

On The Road

The journal of the Alliance of British Drivers

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ABD welcomes two new high-profile patrons

A further sign of the ABD's growing influence came recently with the announcement that outspoken UKIP MEPs Godfrey Bloom and Roger Helmer have joined our list of patrons. Godfrey is well known as an outspoken critic of current road safety policy, and is delighted to join the ABD to work with us towards changing government thinking on this. He's no shrinking violet and as someone who is strongly in favour of objective, scientifically based policies, we're delighted to have him on board.

Keen driving enthusiast and Jaguar owner Roger Helmer was for many years a Conservative MEP for the east midlands; increasingly he found himself at odds with his party's European stance and initiated a huge amount of his own research on subjects like climate change, industry and transport. Last year he switched to UKIP. Roger is happy to back our stance on drivers and looks forward to working with us to counter politicians' ever-present war on the motorist.

Godfrey has been an outspoken critic of the over-zealous use of speed cameras and the appalling misuse of accident statistics, plus the growing trend to push drivers onto lucrative speed awareness courses. He's been regularly featured on radio shows over the years and displays a logical no-nonsense approach on road safety.

He comments: "For many years I've been uncomfortable with the lack of basic understanding of road safety concepts. Politicians generally understand very little about anything. They have no formal training, have to re-seek office regularly, they often deliver knee jerk reactions to problems that are of their own making. Honesty is usually a bar to re-election. Masterly inactivity is alien to the politician's creed. He must be seen to 'do something', however idiotic.



Godfrey Bloom

"Road safety problems manifest this phenomenon particularly. Activity is always cost-based. It's the nature of the beast. So government gets rid of the highly trained and motivated British traffic policeman, acknowledged to be the best in the world, because they were deemed too expensive. Not only are cameras on sticks cheaper, they actually make money. This enormous scam, equalled only by wind turbines, is a political dynamic allowed to flourish by astonishingly lazy journalism. Well, this sort of thing is a reflection of modern society.

"However, infinitely more alarming, is that the police have now bought into the scam. Local politicians and policemen of senior rank have no training in interpreting statistics. They are therefore prey to every camera (snake oil) salesman that comes up their drive. They will glaze over if you talk of regression to the mean, or the implications of a Simpson's paradox. In short you can sell them anything. Resources therefore go to the wrong place. The speed

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The next issue of *On The Road* goes to press on Monday 17 June. Contributions deadline is Monday 3 June.

awareness lecturers read from flawed scripts to bewildered middle-England drivers who were 'nicked' for doing 34mph in a 30mph district, and blackmailed into handing over cash to avoid a potentially damaging licence endorsement.

"These lectures should be given (with a better script) to lower sixth form children one year away from their first car. Young men still kill themselves in appalling numbers while their parents waste half the day listening to the drone of the classroom bore who means well but understands nothing.

"I have ploughed an independent field on this subject, with little success, as middle-England morale is now so low they respond to almost nothing save the dinner gong.

"The Alliance of British Drivers has given me fresh hope. Their expertise is enormous and in-depth. They and a few others are joining the fight back for motorists against the money-grabbing establishment, fake charities and fellow travellers. I am proud to be a patron."

Continued overleaf ▶

To join the ABD
call us now on
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The ABD campaigns for:

- Improved road user training
- Real transport choices
- Investment in Britain's roads
- Honesty on transport issues

More on the ABD's new patron Godfrey Bloom, plus your chance to be heard on plans to introduce fresh charges on the Dartford Crossing.

ABD welcomes Godfrey Bloom

Acting ABD chairman Brian Macdowall welcomed the announcement of our latest patrons: "Two years ago the ABD had no patrons as such, but hard work behind the scenes has identified an increasing number of independently minded outspoken personalities with a strong enthusiasm for driving, who aren't afraid to speak out against the Government's continuing anti-car policies."

A full list of patrons can be found on our website; the ABD maintains a strictly neutral stance politically, and is willing to work with all parties to deliver a fairer deal for drivers.

MacDowall continued: "We're delighted to have Godfrey and our other outspoken, independently minded patrons on board; with people of their calibre we'll be better equipped to fight on behalf of all drivers".

Bloom is a Member of the European Parliament for Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire. He's an ex-HGV licence holder, British Army competition driver, has a clean licence and 45 years' no claim discount. A retired investment banker, Bloom is highly knowledgeable about statistics and their misuse.

Bloom's appointment as one of our patrons was well covered in the specialist transport press, notably in Road Safety GB magazine when he said (tongue on cheek) that more speed cameras are invariably the answer offered for road safety, bringing huge salary hikes for manufacturers and 25% of the take to police and councils.

That certainly set the cat amongst pigeons, bringing sharp responses from Rod King, architect of the 20's plenty campaign amongst others. Bloom, despite the huge pressures on his time, responded to the comments – an example of a patron in action and a good example of why we seek the support of politicians (and others) who are willing to put their head above the parapet.

Previous ABD chairman Brian Gregory has already been making good use of our new connections with Godfrey Bloom, having recently met up with him to discuss the possibility of a new project with him. Says Gregory: "Godfrey generally shares the ABD's views on road safety, which is why UKIP is aiming to vigorously shake up the cosy revenue-raising status quo that is UK road 'safety' currently. Godfrey is planning on making a documentary of around 15 minutes, detailing what's wrong with the current road safety régime. The plan is to follow-up (if it's viewers' attention-spans will allow) with detail on what corrective measures are needed".

The ABD has already recommended to Bloom that driving expert John Lyon is probably best equipped to carry out any in-car commentary on driving standards, Steve

A man of action

Bloom takes any opportunity to speak up for drivers, as shown by these media appearances:

January 2011

Bloom contributes £200 to an appeal by the Grimsby motorist fined for warning other drivers about a police speed trap. He says: "It's my understanding there is a judicial precedent here and a previous case heard for the same offence was dismissed. The purpose of speed cameras is to catch speeding motorists, not to raise revenue. All the driver was doing was warning motorists to slow down, the same as official notices warning of speed cameras. This is a travesty of justice".

November 2012

Bloom, a former Territorial Army officer, promised a team approach to the job if elected as Police Commissioner, and vowed to scrap all speed cameras in the region, arguing they sour police relations with law-abiding citizens and fail to cut road accidents. He's also dismissed speed cameras as a "money-making scam" which are reducing public confidence in the police.

"If your only contact with the police is an officer jumping out from behind a bush with a radar gun because you're doing 34mph, and then they can't come out when your house is burgled, you're going to lose confidence in them," said Mr Bloom.

February 2013

Yorkshire MEP, Godfrey Bloom, has warned deaths due to pothole-related car crashes are "only a matter of time". He took action after a friend's tyre was shredded by a pothole on the A1 in Yorkshire, narrowly escaping what could have been a fatal car crash.

Haley can cover the deficiencies in the current road user training régime - as this issue of OTR was going to press, nothing had been finalised however.

The ABD is also talking to Bloom about the need for an independent road accident investigation branch (as in the aviation & maritime arenas, so not stuffed with scammer apologists). This RAIB would investigate road accidents and their causes, and recommend optimal preventative solutions. We've already provided Bloom with copies of our speed limit setting and objection guide, plus numerous other documents relating to the deficiencies of current transport policies. We should shortly be hearing back from him on where to go from here; Bloom already has a film-maker lined up and hopes to at least part-fund the project via EU sponsorship.

Yet another Dartford consultation launches



The HA is likely to raise £7bn from road users over 25 years, by introducing 'free-flow' charging at the Dartford Crossing. Even after the reduction in journey times which is a potential benefit to road users, the net cost to them is at least £5.5bn over the same period.

That ignores the inconvenience that will be caused to road users by having to pay the charge, the high risk of unknowingly incurring a £35 penalty charge by forgetting to pay and the hassle involved in using such a system (the consultation document suggests over 15,000 penalty charges will be issued each day). This proposal is backed up by a grossly misleading consultation document which suggests the tolls are required to pay for more river crossings when the net revenue being raised would pay for a new crossing in as little as two years.

We encourage you to oppose this measure, which may set a precedent for other road charging schemes (which the Government clearly has in mind), so go to the links below, to register your objections.

This is likely to become the template for road pricing throughout the country; it's unlikely to happen this side of a general election, but now is the time to object. The ABD's Roger Lawson has given our official response to the consultation; it's available online via the link below.

A key part of our strategy was to issue local press releases; Ian Taylor adapted the PR for Kent media and Rowland Pantling did likewise in Essex to ensure maximum coverage.

Links

▶ Sign our e-petition: tinyurl.com/bdaq434

▶ The HA's consultation document on 'free-flow' charging at the Dartford Crossing (where you can submit responses on-line):

tinyurl.com/cwl5gnq

▶ The full response by the ABD to that consultation:

tinyurl.com/ctvu59j

▶ We've also recently opposed the introduction of charges for the Blackwall Tunnel in response to a consultation on new Thames River crossings from TfL. For our response, see:

tinyurl.com/ad5bxze

You can donate any amount to the ABD's fighting fund at any time. Just contact the membership secretary (see p16) for more information...

New ABD strategy to be revealed at annual members' meeting

When the ABD holds its next members' meeting on 13 July at the Heritage Motor Centre in Gaydon (near jct 12 of the M40), we'd really like you to be there. Not only because we want you to see what the ABD is doing for you, but also because you can find out what we've got planned for the future. And we've got a lot planned, because on 13 July we'll be telling you all about a major change in the running and effectiveness of the organisation.

As you'll have noticed in OTR over the last couple of years, there have been subtle changes; a sharper focus on campaigning, a new look to the website (ongoing), a merger with the Drivers' Alliance plus a move to work smarter, focusing on increasing contact with those politicians prepared to put their head above the parapet. All this has been achieved by a limited number of dedicated members working as a team.

