

# ABD London News

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## Editorial

We are coming up to two of the most important decisions for Londoners in the next few weeks. Namely the election of a new Mayor to replace Boris Johnson, and the referendum on whether to leave the EU (or Brexit as it has come to be known). We also of course have elections for Greater London Assembly Members.

Will Boris Johnson leave a positive legacy? Janet Street-Porter certainly thinks not and neither does your Editor. Whoever thought when he was originally elected that he would completely remake London's transport network in the name of encouraging cycling? I certainly do not recall that as being in his manifesto at the time, otherwise he might not have gained my support.

Now we have both main party candidates who strongly support cycling. Indeed Mr Goldsmith says that he will "will ramp up Boris's cycling revolution". Is he not likely to lose as many votes from this advocacy as he might gain from the cyclists?

What other legacies has Boris left? I find it difficult to recall any but the Emirates Cable Car which most people rate as a costly vanity project.

A writer for the Guardian said he could be applauded for not making matters worse, and the problem is that central Government controls the purse-strings of London and its boroughs. But as regards the road transport network he has surely made a monumental hash of it.

We are now faced with a choice between a right-wing environmentalist and a left-wing muslim very much in the populist style of Ken Livingstone (one of the worse disasters Londoners imposed on themselves). One or the other will win. But as one of the candidates said in Chislehurst, the beauty of the London elections is you can vote for your favourite as first choice and the second best as your second, and still influence the outcome. And that is what I shall do.

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## Quotes of the Month

*"I've finally had enough of Boris Johnson - the man who has brought this wonderful city to its knees in the name of cycling" .....Janet Street-Porter—see page 7.*

*"The anticipated reduction in casualties has not been achieved".... Report to the City of London Corporation on their 20 mph zone scheme—see page 9.*

*"If you come to Tower Hill any morning, there is a tailback of commercial vehicles several miles long"....Sir George Iacobescu on the East-West Cycle Superhighway See p.6.*



## London Mayor Transport Policies

As we are coming up to the election of a new London Mayor on May 5th, and for representatives to sit on the Greater London Assembly as well, it looks a timely moment to look at the policies of the main parties. But we will only cover their transport policies in this newsletter because that is on what we focus.

There is one thing that clearly differentiates the two main candidates for Mayor. It is that one is the son of a billionaire financier and businessman, while the other is the son of a London bus driver. You can easily guess which is which of course, but their policies on transport are actually not that much different.

Both candidates will continue to support that expensive hand out to the electorate called the "Freedom Pass".

As he says, TfL is a vast organisation but he thinks it is inefficient and flabby.

He suggests there are major efficiency savings to be made but he would spend more of TfL's budget on cycling - expansion of the Superhighway network and Quietways for example. He would also spend more on support of 20mph zones.

Mr Goldsmith says that freezing fares is not practical to meet the investment plans for TfL and maintain operations, i.e. that a budget could not be devised to do this.

The Freedom Pass is a system where both the rich and poor get encouraged to consume public transport by unjustifiable subsidies which impose a major financial burden on local borough councils (and which the public end up paying for but not transparently).

Both candidates also support the proposed new East London river crossings, investment in Crossrail 2 and tougher rules on HGVs entering London.

They are also both keen to reduce air pollution in London, and to encourage cycling.

So **Conservative Zac Goldsmith** (photo to the right from his manifesto) says "Dirty cars, vans and buses contaminate the air we breathe" and he intends to "make London the greenest city on earth". As he also says in his manifesto, which nobody can dispute, that he has been a lifelong environmentalist and is opposed to expanding Heathrow airport.

Mr Khan (photo right) also opposes a third runway at Heathrow but prefers expansion of Gatwick to meet demand for air travel growth. He supports keeping the Congestion Charge (aka "Tax") as its current level but he would bring forward the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) and extend it to major arterial routes "or a wider section of central London" as he rates cleaning up London's air to be a priority. He would also call upon the Government to "introduce a diesel vehicle scrappage scheme", although that would surely not be likely to prompt a positive response.



