
Boris watch

Posted by E10 Rifle - 03-07-2008 20:16

Forget Ken's shadowy Trots, you get a better class of wrong'un employed in Boris's new era.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2008/jul/03/london.boris>

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Taylor - 03-07-2008 21:53

Have you ever seen Ray Lewis on TV, or read an interview with him? He's a fucking weirdo. He runs a sort of boot camp thing for problem kids, and takes it very seriously. One of those super-religious types with the air of a serial killer... they always give me the creeps.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 04-07-2008 00:39

Ray Lewis is a "deputy mayor". I didn't know there was such a thing. Does the term "deputy mayor" actually mean anything? Boris seems to have five of them. What do they do? Are they responsible to anyone other than Boris?

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by statto99 - 04-07-2008 08:26

How does he find time to fit this around his duties leading the Baltimore Ravens defense?

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by evilC - 04-07-2008 09:13

Antonio Gramsci wrote:

Ray Lewis is a "deputy mayor". I didn't know there was such a thing. Does the term "deputy mayor" actually mean anything? Boris seems to have five of them. What do they do? Are they responsible to anyone other than Boris?

I imagine they do everything that he can't ...i.e., everything.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by boris - 04-07-2008 10:04

Stop watching me, you bastards.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by evilC - 04-07-2008 10:10

No. It's in the public interest.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Nil Arshavin - 04-07-2008 10:20

Last month one of his senior advisers James McGrath quit after remarking that Caribbean immigrants could always return to their places of birth if they did not like London under Johnson. The mayor insisted that James McGrath, his political adviser, was not a racist.

Why did Mr. McGrath not return to Ireland under Ken?

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Bill Poster - 04-07-2008 12:02

"If I punch you and you fall on the floor, that's my fault,' Lewis says. 'If you're still there 10 years later, that's your fault.'"

Out for count?

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Tubby Isaacs - 04-07-2008 14:06

Shouldn't we elect a deputy mayor directly? Or at least have one chosen from the GLA? Sounds like another Blatcherite idea that Richard Branson or whoever was supposed to be mayor wouldn't want to "waste time having internal discussions".

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by And I am the Life - 05-07-2008 01:12

It is only fair to point out that people called James mcGrath are traditionally given the nickname "spud" I have no fucking idea why It just happens.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Kowalski - 05-07-2008 01:19

'We're quite disciplined,' Lewis tells me afterwards. 'We put an emphasis on testicular fortitude.'

Is Ray Lewis Talking Bollocks?

He's Gone

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/7490687.stm>

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by E10 Rifle - 08-07-2008 09:04

A rare victory for the poor, besieged, oppressed, victimised and tortured motorist
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/7494495.stm>

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Lyra - 08-07-2008 09:09

There were a couple of interesting letters in that free paper thing yesterday. People saying "Why is Boris banging on about trains and buses while kids are getting stabbed?" However much that's why whatever fucktards voted for him did so, maybe they've thought a little better of it now.

Also - I couldn't help myself. I texted the paper to say Boris was a buffoon and what did they expect. I think this may become a bit of a habit.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Jimmy Bignutz - 08-07-2008 09:18

Stop now before it does. Once you've contacted one of the free London papers, a line has already been crossed.

Was it Metro or one of the afternoon ones?

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by JtS - 08-07-2008 09:22

Surely Boris has a point about the effects on congestion.

A car that produces more C02 doesn't create any additional congestion, and allowing lower polluting cars in for free would actually create more congestion.

If the idea is to reduce pollution rather than congestion then you have to come up with a different scheme.

E10, as much as I admire your political convictions, you're barking right up the wrong tree with this one.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Lyra - 08-07-2008 09:30

It was 'the london paper' which I think is by far the better of the two. The 'Lite' is appalling. Cos I come in from Southeast London every day, I never see a Metro - thank heavens.

I really wish it wasn't called the congestion charge, for the exact reason that you get people being silly about it.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Jimmy Bignutz - 08-07-2008 09:34

The two evening ones are pretty much indistinguishable from each other - both absolutely appalling. They make Metro look like a work of great literature.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by JtS - 08-07-2008 09:40

Lyra, what should you call a charge brought in to reduce congestion?

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Lyra - 08-07-2008 09:51

See? Silly. They take a measure against climate change, give it a silly name and everyone has an excuse to whinge about it. I think it should be a pollution charge. Actually I think we should have a congestion charge for all cars and a pollution charge on top of that for all the polluters.

the point re Boris is that this is a backward step re both congestion AND pollution.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by JtS - 08-07-2008 10:11

It wasn't a measure against climate change at all. It was to improve congestion in central london.