However with 33 million drivers suffering from having their pockets picked by

government and with the very threat of road pricing being introduced, we need to attract a wider audience.

Late last year we followed up on an enquiry from a director of a UK-based PR firm; this led to initial meetings together with a report from them on how to make the ABD a "brand name" which the majority of drivers will recognise and support.

Whilst we will keep our options open on campaigning subjects, we're likely to focus on a few core issues, in order to secure wider national publicity for the group. Developing political support and building links with the commercial sector to raise finance are essential to growing the ABD.

A new venture will be the release of online surveys on topical issues which we'll ask you to take part in. These will be easy to do, take



Brian MacDowall

little of your time, but allow us to count your support on a range of issues. This will give you a direct input into our campaigns so your voice will be heard when we campaign to get drivers' issues higher up the political agenda.

The first one is being worked on as we go to press, so keep an eye out for it in your inbox. We remain a democratic organisation open to its members, so we

urge you to join us at Gaydon on 13 July, to give us your views and offer your help. As you can see from this issue, we're working hard and putting in a large number of hours every week to promote drivers' concerns. But we need to make a far bigger impact and we're sure you feel the same way. Join us to discover more and assist us as we forge ahead.

ABD Kent moves into overdrive

One of the ABD's most active areas is Kent, which has been especially active over the last three months, initiating and responding to anti-driver letters and other projects in the region. The team there – Ian Taylor, Brian MacDowall and Terry Hudson has found that it's very easy to get airtime and column inches – the catalyst being a few keystrokes on the PC.

Says MacDowall: "Any published letter is read by thousands, so any space the ABD gets in the local press is valuable publicity. It shows drivers that there's somebody out there fighting on their behalf. Such coverage can gain us valuable new members. Any ABD member needing advice on how to campaign effectively can call me and I'll assist in any way I can" – for contact details, check out the back page.

One of the things that has kept ABD Kent members busy kicked off last November, when it emerged that the Police & Crime commissioner Ann Barnes had made promises of support to those demanding blanket 20mph speed limits. When challenged by Terry Hudson, Kent ABD coordinator, she gave a somewhat evasive reply to the effect that she thought there was popular support for them. We're now chasing up on this and will report back soon.

In January, several MPs, including Charlie

Elphicke and Damian Collins, (Dover & Folkestone) spoke in support of road pricing for some routes, especially privately built new ones. We got our disagreement into the local press.

Also in January, Kent ABD joined in Roger Lawson's campaign against Dartford tolls and the free-flow consultation (see story to the left) – this was picked up by local papers in Dartford, Gravesend, south-east London, and the (county-wide) paper, the *Kent Messenger*. Roger also did an interview on BBC Radio Essex.

Around the time this was all happening, we also turned up at a public meeting where 20's Plenty campaigner Rod King was speaking. His claims of 20mph leading to road safety and environmental benefits were absurd; we gave him a tough time during questions. Our published letters prompted a local businessman involved with the chamber of commerce to offer his support on the night, which we accepted.

There have been numerous strongly worded letters over our strong rebuttals about the supposed benefits from the 20's Plenty brigade, plus moves to impose 40 limits on rural roads.

Terry kept up a continual correspondence over a major traffic scheme in Canterbury which caused massive congestion; the scheme has now been dropped. This then expanded into a more

general discussion on car use in the city and car use generally – at which point Brian MacDowall stepped in to suggest that if a real public transport alternative was wanted, a rollercoaster elevated tram might be considered, being cheap to build and run (uses little electric power – so it's 'green') and, being elevated it doesn't take away precious road space.

This caught the imagination of the local press, which featured it in a major way. Not surprisingly it was rejected by the environmental pressure groups as potentially making life easier for cars – that showed their true colours. In turn that got Brian onto KM-fm local radio news; this one is still on-going too.

Most recently, Kent ABD picked up on a complaint upheld by the ASA against the Kent Camera Partnership over their claimed 72% reduction in accidents. Kent on Sunday ran with it; from there it was picked up by BBC Radio Kent – they ran a whole day's news with it and Brian was interviewed live.

Brian MacDowall was also interviewed on Radio Kent over proposals to make Canterbury a cycling city. All this activity resulted in snippets being repeated throughout the day getting the ABD name broadcast to a wide audience. A few words can make a difference!

On 28 February Malcolm Heymer attended a conference on speed policy organised by Landor, publishers of *Local Transport Today* (LTT). Roger Lawson was there as a panel member and Idris Francis also attended, managing to inject some forceful contributions into the proceedings!

The first speaker was Jessica Matthew from the DfT, whom some of us met last October. She described what the DfT is currently doing on road safety issues, including the recently published speed limit setting circular and the consultation on the HGV speed limit. Regarding the latter, Jack Semple of the Road Haulage Association gave a presentation later in the day in which he expressed the desire of his members to see the limit raised to 50mph, but only on A-roads where the national 60mph limit applies to cars. He believes it should remain at 40mph on A-roads with 50mph overall limits, as well as on all lower classes of road. The ABD's response to the consultation advocated a blanket increase to 50mph, pointing out that HGV drivers are professionals who are quite capable of adjusting their speed according to the conditions.

The panel session was chaired by Andrew Forster, editor of LTT, and involved, in addition to Roger, Paul Watters of the AA, Phil Moore of the Local Government Technical Advisers Group and David Davies, the new chief executive of PACTS. Each was asked a couple of pre-arranged questions in turn, and then it opened out into a wider question-and-answer session. Roger explained the ABD's position on speed limits and the need to use the 85th percentile speed in setting them, and also our opposition to physical traffic calming features such as humps. Paul Watters described the findings of the AA's Populus polls, which consistently show a high level of support for speed cameras and more severe punishment of drivers. This echoes John Leeming's findings in *Road Accidents: Prevent or punish?* that drivers have become so conditioned into believing they alone are responsible for all accidents that they deserve to be punished!

The second half of the morning was taken up with presentations on speed in urban areas, particularly 20mph limits. Rod King of 20's Plenty gave a talk about the origins and growth of his campaign, and he is an articulate and able presenter. Like all the proponents of 20mph limits, however, he refuses to acknowledge that they could ever have negative effects on road safety. Zahur Khan from Islington, the first London Borough to implement a borough-wide

Seminar gives mixed messages on speed

20mph limit, gave figures showing that traffic volumes had fallen by 8% but fatal and serious casualties had reduced by only 6% - meaning that the casualty rate had increased.

He didn't seem particularly concerned by this! Chris Young from Coventry described the way the city centre has been changed through shared-space schemes to deliver low speeds. Ben Johnson of TfL raised his concerns about applying 20mph limits to main roads, as they're bound to lead to high levels of non-compliance.

The overall impression was that there is a relentless drive to introduce 20mph limits throughout urban areas, regardless of any negative impacts, as people feel safer - which is probably why accidents can increase, as they take less care. Stephen Plowden, a well known advocate of lower speed limits, was in the audience and expressed his view that

the default speed limit in urban areas should be changed from 30 to 20mph, with local authorities applying higher, signed speed limits on main roads as exceptions. Rod King also wanted this reversal of the current regime. Fortunately, Jessica Matthew had said that ministers have specifically ruled out changing the default 30mph urban limit - for now, at least. This is a battle we may have to fight very hard in the future, though.

In the discussions it was acknowledged that, while people often wanted lower speeds on the roads in which they lived, they were not prepared to drive more slowly themselves. These double standards have been known for years, of course, with police regularly reporting that residents who demand lower speed limits are usually among the first to be caught exceeding them. This just shows how many people are unable to understand what a numerical speed limit actually means in practice when they - or other - drivers are expected to obey them. It should ring alarm bells with those who want to impose ridiculously low speed limits on us all, but the people involved in these campaigns are either ignorant of what safe driving involves, or are actively anti-car for ideological reasons.



The first afternoon presentation was from Suzette Davenport, ACPO's current head of roads policing. She stressed ACPO's desire to see speed limits set at the 85th percentile level, a point made in ACPO's response to the DfT consultation, but ignored. She also said that the police should enforce speed limits on an evidence-led safety basis - a clear hint that unrealistic speed limits (such as 20mph on main urban roads) would not be prioritised. She also said that ACPO is currently reviewing its enforcement threshold guidelines, but she rejected a call from one member of the audience that speed limits should be enforced without any discretion at all.

Suzette also revealed that ACPO has regular discussions with 20's Plenty and Brake, indicating that the ABD needs to establish a dialogue with ACPO as well, to redress the balance.

Geoff Collins of Vysionics gave a presentation on the alleged benefits of SPECS average speed cameras. Malcolm has made a complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority about the claims in an advertisement by Vysionics, which implies that the entire casualty reductions observed at SPECS sites are due to the cameras alone. That complaint has yet to be resolved at the time of writing. Malcolm was able to make the point at the meeting that other factors, such as regression to the mean, long-term trends, and other measures introduced at the same time as the cameras, can often explain the majority of the observed fall in casualties.

A presentation on ITS (Intelligent Transport Solutions) from Phil Pettitt of InnovITS described advances in electronic driver aids and the move towards driverless cars. In response to calls from some delegates for ISA (Intelligent Speed Adaptation) to be fitted to new cars, Phil expressed the view that this would only be relevant if it ever became possible to devise a fully 'dynamic' system that would take account, not just of statutory speed limits, but constantly changing road, traffic and weather conditions. This doesn't seem likely in the foreseeable future. Jessica Matthew had also said that the DfT is not planning to do any work on ISA at present.

The conference was very useful for a number of reasons, and while some parts were a little depressing, there were also some glimmers of hope, with common sense beginning to prevail in certain quarters. We now need to make approaches where we think we can make headway, such as with ACPO.

New tool to slash limits nationwide?