**Labour's candidate, Sadiq Khan**, is keen to expand London's public transport network while making it more affordable. One difference between the candidates is that Mr Khan would freeze fares for 4 years and cut Transport for London's budget. Indeed he is threatening to take personal control of TfL by chairing that organisation.



*Continued on next page.*



## London Mayor (Continued)

Incidentally both main candidates seem keen to pedestrianise Oxford Street. That has always been a popular concept but ignores the practicality of routing all the buses elsewhere apart from the objections from the retailers that this would deter a lot of their customers.

The **Green Party** (candidate **Sian Berry**), who actually did quite well in the last London elections, would also like more investment in walking, cycling and public transport.

They would introduce a "smarter" congestion charge system with much more extensive coverage and also expand the ULEZ. They also support a workplace parking levy.

**UKIP** (candidate **Peter Whittle**) claim to support London motorists and would cap the number of events that cause road closures (such as RideLondon). He would limit the number of Private Hire Vehicles to try and reduce congestion. He opposes HS2 and wishes to encourage cycling, but would tackle "rogue" cyclists.

There are also a large number of other minor party candidates, if you don't find any of the above to your liking. And don't forget this is a transferable voting system (a supplementary vote where your second choice is used if there is no outright winner on first choices). So there is no harm in declaring your preference for a minority candidate. Just make sure you VOTE FOR SOME-ONE.

**Zac Goldsmith's views on cycling.** Now it just so happens that the Editor was able to ask a

couple of questions of Zac Goldsmith at a recent hustling meeting. I asked him what he was going to do to sort out the traffic congestion that Boris had created with the Cycle Super-highways, and whether he was a keen cyclist himself. In answer to the first question he said he would look at the issue when the works had been completed, and might consider mitigation measures if necessary. He avoided answering the second question altogether. An altogether weak response. I am afraid Mr Goldsmith comes across as a glib and slick politician but one who is not likely to win the election, particularly if he goes on in this manner. Needless to say he is trailing in the opinion polls at present. But whichever candidate wins, it looks like we will get a continuation of the policies pursued in the last few years which have been so damaging to the road network of London.



## 20 Mph in Croydon

### Scrutiny Committee of 20mph in Croydon

On the 7th March Croydon Council held a Scrutiny Committee to review the council's decision to go ahead with a wide area, signed only, 20mph scheme in North Croydon.

It had been requested by 14 Conservative councillors who were concerned about the cost. You can see a video recording of the event on the Council's web site, but your Editor spoke in support of the "call in" and in opposition to the proposal. To save you wading through the whole video, here is what I said:

### **"Objections to a Wide Area 20 Mph Scheme for North Croydon - Scrutiny Committee Speech"**

*I understand the call-in has taken place because of concerns about the cost of the proposed 20 mph wide area scheme in North Croydon. At a cost of £300,000 it is certainly likely to be a waste of money.*

*The main arguments for 20 mph schemes have always relied on the benefits to road safety. In other words that accidents and injuries will be reduced. **But this is a mirage and is not borne out by the evidence available to date.** Claims for such benefits are wrong and that is why the Department of Transport has commissioned more research into this topic. The latest part of London to introduce a wide area 20 mph scheme was the City of London and the initial evidence there is that injury accidents rose afterwards.*

*The other claims such as "improving liveability" are basically just hot air with no substance in reality.*

*Continued on next page.*





## 20 Mph in Croydon (Cont.)

*Introducing a 20 mph speed limit does not encourage more people to walk or cycle - there is simply no evidence for this.*

*So in reality nothing much will change but you want to spend £300,000 of taxpayers money on just one part of Croydon to prove how pointless it will be. If you have £300,000 to spend on road safety it would be much better spent on other road safety initiatives, or point solutions.*

*It is most regrettable that these proposals have been put forward by those ignorant of the facts, and supported by a rigged public consultation exercise.*

*That is all I wish to say, but I hope Councillors will see sense on this matter and not pour £300,000s of taxpayers money down the drain."*

Neither I nor local resident Peter Morgan who also spoke were given the opportunity to challenge many of the erroneous comments and "facts" presented by the supporters of this proposal, and none of the members of the Scrutiny Committee apart from Conservative Councillors on the Committee (who spoke well incidentally in a reasoned and measured way, unlike some of their Labour opponents) took up any of the points I made or asked for more information. They prefer their own blinkered view of the wonders of such schemes rather than the facts - rather like adherents to a religion who will believe anything even though the facts undermine their beliefs.

