

## Say no to parking levies

The ABD is joining with the TaxPayers' Alliance to oppose the proposed introduction of Workplace Parking Levies.

The first 'Lose The Levy' event took place in Bristol where, although a previous mayoral attempt at doing this was rebuffed several years ago, the current mayor has revived the idea.

Ian Taylor attended for the ABD. The day started on College Green in the city centre, home of the Bristol Council offices, with a photocall and videos, and the rest of the day was spent visiting local shops and businesses in different parts of the city, giving out cards advertising a petition to sign and window posters to those willing to put on display.

Ian said: "At one point we came across a duo busking in Gloucester Road, who took a poster,



*Ian Taylor, right, in Bristol representing the ABD* and a little later were heard belting out an instantly improvised song called Lose The Levy! "Councils across the land are jumping on this bandwagon, Hounslow (London), Oxford, Cambridge, Leeds and Leicester are possibilities so far, so this could be the first of many such campaign days."

● **Birmingham Blow: Page 8**

# Cold shoulder for the hard shoulder

## ABD pressure provokes rethink on all-lane running

**H**ighways England has potentially backtracked from its policy of using hard shoulders as running lanes on motorways, after being summoned to appear before the Commons Transport Committee following recent deaths on the Strategic Road Network.

A widow of a driver, killed after stopping in a live lane on a smart motorway, plans to bring

a case against the government-owned company for corporate manslaughter.

The ABD has had concerns for a long time over the safety value of all lane running, and recently asked Highways England to supply accident rates comparing hard shoulder with non-hard shoulder running.

The supplied answer failed to quote the accident rate per billion vehicle kilometres travelled (a standard way to assess accident rates) and was, in the ABD's view, effectively useless.

At a recent transport conference, Highways England chief executive, Jim O'Sullivan said: "We're working hard; we're comparing the types of accidents on both types of motorways. And we're comparing the numbers. We can find no perceivable difference.

"We know the accident rates on smart motorways are no different from conventional motorways. Both are amongst the safest roads in the world. They're about ten times safer than normal built-up roads."

● **Full story on page 7**

Who are we, and what do we do? To join or donate to the ABD, visit [www.abd.org.uk](http://www.abd.org.uk)

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

# ABD AGM 2019

By Brian Macdowall

**F**ighting back against climate hysteria, new member benefits and punchy presentations on how to challenge speed limit downgrading were the main themes of this year's AGM and members' meeting.

The meeting was held at the British Motor Museum at Gaydon, and for the first time, members were treated to a pictorial slide show of the year's main activities.

Chairman Ian Taylor listed two important board changes, with founder member Brian Gregory moving to policy and research director, aided by returning board member Paul Biggs, formerly board member at Jaguar Driving Club.

Paul's BSc (Hons) in biological sciences has proved beneficial at a crucial time in the ABD's history.

He produced a superb document on the limitations of electric vehicles when towing caravans, which the ABD passed to the civil service, but received no response, to no less than three PRs combating climate change hysteria in the week leading to the annual meeting.

His expertise, which our founder Brian Gregory also shares (Brian has a degree in organic chemistry) will be severely tested in the year ahead.

A graphic upgrade to the previous year's website makeover, which has produced a more visually appealing and user-friendly website thanks to Roger Lawson, was explained to members. It also includes a blog on which members can leave



*The AGM was held at the British Motor Museum, Gaydon*

comments, without logging in.

Roger is also working on a new members' website accessible by members with a simple log in. It will house essential campaigning documents and related information, exclusively for members.

Ian showed members the hard work undertaken by mostly board members, on the campaigning front.

These included opposing panic on emissions, pressuring government not to adopt mandatory speed limiters, challenging workplace parking levies in Bath in conjunction with our allies the TPA, and a new ABD general leaflet explaining our aims and objectives, (see member offer elsewhere this issue).

Plus a new MTS leaflet in London where a handful of volunteers have delivered 150,000 leaflets gaining 1,000 supporters.

Submissions were made to the Scottish parliament opposing 20mph limits (currently shelved), on road safety, young drivers and, of particular note, a sterling performance by Ian in front of the HOC Parliamentary Committee on Transport, arguing against a blanket ban on pavement parking.

It was a daunting and courageous fightback; unfortunately, the committee has recommended the government introduce a nationwide ban.

**ABD** Alliance of British Drivers Driving Sense

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**The Independent Voice for Drivers**

The Alliance of British Drivers is a voluntary organisation promoting the interests and concerns of Britain's drivers.

*The new-look ABD website was shown to those in attendance*

Members were also shown the video produced by the Daily Express filmed in London, where both Ian and I fiercely condemned the range of anti-car measures being forced through by mayor Sadiq Khan.

No holds were barred and we're grateful to the exposure provided by the Express.

Brian Gregory led the way with a presentation on Taxation and Investment, which is now available on our website.

Whatever way you cut it, the UK is short of major roads, many being in poor condition. Brian has updated previous versions of this subject; all members are urged to read and use it when contacting officialdom, (over £1 billion a week is extracted in motoring taxes).

Roger Lawson gave a presentation on the new 20's Senseless website he has established to counter the misinformation available on 20s Plenty. He showed how to be successful at countering councils agitating for 20mph zones, by keeping tabs on council transport committee meetings affecting road transport, and making your views known early before anti car measures appear; he has been very successful in Bromley where a no blanket 20s policy exists. Check out the website and give us your feedback.

Finally, Dave Botterill, our new North Yorks co-ordinator, gave us a valuable insight into battling against the imposition of 20s limits in his area.

Dave did impressive research on accident rates, wrote to councillors and argued at committee against the mindset that says lower limits equal safer driving. His was an inspiring talk.

Members asked for recruitment to be boosted; the board will respond with proposals shortly.

