on the front page of the Daily Telegraph on 23/9/2015. See article on page 9.



City of London 20 Mph—First Results

The City of London has produced the first report on the wide area 20 mph scheme that was introduced in July 2014. It covers the whole City other than the A3211 (Lower/Upper Thames Street), where traffic has been slowed to a crawl anyway by the new Cycle Superhighway and associated road works (see photo right taken at Blackfriars recently).

Average speed across the City has been reduced by 1.5mph which is higher than most such schemes (1 mph is more typical). But whether this was a result of the new limit or more congestion generally is unclear. TfL have been complaining about congestion from larger number of private hire vehicles in London and the Cycle Superhighway works.

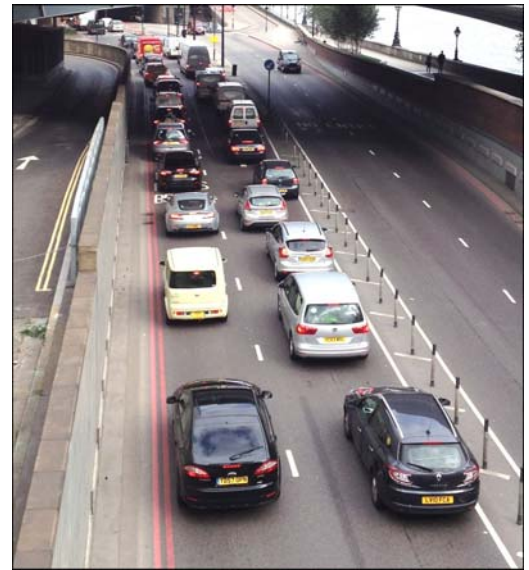
The redevelopment of Aldgate and the Superhighway works have also had wider impacts on congestion in the City.

Provisional casualty data up to June 2015 suggest that there has been a continued increase in the number of slight injuries to people walking and cycling, according to the report.

Increases in such accidents were one justification for the imposition of this scheme.

The report argues that without the scheme, accidents might have increased even more, but that is a somewhat dubious statement is it not?

More data on accidents is not yet available (3 years before/after is the best measure of course although interpreting the data because of other changes in the City may not be easy).



The police have been quite vigorously enforcing the 20 mph limit and reported 370 traffic offences in the last 12 months which has resulted in 180 fixed penalty notices and 99 court summons. The overall cost of this scheme was originally estimated at up to £150,000, and surely it has been a complete waste of money based on the evidence to date.



Blackwall Tunnel Consultation

Transport for London (TfL) have launched a formal public consultation on proposals for a new Blackwall Tunnel to run alongside the existing one - called the Silvertown Tunnel.

This is a summary they give of the reasons which certainly spells out why it is required:

"The Blackwall Tunnel is at the heart of east London's strategic road network, linking the A12, the A13, the A2 and the A20. It is crucial to the success of the east London economy because it is the focus for most of the demand to cross the river by road in the east. The current levels of demand to use the Blackwall Tunnel greatly exceed the capacity of the tunnel, and there is regularly very significant congestion in and around the area. The tunnel itself was first opened in 1897 and was designed for horse & coaches.

While the Blackwall Tunnel is accessible to most vehicles, it wasn't designed for modern freight vehicles, or double deck buses. As a result, it is highly susceptible to disruptive incidents which can require that it be closed at very short notice.

The Silvertown Tunnel will reduce congestion at the Blackwall Tunnel, improve the resilience of the surrounding road network and support economic and population growth. In recognition of the importance of the project, it has been designated a 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project'."

Continued on next page



Blackwall Tunnel (Cont.)

The old Blackwall tunnel bores will remain in use. There would be a charge to use both the old tunnel and the new Silvertown Tunnel which is likely to be (at today's prices - no doubt more when built), of £1 off peak and £3 at peak times (the latter being 06.00 to 10.00 northbound and 16.00 to 19.00 southbound) - it will be free before 06.00 and after 22.00 hours.