You can see more on the background to this proposal and how councillors rigged the public consultation here on the ABD London's web site (link below).

One point not brought out though was that only residents within North Croydon were consulted (any responses from outside the area were ignored, so the views of those who drive through the area on the roads were sidelined).

As expected the motion to "call in" the proposal was rejected so the scheme will go ahead in North Croydon.

Whether they will be able to push it through for other parts of Croydon, particularly as there was clearly no overall support in the first area for these schemes, remains to be seen.

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## Croydon Pushes Ahead with 20Mph in Zone 2

Following the previous article on Croydon Council rejecting objections to a wide area 20 mph scheme in North Croydon (despite the public consultation vote clearly being rigged), they are now pushing ahead with a similar consultation in North-East Croydon.

That covers Addiscombe, Ashburton, Woodside, Shirley, Heathfield, Fairfield, parts of Selhurst and South Norwood (one road affected would be Davidson Road—see photo).

Those who live in that area should make sure they respond to the public consultation. Those who do not, or only use roads in the area will of course be ignored but you could write directly to Croydon Council in that case).

For more details please go to the web page below where you will find a link to the Councils consultation web page and more details of the campaign against this proposal by the ABD: Please make sure you respond if you live in the area, and encourage others you may know to do likewise.



### **How much will this cost?**

Probably about another £300,000 of your taxpayers money if they manage to get enough support for it. That will certainly be wasted when it could have been spent on real road safety

### **Croydon 20 Campaign:**

<http://www.freedomfordrivers.org/Croydon20.htm>

# Cyclists Racing on London Streets

The ABD received a number of complaints about the article in our last edition on cyclists "racing" on London's streets.

Here is a comprehensive response. The original article indicated that there was evidence that cyclists were recording their travel times on road segments in London on a web site named Strava, and that this might be encouraging "furious cycling" (a criminal offence) as cyclists effectively were vying with each other, or competing against their own past recorded times as recorded on that web site.

The article was based on an item in the Daily Telegraph and your editor does not normally find it necessary to investigate or verify what the national quality press publish. It was also based on what was immediately obvious on the Strava web site mentioned in the article.

So for example if you go to the internet and search for "strava segment embankment" it gives you the times that have been entered by cyclists for the stretch of road along the Embankment in London. As reported in the original article, the top time present is shown as being by Tom Moses with a time of 3 minutes and 9 seconds (an average speed of 31.7 mph).



Some time after the article was originally published a number of cyclists pointed out that Tom Moses is actually a professional cyclist and the time shown was recorded when he was riding in the Tour of Britain, and when the road was presumably closed to vehicular traffic. I acknowledge that this might have been the case, without examining that claim in detail.



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However, if you look at that page of the Strava web site you will see that there are "64,779" attempts by 5,964 people (as shown at the time of writing this note). It therefore seems very unlikely to me that most of those timings were made when the riders were competing in a formal cycle race on closed roads. Indeed some of them are clearly riders on "powered" bikes who would surely not be in any normal cycle race.

So in essence, it might have been unfortunate that the facts about Mr Moses' ride were omitted and I am now perfectly happy to report that now. However it does not undermine the main point of the article in that it is very clear from anyone who walks, cycles or drives in London that there are a minority of cyclists acting in a somewhat dangerous way both to them-

selves and other people. In other words, cycling at an excessive speed in relation to road hazards and other road users.

In addition I would point out that although there are cases reported of car drivers racing each other (which are often prosecuted), if there was any web site set up to report driving times by car users, it would immediately be seen as positively dangerous and inappropriate. Why not for cyclists?

One of the astonishing things about this matter is that there were a number of people who took it upon themselves to complain to me via email and on twitter in a most intemperate way. In essence suggesting that I was maliciously distorting the facts while not appreciating the dangers cyclists faced. Indeed they tended to ramble off into all

kinds of complaints about car drivers. They even ignored the clear copyright statement on the newsletter where the article was published and reproduced it without permission which I suggest is somewhat symptomatic of the contempt shown by many cyclists to laws and regulations.