However, the board reiterated the importance of members stepping forward to aid the ABD's progress; indeed, we welcome any input, especially offers of help, from members.

The ABD's activities have resulted in a new South Wales coordinator in Mike Jones plus a potential new co-ordinator to take on North Wales.

Paul Biggs has offered to take on social media for West Midlands as a way of keeping the Birmingham ABCAZ campaign going.

- Get involved in the campaign see [www.20senseless.org](http://www.20senseless.org)

## Season's greetings

Thank you for your support over the last year. The dark days of midwinter are upon us with the threat of a general election result producing even darker days for us drivers. We are threatened as never before, and the ABD needs your continued or even increased support if you can manage it. We'll continue to do our best for you next year whatever the odds. Don't forget to let your parliamentary candidates know what you want! I wish you all the very best for the

Christmas and  
New Year  
festive  
season.



Ian Taylor,  
chairman

# Chairman's report

By Ian Taylor

The last year started with Dorry Watt taking over as Membership Secretary. Under her guidance all our records have been brought into one system and are now in better order.

Unfortunately as a result the number of paying full members has shrunk slightly and we are still in danger of dying out as new membership uptake has been disappointing. It cannot be emphasised enough that any contacts made who broadly agree with us need encouraging to join.

There has been no let-up on campaigning. A new general leaflet has been produced, also a leaflet for use in London against the Mayor's Transport Strategy - over 150,000 delivered.

The AMPOW campaign against speed awareness courses has continued; we have opposed the unjustified panic on emissions and air quality; also the EU mandated Intelligent Speed Adaptors - speed limiters to you and me.

In Birmingham we lost our local co-ordinator due to change of employment - that campaign (ABCAZ) is currently inactive and at risk of ending - situation vacant!

20's Senseless is now the title of our revamped national campaign against the spread of wide-area 20mph speed limits - this has its own website.

Where we were unable to mount campaigns by ourselves we have joined forces with the TaxPayers' Alliance: with anti-HS2 activity, against the proposed Clean Air Zone in Bath

and more recently trying to forestall a suggested Workplace Parking Levy in Bristol. Lose The Levy is set to be taken to other towns and cities where it is threatened.

Brian Gregory has produced a document: Road Investment and Road User Taxation: The Truth, on the disparity between UK road user taxation and public road spending - and how to address it. Paul Biggs produced a report on the consequences of electric vehicles for caravanning and towing. The look of our website has been improved and we are progressing plans for an additional Members' Website.

We continue to attempt to influence decision makers where possible. Evidence was submitted



Ian Taylor

to a Scottish Parliamentary Committee on default blanket 20mph speed limits - plan shelved for the moment. Three submissions were made to the UK Parliamentary Transport Committee: on road safety, young drivers and pavement parking. In the last case I attended the committee as a witness. We continue to participate on the Road User Panel of Transport Focus.

To keep you better informed we launched an occasional newsletter, The Rocky Road, for email distribution to both paying members and non-paying supporters. On The Road now has an easier distribution system, and a new home via the "new" website, providing easier access.



# Pave a way to calamity

**D**espite chairman Ian Taylor's outspoken performance, reported in our previous issue, the Commons Transport Committee is recommending an outright ban on pavement parking across England, warning it leaves people afraid or unable to leave their homes.

The report also calls for reforms to make it cheaper and easier for councils to use Traffic Regulations Orders to effect bans.

Committee chair Lilian Greenwood, said: "In the long term we believe the Government should ban pavement parking across England.

"Local authorities could create exemptions if they choose to do so, but drivers would know that unless it was expressly permitted it was illegal to park their car on the pavement."

A spokesperson for Guide Dogs said: "Pavement parking puts pedestrians in danger, including disabled people, older people, and parents with children.

"People with sight loss are particularly at risk as they may have no alternative but to walk in the road with traffic which they cannot see."

Chairman Ian Taylor responded: "The committee's recommendation was the latest



*Ian Taylor's appearance at the House of Commons*

episode of a battle lasting two or three years in which the ABD consistently opposed any attempt to force a nationwide ban.

"Pedestrian associations have upped the ante on this subject, misrepresenting the subject; most pavements are relatively clear during the day and fewer pedestrians travel at night - the issue balances itself out.

"No consideration was given to our proposal to have a gap of between one and two metres so people could easily pass.

"If enacted, the issue will cause chaos by with blocked roads and a hunt to park in nearby (wider) streets creating a competition for spaces."

## It's a chaotic picture

Roger Lawson attended an ITC meeting on the subject of Transport Impacts of Clean Air Zones.

The speaker from Oxford said they were aiming for a zero emission zone in the city, but people are not ready to give up their cars.

They also have a problem in enforcing moving traffic offences (unlike in London) so they need more powers to enforce low emission zones. Also, the information available from DVLA is not sufficient to do so easily.

Steve Gooding from the RAC Foundation spoke well and was reasonable, although he clearly supports some form of road pricing. But he said it could be a chaotic picture if every region/town did their own thing.

Roger said: "Most of the audience who spoke wished to make speeches or demonstrate how clever they were, so as a discussion forum it was not great."

## ABD's new voice for South Wales

We have another new local organiser and representative - this time flying the flag for the ABD in South Wales.

Cardiff-based Mike Jones has assumed the role. He is already active and we wish him well. He can be contacted on [southwales@abd.org.uk](mailto:southwales@abd.org.uk).

Our Birmingham ABCAZ campaign has expanded. Martin Moyes has changed jobs - good news for him, less so for us.

Director Paul Biggs has taken on the mantle expanded beyond clean air zones to deal with other local issues, not least the proposed Workplace Parking Levy - and is covering the whole West Midlands area. His contact details are on the back page.