The charge will be collected and enforced by cameras as with the Dartford crossing (i.e. it will be a free flow system with no toll booths, which of course means that there will be enormous numbers of fines incurred).

"Please note that the Alliance of British Drivers (ABD) is not opposed to 20 mph speed limits in all locations - for example where the natural speed of traffic is near that speed. In many residential streets that is the case. However we are opposed to blanket wide area 20-mph limits because they are not a cost effective road safety measure, are not likely to be complied with and needlessly slow traffic.

1. Let me first refer to your published document entitled "Lambeth Goes 20mph—Guide" which unfortunately contains a lot of inaccuracies.

For example, it states that "driving slower on residential roads has been proven to reduce traffic accidents,.....". Unfortunately there is no such evidence.

There may be discounts for account holders and 100% discount for blue badge holders, low emission vehicles, taxis, private hire vehicles, buses and a few other categories.

Environmental impacts seem to be either minimal, or positive.

This writer is certainly in favour of this proposal and considers that the sooner it is progressed the better. But I do not like the charging scheme.

If you use the Blackwall Tunnel, please be sure to submit your comments to the public consultation a.s.a.p. at this web address: www.tfl.gov.uk/silvertown-tunnel

It is important that as many people as possible respond to this consultation.

Perhaps you could care to produce the evidence on that which is of course not supplied in the document concerned. Furthermore you say that "By reducing speeds to 20mph, it will reduce the number of casualties in the borough, improve pedestrian safety, encourage more confidence among cyclists and cut the number of incidents around schools", but again there is no evidence for those claims.

2. The facts are these:
a - In general the benefits of 20 mph signed area wide area schemes are grossly exaggerated.

The average reduction in the speed of traffic is typically about 1 mph (assuming that there is no bias in the collection of data or other influences that might affect traffic speeds which is a dubious assumption).



Lambeth 20 Mph Scheme

Lambeth Council are pushing ahead with a borough wide 20 mph speed limit.

Anyone who has any views on this should send them to Barbara Poulter at the Council (email address: bpoulter@lambeth.gov.uk) .

Here's some comments this writer has already sent her.



Such a speed reduction is not likely to have a significant or measureable impact on road traffic accidents and not have any impact on the general environment of the roads concerned. Neither is it likely to encourage cycling or walking or discourage driving so the general health benefits will be nil - indeed there is no good evidence yet available for any such positive benefits (cities such as Bristol have claimed such benefits but their evidence is statistically dubious in the extreme).

b - The suggestion that a reduction in traffic speed translates into a significant reduction in collisions is not borne out by the real world evidence but is based on a biased analysis of traffic speeds on different types of roads.

Continued on next page



Lambeth 20 (Cont.)

There has been no proper "controlled" trial of the use of signed only speed limits. The results in Portsmouth (which are mentioned in your document who claim an 8% reduction in collisions) do not provide firm evidence that there is any real benefit. Indeed KSIs in Portsmouth actually rose.

You also refer to data from Nottingham which only covers one year and any road safety engineer will tell you that one year is too short a time to be

significant, particularly as there tends to be a short-lived reduction in accidents if the road environment is changed. And as you are no doubt well aware, it is more normal to only consider 3 year before and after periods as showing any significant change.

c - There is no good evidence that 20 mph sign only schemes provide any real, statistically significant, and below trend accident reduction. It is also worth pointing out that the Department of Transport (DfT) have recently commissioned a three year study into the effectiveness of 20 mph schemes as they suggest that current evidence is "inconclusive".

It would be rash of Lambeth Council to spend large amounts of money on any 20 Mph, signed only, schemes before more evidence is available on their financial benefit and effectiveness.

3. There is no cost/benefit justification provided for the large expenditure of £700,000 on these proposals, money that would be better spent on other road safety measures.

The key question is whether the benefits of that expenditure outweigh the costs, i.e. that it is a superior cost/benefit ratio to spending that money on other things.



4. More evidence. Historically there was a 20-mph speed limit across the whole of the UK before 1930, when accident figures were much higher. Accidents fell after it was removed.