Now you know the full facts on this matter, you can judge for yourselves whether there was information in the original article which should rightly have been brought to the attention of the general public. I still think there was. Therefore there will be no apology (as some "demanded" forcefully) for the content of the original article.

This will also be the last comment I will make on the subject unless there is more information received.

Roger Lawson

# London Divided, and Cycling Accident Rates

The Financial Times ran an article on the 31st March by Conor Sullivan which was headlined "London divided over Mayor's cycling legacy".

It highlighted the contrasting views of Londoners over Boris Johnson's cycling policies and specifically the construction of the Cycle Superhighways. These have resulted in a major worsening of traffic congestion in London and are likely to continue to do so - we have reported on this in previous articles.

Here's some quotes from the FT article. Sir George Iacobescu, CEO of property group Canary Wharf, said "if you come to Tower Hill any morning, there is a tailback of commercial vehicles several miles long". Andrew Gilligan, the Mayor's cycling commissioner, responded that most people wanted improvements for cyclists and that "There is always noisy objection, but they always turn out to be from the minority".

Members of Parliament were also reported as being unhappy as Parliament lies on the route of one Superhighway and Gilligan said "MPs were constantly tugging at the [Mayor's] sleeve saying 'this is a disaster'."

Sir George noted that while only a small proportion of Londoners

still drive in the city centre, those who do often have no option.

He said "You have shop deliveries, commuter buses, construction traffic, white van man, the black taxi, the disabled, garbage collection, ambulances, dignitaries, Her Majesty..... this is not about private cars".

## Furious Cycling

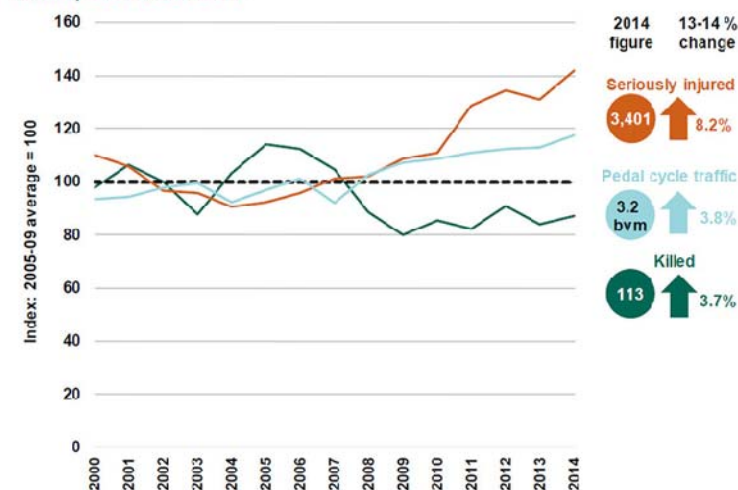
The previous article on "furious" cycling, or racing on the streets of London, got some predictable comments from cyclists. For those who misunderstood, the article was intended to highlight the behaviour of cyclists not just for the problems that they create for other road users and pedestrians but because they are often a danger to themselves.



As I have been preparing a presentation on road safety, I happened to come across the chart on the right - from page 7 of the document published by the Department of Transport entitled "Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain 2014" - the full report is well worth reading:

The interesting thing about this chart is that it shows that although cycle traffic has gone up considerably in the last few years, the number of seriously injured has gone up even more (the number killed has fallen but the numbers there may be less statistically significant and may be more affected by better medical treatment). Now if there was generally worse behaviour by other road users,

**Chart 5: Number of killed and seriously injured pedal cyclists compared with pedal cycle traffic, GB: 2000-2014**



1 2014 figures are shown in the circles with the 2013-2014 percentage change represented by the arrows. bvm - billion vehicle miles.

you would expect to see an increase in KSIs among other road users, but that is not the case. Even the KSIs among pedestrians have fallen. This surely rather suggests that the behaviour of cyclists has changed in some way over the

last few years which has led to a rise in KSIs. I therefore suggest that this is evidence that "furious cycling" is a growing problem and as the above figures are for Great Britain as a whole this problem has now extended well outside London. R.W.L.