I agree with you about having a pollution charge, but it's a differnt kettle of fish.

Technically, by charging some cars a higher amount for the congestion charge there would have been reduction in congestion, but again, it's hardly fair in that you can't differentiate on how much congestion a car causes by it's emmissions.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by JtS - 08-07-2008 10:13

And

By allowing more cars into the zone free, there would be more congestion.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Andy C - 08-07-2008 10:29

That's rather like saying that income tax shouldn't be used to pay for health provision because it was conceived as a way of financing the army.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Lyra - 08-07-2008 10:35

They sold it to us as a congestion charge because they knew that trying to get anyone to take any responsibility for climate change is going to be a struggle, given the short-sightedness of the general public. Sure they said it was about congestion because that is something that your average selfish motorist feels affects him. Obviously that's now come back to bite them on the arse.

It's like they sold the smoking ban as being about passive smoking, because they knew people would resent being told that it's to encourage them to give up.

Fact is they have a system in place to charge people for driving into London and why on earth not use that to address both issues. Perhaps they should rename the charge, and make it explicitly equally about pollution.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by And I am the Life - 08-07-2008 10:43

Removing the tax for electric cars is a mistake and sends the wrong economic signals. They should have reduced the tax, or made it clear that removing the tax was a temporary feature until the numbers of electric cars rose to a certain level.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by JtS - 08-07-2008 10:52

Lyra, I disagree.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by TonTon - 08-07-2008 11:26

I'm with Lyra, here. People can be way too literal. "Congestion" is primarily a problem because of its climatic effects, not because it might make you late for a meeting.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by The Chubby Cyclist - 08-07-2008 11:33

I'm with JtS. The congestion charge is clearly about congestion, and not about climate change. If it was about climate change it wouldn't be focussed solely on the highest congestion parts of London where they needed to improve traffic flow to get the buses working better and get people onto the buses.

It's about congestion, and it should be about congestion. Much though climate change is a crucial issue for Britain, my day-to-day environment is much more critically changed by the amount of traffic on the roads and how clogged up they all are.

The climate-change difference that would be made by charging large engined vehicles to come into London would be trivial, and the congestion problems caused by letting other vehicles in for free would undo all the good work of the CC at the moment in freeing up the City's streets a bit.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Lyra - 08-07-2008 11:42

I don't think they should let any vehicles in for free, low emission or not. That's a mistake But I do think climate change is more important than anyone's journey to work.

I don't think that asserting that it's only about congestion really helps anything much though. Things develop. Even if the introduction of the charge was very much positioned as about congestion only, do you really expect them to then just ignore the totally interrelated question of emissions?

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by And I am the Life - 08-07-2008 11:45

to CC: which is why if you want the congestion charge to do two things (reduce congestion and encourage a move to electric cars) you have to reduce the charge on electric cars, not remove it because you are acting against the thing you

introduced it for (congestion).

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by And I am the Life - 08-07-2008 11:57

The logic behind road pricing is fairly straightforward. There is only a certain amount of road space and without road pricing you are allocating it by queuing. If you don't put a price on it, a lot of people will assume that it is free, and not realise that you are paying for it with time.

It also has the effect of making public transport look more expensive than it actually is, putting more people into cars. the congestion charge tells people that the cost of driving into the city centre is £X so the only people that drive through the city centre are those for whom the journey is worth £X. In return they can travel fairly quickly.

Road Pricing, or tolling is an impeccably market based solution to transport problems. Not charging by price but allocating by queuing is a very communist way of going about things. This case has never really been made.

Removing the tax completely for low emission cars was a political and economic mistake. It should have been a reduction, and would have been very difficult to attack for reasons other than "I have a big car and this affects me"

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by evilC - 08-07-2008 11:59

The whole issue of the various charges for road use is a stupidly convoluted and thorny one. While I support initiatives to reduce both road use and pollution levels, I can't see how the government can justify a separate road tax and taxation of fuel. If they could somehow (and I don't know how) be more transparent about the allocation of fuel taxation revenues, then they could scrap road tax altogether, in the process saving a fair bit on administration costs. That way, price hikes for fuel could also be slightly more justifiable, since higher use of fuel implies higher emission of pollution.