# Reducing accident rates among young

By Malcolm Heymer

It was reported in issue 131 of On The Road that the ABD had submitted evidence to the transport committee's inquiry into road safety.

Subsequently, the committee expanded the inquiry to seek evidence on how to reduce the high accident rate among young and novice drivers.

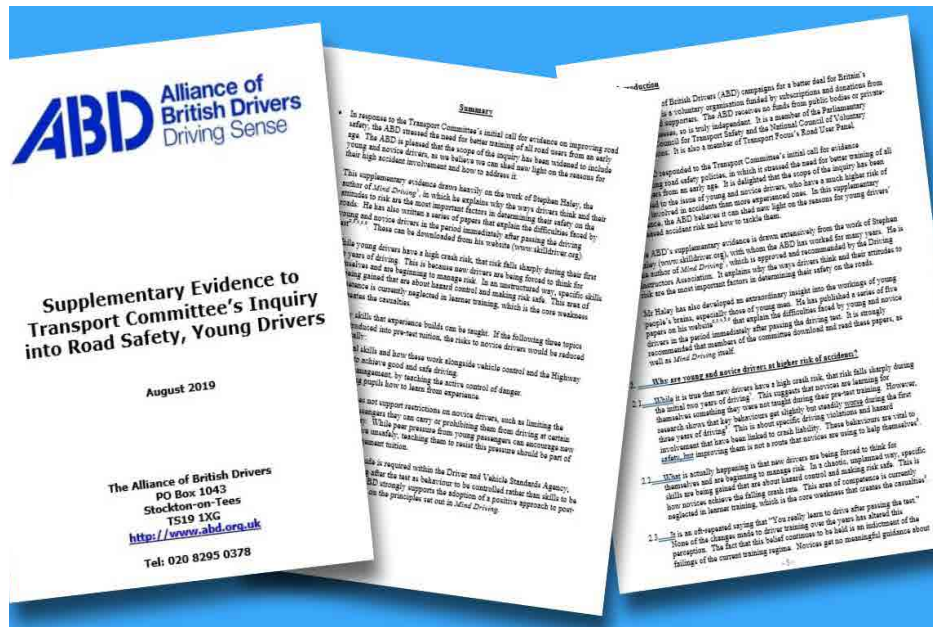
The ABD welcomed the opportunity to give its views on the reasons for the high accident involvement of young drivers and how to address them.

Our evidence drew heavily on the work of Stephen Haley, the author of Mind Driving, in which he explains why the ways drivers think and their attitudes to risk are the most important factors in determining their safety on the roads.

He has also written a series of papers that explain the difficulties faced by young and novice drivers in the period immediately after passing the driving test. These can be downloaded from his website, [www.skilldriver.org](http://www.skilldriver.org).

While young drivers have a high crash risk, that risk falls sharply during their first two years of driving. This is because new drivers are being forced to think for themselves and are beginning to manage risk.

In an unstructured way, specific skills are being gained that are about hazard control and making risk safe. This area



Part of the ABD's supplementary evidence submission

of competence is currently neglected in learner training, which is the core weakness that creates the casualties.

The key skills that experience builds can be taught. If the following three topics were introduced into pre-test tuition, the risks to novice drivers would be reduced dramatically:

1. Mental skills and how these work alongside vehicle control and the Highway Code to achieve good and safe driving.
2. Risk management, by teaching the active control of danger.
3. Teaching pupils how to learn from experience.

The ABD does not support restrictions on novice drivers, such as limiting the number of passengers they can carry or prohibiting them from driving at certain times of the day.

While peer pressure from young passengers can encourage new drivers to behave unsafely, teaching them to resist this pressure should be part of their risk management tuition.

A change of attitude is required within the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, which sees driving after the test as behaviour to be controlled rather than skills to be developed.

The ABD strongly supports the adoption of a positive approach to post-test training, based on the principles set out in Mind Driving.

- The ABD's full evidence can be downloaded from the Transport Committee's website. You can find the link here: <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/transport-committee/road-safety-young-and-novice-drivers/written/104645.html>

## Road users in focus at meeting

Ian Taylor attended the latest road user panel at Transport Focus.

Highways England replied to our enquiry about how they compiled their figures on all lane running motorways, leading to their claim that they were safer than hard shoulders.

Ian thanked them for their reply, but pointed out that an article in Auto Express and the AA showed the opposite.

During the roundtable update, Ian said the ABD was continuing as before, and fighting Extinction



*Are your road signs clear to see? If not, there's a new way of reporting problems.*

Rebellion's efforts to make us extinct - also building a local campaign network.

A new online system is being introduced to report evidence of unreadable signs along the Strategic Road Network, called Sort My Signs. Responses will

be on a map on a website, and Transport Focus will pass to Highways England. The campaign will run for as long as people show interest.

And the RAC's report on motoring revealed the public's top concerns regarding motorists. In priority order they are - mobile phone use, tailgating, maintenance of local roads, aggressiveness of other drivers, and environmental issues including roadside litter and maintenance of roadside signs and crash barriers.

## Trying to generate interest

By Ian Taylor

**I attended the 2019 annual lecture of the Global Warming Policy Foundation on November 11. This year it was 'Energy Utopias & Engineering Reality' delivered by Professor Michael Kelly from the University of Cambridge.**

We are being told to ditch the internal combustion engine in favour of electric vehicles. So where is all that extra electricity going to come from? Can we do it?

There are some who think that this is a ploy to get us to go electric, then to say there isn't enough power so you cannot have any sort of private car. Is that a real possibility, or paranoid conspiracy theory? That makes the subject of this year's lecture very important to us at the ABD.

The GWPF is now 10 years old, having been founded just

after the Climategate scandal at the University of East Anglia. Professor Kelly was on the panel which investigated that, and the only panel member to warn against 'whitewashing'.

