



Welcome to Issue no. 39 of our Newsletter! Since our last Newsletter the General Election has been postponed, and with it the County Council elections. This gives interested people a longer chance to ask questions of their candidates, both local and national. Ask them what their attitudes are to walkers, to footways and pavements, to shared-use footway/cycleways, to the siting and timings of pedestrian crossings. Pedestrians are on the whole a neglected area of policy, although this is changing. This is your chance to learn about and to educate the people who are going to represent you for the next four years, at least.

- 1) **Members of Thames Valley Police attended our March meeting, all ready to engage the press in a high-profile campaign to get cyclists and parked cars off our pavements.** Jill has since forwarded five items on pavement parking/cycling to Special Constable Barry Hooper. She will still accept items, so if you have a 'problem' pavement near you, please contact Jill (contact details at end of this Newsletter – please note this is the correct number, apologies that this was not the case before). Special constables have the same power to issue tickets and fines as ordinary police officers. They feel they can fill a gap left by the Special Parking Area wardens, who deal only with obstructions and illegal parking. For themselves the special constables hope to gain good publicity.
- 2) **OxPA has a current balance of a healthy £402.** It is felt that we could usefully spend some of this on publicity. So far suggestions have included leaflets for schools, street theatre, and letters to candidates for the upcoming elections. If any readers have any other ideas, please contact one of the officers (details at end) and pass them on for consideration at our next meeting.
- 3) **Parks Road crossing.** This has been on the agenda for some time. There is an issue about exactly where it should be, as there are two desire lines, one used mostly at the weekends by people accessing the park, and one used mostly weekdays during term time by students going to and from Keble College. When asked why there cannot be traffic calming or a junction table covering the entire junction we were informed that **this is a 'major traffic route' and cars get priority here.** Baktie are the agency employed by the County to suggest possible designs, but when they suggested a zebra crossing sadly the same argument was used against that by the County officers, who said this is an **'arterial route' for traffic** and a zebra crossing would not do there. So much for pedestrian priority and safe routes! It seems that OTS only applies to the very centre, not to well-used routes around Oxford centre. At any rate there will be a new crossing, but like most other crossings it will be 50 or so yards to the side of where it is actually needed, and either necessitate a detour, or will mean many people will still cross against fast moving traffic.
- 4) **A reason to celebrate! Free use of Town Hall rooms is to continue Mon-Fri until 9.30pm.**
- 5) **A correction to the information about pedestrian injuries in the last Newsletter, which should have read:** In 1999 3,423 people were killed on Britain's roads, and of these 870 were pedestrians. 107 of these were children of under 15 years old. A massive 39,122 people were seriously injured on Britain's roads, of whom 8,955 were pedestrians.
- 6) **OxPA representatives will be attending a meeting in May, with Eddie Luck of the County Council, and city planners, to discuss Broad Street.** There is £75,000 to spend. There are various issues which require our comments, such as enforcement of loading restrictions, unauthorised vehicles, motor-cycle, cycle, and disabled vehicle parking.



- 7) **A walking strategy for Oxford city.** The new draft strategy says the responsibility for identifying the 'core pedestrian network' i.e. routes along which one could walk to shopping centres and public buildings, lies with the City Council. So far the walking strategy for the city consists only of a few generalised comments. Members of OxPA are planning to identify a few core walking routes and hand the plans in to the city officers. If readers have any ideas please contact Patrick, who will feed them into the process.
- 8) **People ask from time to time what has happened to the refuges which used to be helpful at this or that junction and have now disappeared.** Apparently they are removed so that large vehicles can get round corners. Great for the big vehicles. But what of the plight of the poor pedestrian with at least two lanes of moving traffic, and often more to cross, in one go without a breather in the middle? If, like York, Oxfordshire subscribed to the road users' hierarchy placing pedestrians at the top of those considered when a change was mooted, precious city refuges would never be sacrificed to the turning curve of a huge vehicle.
- 9) **There have been 2 important documents issued recently – the revised PPG13 and IHT 'Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot'.** PPG13 (Planning and Policy Guidance Note 13) on Transport has been the most important piece of Government guidance since it was first issued in 1994. It basically calls on planning authorities to ensure new developments are located where they are easily accessible by bus, by cycle and on foot. The new Guidance reaffirms the importance of providing for journeys on foot, promoting local facilities and designing for pedestrians. The one major disappointment is that it says building Park and Rides on Green Belt land is not inappropriate. Even better is the issue by the Institution of Highway and Transportation (IHT) of technical guidance for highway planners and developers putting in facilities for pedestrians. The book covers all aspects of pedestrian planning from pedestrian reviews and audits, School Travel Plans, signage, crossings, surfaces, maintenance, marketing, and monitoring – 164 pages in all, possibly the most detailed summary of current practice ever. Let's hope that our local planners and highway engineers actually read it!
- 10) **Oxford's friendly rail station strikes again!** As pedestrians approach the station by the obvious route a sign greets them saying, 'Vehicle and Cycle Access Only', and as they exit they arrive at a sign saying, 'Pedestrians Look Right, - Vehicles Have Priority'. Very strange, in a city that, according to all the documents, gives priority to the more vulnerable road users, i.e. walkers.
- 11) **Minutes taking – help wanted.** Christina would be glad to hear from volunteers who would be prepared occasionally to take the minutes when she is unable to attend a meeting. This will be discussed at the AGM in June, or please contact one of the officers.

Our next two meetings are on Mondays May 21st and June 18th, at 7pm in Oxford Town Hall. Please note that our AGM will be at our June meeting. Please come, and bring anyone interested with you. Everybody is welcome!

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