As with so many new technologies over history we get besotted with it and think it will answer all questions. Digital technology is no different to the discovery of antibiotics or electricity; useful in the right place but not automatically the answer to everything! We need to consider the cost and benefits dispassionately.

Below is just the tip of the iceberg!

Technology:
Currently facial recognition technology has a very poor record of accuracy. It seems it is 98% inaccurate particularly with the faces of women and black people. Until this is improved it should not even be considered as a good use of tax payers money.

Civil Liberties:
Currently some Police Forces in the UK are using facial recognition. There are no regulatory guidelines for them. Inevitably police officers will use the tool with the full authority of the Police behind them. The Mail Online has a video of a man who was charged and fined for disruptive behaviour because he hid his face from being filmed. The Police were not filming him for any particular reason but when he objected they interpreted this as being obstructive and so felt they could fine him. The onus is all wrong! (When it does work) they should only be using it in pursuit of a known incident.

Information retention:
Responsible use of information is not just the gathering of it. To be useful it has to be kept up-to-date. There is a cost to ensuring this. As you have published the courts have said keeping photos of people who have been charged and found innocent on the UK PND is unlawful and the records should be deleted. However, the Police haven't got the technology to do it!! Only when facial recognition can fulfill the requirements of (yet to be established) regulation should it be considered.

Regulation:
Regulation is essential as the technology is here. The Police gather information wherever people collect in crowds. These could be football fans, pop concert go-ers or protesters. The Police do not particularly value the democratic right & responsibility of peaceful protest, though the approach varies between different Police Forces. The Police need guidelines. People should not be targeted and have permanent records held by the Police just because they attended a particular event, including a protest.

Regulation must enshrine the right to peaceful protest in the roll out of any new technology, as well as facial recognition not threatening people pursuing normal activities.
Transparency:

If the Police are to use this tool there must be guidelines on when they can use it, not just the Police deciding willie nilie. Records must be published of where and when the Police used it and how many arrests/charges/guilty verdicts resulted.

There needs to be a disposal policy so records are deleted promptly. Holding records for a further time should require written justification and permission with reasons. It will not be good if the Police can use it in an arbitrary way.

Until the accuracy of the technology improves it is very dangerous to use it.

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