The DfT has endorsed the installation of 20mph speed limits on busy main streets in a new speed limit circular for local authorities in England. The circular, *Setting local speed limits*, replaces the 2006 document of the same name. Alongside its release, the Department has released a new software tool (see separate panel) to help local authorities assess the impacts of changing speed limits.

The circular supports the roll-out of 20mph speed limits beyond residential areas, saying they can be suitable for "major streets where there are – or could be – significant numbers of journeys on foot, and/or where pedal cycle movements are an important consideration, and this outweighs the disadvantage of longer journey times for motorised traffic". It also endorses the implementation of area-wide 20mph speed limits, something the 2006 version advised against.

The circular says research suggests signed-only 20mph limits reduce mean speeds by about 1mph. "If the mean speed is at or below 24mph on a road, introducing a 20mph limit through signing alone is likely to lead to general compliance with the new speed limit," it adds.

During consultation on the draft circular, the Association of Chief Police Officers challenged the DfT's view that mean speeds give a good indication of compliance. "ACPO believes that the DfT's use of mean speeds as an indicator of general compliance is open to many skewing factors and risks unrealistic limits being set," according to a DfT report summarising consultation responses. ACPO said the 85th percentile – the speed at which 85% of the total traffic flow is not exceeding – is a better indication of compliance. It was used for speed limit setting until 2006.

The DfT, however, has rejected the ACPO advice, stating: "The effect of using mean speeds is to enable traffic authorities to justify more and lower speed limits where communities want them."

The circular says highway authorities should continue to collect both mean speed and 85th percentile speeds "but mean speeds should be used as the basis for determining local speed limits". The DfT says it has found "no conclusive evidence that speed limit changes in isolation from other measures have an impact on walking and cycling levels (even with 20mph schemes)".

Furthermore, it says it has found "no evidence that public transport reliability is impacted by speed limit changes". "For example, First Bus reported that the 20mph pilot at inner south Bristol has not adversely affected bus journey times or service reliability."

The new circular says the national speed limit of 60mph is "only appropriate for the best quality" rural C and unclassified roads "with few bends, junctions or accesses". A 40mph limit may be appropriate for rural C and unclassified



roads "with a predominantly local, access, or recreational function, for example in national parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty".

The DfT says it would "welcome applications for zonal rural speed limits, usually 40mph zones, for example in national parks or AONBs or on other networks of minor rural roads where speeds are already in line with such a limit". Such zones would include entry treatments and painted repeater signs. The circular also endorses the use of lower speed limits to improve air quality where statutory air quality standards are in danger of being exceeded.

The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation, which had a representative

on the steering group for the circular, has welcomed the document but voiced caution about some aspects of the 20mph advice. "CIHT welcomes this circular and the guidance it provides as continuing to provide a sound basis for setting local speed limits," said director of communications, Daniel Isichei.

"While the guidance provides useful advice regarding 20mph zones and limits, much of the references to limits relate to the Portsmouth scheme," he added. "Given the limited experience of installing limits, and questions raised over the Portsmouth results, this area of the document needs to be kept under review as further experience and results are collected."

The right tool for the job?

The DfT's software tool is supposed to help local authorities understand the impacts of changing speed limits. It's designed to allow local authorities to:

- Forecast the mean and 85th percentile speeds for speed limit changes (both up and down).
- Forecast changes to journey times, vehicle operating costs, accidents, CO2 and NO emissions.

Results are reported in Excel spreadsheet tables, with costs and benefits presented in monetised form. The DfT advises that the impacts are assessed over a ten-year appraisal period. Highway authorities will not be required to use the tool but the Department says it will improve transparency in decision-making.

Living Streets has criticised the tool, saying it ignores the impact reduced speeds have on noise, pollution and encourages walking and cycling. "Local authorities should be careful not

to overly rely on it when deciding whether to introduce 20mph limits," said the organisation's Phillipa Hunt.

Accompanying guidance explains the research and assumptions that have gone into developing the tool. "Where a speed limit scheme reduces speeds, the tool will always forecast reductions in accidents," it explains. "Conversely, where speeds increase, accidents are also forecast to increase."

The relationship between speed and accidents draws on a 2009 Norwegian academic study. The relationship between speed limit changes and mean speeds draws heavily on the experiences of local authorities, with much of the rural data coming from Buckinghamshire and Warwickshire county councils.

The tool has been developed by Hyder Consulting in association with John Fearon Consultancy and Minerva. A steering group overseeing the toolkit's preparation included representatives of local authorities, the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation, and the CPRE.

it's the limit

It's no wonder speed limits are being slashed across the UK; new guidance from the DfT advises that lower limits automatically mean safer roads.

The DfT issued a revised circular on the setting of local speed limits in January, replacing the previous version that had been in force since 2006 (see previous page). The draft circular was the subject of consultation last year, and the ABD responded with a strong plea for the 85th percentile speed to once again become the basis on which speed limits should be set (www.abd.org.uk/resources/documents/speed_limit_setting_2012.htm). The average (mean) speed became the basis of speed limit setting in the 2006 circular.

Sadly, the DfT has ignored not only the ABD's arguments but also those of ACPO. In its response to the DfT, ACPO said, "ACPO believes that the DfT's use of mean speeds as an indicator of general compliance is open to many skewing factors and risks unrealistic limits being set." It went on to say that the 85th percentile is a better indication of compliance.

In ignoring this advice, the DfT let the cat out of the bag by admitting that the change from the 85th percentile to the mean speed was made "to enable traffic authorities to justify more and lower speed limits where communities want them." So there is no longer any pretence that speed limits should be set on a rational basis, or at a level that the majority of drivers will comply with.

It is astonishing that the DfT can ignore the concerns of ACPO and the ABD about unrealistic

speed limits, when it is the police who are at the sharp end and understand how speed limits should work, far better than the desk jockeys in Westminster. If the police attempt to enforce speed limits that do not have widespread support from drivers, they risk damaging their relationship with the public.

A computer-based speed limit appraisal tool was issued alongside the 2013 circular, with the claimed intention of enabling local authorities to calculate the costs and benefits of changing speed limits. This should enable them to make



decisions on a more consistent and defensible basis. It is clear, however, that the appraisal tool is weighted in favour of lower speed limits. Programming it to always predict fewer accidents if speeds reduce, and more accidents if they increase, ignores the wealth of empirical evidence in the UK and elsewhere that raising unrealistic speed limits leads far more often to accidents reducing than increasing. Besides, it's hard to see why the DfT went to the trouble and expense of producing the appraisal tool at all,

when local authorities are not required to use it and can, in effect, set any speed limit they like, as the circular is only guidance – it's not mandatory.

Sadly, we appear to be reverting to the situation described by J J Leeming in his book *Road Accidents: Prevent or punish?* that we are "...letting the limit be decided by the local busybody." In the 1970s and 1980s, the DfT's predecessors did employ officials who understood the need for a scientific approach, which led to the 85th percentile being adopted for speed limit setting. That expertise appears to have been lost.

Speed limits on the railways are set by engineers for engineering reasons, and it would be unthinkable for it to be otherwise. Why should politicians be allowed to set speed limits on the roads for political reasons? Most members of the public and their political representatives have a very simplistic and false understanding of the effect of speed limits on driver behaviour.

Road safety can be a very emotive subject, especially to people whose loved ones may have been injured or killed in a road accident. Nevertheless, if we are serious about reducing casualties, we need to put emotion to one side and pursue road safety strategies based on real evidence, not on perceptions, hunches, manipulated statistics or computer models containing false assumptions. The DfT should be providing a robust defence of tried and tested approaches, such as setting speed limits at the 85th percentile, not surrendering to pressure from ill-informed, albeit often well-meaning campaigners. The 2013 speed limit circular shows that it has failed miserably.

Malcolm Heymer

Why ISA isn't the answer

I'm bemused as to why any road safety professional would ever advocate the use of ISA (Intelligent Speed Adaptation - speed limiters) instead. In my view, ISA would have a greater detrimental effect on road safety than speed cameras.

Speed cameras and ISA both have the same fundamental flaw - they assume that absolute (numerical) speed is a significant factor in road accidents. It is not. What matters is speed relative to changing conditions and hazard density, including road layout, traffic flow, presence of vulnerable road users, time of day and weather.

Correctly set speed limits (a rarity these days) should align with the intuitive, non-numerical assessment by an experienced driver of a safe speed in good conditions, but drivers also need to make intuitive adjustments to their speed when conditions are less than optimal. Over-emphasis on

rigid adherence to speed limits devalues the importance of this vital ability, leading less experienced drivers to believe that unthinking compliance with speed limits is the key to safe driving. This trend to 'driving by numbers' is very worrying, as dumbed-down drivers who expect to be told what to do all the time are unable to deal with unexpected situations.

The adverse effects of speed limiters can be seen on any dual carriageway, where one speed-limited heavy goods vehicle overtakes another with a speed differential of one mile per hour or less. Not only do these manoeuvres hold up following vehicles for prolonged periods, the faster driver will not pull out to overtake until the last possible moment, and will pull in again as soon as the rear of his vehicle has cleared the front of the slower one. Thus both drivers during some part of the manoeuvre will have their

forward visibility severely restricted. Of course, this danger would be avoided if the driver of the slower vehicle lifted off the accelerator briefly to allow the faster driver to complete the overtake quickly, but this hardly ever happens. Speed limiters create robotic, bloody-minded drivers.

