

Oxford Pedestrians Association

OXFORD PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION NEWLETTER NO. 38
MARCH/APRIL 2001

Welcome to Issue no. 38 of the Newsletter of OxPA! The new year is well underway, and the days are getting longer, meaning longer walking days and more time to be outside. Longer periods of being up against the obstacles we pedestrians have to face every walking day: lack of crossings, crossings badly situated, bumpy pavements, road works, street furniture, cyclists and drivers using pavements...The list seems endless. Nevertheless, there are always reasons for optimism. Like the fact that the new Chief Executive to the County Council, who starts in a month or so, actually **refused the offer of a free car to go with the job, saying he would be living in the city centre and will be walking and using public transport.** The County Chief Executive wields enormous power, and to have one who has chosen to walk as his preferred means of transport should be a boost to all our work. **And also positive is the fact that Chief Inspector Leigh, who attended our January meeting, said that the Special Constables will be able to target pavement cyclists and car parkers,** we just need to draw up a list of problem areas for them. Contact Jill with details of problem areas.

- 1) **Clare Symonds, Oxfordshire's Local Agenda 21 representative, attended our February meeting to let OxPA know of the 'Mapping Matters' exercise which is taking place in areas of central Oxford.** North Oxford has already been mapped in this way, and now east Oxford is to be done. This is a community exercise, to involve all those who live in, work in and visit east Oxford. The map is being made according to three headings; (i) environmental and social facilities; (ii) how east Oxford used to look; and (iii) how the community want it to look now. So for example if you are one of those who would like to see Home Zones in east Oxford, this is your chance to say where you would like them to be. (A Home Zone is an area (street or streets) which have residents and pedestrians as the priority in terms of who is catered for, with residents' only parking, play areas, trees, and sitting out areas. Unlike roads through the middle of communities, a Home Zone cannot be put in without community backing.) **To give your views on the east Oxford map, drop into SS Mary and John Church Hall, on Cowley Road next to Leopold Street, or telephone (01865) 252790.**
- 2) **County Council issues. Thanks to pressure from walkers and walking groups, the budget this year specifies a sum for pavement and road maintenance, not just road maintenance.** This indicates a change in thinking, which is vital if changes in policy are to follow. And several issues pertaining to walking were debated at Highways and Road Safety on Feb 22nd. Sadly, and despite an excellent address by Jill, the County decided to do nothing about the City's reluctance to identify core pedestrian routes in Oxford city, which leaves us without a proper pedestrian strategy for the city. The only thing Councillors agreed to do for pedestrians was to work with the police and cameras etc. to ensure the more effective policing of OTS traffic orders in the city centre.
- 3) **The following figures give food for thought: in 1999 3,423 people were killed on Britain's roads, and of these 870 were pedestrians. A massive 39,122 people were seriously injured, of which 8,955 were pedestrians. 107 of these were children of under 15 years old.**
- 4) **Are we wealthy? OxPA will have to start paying for use of the Town Hall starting on April 1st.** Apparently the criterion for free use is (wait for it) **can the members of the group or charity afford to pay?** They decided members of OxPA were wealthy enough to pay for use of the Town Hall, although what they based this on is anybody's guess!
- 5) **The House of Commons Select Committee published their responses to their inquiry in a document called 'Walking in Towns and Cities', published by The Stationery Office Ltd., House of Commons, London, on the 24th Jan this year. It costs £14.70 ;, to order please ring 020 7219 3890. However, here is a summary of the contents by our Technical Advisor, Patrick Lingwood:**



Memoranda were submitted by many organisations, including Pedestrians Association, Transport 2000 etc, as well as notable individual pedestrian campaigners e.g. Terence Bendixson and Mayer Hillman, and all organisations call for more attention and money to be spent on pedestrians. Here are short thumbnail sketches of some of the memoranda:

- **Institute of Highways and Transport** (the major body identifying standards in transport): ‘The creation of safe and attractive pedestrian environments in our towns and cities is a necessary condition for success and is central to improving viability, vitality and amenity of our urban areas’
- **Parliamentary Advisory Council for Safety**: ‘Reducing vehicle speeds on busier roads with higher speed limits will benefit child pedestrians substantially’
- **Ramblers Association** (largest pedestrian organisation with 130,000 members): ‘Reducing dependence on the car must be a priority if cities are to be made healthier and more inviting places to live ... The arrogance of the car has to be curbed’
- **British Medical Association**: ‘Key factors are an overall reduction in motorised transportation ... air pollution related health impacts from transport may be equivalent to, if not greater than transport accidents in London’
- **National TravelWise Association**: ‘To really provide pedestrian friendly facilities, the pedestrian’s needs must be considered and designed first and then the traffic access design around that’
- **Local Government Technical Advisors Group**: Pedestrians crossing side roads: ‘An awareness campaign to restore this right of way, backed by widespread provision of footway-level crossing of side roads (or pavement extensions) could have major safety benefits for pedestrians, as well as reducing routine intimidation which they suffer’
- **Mayer Hillman**: ‘In affluent countries, carbon emissions must be reduced by over 90% if the equitable contribution of their populations is to prevent serious damage to the planet’s eco-system’
- **Slower Speeds Initiative**: ‘Ideally, walking should be the major mode of transport in towns. It is available to almost everyone, causes no pollution, is very cheap to provide for, is good for health and makes for a lively and agreeable urban scene’
- **Pedestrians Association**: ‘Creating more walkable environments should be national policy goal’
- **Civic Trust**: ‘The pavement should be treated as inviolable space for pedestrians. Shared use footpaths should not be used. They pit pedestrians against cyclists, who should be natural allies. Car parking on them should also not be tolerated’
- **Transport 2000**: ‘Walking has low status: people who need, or choose to walk, are treated as third class citizens or even ignored. Walking is an activity which is socially inclusive, costs nothing, is healthy, and is very enjoyable.’

6) **If anyone wants anything on a meeting agenda, please ring Christina (number at end of Newsletter) at least a week before the meeting.**

7) **OxPA needs committed members to support our stall having a town centre presence on Saturdays.** You do not need to be a regular attender of meetings. If you have a little time to spare for an excellent cause, and like meeting people, please contact Jenny (contact details at end of Newsletter).

Our next two meetings are on Monday March 19th and Monday April 23rd (because the 16th is Easter Monday) at 7pm in Oxford Town Hall. Please come, everybody is welcome!

Contact Numbers

Patrick Lingwood (Technical Advisor) and Sushila Dhall (Newsletter Editor)...553415

Corinne Grimley-Evans (Main letter-writer and Attender of Meetings).....779663

Jill Haas (Back-up and Press Officer).....766368

Christina Millett (Minutes).....768073

Jenny Linsdell (Stalls).....246079

Ray Jones (Membership Secretary and Treasurer).....865070

Address of National Pedestrians Association

3rd Floor, 31-33 Bondway, Vauxhall, London SW8 1SJ. Tel. 0171 820 1010. Fax 0171 820 8208.