

# ABD London News

Click on any index item below to go directly to the article in a digital edition.

## In this Edition

ULEZ News

Mayor's Dubious Gesture and Taxi Age Consultation

Sadiq Khan Refuses to Answer Questions, and Lies

Mayor Loses Case in High Court

Legal Action Against Mayor by Minicab Drivers and Cab Driver Protests Escalate

London Air Pollution Alert

Wood Burning Stoves

Permit Parking Charges in Camden, Croydon, Kingston and Lewisham

East Dulwich Permit Parking Scheme and Tony Frew Obituary

Richmond Ignores 20 MPH Vote and 20's Plenty Debunked

Dockless Bike Hire Schemes and Idris Francis Obituary

Mandatory Speed Limiters and Bus Accidents

Media Coverage and City of London Corporation Ignores Representations

See the last page for publisher and contact information.

## Editorial

All through my life there have been major issues of public concern. Typically they are driven by a wave of hysteria and are promoted by young enthusiasts or old fanatics who wish to fix the world. In the 1960s we all worried about the "bomb" and the end of civilisation. In the 1980s and 90s we worried about sexually transmitted diseases and in particular the AIDS epidemic.

In the new millennium we worry about global warming and the environment. It is fact that the general public get enthused about subjects after they are promoted by "thought leaders" just as religious fanatics in the past promoted crusades against infidels and unapproved sexual activity to the point of creating hysteria. Witch hunts are the result. They benefit the leaders of such campaigns but not the followers.

In London the Mayor says there is a public health crisis with thousands of people dying from air pollution despite the fact that no single death has ever been attributed to it directly.

In the Ultra Low Emission Zone the Mayor is dressing up this new tax as a way to improve our health when it will not. It's blatant misleading of the public by a Mayor good at rhetoric but bad at actually managing the capital's finances. The Mayor has manufactured a false emergency so he can say that he is taking urgent and bold action to "save" people from it.



This is no different to any religious crusade, but just as misinformed.

The irrationality in public life is increasing as scientific analysis is ignored in favour of rhetoric. I recently had a letter published in the Financial Times on the subject of the dropping of the use of statistical confidence limits as a basis for determining whether a claim was true or false. It seems some scientists feel that feeble evidence is sufficient. Let us put a stop to this irrationality before it goes too far.

Roger Lawson (Editor)

### Quotes of the Month (some responses to our MTS/ULEZ Campaign)

*"It's nothing to do with environment, just to do with money! First the government tell you to buy Diesel cars, then tell you , they can't be used anymore".....S.V.*

*"My parents live one side of the North Circular and they are very elderly - 92 and 86, and I live on the other side. It will cost me £12.50 every day I visit them, and they need to be visited daily".... L.C.*

*"This is utterly disgusting. It is the pensioners and poorer income households that will suffer the most and this is being imposed by a left wing Labour Mayor! .....S.J.*



## ULEZ News

The Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) will be in place from the 8th April in the central London zone. Non-compliant car owners will have to pay £12.50 per day in addition to the Congestion Charge (a.k.a. Tax) of £11.50. Penalties for not paying are severe.

To check whether your vehicle is compliant go here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/ya4usuqr>

Vans and HGV vehicle drivers will pay even more and even owners of older motorcycles have to pay even though their emissions are very low.

There are numerous anomalies in this tax which will particularly affect those who drive older cars who are typically the poorer members of the community.

But the public is only now waking up to the ULEZ and other aspects of the Mayor's Transport Strategy. The ABD has opposed similar schemes in Birmingham, Bath and elsewhere. Some have already been reconsidered due to local opposition, but the Mayor of London is not listening.

The ABD is continuing to distribute leaflets in London to generate support for our campaign and opposition to the Mayor's policies. We have also produced a poster to put in shop, home or office windows (see above).



Those who drive very expensive modern supercars or luxury vehicles with large engines will not be paying even though the emissions from them are high.

Those who bought diesel vehicles only a few years ago, encouraged by the Government because of their lower CO2 emissions, will now find they are paying this tax or will have to buy a new vehicle.

In reality the ULEZ is a tax designed to bolster the Mayor of London's income to fix his mismanagement of the Transport for London budget. The tax could take over £1 billion per year out of the London economy and yet it is unlikely to significantly improve the air quality in London.

Mayor Sadiq Khan claims there is a public health crisis from air pollution in London so as to justify these new taxes but that is simply not true.

There is in addition a rear window sticker for vehicles (see photograph below).

We can supply a few window stickers to any reader of this newsletter free of charge. Just let us know how many you want and where to send them by contacting us via our web site here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/y4txdeot>

You can order the large posters for a nominal charge from here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/y4xhvl26>

More information on why the Mayor's attack on London's air pollution is misconceived is available from this web page:

<https://tinyurl.com/y9sgwedh>

Readers should make sure they tell the Mayor what they think about this new tax and his misleading of the public.