With ISA, which controls vehicle speeds to local and national speed limits, the dangers are greater and more complex. A GPS system compares the vehicle's position with a database of speed limits, and restricts the throttle or applies the brakes to bring the vehicle's speed into line with the limit. It does this, however, without taking any account of the speed or proximity of other road users. So if an ISA-equipped car is approaching, say, a 30mph speed limit with another (non-ISA) vehicle following close behind, there is the danger of a rear-end collision if the lead car brakes unexpectedly early or heavily. If the

Want to get more involved? There are plenty of ways you can help the ABD to move forward. Just check out page 15 to find out how

Some of the best work in the USA to set posted speed limits on both urban and suburban roads to produce the highest safety and the smoothest traffic flow has been done by the Traffic Services Section of the Michigan State Police; the department responsible for improving safety statewide, headed by Thad Peterson and Gary Mege. Both have received two awards, one for their work with setting 85th percentile posted speed limits on Michigan highways and principal county roads, and one for their work to revise work zone speed limits with the principal rule of '45mph where workers are present' (with higher limits if no workers are at risk). See www.motorists.org/speed-limits/articles for a presentation of their work.

The fatality rate in Michigan has been about 25% lower than the US national average for many years, and realistic posted speed limits set at the 85th percentile speed of free-flowing traffic under good conditions by the Michigan State Police on many of our major roads plays one part in that complex relationship.

As most professional civil engineers and all experienced police officers know, the posted speed limits have almost no effect on the actual 85th percentile speeds of travel. Artificially low limits set at or below the 50th percentile speeds to arbitrarily define half or more of the drivers as violators can easily increase speed variance and conflicts between vehicles, but the upper end of the travel speed range remains virtually unaffected by artificially low posted limits set well below the speeds that most competent drivers find to be safe and comfortable. This is,

The US perspective

of course, not a new principle. I have a copy of the (US) 1941 National Safety Council Report on Speed which says to post limits between the 80th and 90th percentile speeds of traffic for the best results. Britain formerly used this 85th percentile speed methodology.

Great Britain could advance the cause of traffic safety and restore much of the respect for traffic laws in general that has been lost in the last 20 years of emphasis on speed camera enforcement of low posted speed limits by returning to the use of 85th percentile posted speed limits on its roads of all types. Posted speed limits set at the 85th percentile speed of free flowing traffic under good conditions rounded up or down to the nearest 5mph interval will normally tend to produce:

- ▶ the smoothest and safest overall traffic flow with the fewest crashes.
- ▶ the least overall speed variance.
- ▶ the fewest conflicts between vehicles.
- ▶ the allocation of traffic to the best and safest road types where the posted limits allow legal travel at the safest speeds, moving more traffic off neighborhood streets onto the collectors, more traffic off the collectors onto the arterials, and more traffic off the arterials onto the highways including the designated main highway routes through urban areas.
- ▶ reduced tailgating.
- ▶ reduced passing.

▶ better lane courtesy/lane discipline with more slower vehicles in the slower lanes, leaving passing lanes clearer for passing vehicles, reducing the tendency for unsafe 'lane shopping'.

▶ correct and truthful information about the approaching speeds of vehicles for pedestrians and bicycles.

▶ the best possible throughput of vehicles due to smoother traffic patterns.

▶ better respect for the posted limits by drivers because most will understand them to be reasonable, a respect that is damaged or destroyed when the posted limits are set far below the actual safe speeds of travel.

▶ better allocation of scarce police patrol resources to seek out and cite truly dangerous drivers such as those guilty of drink driving with high blood alcohol rates, instead of using time citing safe drivers at around the 85th percentile speeds - drivers that have the lowest actual accident risks.

▶ much better respect from drivers for police patrol officers because driving safely at around the 85th percentile speeds will no longer be a cause for financial punishment by those officers.

Michigan has benefited significantly from establishing safe and realistic speed limits that are respected by the super-majority of drivers, and Great Britain could benefit from the same philosophy of traffic management.

*James C. Walker
National Motorists' Association*



driver had been in control, he would have been able to adjust his rate of deceleration appropriately to the circumstances.

Dangerous situations of this sort were reported by one of the volunteers in the

Leeds ISA trial a few years ago, despite a restriction on talking to the press. Simulator trials also confirmed the obvious dangers of ISA-equipped cars being vulnerable to head-on collisions in misjudged overtaking

manoeuvres on single-carriageway roads.

As we already see with today's speed-limited vehicles, the spread of ISA would inevitably lead many drivers to rely on the system, rather than their own judgement, to set their speed. While this might be within the legal limit, it would be unsafe in many situations. It is also to be expected that tailgating would become worse. Those who advocate the use of ISA clearly do not understand the complexities of the driving task or the limitations of speed limits.

Most road accidents are caused by human error on the part of one or more road users, and those errors are frequently due to lack of attention. If we are serious about improving road safety, we need to focus less on speed and more on emphasising the need for everyone who uses the roads to give their full attention to what they are doing.

Idris Francis

closed shop

The Motorists' Forum doesn't contain many pro-motorist groups. Brian Mooney explains why, and how he's looking to improve the situation.

Last May, the government responded to the Cook Report, which suggested that ministers and the DFT should become the champion of road users, ensuring that the strategic road network (SRN) reflected the "reasonable aspirations of road users". The government identified the Motorists' Forum as "an established group" representing "a wide range of motoring interests" and "close to the issues that mattered".

The obscure Forum was in fact set up by the Labour anti-driver politician John Prescott. No surprise that it was a tame body with mainly political and commercial interests (including a Labour donor) appointed, although a minority interest (disabled drivers) was represented. It was reconvened in 2011 with a revised membership, but could it be said to truly represent Britain's 33 million motorists?

Until recently, when he left the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) for a role outside the industry, Paul Everitt had chaired the Forum for half a year. He had been one of the ABD's past conference speakers.

Garrett Emmerson, a Director of TfL, struck me as an official who listens, but he is tasked to represent English local authorities (LAs). Under Cook's vision, the LAs might end up with a wider roads remit and, like SMMT, be seen as 'supplier' rather than 'customer'.

There is a definite 'RAC Foundation' (RACF) feel about the Forum. The RACF is not exactly a grass roots organisation that stands up for the motorist – it's classed as a charitable foundation, but has promoted unpopular measures like speed cameras.

Its director, Prof. Stephen Glaister is a road pricing evangelist. His background is mainly in rail, and he was seen as politically correct enough for Ken Livingstone to appoint to the Board of TfL. The RACF criticised the Government decision to dissuade Cook's review from explicitly considering any form of pay-as-you-go driving.

The current government originally appointed another Livingstone favourite to chair the Forum – RACF Chairman David Quarmby, with a public sector (Ministry of Transport), public transport (mainly rail) and academia credentials.

A look at the backgrounds of the RACF's leading lights and Public Policy Committee (PPC) appointees hardly gives much confidence that they represent drivers. Those I could identify have often had interests in public transport, rail, aviation, government, consultancy or selling services (like insurance) that make money out of drivers.

OTR has previously noted that RACF PPC member John Wootton (variously a transport planning professor and president of the Institution of Highways and Transportation) authored a virulently anti-motorist report.

One PPC insider publicly referred to the RACF as "the lobbying arm of the RAC". In 2008, it was noticed that the insurance giant Aviva/Norwich Union got a PPC place, with the insurer's Group Public Affairs unit admitting that it sought to influence policy and advance its commercial objectives.



Two RACF luminaries were linked with the Rees Jeffreys Road Fund that sounds interested in drivers but has in the past given grants to projects such as "The contribution of cycling organisations to the creation of an effective roads lobby" and "The social dimensions of car-reduced development".

The RAC (Motoring Services) has recently been awarded representation on the Forum, its nominee being Dr David Bizley, who has also been a long-standing Director of the RACF.

The Centre for Automotive Management is represented by Christopher Macgowan, formerly of SMMT, and later Vice Chairman of the Motorists' Forum. He is also listed as Chairman of the DFT's Interoperability Forum which will "help steer the delivery of interoperability between different road pricing schemes", and 'Chairman, RAC Foundation Network'.

The AA (now part of insurance group Acromas) is represented by former RACF Director, Edmund King, who has called for a better deal for drivers, but also talked up 'drive time road pricing'... 'the only way ahead is a 'voluntary' system that shows motorists they can benefit'.

At the height of the national debate on road pricing in 2007, when nearly 2 million signed the petition against it, the AA was equivocal and sat on the fence – "it's still too early to support or oppose".

King, however, was then still with the RACF, which argued for road pricing to be rebranded as part of a wider package "to make it appeal more" to drivers.

On the (Motorists') Forum the Association of British Insurers (ABI) is represented by Nick Starling. The Competition Commission recently launched a full-scale investigation into the car insurance industry after it was found that drivers were being ripped off by at least £225m a year. An OfT report uncovered evidence that premiums are being inflated by excessive costs in repairs and providing replacement cars.

Journalist Mike Rutherford attacked the ABI for not putting its house in order before. The ABI defines its role to be "the voice of the UK insurance industry, leading debate and speaking up for insurers".

On the Forum, Chief Constable Phil Gormley

represents ACPO – a private company for whom 'road policing' is a 'business area'. Its associated company, Road Safety Support Ltd, assists speed camera partnerships in prosecuting drivers. Although he favours the police moving away from targets, he wants more drivers sent on offender courses. ACPO and the RACF have collaborated over the courses. His roads policing predecessor, CC Mick Giannasi felt: "There is not a war on the motorist and there never has been".

Rob Gifford, until recently of PACTS, has maligned drivers as being 'carcooned' – sitting in increasingly safer cars with less concern for pedestrians and cyclists. PACTS and the AA jointly lobbied for speed cameras to escape recent spending cuts.

The most bizarre choice for the Forum though is Stephen Joseph, of the Campaign for Better Transport (CbBT, formerly Transport 2000) – funded by public transport companies and unions. The 'charitable' CbBT has explicitly campaigned for drivers' interests to be relegated. It has backed removing road space from drivers and opposed parking provision, new roads, motorway widening and a fuel duty stabiliser (on the grounds that drivers might pay less tax). Joseph has also backed road pricing to curb travel.

