



Walk Talk

Newsletter of Oxford Pedestrians Association

Issue No 96: January 2011

New Year Greetings to all our members and a warm welcome to our new Chair, Sushila Dhall.

The consultation for LTP3 ended this month. OxPA's response, drawn up after our meeting with Owen South in November, can be read in full on our website. One of our most important points is the necessity of specifying how policies will be enforced, especially where collaboration with the police or city council is involved.

National support for Walkability.

National policy increasingly recognises the value of walking, and of making places more walkable so that people can choose to walk more. Last September, Secretary of State for Transport Philip Hammond made a declaration that had previously been unheard of, except when made by groups like OxPA. Hammond said "...most journeys, of course, are made ...on our local roads and it is at local level that most can be done to change patterns of behaviour and to create more genuinely sustainable transport modes while stimulating urban regeneration, economic growth and social integration at the same time." The Secretary of State's declaration was backed up by a government announcement of the **Local Sustainable Transport Fund**, intended to provide £560 million of funding to local authorities up to 2015, for packages including "**measures that promote walking and cycling**, encourage modal shift, manage effectively demands on the network, secure better traffic management, improve road safety and improve access and mobility for local communities."

If that were not enough, the White Paper on Public Health (published in November) states that '**Active Travel and physical activity need to become the norm in**

communities'. By April 2013 it is expected that local authorities will have a public health duty and be required to take steps to improve the health of their populations, with the aforementioned Local Sustainable Transport Fund identified as a potential source of funding for public health initiatives. With the final stages of consultation on Local Transport Plan 3 now completed, we ask our County Council to please take note.

Speeding, crashes and economic consequences.

Recent research by OTS (*On the Spot Study*, funded by DfT and the Highways Agency) into causes and consequences of road crashes, has shown that the role of speed has been underestimated in DfT statistics, because of relative under-reporting by the police. Further news from the DfT is that its estimate of the cost of road casualties has been readjusted to include hitherto unreported crashes. The new estimate is £30 billion, up from £18 billion - which is almost half of the total estimated cost of crime in the UK.

Speed Management. We are very pleased to report that following the initiative of Thames Valley Police, the County will be re-instating speed cameras on Oxfordshire's roads in April. This is welcome news for all concerned to reduce death and injury on our roads -

and to protect communities and non-motorised road users from the intimidating impact of speeding traffic

Westgate. Just a few weeks ago the Westgate site was given permission by the City Council for a huge car-generating new development, comprising several large department stores and a huge new multi-storey car park, partly underground (displacing groundwater). This will mean cutting down all the semi-mature trees behind the current multi-storey car park, and demolishing Abbey Place housing. Traffic on Botley and Abingdon Roads is expected to be 'like just before Christmas but every day' in order for the development to thrive. During construction there are estimated by the developer to be around 400 heavy vehicle movements per day more than at present accessing the site. According to the City Council's own figures this will mean a rise in air pollution and congestion on Botley and Abingdon Roads and on Thames Street and Oxpens Road, even if all cars and lorries using the routes have the cleanest engines possible. There are no proposals to improve access to the area for pedestrians.

Snow. During the recent snowy weather some roads were gritted, but almost no pavements or cycle-ways, with the exception of the pavements in front of the shops on Cornmarket and Queen Street. We propose that while pavements are impassable, cleared road space is temporarily defined as "shared space" on which pedestrians will have safe right of movement until pavements are usable!

Stalls. A big thank you to all who helped on the OXPA stalls at the One World Fair in November and the Green Fair in December. These lively events give us a chance to raise awareness of OXPA, and talk to a variety of people about our activities. We offer literature, information about our website and meetings and encourage them to join.

We also raise funds through the sale of the ever-popular *Oxford on Foot*, t-shirts, and cards. It is always interesting to meet people from other organisations ranging from the national, such as Sustrans, to the local, such as Cyclox and useful to talk with like-minded people. We hope to attend next year and may also take stalls at other events over the year, (suggestions welcome). *A few t-shirts at a bargain price are available at our monthly meetings: contact Felicity Wenden.*

Annual Subscriptions. Following our decision to simplify membership procedures, all annual subscriptions, except bank debits/orders, are now payable in January, regardless of original date of joining - some of you have gained some free months as a result. Please send cheques to our Treasurer at 72 Cumnor Hill OX2 9HU, or bring cash to our January meeting - or better still, arrange for payment by bank order.

Meetings

Tuesday January 25th: **Planning for 2011:** general discussion with our new Chairman Sushila Dhall. All welcome. 7pm at the Town Hall

Road Witching: The Beechcroft Road experience. OxPA members are invited to hear Ted Dewan explain how residents in Summertown calmed the car in the city's first Sustrans Living Streets project. Thursday 27 January, 7.30pm Friends' Meeting House, 43 St Giles, OX1 3LW All welcome, free entry.

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