

# Democratically Yours

Political Newsletter of Norman Cutting

Issue B

November 2006

## You missed it!

I'm afraid that due to lack of time and money, some of you have missed a couple of issues - however if keen, it's available on my web site ([www.normanCutting.com](http://www.normanCutting.com)) along with most other bits amongst the archive section.

Regular readers know that I try to bring to your attention those national and local issues that frequently slip under your radar, so just to get you going:

## Good idea or not?

*A "24x7 national vehicle movement database" that logs everything on the UK's roads and retains the data for at least two years is now being built, according to an Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) strategy document leaked to the Sunday Times. The system, which will use Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), and will be overseen from a control centre in Hendon, London, is a sort of 'Gatso 2' network, extending, enhancing and linking existing CCTV, ANPR and speedcam systems and databases.*

*"24x7 vehicle movement database" is actually how the police describe it, and from the point of view of a Surveillance Commissioner you'd think that was a dead giveaway. The system doesn't just track named suspects, even hundreds of thousands or a few millions of named suspects, it tracks all vehicles, keeping the data so that it can be mined to discover the movements of people who at some point in the future become suspects. So effectively, everybody is a suspect.*

More information on that story was in my last newsletter and can be viewed at:

[www.normanCutting.com/pdf/DY0706.pdf](http://www.normanCutting.com/pdf/DY0706.pdf)

## Local Government?

The government has recently announced that they are going to encourage power to be devolved to local parish and town councils.

Was it really 10 years ago that we had a Town Clerk, one part time assistant and just 12 Councillors with a precept of around £80,000?

Now Town Council staff are coming out of the woodwork, 15 Councillors and a precept of only £146,800 for the current year.

Considering the Town Council is responsible for the allotments and - er, um, the allotments and hasn't taken advantage of the concurrent services funding to provide local services under local control, do you think we are getting value for money?

You will hate me for this, but I do think the Town Council actually does a lot for the money. Don't worry, it's not all good. The lot it does, doesn't make a lot of difference to our town for the simple reason that they don't control most of it or have the powers to make a real difference.

For example, the Stag Lane development is a result of the developer trying to get things past the Borough Council, the Borough Council saying no, then suggesting a plan which the developer promptly accepted in the main. How can you object when they did what was suggested by the planning authority?

The current one doing the rounds, is trying to develop the Water Lane area (ask why!).

Just last year, I was informed by the Borough Council portfolio holder for planning that there were no thoughts of doing anything with the Water Lane area when I suggested that Tesco would love to develop it as Stag Lane (their land!) was now to be housing and Waitrose was going to expand it's store.

Less than 12 months later, money is being pored into a study as to what is feasible. Golly gosh, this is rocket science isn't it? Why don't I ever get any of this slush fund that must exist?

Getting back to the Town Council, I'm not sure that devolving power to a group of unpaid geriatrics is a good idea. There is not the pride in our community or the wealth being generated to allow action without renumeration of any kind, so the Borough has it then, and we know what they feel about anything other than Hemel.

## Hospital - wot hospital?

The Berkhamsted Citizens Association has taken residents concerns on board and actively supporting the Dacorum Hospital Action Group.

More information on '[www.berko.org.uk/bca](http://www.berko.org.uk/bca)'.

I also see that our very own Borough Councillor, Ian Reay, has suddenly noticed that something is amiss with his recent article in the 'Berkhamsted Review' (the very same Cllr. Ian Reay who didn't spot the Water Lane possibilities).

## Meanwhile, in the rest of the world!

Global warming is the current flavour of the month.

Lets's assume that we are causing problems to our planet and we need to reduce our emissions of CO<sup>2</sup>.

The political answer is to raise taxes (choice, you see) but does this reduce emissions? Not really if you think about it. What it does is allow those who can pay to continue their sweet way and those who can't pay - well - achieve the object of the exercise.

There is also an idea of 'carbon trading' which has a similar result to the taxation idea, only those who want, pay those who don't want.

I have a cunning plan!

Why not just reduce the carbon emissions over a period of time, which will allow the clever clogs who know about these things to confirm (or otherwise) that we are going in the right direction.

I bet you are wondering how this will be achieved, aren't you?

Well, we know what and who are the major polluters are, don't we? Apparently the USA and the Chinese produce most 'greenhouse gases' and general transport are fairly high on the list. Yet we continue to expand airports, produce more and more road transport and burn more fossile fuels to heat and light our homes, offices and factories.

The tax raising solution has to be the one politicians favourite and just great for raising inflation, whereas if, for example, aeroplane take-off and landings were pegged to

say, those on 1st November and reduced every year by either a fixed number or percentage. The same could be done for motor vehicles. Ban the sale of new vehicles exceeding, say, 300mg of CO<sup>2</sup> and reduce this by a fixed amount or percentage every year.

The same theory can be applied to all carbon emitting items. No fuzzing, no argument and pollution will reduce.

Damm, too easy. Oh well,

Once again, I've run out of space so keep an eye on the web site and I should get another issue of 'Democratically Yours' out in the new year.

### Things to think about meanwhile:

I heard recently that the new proposed 'centre of excellence' hospital 'planned' for Hatfield may not happen, as the Health Authority has run out of money and will not be able to afford it.

You'll never guess who actually funds the NHS and says they will fund the infrastructure for the imposed new housing. Is it any wonder that suspicions are raised?

I could go on about ID cards, council tax, parking, the state of the 'new' town centre pavements and all the other annoying items, but I will end this issue with a quick thought.

Why not continue the development of the old swimming pool site and built a decent facility for our youngsters - with ongoing funding?

That's it for this issue. Any queries, questions, criticisms, you know where I am.

[www.normanCutting.com](http://www.normanCutting.com) - [www.berko.org.uk](http://www.berko.org.uk)

---

## Do you find this newsletter interesting?

You have been receiving my newsletters fairly regularly since 1996 (yes, it's that long!), and there is an election next year, if you didn't know.

I could do with some funding, as well as help in delivering my 'missives'.

Each newsletter costs about £125 and between 2000 and 2500 copies circulated (depending on how I feel and time available). It takes about 1 hour to deliver 100, so any help would be appreciated.

Please get in touch if you support my efforts, the address is at the bottom, together with my telephone number. My e-mail is [norm@berko.org.uk](mailto:norm@berko.org.uk)



Just in case you have absolutely no idea who I am, then at great expense and effort, I wandered out and got my wife to take a photo of me. Of course, in real life, I look much better, have more colour and the sun doesn't make my glasses quiet so dark, but hey, what do you expect for nothing!

This newsletter is sponsored by your local electrician - *me*, so for your electrical work, give me a call!

**N.Cutting Electrical - 871851**

Carrying out electrical work for the local community since 1972

---

Designed, produced and distributed by Norman Cutting 15 Chestnut Drive HP4 2JL - 871851