



BBRAG NEWS

Bromley Borough Roads Action Group - No. 47 (July 2007)

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Editorial

This edition covers some of the main policy issues on transport that are facing the country and Londoners, and a couple of TV appearances by your editor where he sparred with Steven Joseph and Ken Livingstone on those subjects. And if you aren't aware of the arguments to use against those advocating road pricing, there is a handy "quick-reference" guide.

Perhaps with a new government, and a new transport minister, we might see some changes to more enlightened transport policies, but I would not bet on that..... Roger Lawson, Editor

Worsley Bridge Road Speed Table



Above is the latest incident of a car leaving the road after hitting the speed table at the junction of Worsley Bridge Road and Copers Cope Road in Beckenham. This is the last of several such incidents and the following is what the owner of the property into which the car crashed said in a letter to Gordon Hayward of Bromley Council:

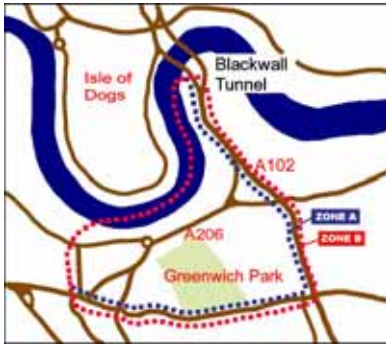
"It is 2.30 am and here we are again with yet another night's disturbed sleep. This time by a car crashing into our garden. I am really upset and so are the children.

Please tell me what you propose to do about this situation. The police are unwilling to even remove the vehicle, as it is on our land and inform us they will get back to us. Do we also have to keep footing the bill for the damage and disruption of these events?"

This problem received some coverage on BBC TV News so hopefully it might prompt the council to do something about it. So far they have stonewalled in the usual manner and refused to accept liability or even pay for a survey of the noise and vibrations that are claimed to be damaging the house.

Bromley Council have made some proposals that might improve matters, but a specialist survey of the vibrations is now being undertaken and a decision has therefore been postponed.

Greenwich Road Tolls and Blackwall Tunnel Tidal Flow Cessation



The cessation of the Blackwall Tunnel Tidal Flow systems has increased morning travel times by over an hour for many people.

Your editor submitted a request for information on the cessation of the tidal flow system to Transport for London (TfL) under the Freedom of Information Act. That included requests for data on the traffic accidents within the tunnel and the approach roads.

Although TfL didn't supply all the information requested, as is their habit, they did provide the accident data. In the last 3 years, there were a number of personal injury accidents reported to the police in the tunnel and on the approach roads – 65 in total of which one was fatal (to a motorcyclist who lost control and fell under the wheels of a goods vehicle outside the tunnel), but most of the rest were slight. Most of the accidents seemed to involve vehicles running into stationary ones ahead through inattention (or as a result of sneezing as in one case).

There appear to be only two accidents involving vehicles where the contraflow was in operation of which one seemed to be related to overtaking by a motorcyclist, and the other with a vehicle travelling in the wrong lane.

This whole matter was raised by Bromley & Chislehurst MP Bob Neill in a debate in the House of Commons on the 17th May – see <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm070517/debtext/70517-0023.htm#07051782000002> for the transcript.

He also intends to raise it at the Mayor's Question Time.

Misinformation by Ken Livingstone

Ken Livingstone was talking on the Vanessa Feltz Radio London show on Friday 11th May. He implied that there had been overtaking in the tunnel, and god forbid, what would happen if a car collided with a tanker! But of course tankers are not permitted in the Blackwall Tunnel.

Greenwich Toll Surveys

A member of the ABD has also submitted a request for details of the public surveys performed on the proposed road tolls or congestion charging scheme in the Greenwich area (map of the proposed zones at the head of this article). There have been a number of surveys done it seems by Accent and Ipsos/Mori (the writer was telephoned by the latter on the basis that I was a "visitor" to Greenwich although where they got that data from is unclear).

Some of these surveys were completed as long ago as Spring 2006, and include such nice simple questions as "*How strongly do you support or oppose a congestion charging scheme for Greenwich*". Wouldn't it be great to see the results of these surveys! But would TfL give out the results of the surveys – No, because they think the data will be used in policy formulation. This is a direct obstruction and contrary to the principles embodied in the Act as clearly the reports have in most cases been completed and the data is simply data and not relevant to the policy decision process. The ABD will be pursuing these requests until they get the data.

