



Walk Talk

Newsletter of Oxford Pedestrians Association

December 2019

Welcome to Newsletter 132



Keith Holly (1926 – 2019)

Members will be sad to learn of the death of Keith Holly (seen on the left in this picture) at the age of 93. Keith was an active member of OxPA as well as other organisations involved in walking, especially the Oxford Ramblers group, of which he was Footpaths Officer for many years. Sushila, OxPA Chair, remembers that Keith “was a valued member for years and continued to attend even as he was 'winding down' including coming on walks with us”. Keith’s career was in agricultural chemistry and he was involved in founding the Weed Research Organisation; after his retirement from that organisation in 1986, Keith continued to promote agricultural research and was a director of the British Crop Production Council. He also devoted more time to his wider interests, especially as a prolific walk leader and campaigner for access to rights of way. Keith leaves two daughters, two grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Reclaiming the streets – from Deborah Glass-Woodin

If you live on a relatively quiet road, that is mostly a street for people-car park, why not make it a new year's resolution to try 'Playing Out' in the Spring? Because my bit of street is a cul-de-sac, I do nothing more than invite (notify) the local residents - no official 'apply for road closure' needed. It couldn't be simpler and the benefits cannot be overstated!



(Note from Editor: if you do want to apply for a street closure, there is now a fee of £15. Local charity Headington Action, wishing to encourage playing on the streets, will refund this fee and reasonable expenses for events in the Headington area.)

LTP5

OxPA have representation at the County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTP5) steering group, where pedestrian (and cyclist) issues are front and centre of our initial discussions. However, we have been here before and know well the chasm between vision and theory and practice... Deborah will provide regular updates of what is being discussed. So far, we are beginning to look at the parameters of the group, for e.g. what topic papers should cover, but

they include: home zones, public realm, cycle streets, bus strategy. There is also an understanding that the Council needs to be bold and brave (to meet zero emission targets, for example, and provide genuine safe, efficient alternatives to private car use) and a belief that the will is there... Watch this space!

Pavement parking – now ‘designed in’

We continue to object to pavement parking which has become endemic in Oxford. We are horrified to see that in the new Barton Park Phase 1 development, parking spaces have been created that completely block the pavement, so that pedestrians have to walk in the road. How could this have been allowed?



Ramblers issue a manifesto that’s also good for pedestrians

Ramblers (formerly the Ramblers Association) have issued a manifesto for the election. Included are the following policies, that could also have been written by a pedestrian campaign group:

- Strengthen planning rules so that neighbourhoods are designed for walking and residents have easy access to high-quality green space.
- Set a 20mph default speed limit in all built-up areas to make our streets safer for everyone.
- Ban pavement parking in England and Wales, as recently passed in Scotland, to create safer, more accessible streets for people walking.

The full manifesto can be seen at <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/general-election-2019-ramblers-manifesto.aspx>

Public Attitude Survey on the City Centre

The City Council has opened this consultation, closing date 12th Jan 2020. Deborah points out the typical bias of the questions: e.g. it references 'irresponsible cyclists', but nothing about the irresponsibility of other street users idling, pavement parking, obstructing access etc and generally blighting the public realm with noise, fumes and danger... There are also lists of so-called anti-social behaviours which one is invited to rate as making one feel unsafe or not, but absolutely no reference to the amount and behaviour of motorised traffic and levels of air pollution.

View of Bath on foot

Sushila notes: Walking in Bath centre was like walking in an alternative Oxford, in which independent shops were celebrated and streets were for people. The buildings are similar to Oxford's old ones, but traffic far less dominant and most importantly no Westgate-type centre to close independent shops and take valued chains off the main streets. I imagine Bath chose a different general policy direction some time ago, which put the beauty of the city ahead of financial profit-making; this of course means huge numbers of local people and visitors who have room to walk around and keep supporting those independent shops. Could we learn something in time to prevent the closure of Boswells?



Photo from businessadvice via Google

OxPA still needs a secretary

OxPA needs help with the following: preparing agendas, taking minutes, being point of contact for enquiries, sending out things to membership, booking rooms and stalls, renewing our insurance when due, working with Chair to plan meetings, book speakers, etc. We can afford to pay someone an honorarium equivalent to a reasonable hourly rate. If you are interested, or anyone you know might be, please contact Sushila (sushiladhall@gmail.com).

Meetings:

NB No meeting in December.

28th January 2020, 19:30 (note start time):

OxPA's Winter Social at St Michael at the Northgate.

Contacts:

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