

ABD represented at the House of Commons

Have you seen ABD chairman Ian Taylor giving evidence to the House of Commons Transport Select Committee?

He was invited to join a debate in Westminster about pavement parking - with footage being broadcast online.

Ian said: "It was a daunting challenge, being a rep from a small group, up against strident organisations like Living Streets and local authorities eyeing the prospect of levying fines against drivers.

"I needn't have worried, though. Questions



Ian Taylor took part in a debate at Westminster

were quite probing but good natured - I've had far worse treatment from BBC radio presenters!"

Find out more - and how you can watch the video footage of Ian giving evidence, on pages 8 and 9.

Don't take us back in time

Politically-motivated environmental extremists who are behind the declaration of a 'climate emergency' will never be satisfied - even if we return to the Stone Age.

That's the view of the ABD, in response to the news that two UK cities have now declared car-free days.

"No-one dies from modern levels of air pollution in the UK - there are no death certificates or coroners' reports citing air pollution as a cause of death," the ABD says.

"Since 1970, according to Defra, NOx emissions have been reduced by 72% and particulates by 79%. If there ever was an air pollution 'crisis' or 'emergency' it was in the middle of the 20th century and certainly not in the 21st century.

"In the ABD's view, claims to the contrary are nothing more than a taxation and restrictions opportunity for the political class, backed by dishonest attacks on transport and the economy by politically motivated environmental extremists who will never be satisfied even if we return to the Stone Age."

The ability to continue driving into our towns and cities is a common theme through this issue.

ABD member Peter Horton has put pen to paper to challenge plans to scrap the proposed dual carriageway scheme around York.

- See Pages 5 and 13

AGM - a chance to have your say

BRITISH 
MOTOR
 **MUSEUM**

The ABD is returning to the British Motor Museum at Gaydon in Warwickshire for its annual general meeting this year.

Save the date: It's on Saturday October 12th, starting at 10.45am. Members will receive a notice nearer the time.

Director Brian Macdowall says: "It's your chance to comment and offer support on our activities - there have been several important changes over the last year, designed to improve our effectiveness.

"Your help and support is vital for our campaigning success, so please come along and join in!"

Who are we, and what do we do? To join or donate to the ABD, visit www.abd.org.uk

The ABD campaign for: Improved road user training ● Real transport choices ● Investment in Britain's roads ● Honesty on transport issues

Letter C is for ...

C is for ... CONFRONTATION

At a TaxPayers' Alliance panel discussion on HS2, Ian Taylor found himself in a direct public confrontation with Shaun Bailey, the Conservative candidate for Mayor of London. Shaun is against HS2 but when challenged over our suggestion for roads to get a lion's share of any money saved, he came out and said a big 'no' - he is for prioritising railways. More about this on page 11.

C is for ... COLLABORATION

Later that same evening (in the pub!) Ian was in conversation with the TPA's National Grassroots man, Harry Fone. The TPA are about to launch campaigns against workplace parking charges, now being considered by a number of councils. We would like to stop these too but lack sufficient local organisation 'on the ground' to do much, so it is pleasing that the TPA have invited us to join forces.

C is for ... CAMPAIGNING

Bristol is again considering a workplace parking levy. We will be joining the TPA on an action day - possibly two - involving street stall/leafleting, an open letter to council and media activity, on September 13 and/or 14. If you are from Bristol, Bath, Somerset or Wiltshire, this could affect you. Please come and join in. More details will be emailed nearer the dates, or will be available from Ian Taylor.



C is for ... COUNCILLOR

We reported in the last issue that Bob Bull had been elected to a council seat in Bristol. He has in fact taken a seat on Portishead Town Council.

COMMITMENT BY THE ABD TO WORKING ON YOUR BEHALF

Champion of the services revealed



Welcome Break South Mimms Service Area

By Ian Taylor

The results of the annual Motorway Services User Survey, by Transport Focus, were presented at Welcome Break South Mimms Service Area on the northern half of the M25.

The survey showed overall satisfaction remaining high at 90%, however fewer visitors described themselves as 'very satisfied' compared to last year. Dissatisfaction remained low at 3%.

Disabled visitors reported 87% satisfaction, while professional drivers were the least satisfied group at 87%. Across individual operators the range was from 86% to 98% satisfaction.

Westmoreland achieved the highest score for an operator, while Norton Canes was the highest rated site for the second year running. Thurrock was the most improved - 68% to 93%. Other sites with notable improvements were Heston West, Heston East, Oxford and Rownhams South.

When it came to suggested areas for improvement, they included expanding foot to eat-in range, toilet cleanliness and maintenance, and general pricing of goods and fuel.

The survey interviewed 11,609 as they left. Trunk road services raised concern - there needed to be a better definition of what they are and what they might be expected to provide - for example Chobham TRSA (not the MSA) gives only 35 minutes free parking.

It was pointed out that railway stations (the main ones at least) are becoming more like motorway service areas or even airports in terms of facilities available, so there is room for cross-learning.

Joining forces against senseless speed limit

The ABD has launched a specific website against the continued expansion of 20mph limits - www.20senseless.org

The '20s Senseless' campaign aims to support local campaigns against the misuse of 20mph zones, gain media exposure, and raise public awareness against 20's limits, often imposed for ideological, rather than road safety reasons.

The reason for doing this, the ABD says, is that there is much misinformation being spread by campaigners for such speed limits.

What has been happening, it says, is that anti-car activists encouraged by such organisations as 20s Plenty are now wasting millions of pounds nationwide which would be better spent on other road safety measures - such as road engineering and education of younger drivers.

The Department for Transport published the most authoritative study to date on the impact of wide-area signed-only 20mph speed limits last year. It showed that there is no road safety benefit whatsoever from such schemes. In addition they have negligible impact on modal shift or on traffic speeds.