5. In general the evidence put forward by those who support 20 mph wide area speed limits as a road safety measure is dubious and I would welcome the opportunity to contradict any that you receive. They often rely on selection of the data while ignoring other factors that might affect the results. In practice, their understanding of statistical evidence and the scientific method is weak in the extreme.

6. So the key question, is whether spending £700,000 on such a scheme is worthwhile, or whether it would not be better to spend it on other road safety measures!

Regrettably a proposal to reduce traffic speeds looks both simple and attractive which is why politically it can appear to be sensible. But road safety is a much more complex matter that is not amenable to simplistic solutions.

Smaller, focused road safety schemes would be likely to create much more benefit than putting up 20 mph signs everywhere (which will of course be ignored by many road users who will consider it an inappropriate speed for many roads in Lambeth).

8. Imposing a speed limit that is lower than necessary will slow traffic of all kinds, and will not be adhered to unless there is massive expenditure on enforcement (which of course has to be taken into account in the cost/benefit calculations as has the cost of increased travel times).

Finally, let me say that these proposals are being put forward by those who have little understanding of road safety or how to reduce accidents.

In reality it is "gesture politics" of the worst kind. It is likely to result in fewer reductions in road casualties, and hence possibly more deaths, by wasting money that would be better spent on other road safety measures."

As 20 mph speed limit proposals are cropping up all over London, readers based in other boroughs could use these same arguments to object. The ABD can supply more supporting evidence to support the claims in the above note if you need it.



Road Closures in Lambeth around Loughborough Junction

Lambeth Council have closed a number of roads around Loughborough Junction on an "experimental basis" for 6 months.

That includes closures in Loughborough Road, Barrington Road, Calais Street, Padfield Road, Lilford Road and Gordon Grove. These closures are causing enormous difficulties for both local residents and those travelling within the borough.

For example, Loughborough Road was used by 13,000 vehicles each day according to the council and those vehicles will now have to find alternative routes.

The aim of the scheme is to enable "public space improvements". The council did consult local residents but only 633 people responded. Over 750 people signed a petition organised by Loughborough Estate Tenants and Residents Association against the closures. The Brixton Society have also called the consultation "fundamentally flawed" and neither anyone living outside the affected zone nor the ABD were consulted - in other words a lot of the road users were ignored.

More information is present on Lambeth Councils web site.

Send your objections to Barbara Poulter at bpoulter@lambeth.gov.uk

This is of course a typical example of the degradation of the road network in London of late, supported by councils such as Lambeth, Transport for London and the Mayor, who take little notice of the impact these closures have on the day to day life of those who live or work in the area.



And Road Closures in Hackney

Transport for London are consulting on numerous road closures in Hackney, allegedly related to the Cycle Superhighway 1 (CS1) but in reality more likely to be in response to demands from local residents to remove traffic from some roads. Of course it won't remove the traffic but simply move it onto other more congested roads or onto other roads where residents are less vociferous, i.e. it will move the misery elsewhere.

These are typical examples of how the road network in London is continually being degraded by road closures to the disadvantage of residents and visitors



under pressure from minority local groups who hate motor vehicles. It will mean very circuitous routes need to be followed to reach many properties.

The roads affected are in the Broadwater Road area, Wordsworth Road area and the De Beauvoir Road area. The diagram above is an example of one of the new junctions restricting vehicle movements on Broadwater Road.

Cyclists are still allowed through of course, but the design is surely unsafe.

You can make your objections by going to the Transport for London consultation hub web page where the Broadwater Road area consultation and the other two are listed.

The ABD has already objected of course but please do so also.



Parking Enforcement by Camera in Bromley

Readers will probably be aware of the new Deregulation Act which has severely limited the use of cameras to enforce parking. They can only be used now to enforce:

- school keep clear markings
- bus stop/stand clearways
- red routes
- bus lanes

These were granted as exceptions to the general principle of not allowing camera enforcement after representations by local authorities that it would make for great difficulties in enforcement. However, there is still the overriding guidance on operational use issued by the Department for Transport.

