

## **OXFORD PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO 55**

**JANUARY FEBRUARY 2004**

Welcome to Issue number 55 of OxPA's Newsletter, and wishing all our members a very Happy New Year!

Please note that membership subs are now due. The cost of OxPA membership has been steady at £3 per annum since we first set up nine years ago. Now our costs have risen as we have to pay £20 per month for the room in which to hold our meetings. So we recommend a subscription of £5, although the minimum cost of membership will remain £3 per annum. Please send cheques to: Ray Jones, 72 Cumnor Hill, Oxford OX2 9HU.

1) Those people who have been doing seasonal shopping in Oxford City Centre will have noticed the new traffic lights at the top of George Street, and even more bafflingly, at the north end of Cornmarket. They were installed suddenly and without consultation. The pedestrian priority across the top of George St, which is a legal priority (as going straight along the public highway takes lawful precedence over traffic emerging from side streets), has been lost, and crowds of walkers are continuously backing up on either side of the road. Cornmarket, which has now been re-done but not yet finished, looks like a road again, especially with the lights at the end. **Who are the traffic lights aimed at? Although vans and cars often drive illegally across Cornmarket at all hours of the day, surely they do not merit traffic lights?** Letters and 'phone calls to Oxfordshire County Council have so far yielded no explanation. We hope to have one for the next Newsletter.

2) When Peter Mann, Acting Chief Transport Planner on Oxfordshire County Council, came to talk to OxPA in October, he inadvertently gave us the impression that the pedestrianisation of Queen Street was no longer on the cards and could not now go ahead as buses on Queen Street were an integral part of the new (not yet designed) Westgate development. **OxPA is glad to learn that as Oxford Transport Strategy is a legal document, Queen Street has to be pedestrianised. Peter Mann wrote, 'Far from abandoning the pedestrianisation of Queen Street we expect to work closely with Capital Shopping Centres and the City Council to secure the alternative bus provision and enable the pedestrianisation to happen.'** The remaining question now is not if but when the buses can be moved from (currently highly polluted) Queen Street.

3) **Old Road and Lime Walk junction, Headington.** Consultants have been employed to design a proposal for this busy junction, to include measures to slow or reduce traffic on both roads. The consultants came up with a range of proposals which now need to be selected from. There is a tight budget of £190,000. Within this pavement extensions across side roads could be provided, together with a pedestrian crossing, and cycle lanes on pavements. Or the roads could be calmed by narrowing, which would mean cyclists could stay on the road. **OxPA suggested the following option of calming the roads: leaving cyclists on the road, and providing pedestrian crossing places.** We also suggested that if the budget does not run to pavement extensions, at the least the curved corners of pavements, which encourage drivers to zoom around corners, could be squared off. This would slow turning traffic and narrow the point where walkers cross, also making it easier for wheelchair users to get off and onto the pavement.

**4) Dr Andrew Chivers, Executive Committee Chair of Oxford's Primary Care Trust, will be coming to speak to our April meeting about the benefits of walking for health and well-being.** He will be accompanied by a colleague who is also knowledgeable in the field, so it will be a lively and interesting meeting. OxPA's plan is to publicise the meeting with the aim of attracting lots of potential new active members. Our April meeting is on **Monday April 19<sup>th</sup> at the usual time of 7pm**, and we will try to book one of the large downstairs rooms in **St Aldate's Centre** for this. **Please put the date in your diary, and let friends know that if they have never been to any other OxPA meeting, this is the one to attend.**

**5) A kind of Orwellian 'double-think' is illustrated by the Councils, who hold meetings about the chewing gum and graffiti in Oxford centre, but turn a blind eye to expensive and hazardous damage to kerbs caused by vehicles parked on pavements.** Broken kerb stones, cracked and uneven pavements and huge puddles result from this inability to think of damage caused to footways by motorists. For many years OxPA has tried to persuade the Councils to do something about this problem, without success. Nevertheless we go on trying, in the hope that common sense (and the pavement repair budget) will eventually prevail.

**6) Headington residents' parking.** OxPA is in favour of this, but requested space between every three or so cars for walkers needing to cross the roads. **OxPA also drew attention to the need for on-road cycle parking. For a single vehicle parking space one could have room for ten parked bicycles,** providing significant extra space on the footway for pedestrians.

**7) Pedestrian and Cycle groups have a lot in common as both are 'vulnerable road users' and both have been horribly marginalised by the growth in vehicle ownership and use.** It would therefore make sense if we could work together on issues such as **getting cycle lanes off pavements and slowing traffic speeds,** especially on 'radial' routes. However, the behaviour of some cyclists, who zoom across Cornmarket and Queen Street, and along pavements, sets up tensions between the two groups. **OxPA is therefore liaising with Cyclox, the newly regenerated cycling group in Oxford, to see if something could be done to help these cyclists become more aware of pedestrians and their needs. However it is important to bear in mind that there are many serious cyclists in Oxford who never cycle where they should not.** As is often the case, those who are careful and caring are liable to be tarred with the same brush as those who are not.

**Our next two meetings are on Mondays January<sup>19<sup>th</sup></sup>, and February 16<sup>th</sup>, at 7pm, in St Aldates Centre on Pembroke Street (which is across the road from the Town Hall). Please come, and bring a friend. Everybody is welcome!**

#### [Contact number](#)

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