This was the long-awaited evidence that enormous amounts of money are being wasted on implementing 20mph schemes which could have been spent instead on more effective road safety measures.



'20s Senseless' aims to support local campaigns against the misuse of zones

In London alone, it is estimated that tens of millions of pounds have been spent on 20mph signed-only schemes to no effect and nationwide it must run into hundreds of millions of pounds.

The ABD has long called for 'evidence-based' road safety policies, saying the evidence on 20mph schemes should not be ignored.

The DfT report can be read at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/20-mph-speed-limits-on-roads>. Key paragraphs include:

- "The evidence available to date shows no significant change in the short term in collisions and casualties, in the majority of the case studies (including the aggregated set of residential case studies)."
- "Journey speed analysis shows that the median speed has

fallen by 0.7mph in residential areas and 0.9mph in city centre areas."

The ABD is not opposed to the use of 20mph speed limits where it might be of benefit or where compliance will be high.

But the organisation's view is that it is not the solution to all road safety problems and simply sticking up signs is a waste of money.

"The simplistic solutions proposed by advocates of wide area signed-only 20mph schemes do not work to reduce the Killed and Seriously Injured (KSIs) on our roads to any significant extent," the ABD says.

"Money is being wasted on them that could be better used to reduce KSIs in other ways."

- Get involved in the campaign see www.20senseless.org

Is this a smart idea?

A new report has arrived from Transport Focus into the ongoing work to turn the M4 into a smart motorway.

The key findings of this report, produced in conjunction with Highways England, are that evidence shows smart motorways to be as safe as traditional motorways, but drivers are not convinced and want to 'feel safe'. It also highlights a need for better understanding of how to use smart motorways.

Almost three in five drivers interviewed were satisfied with their most recent use of the M4, with one in five very satisfied.

The report recommendations included more information about the work through a variety of channels including roadside signage, news media, mapping tools and apps as well as social media, information at service areas, and, for businesses, direct contact with Highways England.

There was particular interest shown in receiving information via satnav systems and from the likes of Google Maps and Waze.

It was felt that providing more details about the operation of smart motorways - and on the M4 in particular - may help overcome key issues, along with statistics that demonstrate the safety of smart motorways already in operation.

On that last point, the ABD has questioned Highways England via Transport Focus on how they collected those statistics and comparisons with a shrinking amount of traditional motorways. At the time of writing, their detailed reply is awaited.

Rack and ruin - it's time to take back our roads

The Transport Select Committee is calling for a front-loaded, five-year funding settlement to tackle what it describes as the 'extreme state of disrepair of the English local road network'.

A lack of funding certainty has caused many councils to take short-term, reactive decisions on road maintenance, 'which is less effective than proactive maintenance and undermines local economic performance,' MPs said.

Whilst we welcome the call - which is long overdue - the ABD feels it doesn't go anywhere near far enough.

We urge all readers to download new ABD research from our founder Brian Gregory, who has produced a new updated version 'Road Investment and Road User Taxation: The Truth'

In an easy to read format it gives the truth that, whatever way you measure spending on roads, the taxpayer has been badly short changed and the economy has suffered.

It provides an excellent reference work and a useful counter to MPs and others who say we can't build our way out of congestion.

As Brian himself says: "It doesn't help if you've never actually tried."

The document can be downloaded at the website www.abd.org.uk/category/taxation/



Brian Gregory

Letter to the editor - course for concern

I recently had the misfortune to attend a Speed Awareness Course run by Drivesafe, an offshoot of the AA.

Some of the information given was useful, such as explaining the default rules governing which speed limits apply to different roads and classes of vehicles.

However, I was concerned that a number of statements were made that were factually incorrect.

For example, it was said that the sale of new diesel cars would be banned from some time next year, which is certainly untrue.

It was also stated that the guidance to cyclists had recently been changed to recommend riding two abreast.

However, Rule 66 of the Highway Code clearly states, as it has done for some years: "You should never ride more than two abreast, and ride in single file on narrow or busy roads and when riding round bends."

Whatever you may think of these courses, surely it is incumbent on those organising them to ensure that all information provided is accurate and will not mislead participants.

Peter Edwardson

Climate alarmism has reached new heights

Climate alarmism, with its doomsday message, generated a 400,000 signature petition, and led the government to declare a 'Climate Emergency'.

Now, it has also moved two UK cities to declare car-free days.

Local authorities, like sheep, have jumped on the bandwagon. Roads around Leeds will be closed in Otley, Headingley and Hunslet on Sunday, September 22 this year, to celebrate World Car Free Day.

The council's portfolio holder for planning and transport, Councillor Lisa Mulherin, made the announcement during a speech at an event entitled 'The Big Leeds Climate Conversation'.

"We want to become a carbon neutral council, but we want to ask the biggest nine carbon emitters in the city to do the same.

"Every organisation has a part to play, that is why we are announcing a new £150,000 funding competition to help reduce car journeys from our roads.

"Every weekday morning it is estimated that 60,000 people drive into Leeds alone, causing congestion, worsening air pollution and damaging health.

"Starting with three in September on car free days and two in our inner cities - there will be a rolling programme going into next year."

The exact identities of the closed roads has not been



One of the major arteries into Birmingham is to close

revealed at time of going to press.

But Birmingham will close one of its major arteries, the Aston Expressway, on Sunday 22 September; it will shut for six hours to create a park on the road as its contribution to so called car free day.

The cost of the TRO to allow this jamboree hasn't been mentioned.

Even 10 years ago this would have seemed far-fetched, but the stridency of campaigners, like Client Earth, promoting junk science, and a national media - which is woefully ill informed on the scientific debate, has allowed the equivalent of an anarchist state to prevail, with drivers again being the fantasists' main target.