Bromley Council had been using 4 mobile camera cars to enforce parking restrictions generally in addition to outside schools, i.e. when outside school opening closing times and during school holidays they were deployed on other roads. These will now be scrapped (and probably don't have any resale value) as the

limited use now possible for them makes them uneconomic. Instead to enforce school zig-zag areas they will be replaced with ten automated "fixed" CCTV cameras that will be rotated around Bromley's schools.

These are "automated" in the sense that by software they identify automatically infringements (and simply stopping, not parking, on the zig-zags is an infringement, but a PCN will only be issued after a review by a Civil Enforcement Officer). In addition another ten automated cameras will be used to enforce bus lanes (to replace "manned" static cameras).

The council expects to generate more income from the parking cameras, with no more cost.



There will also be less income from bus lane cameras due to changes to Bromley High Street, resulting in a net small reduction in overall "surplus" on such operations. The Council was very concerned about the impact of the Deregulation Act on parking surpluses which are a significant contribution to overall Council budgets.

This writer asked a question on the legality of the new approach at a Council Meeting on the 30th September.

The answers given by the Committee Chairman did not satisfy me so I subsequently wrote this letter to him, which spells out the issues:

Dear Mr Huntington-Thresher,

I must say I was very disappointed by your answer to my question at the Environment PDS Committee last week.

As I pointed out in the meeting, the current "Operational Guidance to Local Authorities" makes it quite clear that the use of cameras (which result in PCNs being sent in the post to infringers) is severely limited.

As it says in that document, the guidance "*advises all English enforcement authorities of the procedures that they must follow, the procedures to which they must have regard and the procedures that the Government recommends they follow when enforcing parking restrictions*" so effectively it has the force of law.

Continued on next page



Follow the Blog

The ABD London region now has a blog so many of the articles herein first appeared there. The address is:

<https://abdlondon.wordpress.com/>

Please take a look at it and post your comments on the articles there (or of course send an email to the editor). Note that articles on topical news will be posted there first although they will still continue to be summarised in this newsletter.

You can register to "follow" the blog so you get notified of any new articles as soon as they appear.

Contributed articles to the blog are also welcomed.

Parking in Bromley (Cont.)

Although I do not wish to encourage anyone to park on the zig-zags outside schools, the use of automated cameras to enforce them is not compliant with the rules on operational Guidance in the aforementioned document or with the Deregulation Act 2015.

Indeed the above document says specifically that "*Where approved devices may be used, the Secretary of State recommends that approved devices are used only where enforcement is difficult or sensitive and CEO enforcement is not practical*".

The proper course of action would be to take proper legal advice on the matter by consulting the Secretary of State at the Department of Transport, and/or some other independent legal authority before this plan goes ahead.

I probably don't need to point out to you that clearly this plan is motivated by financial objectives - namely that using an automated system is likely to produce revenue at minimal cost. But you should not be using parking fines to generate profits, which is again contrary to Government guidelines.

In general the proliferation of cameras everywhere is abhorred by the general public. We don't wish to live in a big brother society where our every move is monitored by authorities and even accidental infringements of petty rules get penalised.

As I pointed out in the meeting, I do not see why enforcement by CEOs in the normal way would not be possible outside schools. Even if motorists drive away before being given a ticket they can be sent by post later, and as on zig-zags even stopping temporarily is an infringement there is no need to allow for grace periods. So enforcement would not be "difficult or sensitive" - no more than for any other parking offence. The additional argument was put that people might drive off in a hurry if they saw enforcement happening and cause an accident, but that seems very unlikely. In essence the presence of a CEO is much more likely to deter stopping or parking outside schools which is the whole point of the exercise

I ask you again to reconsider these proposals.

Roger Lawson 9/10/2015

Final Comment: Although one appreciates the focus of councillors on running a balanced budget, using cameras and automated processes to issue PCNs is a recipe for disgruntled voters.