But it seems TfL are intending to publish a policy document based on the survey results this summer.

Tunnel Cameras

Note that contrary to recent rumours, TfL advise that they have not installed speed cameras within the tunnels. They did install some monitoring CCTV cameras for a short while but these have now been removed.

Road Pricing – the Key Issues

On the 27th April, your Editor appeared for the ABD on the Daily Politics BBC TV show. This has an interesting format in that they have a live panel of people watching the programme who record their instant reactions (positive or negative) to the arguments put forward by the speakers who appear. I was debating with Steven Joseph of Transport 2000, a long standing campaigner on environmental issues, so I was expecting a good fight.

In reality it proved somewhat of a walkover with him consistently scoring negatively to my positively – in fact the only time he got near “neutral” was when he started apologising for the Government’s actions.

Anyway, in case you get into similar debates, here is the note I prepared to brief myself on the issues and which I used in the initial three minutes of speech which we each got:

Key themes:

It Won’t Work. The ABD’s position is that road pricing will not cut congestion significantly, and it is enormously expensive. It almost certainly means that the total tax taken from road users will rise. We already pay about £50bn in taxes on road transport, whereas less than £8bn per year is spent on the roads – this unbalanced equation would clearly worsen with road pricing.

Privacy. Road pricing almost certainly will involve constant surveillance of your movements which is an invasion of your privacy.

Regressive. Road pricing is a regressive tax that impacts the poor more than the wealthy and is not something which a country that believes in equality should put up with.

Sub-themes:

London. A good example of the failure of congestion charging schemes is the London one. An enormously expensive nightmare where 90% of the regular charges paid by motorists get consumed in operating it. And traffic speeds are almost back to where they were before the scheme was introduced.

Councillor Brian Ashton from Canada took a look at the Congestion Tax system in London. Here are his comments: “There will be headlights shining out of my butt before we ever see congestion charges in Toronto”.

Environment. Neither is there any real environmental benefit from congestion charging schemes – in fact with people driving further on minor roads to avoid congestion charges on main roads, they might actually make things worse. In London, air pollution has risen, not fallen.

Solution. How do we solve congestion? Simply by improving existing roads and tackling congestion hot spots. As the Eddington report pointed out, there is a fantastic return on investment by doing so because building roads is cheap in comparison with the financial return. Improving public transport might help but it really is not economic in comparison and the public prefer not to use it anyway.

Costs of national road pricing: £62 billion to set up and £8bn per year to run. That is about the same as the existing motorway network in capital cost so the network could be doubled in size if we spent the money on that instead.

Voting. The Association of British Drivers calls for a referendum on all road pricing schemes and suggests that the Government should stop bribing local councils to introduce them.

Joining. And anyone who wants to fight road pricing should join the ABD.

Note: the BBC have been running polls which ask “If all the revenue raised from road pricing was spent on public transport, would you be in favour”. This is a ridiculous question. It’s rather like asking turkeys if they would vote for Christmas if they weren’t invited to dinner. There is no way that all the revenue can be spent on public transport because a lot of it will go in setting up and operating the system (most of it in the case of the London congestion charge for example).

Transport 2000 Funding

Apart from the debate mentioned above, Transport 2000 spokesmen often appear on TV and radio programmes promoting the benefits of public transport and criticising car use. They do this using a claim of "environmental benefits", so to quote from their web site: "*Transport 2000 is the independent national body concerned with sustainable transport. It looks for answers to transport problems and aims to reduce the environmental and social impact of transport by encouraging less use of cars and more use of public transport, walking and cycling*".

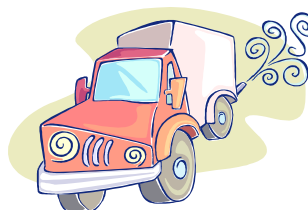
It is interesting to examine who might support such an organisation and fund it. Well there is some information on the Transport 2000 web site. So for the 2004/5 financial year, this was a breakdown of their budgeted income:

Source	£
ASLEF	12,000
TSSA	12,500
RIA	9,700
Unison	12,500
Stagecoach	12,500
National Express	12,500
First Group	12,500
Go Ahead	10,000
Arriva	12,500
Transport for London	10,000
National Rail	5,000
Member Subs and Donations	70,941
Other Income	57,035

Notice the large amounts from public transport trade unions and from bus companies. Of course these organisations may have other motives for contributing than their support of "environmental benefits".