His presentation started with the upsides of energy availability which has improved every area of human welfare.

Each person uses 8 times more energy than in the year 1800, during which time we got off renewables and are now trying to get back on them. About 80% of the world's energy comes from fossil fuels and has done for the last 40 years.

If that is reduced by the intended amount, we shall have to reduce our use back to 1800 levels. The feeling was that this simply cannot be done with current population levels.

There was a marked increase in fossil fuel use between 2000 and 2005, which correlates to a worldwide rise in the 'middle class', most notably in China. The predicted renewables will be just 10% of energy supply in 2035

- giving up fossil fuels at that rate would need 400 years.

Emissions in the UK were already falling before the 2008 Climate Change Act, the audience heard. UK CO2 reductions are 80 times above the rest of the world - much of that being down to deindustrialisation.

To decarbonise needs a huge new infrastructure for heat, electricity and transport - the grid would need to be at least six times bigger. Where would the electricity come from? Renewable capacity cannot provide efficient and reliable production.

The professor gave examples from Germany (unable to meet peak demand), the USA (lack of storage) and China (nowhere near meeting increased demand). Renewables are profligate in their use of advanced materials - with no-one yet considering how to recycle.

- The full lecture with slides can be viewed on GWPF's website



# Feedback on smart motorways needed



Using the hard shoulder as a live lane. Picture - BBC



Making his point - Brian Gregory

**A**s our cover story reveals, Highways England has potentially backtracked from its policy of using hard shoulders as running lanes on motorways.

It has been unable to provide comparative data between different smart motorway systems, claiming a detailed study wasn't attempted because the data set, (done between 2 junctions on the M25), was likely to be small.

The House of Commons Transport committee became impatient with Highways England over a lack of statistics.

Stopped Vehicle Detection is in place across 18% of the smart motorway network.

Theoretically, it means that drivers breaking down in a live lane can be helped much quicker.

Transport secretary Grant Shapps asked his department to carry out 'at pace', an evidence stocktake to gather the facts quickly and make recommendations'.

Mr Shapps said that the statistics on smart motorways were hard to understand - a point the ABD has been trying to get across to government!

Founder member Brian Gregory said: "The ABD has always promoted setting speed limits correctly using 85th percentile method, i.e. the speed at or below that, which 85% of drivers would drive in the absence of a speed limit - as well as correctly interpreting accident stats.

"In the case of motorways, our safest roads, the failure to provide accurate comparative figures is hugely damaging.

"Highways England data shows average delay in spotting a vehicle breakdown, by an

operative, is 17 minutes. Currently, there are only two sections of motorway with automatic vehicle detection systems in place, on the M25 junctions 5-6 and 23-27.

"Whilst installation of detection systems will proceed on the M3, it's doubtful whether any existing or new schemes will continue on other motorways.

"Using the hard shoulder as a running lane is widening a motorway on the cheap; improving traffic flow can reduce accidents and alleviate congestion, but drivers find the part time running lane, where the hard shoulder varies between being a hard shoulder and a running lane, confusing.

"Sadly, it takes deaths to provoke a review. There are still questions to be answered here, and the ABD will be seeking them."

## Letter to the editor - how can this be fair?

In July I was allegedly caught doing 35mph in a 30 zone on a country road with two dwellings, by someone who flew out of a hedge with a swiftly moving camera.

My speedo showed 31-32, which I now know shows 2-3 miles over the actual speed.

I am really careful and did protest, but have been duly processed. I am a full-time carer to 92-year-old husband

and have been sleeping on the floor beside his hospital bed downstairs for almost a year, so I wrote to the Magistrate - what a mistake.

My fine was reduced to £40 as I have a low income, but court costs put it to £157 and I still got three points.

I am in despair - a local job burned down the bus shelter and got 40 hours community service and a few weeks of

curfew. I did fire off an email to the court asking where there is no humanity, but there is no hope. Prior to this I had a clean record, having never even dropped a bit of litter, so feel really disillusioned.

If I can be caught then anyone can, as I must be one of the most careful drivers in the country and now feel afraid to go out.

Jane Page

# Annual £500 fee to park in the UK's second city

**B**irmingham City Council has approved plans to create a workplace parking levy of £500 per space per year.

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.

The council's cabinet agreed a report from the Strategic Outline Business Case and approved further investigation of a WPL scheme for the city

WPLs charge employers who provide parking for staff, generating funds for other transport projects.

The report described the proposal as part of a series of measures being implemented to improve air quality, create a healthier environment, and reduce congestion in the city.

It will also fund schemes to improve the quality and



The council says a workplace parking levy would help tackle air pollution attractiveness of more sustainable modes of transport, and make travel by private car less attractive.

Waseem Zaffar, cabinet member for transport and environment, said: "A workplace parking levy would help tackle air pollution, fund public transport improvements, reduce congestion and improve the way we move around our city."

"We will of course work closely with the business community and will carry out a full consultation before a decision is made in late 2021 for implementation no earlier than 2023/24."

The council estimates that

the levy of £500 per space will generate an estimated £5.6 million in its first year of operation.

Between 2024 and 2034 it is estimated that £79 million will be generated, allowing for a 2% annual increase to the levy and operational expenditure.

The ABD is not satisfied with bringing in a dubiously titled clean air zone charge next year - in our view, Birmingham is now piling on the misery with a proposed workplace charging scheme in an area with limited parking space for employees.

It could be a case of pay up, or travel by public transport.



# ULEZ to bring in less income

**W**hilst London's mayor Sadiq Khan continues to crow about illusory health benefits, increasing vehicle compliance is having an adverse effect on TFL's finances.

A rise in compliant vehicles to 72.5%, up to July, will see forecasted income from the ULEZ for 2019/20 to be £51 million, down 34% on a previous projection of £77 million.

