

Oxford Pedestrians Association

OXFORD PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION NO. 37
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2001

Welcome to Newsletter no. 37, and a Happy New Year to all our readers! In honour of the festive season here is a humorous little story. Some of you may have read it before, but here it is intended to be a commentary on why we need a Pedestrian Officer in the city of Oxford. So, hoping you are sitting comfortably:

This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realised that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

Perhaps in 2001 Nobody will be replaced by an official Somebody who will do what Anybody could do for Everybody!

- 1) **Please remember that the beginning of the year is OxPA renewal time.** Membership of OxPA entitles you to six of these Newsletters annually, and costs £3. Please send cheques to Ray (contact no. at end of Newsletter).
- 2) **Update on the City Walking Strategy.** The latest is that the City says there is no way they are doing it. Although it is still vaguely in the pipeline nobody has any idea who may be doing it or when. Since the City originally wanted to do it, this is an about-turn. There is now a motion going to the County Highways and Road Safety Sub-Committee on February 22nd to ask them to take back the responsibility for identifying the core pedestrian routes in Oxford.
- 3) **A motion on Climate Change went before the County Environment Committee.** It was suggested that some very simple measures on the part of the County would help reduce Oxfordshire's contribution to changes in weather patterns leading to flooding, such as designating a proportion of all new developments car-free, investigating work-place levy charging, and improving safety and accessibility on the ground for pedestrians, public transport users and cyclists. Unfortunately the great majority of members mocked and derided the very idea of Climate Change (although some also said we may benefit from it!) and they voted to throw out the motion. Then the Oxford Mail reporter who covered this wrote a biased column in the Oxford Mail, making the idea of concern about Climate Change seem laughable. A subsequent complaint was accepted, but there is a long way to go still before people in power start leading us towards a truly better and more equitable society.
- 4) **Cars parked on pavements.** The number to ring is **(01865) 247090**, and the wardens will go and see if the vehicle is illegally parked. If it is, they are very quick to act, and will slap on a £20 fine: Very satisfying if someone is selfishly obstructing the footway with their car.
- 5) **"I pay taxes for this road and you don't!"** How many of us have had that said to us as we attempt to cross roads on desire lines instead of walking the extra distance to the inconveniently-placed official crossing. Drivers are often under the illusion that they pay for roads, therefore the roads belong to them. The facts are that despite this sense of owning the highway, **drivers pay an annual £23 billion in taxes, but the actual costs they incur (road building, road maintenance, safety works, resurfacing etc.) are in the region of £42 billion.** This figure does not include effects on health, work hours lost through accidents, and the cost of delays. So it is pedestrians who are subsidising drivers, not the other way round.



- 6) **The House of Commons Select Committee on Environment, Transport and the Regions are inviting submissions on 'Walking in Towns and Cities' by January 8th.** The Select Committee agrees that the Government Strategy on Walking is not effective, and are asking us and others what steps could be taken to improve walking in urban areas. Jenny has a copy of the National Pedestrians' Association draft response, so please contact her if you are interested.
- 7) **Chief Inspector Leigh, a representative of Thames Valley Police, will be attending our January meeting.** This is our chance to ask about what can be done about cyclists using pavements, and cars parked on pavements. We also plan to ask about the future role, if any, of traffic wardens, and to ask for leaflets from the police which we could hand to cyclists.
- 8) **At the up-coming Pedestrian and Cycle Sub-Committee in the Town Hall on January 19th there will be two items discussed which members may find of interest; (i) Headington and Marston traffic study – pedestrian and cycle improvements, and (ii) pedestrian safety and route improvements.** The public are welcome to go and listen. If anybody would like to address the Sub-Committee you have to request this in advance. Ring the City Council general number (249811) and they will put you through.
- 9) **Residents Parking is being put in in many areas of Oxford.** The main problem for pedestrians is that there are no walkways between cars for people wishing to cross the road. The issue has been raised with relevant City Councillors, but so far has not really been heeded. Pressure is needed, so when you see those signs telling you that residents' parking is on its way and asking for comments, please remember to mention this.
- 10) **When it snowed and then froze recently, pavements became highly dangerous sheets of ice.** Major roads get sanded and salted to ensure accidents do not happen as a result, but residential street pavements never get gritted. One idea is for every street to have its own bunker of sand for times of freeze. This would be an inexpensive way of preventing many bruises, bumps and broken bones resulting from slip falls on pavements in winter.
- 11) **We intend to have more speaker meetings this year. If anybody has suggestions for speakers who could be asked to come and address one of our meetings and answer questions, please contact any of the officers at the end of this Newsletter.**

Our next two meetings are on Monday January 15th and Monday February 19th, at 7pm, in Oxford Town Hall. Please come, and feel free to bring anybody you like. 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 and Treasurer).....865070

Address of National Pedestrians Association

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