

**OXFORD PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO. 63**  
**MAY/JUNE 2005**

**Welcome to Issue Number 63 of OxPA's Newsletter! And apologies for the lateness of this edition.**

**Since May 5<sup>th</sup> the make-up of Oxfordshire County Council has changed drastically. Until election day Oxfordshire was a hung County, with the Lib Dems and Conservatives ruling by coalition, Labour in opposition, and just one Green member. Now there are: 43 Conservatives, 17 Lib Dems, 9 Labour and 5 Green members. Oxford City itself elected no Conservatives, but the Conservatives are an overall majority in Oxfordshire. The Conservatives have said they will control all Executive and Scrutiny functions, and take all membership of outside bodies. They do not want any debate between elected representatives, but wish the entire County and City to be run by Conservatives.**

- 1) The Conservatives first pledge was to make car-parking free in Oxford City.** There is rapidly emerging a polarisation between the views of City residents, students and workers (taking into account air pollution and local accessibility for walkers, wheelchair users and cyclists), and the County view (of Oxford as a retail centre to drive into). **It is vital that those of us who walk in and into Oxford centre, or who live and walk anywhere in the city, make sure we are heard when these decisions come up.**
- 2) Car Free Day, September 22<sup>nd</sup>.** The City Council has agreed to support this, and has appointed an officer called Sharon Cosgrove to support organisations who wish to mark or celebrate Car Free Day this year. An informal Working Group comprising Sharon plus 1 Green, 1 Labour and 1 Lib Dem City Councillor has been arranged, and will be meeting for the first time on May 20<sup>th</sup>, at 1pm at the Town Hall with representatives of OxPA, FoE, someone representing buses/bus users, and Cyclox. Sharon cannot make this, but another Officer will attend in her stead. This will be a preliminary meeting to discuss initial ideas and plans.
- 3) At the meeting of the County Transport Implementation Committee on April 14<sup>th</sup> Cllrs David Robertson and Anne Purse gave the go-ahead for free short-term parking spaces to be added to the City Centre.** Despite representations from OxPA and Cyclox these went ahead, on the grounds that people were already parking illegally and this just legalised what was already happening.
- 4) RoadPeace is a national organisation focussing on families and communities throughout the world affected by road deaths and injuries. RoadPeace is dedicated to making us on a par with European countries, where when a person is killed by a driver, the driver is culpable.** RoadPeace believe that if a driver kills somebody it should be referred to as 'manslaughter' or 'causing death by dangerous driving', and would carry a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment. Currently if a driver kills a pedestrian or cyclist it is referred to as, 'driving without due care and attention'. If you support this please make your views known via [www.roadpeace.org](http://www.roadpeace.org), or [info@roadpeace.org](mailto:info@roadpeace.org), or by writing to: Lyndsay Gittus at Fry Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 2 Marsham St, London SW1P 4DF. You can telephone RoadPeace on 020 8838 5102.

- 5) **At a recent meeting of Central South and West Area Committee local City Councillors voted to approve a street café for Broad Street, which has been enthusiastically supported by local residents.** Interestingly, this was opposed by Oxford Preservation Trust who felt it would ‘look cluttered’ ‘block the carriageway’, and that we should remember Broad Street is a historic monument. The OPT representative also said the street will be open to traffic again at its west end, and closed instead at its east end according to the Kim Wilkie study. However local City Councillors felt that Broad St is not only a monument but also a local street and public space in a city with very little public space for its residents, and that its west end cannot be opened to traffic as there is nowhere for traffic to come from and go to (Magdalen St East and George St being entirely congested with traffic all of the time, and Turl St being narrow and closed to through traffic, and anyway leading to High St which is restricted to traffic.) **So this summer should see Broad Street coming alive in a daily way which it has not done (barring the odd market or event) in the past.**
- 6) **Old Road area, Headington.** An informal consultation with residents and interest groups took place on transport arrangements for next to the Nuffield Hospital. Basically this is a motorised-centred traffic plan, with cyclists and pedestrians tacked on as an after-thought. **The plan showed minimal traffic calming, one toucan crossing, and a shared cycle/footway in the middle, with bits of on-road cycle-way at either end.** There is acceptance of the need to slow traffic, but universal condemnation of speed cushions ‘because they are easily straddled’. County Council Officer James Gagg said he would go away and think about it’ again. There will be a formal consultation on the plan for this area in June, although at this time no date has been set.
- 7) **Members may be interested to know that when one compares prices, it is cheapest for four people to drive into Oxford centre and park; more expensive for the same four to drive to the Park & Ride and bus into Oxford, and the most expensive option would be for all four people to take the bus from Witney into Oxford centre. This needs no comment; your Newsletter Editor believes it speaks for itself!**

**To discuss this and other vital aspects of being a walker in Oxford city, please join us at our monthly meetings. Our next two meetings are on Tuesdays June 28 and July 26, at 7pm, in Oxford Town Hall. Please come. Everybody is welcome!**

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