Roger Lawson



## HALT THE ULEZ

The Mayor of London is imposing an Ultra Low Emission Zone across much of London which means many car owners will either be paying £12.50 per day or will have to buy a new vehicle. It won't solve air pollution problems and is just another tax. Make sure you object.



Published by the Alliance of British Drivers (London);  
[www.freedomfordrivers.org](http://www.freedomfordrivers.org)



In 2021 this tax will be extended to everywhere within the North/South Circular which will affect millions of car owners in London. The Alliance of British Drivers has been opposing the ULEZ scheme since it was announced.



## Mayor's Dubious Gesture and Taxi Age Consultation

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, has announced more money for his "scrap for cash" fund. Previously this trade-in scheme for older more polluting vehicles had funds allocated of £25 million but it's now £48 million. This is particularly designed to help small business owners to replace vans and to help "low-income Londoners scrap older cars", i.e. the vast majority of vehicle owners will not be eligible. However, details of the additional scrappage scheme won't be available until later in the year, despite the fact that the central zone ULEZ commences in April.

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## Mayor's Gesture (Cont.)

Details of even the first scheme for vans do not seem to be available from TfL. In reality the amount of money being offered will not cover the vast majority of costs incurred by people in replacing cars and vans, so this looks like a token gesture.

The Mayor did of course promote this scheme at a recent Clean Air Summit meeting where he had children support his actions in the audience. Likewise at a recent London Assembly Committee meeting. They had clearly been well-rehearsed by their teachers. Some of these children came from Henry Maynard Primary in Walthamstow. If you think it is wrong for uneducated children to be used to promote dubious

policies which are primarily aimed at raising taxes rather than solving real air pollution issues, you could contact the school here:

<https://tinyurl.com/y4s3ua6w>

The Mayor is a serial offender in using children to support his political campaigning as the ABD has covered previously. Does he have no ethics?

The Mayor has also launched a public consultation on changes to the age limits of taxis. Older diesel taxis are undoubtedly some of the most polluting vehicles in central London, but will his changes actually have an impact on pollution? There is a very long phase in time which means that the taxi vehicle fleet might change substantially anyway. There is also still only one electric charging point for taxis in central London so any taxi owner



would be unlikely to move to an electric vehicle until that issue is resolved.



Note that these proposals replace previous ones that have not worked. As the Consultation says: "in spite of previous steps to reduce taxi emissions, the required reduction in emissions has not been achieved". But there is no clear estimate provided of the impact of the new proposed measures on air pollution. And as usual with TfL consultations of late, no cost/benefit justification is provided as there should be.

## Mayor Sadiq Khan Refuses to Answer Questions

At a recent session of the Greater London Assembly where Sadiq Khan was supposed to answer questions, he repeatedly refused to answer simple questions about the ULEZ and his view on road pricing.

You can see the session here:

<https://tinyurl.com/yxhrt8l>

It's well worth watching to see just how bad is the current Mayor. He also grandstands to children who were in the audience and makes totally false allegations about the impact of air pollution.

The meeting was badly chaired by Tony Arbour but Sadiq Khan even abused him for being partial.

Bluster, pomposity and personal abuse is the approach of the Mayor to quite simple questions. Let us hope the general public will learn just what this man is like sooner or later.

## Mayor Lies

On the 14<sup>th</sup> March there was a "People's Question Time" in Bexley where Mayor Sadiq Khan answered questions from the public (see photo above).



It commenced by the Mayor suggesting that London's roads were unsafe because he had no control over road safety in response to a question on junction improvement. He claimed that 95% of the roads are controlled by local boroughs, suggesting it was their fault. But in reality, the Mayor via TfL controls almost all the money spent on roads and road safety.

TfL dictates what projects local boroughs can spend money on by only funding what they like. In addition they dictate transport strategy directly.

*Continued in next page.*



## Mayor Lies (Cont.)

As a result of the powers of TfL (who report to the Mayor), boroughs are forced to spend hundreds of millions of pounds on 20 mph wide area speed limits that have been proven to be totally ineffective, on cycle lanes, speed hump schemes and other pointless measures.

The Mayor was also criticised for spending £400 million on the proposed Rotherhithe cycle/pedestrian bridge, and when it came to policing there was applause from the audience when one person suggested he could solve the crime problem overnight by just diverting money spent on cycle lanes to the police.

When discussing public transport the Mayor said that London is the only city in the world that is not subsidised by Government.

**That is simply not true.** TfL receives £3.2 billion in grants which is 31% of TfL's income. Most of that money comes from taxes and much comes from central Government – see <https://tinyurl.com/y3u2ka5b>

In response to questions on the environment the Mayor said that London air is a killer which is a gross exaggeration. But he got one point right – namely that diesel buses are a major problem. He said the worst areas for air pollution in London are those with the most buses. He said they are not buying any more diesel buses and are retrofitting existing ones.

He got criticism on the ULEZ but apparently expects central Government to bail out folks who cannot afford to buy a new car, which is highly unlikely to happen.

His final major point was to promote another referendum on Brexit.