The truth about air quality is very different.

No-one dies from modern levels of air pollution in the UK - there are no death certificates or coroners' reports citing air pollution as a cause of death.

The balance of all of the many factors that influence life expectancy are strongly positive in favour of increased longevity - people are living years longer, not days, weeks or months shorter.

There are no Particulate or Nitrogen dioxide syndromes and the NHS cannot attribute cardiovascular or respiratory problems in patients, which have multiple potential causes, to PM2.5 or NOx.

Instead, the false health scare is created by mathematical models derived from extremely unreliable 'ecological' epidemiology studies where actual exposure of individuals to PM2.5 or NOx is NOT measured. Statistics isn't science and correlation isn't causation.

The same low-grade epidemiology produces a spurious 99% correlation with divorce rates and margarine consumption in Maine!

The last significant unhealthy smog conditions in the UK, caused by a weather-related temperature inversion and Sulphur dioxide were in London in 1962. The 1952 London smog resulted in the 1956 Clean Air Act.

Since 1970, according to DEFRA, NOx emissions have been reduced by 72% and Particulates by 79%. If there ever was an air pollution 'crisis' or 'emergency' it was in the middle of the 20th century and certainly not in the 21st century.

In the ABD's view, claims to the contrary are nothing more than a taxation and restrictions opportunity for the political class, backed by dishonest attacks on transport and the economy by politically motivated environmental extremists who will never be satisfied even if we return to the Stone Age.

Bottom of priorities list

By Malcolm Heymer

The ABD has long been a member of PACTS, the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety. I attended the latest working parties meeting on June 24.

The morning session focussed on 'promoting safer, sustainable and active travel'.

Most of the speakers were from Transport for London, explaining the latest research and developments in the capital. Much of this concerned resolving conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, bus passengers and motor vehicles.

While some of the measures introduced seem sensible, there is no getting away from the fact that drivers are now at the bottom of the priority list.

Apparently, almost 40% of London's roads now have a 20mph speed limit, mostly in the central area, and TfL wants to get outer London boroughs to increase their use of 20 limits.

One presenter claimed that 'inappropriate speed' is a factor in 37% of fatal and serious accidents in London, but where this figure came from was not stated. There are now some 900 speed cameras in the city.

Heather Ward suggested that people 'like' 20mph limits and that they 'do no harm'. Really?! Edinburgh is carrying out a study into the supposed health and casualty benefits of 20 limits - the study is due to be published in 2021.

Former LibDem MP Lembit Opik of Motorcyclists Action Group



Highways England is not keen on rural speed cameras

asked why 'failed' 20mph limits such as those in Portsmouth and Bath were not being removed. The rather weak response was that it would be too expensive!

Perhaps the most interesting topic concerned new forms of motorised personal vehicles such as electric scooters, electric bikes, hover boards etc, and how these should be dealt with.

Legislation will need to catch up with such developments and where they can and can't be used or parked. The potential for conflict with other road users, either on carriageways or footways, is obvious.

In the afternoon session of the Road Environment Working Party, there was an update on 20mph speed limits in Scotland and Wales. As reported recently in Local Transport Today, the Scottish Parliament has rejected a change in the default urban limit from 30 to 20mph.

Wales is looking into the feasibility of a blanket 20mph limit but has not; contrary to the impression 20's Plenty for Us like to give, already made that decision!

The ongoing review of the STATS19 police accident report



Conflicts exist between motorists and cyclists

form is attempting to reduce the current 70+ contributory factors to around 30. Some of the current ones have never actually been used. There will be a consultation on the resulting slimmed-down list, hopefully in 2020.

On rural road safety, I said the ABD does not want to see reduced speed limits as the default solution. I pointed out that the accident problem with many single-carriageway rural A-roads is that they are operating above capacity, and gave the example of the A47 through Norfolk.

Drivers may have to wait several minutes to join or cross at at-grade junctions, and impatience can lead to rash decisions.

Apparently Highways England is not keen on the use of speed cameras on its roads, except for enforcing variable speed limits on motorways. They don't like to be seen penalising their customers!

When the meeting ended, we were asked to submit agenda topics for future. I have suggested that we would like to see saccadic masking discussed.

A win for road safety and the economy too

Another ABD prediction has come true... A Department for Transport report shows that allowing HGVs over 7.5 tonnes to travel 10mph faster has saved business millions of pounds a year - and may have improved road safety.

Bringing them closer to the speed of other traffic, has contributed to an increase of 1.5mph in average speeds on single carriageway roads saved hauliers 650,000 driving hours and more than £10 million a year in running costs.

The change, which came into force in 2015, allows lorries to travel at up to 50mph on single carriageways and 60mph on dual carriageway roads in England and Wales.

It means they are travelling at similar speeds to other vehicles, with the aim of improving road safety



ABD spokesman Paul Biggs

Roads minister Michael Ellis said: "Increasing the speed limit for lorries has helped companies save time and money . . . potentially improving road safety by reducing the risks some drivers take when overtaking slow-moving vehicles."

ABD spokesman Paul Biggs said: "The ABD welcomed the speed limit increase for HGVs in 2015 and the positive results are in line with our expectations.

"The ABD had meetings with civil servants during 2013/14 on this issue.

"This is an important reminder of the fact that setting appropriate speed limits improves safety and helps the economy.

"Groups campaigning for lower speed limits have been proved wrong again."

In brief...

Gearing up against workplace charging

Workplace parking has reared its ugly head again with several councils, including Bristol (again!) Oxford, Cambridge, Leeds and maybe Leicester amongst others, promoting the idea of workplace charges to ease congestion.