## Janet Street-Porter's Views on the Cycle Superhighways

Well known media personality Janet Street-Porter has given her views on the Cycle Superhighways in London in the Independent. She said "Sometimes it's time to stand up and speak out, at the risk of causing offence and attracting sneers" - and she got the predictable response from the cycling lobby.

She continued: "I've finally had enough of Boris Johnson - the man who has brought this wonderful city to its knees in the name of cycling".

She also said "London has been turned into a gridlocked building site as roads are dug up and rebuilt to create Boris's follies, a network of cycling superhighways". She argues that the extra congestion, and hence air pollution this has created has made even walking in London an unpleasant activity and she also complains that the young, the elderly or disabled may be unable to cycle.

The article which also attacks cyclists as being subject to ridiculously few rules and that they frequently ride on pavements is well worth reading on the web. She concludes with the comment "If Boris becomes Prime Minister, God help us" which this writer cannot but agree with. He's already lost my vote.

### Chris Boardman's views

Olympic champion Chris Boardman was reported as saying in the Daily Telegraph that he does not ride a bike in London because it does not feel safe.



He would prefer to walk. But he did argue that the Government should spend more money supporting cycling.

### Shorter Street Closed

The latest destruction of road space caused by the Cycle Superhighway is the closure of Shorter Street near Tower Hill.

This is a short bit of road that enables traffic coming down Mansell Street to the east to turn right so as to go west along Tower Hill and Lower Thames Street. It also enables vehicles parked in the Minorities car park at Tower Hill to go to the west.

They now have no practical route to do this as they can only go straight ahead (across Tower Bridge) or turn left towards The Highway. This writer did complain to TfL that this was nonsensical in the consultation on the proposals but it seems they have taken no notice. A further letter has been sent about this matter.



### Traffic Congestion Increased

An article by David Williams in the London Evening Standard recently reported that traffic congestion in London has been increasing. Apparently data from TomTom reveals that congestion is 14% worse in London than it was five years ago. But it need not be so - congestion in the rest of Europe over that period is 3% down, which surely demonstrates

how damaging have been the policies of Boris Johnson.

TomTom even reported that the "added delay" over free flowing traffic conditions rose by 37% in 2014 alone!

One of the worse routes was the Embankment to Lower Thames Street for a reason you can no doubt guess - the Cycle Superhighway of course. But the new road design at the Elephant & Castle was another hot spot.

## Council Transport Policies Driven by Opinion Not Evidence

The national body of the Alliance of British Drivers (ABD) has issued a press release on bus emissions. This is what it says in brief (the full version is in the ABD's web site):

It has discovered that local authorities are unable to directly compare emissions of car and bus users.

Following a recent FOI by the ABD, it was found that not one

authority questioned was able to provide evidence showing real world comparisons of emissions between Cars and Buses. Only one Authority (Sheffield) had investigated real world bus emissions; and only two authorities questioned were able to provide figures for bus passenger occupancy per km.

The investigation by the ABD shockingly revealed that the average bus occupancy was unbelievably low at just 2.3 passengers per vehicle km during the morning peak period.

Brian Gregory, spokesman for the ABD, slammed local government saying:

"For many years Local Government has been telling drivers to drop their licences and move onto public transport.

This for environmental reasons; yet this advice seems to be driven by a political agenda rather than actual science."

Real world figures provided by Sheffield and Manchester tell us that the average bus passenger emits:

**6.7 times more NO<sub>x</sub> per km than a (Euro 6 diesel) car occupant.**

**Over 37 times more PM<sub>10</sub> particulates per km (Euro3 most common 'bus type)**

**Even the latest 'bus type tested emits:**

**4.8 times more NO<sub>x</sub> per km than a diesel car per occupant.**



**Over 10 times the PM<sub>10</sub> particulates per passenger km of those of a diesel car**

**312g versus 107g CO<sub>2</sub> per km respectively for the typical bus and car occupant.**

Such low average occupancy rates in Manchester - even at peak morning periods - is evidence that there is not the demand for the number of buses scheduled. The result is that emissions per passenger km show that travelling by car is the least polluting option. Britain also has the largest bus fleet in the EU with over 110,000 registered buses, compared to 91,000 in France and just 76,000 in Germany. The current policy of too many (heavily subsidised) scheduled bus services chasing too few passengers has resulted in near-empty buses and unnecessarily high pollution levels.