What a pity that Parliament ruled it out the same day which probably pleased the audience

### Mayor's Tax Precept Rises

There were a number of criticisms of the Mayor's financial policies at the meeting described above. London residents may have just realised that their local Council Tax is rising significantly this year and one reason is that the Mayor's tax precept that you pay in your Council Tax, and is passed through to the GLA, is rising by 8.93%. That's way ahead of inflation and is another example of the Mayor's financial incompetence.

## Follow the Blog

The ABD London region has a blog where many of the articles herein first appeared. It is present here:

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

## Mayor Loses Case in High Court over CS11

Sadiq Khan, has lost a judicial review case on Cycle Superhighway 11. That was proposed to cover the Swiss Cottage gyratory, Avenue Road and the road around Regents Park which would be mainly closed to vehicles. We published an article by objector Danny Michelson in November 2016 which gives more details: <http://tinyurl.com/ydh4wc8b>. The picture above is how Transport for London envisaged the Swiss Cottage junction would look – as usual a very optimistic and unrealistic view!



The City of Westminster launched the judicial review on the basis that there had been inadequate consultation and TfL had ignored their objections on the matter. They suggested the proposals would cause more traffic congestion. High Court judge Sir Ross Cranston ruled in their favour.

TfL may appeal the case, otherwise they will have to go back to the drawing board and possibly do another consultation.

**Comment:** Swiss Cottage is one of the key road junctions in London for North/South traffic and Regents Park is also an important route for vehicles. Swiss Cottage road junction is far from perfect and no doubt could be improved in a number of ways, including provision for better cycle safety. But this scheme was badly designed and there was no justification for all the road closures to vehicles. It's a case of the Mayor not listening to objectors as we have seen many times recently. The only folks who supported this scheme were the very vociferous cycling lobby but they need to listen to the concerns of other people also.

## Legal Action Against Mayor by Minicab Drivers

PHV (Minicab) drivers are incensed by the recent steps by the Mayor of London and TfL to make them pay the London Congestion Charge while licensed taxis will continue to receive an exemption. That and the proposed ULEZ charges will threaten the livelihoods of minicab drivers who are relatively poorly paid already. Many will have to give up and end up out of work.

They are supported by the Independent Works Union and have issued a “pre-action” letter to Mayor Sadiq Khan, prior to the launch of a judicial review.

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I promoted the ABD’s campaign against the Mayor’s Transport Strategy and the ULEZ and emphasised it’s all about raising taxes to fix holes in the Mayor’s budget in in a brief speech at the UPHD meeting. PHV drivers are very unhappy about losing their exemption from the Congestion Charge and of course the new ULEZ charges also. This could destroy their livelihoods, particularly of smaller operators. They think the black cab drivers are being favoured but they are not happy either.

But the demos both groups of drivers are running are not having much impact. The BBC TV news and press media aren’t even covering them of late, despite the major disruption they cause to traffic. Perhaps they need to escalate the demonstrations and block the roads for longer and in a wider area to ensure Mayor Sadiq Khan pays attention!

They are also claiming that as most minicab drivers are BAME (black, coloured or from ethnic minorities) while most taxi drivers are white, this is indirect discrimination.

**Editor’s Comment:** Such drivers are certainly incensed by this proposed change as I saw at a recent meeting I attended. There does not seem to be any rational reason for treating one set of cab drivers different to another, particularly as the likely impact on the number of PHV drivers in central London is not forecast to change much. It will of course affect some drivers much more than others.

We wish them the best of luck with a judicial review although these are not easy legal proceedings (I have been involved in more than one), and depend on a lot more than the moral arguments.

## Cab Driver Protests Escalating

Your editor attended a meeting of PHV (minicab) drivers in Hackney recently (members of the UPHD – see [www.uphd.org](http://www.uphd.org)). They had just finished blocking Tower Bridge for an hour or so, have done other similar demonstrations and plan more. Everyone has realised that blocking London bridges is exceedingly easy.

Black cab drivers have also done demos outside Parliament and at Bank in the City – about roads being closed to them (and of course to all other vehicles except buses) at Aldwych, Tottenham Court Road, Bank Junction, etc.



## London Air Pollution Alert, or Perhaps Not

On 26/2/2019 Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, issued an “Air Pollution Alert” in a press release (see <https://tinyurl.com/yxud56ya>). He claimed that this is evidence of London’s air quality crisis and why we need the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) which will result in Londoners paying millions of pounds in taxes.

But if you read further down the press release it says: “This is due to a combination of poorly dispersed local emissions and sustained import of particulates from Germany and France” and he goes on to say this will get worse on Tuesday. But he omitted to mention that the winds from the south are also bringing dust from the Sahara.

This was covered in the Financial Times where Alexander de Meij of MetClim is quoted as saying “it is a rare phenomenon because of the Sahara dust” and added that local and European pollution were contributing factors.

Despite all these hysterics, at Wednesday lunchtime, when air pollution was forecast to be “high”, according to the London Air Quality Network it was in reality only “moderate”.

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## London Air Pollution Alert (Cont.)