Following our panel discussion at the TaxPayers' Alliance, we're pleased to report the TPA are formulating battle plans to counter this money grabbing exercise.

They want us there with them on this, so everyone please be prepared to travel and meet up with them on some action days, usually street stalls, leafleting in streets, and local publicity or interviews. We'll keep you informed.

Pothole problems every six minutes

Local authorities in the West Midlands receive a complaint to fix a pothole every six minutes, according to new Freedom of Information figures gathered by the Federation of Small Businesses.

In total, more than £61 million has been spent fixing damaged roads and holes in the region over 2018/19, down £4 million from the previous year.

Just under £175,000 has been paid out in compensation to claimants in the region that had their vehicles damaged last year. The figures revealed that just 31% of claims for vehicle damage were successful across the West Midlands, with the average pay out per claim equating to £218.

Chairman gives evidence to panel at Westminster



Ian Taylor faced questions by the House of Commons Select Committee

ABD chairman Ian Taylor put in a fighting performance after accepting an invitation to appear before the House of Commons Transport Select Committee.

Chaired by Lilian Greenwood, the first debate on pavement parking also heard evidence from Dr Rachel Lee of Living Streets, and Chris Theobald from Guide Dogs.

Ian said: "It was a daunting challenge, being a rep from a small group, up against strident organisations like Living Streets and local authorities eyeing the prospect of levying fines against drivers.

"Questions were quite probing but good natured - I've had far worse treatment from BBC radio presenters!

"We were helped by my being able to present views as evidence-based: practical examples of pavement parking that works and our suggestion of a 1.2 metre clear footway having been used in Havering.

"There was dispute that that was enough from Guide Dogs and Living Streets, they wanted 1.5 or 2 metres - some pavements are narrower than that!"

The second panel comprised of council people. Their line was harder, being committed to discouraging car use.

Ian said: "It was lot of hard work but, once again, the ABD has promoted the voice of drivers.

"I urged the committee not to stray over the line that separates traffic management from social engineering. The impression I got, even if they didn't come out and say it, is that their ultimate objective is to plan out car parking, both off and on street.

"When I suggested a statutory duty on councils for to provide parking provision, I don't think they liked that either. Whatever happens, councils will be expected to self-fund from fees and penalties.

"That is why some are not keen to be handed responsibility - though there was acceptance all round that local authorities will have to be the enforcing authority.

"Having argued against 'one size fits all' law because roads and pavements vary so much, it is likely that pavement parking will be decriminalised as result -



Pavement parking was the focus of the debate held in Westminster

relieving councils of necessity for expensive Traffic Regulation Orders."

Here is an abridged summary of the main questions posed to Ian by the panel, and his answers:

Q: There is no doubt that we have received hundreds of pieces of evidence - more than for any other recent inquiry, by a long way. Of course, the reason for holding the inquiry is to do something about it. Do you think that the general public and motorists generally understand the potential impact they are having when they park on the pavement?

A: Most reasonable people do. Let's face it: I am a motorist, but the minute I park my car, I become a pedestrian, using the footpath as well. I do not want people blocking me from it. Having said that, we have mentioned whether it should be presumed forbidden except where you are told that you can, or whether it should be the other way round. We do not like the idea of blanket or near-blanket bans. It is the principle of one size fits all. Roads and pavements are so vastly different that we do not think that one size does fit all. It should be largely up to local decision, depending on the road and the situation. Therefore, we like the present system, whereby you can do it unless there is something or someone there to tell you that you cannot. It should be made clearer where you cannot, certainly. When people selfishly ignore that, there is a good case for making it easier for action to be taken against them. If you imposed a blanket ban, you might need seriously to consider exceptions. The emergency services are obviously the first that come to mind. That is why we recommend that, as long as no obstruction is caused, it should be allowed, where it can be allowed responsibly. We have our own ideas on that. I consulted one of my members, who is a retired highways engineer. He said that in one London borough where the law is a bit the other way - Havering, actually - they tried forcing people always to leave a minimum limit of 1.2 metres. He said that seems to work. There seems to be a little bit of evidence in favour of that. That is therefore what we would recommend.

Q: At the moment, motorists make a judgment about what they think is a reasonable gap, I guess. Would that be fair?

A: They may need some guidelines

Q: An area I am particularly interested in, is the extent to which it is local people knowingly doing it, because it is what people do, and the extent to which it is people from outside the area, who are just confused. What is your sense of that?



ABD's Ian Taylor

A: It can happen both ways. I agree that most public concern probably arises from things like parking around schools. They have the added protection of the zig-zags. In many cases, it may be a problem only at the times when schools come in and out. I hope that would take care of it. Regarding other obstructions, I think sometimes we get a bit too concerned about exactly where all the wheels are, rather than whether or not an obstruction is being caused.



Obstructions to the highway should always be avoided

People parking is not the only thing. All sorts of things obstruct pavements, be they lampposts, signposts, bus stops or even overgrown hedges - you name it. All sorts of things do it, and people have to contend with them as well. Wheelie-bins were mentioned just now. I have always thought that there is a bit of an irony, in that we are told to put out our wheelie-bins by councils, which also put a lot of those other things on the pavements, and they might be the same authorities that are enforcing bans on pavement parking. I do not want you to get the wrong impression. I definitely do not approve of people who cause obstruction, whether it be in the highway or on the pavement. The pavement is a highway, too, don't forget. It is just a matter of proportionality all round. In that respect, some of the London boroughs that have this power specifically provide a certain amount of pavement parking - marked-out parking. It seems to work. In fact, a few other places do it, too. I have seen pictures from Bristol. Actually, a member wrote to me about it. I think he mentioned Hemel Hempstead, or somewhere like that. Anyway, it happens. I personally have seen it quite a lot in my travels all around Europe. I have seen it in Latvia, in Düsseldorf, in Frankfurt and in a little place in southern Germany called Passau. I am sure that there are many other places where, as long as the pavements are wide enough, the local authorities actually mark out parking bays. They are half in the road and half on the pavement. I therefore regard it as a proven system. It works. The motorists are happy. The pedestrians are happy. It is win-win.