The ULEZ, introduced in April, operates 24 hours a day in the existing Congestion Charge area of central London charging cars, motorcycles and vans that do not comply with set emissions standards £12.50 a day or £100 per day for lorries and buses or coaches.

In March, there were 35,578 and 55,457 non-

compliant and compliant vehicles respectively, per day.

By July, this has changed to 23,054 non-compliant vehicles and 60,844 compliant vehicles per day during Congestion Charge hours.

Sadiq Khan claimed: 'These older vehicles send harmful emissions into our air and lungs and I will continue to take bold action to protect Londoners from this invisible killer'.

The ABD view is that already, just over six months on from the start of charging, the London ULEZ is on course to score a spectacular own goal by bringing in significantly less income than anticipated.

No wonder London boroughs want a crackdown on current speed limits to boost their revenues!

## All-new leaflet is available now

**THE ABD STANDS UP FOR DRIVERS LIKE YOU**

**HELP US TO HELP YOU**

**WWW.ABD.ORG.UK**

**JOIN THE ABD TODAY**

**THE INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR DRIVERS**

**The ABD:**

- Is frequently approached by the media to provide the driver's point of view.
- Meets with transport ministers and other decision-makers to lobby for action on a range of issues.
- Presents evidence to Parliamentary Inquiries on important topics.
- Has articles published in a range of media outlets.
- Works with residents' groups and local campaigners to expose anti-driver proposals and get them stopped.
- Produces regular newsletters and social media posts to keep our supporters informed.

**ABD campaigns have:**

- Halted the introduction of road pricing. The online petition was one of the largest ever with a massive 1.8 million signatures.
- Helped stop local congestion charge schemes in Manchester, Edinburgh and West London.
- Helped to stave off rises in fuel duty and forced a rethink on speed camera policy.

Visit [www.abd.org.uk](http://www.abd.org.uk) to become a member or to make a donation.

You can also become a Facebook friend or follow us on Twitter to get the latest news.

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Please note that the ABD is a non-profit organisation run primarily by volunteers. Additional donations are always welcomed and used to good effect.

**ABD Alliance of British Drivers Driving Sense**

Roger Lawson has designed the latest ABD campaigning leaflet

The latest version of our general campaigning leaflet is available - and we strongly recommend members to obtain their copies.

The latest version covers taxation, road safety, parking, the truth about air pollution amongst other topics.

The ABD wishes to thank Roger Lawson for the updated design. Keep copies in your car to hand

to anyone feeling hard done by with present motoring policies; see if garages will stock them in their waiting rooms.

Copies are available from the member communications secretary, Terry Hudson - please contact him at [kent@abd.org.uk](mailto:kent@abd.org.uk).

A donation to cover the costs of postage, which can be done via our website, would be very much appreciated.

## Study is welcome first step in Kent

After years of campaigning by the ABD, the road freight industry, the Port of Dover, Kent County Council, Dover District Council and Charlie Elphicke MP for Dover, the first round of funding has been secured by Highways England for the widening by dualling of the A2 between Lydden Hill and Dover Port.

This is for a feasibility study only - but in the words of ABD chairman and Dover resident Ian Taylor: "This is a welcome first step after years of pressure since John Prescott cancelled the original approved scheme in 1997."

The case has been helped this time by increased freight through Dover, and its vulnerability to traffic snarl-ups, Brexit plans, and the impacts of the Lower Thames Crossing and Ebbsfleet Garden City, plus other new housing along route.

# Safety is a priority for group

Ian Taylor reports from the November meeting of the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) members meeting in London

**T**here were two presentations: the first being sustainability of road safety engineering in local government, given by Kate Fuller, road safety engineering director with the Road Safety Foundation - founded in 1986 by the AA and insurers.

Their latest work started by examining problems faced by local authorities in this area, namely the level of resourcing, lack of capital investment, and inability to compete with care services (for funding)

They want to reinvigorate safety engineering, and are using a Rees-Jeffreys grant.

For Phase 1 they surveyed 30 local authorities, very few of which are achieving anything like their 50% KSI reduction targets. Scottish authorities were the 'best', while in England, urban authorities fared better.

The second presentation was from the Law Commission, who are running a consultation on Highly Automated Road Passenger Services, presented by Jessica Ugucioni, lead lawyer for Automated Vehicles Review.

This is looking at the UK's regulatory framework for automated vehicles and their relationship with passenger services and public transport. Recommendations are due in 2021. Find out more about the consultation at [www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/automated-vehicles/](http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/automated-vehicles/)

The road environment working party report was given by Heather Ward, who said PACTS think they should be doing more on non-motorway SRN roads.

She revealed she attended Twenty's Plenty's conference and she again clashed with them over claimed Edinburgh results from no actual data.

She also challenged analysis from Bristol, describing the 64% casualty reduction claim as 'nonsense' - the 20's Plenty rep left the meeting early!

In her Q&A session, the subject of smart motorways was raised. The groundwork was originally well done on the M42, but has now become a big issue, with a review going on.

That was my cue to stick my hand up. Public perception has not favoured smart motorways and now, with latest accidents and stats, public opinion appears to be changing - against them.

What did PACTS think of HE's latest figures, I asked? Originally they said smart motorways were



*The ability of AVs to recognise motorcycles was up for debate*

safer - now they're saying "no better or worse than non-smart".

From the vehicle design working party, the Q&A again proved interesting.

A suggestion was made that too many vehicles are getting too big, either aimed at HGVs or SUVs - or both.

A comment was made that attention to AVs was mainly about the 'end product' of completely driverless rather than the part-AVs along the way. Another cue for me...

Up went my hand to suggest it really should be the other way around (and urgently), because partial AVs are coming first, and are regarded by some as being potentially more dangerous.