More information is present at:
www.transport2000-office.org.uk/t2000_finance_index.htm

London LEZ



The Mayor of London has confirmed that he is going ahead with the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) proposals. From

2008, HGVs and buses will have to comply with the latest emission standards or pay £200 to drive anywhere in London. Larger LGVs and minibuses will also have to comply from 2010.

London Councils (formerly the ALG which represents the local authorities) and London First who represent businesses are now both very sceptical about the cost and benefits of the scheme. For example London Councils claim the total cost will be £600 million, but it will reduce pollution by only 0.3% more than will happen anyway.

Of that £600 million, £470m is compliance costs incurred by transport operators, but the residents of London will be paying the other £130m.

Lorraine Lynch of London First said "*we remain unconvinced by the cost-benefit value of this expensive and bureaucratic scheme. The Mayor and TfL seem committed to an LEZ, whatever the cost and however small the benefit*".

BBRAG Membership Rates

It was decided at the BBRAG Annual General Meeting on the 9th June to increase membership subscriptions. The new rates will be £12 for those receiving the newsletter via post, and £9 for those receiving it via email. The previous rates were £11 and £8.50 – the differential has been increased to encourage more use of email which saves us a large amount in costs. In addition, there have been substantial increases in postage and printing cost of which we need to take account.

Most members actually now receive the newsletter via email as a PDF document, and of course they get a colour version whereas our printed version is only black/white.

If you have an email account but have not yet switched to receiving our newsletter via email then please send an email to the following address: roger.lawson@btclick.com to request it in that format. We can send a sample copy if you are unsure.

Bus Jams



Many parts of central London are now suffering from "bus jams". There are so many extra buses on the roads that they get in each others way. Above is a picture taken recently on Oxford Street which shows the syndrome (photos courtesy of B.Abrams).

Recently your editor noticed that this problem was now affecting the western entrance to Trafalgar Square where a totally separate route is reserved for buses – but as it gets totally fully of buses, some were now starting to take the longer route via the "non bus lane".

Many of these buses are relatively empty (on average much less than 50% loaded), particularly during periods outside the rush hours. They also contribute to worsening air pollution in the capital.

Tramlink Extension Consultation



The results of the public consultation on the Croydon Tramlink Extension to Crystal Palace have been announced by Transport for London (TfL). Sixty seven percent supported option 2 which was the route that minimised the impact on traffic by avoiding Anerley Road. The other options received only 15% (Anerley Hill, on street) and 18% (Anerley Road/Crystal Palace Park).

Over 1,500 people responded to the consultation so the result is quite conclusive. But ominously the announcement by TfL then says that "TfL is now working to select the preferred route from the three options" as if the public view is not conclusive.

More information on the consultation results can be read at: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk:80/corporate/projectsandscemes/networkandservices/croydontramlink/2061.aspx>

The Dangers of Bendy Buses

The London Evening Standard has reported that "bendy buses" in London cause twice as many injuries as any other bus type according to official figures. More than 90 pedestrians and cyclists were injured by them last year, and they were involved in 1,751 accidents – 75 per cent more than other buses.

The full story can be read at:
[www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/article-23399737-
details/Bendy+buses+-+the+fatal+facts/article.do](http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/article-23399737-details/Bendy+buses+-+the+fatal+facts/article.do)

It also seems that fare dodging on bendy buses is rife as people can enter through the rear doors and not pay.

For more information you can also look at the following blog written by an opponent of them: <http://notasheepmaybeagoat.blogspot.com/2007/06/bendy-and-dangerous.html> . There are other blogs of a similar nature also – clearly bendy buses are not popular with many people, and are positively hated by some.

TfL deny the charge of bendy buses being more dangerous and say that they are not when comparable routes are studied.

(Editors Comments: They certainly seem to be a hazard to other traffic as anyone who has driven in London will know. The drivers of these vehicles have limited visibility and they often block junctions. They also block pedestrian crossings. On the narrow and winding streets of London, they tend to cause significant congestion whereas double-decker buses such as Routemasters were much less of a problem, even if they were slow in comparison).

Tesco Orpington Update



As readers will probably be aware, Tesco obtained planning permission to demolish the multi-storey car park in Station Road and build a new superstore on the site. The car park has now been demolished in fact. However before that was done, Tesco put in a new planning

application to increase the store size by the introduction of a mezzanine floor.

