

Oxford Pedestrians Association



OXFORD PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO. 36
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2000

Welcome to Issue no. 36 of the Newsletter of Oxford Pedestrians Association! Whilst floods have been the bane of lives elsewhere in the country, in Oxford rain time is giant-puddle-at-junctions time. Where the pavements slope towards crossings (whether one wishes to cross or not) and the gutter is intended to take the run-off from the centre of the carriageway, is often a magnet for water. A large puddle can form very quickly, making it difficult for pedestrians to step off the pavement without getting their feet soaked. Most pedestrians step around or wade through the obstruction as fast as they can and go on their ways without even questioning why nothing has been done about it since the last rainfall. This is a measure of how down-trodden (excuse the pun) pedestrians have become. **However, should any reader wish to take action on finding a large puddle at a crossing on a major urban road, ring 01869 241144 and speak to Ashley Prior, Assistant Area Engineer for the city.**

- 1) **On Monday September 25th, David Early of the National Pedestrians Association came to an OxPA social to give a presentation and answer questions on the future shape of the National Pedestrians Association, and OxPA's role in relation to it.** The National Pedestrians Association is 71 years old. David Early is a recent employee, who found on reading it that the constitution no longer made sense. He said it 'was not where charities are expected to be now'. It had many different local groups and contacts with different structures, of which OxPA is one. Taking advice from other charities, the Management Committee decided on one organisation with a strong grass roots influence, constituting local branches. Each branch will pay their subs to the National Association, and receive a portion back for local work. Should OxPA vote to become a branch of the new organisation, this would affect us in a number of ways: (i) We would have to keep within the guidelines of the new organisation; (ii) Whereas we each pay £3 a year as things stand, we would have to pay £15 each a year to be members of the new branch of the organisation; and (iii) in return we would receive support from the National Association in doing our work, and (iv) we would get a list of members of the National Pedestrians Association so we could contact and include them. **If we do not buy into this, OxPA can become an affiliated group, and nominate a representative to be our contact and link with the central organisation.** In this case we would be able to keep the name OxPA, where if we became a branch we would no longer be able to use it. We would continue to raise our own membership fees, which means we could keep the cost down to £3 a year as at present. OxPA would then pay a fee to the central organisation for the affiliation. The general feeling seems to be that we should affiliate and stay as we are. **If you have any queries about this complex change or would like to know more, please ring Jenny.**
- 2) **Another David, David Young, Director of Environmental Services on Oxfordshire County Council, came to our October meeting.** He was invited to expand on his invitation to OxPA to work closely with the County Council on pedestrian issues, and discuss ways in which we and they can practically work together. One of his henchmen, Pele Bhamber, also attended and so did a representative of Baptie, Mr Gibbard. Mr Young agreed that pedestrians are vulnerable and made a list of promises as follows: they will look at the problems with the refuges on Longwall Street; chase up County officers; and have a general look at the 'inner ring road' in the city, which is still dangerous at all crossing desire lines, lacking facilities and with layouts which encourage fast traffic. The department is looking at widening the pavements and narrowing the roads on St Aldates and George Street, and putting in crossings on New Road in front of Nuffield College. Apparently the Police are the sticking point regarding 20mph speed limits on streets like High Street, but nevertheless Mr Young said that the Department of Environmental Services is looking to OxPA to 'educate them'. **They certainly need it, judging by decisions made over the past few years.**
- 3) **Which leads onto the proposed Woodstock Road two-way cycle lane, planned to slice the pavement width in half on the outgoing lane side of the road, north of Bainton Road.** Your Newsletter Editor is



bewildered by this proposal, especially in the light of strenuous opposition from pedestrian and cycle groups alike. Some years ago Oxford City Council said there would be no more cycle lanes on pavements unless it was 'absolutely necessary', a clause which has since provided one let-out after another. Cycle lanes on footways have endangered, inconvenienced and annoyed walkers for many years in Oxford, on Botley Road, in Headington, up the east end of Cowley Road, and further up Woodstock Road, now their creeping menace is to be extended even further. No matter that many cyclists hate them and will not use them, preferring to cycle on the flatter, less obstructed road, where drivers speed dangerously past them and hoot loudly to try and force them on to the pavement cycle lane. No matter that unruly cyclists see pavement cycle lanes as an invitation to speed along all pavements, regardless of pedestrians. And no matter even that pedestrians continue to argue vociferously against any more pavement loss to cycle lanes. If you would like to object to the proposal, please contact the departments of Environmental Services, Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council.

4) **Jill wrote a letter to the police about the problems for pedestrians encountering cyclists on pavements.** The reply she received was a bit wet. Superintendent McWhirter said they were only going to work with university students, and that this work would take the form of 'communication'. **Let us hope it reaps enormous rewards!**

5) **On October 4th Jill and Ray,**^{rChristina} **very successfully leafleted schools with a pedestrian leaflet.** There was a very positive response, and in fact we could do it at any time. If anybody is interested in doing a bit of leafleting please contact Jill.

5) **Pavement falls.** People get quite badly injured in trip falls due to loose paving slabs, uneven surfaces, slopes and broken kerbs, etc. But pedestrians often do not know they can claim compensation, or do not bother to do so, from the City Council. It is very important that people do claim, as only when it hits the budget will anything real be done in the way of keeping pavements in a good enough condition to walk safely on. **Should anyone wish to make such a claim, please contact Jenny, who has some claim forms.**

6) **City Walking Strategy.** Two years after the Walking Strategy for the whole of Oxfordshire (**but apparently excluding the City of Oxford**) came out, the City Council still have not produced what they were supposed to, a Walking Strategy with specified walking routes into and around Oxford City centre. They say they will put it in the next Local Plan, but this is not going to be for another 3 years. Jill gave a stern five minute talk to city Highways and Traffic about this, and a motion is going to County Council suggesting that they take back responsibility for it in the absence of the City's action. We need a City Strategy if we are to have a lever with which to push forward the needs of the city's walkers.

7) **Transport 2000 is a campaigning organisation working locally and nationally for environmentally-friendly forms of transport.** Walking should be at the top of the road users' hierarchy, and they seek to promote it as such. OxPA is going to affiliate to Transport 2000 for the sum of £15 a year, as it is believed we have much ground in common and could benefit from closer links.

Our next two meetings are on Monday November 20th (please note that this is also our AGM), and Monday December 18th, at 7pm at Oxford Town Hall. Please come and feel free to bring a friend, neighbour, or drag along a visiting relative. Everybody is welcome!

Contact Numbers

Patrick Lingwood (Technical Advisor) and Sushila Dhall (Newsletter Editor)...553415

Corinne Grimley-Evans (Main letter-writer and Attender of Meetings).....779663

Jill Haas (Back-up and Press Officer).....766366

Christina Millest (Minutes).....768073

Jenny Linsdell (Stalls).....246079

Ray Jones (Membership Secretary).....865070

Address of National Pedestrians Association

3rd Floor, 31-33 Bondway, Vauxhall, London SW8 1SJ. Tel. 0171 820 1010. Fax 0171 820 8208.

Analogies for delay - improved system for delivery in pipeline