



## OXFORD PEDESTRIANS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER No. 35 SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2000

Welcome to issue no. 35 of our Newsletter! The topic of the moment in Oxford seems to be cyclists riding and parking on pavements. Many of those who have experienced a healthy young cyclist cycling at high speed, head down, silently and apparently not looking ahead but at the pavement beneath their wheels, zooming towards them on the pavement, are understandably threatened and annoyed. And cycles parked across pavements do force pedestrians off the kerb and into the road. What occurs to me is that cyclists are taking up pedestrian space because their space is being taken up by even faster-moving, more threatening vehicles. And, yes, the morally courageous thing to do would be to cycle on the roads anyway, as many cyclists choose to, and refuse to pass the problem on to the next vulnerable road user. But the fact that there is a problem is a symptom of a dysfunctional transport system. Responsible cycle groups are united against cycle lanes on pavements, it is just transport planners who put them there. And of course there are always selfish people who zoom along pavements without thought for others. But both being vulnerable, perhaps pedestrians and cycle groups could join hands in the battle to make the public highway safer. At any rate, perhaps the channels of communication need to be opened up between us, as both pedestrians and cyclist are scapegoated by the situation at present.

- 1) **Referring to the above**, representatives of OxPA have asked someone from the police to attend a meeting and talk to us about what is to be done about cyclists on pavements. So far the police have said they cannot remove bikes as they have nowhere to put them in their station, and they do not have time to police obstructions (in the form of parked cycles) on pavements. There is a move to increase the amount of on-street cycle parking, which will eventually ease the problem. In the next Newsletter will be the date of the meeting at which a representative of the police will attend to speak and hear our concerns.
- 2) **The Director of Environmental Services from Oxfordshire County Council (David Young) is to attend our October meeting and talk to us about how his department will work with OxPA.** Mr Young has frequently expressed his willingness to do so, and we would like clarification of what this means, and how best we can help one another achieve our objectives. Please think of things you would like to put to Mr Young when he comes, as the County Council holds ultimate responsibility for all roads and pavements in Oxfordshire.

**When the Inspector pronounced his judgement on Oxford Transport Strategy he commented that 20mph speed limits would be desirable on High Street.** Now that there is less traffic on High Street the buses in particular are speeding along at top speed. There is supposed to be a 'gentlemen's agreement' to keep to 20mph, but many drivers are clearly not gentlemen enough to observe this. It would be possible to have a statutory 20mph limit only if something was put in place to force drivers to slow down. The question of whether the crossings could be made more frequently at green for walkers, thus slowing any traffic, is being looked into.

- 4) **The County Council Highways and Road Safety Sub-Committee voted to reject a motion that would have required the Council to hold a design competition for St Giles.** They said there is no money for it at present. However, they took on board the issues raised of lack of safety and convenience for local people, shoppers, students and workers in the vicinity, and made a commitment to look at St Giles as part of future work to expand OTS in the city centre.
- 5) **The results of the national Pedestrians Association best/worst pavement campaign were recently published.** Oxford had some of the worst pavements, especially around the station area, where no crossings where they are needed was cited as the most common problem. Narrow pavements and lack of planning thought for pedestrians were also cited.



- 6) **A lot more money is set to go into transport in the next ten years.** OxPA is hoping that fine words will become actuality and some of this money will be put into pedestrian improvements. According to the Safe Routes to School initiative, all children should be able to walk to their schools. This will mean lots of extra pavement extensions and crossings if it is to be seriously adhered to.
- 7) **Returning again to the issue of cyclists using pavements:** despite the City Council having said they will not have any more 'shared use' pavements after the Headington and Botley Road fiascos, it looks as if Woodstock Road pavement is set to become a cycleway/pavement under the auspices of the County Council. Mr Young, who is coming to our October meeting, is in favour of this, so he is one person to target if members would like to protest about this.
- 8) **October 4<sup>th</sup> is official 'Walk to School' week.** A leaflet is enclosed with this Newsletter. Are there members or friends of members who are willing/able to give copies out on the day, outside a local primary school? If so, please contact Jill or Jenny, who will arrange copies.
- 9) **City Council Pedestrian and Cycle Sub-Committee.** Deborah is chair of this now, and she intends to see the agenda is changed so that our items are included in the main body of the agenda and not left until the end, where they may not get discussed if time runs out (as it often does). This should give our concerns more attention than they have ever had before, and is a very positive development. If any member has issues they would like to see included on this agenda, please contact Deborah or Corrine.
- 10) **Westgate Centre is to be developed into a far larger commercial centre, stretching all the way down to Oxpens Road.** The plans are currently being discussed and debated in a variety of settings. To see a copy please visit the Planning Department in Clarendon House on Cornmarket.
- 11) **Please remember our special OxPA meeting on Monday September 25<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm in the hall at St Michael of the Northgate.** Refreshments will be served there. We have David Early from the National Association coming to inform us about changes to the constitution which may affect us here in Oxford. We need to be as well-informed as possible as we will subsequently be voting on whether to remain a branch of the National Association or not.
- 12) **Following on from that item, our AGM, at which we will be doing the actual voting, will be at our November meeting.**

Our next two meetings are at 7pm on Mondays September 18<sup>th</sup>, and October 16<sup>th</sup>. Please come, and bring a friend or anyone else who is interested. Everybody is welcome!

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