Making up numbers on the Forum are two trade body reps – Theo de Pencier, Freight Transport Association and John Lewis, British Vehicle Rental & Leasing Association.

The 'DFT' side of appointees to the Forum includes Graham Dalton, chief executive of the Highways Agency, hardly a disinterested party when the government supports Cook's view that it should sweat maximum economic value from the road network.

Why should the DFT have to seek clear evidence of 'what drivers want' when it already has it? As part of the DFT MBURN programme, the MVA consultancy engaged with drivers to identify transport measures that would enjoy general support. It presented its findings that 'road charging options' were 'distinctly unpopular'.

To redress the balance, the ABD has applied for representation on the Forum. We'll keep you posted on this...

What's on the mind of Chris Medd, OTR editor. This issue; French motorway lane discipline, why trains are rubbish and why 20mph limits won't make our urban streets any safer.

The activity you see reported in OTR is but a fraction of what goes on behind the scenes; there's always plenty of fierce debate about what the ABD should do next, and how it should do it. One of the most recent discussions was about climate change and how much we should focus on the topic; is it something the ABD should have a stance on? For some, it's too marginal while for others it's a key reason why drivers are under the cosh so much. I'm inclined to go with the latter view; for years it's been at the heart of many anti-car policies introduced by successive governments, and despite the science being on very shaky ground, the Government shows no sign of reducing its dependence on climate change so it can continue to fleece us all...

There's also frequently much discussion over whether or not we should comment on news stories when they break. A recent example was the Christmas day M6 crash which killed a mother and her child. True to form, the police closed the whole stretch of motorway for hours, in both directions, even though the crashed car was the sole vehicle involved and it was confined to the hard shoulder of one carriageway. The ABD commented that closing a major road such as the M6 for hours at a time (in both directions) was unnecessary; predictably we were lambasted for being "insensitive" to the fact there'd been multiple deaths. This episode came just the day before the DfT issued a press release on how it was investing in new technology to clear roads more quickly after crashes. Were we being insensitive, or entirely reasonable in questioning the status quo?

I'm in a couple of walking groups, which gives me a great opportunity to meet people who aren't

into cars or driving. And by that I mean they *really* aren't into them. Yes my fellow walkers invariably drive, but they're often apologetic about the fact and hate every minute of it. One such chap whom I recently met is a town planner and he's very firmly of the view that there's a hierarchy of road users (with drivers at the bottom) and that roads are there for kids to play in, and drivers are the scourge of the Earth for using this precious resource. On our most recent walk, this chap made a fascinating observation, which was that "there's no such thing as a safe driver, because conditions are changing constantly. That's why you must drive everywhere slowly – because you don't know what might appear from nowhere". He also supported speed cameras because "speeding is a social menace and something must be done about it". Our conversations have certainly made the miles of walking fly by...

In another walking group, I met a chap who works for the railways; I had to share a lift with him recently. He drove everywhere at 10-20mph below the limit, even if the limit was already unrealistically low. As he drove along a deserted Welsh dual-carriageway on a Sunday morning we chatted about driving and he made the observation that driving quickly is the same as aggressive driving, and as he's not an aggressive person he has to drive "carefully" (slowly) everywhere. I suggested to him as well as Town Planning Man that he should take an advanced driving course to see if it helped them gain confidence as drivers; both pilot their ancient Skoda hatchbacks (yes, both of them) everywhere with unbelievable timidity. Naturally they both laughed off the idea as utterly pointless...

Do you pay by standing order?

Loyds Bank had a computer problem in January, which prevented it from receiving some standing order payments. If yours was returned to you, could you please make the same payment by cheque directly to the Membership Secretary.

A story that broke just as this issue was being put together was that of the M42 variable limit speed cameras, which were displaying the wrong font. As a result, thousands of speeding prosecutions could be overturned, on this technicality. The problem is, drivers shouldn't be 'getting off' because of a technicality; they shouldn't be prosecuted in the first place if the limit is wrong. As somebody who regularly has to use this stretch of motorway, I've lost count of the number of times a 40 limit has been flashed up on the gantry, only for the next one to be national speed limit – with no change in conditions between the two.

Thanks to Brian Moon ey, who spotted this pic in his archives. It shows an enthusiastic Chris Huhne extolling the virtues of speed enforcement just a few short years ago. Maybe we should revive the Hypocrite's Corner section that we used to feature in OTR...

Chris Medd



ABD to work more closely with NMAG

The only way the ABD will make significant progress is by collaborating with other groups. As a result, we're now affiliated to NMAG (the National Motorists Action Group). NMAG was set up last year by Neil Herron, a long-standing friend of the ABD, who has a history of legal actions against councils which he alleges are in the habit of illegally enforcing parking restrictions and charges. He was also involved with the "metric martyrs".

NMAG's activities include the Motorists' Legal Challenge Fund. Online they have the NMAG Blog, edited by Richard North, and the NMAG Motoring Forum (in association with the Consumer Action Group) – and a presence on Twitter. NMAG can also put their members in touch with a small number of affiliated specialist companies and lawyers – you'll find out more about the group at www.nmag.co.uk



Log on and you'll find that NMAG's objectives are very much in tune with the ABD's, as they include:

- ▶ Bailiffs
- ▶ CCTV/ANPR
- ▶ The DVLA
- ▶ Fuel taxes
- ▶ Local authority parking/traffic enforcement
- ▶ Parking & permit charges
- ▶ Private land parking
- ▶ Refunding of unlawful penalties
- ▶ Roadworks
- ▶ Speed limits and enforcement
- ▶ Vehicle clamping and towing

The emphasis is clearly on legal issues, but the key thing is that there is much common ground with what the ABD campaigns on. As a result, the alliance will undoubtedly prove to be beneficial to both groups.

letters

Opinions expressed are personal views and not necessarily those of the ABD. Please note letters may be shortened.

Write to OTR: Chris Medd, PO Box 248, Manchester M41 4BW or send an email to otr@abd.org.uk

I don't think anyone can credibly argue that climate alarmism and the associated demonisation of CO2 haven't dominated Government policy, including transport, for a couple of decades. Anthropogenic climate change theory has provided politicians with the opportunity for more taxes and restrictions that was too good for them to miss.

Scepticism is an essential part of scientific discovery. So, briefly, how is computer-modelled anthropogenic climate theory doing these days? No statistically significant global warming or cooling for 16 years. Successive reports since 1990 from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have projected increasingly extreme global warming scenarios, yet any warming has remained at the low end of these projections, suggesting low climate sensitivity to CO2.

Furthermore, no link has been established in the scientific literature between CO2 or global warming and extreme weather events, but this didn't stop the IPCC claiming a link in their 2007 report via an unpublished 'smoothed' graph that even the author agreed should not have been used.

The lower and mid-troposphere of the atmosphere have failed to warm as predicted by climate models. Models of the mid and upper-stratosphere are in trouble too.

Having just retired early at the age of 55, after nearly 34 years of scientific research, I'm left wishing that my reduced pension and lump sum had been based on an IPCC computer-modelled projection!

Paul Biggs

During the Little Ice Age (roughly 1500 to 1850) CO2 concentration in the atmosphere reached dangerous lows. Most plants require at least 150 PPM to survive – it's their main food – but we got down to 200PPM or so. Optimum for plants is around 1100PPM and we need plants to survive on the planet. Geologically speaking,

In response to the 'revelation' that twice as many people die from accidents in the home than on the road (full article next issue)...

I find it fascinating that those in the road safety industry have the gall to claim they are responsible for reductions in road deaths. Organisations such as the DfT, HA, TfL, Brake, RoSPA and so forth claim they're responsible for the reduction in road deaths. Nonsense.

Deaths have reduced largely due to car manufacturers improving their designs, yet like most working in the lucrative road safety industry, they get no credit at all. Other factors are universal use of mobile phones meaning ambulances arrive much sooner, plus better medical procedures. Deaths have reduced despite the interventions of many of these organisations, not because of them. Without airbags, ABS, medical advances and phone technology deaths would probably have risen.

Steve Mayer

Give us a quote

"If a camera followed me on my bike, it would be bound to find me breaking the law somewhere, including riding the wrong way down one-way streets. It's the inescapable reality of riding a bicycle."

Jon Snow, President of the Cycle Touring Club

the Earth's atmosphere should have around 500-1000PPM of CO2 to be optimal. The last few million years are unusual in that CO2 is so low. We are simply recovering to normal. Current CO2 concentrations are around 340PPM, and to call CO2 a pollutant is simply stupid – it's required for life on Earth, no less than oxygen.

Andrew May (geologist)



When I used to speak for the ABD, I once spoke at an IAM conference in London, where (in question time) somebody advocated absolute compliance with limits. I asked them - and the rest of the audience - what they'd do if their speedo broke while they were driving. They tried arguing that this would be an MoT failure, so they'd stop immediately and call for recovery (another compliance argument). When I tried to bring the discussion around to safety - rather than compliance, they became incredibly defensive and emotively so, just as though I'd challenged a religious belief.

And that's what the ABD is fighting. Superficially rational arguments pasted over profoundly deep-seated, visceral emotional reaction. All the logic and reason in the world won't work - because we're arguing against

Around 500,000 people die in the UK per year. If 2,000 die in road accidents and 5,000 die at home that means 493,000 or 98.5% die somewhere else. Best remain in your car if you can, if not, run to your house.

Alan Marshall

A shocking statistic has just been revealed; the majority of people who die in their homes die in their beds. This number dying in beds is far higher than those who die from accidents involving stairs, knives, electrocution, fire, or tripping, (researchers are still out on the tripping, they have taken a smoke break or something).