Perhaps the Council should consider a scheme similar to that recently pioneered by Thurrock Council in Essex - namely training teachers and parents to issue PCNs outside schools.



whereas an automated camera will just result in post-facto fines.

Your response was in essence, that if you get challenged in law and lose the challenges then you will reconsider. But in the meantime you will spend a lot of money implementing these cameras and issuing tickets.

To my mind this is a most irresponsible attitude. Firstly it flouts the law and councils should not set such a bad example, and secondly it might result in the council incurring the liability of having to refund all past PCNs when they are shown to be wrong - and that's apart from the money wasted on the cameras that might prove to be useless in due course.



Bus Passes for the Homeless

Charity New Horizon Youth Centre are providing bus passes to young homeless people in London so they can sleep on night buses that run around the capital.

This they consider safer than having them sleep on the streets when other accommodation is not available, even though the charity has to pay for the tickets.

But back in May Transport for London (TfL) actually launched an operation to tackle sleeping on night buses. It included "providing assistance" and getting the bus drivers to report such incidents. Perhaps they need to give the charity a call?



Luddite Black Cab Drivers

Well at least that is how Boris Johnson described those who oppose “new technology” at a meeting at City Hall, which caused uproar among taxi drivers who attended and caused the Mayor’s Question Time to be abandoned. Politicians are surely educated to be normally more “politic” in their comments.

Black cab drivers are protesting about the rise of Uber and other private hire vehicle hailing systems which they allege breach taxi regulations about “metering” of fares.

So as to reach legal clarity an application for a Judicial Review in the High Court has been made, supported by TfL, the Licensed Taxi Drivers and Licensed Private Hire Car Association. That is currently being heard. In the meantime TfL have launched a public consultation on proposals for change under the title “Private Hire Regulations Review”. Anyone with an interest in this matter should respond to it.

One of the proposals in the consultation is to enforce an artificial 5 minute delay between

journey booking and trip commencement so as “to allow the driver and vehicle information to be communicated to passengers”. Why would it take that long? This surely looks more like a sop to please the black cab drivers.

Another restriction is to stop Private Hire vehicle operators from showing vehicles which are available for immediate hire via an app. Allegedly this increases the risk of them “touting” for hire, but again it seems a very artificial restriction.

There are numerous other proposals, some of which such as requiring PHV drivers to speak reasonable English seem sensible. But the key issues seem to be fudged.

Road Casualties in London rise, but KSIs fall.

Transport for London (TfL) have recently reported the road accident data for Greater London during 2014.

Total personal accident collisions (as reported to the police) rose 13.2% to 30,785, but fatalities fell and Killed & Seriously Injured (KSIs) fell by 7% to 2,167 over the prior year. The latter is a statistically significant change.

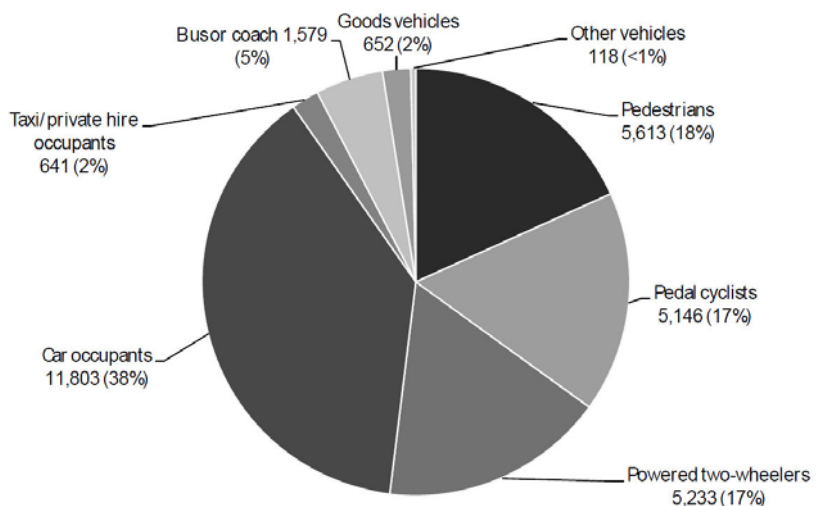
Note that slight injuries are particularly sensitive to over or under reporting—the figures depend on people bothering to report them and diligence by the police in recording them.