Q: Could each of you give me a definition of what you believe constitutes obstructive pavement parking?

A: It is where people using the pavement risk getting wedged in or are forced into the road. That is obstruction, and I am as much against that as anyone here. If it can be done in the right circumstances, responsibly, without causing obstruction, let it be. The big question is whether the presumption should be that you can do it unless you are told not to, or vice versa. A lot of the enforcement of that comes down to how individual councils, which, I presume, would be the enforcement authority in most cases, would carry it out. I know that a lot of people who are drivers fear that. To put it bluntly, they do not trust their council not just to impose a ban, to send out their wardens on a ticketing spree and to penalise them right, left and sideways. I would not go so far as to say that most councils would do that, but it is a perception. Therefore, it might be best to do it the other way round. Councils have the power to have traffic orders and impose pavement parking bans locally, where they think it necessary, as it is. I would have no objection to it being made a bit simpler for them to do that, in the right circumstances.



When parking causes no obstruction, what is the problem?

Q: Do you think there are solutions to addressing the problem other than a ban?

A: Roads not unnecessarily narrowed, very often in combination with wider pavements, which almost begs someone to park partly on them, but it does mean there is room there. I am aware that there are a lot of older roads that are narrow and have narrow pavements where you cannot have parking of any sort, but there are others where the road is narrow enough not to want parking on the street but the pavements are wide enough for maybe half a little vehicle. It is a matter of fitting the rules to the situation rather than one size fits all. I am afraid I go back to that again.

Former ABD Herts co-ordinator Robert Bolt correctly pointed out where parking partly on the pavement is in order to leave the roadway wide enough for traffic to get through without obstruction or delay - something that seems to be overlooked by those agitating for a ban.

Rob said: "The 'New Town' of Hemel Hempstead is designed for pavement parking in the New Town residential areas. Pavements are deliberately wide and are marked with parking bays fully on the pavement.

"As a result there is hardly any parking on the roads in New Town residential areas. In contrast, where I live, built in the 1990s, the streets and pavements are narrow, with high housing density."



A daunting challenge - Ian Taylor seated far right during the debate



Will additional carbon dioxide emissions from its Highways England planned Stonehenge tunnel increase congestion on the route?

More 'hot air' threatens to delay a vital scheme

Highways England has tried to counter arguments that additional carbon dioxide emissions from its planned Stonehenge tunnel will increase congestion on part of the route as a result of additional induced traffic.

A report from the National Audit Office has disclosed that Highways England expects the controversial 3.3km tunnel for the A303 to increase carbon dioxide emissions by two million tonnes over 60 years, providing a negative benefit of £86 million.

The NAO report also states that the scheme will result in net improvements in nitrogen emissions and particulates, albeit with an air quality benefit costed at only £300,000.

The NAO report also discloses that the total journey time benefits of the scheme over 60 years are £370 million, a figure that is dwarfed by its 'inherently uncertain' cultural heritage benefits of £955 million.

Highways England's Combined Modelling and Appraisal Report for the scheme, states: "Annual average daily traffic flows on the scheme in 2041 are predicted to be 45,500 vehicles, which is almost 20,000 more vehicles than in 2017 and 13,000 more vehicles than without the scheme."

In the ABD's view, anyone who has driven along this road knows that the congestion (and pollution) is directly caused by the change from a dual to a single carriageway between the village of Winterbourne Stoke, the Longbarrow and Countess roundabouts.

This scheme will address those pinch points improving traffic flow considerably.

The A303, long labelled 'the longest footpath to the south west' will attract more housing jobs and investment because journey times will become more reliable.

Putting monetary values on carbon dioxide and exhaust emissions totally distorts cost benefit analysis, threatening to kill off large infrastructure projects because of alleged harm of increasing emissions.

So-called environmentalists have (in an argument, already lasting several years) forced Highways England to design a tunnel past the site to satisfy their demands the landscape looks untouched since ancient times!

The entire scheme is currently costing anything between £1.6 and 2.4 billion.

"The likelihood, in the ABD's view, is that the scheme will be shelved . . . and the congestion will worsen.

HS2 is a bad idea - but does a viable alternative exist?

As a follow up to the TPA's Great British Transport Competition, a panel discussion was held to consider better ways to spend money than HS2. Both Brian Macdowall and Ian Taylor attended for the ABD.

The panel consisted of Kelvin Hopkins, MP for Luton North, Michael Byng, an infrastructure and procurement specialist, and London's Conservative mayoral candidate Shaun Bailey.

Everyone described HS2 as a bad idea, but there were widely differing views on alternatives.

Those views were pretty extensively all about rail . . . Brian and Ian were the only ones at the meeting who were advocating roads.

Criticism was mounted (from transport consultants in the audience) of a number of the competition-winning entries: on grounds of flawed costing and business plans - and the fact that some of the projects are going ahead anyway. This includes part of A5 Expressway upgrading, Midland Main Line Electrification and the Lower Thames Crossing.

A lively debate ensued, albeit a very rail-centric one.

Ian Taylor said: "I got the microphone, stating around 88% of all journeys are made by road, before putting forward our suggestion for an 85% to 15% split of any saved money between road and rail.

"Potholes must be a priority, with a matching maintenance fund, to ensure our roads stay



Is the answer to HS2 better roads?

at the high level of maintenance enjoyed by the Netherlands.