This must bring us to the inevitable conclusion beds are very dangerous and should be avoided at all times. An interesting extra statistic has also been revealed. Very few people die in someone else's bed except in hospitals. The solution is therefore to sleep in someone else's bed. The owner of the bed

belief; the most powerful thing in the world. I even wrote a blog on it: tinyurl.com/a3xwko

Mark McArthur-Christie

Many people confuse the war on the motorist with revenue generation, but they're different things. The war on the motorist is carried out for ideological reasons by those keen to force us out of our cars. But politicians don't want us to stop using our cars; they want us to keep using them and committing lots of minor offences for which we will have to pay them.

It shouldn't be too hard to stir up public hatred for this plan, because we can sell the idea of councils desperate to maintain – or increase – their incomes to protect their jobs and pensions. With many families feeling the financial pinch that should hit a nerve.

We should suggest that councils issue tickets, but to dispel fears of them doing it for revenue generation, all proceeds should go to central government, as with speeding tickets. The labour government had the sense to do that in the face of public belief that speeding tickets were about making money. If we can get the fines sent to the government, it would kill off all sorts of local enforcement, as councils are only interested in the money.

Chris Lamb

Within the road safety industry I've identified three separate forces at work, with one feeding from the other. The first is the ideological anti-car anti-driver green groups and politicians. The second is a massive multi-billion pound road safety/speeding industry which finances the former and then pronounces the public mantra

can stay but runs a high statistical risk of bed death. If you swap beds you will/might live forever.

Chris Goy

More people are having fatal accidents at home because people are increasingly not having to think for themselves. Maybe without road safety measures those people dying in their homes from accidents would have been killed on the roads. Maybe they are so accident prone, unobservant or just plain reckless that they are destined to die in an accident the only question is where. How much money should be spent, how much inconvenience to the rest of us just to save these few thousand people determined to inadvertently kill themselves because they cannot manage to perform the simple task of not exterminating themselves without aid from third parties?

Simon Atherstone

Does the membership secretary have your current contact details – including a correct email address? If not, please send an update ASAP!

I've never received a ticket by one, but I'm completely against the whole idea of photo enforcement – and I'm a former police officer. Since inception, these cameras have been either ineffective at reducing accidents (some studies have shown minor accidents increased after their installation), or even worse, been riddled with accusations (with merit I might add) ranging from corruption (with contractual deals being made to split the



revenue with the cities and the contracting companies that monitor them), to being deliberately placed contrary, and in spite of state law (as is the case here in Seattle).

Seems to me, the one thing they are effective at is pitting people against their own local government (who is supposed to be operating in the best interests of the people), and enhancing distrust – especially with law enforcement, which admittedly, I'm particularly against and sensitive to.

I worked in Patrol Services for about five years, and it was obvious that if there was an intersection or stretch of roadway that was showing signs of being (or becoming) a problem (speeding, increased accidents, etc) we would increase our visible presence, and increase enforcement (making stops, issuing citations). It always worked. But the funny thing was, and I don't really know why this is, but those "problem areas" changed quite a bit. In my opinion, enforcement does work, if it's being done by a police officer. You see, if a driver sees the infamous "flash" after

they've already gone through an intersection illegally (failing to stop, speeding, etc) it has done nothing to protect the other drivers and pedestrians who were just subject to that additional risk. So if it's not actually protecting people, what's the point? Oh yeah – to make money. On the other hand, if you approach an intersection and you see a marked police vehicle or a clearly visible police officer... suddenly everyone becomes more attentive to traffic laws.

Also, in my experience, in general, just pulling people over and not writing a ticket was far more beneficial than giving them a ticket because the experience is quite stressful on the average motorist, and they'll probably drive more carefully after it, regardless of there being a financial penalty. They also leave the experience not only as a more careful and educated driver, but they now harbour more positive feelings for law enforcement. Which always seemed a win-win to me.

Letter sent to the National Motorists' Association in the US

for the latter in one big cycle of drivers' cash. The third are all those who readily believe the sixth form brainwashing such as 'The slower everything goes the safer things must be.'

Counteracting this is an uphill struggle but it is good that there are enough of us passionate enough about true road safety and unfair prosecution to, in our own diverse ways, voluntarily commit so much time and effort into it.

Keith Peat

Drivers' Protest Union (youdrive.org.uk)

Last July my wife was caught on camera in Warrington, doing 35mph in a 30 zone. The offence was committed at 8.30pm on a Sunday evening with no other traffic or pedestrians in sight. She duly received a NIP with the alternative of a Speed Awareness Course.

My wife has been driving for almost 50 years and has never previously had so much as a



parking ticket. At 72 she did not feel a Speed Awareness Course was necessary or appropriate and elected to pay the fine. She did not expect the additional £60 loading on both our insurance policies and I understand this will apply for the next five years.

This minor, isolated indiscretion will now cost £360 in total. As a

consequence I have decided to opt out of the "big society" and have cancelled several long-standing charitable contributions to offset this disproportionate financial penalty. This is a classic example of how to breed anti-police feelings among the general, law-abiding public. I hope the Chief Constable of Cheshire can sleep well in his bed.

Details supplied

I find it worrying how so few road safety professionals and campaigners know very

OTR glossary

- **ACPO**: Association of Chief Police Officers
- **ANPR**: Automatic Number Plate Recognition
- **Brake**: Vocal anti-car group
- **CfBT**: Campaign for Better Transport (previously Transport 2000)
- **CPRE**: Campaign to Protect Rural England
- **CPS**: Crown Prosecution Service
- **DfT**: Department for Transport
- **DVLA**: Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency
- **EC**: European Commission
- **ECHR**: European Court of Human Rights
- **FoI**: Freedom of Information (Act)
- **FTA**: Freight Transport Association
- **Gatso**: Speed camera that measures a car's speed at a single fixed point.
- **IAM**: Institute of Advanced Motorists
- **IPCC**: Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (pushes man-made CC view)
- **ISA**: Intelligent Speed Adaptation
- **KSI**: Killed or Seriously Injured
- **LTP**: Local Transport Plan
- **MART**: Manchester Against Road Tolls
- **NAAT**: National Alliance Against Tolls
- **NIP**: Notice of Intended Prosecution (usually a speeding ticket)
- **RHA**: Road Haulage Association
- **PACTS**: Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety (of which the ABD is a member)
- **PCN**: Penalty Charge Notice
- **Scamera**: Speed camera
- **SPECS**: Speed camera that measures a car's average speed between two or more points.
- **TfL**: Transport for London
- **VAS**: Vehicle-activated sign

little about the fundamentals of safe driving or the dangers of so-called 'Intelligent Speed Adaptation' (ISA). Driving safely, from the point of view of speed, is about slowing down or speeding up in response to changes in the prevailing road conditions, not about the distraction of balancing the speedometer needle on numerical speeds in 10mph increments to match a roadside number on a pole. A speedometer is only really useful for complying with speed limit enforcement.

Of course, a prerequisite for any method of speed limit enforcement should be the setting of speed limits correctly in the first place (using the 85th percentile). Otherwise we end up in the current situation where the vast majority of drivers who are fined for 'speeding' were driving safely at the time.

ISA does not prevent driving at an inappropriate speed for the prevailing road conditions under the posted limit, so ISA is more dumb than intelligent. Read the report from a volunteer who participated in the ISA trial that was published in *The Daily Telegraph* and see how dangerous ISA really is (aside from the privacy and civil liberties aspects). We probably wouldn't want a 'paint by numbers' picture instead of a Rembrandt, so why should we accept 'driving by numbers' instead of genuine road safety?

Chris Connor

in brief...

▶ David Sparks, chairman of the Local Government Association's Transport Board, has said councils are pushing up parking charges to ease the pressure on their budgets. Sparks' admission was buried in evidence given to the Public Accounts Committee, which said councils in England made £411m profit from on and off-street parking. This figure does not take into account the hundreds of millions of pounds they also rake in from parking fines. Asked about how parking revenue was spent, he told MPs: "You will look at increasing car parking charges to alleviate the overall pressures on the budget. That means that car parking charges are going up to keep council tax down."

▶ NHS volunteer James Quinn drove a baby 250 miles to London for critical brain surgery. After repeated failed attempts to pay the Congestion Charge, he was hit with a £120 fine - a week's pension. TFL refused his appeal, so his MP David Morris, an ABD patron, wrote to Mayor Boris Johnson, calling the situation "ridiculous", and adding "Volunteer drivers save the NHS a fortune and free up ambulances for more urgent cases. We should be thanking this man, not bullying him into paying a large fine." TFL insisted they were in the right but would waive the ticket "as a goodwill gesture".

▶ A former council leader who campaigned for speed cameras on a busy road has been disqualified from driving after being caught speeding there. Councillor Ken Lupton, the former leader of Stockton Borough Council, was caught doing 35mph in a 30mph zone. The councillor, who pleaded guilty but claimed there were mitigating circumstances when he appeared at Teesside Magistrate's Court, said it was "ironic" he had been caught speeding.

▶ Gwynedd Council is to fine any driver £70 if their car ends up further than 20 inches (50cm) from the edge of the road when parking. The fines will apply to all drivers, including the disabled, and will be levied even in areas without parking restrictions. The Council claims the fines are necessary to prevent traffic jams and make it easier for pedestrians to cross the road. The fines will also be levied against drivers who park across dropped kerbs, which should provide access to other drivers or pedestrians. They will be reduced to £35 if paid within a fortnight.

▶ A group of traders in Newport have banned Labour council members from their businesses in protest over free parking being stopped. Steve Reynolds, owner of Toy Army in Newport Market, launched the campaign after councillors voted against a motion which would have saved the city's two-hour free parking. Other businesses in the market have followed. The motion was brought by opposition leader Matthew Evans urging the council to reverse its decision to axe the scheme, which allows shoppers to park for free for the first two hours in all its city centre car parks.