However, as for reducing pollution and congestion in London? It's tricky now, following mismanagement and non-management of the transport infrastructure for decades and possibly the best part of a century. I'd like to say "how about banning all fossil-fuel powered cars from within the congestion charge zone? Instead allowing only biofuel and electric vehicles, bicycles and motorcycles" That would cut pollution and congestion, but is totally unrealistic. We weren't induced early enough or effectively enough to convert to other fuel types for any such scheme to work. It should have happened in the mid-70s, after the first fuel crisis, but it never did. We didn't learn our lessons then and instead were exalted to consume, consume, consume. If you had told someone in the mid-70s that fuel-thirsty four-wheel-drives weighing several tons would be one of the most popular car-types in 2008 they wouldn't have believed you. They would assume that some alternative power source had been invented in the intervening years.

Short of closing the city for a decade whilst some sort of integrated public transport system (that is dirt cheap and totally reliable) is put in place, I don't think there's going to be a solution. There are NO easy answers to this problem. Not with where it has got to at the moment.

As a slight aside - and a selfish one at that - one of the few vehicles that does reduce both congestion and pollution, the motorcycle, is under consideration for being hit with parking fees by many borough councils. It may be a little-known bonus of motorcycling (which just goes to show how ignorant most people are of that sphere) that one doesn't have to pay for parking in most places. However, this at least encourages people to use that particular mode of transport that uses up a fraction of the road space that a car does and is less susceptible to delays when there is congestion. So, given these advantages (for all road users) of motorcycle use in the city, are people being encouraged to ride? No - they're being told that you may as well get in a (warm, dry) car, just the same as everybody else, since you're going to get hit for the same (or similar) parking fees. Fuckwit council types!

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by The Chubby Cyclist - 08-07-2008 12:14

Lyra wrote:

I don't think that asserting that it's only about congestion really helps anything much though. Things develop. Even if the introduction of the charge was very much positioned as about congestion only, do you really expect them to then just ignore the totally interrelated question of emissions?

Well, they have also introduced the LEZ. If they applied that to all vehicles over a certain engine size it would make sense. Partly because it's targeted at emissions rather than congestion, and partly because it covers a much broader area and therefore is going to be far more effective in cutting emissions than just a tiny(ish) bit of the very centre of London.

Cutting emissions and cutting congestion are related but there's no direct correlation and it makes sense to use different instruments for a more focussed result.

Re:Boris watch

Posted by Eggchaser - 08-07-2008 12:21

I notice the Government's suddenly realised biofuels are by and large a crock of horseshit as well.

Re:Boris watch

Posted by The Chubby Cyclist - 08-07-2008 12:23

They're only a crock of horseshit when they're sing crops and cropland that could be used to feed people. There's a chance that cellulosic biofuels could be far more effective and efficient.

Re:Boris watch

Posted by Eggchaser - 08-07-2008 12:29

Look, we should be eliminating carbon emissions full stop, not just replacing one thing with another and saying it's good for the environment because it's less harmful. It's like switching from Marlboro to Marlboro Lights for your health. You may delay lung cancer, but it's still coming.

Re:Boris watch

Posted by evilC - 08-07-2008 12:32

The Chubby Cyclist wrote:

They're only a crock of horseshit when they're sing crops and cropland that could be used to feed people. There's a chance that cellulosic biofuels could be far more effective and efficient.

Indeed. The government (and others with vested interests) are again remaining blinkered ...and encouraging people to do the same and not even bother looking for opportunities to change things!

Re:Boris watch

Posted by Tubby Isaacs - 08-07-2008 19:33

Was there any justification for charging these "gas guzzlers" 3 times the rate of other cars (leaving the freebie cars out of the equation)? That suggests to me that other cars are OK in London which isn't true at all.

I'd have done away with resident discounts as well. I don't care that whoever is clogging up my city lives nearby. You live in central London, you don't need a car.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by E10 Rifle - 08-07-2008 22:14

Yeah, living in central London as I was when the charge came in, I flogged my car pronto (admittedly this was to enable me to go to the other side of the world and watch cricket, thereby adding yeti-sized stomps to my carbon footprint, but anyway...)

In other Boris news, I hope he gets taken on over this:
<http://www.rmt.org.uk/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=108209>

Re:Boris watch

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 08-07-2008 22:51

If you had told someone in the mid-70s that fuel-thirsty four-wheel-drives weighing several tons would be one of the most popular car-types in 2008 they wouldn't have believed you.

As a mid-70's-ite I still have trouble believing it.

Re:Boris watch

Posted by JtS - 10-07-2008 09:36

Boris Johnson is to increase and extend the minimum wage for tens of thousands of poorly paid Londoners to £7.40 an hour, the Guardian has learned.

The mayor will announce the decision on July 28, committing City Hall to paying the "living wage" to all staff employed by the Greater London Authority and related bodies, including Transport for London.