"I emphasised the ABD wasn't anti-rail, but that all the talk about reducing car and road use was wrong. Road and rail were both essential with both operating seriously over-capacity."

A telling response came from Shaun Bailey. He insisted more had to be spent on railways than roads, and getting people out of cars was helping cut congestion for those left on road.

Ian conceded those national percentages might be different for London - but he insisted on rail get priority everywhere.

However, he agreed the state of the roads, - potholes in particular, - urgently needed attention, but that should come out of road taxation, (not savings from scrapping HS2)

Interestingly, in the "before and after" conversation outside the meeting, Ian said he overheard him confirm that he wouldn't extend Clean Air or Congestion Zones - but existing ones would stay.

Unfortunately, all the other candidates for mayor are proposing (from the ABD's perspective) far worse.

Brian Macdowall obtained contact details of Shaun Bailey's

policy advisor which he passed onto Roger Lawson, our London co-ordinator, with a view to influencing Mr Bailey himself.

Outside the main meeting, Ian had a conversation with the two traffic consultants, currently conducting a project about infrastructure in the south-east.

What did he think about the Lower Thames Crossing and roads to the ports? Ian told them, including some suggestions for upgrading the A2 and the Dover port approach.

"I found they are actively pushing for road pricing, saying it's not only inevitable, but the only fair way to pay for roads, citing the equivalent of peak rail fares to manage demand.

"The inevitable bit came from the switch to electric rendering fuel tax null and void.

"I told them we needed the equivalent charge for electric power for transport; How? They asked.

"By bringing in a system of metering - not impossible since vehicle chargers use completely different plugs. The principle is important, as without it, road pricing is creeping up on us."

● Responding to the rail v road discussion, Terry Hudson says: "I think a good point always to make about moving freight from road to rail, is how are you going to load/unload it? Even containers need large areas and extra rail tracks to load/unload - do we have that amount of spare land? It still has to get to its final destination by road, increased handling and risk of damage and time . . . all this has to be paid for."

Time for a fresh look at road user charging?

The ABD was invited by Transportation Professional, the magazine of the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation, which claims 14,000 members, to participate in a debate on whether to look again at introducing road charging.

The question was: Should the UK's cities take a fresh look at road user charging to combat congestion and pollution?

Silviya Barrett from the Centre for London English answered 'yes' to the question, claiming among her arguments that fairer charging and improved public transport would encourage those who are able to leave the car at home to switch to more sustainable and active modes of travel.

The ABD's counter-response, from Ian Taylor, was an emphatic NO. His train of thought was based on one of Brian Gregory's documents. Here are Ian's comments from the article, reproduced with the magazine's permission:

"Road pricing never achieves what it purports to deliver: altering road users' travel choices.

"The vast majority of people cannot choose their journey times, routes or duration - this is often pre-determined by the need to reach destinations by certain times for employment.

"Congestion charges can only work by pricing users off the road, regressively removing the poorest first. Travel behaviour for the rest is not materially altered.

"In London, a combination of road charging and road space subtraction did cut traffic levels

but without improving congestion levels or journey times.

"These measures reduce capacity, increase congestion and with it emissions. Councils have been financially pressured into planning charging schemes - an approach that failed in Edinburgh and Manchester once the public were mobilised.

"Little public consultation of the issues has occurred and the last time central Government seriously suggested widespread road pricing, the public delivered a thumbs down via a petition with numbers only surpassed come Brexit.

The question was: Should the UK's cities take a fresh look at road user charging to combat congestion and pollution?

"Any infrastructure required to implement charging would cost a lot and would have to be recouped from road users.

"Some regard the tracking aspect as an infringement of privacy and civil liberties. It is unnecessary. Fuel duty is already a progressive form of road user taxation. The bigger the vehicle and the more it is used, the more is paid - and no avoidance.

"A similar tamper proof system must be instituted for electric vehicles.

"On pollution, vehicles will continue to become cleaner. Retrospective financial penalties on existing vehicles make no technical difference. Outside certain hotspots our air is clean.

"Congestion pollutes: tackle



Transportation Professional cover



An article featuring the ABD

that and keep traffic flowing. In congested cities the positive way forward is to provide good alternatives, but in a way that does not take away precious road space. Independent road travel must remain a choice in a free society."

Plans face the scrapheap

When ABD member Peter Horton read that York City Council's new Green Party and Lib Dem coalition was considering scrapping plans to dual the city's ring road, he put pen to paper to air his thoughts.

Peter, from Ripon, felt it was putting at risk the proposed government funding for the scheme, saying: "This foolish proposal cannot go unchallenged." Here is what he wrote to the council's leader, and executive member for transport:

"I was quite perturbed to read in the Yorkshire Post that the Green Party are thinking of scrapping plans to make the A1237 York ring road into a dual carriageway, according to Conservative members.

"Whilst I accept that you have serious concerns about climate change and air pollution, I do not think that the abandonment of an essential road scheme is the right way forward.

"I know, from personal experience, that the A1237 is often highly congested and crying out for some measures to ease the problem and I cannot see that you would improve the situation in any way by leaving things as they are.

"I also know that many campaigners take the line that new or improved roads only serve to generate more traffic, but I find this a false assumption as the perceived extra traffic is most likely taking advantage of a new and improved route to the benefit of other less adequate routes which may have been used previously to avoid congestion.

"Appreciating that you would advocate less car use in favour of public transport, walking and cycling, this is unlikely to happen on the York ring road which is part



What's wrong with a dual carriageway round the historic city of York?

of the wider network across the county, and of course carries a large volume of commercial and heavy goods traffic for which there is no alternative.