The original store size was a net 3,917 square metres of retail sales space – this compares with the Tesco store at Ruxley Corner of 4,557 sq. metres for example.

Originally the mezzanine floor proposal was for a “full cover” floor, but this has now been reduced to a partial cover, with the result that the new net sales space will be 5,900 sq. metres which is of course much bigger than any other store in the area.

The planning application reports that the new store will divert 28% of existing turnover in Orpington for “convenience” goods (ie. food, etc). But it suggests that the “*effect on Orpington town centre as a whole will be positive*”, presumably based on the new store generating extra footfall into the town centre, particularly for other goods and services.

The provision of car parking space has again been reduced, other than the provision for the residential flats, with the new figures being as follows (in comparison with those in the original plans):

Public car parking down from 210 to 202
Offices car parking down from 255 to 209
Residential parking up from 32 to 47
Store/staff parking up from 450 to 468

The Traffic Assessment submitted with the Planning Application suggests that with the new road layout, and traffic light controlled junction, that no extra traffic problems will arise. But the report depends on computer software simulations of the traffic flows, which may not be accurate, particularly bearing in mind the closeness of the two exits and entrances to the war memorial roundabout. It does suggest though that the store car park might become totally full at certain times.

It is understood that there will be a Development Control Committee meeting on the 10th July to consider the latest application.

The Cost of London's Freedom Pass



The Mayor of London, Mr Livingstone, is making a great fuss about the attacks by the London Councils and others on the Freedom Pass and its costs. Freedom passes are granted to all people over 60 and the disabled and they enable you to travel free of charge on trains, tubes, buses and trams after the morning rush hour.

Although the Mayor takes credit for this hand-out, in fact the local London boroughs pay for the costs. It currently costs £213 million per annum in total and boroughs are finding it is becoming a major burden. With rising numbers of elderly people, council budgets need to accommodate the rising costs when they have no extra funds to cover it. With a reluctance to raise it from the community charge, this means that councils have a strong incentive to raise as much money as possible from parking charges, parking penalty notices, bus lane infringement charges, and other "transport" related charges that can be diverted. Hence the resulting over-zealous enforcement and high revenue targets set for parking operators.

In addition, every time the Mayor puts up tube or bus fares, the charges to local authorities go up directly in proportion – but he never consults them on this of course.

The following is what Councillor Daniel Moylan has to say in an open letter to Mr Livingstone on this subject (taken from the Freedom Pass web site: www.freedompass.org):

"Dear Mr Livingstone

You have recently been telling Londoners that London Councils is putting the Freedom Pass at risk. You know full well that that is not true. There has never been a threat from us to the free travel enjoyed by London's older and disabled people. The reality is that if there is any danger to the future of the Freedom Pass it is coming from you.

You also go around wrongly creating the impression that the Freedom Pass is one of your gifts to

London's older and disabled residents, when you know it is paid for by London's boroughs.

London's councils pay out hundreds of millions of pounds a year to provide the Freedom Pass, the most generous free travel scheme in the country. We are proud to have provided this service for 23 years. In that time it has been extended to cover national rail services and to give disabled people access to free travel 24 hours a day. There is no change in our commitment to providing this highly valued scheme, and nor do we want to water down any of the benefits.

So who are we paying this money to? The answer is you – and your people at Transport for London (TfL). And who decides how much we must pay for these services every year? Again the answer is you and TfL

You see if no agreement is reached by the end of each year on what the boroughs should pay for the Freedom Pass, TfL can, by law, charge whatever they like for running the Freedom Pass, regardless of whether London's council tax payers get value for money.

So is it surprising that since TfL was set up seven years ago, the cost of providing free travel on the capital's buses and tubes has risen by 52 per cent? This is the real threat to the Pass.

This is one of your best hidden stealth taxes and to portray yourself as the defender of the Freedom Pass is disingenuous. This is why you want the law to stay as it is, not to protect the Freedom Pass.

Your disregard for council tax payers is clearly shown through the staggering demands TfL is now making to run the Freedom Pass on the North London Railway. TfL is seeking more than £1 million, which is almost double the amount the Association of Train Operating Companies currently charge for providing the same service.

We think the law has to be changed. Nowhere else in the country can a provider of transport schemes hold council tax payers to ransom in this fashion. We are not threatening the Freedom Pass. We are simply asking that if we cannot agree with you each year how much we should pay for it, the government should make the final decision, removing your power to use the Freedom Pass as a secret levy on Londoners.