The lack of the normal wind and rain in London did not help perhaps but that soon changed of course.

Readers are reminded that emissions from vehicles are only one contributor to outside air pollution in London and are in decline as they have been for many years. We reported recently on how air pollution on the Underground is much worse and noted how air pollution inside people's homes is also relatively poor. That was confirmed in a recent report from the University of Texas in the USA where a study of cooking in a typical American home showed high levels of pollutants was the result.

Even simply cooking toast raised particle levels substantially. Meanwhile, you might be surprised to learn that the UK Government is funding activist lawyers ClientEarth through the Foreign Aid Budget – that's an organisation that has actually been launching legal actions against the UK Government.

As a result, local councils have been introducing Clean Air Zones with charges on vehicle users, such as the ULEZ in London. But do they have any impact, such as protecting the health of children or anyone else? The answer is no according to this report from the Taxpayers Alliance:

<https://tinyurl.com/y4unc3gp>

The conclusion must be that these impositions are about extracting money from vehicle users rather than a motive of improving health because they will not do so.

The Mayor's latest scaremongering is just another example of how he is using scare tactics to get people to support the ULEZ.

The Mayor is promoting London as an "Open" city, but perhaps he should try closing it to air pollution from the EU and North Africa. An imitation of King Canute would be appropriate perhaps?

## Wood Burning Stoves

**The ABD has issued the following Press release: Are Drivers Paying for Air Pollution from Wood Burning Stoves?**

Wood burning is now the largest single source of particulates (PM2.5) in the UK, at least twice as much as from traffic.



Clean air policies in towns and cities around the UK, which will charge non-compliant vehicles in Clean Air Zones (CAZ) or Low Emission Zones (LEZ), look doomed to fail thanks to yet another 'green' mistake.

It was the Cameron government that encouraged wood burning stoves and provided exemptions from the Clean Air Act in 2012 (1).

ABD Environment spokesman Paul Biggs said: "I was one of the first people to point out the folly of wood burning in a letter to Local Transport Today published in January 2014. Five years later my fears for the effects on air quality have been proved to be correct. One log-burning stove in a smokeless zone can produce more PM2.5 than 1000 petrol cars, 18 times as much pollution as

a modern diesel car, and 6 times as much pollution as a diesel lorry.

CAZ charges are just another example of drivers being used as an easy target for the primary purpose of revenue raising."

Wood burning stoves have a much longer life than cars so pose a long-term threat to air quality while the car fleet will continue to become cleaner as newer vehicles replace older ones.

## Changes of Email Addresses

Please note that the editor of this newsletter is changing his email addresses. In future those who wish to contact the Editor (Roger Lawson) should not use any of his previous email addresses but instead use the Contact page on the ABD London web site. See:

<https://www.freedomfordrivers.org/contact.htm>



## Permit Parking Charges Hiked in Camden

The London Borough of Camden is proposing sharp increases in permit parking charges. That will particularly apply to larger engined or older vehicles that emit more than 225 g/km of CO<sub>2</sub>/km.

5. I have no choice not just because I need my car but also because I cannot stop you. Therefore Camden will continue to 'gouge the motorist' simply because we are an easy target.

This is lazy administration and fundamentally unfair. Also I have no choice not just because I need my car or because I can't stop you but also because I can't vote this administration out of power. Camden is a solid Labour council and constituency. Therefore I am and have always been politically unrepresented and unprotected from policy excesses such as this one."

**Comment:** this is certainly an unjustifiable increase and is probably unlawful in that it appears to be a revenue raising measure rather than just covering the costs of administration and enforcement. Residents should consider legal action.

Charges for those will rise from £296 p.a. to £475 p.a. and there will be an increased "diesel surcharge" of £102. Smaller vehicles face even larger increases on a percentage basis. These proposals are part of the councils Clean Air Action Plan. This is some of what one local resident had to say to Councillor Brenda Busingye:

"1. The proposed charges represent an increase of over 70% (in my case) which is an outrageous increase for any tax under any administration.

2. There is no justification for increasing this tax other than your stated 'vision' which is based on a narrow, highly politicised and anti-car ownership bias. Millions of ordinary people depend on private transport and the alternatives simply do not provide the facilities required. I am one of them.

## Higher Permit Parking Charges in Croydon, Kingston and Lewisham

Now Croydon, Kingston and Lewisham are proposing similar changes to those in Camden covered above. In Croydon it will mean the permit parking charge for a vehicle emitting more than 225 g/km of CO<sub>2</sub> will rise from £80 to £300. There will also be an additional surcharge of 30% for pre-2015 diesel vehicles. It is also proposed to introduce similar increases for Pay & Display Parking Spaces. There is more information and a link to the full council report in this Inside Croydon article: <https://tinyurl.com/y4pfwj99>

3. There is no recognition in either the existing or proposed charges that, with Euro VI standards and new technology, diesel cars are now amongst the cleanest, producing far less CO<sub>2</sub> than petrol equivalents and far less NO<sub>x</sub> emissions (note that it was a Labour government that whole-heartedly promoted diesel as a means of reducing greenhouse emissions which is one of the reasons I bought one).