MPs alarmed by DfT's lack of transparency

MPs have voiced alarm at the DfT's lack of knowledge about how its local transport funds are spent by councils. The House of Commons public accounts committee's new report on local transport says the DfT doesn't monitor the way authorities spend their road maintenance and integrated transport block allocations – worth £1.2bn in 2011/12. These funds are not ring-fenced, so councils can spend the resources on whatever they like. Committee chair Margaret Hodge said the Department had "no clear way of controlling how its money was used. The Department does not monitor whether it is actually spent on transport or achieving its intended purpose," she added.

The committee's report represents a strong attack on the Government's localism agenda. It says the DfT has a "lack of consistent and comprehensive local transport data", which

means that the Department cannot assess the impact of budget cuts on performance. "The Department should clearly set out the information it will use to identify a failure or an unacceptable reduction in the standard of provision, the circumstances under which it would intervene, and what form that intervention would take," say the MPs.

They also voice concern about the DfT's plans to devolve local major scheme funding from April 2015. "We are not convinced that Government has thought through the risks of devolving more control over the funding of major transport projects to a local level," said Hodge. The committee remarks: "The Department could not clearly define how it would ensure cross-boundary projects would be funded and agreed in the new landscape. It accepted that it will have to rely on local goodwill and departmental influence."

Up to 350,000 parking fines issued illegally

Almost 350,000 parking fines - totalling an estimated £23m - may have been unlawfully issued to London motorists. In 2010 a ticket issued in a suspended parking bay was ruled unlawful because Camden Council didn't have authorisation for its signage. Yet still, 16 councils have no authorisation for these signs, while others went for years without. Some boroughs insist a later judgement made tickets enforceable.

A typical inner London council suspends more than 1500 parking bays a month, often so building works can take place. The DfT designs road signs for most situations, which authorities must follow closely. But it has never produced a template for a suspended parking bay sign. If no sign is set out by the DfT, the law says councils must ask the transport secretary to authorise their own creations. Otherwise they would be effectively licensed to invent road signs at will.

In January 2010, motorist Suzanne Campbell defeated Camden Council at appeal, after being ticketed in a suspended parking bay. Adjudicator Edward Houghton ruled: "In the absence of a compliant sign the vehicle was not in contravention and the appeal must be allowed. No doubt the council will give consideration to



obtaining the secretary of state's authorisation." Shortly afterwards there was a rush of applications for authorisation from London councils. Some 14 received it by 2012. But all these councils had been issuing tickets in suspended parking bays for years previously – and according to the DfT, 16 councils still have no authorisation.

Motoring solicitor Neil Davies said: "From a legal perspective councils are on very shaky ground, because the signage they used is effectively made up. It's difficult to explain the actions of councils who haven't sought authorisation - they may be relying on the fact many people don't challenge parking notices."

Fewer commuters travelling by car

The percentage of people who commute to work in England and Wales by car or van fell between 2001 and 2011, according to Census data published by the Office of National Statistics. Comparing 2001 and 2011 data, the ONS reports:

▶ A fall in the percentage of commuters travelling to work by car/van as a driver or passenger – from 61.5% to 59.2%

▶ An increase in the proportion of people working at or from home – from 9.2% to 10.7%

▶ A reduction in commuting by bus or coach, from 7.4% to 7.2%

▶ An increase in commuting by train from 4.1% to 5% and 'light rail' (including Underground) services from 3.0% to 3.7%

In London, 49.9% of people commute to work on public transport. The South West region has the lowest proportion of people commuting by public transport (6.3%), with the highest proportion outside London being in the North East (13.1%). London has the lowest proportion commuting by car, van, taxi or motorcycle (31.4%). Elsewhere, these modes account for at least two-thirds of commuting trips, ranging from 66.8% in the South East, to 75.2% in Wales.

Edinburgh 'consults' on lower limits

The City of Edinburgh Council is seeking views on whether to implement lower speed limits on many main roads. The council launched a six-week review on the key issues for the next local transport strategy, asking whether 20mph limits should be extended to all residential streets, together with the city centre, as well as main roads in areas with high pedestrian activity.

The council also suggests setting a maximum speed limit of 30mph for all streets with any 'urban' frontage. This would cut the existing 40mph limit on a number of main roads.

Streets outside some schools could be closed off to vehicular traffic for 20-30 minutes at school start and finish times "to create a

safer, more pleasant environment for children immediately around the school". The council concedes this may cause access problems for residents and would be challenging to manage and enforce.

An LEZ applying to buses and goods vehicles is also suggested. Alternatively, an LEZ could cover goods vehicles only with bus emissions tackled via a Statutory Quality Partnership or Traffic Regulation Conditions. The council also asks whether funding for supported bus services should be increased by, for instance, setting aside a proportion of parking charge revenues or fine income from bus lane enforcement cameras.

The new local transport strategy should be finalised by the end of the year.

in brief..

► Traffic wardens in Ceredigion are accused of being overzealous after parking tickets more than trebled over a six-month period. There were claims of parking chaos when the county had no wardens for a year after control for them switched from the police to the council in May 2011. From 4 June to 30 November 2012 the new wardens handed out 4653 tickets. This compares with 1367 handed out between April and October 2010 by the three wardens employed by the police.

► Norfolk police have made over £400,000 from speed awareness courses. In 2010, 11,665 drivers took the course but this rocketed to 17,052 in 2012. In just six months last year the camera partnership took £429,134 and in the 2011/2 financial year, nearly £1m was raked in – an increase of 250% on the previous year.

► A protester who tunneled under a road building site was allowed out overnight by security staff, only to return underground the following morning. 'Simon Medhurst said security workers on the Bexhill-to-Hastings link road allowed him to leave the tunnel because of freezing weather. He said a "gentlemen's agreement" was honoured and he was allowed back in his tunnel to await bailiffs. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) said staff made sure protesters were safe. Medhurst, said: "I have learnt and will be able to pass on invaluable information to the protesters of the next road they build on how to stop it".

► Speed limits could rise on some Scottish roads, following a government review. Transport Scotland has recommended increases on 23 sections of road and decreases on 44 throughout Scotland. The agency said the rises would not be "promoted" until police examined how well the lower limits were working. Former government strategy minister Bruce Crawford announced last July that the Scottish government had "no current plans to increase speed limits". Transport Scotland said it would "promote decreases on the earmarked roads straight away".

► The BBC has re-edited the final episode of David Attenborough's nature series, *Africa*, to remove a piece of commentary about climate change. In the original programme, Attenborough said: "Some parts of the continent have become 3.5 Celsius hotter in the past 20 years." However, the BBC admitted the comment was "disputable". A decision was taken to remove it from the repeat programme and the iPlayer version.

► The Welsh economy is at risk of being damaged by chronic "under-investment and congestion" on the M4, a cross-party group of MPs has warned. In its *Crossing the Border* report, the Welsh Affairs Committee urged the Welsh and UK Governments to take immediate action to improve the main trunk road into South Wales and mitigate further economic problems. The committee said the high toll on the Severn Crossings is "hampering" the development of businesses in Wales and that the situation is only getting worse.

80mph motorway limit trial abandoned

The Government appears poised to abandon plans to introduce a new 80mph speed limit on Britain's motorways, amid fears the move could lead to more collisions, according to the Telegraph. The newspaper claims that Patrick McLoughlin, transport secretary, is determined to make road safety a greater priority and does not want to implement the 80mph proposal he inherited when he took over the job last September.

Increasing the motorway speed limit from its current level of 70mph was first suggested under Labour and was pursued by Philip Hammond, who, as transport secretary, officially mooted the idea in 2011. Hammond claimed the move would reduce congestion and boost the economy by "hundreds of millions of pounds".



A coalition source said: "There is no imminent announcement of a U-turn, but rest assured, there is no way Patrick [McLoughlin] is going to preside over a raising of the limit on motorways. You are likely to hear official confirmation later in the year."

UK Drivers facing pothole misery

Drivers are facing "catastrophic" conditions on Britain's roads as councils are hopelessly trying to patch up potholes despite a lack of funds, the Local Government Association (LGA) has warned. Councillor Peter Box, chairman of the LGA transport board, said decades of under-funding by central Government and appalling weather conditions has left miles of road in a dangerous condition. He warned that further extensive flooding or severe winters could have "catastrophic consequences" for the nation's roads if councils are not given the necessary funding to upgrade their carriageways and escape "the false economy of chasing potholes."

His comments came as a survey by the AA found a third of drivers suffered pothole damage to their vehicles. Box said: "Underfunding by Whitehall, severe winters and last year's widespread flooding has left large swathes of our roads in disrepair with many councils struggling to move beyond simply patching up a deteriorating network."



Councils have tackled millions of potholes in the last two years to keep roads safe and passable and many councils are using new technology and extra funds to tackle the new batch of potholes. However, Box said councils need "increased and consistent funding" to invest in resurfacing projects in order to see a long-term improvement.

The AA's survey of 22,827 members found that drivers in Scotland suffered worst from potholes, where 44% said they had suffered damage to their vehicles.

in brief...

► Cyclists in Cardiff are to be offered training in a bid to tackle "irresponsible" riding after complaints of speeding. Cardiff council is to lay on adult classes at leisure centres after the Olympics inspired more cyclists. The council said the classes will be open to all and will be run from leisure centres across the city from the spring. It wants to tackle problems such as cyclists riding too fast, on pavements and going through red lights.

► The UK's biggest insurer has said that motorists' premiums could be cut by an average of £60 a year by changing the system of whiplash claims. Aviva has called for a new process that would force victims to put their claims directly to the insurer of the driver who caused the crash. It suggests that the system would cut out middlemen who inflate the cost of claims.