It would be negligent if we did not seek to protect our council tax payers, many of whom are pensioners or disabled people, against these continually rising costs.

Misleading statements from you about the threat to the Freedom Pass, when it has always been and will continue to be safe in the hands of London's boroughs, only result in unnecessary anxiety among those who rely on the Pass to live a full life. Frightening London's vulnerable people to protect your own income is wrong and you should stop right now.

Cllr Daniel Moylan

Chairman, London Councils' Transport and Environment Committee"

(Editor's Comments: It certainly seems time to review how this scheme operates and who is eligible for the benefit. Many people such as myself are granted free travel who do not need it. And if costs are becoming higher than are affordable – and let's face it someone has to pay the cost – then it should be reviewed. At present the people who are footing the bill, the local authorities, have no control over the charges whatsoever).

Challenging Ken Livingstone On Congestion Charging and Pollution



On the 21st May, your editor attended the ITV1 studios for "The London Debate" – a programme compered by Alistair Stewart where members of the public can ask Mayor Ken Livingstone challenging questions. Here's the dialogue between me and the Mayor:

Me: Bearing in mind that pollution has actually gone up within the Congestion Charge zone (based on actual figures) how much do you think it is going to be cut by this £25 congestion charge?

Ken: Pollution hasn't gone up.

Me (interjecting): Yes it has!

Ken: Carbon dioxide emissions are down by 20% in the congestion zone, and nitrous oxides and particulates, the real killers, are down by 12%. What we anticipate is... some 4x4s are not polluting – it's band G registration vehicles – it's great big sports cars. It's cars that emit twice the amount of carbon as the average car. It will be a further reduction. Only 4% of cars in London are in that band. But they produce twice as much as the average family car.

Alistair Stewart: So you're going ahead with it?

Mayor: We have got to go through consultation. People are going to have a chance. It won't come in until after the next election.

Me (interjecting): Answer the question! How much will it go down? How much will pollution come down?

Mayor: Pollution will come down. We couldn't estimate how much it would come down when we did the congestion charge.

Me: It hasn't come down!

Mayor: We are doing the work at the moment. When the work is done we will publish it for consultation. It will not be activated until after the next Mayoral election. So you'll have a chance to see all the facts and figures. All the debate. And I am sure there will be a candidate standing who opposes it.

Me: Why are you proposing it if you don't know the answer?

Alistair Stewart then cut me off and moved on to other topics (but this was a longer "conversation" than many).

Further comments are: If only 4% of cars in London are in Band G, and one assumes that all their drivers switch to bikes, or don't travel at all, then there might be an 8% reduction in emissions (assuming they are twice as polluting as claimed). But as cars only represent 10% of all emissions, that means the overall reduction would be only 0.8%, an imperceptible amount.

In reality such car users might simply switch to slightly smaller cars, giving a reduction of 4% or less. Or they might switch to public transport, which is no better in terms of emissions per person. So the overall impact is more likely to be a reduction of 0.4%.

Even worse, they may simply pay the charge – and at least a proportion of current users will do so. The end result – a miniscule change in CO2 pollution and other emissions, but an enormous financial burden on a small minority of the public.

The Real Figures

Michelle Dix has also quoted similar figures although Ken seems to have exaggerated the CO2 reduction (see separate article). These figures Livingstone was quoting were probably the “estimates” prepared by TfL. For example, it’s very difficult to measure CO2 emissions from vehicles in reality as it gets swamped by background levels. But here are the real figures from my own report from measured levels by the LAQN (London Air Quality Network):

NO2 – Up 1.9%
NOX – Up 10.8%
PM10s (particulates): Up 0.1%

IPSOS/MORI Conference Report

Also in June, your editor attended a conference in London organised by IPSOS/MORI on topical issues in transport. Speakers included Stephen Ladyman and Michelle Dix (head of congestion charging at Transport for London). Here’s a brief summary of what was said.

Ladyman: Clearly 1.8 million people feel strongly about road pricing, but they need to come up with some other solution. It is a question of reality versus perception (what the Government does is often perceived differently to the reality with major investment in the railways producing one of the best rail systems in Europe but nobody recognizes this).

Dix: She presented a slide which showed “Environmental changes” from the London Congestion Charge as positive, ie. NOx down 13%, PM10 down 15%, CO2 down 16%.

I said, when there was an opportunity to ask questions, that this was not what I saw when I looked at the actual figures and said her presentation was grossly misleading - she conceded they were only “estimates”.