4. Although it is true to say that electric vehicles are the future (and I am a big supporter), the technology in terms of range (a particular issue for me), charging infrastructure and cost means this option is still years away for most people. That is unless you happen to be very wealthy (I am not) in which case for such individuals the parking permit charges would not be an issue.



The justification is to reduce air pollution and help with climate change when levels of CO<sub>2</sub> have no impact on public health whatsoever – if anything higher CO<sub>2</sub> levels have benefits for plants and animals. So it's fundamentally misconceived. There is also no evidence that such charges will have any impact on air pollution as anyone with off-street parking will not be affected, many vehicles that drive on Croydon roads do not park in the borough and most problem emissions such as particulates are from buses, HGVs and LGVs which won't be affected.

Although the Council has not yet published the impact it will have on money raised by the borough from permit parking charges, it is likely to lead to very substantial increases. Readers are reminded that permit parking charges can not be used as a revenue raising measure.

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## Permit Parking (Cont.)

This is well established by previous legal cases (Camden v Cran and in Barnet).

There will be a public consultation on these proposals – residents of affected boroughs are encouraged to respond.

### Kingston Council

Very similar proposals are also being put forward by Kingston Council. See <https://tinyurl.com/yxdss7do>. In Kingston the highest rate will be £350 per annum plus an additional £50 for diesel vehicles (even diesel hybrid ones). Affected residents should submit objections.

These changes are undoubtedly being encouraged by Transport for London (TfL) as part of the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

Parking spaces will also be reduced by the introduction of "parklets" – where bays are converted to mini "open spaces" with planting and seating.

What is likely to happen is that residents will simply find that they are paying for a previously free parking space, but that they find it even more difficult to find a parking space. Indeed they may find that they are paying to park outside their home but cannot do so!

The ABD consistently opposes permit parking schemes because they do not provide any more parking spaces so are generally simply a way for councils to extract taxes from residents, most of which is wasted on administration of such schemes.

This scheme, and the increases in permit parking charges covered in the previous articles,

But the attempt to improve public health by introducing emission based parking charges is fundamentally misconceived and will not work. It's all about money as usual with Councils of late.

### Diesel Surcharges

The London Boroughs of Brent, Ealing and Hounslow are also planning surcharges on parking for diesel vehicles. In Brent these will start at £50 for parking permits but will rise to £100 in 2020, and will raise an additional £500,000 for the council initially.

## East Dulwich Permit Parking Scheme

Southwark Council are proposing to introduce a permit parking scheme in East Dulwich. They ran a public consultation on it but that has now closed.

are exactly the kind of proposals to discourage car ownership by Sadiq Khan in his Mayor's Transport Strategy which the ABD has been opposing. The money to implement this scheme will no doubt come from the Mayor via TfL.

Residents and businesses in the area should make sure they object.

## Tony Frew Obituary

We regret to announce the death of Tony Frew, Professor of Allergy and Respiratory Medicine at the Brighton and Sussex Medical School. He was outspoken about the exaggerations that are being made about the impact of air pollution on health. For example, he said on the BBC that getting rid of ALL the transport in London



East Dulwich is an area of narrow streets, with little off-street parking but with many residents owning cars, sometimes more than one. On-street parking is often difficult, made worse by the introduction of permit parking schemes in adjacent areas. See photo above.

The Council expects the scheme to reduce kerbside parking by 40%. Where are the vehicles going to go? The Consultation does not say. It also does not indicate the level of charges that will apply.



would only have a marginal benefit for people who live there. See this interview in April 2018: <https://tinyurl.com/yxvbhj4v>

He said: "At the moment for Millennials, the median life expectancy is in the mid-90s. So you are going to live to 95. If you get rid of all that [transport] pollution and nothing else happens, you might live to 95 and one month. We have to ask ourselves whether that extra month is a worthwhile benefit in return for not having any cars or any public transport or any delivery vehicles."

There is tribute web page to Professor Frew here that gives more details on his life:

<https://tony-frew.muchloved.com/>

## Richmond Ignores 20 Mph Vote, and Wandsworth's Doubtful Claims

The London Borough of Richmond is set to ignore a public consultation where a majority of respondents opposed the introduction of a borough-wide 20 mph speed limit. The almost 10,000 respondents voted 47.9% in favour and 49.7% against. There was even less support for the notion that 20 mph speed limits will improve air quality and reduce car use.

However they have made some changes to the original proposals with more roads excluded from the scheme.

implementation period is known to distort the figures. A three-year before and after period is recommended by road safety engineers to avoid temporary reactions to perceived road changes.

But Wandsworth is claiming it as a success anyway and is looking to impose 20 mph limits on some major roads such as Putney High Street.

## 20s Plenty Debunked

There was extensive correspondence in the pages of Local Transport Today (LTT), a publication read by traffic engineers, on the DfT report analysing 20 mph wide-area schemes. Rod King of campaigning group 20's plenty attempted to debunk it with false claims.