The answer I got was that even if that were true, there would still be less danger and accidents than now with less humans doing all the driving. As always, rigorous trials would come first, followed by an "evolution".

Closing the meeting, David Davies said PACTS can bring together "segregated" academics who have no practical experience with people "in the field" who do have.

After the meeting I had a word with Anna Zee (Motorcyclists), who has been to some Brussels meetings (with Oliver Carsten). The EU are actively working on AVs 'recognising' motorcyclists, with robust testing.

Previously they had difficulties recognising but the latest results are good. In particular Volkswagen tests, AVs recognised motorcyclists every single time. The message? If you want to cycle in front of an AV, make sure its a VW?!

I've been as critical of these PACTS meetings as anyone and questioned their worth. On this particular occasion however, it was informative and useful - and I managed to make a significant contribution.

## Driving on right or left side of the road

By Hugh Bladon

The recent accident resulting in the death of Harry Dunn reminds me of an incident of many years ago.

We had just attended my brother's 'passing out' parade in Aldershot and were on our way home. He was leading in his car. It was Friday 13th August, my 13th birthday.

An Austin A70 appeared coming towards us on our side of the road. My brother braked hard and pulled to the left.

The driver of the Austin braked hard and pulled

to the right. The resulting head-on crash was, fortunately, no more than about 10mph and resulted in some bent metalwork and a leaking radiator. It transpired that the Austin driver was an American over here on holiday.

This is a simple mistake which I am sure many people might have made when they have been on the continent, and is very easy to do when turning out to the left after visiting a petrol station or from the hotel first thing in the morning.

The lady who caused the accident should, of course, have stayed and faced the consequences, but it was hardly a deliberate act.

## Uphold freedom of information

**W**hen Transport For London failed to provide a cost benefit analysis for its rollout of 20mph zones, our London co-ordinator Roger Lawson didn't let them off the hook.

He submitted a Freedom of Information request to obtain that information, appealing to the Information Commissioner's Office about the refusal by TfL to provide the requested information, which he felt should have provided a justification for their proposals in advance of the public consultation.

The ICO upheld his complaint - and he has now received the requested information.

The business case was published very recently. A similar draft, published in 2012 and accessible well before the consultation was launched, should have been made available.

However, the numbers in the later version on which the cost/benefit ratio was calculated were much different, with the capital cost being reduced very substantially and the collision



*Roger Lawson*

reduction benefit almost doubling.

The outcome is of course a very clear positive benefit as a result. It is clear, in the ABD's view, that TfL wanted to conceal the earlier version because it provided marginal benefits.

But we feel both versions are seriously defective because they do not include all the costs in the analysis.

For example, they do not include:

- The economic costs of increased journey times. Although average speeds during a lot of the day are less than 20 mph on these roads, they are higher at other times and ignore the fact that between junctions and traffic lights/pedestrian crossings, the speeds are higher.

- Costs for enforcement of the 20mph limits.
- No costs imposed on drivers from paying fines for exceeding the limits are included, which will likely be quite substantial.
- They discount the suggestion that lower speeds would increase emissions from vehicles and hence have not evaluated it which is contrary to readily available evidence on that issue.

In other words, it seems TfL concealed the original 'business case' on spurious grounds, thus defeating a fair public consultation. This demonstrates, in our view, exactly why TfL is not to be trusted and should be reformed.

Roger said: "One moral for readers is to not accept refusals to FOI requests. Such refusals are often unreasonable and are just a mechanism to delay answering, and hence concealing information until it is too late to be useful.

"The mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, who is a party to this dubious activity, should ensure TfL acts more responsibly. I will be sending him a complaint on this issue."



# Declining a speed awareness course

By Quentin Gallagher

**I**n August I travelled to Shropshire for a family diamond wedding. The journey started well with a clear A34 and M4 followed by a pleasant dual carriageway road beyond Swindon to the Air Balloon roundabout.

A lower-grade A road then passed through a number of rural villages. There was no particular hurry, conditions were good, and I continued at a sedate pace. Rounding a left-hand bend on the A417 at Stretton Grandison, a short straight to a rise opened up and I saw the camera van, a split second too late.

Several days later the Notice of Intended Prosecution arrived, stating that my speed had been recorded at 38 in a 30 zone. The location was the sort of road and topography where, not too long ago, there might have been a 40 limit or more likely the national speed limit.

With all that I have read about speed awareness courses in ABD communications, and happy that I did not consider myself to have been driving at anywhere near an excessive speed for the conditions, I was resolved not to accept the offer of a course. However, I now had a problem because the stated turnaround for return of one's licence was four weeks and I was due to travel to Canada for a holiday with an element of self-drive car hire.



*Drive with regard to speed limits*

There was a contact number for the ticket office, open 10am-3pm weekdays and constantly engaged. When I got through on ringback I explained my predicament. A helpful human being said that I need not book my course until after my return, as they would put a note on the file that I was away.

I said that I intended to pay the fine rather than take a course (for £120 and a day's holiday). "Are you sure?" said the slightly shocked voice at the other end. It was agreed that I would pay the fine and need only return my licence once I returned from Canada, although I may get a reminder in the meantime.

I paid the fine online immediately on a Ministry of Justice website, and I think there were three 'are you sure?' type warnings urging me not to pay the fine but to accept a course before it was processed.

On the day of my return I

posted off my licence (not sure why they actually need it in these days of electronic records?). Ten days later I got a reminder saying I had not posted it and could be taken to court, on conviction I could receive six points and a fine of £1,000.

Back on the phone but unable to get through, I did get a recorded message quoting an email address. I mailed this address and got an acknowledgment saying they aimed to reply to emails within ten working days.

A day later I received a reply saying my licence was not recorded on the computer, but they have a ten day backlog so give it another week. One day before this period elapsed my licence arrived.