She also said that a recent poll by TfL showed only 50% for, 15% undecided and 35% opposed to the congestion charge. This had swung more against in comparison with preceding polls following the recent on-line petition against road pricing. *(Editor: I am very sceptical that these figures represent the true views of the majority of Londoners and would like to see exactly what questions were asked and who was included in the survey).*

A poll of Western extension residents in March 2007 showed 42% for, 9% undecided and 49% against.

There will be a public consultation this summer on the £25 congestion charge. (Band G - more than 225 gm/km co2). It had received “a lot of support” already.

Garden Road and Commuter Parking



A wide area Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) has been proposed for Garden Road, and nearby Edward Road which are roads off Plaistow Lane near Sundridge Park station. The roads are just outside the existing central Bromley CPZ which covers an enormous area. The consultation letter issued to local residents refers to the problem of “all day commuter parking” in the road. There would be a “no parking between 11.00 am and 12.00 noon” limitation to deter them.

Your editor went to have a look at these roads, both during the week, and early on a Saturday morning. In reality, there are parked cars on the northern end of Garden Road during the week, but few on Edward Road. But even on Garden Road, they do not stretch for very far.

Are these commuters (ie. people who leave their cars there all day and catch a train). The picture above shows the scene at 8.0 am on a Saturday which gives the lie to that claim. There is the same row of parked cars as there is during the week. In reality the people who park there are more likely to live on Plaistow Lane, where there are a number of newish blocks of flats. Or they live within the existing Bromley CPZ and don't wish to pay to park outside their own home.

One very odd feature of the proposed scheme, is that ward councillors have insisted that residents can opt out of having yellow lines outside their particular houses. Clearly not everyone is in favour of this scheme.

(Editor's Comments: A typical example of how CPZs just encourage vehicles to migrate from one area to another without solving the basic problem of inadequate parking provision. But this proposal is obviously simply motivated by a few residents of Garden Road who don't like other people parking in their road. Such parking is very limited in nature and there is no justification whatsoever for imposing such a scheme on these roads).

Unreasonable Camera Enforcement in Lambeth by Peter Morgan

Lambeth Council have attracted a lot of negative publicity with their latest abuse of motorists by misusing their new powers to issue CCTV fines for alleged contraventions of a "one-way priority" junction. This story was covered on BBC TV news among others. Salters Hill is an important local link road between parts of Norwood and Sydenham, which I have used frequently over many years. It is just over the border from Croydon into Lambeth, and carries a significant flow of local traffic between these areas.

Lambeth Council has messed around with this road over the years, introducing a range of anti-motorist measures to make it difficult to use the road. Recently the council narrowed the road under the railway bridge, and introduced a totally unnecessary alternate one-way single file movement with priority to traffic in one direction. In conjunction with this they have imposed "Give Way to Oncoming Traffic" signs.

Determined to stamp their authority on the public, they are now enforcing this absurd traffic mismanagement with CCTV and fines through the post. Even if one accepts the scheme they have imposed, all traffic is legally required to do is not compel an oncoming vehicle to change speed or direction. Naturally, traffic gives way in a sensible way, allowing several vehicles to flow through. But Lambeth Council are playing fast and loose with the law, interpreting legitimate actions as breaking their rules. And by using "still" photographs which are zoomed in to give an artificial representation of the situation, they are issuing fines which are totally unreasonable.

(Editors Comments: Yet another example of over-zealous enforcement and using cameras to collect large numbers of unjustified fines. Surely the public is going to get fed up with this constant supervision by millions of intrusive cameras soon).

Another London Mayoral Candidate



One of a number of Tories competing for the nomination to contest the London Mayoral election is Bromley councillor Simon Fawthrop (picture left).

Mr Fawthrop believes in "communities first" and he has a particularly

interesting transport platform. More information on his policies can be seen at:

www.fawthropformayor.co.uk .

A few key points of his transport policy which may be of interest to you are:

- 1) Encourage working from home to tackle the cause of congestion.
- 2) Fewer grandiose schemes and more practical solutions.

- 3) Rein in TfL; return powers to the Boroughs.
- 4) Independent review of Congestion Charging.
- 5) Fewer anti-car policies.

A copy of his transport policy, which is quite a long and detailed document, accompanies this newsletter for those who receive this newsletter via email (ask for a copy if those who receive printed versions want one). Your editor made some contributions to its contents and I would recommend it as a sound alternative to the current policies of the incumbent Mayor.