"Therefore improvement of the road is essential and I ask you to consider this: Do you think that slow moving traffic queues in low gear, stopping and starting and negotiating busy junctions is less polluting than free flowing traffic streams on a dual carriageway? A moment's thought will give you the answer.

"May I make a plea for you to reconsider this matter and not to abandon essential infrastructure improvements."

He did get a reply from the council, suggesting that the report was a bit of press scaremongering and that they were still considering the pros and cons of the project...

Peter also had a letter on another of his campaigning issues published in the Yorkshire Post, in response to a story headed 'Dozens clocked speeding more than 10 times', which did not tell where these offences occurred - motorways, on A-roads or in towns.

He said: "The vast majority of drivers have spent substantial sums on buying, running and

maintaining their vehicles and are anxious to avoid accidents at all costs, and therefore drive according to the road and the conditions.

"But this is not good enough for the speed-obsessed establishment who set limits which are quite unrealistic for modern traffic. This is clearly demonstrated by the number of prosecutions for infringing a limit on a sign.

"One spokesman said that speeding drivers put everyone on the road in grave danger, and my response is that this is emotive nonsense because "speeding" may just involve doing a little above a number posted on a sign, but may not be dangerous in any way.

"It seems that it is acceptable for police officers to drive high-powered cars at incredible speeds to catch errant drivers (as shown on TV programmes) because they claim to be highly-trained young drivers, but no allowance is made for other drivers who may have many more years of experience and accident-free records.

"The whole issue of speed limits needs to be taken out of the hands of local councils and transport ministers and totally re-assessed by an independent body that includes experienced road-users.

ABD - in the media

Compiled by Ian Taylor

Here's a summary of our main media appearances since the last edition of OTR. It's been as busy as ever.

May:

Hugh Bladon commented on the City of London introducing a 15mph speed limit on BBC Three Counties Radio. Roger Lawson spoke to The Sun about Heathrow Airport introducing emission charges. Motor1.com quoted the ABD on this subject saying cars and taxis pollute less than what would be caused by their planned extra runway. They intend introducing their own ULEZ charge for cars and PHVs, with a view to it eventually becoming a vehicle access charge levied on everyone, black cabs included.

Local Transport Today published a letter from Paul Biggs replying to critics on the subject of 20mph limits in which he recommended some reading matter to study facts about climate change - and took a swipe at Extinction Rebellion.



Hugh Bladon has been a vocal commentator once again

BBC Three Counties Radio - this time on 20mph limits. He was also quoted in the Daily Mail commenting on "an idiot checking the movement of his stocks and shares on his mobile phone while driving".

June:

The Newspaper.com reported "UK Parliament Hears From Pro-Motorist Group". That's Us! Full reports on the ABD submissions (penned by Malcolm Heymer and Ian Taylor) to the Transport Committee elsewhere in this issue.

Paul Biggs commented on speed after someone caught on dual carriageway (reduced from 70 to 50) with no deaths recorded.

Roger Lawson appeared in My London criticising planned Heathrow expansion for lack of detail - and feared M25 disruption.

He also gave comment to Local Transport Today on the Metropolitan Police's plans to massively increase London's speed enforcement and even predicting numbers they expected to catch.

They also published a letter from

him on London parking policies.

Transport Professional is the magazine of The Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation. They published a debate on road pricing, which Ian Taylor wrote an article against - covered on page 12.

Brian Macdowall was quoted in the London Evening Standard. He accused councils of revenue raising after 20,000 drivers were fined for entering one south London pedestrianised street (Surrey Street). Drivers claimed the warning signs were hard to see.

TaxiPoint Taxi News said: National motorist group questions validity of TfL consultation process. That would be us! Roger Lawson suggested they try to avoid consulting on key questions as to whether projects should be done at all.



ABD patron Jill Seymour has left the European Parliament

July:

The Shropshire Star featured ABD patron Jill Seymour's departure from the European Parliament, in which she pledged to continue supporting the ABD and fight anti-car legislation.

Two more interviews for Hugh Bladon. First BBC Radio Wales on pavement parking.

Then BBC Three Counties Radio on mobile phone use in vehicles, a new police gadget to detect them, and the latest push to ban them all, handsfree included.

The Times reported a bin-blocking crackdown with £60 fines and threat of towing in Edinburgh. Nigel Humphries described as a 'hammer to crack discarded nutshell'.

Hugh Bladon spoke on BBC Radio Leeds against road closures for car-free days. BBC Three Counties Radio interviewed Paul Biggs about ideas to ban young or novice drivers from night driving, which he described as totalitarian, and a restriction to employment, especially in winter. Tuition was preferable.

August:

LBC Radio dealt with the possibility of eye tests for the over-70s. Hugh Bladon said it would be reasonable to have them done (by opticians, to tie in with regular check-ups) and also tie-in with licence renewal every three years.

Local Transport Today ran an item about our PR on the inequitable division of spending between rail and road - also against the argument that road capacity cannot be matched with demand and growth suppression to manage demand is the only answer.

Hugh Bladon was quoted in the Sunday Express saying: "Councils are using parking fines and traffic offences to generate money from motorists who have made accidental mistakes, do not understand, or have not seen the signage" - this in response to figures published by them revealing that councils fine motorists £200,000 an hour.

The story was also covered over following days by The Sun ('Milking Motorists'), Transport Network, the Daily Mail (quote from Roger Lawson) and Metro. Most of these reports detailed locations where you're most likely to get caught out.

The News (Portsmouth) reported Portsmouth as having the second highest numbers of speed bumps in the country - all in the name of traffic calming and enforcing 20mph limits. Hugh Bladon said speed bumps weren't always effective and dismissed them as "a damn nuisance" that can damage small cars.

