



# Walk Talk

Newsletter of Oxford Pedestrians Association

September 2018

Welcome to Newsletter 126

Pavement parking



A Transport (Scotland) Bill has recently made it illegal for vehicles to park on pavements in Scotland, and will publicise this with the support of 83% of Scotland's population. This is good news for England, where under pressure from campaigners the Department for Transport are reviewing current legislation which only advises that drivers 'should not' park on pavements in England outside London (where it is illegal). The 'should not' is widely ignored because it is only advisory, and evidence of the failure to protect walkers can be seen widely throughout Oxford although particularly in east Oxford where narrow pavements are routinely blocked by parked cars, and has even become a habit on wide roads where there is plenty of road space such as Boundary Brook. OxPA supports the review and has for many years sought to free up pavement space for walkers. Stickers are available from OxPA to remind drivers of vehicles parked on pavements that walkers exist, and need access on the often already marginal spaces allocated to us.

## Banbury Road Audit

On June 12th six OxPA members walked along Banbury Road auditing both sides between St Giles and Marston Ferry junction. Banbury Road is a beautiful street, but marred by traffic noise and pollution along its length. At best the pavements are wide and flat in stretches, probably the best in urban Oxford. At worst we found our ways obstructed by poles, bins and bus shelters badly situated, tree roots and overhanging vegetation creating narrowing of level safe passage, and varying degrees of safety crossing sideroads. At best there were level and direct pavement extensions; at worst there were steep cambers, off desire-line crossings with poor visibility, and very wide stretches to negotiate due to curved pavement sides with motor vehicles in mind. At the very worst side-crossing at Lathbury Road our Treasurer, a wheelchair user, could not proceed

and had to turn back. In parts the pavement was



flat and well-maintained, in others it was bumpy, eroded cracked and patched with badly maintained driveway accesses creating trip hazards across the footway. In summary, Banbury Road for the part of its length we audited is a strange combination of the worst and best pavements in Oxford.

## Introducing "Oxfordshire Liveable Streets" – by Scott Urban

There is an opportunity to improve the lives of people everywhere by changing the way we get around. People will use active and sustainable transport modes when those options are safe and reliable. They not only improve their own health and those of people around them, they leave more space for the cars that need it. From a public policy standpoint, taxpayers win. Fewer single-occupancy car journeys mean substantially less wear on the road. More active journeys mean better physical and mental health. Safe space for cycling means more school trips by bicycle and healthier, happier children. Oxfordshire Liveable Streets (OLS) is planning for this outcome by developing The OLS Plan, a blueprint for better transport environment across Oxfordshire. OLS is engaging directly with the public to make the case for liveable streetscapes. It is building a coalition with others supporting the switch to liveable streets, and preparing actively to support friendly candidates for city, parish and county office. To get involved, you can email me directly at [scott@oxlivsts.org.uk](mailto:scott@oxlivsts.org.uk). (Scott Urban)

## The Public Health Challenge of Air Pollution – by Councillor Dr Suzanne Bartington



The air we breathe is essential to life and air pollution affects us all – from before we are born until old age. Harmful particles and toxic gases in air cause a wide range of diseases of the heart, lungs, circulatory system, brain and other vital organs. In the UK, air pollution caused by the most harmful pollutants is estimated to cause approximately 34,000 early deaths each year, including 1 in 20 deaths in Oxfordshire. People who are older, live in deprived areas, have pre-existing conditions or live near busy roads are at greater health risk. This injustice means that our poorest and most vulnerable communities are exposed to some of the worst outdoor air quality, worsening existing health inequalities. Air pollution also has a major impact on ecosystems, contributes to climate change and damages our wider economy. A report this year estimated that pollution from cars and vans costs us £6 billion in

health costs/year - equivalent to £8000 for each car driven in central London. Whilst converting from diesel to petrol cars may be an option to reduce air pollution it still increases carbon emissions; therefore the best solution is to travel by foot and cycle. If we could swap just 1 in 4 of urban car journeys in urban areas for walking or cycling we would save £1.1 billion in health costs per year. Therefore we can all play a role in tackling the public health challenge of air quality - whether it's walking, cycling, taking public transport ourselves, or encouraging others to consider the wider impact of their own transport choices.

### More help needed!

We need more people to help out with OxPA's work, staffing stalls and helping with publicity and administration. Please consider if you could help and talk to one of the officers, or contact [oxford.pedestrians.association@gmail.com](mailto:oxford.pedestrians.association@gmail.com).

### OxPA's AGM will be at 7pm on Tuesday November 27th at Oxford Town Hall

We are seeking nominations of volunteers for the roles of Stall (keeping stall stock, making it available or bring it to stalls, keeping stock up dated); Website Manager; and Books (checking outlets have plenty of AMWO's and 'On Foot In Oxford' copies, supplying them if needed and organising reprints in liaison with other officers of OxPA).

Our speaker will be **Patrick Lingwood, Walking and Cycling Officer for Oxfordshire County Council**. He will introduce his role and talk about how lobby groups like ourselves and Cyclox can best work with him and the County Council.

### Meetings (all 7 pm in the Town Hall):

**September 25<sup>th</sup>:** details to follow

**October 23<sup>rd</sup>:** details to follow

**November 27<sup>th</sup>:** AGM – details above.

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