News Snapshots

Sundry news in the last few weeks that is worth a mention is as follows:

+ The cessation of the Blackwall Tunnel tidal flow was mentioned in our last edition. A petition against this proposal has been created and can be signed on the following web site: www.blackwalltunnel.co.uk. Please sign it if you have not already done so, and ask any of your friends who are affected to sign it also.

+ Bromley & Chislehurst MP Bob Neill has a new web site at: www.bobneillmp.co.uk, although it only consisted of one page when last looked at. He has also moved into a house in the constituency to show his dedication to his new electorate.

+ Your editor's petition for the removal of all speed humps on the PM's electronic petition web site collected 6,608 votes in support. This is many more than most petitions although it didn't quite seem to catch the imagination of people to the same extent as the road pricing one. It seems a pain in the backside is of less concern than a potential pain in one's pocket. Thanks to everyone who signed the petition.

+ A campaign group opposed to the Manchester Congestion Charge Scheme has been formed (this is the first of the local areas being bribed by the Government's Transport Innovation Fund to get off the blocks). Please go to their web site at: www.manchestertolltax.com, read what they have to say, and sign the petition against it.

+ The result of the referendum of the whole population of Islington on whether to go ahead with a CO2 based permit parking charge system

was as follows: 56.1% in favour, 43.9% opposed. Some 29% of residents voted which is about the same as in council elections. Council Leader James Kempton (LibDem) claimed it was "a groundbreaking result" and that it was "a strong message of support" for council policies on climate change. What your editor says is: *"Bearing in mind the biased consultation leaflet circulated by the council, and the support by many councillors, it's a very narrow majority that voted in favour. Perhaps the council is lucky that nobody chose to kick up a fuss about it as they did in Richmond."*

+ Road accident casualty figures in the UK for 2006 have recently been published. Deaths fell by 1% to 3,172. Overall casualties fell by 5% but there are a lot of questions on the accuracy of the latter statistics. Motorcyclist deaths rose by 5% to 599 and therefore this known problem area continues to be resistant to solution.

The poor rate of reduction in fatalities continues the trend in recent years. As Paul Smith of Safe Speed as pointed out, the likely impact of known influences should mean a much higher reduction. He suggests likely factors and their impacts are:

1. We're continuing to put safer cars on the roads every year (-3%)
2. We're continuing to improve roads engineering (-1.5%)
3. We're continuing to improve post crash care and rescue (-1%)
4. Pedestrian activity continues to decline (-1%)
5. Traffic continues to increase (+1.5%)

So there should be a much larger decrease in these accident figures, and he suggests that the probable cause is the inept road safety policies pursued in recent years. These have encouraged poor driver behaviour, and undermined sensible traffic management policies. The UK now has a relatively poor record in comparison with other countries in improving road safety.

Contact Information

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B.B.R.A.G. Chairman and Newsletter Editor: Roger Lawson (Tel: 020-8467-2686, fax: 020-8295-0378, Email: roger.lawson@btclick.com). Contact the above for information on the aims and objectives of B.B.R.A.G. or for membership information (membership costs £12.00 per annum for individuals, or £9.00 if you opt to receive our Newsletter via email, or £50 for corporate membership). B.B.R.A.G. would be happy to advise or assist anyone who is concerned about any traffic, transport or road safety issues in the borough.

Our internet web address is: <http://www.bromleytransport.org.uk> . This contains much useful information including articles extracted from our newsletters. It also contains a "News" page which is updated regularly with items of topical interest.

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BBRAG Background Information

The Bromley Borough Roads Action Group (B.B.R.A.G.) stands for a more democratic and more rational approach to the traffic management problems of the London Borough of Bromley. Our initial formation some years ago was based on opposition to the kind of traffic calming scheme that was being introduced in the borough that simply caused more traffic congestion, and general inconvenience to road users, without any significant benefit in terms of road accident reductions. In fact, the money wasted on such schemes could have been much better spent on actual improvements to road safety in other areas. We now take a more general interest in all transport and associated environmental issues in the borough of Bromley and the greater London area. This includes traffic management schemes, public transport, road safety, parking policies, air pollution, other transport environmental issues such as noise, and associated local and central government policies. Our prime objective is to promote improvements in the transport infrastructure while stopping wasted expenditure on unpopular, ineffective or inappropriate policies.