



Walk Talk

Newsletter of Oxford Pedestrians Association

March - April 2010

Welcome to Newsletter 92 of the Oxford Pedestrians Association

Government publishes Active Travel Strategy

The Government has published its active travel strategy, which aims to get more people travelling on foot and by bike. This is a significant document, turning on their heads some assumptions about investment that have contributed to a decline in walking and cycling for many years. The document says of walking, "Our plans to get more people walking more often are founded on two pillars:

- Wherever possible creating an environment in which walking is safe, convenient and enjoyable: and
- Encouraging people of all ages to find their feet through programmes like Walking for Health, 2012 Active Challenge Routes, Walk Once a Week (WoW) and web-based walking route finders"

The timing could not be more apt, as the County Council prepares its Local Transport Plan, with policies expected to last for twenty years. More on this another time - can we achieve the vision of Oxford becoming the first truly walkable city?

Recent responses to consultations

OxPA has been kept busy, responding to the County Council on its draft policies for the forthcoming Local Transport Plan, and on the Oxford Station Masterplan. We have also responded to the Transport & Works Act application that Chiltern Railways have submitted, for a new service between Oxford and Marylebone via Bicester. OxPA's consultation responses are on the website – www.oxpa.org.uk. If you don't have internet access, Corinne will be pleased to send you copies. If you have thoughts that you want to express in consultation, do please let OxPA know.

Oxford Station

Regarding the station and Chiltern Railways' proposals, we have focused on improving walk routes to/from the station, including the walk between trains and buses. The Government has recently talked about requiring station access plans. We have pointed out that there are considerable deficiencies needing to be addressed on walk routes to/from Oxford station, especially as demand for rail travel grows with new and electrified services.

Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan

Consultation continues in preparation for the next Local Transport Plan. OxPA's submission has sought greater focus on the potential for walking, in conjunction with public transport and cycling, to contribute to reducing overall vehicle demand on Oxfordshire's roads. Walking is the most sustainable and low-carbon way of getting about that exists – most of us can do it regardless of age, and it's healthy too. Among the schemes being promoted is creation of a walking network for Oxford. OxPA would like to go beyond that, to a wider vision – Oxford as Britain's first truly walkable city.

Walkability test 'could bring public services to the population'

The Government has been urged to introduce a 'walkability test' to ensure public services are easily reachable for the population by foot. Environmental groups led by the Campaign for Better Transport (CBT) and including the Campaign to Protect Rural England, CTC, Friends of the Earth and Living Streets have included 'Walkability Testing' in a manifesto calling on the next government to ensure transport

plans are integrated at a local, regional and national level. They also want the Government to introduce a 'transport test' for all new policies so they do not lead to people having to travel further, particularly by car. The 'walkability test' could be applicable for all public services, such as post offices, schools and NHS facilities. The report can be downloaded from www.bettertransport.org.uk/system/files/Manifesto-to-Improving-everyday-transport-Jan10.pdf

Walk to Work Week April 26th to 30th It will soon be **Walk to Work Week** again. The theme for this year's event is 'Get fit without the hassle. Try walking to, from or during work.' This year there are 5 challenges for employers to set their employees:

1. Try walking all or part of the way to work
2. Try walking all or part of the way home
3. Hold a walking meeting
4. Walk all or part of the way to a meeting
5. Take a walk during your lunch break

An online tool enables workplace organisers to track the impact of the Week, and it will allow individual employees to track their own progress. Prizes will be available both to participating employees and workplaces. Visit the **Walk to Work** website (www.walkingworks.org.uk/walk-to-work-week-2010) to find out more.

Walk to School Week May 17th to 21st
Yes, it will soon be **Walk to School Week** too. Do children in your family walk to school? They should. With national statistics revealing that for the first time fewer than 50 per cent of children are walking to school, and with growing concerns about children's exercise and obesity, Walk to School takes on a growing significance. The theme for this year is going to be 'Walk Your Way', encouraging children and parents to explore the wayfinding and independence benefits of walking to school. Resources will be available from the **Walk to School** website with free guides for both parents and teachers: www.walktoschool.org.uk/

City Centre Manager, Gordon Reid, was guest speaker at our January meeting, and

gave a frank and encouraging account of his aspirations for a more walkable city centre. Visit our website [meetings](#) section for a report of the discussion

Car-Free Cities Conference, York: June 28th to July 1st

Would you like to see a car-free Oxford? Or at least a city less cluttered with cars? If so, you may be interested in '**Towards Carfree Cities IX: How Do We Get There?**' The conference will focus on bringing car free communities to life, considering a range of strategies from temporary events to permanent road space reallocation, to European models of new car free development. There will be a real street conversion during the conference. See <http://www.worldcarfree.net/conference/>

Oxford Mail "Trouble Spots" article

OxPa was invited to nominate a list of problem spots for pedestrians, which was published in the Oxford Mail and Times, with a photo of one the worst, Hythe Bridge.

Area Committee volunteers.

Area representatives are still needed to attend the East, Cowley, and Northeast Area Committees each month and report upon any Agenda items affecting pedestrians in their part of Oxford. Contact Paul or Corinne if you have time to help OxPA once a month in this way.

Next Meetings:

Tuesday March 23rd, 7pm in the Town Hall.

Christopher Gowers will talk about the CPRE Green Lungs Project.

Tuesday April 27th, 7pm, Town Hall.

Gwynneth Pedler, Chair of Oxford Access Forum: "Don't trap me at home!"

Contacts

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