Now it was time to contact the insurers of mine and my wife's vehicles.

All of them noted the news and made no adjustment to the premium (I have no other recent points or claims), and only one said it may make a difference to the renewal premium next time; time will tell.

In summary, it was a somewhat stressful experience, but interesting to see the reactions of the authorities and the insurance companies on accepting the points.

I am now driving with even more regard for speed limits without actually driving by numbers, and I wonder if the behaviour of drivers who have been on a course changes in a similar way.

# Diesel ban - your thoughts?

Bristol's city cabinet, in a first for the UK, has recommended a ban on private diesel vehicles in a small city centre area, plus a (Class C) CAZ charging buses, taxis and goods vehicles.

The council had supported a Class D CAZ that would charge private cars £9, combined with the additional measures previously attached only to the Class C CAZ.

However, it does not appear

to have included the small area diesel ban in this latest scenario. It's estimated the introduction of a diesel ban, will bring forward the compliance date of a Class C CAZ by six years.

Mayor Marvin Rees said: "These ambitious plans demonstrate our commitment to tackling air pollution so we meet legal limits within the shortest time, without disproportionately affecting

citizens on lower incomes which would happen with a blanket approach to charging vehicles.

"Protecting the most vulnerable people from pollution is central to these plans and we have ensured that all impacts have been carefully considered."

The deadline for the implementation of the plans is March 2021. What do members think?

# Farewell to our US friend

Obituary: Jim Walker (1944-2019)

**I**t is with sadness that we announce the death of Jim Walker, a long-standing member of the National Motorists Association of America and a good friend and supporter of the ABD.

Jim lived in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and was a staunch advocate of setting speed limits in accordance with the 85th percentile principle.

He worked closely with the Michigan State Police to ensure that speed limits were set as close as possible to the measured 85th percentile speed, often against strong opposition from the slower-is-safer brigade.

He frequently wrote letters supportive of ABD campaigns to British publications such as Local Transport Today, and newspapers, both national and local.

Jim and his wife Molly were extensive travellers and visited the UK on a regular basis, as Molly has family in South Yorkshire.



*Jim Walker, pictured during his meeting with Brian Gregory and Malcolm Heymer on a visit to the UK in 2011*

On one such visit in 2011, he met up with Brian Gregory and Malcolm Heymer at the Red Lion pub, on the A57 Sheffield to Worksop road, in Todwick.

Jim was an enthusiastic driver and competed at a high level in special stage rallying in the SCCA (Sporting Car Club of America) Pro Rally series. He finished second in the national standings in 1974 and fourth in 1975.

The highlight of his rallying career was in 1979, when he had a factory sponsored drive

in a Fiat 131 Abarth, a model that won the World Rally Championship in 1978.

That car has been restored and is now part of a collection of Fiat and Lancia rally cars in Florida.

Jim was reunited with it in February this year and actually got to drive it again, briefly.

Jim's support and advice on campaigning issues, especially related to speed limits, has been extremely valuable. He will be greatly missed.

# ABD - in the media

Compiled by Ian Taylor

## August:

TaxiPoint Taxi News asked: "Should there be a re-evaluation of the penalty points system for speeding offences?" claiming disproportionate penalties for 'low level' speeding. Again, our "20's Senseless" campaign garnered a mention. Local Transport Today published a letter from Terry Hudson pointing out that most heritage sites are in remote locations and their future preservation is consequently dependent upon car-using visitors.



Mention - 20's Senseless

## September:

Paul Biggs appeared on BBC Radio Stoke, critical of the Transport Committee announcement on pavement parking and of policies denying parking spaces. He put forward our suggestions and the issue of bikes using pavements plus the wider issues of other pavement obstructions - while agreeing that complete pavement blocking is unacceptable. Metro also mentioned the ABD giving evidence to the Transport Committee on this subject.

This Is Money - website - had Roger Lawson on 20mph speed limits. BBC Radio Tees interviewed Paul Biggs about drivers caught by unmarked police cars - plus advice being given to motor cyclists and cyclists on safer driving.

Ian Taylor was next, on BBC Three Counties Radio, opposing suggestions that roads be more child-friendly

with lower speeds and regular closures so children can play in them. He said we'd lost sight of what roads are for (and always have been) - they are not children's playgrounds.

When the school run was brought up he added that (subject to distance of course) there's no reason why children (barring the youngest) cannot walk alone to school if they're taught how to use roads properly.

More councillors in Kent are demanding extending 20mph speed limits across virtually all towns. An article in the Herne Bay Gazette and Whitstable Gazette featured opposition from Terry Hudson.

Across in Sussex The Argus (Brighton) reported Brighton & Hove Council's welcoming of the Parliamentary Transport Committee recommendation to impose a blanket ban on pavement parking.

Ian Taylor's contribution to the committee was quoted - a very one-

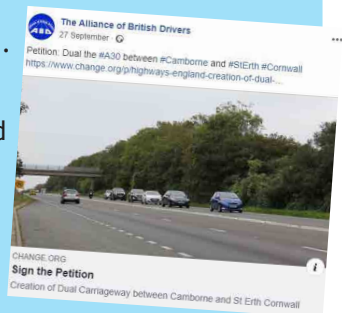
sided selection where he expressed opposition to pavement blocking that completely misrepresented our position.

The Express & Star in Wolverhampton featured our objection (Paul Biggs) to road closures and car free days. The subject was also covered by TaxiPoint Taxi News and Motor1.com.

Paul was also quoted online by BBC News saying that if speed limits weren't

set too low (referring to the M4 in South Wales) for spurious pollution reasons, speed cameras wouldn't be necessary.

