



Walk Talk

Newsletter of Oxford Pedestrians Association

July 2019

Welcome to Newsletter 130



Pavement parking

Despite numerous representations over many years from OxPA and other groups, pavement parking is an ongoing blight in Oxford, narrowing footways to under a metre in many streets, especially in east Oxford, and even habitually done in places where roads are plenty wide enough to park on. This means that walkers are forced into single file down narrow unpleasant corridors, or into the road which becomes a racetrack without exit. Oxford City Council has worsened this by painting lines on pavements allowing cars and vans to park on half of them, or with two wheels on them, thus making this practice seem even more acceptable. What can we do in the face of this deteriorating situation? Councillor Damian Haywood is coming to our meeting on July 23rd to talk about this, and hopefully give us some idea of how the Councils could support us in reclaiming adequate space for walkers and wheelchair users. Meanwhile, OxPA has 'pavement parking' stickers, which are available on our stall or on request, at cost price. A harmless way of showing that we exist and need space too. (Patrick Lingwood, the County Council's Active and Healthy Travel Officer, suggests that 2 metres is the minimum footway width for two wheelchairs to pass each other, and 1.5 metres the minimum acceptable for a wheelchair user and able-bodied pedestrian to pass each other.)

Botley Road consultation

We have now looked at the proposals for Botley Road (which will be consulted fully on in the autumn) and have been saddened to see that the motor car is still the priority, with the very best place in the centre of the road in both directions, with the best and widest view, with every other transport mode fitting in around them. The exception to this is the proposal for a new bus gate at the west end of the road. However, for walkers there is an overall loss of pavement space (with 1.5m being given as a minimum width; scarcely room for two people to pass one another). One good thing is pavement extensions

along the road, but excluding Ferry Hinksey Road where one is desperately needed. The stated aims of the overall project are to 'Reduce vehicle emissions and improve air quality', and to 'Unlock economic growth and job creation opportunities by improving access to development sites'. This appears to OxPA to be a clash in aims, and as so many projects and documents have done over the past 20 years to state the 'right' aims, but really be a way of enabling smooth continuous motorised traffic flow as the main priority, with cyclists and pedestrians fitting around the sides of this main aim. We have said in the strongest terms that we would like to see practical steps taken to ensure

pedestrian and cycle priority; eg. a 20mph zone along Botley Road, zebra crossings eg. at the entrance to Waitrose where people actually cross (on 'desire lines'), and in as many other places as possible, and a minimum of 2m pavement width (meaning usually more than this). We will respond in full detail in the autumn when the official consultation comes out, but in the meantime have sought to be heard before it is too late.

OxPA on social media

OxPA's Facebook page continues to attract a lot of interest. Recent discussions have included (of course) pavement parking, reducing traffic speeds (20 mph throughout Oxford?) and increasing use of streets for playing out. OxPA member Oly Shipp continues to do most of the hard work on this page, whilst our Treasurer Don keeps our Twitter feed going.

New electric car charging points on Cowley Road



OxPA should welcome more electric car charging points as a way of promoting better air quality. But what were the local authority planners thinking of when installing these points at the end of Manzil Way? They've just removed most of the footway. Come on County Council – aren't you meant to be prioritising pedestrianism over cars? Thanks to Scott Urban of Oxfordshire Liveable Streets for pointing this out, and Don for photo.

Oxford Open Doors weekend

Many of us enjoy the wonderful Oxford Open Doors weekends organised by the Oxford Preservation Trust (OPT). Oxford Open Doors 2019 will take place 14th - 15th September <https://www.oxfordpreservation.org.uk/content/oxford-open-doors>. Last year volunteers, on foot and on bicycles (from OxPA and Cyclox), helped OPT in late August by delivering venue packs Open Doors. We have offered to assist with this again.

Would you be willing help by delivering approximately 10 venue packs? (This quantity of A4 envelopes should fit easily into two bicycle panniers). If you are on foot, you'll be allocated venue packs to deliver within the city centre. Those on bikes will be asked to deliver to an area,

where possible, on the side of the city closest to where they live.

There will be a social with drinks at the OPT offices in Turnagain Lane for volunteers to collect their packs on Wednesday, 28th August at 5:30 pm. However, if you're not available at that time, arrangements can be made for you to collect packs from the OPT offices at a mutually convenient time from 26th August onwards. Packs can be delivered at a time to suit you on the days following collection.

Last year volunteer feedback was that this was a quick, easy and most enjoyable project. I realise that it's difficult for people to commit at this stage to doing something in late August but if you are potentially interested in helping, please contact me, Ruth Davis, at treasurer@cyclox.org

CoHSAT -and other acronyms

Deborah reports: CoHSAT (Collaboration for Healthy Streets and Active Travel) has been set up through Low Carbon North Oxford, to work with, and bring pressure to bear on, those responsible for transport in the City (and County) to make our streets more liveable. Addressing issues from air pollution and carbon reduction through cycle and pedestrian priority to healthy travel choices, CoHSAT brings together various interest groups - including OxPA, Cyclox, Oxford Civic Society, Low Carbon groups, Oxford Liveable Streets and the University - already tackling these issues, to work together. 'United we stand!' Meanwhile OxPA has also been invited to attend the Active & Healthy Travel Forum (AHTF) organised by the County Council. All these groups have a common interest in promoting active travel, be it walking or cycling.

Meetings (all 7 pm):

July 23rd: County Councillor Damian Haywood will lead a discussion on pavement parking

NB No meeting in August but OxPA will be at Elder Stubbs Festival Sat 17th August – can you help? Contact us as below.

Sept 24th: – t.b.c.

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