Note that the LibDems won control of Richmond Council in 2018 when it had previously been Conservative controlled. They took over from LibDems in 2010 after the latter repeatedly ignored public opinion, e.g. over emission-based permit parking charges.

**Comment:** It looks like the LibDems are back to ignoring the results of public consultations, presumably because they think they know better. A very dubious decision which they will surely live to regret.

### Wandsworth Claim 20 Mph Success, But Is It?

Meanwhile the neighbouring London Borough of Wandsworth have claimed a success for their borough-wide 20 Mph scheme which was implemented in 2017.

Analysis of the first year post implementation data indicated a reduction of 9% in casualties

They printed the following note from your editor in response:

"The letter from Rod King of 20s Plenty on the "Flaws in the DfT's 20mph limit evaluation" deserves a response in defence. He seems to be "in denial" about the facts of the matter as given in the Department for Transport's report which is the most authoritative to date on the subject.

That's apart from the many other individual reports from locations such as Portsmouth, Bristol, Oxford, Warrington, the City of London and in Hampshire that I have read. That does not even include those locations where no reports have been produced by local councils perhaps because there was recognition that expensive signed-only 20 mph speed limits had no impact on road casualties.



although mean traffic speeds only fell by 0.6 mph. On that basis they have claimed it to be a success although casualties actually fell by 28% across all roads in the borough (which includes the Transport for London controlled main roads where the speed limit generally remained unchanged).

The other problem with this data is that using



The various reports are consistent in not demonstrating any statistically significant reduction in road accident casualties below national trends and in showing that the average speed reduction is typically less than 1 mph. It is incredible that anyone would believe that accidents can be significantly reduced by such small reductions in speed.

Mr King complains specifically about the failure to report on the cost/benefits of such schemes by the DfT. That is indeed a valid complaint but perhaps it was not included in the report because it is almost impossible to show any benefit when accidents are not significantly reduced.

Indeed the reduction in traffic speed, albeit very small at typically less than 1 mph, could be a very significant cost when multiplied over many journeys by



many people. There might be an alleged benefit in improved health of the population from possible modal shift to walking and cycling but no studies I have seen actually demonstrate that there is any real impact on modal shift as a result of such schemes - that's as opposed to asking people leading questions about their personal travel habits when they give the answers required.

He also complains about the use of median speeds as opposed to average speeds which he alleges "dampens the impact of slower moving vehicles", but it also dampens the impact of faster moving vehicles. It is a truism that averages can be skewed by exceptional outliers so statistically it is sounder to use median speeds.

He also suggests that "lack of police commitment to enforcement was recognised as the primary factor in low compliance with the limit".

That may be suggested in the DfT report but that is a dubious

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then road safety can be substantially improved and compliance with the applicable speed limit can be increased. But such schemes are very expensive which is why councils have been adopting wide-area signed only schemes. The latter are comparatively cheaper but even those can cost hundreds of thousands of pounds – for example in Croydon several areas cost £300,000 each. If such schemes have no impact on overall road casualties (as the DfT report makes plain), then money is being spent on ineffective measures that would be better spent on other road safety programmes. One can only conclude that campaigners for wide-area signed only 20 mph limits are actually causing more deaths and casualties than would otherwise be the case if the money was better spent.

assumption. Suggesting that the fact that such schemes did not produce the expected improvements is down to the lack of enforcement is wrong. An example is the City of London Corporation which covers the "Square Mile". They introduced a signed only 20 mph speed limit across the whole of the City in 2016.

There has also been very active enforcement by the police with hundreds of drivers being fined as a result. But the impact on accidents has been insignificant. To quote from their latest "City of London Transport Strategy" document (page 51) "In 2017, 54 people were killed or seriously injured in traffic collisions on the City's streets ..... The number of people killed and seriously injured in the Square Mile has unfortunately remained relatively consistent at approximately 50 a year since 2010". One can argue as to how effective the enforcement might have been, but in reality to enforce a 20 mph limit when drivers see it as irrelevant would require a policeman or speed camera permanently

Mr King also refers to the adoption of the 30-mph speed limit for urban areas in 1934 and considers that it now "inappropriate". He needs to study history some more. Prior to 1930 Great Britain had a blanket 20 mph speed limit across the whole country. But road deaths in the year before this limit was abandoned were about 7,300 compared with about 1,900 in recent years. They also fell in the

years immediately after 1930 when they had been rising before. So the moral is surely that wide area speed limits are ineffective in reducing road traffic accidents and that simply putting up signs without road engineering or other measures will have negligible impact on casualties. That is exactly of course what the Department of Transport used to say.

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Our Twitter handle is **@Drivers\_London**

Any new ABD London blog posts are notified by Twitter and you can of course respond with your own comments.

located on every 100 yards of road – clearly an unaffordable proposition.

