

# Oxford Pedestrians Association

OXFORD PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO. 34  
JULY/AUGUST 2000

Welcome to Issue no. 34 of our Newsletter! We have had a small re-shuffle, with Tony and Deborah standing down as Membership Secretary and Treasurer respectively. OxPA sends them a vote of thanks for many years dedicated work. We welcome Ray, who is amalgamating both jobs.

- 1) **Local Transport Plans:** Following our hard work and hefty comments we have been told we will be sent a copy of the LTP in August. The County made a great fuss of us, but are they taking our comments on the LTP seriously? Four groups were set up by the LTP forum, representing Public transport, Freight, Rural Transport, and Urban Transport issues. We were represented in all but Freight. The task groups co-operated to produce a report on each area. It seemed a true consultation, with very many groups represented ( teachers, taxis, CPRE, FoE etc.) In spite of high-profile words from the County Council about consultation, three afternoons, plus tens of person hours having been spent on this, but it looks as if it may all be ignored. Issues we are concerned about are: (i) a general underfunding of pedestrian-centred inputs; (ii) a lack of pedestrian prioritisation; and (iii) we have no idea what they will do/not do with what we sent.
- 2) **Health Walks.** The City Council has money for 'health walks' in certain areas, and they want input from real pedestrians. Five pilot walks will take place in the Headington and Cowley areas. Jill is to arrange for our presence on these. The idea is for GPs to access a 'health walks' team for those who need them, couch potatoes, or those who would benefit from regular walking exercise. The long-term idea is to get people walking again as a means of transport. Let us hope that when they see their unfit or ailing relations walking for the good of their health, that some of those fit and youthful-looking drivers who block Oxford's unofficial inner ring road morning noon and night will be shamed into leaving the vehicle at home one day and trying a little walk themselves, albeit at either end of a bus journey.
- 3) **The Traffic Working Group had a site meeting at Tescoes on Cowley Road.** Nigel Coates (City Cycling Officer) wants to widen the pavement there and install new bicycle racks by the kerb. There is a general need for on-street bicycle parking, as parked bikes block pavements. But this is one of the spots where cycle racks do need to be moved off the pavement onto the road. This will mean that drivers will not be able to park illegally there without blocking the road rather than taking up a pavement or cycle lane. People park cars there illegally all the time, so two buses cannot pass one another at that point. It seems that people have forgotten it is illegal to park on zigzag lines, double yellow lines and pavements in that area. The police do not enforce it even if they happen to be standing there. Hopefully when the changes have been made the SPA will be persuaded to go up that way more often.
- 4) **After the Civic Society Transport Forum David Young, Director of Environmental Services, Oxfordshire County Council, and a very powerful man, said to Jill who was representing OxPA, 'If there is anything you want us to do we will listen.'** Jill sent a list of things we said regarding the Station Site and saying it needs a review. Mr Young said Baptie, a consultancy firm, are 'doing' the station Site and we can have input into it. Could this be the beginning of a new consultation period? We are ever optimistic!
- 5) **The problem of cycle parking blocking pavements is perhaps nowhere as evident as on Pembroke St.,** where the pavement is narrow so only two or three bikes block it. The police say they have not the resources to deal with pavement obstructions, they are short of staff and also have no room for confiscated bikes in the police station. There is a sore need for a lot more off-pavement (on-street) cycle parking in central Oxford, as the few stands available are always over full. This will be taken forward by our members who are Councillors.



- 6) **The Walking Strategy still has not gone into the Local Plan**, so the City is effectively the only area of Oxfordshire not to have a Walking Strategy. This is a disgrace and means OxPA has not this lever to lobby with. Jenny is pursuing this.
- 7) **A motion asking the County Council to adopt a similar road user hierarchy to the one used in York**, with pedestrians at the top, cyclists second, public transport users third, delivery vehicles fourth and private car drivers at the bottom in order of consideration when new developments go ahead, was thrown out by the Environmental Committee. In the light of Government advice to adopt such a hierarchy, OxPA is complaining to the Government Office for the South-East.
- 8) **A motion is going to Full County Council suggesting a radical rethink of the way space is allocated on St Giles**. It is a beautiful approach to St Giles Church or Oxford, depending which way you are going, but the middle of St Giles is full of traffic, which extends, moving and parked, right to the edges, with walkers on relatively narrow strips on either side. There is not one crossing across the wide road. Several lanes worth of space is available to traffic, but effectively the road functions as two lanes going out and one coming into Oxford, so surely St Giles could be redesigned with this, and the needs of pedestrians, in mind?
- 9) **The National Pedestrian Association has employed a Marketing Agency** ( for £20,000) to improve their image, so they can bid for funding. If you think this is a good/bad thing, please contact the National Association and let them know.
- 10) **Our National Annual General Meeting will be in Birmingham on July 22<sup>nd</sup>**. A new Constitution, the first for many years, will be presented for a vote. Please contact Jenny if you would like to know more about this.
- 11) **On September 25<sup>th</sup> this year we will be holding a Special OxPA Meeting**, at which David Early of the National Pedestrians' Association will speak and answer questions regarding the above-mentioned Constitution. It will also be a Social for all members and interested friends, to be held at St Michael of the Northgate, 7-9pm.

Our next two meetings are on Monday July 17<sup>th</sup> and Monday August 21<sup>st</sup>. Please come, and feel free to bring anyone who is interested. Everybody is welcome!

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