Still in the south of England, Hugh criticised 'unapologetic' Brighton & Hove Council for making £206,000 from bus lane fines in Western Road, Brighton - reported in The Argus.

Motor1.com and TaxiPoint taxi News both reported on our PR criticising London's Vision Zero safety project.

The Transport Select Committee's proposal to ban all phones in cars, handsfree included, made a splash this month. Hugh Bladon was on LBC Radio, then BBC Radio Berkshire, then a 20-minute discussion on BBC Radio Belfast.

The same day Nigel Humphries completed a marathon series of interviews: BBC Radio 5 Live, The Victoria Derbyshire Show on BBC Two TV (via Skype), Nova Radio (Newcastle), BBC Essex, BBC Radio Cornwall, BBC Radio Bristol, BBC Hereford & Worcester, BBC Radio Stoke, BBC Radio Northampton, BBC Radio Newcastle, BBC WM, BBC Radio Sheffield and BBC Coventry & Warwickshire.

As if that wasn't enough, TheNewspaper.com, TaxiPoint Tax News and Staffordshire Live all reported the story, quoting Nigel Humphries. In his own words: "Nigel Humphries is back!"

Lastly, for this time, our PR on 20 limits was reported by Motor1.com, TaxiPoint taxi News, Local Transport Today and Transport Xtra. "Driver's group launches campaign against blanket 20mph limits".

That brought a rebuttal from Rod King of 20's Plenty who accused us of 'prejudice against road regulation to achieve a more civilised approach to safer lower speeds'.



Press releases

The ABD has issued 8 press releases over the past few months.

May

German Public Broadcaster Investigates Air Pollution: English version is a 'must watch' for British journalists, policymakers and drivers faced with ULEZ zones. An unbiased and truthful insight into the traffic pollution debate.

June

Fix The Goalposts on Car Taxation. Uncertainty on tax policies is hitting the car industry - all vehicles should be allowed to reach their end life without extra taxation or forced premature scrappage.

Raising Speed Limits for Lorries has Improved Road Safety and Increased Productivity. Another ABD prediction comes true and the likes of BRAKE are proved wrong again.

July

Four Decades of Strategic Road Investment Inaction Have Delivered Congestion Chaos. Road Investment and Road User Taxation - The Truth.

August

Vision Zero Strategy Failing.

ABD Launches Campaign Against 20mph Speed Limits (20's Senseless).

Drivers 'Can' Allow Anything To Distract: Bans Are Not The Solution. In defence of handsfree phone use.

Pedestrian Errors Primary in Accident Causation - Yet ETSC Proposes Still More Anti-Driver Measures.

Stay informed - show support and help ABD in spreading the word

Social media: You can keep abreast of ABD-related news, and what the ABD is up to on a daily basis, by following us on Twitter (@TheABD), or on Facebook (www.facebook.com/allianceofbritishdrivers)

Don't forget to retweet our posts to help us gain more followers, and to share or 'like' our Facebook posts, encouraging your friends to support us too.

Website: The ABD's website (www.abd.org.uk) is available to everyone, and there is a members' site too (members.abd.org.uk).

Both of these contain mountains of information on a diverse range of topics, with links to other useful sites which may help your research.

Log on to find out more, or contact the ABD Webmaster, Chris Ward.

Digital magazine: If you want an electronic version of our On The Road magazine, it is available in pdf format. Latest copies can be downloaded from the ABD members' website.

Action pack: The ABD offers an informative 'action pack' which explains the process used by local authorities to set speed limits, and the rights you have to object to new or reduced limits.

The pack costs £5 to non-members, but is free to current members, who just need to send a large SAE to: ABD Action Pack, 3 Wheatcroft Way, Dereham, Norfolk, NR20 3SS.

Alternatively, send correspondence by email to malcolm.heymer@abd.org.uk

Affiliated organisations: The ABD runs an affiliation scheme, allowing groups which support us to formally recognise the work we do. If you are a member of an organisation you think should be backing the ABD, please inform Terry Hudson and we'll try to sign them up!

Publicity material: If you would like copies of any ABD literature, please contact our membership secretary.

Please don't over-order, though, as printing costs are high.

Complain, and write to the media: Object about proposals for new traffic-calming measures and speed limit reductions. Few people do and that's one of the reasons why they keep happening. Take time, too, to reply to anti-car articles in the media - you may be able to get a debate going, and become a spokesperson shouting up on behalf of drivers.

Fighting fund: The ABD has a fighting fund which welcomes donations at any time, or by standing order if you wish. For more details, contact our membership secretary.

Joint memberships: These are free, and help increase the size of the group. If your partner or spouse isn't a joint member, sign them up if you can.

Local and regional contacts: If there's a local campaign in your area, please make contact and join in. If there's not and you think there needs to be, why not take on the role of campaign manager yourself? (Contact our National Campaign Director to find out how).

National committee: The ABD's committee is always looking for more members to bring fresh ideas. If you'd like to help out, contact Brian Gregory, Brian Macdowall, Ian Taylor, or email national@abd.org.uk

Car stickers: Show your support for the ABD with one of our car stickers. Just send us an A5 size stamped addressed envelope, plus your name, address, phone number and email address to PO Box 1043, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 1XG.



Contact your MP: We'd encourage all members to write regularly to their local MP, reminding them of their duty to stand up for drivers. It's best to get their contact details from their local constituency website - contacting them through the Parliament website can be a complicated and long-winded process. Make sure you state that you are a constituent of theirs, to get priority in a reply.

Sign up as a supporter for our free occasional newsletter The Rocky Road: If you're already a full member with a functioning email address that we know about, you'll get this anyway - along with announcements and a copy of all press releases we issue nationally.

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