► A speed camera has been set on fire on the main east coast road linking Scotland and England, the A1 near to Dunglass roundabout at Cockburnspath in Berwickshire. The cost of repairing the damage has been estimated to be in the region of £20,000. It brings the number of cameras set alight in the Borders region alone to at least 20 since 2004. In December last year the camera housing was stolen from a device on the A68 near St Boswells. In October vandals used a saw to damage speed cameras on the A68 near Earlston and Oxtou.

Another whitewash from the OfT

Motoring organisations have expressed disappointment after a study found drivers are paying fair fuel prices. The OfT study of the UK petrol and diesel market found that little action is needed. "The evidence gathered by the OfT suggests that at a national level, competition is working well in the UK road fuel sector," its report said. The RAC Foundation said the report gave 'little comfort' to motorists and there were misgivings from the Petrol Retailers' Association and pressure group Fair Fuel UK.

The OfT said there's very little evidence that petrol and diesel prices rise quickly when oil prices go up, but are slow to fall when prices drop. "We recognise that there has been widespread mistrust in how this market is operating," said OfT chief executive Clive Maxwell. "However, our analysis suggests that competition is working well, and rises in pump prices over last decade or so have largely been down to increases in tax and the cost of crude oil." But the OfT found that fuel was significantly more expensive at motorway service stations and was concerned that motorists were not able to see the prices until they had left the motorway.

Police "aren't enforcing" 20mph limits

Top police officers are telling forces around the country not to enforce 20mph speed limits, Parliament has been told. The admission from ACPO leaves it up to local authorities to enforce the law on their streets as a growing number of cities, including Manchester and Liverpool, move to city-wide 20mph limits.

MPs expressed their astonishment at the disclosure from assistant chief constable Mark Milsom that police had decided against enforcing the lower speed limit in residential areas. Ian Austin MP, co-chair of the inquiry, said he was "disappointed and dismayed" by the "unacceptable" admission that police appear to be turning a blind eye. He added: "I think all too often we see the people responsible for really serious injuries or deaths on the roads get away scot-free or with derisory sentences and I think there needs to be greater emphasis on cycle safety from the police and the CPS."



Norman Baker, the transport minister responsible for cycling said: "My view is that the law of the land is the law of the land. Parliament sets the law of the land and it is the police's job to enforce it."

He said he was coming under "quite considerable pressure from local councils" to have 20mph limits enforced.

DfT forges ahead with managed motorways

The Highways Agency is pressing ahead with the implementation of a new design of managed motorway, despite continuing concerns about the safety of the design from the police, fire service and motorists' organisations. A major expansion of managed motorways in England is planned over the next few years, as ministers seek to squeeze more capacity out of the network without resorting to more expensive widening.

Managed motorways have already been implemented on parts of the network, such as sections of the M42, M6 and M1. During times of heavy traffic the hard shoulder is opened up as an extra running lane and lower mandatory speed limits come into force, communicated

to motorists via signs on overhead gantries.

Future schemes will be built to a new design, known as managed motorway all-lane running (MM-ALR). This will see the hard shoulder converted to a permanent running lane. Other design changes include fewer overhead gantries; verge-mounted variable message signs and speed cameras; and fewer emergency refuge areas (ERAs), with their spacing increased from the 1km on existing managed motorway schemes up to every 2.5km. The emergency services and motoring organisations are concerned that the new design poses an increased risk of vehicles running into the back of stationary vehicles broken down in a live running lane.

Industry support for higher HGV limits

Transport professionals have backed the DfT's plan to raise the speed limit for goods vehicles over 7.5 tonnes on single carriageway roads in England and Wales. The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation supports raising the limit for goods vehicles from 40 to 50mph on sections of road where the limit for cars is 60mph. It says raising the limit is likely to improve compliance.

The Road Haulage Association and the Freight Transport Association also support the plans. But both support retaining the 40mph limit where the limit for cars is 50mph. The RHA says the 40mph limit for goods vehicles on roads with a 60mph limit for cars is "unnaturally slow... and creates congestion, frustration, and avoidable road safety risks for no good reason."



"Raising the limit would lead to greater road safety and to a reduction in death and injury," it says. "HGV drivers have the unenviable duty of watching in their mirror as long queues of increasingly frustrated drivers build up behind them – and occasionally, they see car drivers making a dangerous manoeuvre as a result of losing patience."

See <http://twitter.com/TheABD> for the latest ABD news

Stay informed

Social media

Keep abreast of ABD-related news, and what the ABD is up to on a daily basis, by following us on Twitter (twitter.com/TheABD) or 'liking' us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/allianceofbritishdrivers). Please retweet or share one of our updates occasionally to help promote us to your followers or friends.

Forum

You can discuss issues with other members by registering on our online forum. The forum is split into both topics and regions, so whether your concern is a particular topic such as speed limits, or something happening in your local area, you can easily find other members to advise and assist you. Full details of how to register can be found on the members' website.

Website

The main ABD website (www.abd.org.uk) is available to everyone, and there's a members' site at members.abd.org.uk – both contain mountains of information on a diverse range of subjects, with dozens of links to other websites which may help you in your research. Log on to to find out more or email the ABD webmaster – Chris Ward – at website@abd.org.uk

OTR on ipad

If you have an iPad and want to read OTR on it, it's easy. Once you've downloaded OTR from the members' site, just drag the OTR file to the 'Books' Library in iTunes, then sync your iPad. OTR will appear on the 'PDFs' collections page in iBooks.

OTR in cyberspace

OTR31 onwards are now available as PDFs, which you can obtain from Chris Medd or download from the ABD website.

Speed limit objection packs

The ABD has prepared an informative action pack which sets out in detail the process by which local authorities set speed limits, and the rights that every member of the public has to object to the imposition of new or reduced limits. The pack costs £5 to non-members, but is available free to current members. Please send a large SAE (30p) to:

**3 Wheatcroft Way
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Norfolk NR20 3SS
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Help out

ABD publicity material

If you'd like copies of any ABD literature please contact Sean Corker (details overleaf), but please don't over-order as printing costs are high.

Affiliated organisations

The ABD runs an affiliation scheme, allowing groups which support the ABD to formally recognise the work we do. Overleaf is a list of the groups currently affiliated, along with contact details for Terry Hudson, the affiliations contact. If you're a member of an organisation which you think should support the ABD, please let Terry know and we'll endeavour to sign them up.

Complain

Object about proposals for traffic calming and speed limit reductions. Few people do, which is why they happen.

Facebook

Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/allianceofbritishdrivers where you can comment on posted articles, find out about press articles you can comment on, and by sharing some of our updates, encourage your friends to support us too.

Fighting fund

The ABD has a fighting fund to which you can donate any amount at any time. You can also donate by standing order if you wish to give a regular sum. Please contact the membership secretary for more information; she'll send you the relevant form to fill out.

These are free and help us to increase the size of the group easily. If your partner/spouse isn't a joint member, please sign them up if you can – just contact the membership secretary to do so.

Local/regional contacts

Have you been in touch with your local co-ordinator recently? Advise them of anything local you see, find out how you can help campaign locally. You can find out their details on the members site (<http://members.abd.org.uk>). If there's no local co-ordinator for your area, perhaps you can take on the role – more details on what is involved can be found on the members site.

National committee

The ABD's national committee is always keen to increase its effectiveness, which means getting more members involved. An ability to function effectively and diplomatically in committee email discussions across a wide range of issues is essential, and ideally, after an acclimatisation period, new recruits would eventually become a media spokesman too. There are usually around four committee plus (up to) two members' meetings each year, which you'd ideally be able to attend. If you reckon you could get involved, just contact Brian Gregory (brian.gregory@abd.org.uk), Brian MacDowall (brian.macdowall@abd.org.uk) or Bob Dennish (national@abd.org.uk) and they'll do the rest.

Follow us at <http://twitter.com/TheABD>, where you can stay up to date on what's happening. Find out about press articles you can comment on and retweet our posts to spread the word. You can also use Twitter to update us on things you see, if you make sure we're following you. If you're in Essex, Herefordshire, Kent, North Wales, North West, Rutland, Scotland, South West of England, Staffs, Surrey, Sussex, Warwickshire or the West Midlands, we have a local Twitter account too: <http://twitter.com/TheABD/local>

Write to the press

Take the time to reply to anti-car articles and letters in the local press. Not only do you get to respond to information already published, but you may be able to get a debate going – and could even become a local point of contact.

Contact your MP

Write to your MP regularly, reminding them of their duty to stand up for drivers. MPs are listed by name & constituency on the Parliament site (parliament.uk/directories/directories.cfm). Many MPs have their own email, but if you use the Parliament webpage to email them, it's involved. It's often better to check their constituency website (if they have one) for contact info. Make sure you state clearly you're a constituent to get priority in a reply. Conservative ministers are listed at conservatives.com

national & regional contacts

We are always pleased to hear from members who can offer support or need help. But remember that the ABD is a voluntary organisation – funded only by its members' subscriptions – and is staffed by unpaid volunteers who do their best to help members. **So please, no phone calls after 9pm!**

Affiliated organisations

▶ *American Automobile Club*
▶ *BMW Car Club*
▶ *CIPS (Choice in Personal Safety)*
▶ *Citroen Car Club*
▶ *Driver Awareness*
▶ *Jaguar Drivers' Club*
▶ *NO2ID*
▶ *Parkingticket.co.uk*

▶ *Professional Drivers' Association*
▶ *Renault ClioSport Club*
▶ *Repeal the Act*
▶ *Safe Speed (safespeed.org.uk)*
▶ *South East Lotus Owners' Club*
▶ *Subaru Impreza Drivers' Club*
▶ *The Independent Porsche Enthusiasts' Club*
▶ *Triumph Stag Enthusiasts' Club*

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