He complains about the lack of comparison of wide-area 20 limits to those with physical traffic calming. But the study was only ever intended to look at signed-only 20 mph limits. It is undoubtedly the case that where a reduced speed limit is combined with road engineering measures



Mr King has been very active in promoting the religion of speed reduction and simply gives the impression that he is "clutching at straws" to find reasons why the DfT report does not support his arguments. But clearly it does not as regards signed-only schemes.

I suggest that Mr King's enthusiasm and campaigning skills be redirected to more effective road safety measures such as road engineering or driver education. But I suspect that he won't renounce his religion easily after recruiting so many acolytes to his questionable cause.



## Dockless Bike Hire Schemes Fading Away, and TfL Scheme

Dockless bike hire is where cycles can be picked up, used and then discarded anywhere on the streets of a city, for a small fee. That contrasts with the TfL/Santander bike hire scheme in London where you can only retrieve and return bikes from docking stations. Dockless bike hire has taken off in some cities across the world, and a number of operators launched such schemes in London.

The Guardian ran an article recently on the success, or otherwise, of such schemes under the heading "Life cycle: is it the end for Britain's dockless bike schemes?"

See: <http://tinyurl.com/y37ugqc3>

Many operators who launched in the UK have found to their cost that there are high levels of theft and vandalism of bikes. In addition, many local councils (i.e. boroughs in London) have opposed their introduction because it means that bikes get abandoned on streets, often causing obstruction. Some boroughs have taken to removing bikes unless the operator is approved, although technically they do not have to be licensed as yet. This means that as some boroughs have approved operators but others not, bikes cannot be ridden across borough boundaries without the risk of seizure.

Failures include oBike who put 1,330 bikes in London in July 2017 and withdrew them four months later. Wandsworth impounded many of them as they appeared without warning they claimed. Ofo, a very large Chinese company, launched in London but is now withdrawing altogether from the UK.

**Comment:** Clearly an example of a "good idea" which ignored the amount of criminal activity and general vandalism in some parts of London. An example of an unproven business model which has yet to demonstrate it can be run as a viable economic business.

But is the TfL "docked" scheme economic? The answer is no. It lost £3.7 million in 2017/18 even after the sponsorship income of £6.3 million from Santander. So losses are about equal to the fare income in reality. Or to put it another way, the fares paid by users cover less than half the operating costs. That year was similar to the previous year and the one before that was even worse. Clearly a totally uneconomic solution for the transport needs of London users, heavily subsidised by other TfL income (which is mainly bus/tube fares and taxes) and by Santander.

You can see more detail on the economics of the TfL scheme here: <http://tinyurl.com/y44cyebj>



management as Sadiq Khan has shown repeatedly with TfL running up large deficits while Boris Johnson wasted £43 million of public money on the "Garden Bridge" before

it was recently abandoned altogether. Politicians are good at spending your money, and politicking it seems so as to pander to the whims of the electorate, but not at managing budgets and staying within their income. That's one reason why Mr Khan is so keen to raise taxes via the ULEZ scheme.

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Roger Lawson

## Idris Francis Obituary

Idris Francis has died aged 79. A doughty motoring campaigner over many years, Idris led the Strasbourg challenge to the authoritarian s.172(4) of the Road Traffic Act 1988. He went on to become an expert in speed cameras, exposing police lies and misuse of statistics.

Highly intelligent, he graduated with a first class engineering degree from the University of Wales in 1960. The scientific method never left him. A talented inventor, Idris founded his own engineering company and invented the contactless joystick, now used worldwide. He was also a great enthusiast for classic cars.

## Mandatory Speed Limiters: Danger, Diktat and Big Brother Rolled into One

The ABD has issued the following press release:

The Alliance of British Drivers (ABD) are demanding a full public consultation by the UK Government over a wide-ranging EU compulsory Intelligent Speed Adaptation (ISA) policy that has serious implications for a number of issues including privacy via 'Black Boxes.'

ABD spokesman Paul Biggs said: "Previous trials of so-called 'Intelligent Speed Adaptation'

have suggested an increased risk of inappropriate speed UNDER the posted limit due to 'foot to the floor' driving style in the knowledge that the speed limit can't be exceeded. Driving too fast for the prevailing road conditions is already a bigger contributory factor than the 5% of accidents where exceeding the speed limit is a factor. Many speed limits have been reduced to unreasonable levels, which causes enormous frustration for drivers. Setting speed limits correctly in the first place achieves the greatest compliance."

Poor observation remains the number one factor in accidents. In car technology should be used to give drivers the information they need to make them safer drivers rather than undermining their ability via Big Brother external control that also tracks and data logs the vehicle.

It's also clear that the EU intends to make sure that there will be no 'off switch' a short time after ISA is introduced.

**Readers of this press release should complain to their Member of Parliament and request they ask Ministers to block this proposal, whether we are in the EU or not.**

Ends

## The Most Congested Roads in the UK

The BBC has reported on congested roads in the UK and rates the North Circular Road (A406) as the worst. Needless to say, other London roads such as the A23, Kingsway/Strand and the A1203 (The Highway) also rate highly.