Local Authorities have the power to insist on air pollution standards for public transport when putting routes out to tender. Bus companies should be made to meet minimum environmental standards by authorities; but the majority of authorities are not exercising those powers.

Mr Gregory added: "Bus providers have been given significant advantages over regular drivers, including dedicated road space and traffic signal priority - this has increased congestion and emissions for other road users. Bus providers also benefit from large public subsidies - despite this, bus occupancy levels have been in steady decline outside London since 2008".

**Ends**

## 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.



## Miscellaneous News

**RideLondon.** Many roads in London and Surrey will be closed on the 30th and 31st July for another "RideLondon" event. This is sponsored by Prudential and any customers or shareholders in Prudential may wish to complain to them about this pandering to a small minority of the population who desire to have "fun" while disrupting the transport network.

**ULEZ.** The Ultra Low Emission Zone arrives in London in 2020 (or earlier if Mayoral Candidate Sadiq Khan has his way). This will cover all types of vehicles at all times, particularly older or diesel vehicles. You need to check what Euro standard your vehicle engine is and look at the V5C registration document.

(Editor: that means as we have explained before, a way to raise money for the police by allowing offenders to submit bribes instead of face prosecution).

Editor's Comments: Well the result of the adoption of a 20 mph speed limit in the City is much as was expected. Indeed the City of London Corporation staff and Members were told it was a waste of money but Mr Presland remains adamant that it is worth doing. He apparently blames some increase in the number of pedestrians and cyclists for the failure to cut accidents without of course producing any evidence for that. It surely is more likely the result of the law of "unintended consequences".

If a vehicle is not compliant it will cost you an extra £12.50 to drive into central London (basically within the existing Congestion Charge, aka tax, area). More information is available on the Transport for London (TfL) web site.

**Bus Usage in London.** Traffic congestion in London is now so bad, that it is affecting bus usage according to TfL They blame road works and rising traffic volumes for the increased congestion when in reality they themselves are likely to be the cause of a lot of the congestion by removal of road space (for example in favour of cyclists).

TfL plan more "interventions" to improve bus journey times, which is no doubt a euphemism for more bus lanes. But they are also talking about removing parking bays and junction redesign.

Or as ABD spokesperson Malcom Haymer said in the pages of LTT:

"The City of London Police have fallen for the claim that there is a relationship between average speed and accident frequency. The research underpinning that claim is flawed.

Where speed contributes to an accident it is inappropriate speed in a specific location and set of circumstances that matters, not average speed over a journey.

**20 Mph Enforcement.** The City of London Police are to step up enforcement of the wide area 20 mph speed limit in the City.



The lower speed limit has failed to reduce casualties. Although average speeds have reduced slightly "the anticipated reduction in casualties has not been achieved" City councillors were told by Steve Presland of the Corporations staff and by Richard Woolford, Acting Police Commander.

In the last 12 months the City of London Police stopped 749 drivers for speeding. They are now to step up enforcement activities and also plan to offer "education courses"



The limitation of speed limit enforcement in accident reduction needs to be recognised. Making speed more important an issue than it deserves, just because speed is easy to measure, is the wrong approach."



### 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.

### Address Changes

Don't forget to notify the ABD of any change of postal or email addresses. You may otherwise miss out on future copies of this newsletter without noticing that they are no longer being delivered.

### 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](http://www.abd.org.uk)

### Contact and Publisher Information

This Newsletter is published by the London Region of the Alliance of British (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 anyone else who has an interest in traffic and transport issues in London. All material contained herein is Copyright of the A.B.D. or of the respective 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. The ABD London Region also publishes a blog which can be found here: <https://abdlondon.wordpress.com/>



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