Below is a breakdown of all casualties by mode of travel taken from the TfL report.

It does of course show that car occupants have over twice the number of such events than pedal cyclists, although the KSI figures are more evenly balanced.

Is it not odd that cyclists continually call for more expenditure on their safety, whereas they are clearly not the sole vulnerable group. Indeed pedestrians and powered two wheelers are particularly at risk, bearing in mind the relative distances travelled.

Figure 1: Total casualties by mode of travel Greater London, 2014



Road Casualties in London (Continued)

It is not just in London that total road casualties are rising. Across the whole country in 2014 they rose according to Department for Transport (DfT) figures, for the first time since 1997. Particularly worrying was that there were also increases in fatalities and KSIs.

Vehicle traffic increased by 2.4% over the previous year, but the increase in accidents is allegedly due to fine weather (resulting in more cycling and motorcycling), and a generally improving economy. But the real reason may be different (see front page).

However, it is known from studies in other countries that the state of the economy has some influence on road traffic accident levels. Perhaps people are more in a hurry, or become more reckless, when they are busy.

As regards pedal cyclists, the number of seriously injured has increased every year since 2004 and total casualties rose by 9.5% last year.

The increase is almost certainly down partly to the increase in cycling (cycle traffic up by 3.8% last year alone). But as the increase in accidents is even higher one can only conclude that it might be also due to more risky behaviour by cyclists which is easy to spot in London.

Parking Fines in London

The Freight Transport Association recently issued a press release highlighting that 72% of parking fine appeals in London are successful based on a survey of their members. This apparently is mainly the result of PCNs being issued while vehicles are loading or unloading when you are allowed to do that for 40 minutes on single or double yellow lines.

And which London Borough tops the list for PCNs issued? The London Borough of Bromley apparently which may not surprise you if you read the previous article on their attitude to camera enforcement.

Air Pollution from Vehicles

The media generally have gone into hysteria mode over the scandal of VW rigging the test emissions of their cars.

So the Daily Telegraph said that *"Health Experts warn that vehicle emissions are causing 12,000 deaths a year in Britain"* which is surely a gross exaggeration and not technically correct. What they should have said is that one organisation has estimated that it is possible that thousands of people (the exact number is subject to wide tolerances on the estimates) have suffered from a shortened life span as a result of air pollution (and although transport is a big contributor to air pollution, there are lots of other sources in addition).

But that is of course not quite such a punchy headline. All of the focus is now on diesel vehicles which are very popular in the UK in comparison with other countries. And why is that? Simply because the UK Government chose to incentivise the sale and use of diesel vehicles by tax rules. That affects both the relative cost of diesel versus petrol, and other taxes that were focussed on reducing CO2 emissions and increasing fuel economy (where diesel vehicles can be superior). But there are pollution problems with diesel engines, particularly in smaller vehicles.

DEFRA have recently published a consultation document on air quality which includes proposals from all the major devolved regions—including 309 pages on Greater London!



It summarises both past and current developments to tackle NO2 pollution and clearly shows that even with current measures the pollution will considerably improve by 2020, and improve further by 2025.

A lot is being done, in London and elsewhere, but the media are calling for faster action when it is questionable that this is either practical or economically sensible.



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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 and fill out the box to be added to our mailing list.

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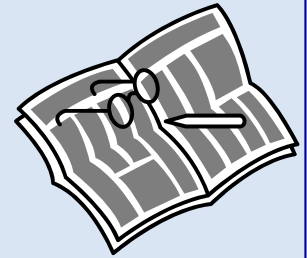
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About the Alliance of British Drivers (ABD)

The Alliance of British Drivers was formed from a merger of the Association of British Drivers and the Drivers Alliance. 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 Alliance 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

Contact and Publisher Information

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