Following pressure from London Citizens, a group of community leaders, faith groups and unions, Johnson is expected to announce that, from next year, organisations funded by the London Development Agency will have to pay the living wage.

Johnson will also disclose that he will open talks with the hotel and hospitality industry - one of the lowest payers in the capital - about implementing the wage for all London hotel workers before the 2012 Olympics.

He was due to unveil the plan next week but the announcement was postponed when one of his deputies, Ray Lewis, was forced to stand down on Friday, following allegations of financial irregularities and inappropriate behaviour.

Johnson will hope the wage increase will help him draw a line under the controversy, but last night the London assembly announced it is launching an investigation into Johnson's appointment of senior advisers and staff.

That follows the departure of Lewis and James McGrath, Johnson's deputy chief of staff who resigned over remarks related to African-Caribbean migrants he made to a journalist. The City Hall inquiry will examine how Johnson picked senior staff, and evaluate if he was properly advised in the process.

Johnson's commitment to extend the minimum wage will be announced at a press conference at the Barclays headquarters in Canary Wharf, east London. The bank has been chosen because it has already negotiated a living wage with contract cleaners in Canary Wharf.

A number of big City banks, including HSBC, Citicorp, and accountants PricewaterhouseCoopers and KPMG - have followed suit.

Johnson's commitment means, in effect, that he will be continuing a policy begun by his predecessor Ken Livingstone in the face of opposition from the government, which is only committed to a national minimum wage of £5.52.

A number of Labour councils - notably Tower Hamlets, in east London - refuse to pay the living wage to their contract staff and the Department for Work and Pensions refuses to pay the living wage to cleaning staff in the capital.

Johnson's decision will be backed by the south and eastern region of the TUC. He is due to be accompanied at the press conference by the leader of the Tory-controlled Ealing council, Jason Stacey, who has negotiated a living wage for all its dinner ladies. Wages went up by £1 an hour as a result.

"We intend to renegotiate other contracts when they come up. Basically we think it is better that people get a decent basic wage rather than staying on benefit and it is better to pay what amounts to the London minimum wage, because the only alternative will be to top up salaries from benefits," said Stacey.

Neil Jameson, head of London Citizens, said: "If he gives a lead at City Hall we can see this policy cascading down across London with thousands of low-paid workers benefitting."

Unions have long campaigned for workers in London to be paid a living wage, with local branches of the two biggest unions in the country, Unite and Unison, affiliating to London Citizens to push their case.

The decision will also affect a dispute between the RMT union and the tube companies, as their cleaners are demanding a living wage and have already been on strike.

The bastard

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Tubby Isaacs - 10-07-2008 09:42

Seeing he believes in contracting everything out, he will have very little power over this.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by ursus arctos - 10-07-2008 09:44

Isn't the point that the policy would cover those contractors? Aren't they the ones being "funded by the London Development Agency"?

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Tubby Isaacs - 10-07-2008 09:51

You're right. Hard to imagine him putting up taxes to do that though.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Lyra - 10-07-2008 09:56

So he carries on something Ken started and we're expected to conclude that he's not a cunt after all?

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by JtS - 10-07-2008 10:20

I thought he was continuing and extending it, the cunt.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 10-07-2008 10:22

He's extending something Ken started, isn't he? The way I read that article, the policy previously applied only to the GLA and not the organizations with whom it contracts.

One thing in the story puzzled me though: when Stacy is quoted as saying "we think it is better that people get a decent basic wage rather than staying on benefit and it is better to pay what amounts to the London minimum wage, because the only alternative will be to top up salaries from benefits", what's he on about? I thought benefits in the UK were the responsibility of the central government, not the local ones. Am I wrong about this?

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Ginger Yellow - 10-07-2008 10:34

He's never going to get the hotel industry to go along with it. Even in good times it would be nigh on impossible without some sort of coercion/tax incentive, but hotels are among the most cyclical industries around and they're probably battering down the hatches.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Lyra - 10-07-2008 10:37

I think local councils pay some benefits, like housing benefit, and some are central, like child benefit or tax credits etc. I think.

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by Eggchaser - 10-07-2008 11:07

I'd like to hear from the CBI on this one; how will they reconcile their usual "red tape, small businesses, costs driving people away" screams of protest with their natural inclination to assume the position for the Tory Party?

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Re:Boris watch

Posted by E10 Rifle - 10-07-2008 15:11

Just goes to show the value of broad-based community and labour movement campaigns really.

Of course how to get the sub-contractors of sub-contractors to honour it when it comes to things like cleaners on the Tubes will be an uphill struggle. And will rely on collective industrial muscle rather more than isolated Tory benevolence.

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