The report is based on information from Inrix who estimated that London drivers lost about 227 hours each on average to congestion. London is by far the worst city in the country for traffic congestion. For example in Leeds only 143 hours are lost. Is it surprising that many companies have expanded operations in Leeds as opposed to London?

What have the current and past Mayor's done about traffic congestion in London? Basically done nothing but make it worse. The Congestion Charge scheme has been an abysmal failure and the growth in PHV (minicab) use and internet deliveries have contributed more recently. Schemes such as cycle superhighways on the Embankment which reduced 2 lanes to 1 on a major east-west route have also made congestion worse – that is why The Highway is congested as traffic backs up from Lower/Upper Thames Street all the way there.

Transport for London (TfL) and the Mayor Sadiq Khan think they can reduce congestion by encouraging modal shift – persuading people to cycle or use public transport – but that simply does not work. They need to rethink their approach. The current Mayor's Transport Strategy is already proving to be an abject failure.

You can read the BBC report here: <https://tinyurl.com/yyrv44cz>

## Bus Accidents Kill Too Many People



The trade union GMB have complained about the number of people killed or seriously injured by buses on London's roads. There were 45 people killed and 1,017 seriously injured in the last 5 years, which is certainly a large number which should be tackled.



## Bus Accidents (Cont.)

The GMB, which represents bus drivers, claimed one of the causes is the pressure put on bus drivers to drive fast so as to meet schedules and punctuality targets. They also blamed the culture at TfL. GMB regional secretary Warren Kenny was quoted as saying “Sadiq Khan has to get a grip on the problem he inherited from the past managers who designed the outsourced killing machines that TfL presides over”.

But is the problem as simple as suggested? Many of these accidents involve pedestrians stepping off the pavement in front of buses without looking. Others are cyclists hit by turning buses or being squeezed under the wheels. Other accidents arise from injuries to bus passengers as they are jolted by abrupt

braking or turns, or from pedestrians being clipped by bus wing mirrors. It is possible that drivers are having difficulty in meeting timetables as buses have been slowed by increasing traffic congestion of late. But it seems unlikely that bus drivers are deliberately driving more dangerously. They can be traumatised by accidents to pedestrians so no experienced driver would risk such an accident. Perhaps there is an issue of driver recruitment and education.

But all the above are hypotheses. Clearly more research is needed into the causes of such accidents and how to prevent them. It is an unfortunate fact that when it comes to road traffic accidents, those with little knowledge are all too quick to jump to conclusions without examination of the detailed accidents statistics, and research into specific accidents and their causes.

## City of London Corporation Ignores Representations

We reported previously on the consultation by the City of London Corporation (effectively one of the London boroughs) on their future transport strategy – see <https://tinyurl.com/yd3qne6c>

The ABD opposed several aspects of the proposals including a City-wide speed limit of 15 mph and a zero emission vehicle only standard for the whole of the City. The “Unblock” body also made representations to change the routing of the East-West Cycle Superhighway from the Upper/Lower Thames Street route.



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The Corporation has now reported on the results of the consultation and its proposed decisions. Although there were many individual objections by organisations and individuals, no significant changes to the proposals, including the points above, are being considered.

The reason is because there was overall support for reducing road traffic and putting walking first – as most of the respondents to the consultation will have been City workers, that may not be surprising.

But it totally ignores the needs for those who have to service business activity in the City, and the practicality of these proposals. It seems that the City Corporation has been captured by the irrational anti-vehicle fanatics.

## Media Coverage

On the 25th March Roger Lawson did an interview with Venessa Feltz on the ULEZ for BBC Radio London. Alex Williams of TfL claimed that the ULEZ was needed for health reasons, but he is simply wrong. As was pointed out, there is no public health crisis in London as the Mayor claims. The ULEZ is just an excuse by the Mayor to raise tax to fix his budget problems. Also on the programme was Gareth Bacon who leads the Conservative Party on the Greater London Assembly. He opposed the expansion of the ULEZ to the North/South Circular.

Two ABD directors, Ian Taylor and Brian MacDowall, recently spoke to the Daily Express about the problems faced by motorists.

You can view a video of their interviews including driving around parts of London here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2p6qjpa>

In summary they say that drivers are finding it evermore “frustrating, inconvenient and expensive” to use the roads with the introduction of new speed cameras and changes to the London Congestion Charge likely to cost road users in the pocket.

Ian Taylor claimed that every measure introduced by the Government “seems to hit the British driver in the pocket” and said that “Whether it be ordinary parking charges, workplace parking charges, it is always hitting you in the pocket, and always trying to exert greater control over every aspect of where you go and what you do.”

They also criticised the Congestion Charge and ULEZ taxes.





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### 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 (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 ABD London region web site at [www.freedomfordrivers.org](http://www.freedomfordrivers.org)

### 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://abdondon.wordpress.com/> or you can follow us on Twitter here: [https://twitter.com/Drivers\\_London](https://twitter.com/Drivers_London)



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Go here for membership information: [www.freedomfordrivers.org/membership.htm](http://www.freedomfordrivers.org/membership.htm)