

KENT ON SUNDAY

COMMENT

Drugs do work

DENYING vital treatments to Alzheimer's sufferers like Stanley Lintern would be unforgivably cruel.

He has not spoken to his wife Denise for four years and is afflicted with the later stage of the disease. But taking away drugs for his illness would make life for both of them much more difficult.

Perhaps even more heartless would be withdrawing drugs from early sufferers during what must be a very confusing, frustrating and soul-destroying period.

Yet that is exactly what the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence believes is acceptable to save money, even though the drugs only cost £2.50 a day.

This ruling must be overturned.

Cap Turner costs

LAST year the leader of the county council, Cllr Paul Carter, announced with great fanfare that the cost of new designs for a Turner gallery in Margate would not exceed £15 million.

That figure has now risen to £17.4m.

Residents are understandably thinking back to the previous spiralling costs of the first Turner blueprints.

Kent County Council must make absolutely sure the costs do not rise again.

The wrong call

THE £30 fines for using mobiles when driving are clearly not working. Stay on any road for a short while and it is not hard to see countless motorists breaking the law.

Doubling the fine and endorsing licences with three penalty points should change attitudes, but the Government ought to invest the funds in road safety, rather than filling the Treasury's coffers.

OPINION:

Big Brother is watching

"THERE must be a public debate," said a harassed transport minister Douglas Alexander this week when being interviewed about the contentious issue of road pricing. What public debate?

In July, 2004, Alexander's predecessor Alistair Darling, rumoured to be the next Chancellor of the Exchequer when Gordon Brown becomes Prime Minister announced, "Britain isn't big enough for us to be pouring more concrete over its green and pleasant land" then invited bids from local authorities using taxpayers money to operate road tolling trials.

Some of the largest national and multi-national companies, which rightly see huge profits from installing and running big brother spy systems, have eagerly supported the project.

The morality of spying on your own citizens and charging them way in excess of what fuel duty, etc, currently provides doesn't enter the 'debate'.

Now the public have forced the issue over road pricing by swamping the Downing Street website with a clear 'No' to road pricing together with the vehicle tracking and surveillance system required to automatically debit the public's bank accounts.

Alexander's response? "The

BRIAN MACDOWALL on the case against road tolls

public need educating".

Such contempt from a supposed servant of the public is typical of the way government has hijacked this so-called debate, where facts are discarded in a naked attempt to track and charge you for every journey.

The UK has approximately 245,000 miles of roads but – and it is a big but – a mere 2,025 miles of motorway carrying roughly 20 per cent of our traffic.

In the past 10 years only 150 new miles of motorway have been created to support a 30 per cent

'In the past 10 years only 150 miles of new motorway have been created to support a 30 per cent increase in traffic levels'

increase in traffic, resulting in congestion as this part of the network struggles to support demand.

Britain has 8,000 vehicles per kilometre of motorway – far more than any of the original 15 EU member states.

Despite trunk roads carrying another 20 per cent approximately of traffic, the total land take of roads is a miniscule 0.9 per cent.

Why is it OK for the Government to force another 300,000 houses into the South East region over the next 20 years but apparently "we can't build our way out of [traffic] congestion".

How come those facts are never mentioned in the so-called public debate?

Widening the most congested parts of our major roads such as the A2/M25 in north west Kent, re-phasing traffic lights, experimenting by allowing vehicles to turn left at red lights if the road is clear, banning traffic calming, and severely limiting extensions of bus lanes will all ease congestion.

Abolishing tolls at the Dartford tunnel which, by itself, causes massive daily jams, wasted fuel, missed appointments, together with unnecessary wear and tear on vehicles is essential to



improving traffic flow.

Practical, common sense answers are the exact opposite of the deliberately designed schemes that causes bunching of traffic we all endure every day and without the nightmarish scenario of Big Brother monitoring you every mile you drive.

Current motoring taxes yield around £5.25 million per hour – £885m per week – with about 14p in every pound reinvested in roads, making a profit for government in the region of £35 billion a year.

Chronic mismanagement of cash on this scale might be regarded as fraudulent in a private company but government never allows such considerations to get in the way of its lust for a Soviet-style control of people's lives where only the rich – not forgetting government officials of course – can afford to use taxpayer funded roads.

The petition can be viewed at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk> until February 20.

• **Brian Macdowall is Kent secretary of Association of British Drivers.**

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Advertisement Feature

Retain Your Independence with McCarthy & Stone Assisted Living

After working hard all your life, don't you think you deserve a little pampering? Wouldn't it be nice to have someone else to do all the hard work for a change, and to know that there is always someone under the same roof, to call on if you need help?

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Nobody interferes with your independence because your apartment belongs to you and you can "shut the front door" and enjoy your privacy whenever you want.

But there is always the option of socialising in the attractive hotel-style lounge or the function room, and a luxurious guest suite is available for when you want to put up additional friends or family.

Residents also have the peace of mind of knowing that a member of staff is on site 24-hours a day. The day-to-day running of the development is supervised by a neighbourly Estate Manager, backed up by a team of assistants, who help to ensure the welfare of apartment owners.

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Let someone else take care of you
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In the event of illness, your

restaurant meal can be brought to your apartment.

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Freedom from security worries makes for a happier, more carefree retirement.

All apartments are fitted with a camera entry system for viewing visitors, which is accessed through an owner's television set.

Centrally located

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Send to: McCarthy & Stone Assisted Living, FREEPOST, 30/38 High Road, Byfleet, Surrey KT14 7BR. (no stamp required).

Kent on Sunday 18.2.07

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