This was also covered by PocketGPSWorld.com



## October:

The month started with Ian Taylor being contacted by The Victoria Derbyshire Show (BBC Two & BBC News). He issued them with a statement about the use of telematics in car insurance and potentially disastrous consequences when it goes wrong. In this case a company called Carrot Insurance and their Better Driving App. This statement, apparently when presented by the BBC to the Financial Conduct Authority, persuaded them to take an interest. Despite an invite to appear on the show, nothing has been heard since, so it looks like either the story has been dropped or there is regulatory or legal action pending. (Private advice to members: don't



The Victoria Derbyshire Show picked up the issue of telematics

use this company, their app doesn't work well, and when it fails you risk insurance cancellation)

Ian was also on BBC Three Counties radio about the standard of driving in Britain. He said that we see bad things and remember them, even though

everyone else fine. Not a cause for complacency but Britain fares well compared to most other countries. The basic rules of the road are courtesy, politeness and good manners which may have deteriorated across society and are not just a road thing.



## October:

Terry Hudson was quoted in the Gravesend & Dartford Reporter in an article about Dartford Crossing Tolls becoming permanent (and out to tender). Our PR about the possibility of an 80mph limit for EVs and the need for setting limits by 85th percentile was reported by Yahoo News, TaxiPoint Taxi News and Car Expert magazine. BBC Three Counties Radio talked about the school run - Hugh Bladon this time.

Dartford Crossing tolls again, and Roger Lawson in the Kent Messenger and Kent Online. He said we are not in favour of yet another private organisation making money from motorists. The charges should be dropped, not extended - governments had broken promises.

Motor1.com said the 2040 ban on new diesel and petrol car sales may prove premature, quoting our PR as saying electric power not suitable for all vehicles. TaxiPoint Taxi News also quoted us on congestion and air quality: "Obstructing traffic and

increasing revenue, the priority in two of Europe's major cities". Local Transport Today mentioned ABD policy in an item about partial decriminalisation to give enforcement powers to councils - who also want to run speed awareness courses (wonder why?!)

BBC Three Counties Radio had Paul Biggs on diesel bans for clean air in cities, debating a cyclist from the Stop Killing Cyclists campaign who wants all cars banned from cities for the sake of safer cycling and walking (question: if cyclists got free reign, how safe would walkers be?) There were predictable arguments about air pollution and climate scaremongering. One news item branded slow drivers as dangerous - killing more than ever. That was taken up by the Daily Star, who spoke to Hugh Bladon.

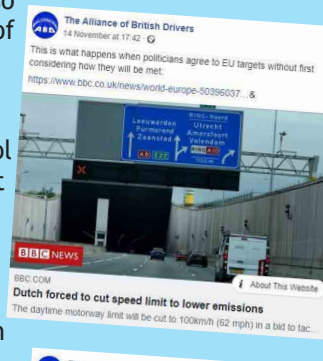


## November:

Paul Biggs was back on BBC Three Counties Radio about Bristol's proposed diesel ban (should other cities follow suit?) - he talked about the cleanliness of the latest cars. Days later he was back, becoming something of a regular, this time about average speed cameras, stressing the need for 85th percentile setting and that no set speed is safe or dangerous in all circumstances. He was also mentioned in Local Transport Today being critical of Bristol's ban.

Hugh Bladon talked about the EU demands for breathalysers ISA (speed limiters) in vehicles on BBC Radio Stoke. He next talked again about school runs on BBC Three Counties Radio. The RAC report on the record amount of money raised by councils from charges and penalties - and bad state of road maintenance - then made the news. Hugh was interviewed and quoted by the Daily Mail, twice! -and repeated that councils treated drivers as cash cows.

"Netherlands forced to slash speed limit to reduce emissions" was another story. Paul Biggs debated Christian Woolmer in an evening slot on talkRadio. Motor1.com reported our PR urging the next government to reject Bristol's diesel ban as most modern diesels are as clean as their petrol equivalents. Hugh Bladon went on BBC Coventry & Warwickshire over their 20% increase in deaths and injuries on their roads.



# Press releases

Press releases issued since the last edition:

- Frivolous and Ideological Road Closures - The Latest Weapon in The War Against Drivers
  - Grant Shapps Review of Speed Limits Welcome. Focus Should be On 85th Percentile to Maximise Safety
  - Unilateral Net-Zero CO2 by 2050: Pain for All Including Drivers, No gain
  - London and Paris have The Same Problem: Their Mayor
  - Will Electric Vehicles Ever Be Ready To Power The Caravan and Motorhome Industry?
  - New Mobile Phone Cameras Branded 'Government Approved Upskirting'
  - A New Government Must Reject Bristol's Blanket Diesel Ban
  - Fancy Becoming a Climate Serf?
  - Economically Beneficial Speed Limit Increase Unreasonably Opposed - that's 80 on motorways
  - What Have Politicians Ever Done For Us? A pre-election special posing 19 questions from drivers to would-be MPs.
  - ABD Launches Home Safety Week 2019. This is where ABD means Alliance of Better Dwellings - a joke PR (clearly marked as such) to spoof Road Safety Week (BRAKE) and send-up their logic, using real data from RoSPA.
- All of our press releases are available to view on our website (under News) and are now sent to members and supporters for whom we have a working email address.

# 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 Facebook ([www.facebook.com/allianceofbritishdrivers](http://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](http://www.abd.org.uk)) is available to everyone and contains lots of information on a range of topical items. Log on to find out more, or contact the ABD Webmaster, Chris Ward.

**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!

**OTR back copies:** Available for a limited time from Terry Hudson (see our local campaigns section).

**Car stickers:** Show your support for the ABD with one of our car stickers. Contact Terry Hudson if you are interested - you'll need to send him an A5 stamped addressed envelope.

**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 or Ian Taylor, or contact by email [national@abd.org.uk](mailto: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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