

**OXFORD PEDESTRIANS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO. 65
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2005**

Welcome to Issue number 65 of OX PA's Newsletter!

September promises to be an exciting month for pedestrians and members of OxPA with European Car-Free Day being celebrated on Broad Street on Thursday 22nd Sept, and then OxPA's Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 27th. Help is needed on the OxPA stall on Car Free Day between the hours of 8am and 4pm. Please volunteer an hour or two (by contacting Michael) and help make this celebration a success. Our AGM on Sept 27th will start promptly at 7pm with business. We have a new constitution to ratify, and Paul Cullen has been proposed as our new Chair; so come along, have your say and vote. At 7.45pm we have our guest speaker, who is Mr Bill McArdle of OX1. We look forward to seeing as many people as possible at our AGM, and if you have not been an active OxPA member before, this is your chance to get involved at the beginning of a new year.

- 1) Please would members send in suggestions for campaigns to our Newsletter.** There are so many things we could be working on, that it may be more effective to focus on one or two specific issues with a view to their resolution. Some suggestions so far include: **huge puddles at crossings when it rains, the issue of cars ignoring the High St bus gate (we could have people photographing cars illegally going through, on one day), Queen St pedestrianisation, and footway parking.**

- 2) Pavement Parking stickers.** Julie Jones of Oxfordshire County Council says these are nearly ready. She advises us to 'use these with care as on some streets it is legal (where there is a Traffic Regulation Order) to park on pavements, as streets are too narrow for both emergency vehicles and parked cars'. **Following this up, it is clear that a blind eye is turned to the problem of pavement parking in some areas because of access issues for emergency vehicles. However this is not the same thing as making pavement parking legal.** As pedestrians we feel we also have some right to walk along streets; whereas hearing the emergency vehicles argument one would think only vehicles used the streets. **Pavement parking stickers mean pedestrians have the small power to say, 'We exist too and also have needs and rights.'** If people send OxPA names of streets where the problem is particularly bad we will target those streets.

- 3) Traffic lights at the north end of Cornmarket.** The County Council has said repeatedly that OxPA is in favour of the lights, which is not true. In any case, the lights are badly set, so that George St traffic is encouraged to speed through whilst their lights are green, and pedestrians rush across at all times, because for most of the time the lights are against them. This is despite the fact that most of the people using this junction are pedestrians. **OxPA is clear that we did not and do not support these lights remaining,** as, at this spot, they vastly increase danger to pedestrians.

- 4) **Councillor Keith Mitchell is the leader of the ruling (Conservative) group on the County Council, and therefore the leader of the County Council. As has been written in previous newsletters he has also made himself ‘City Liaison’ person on the County, although he himself represents Bloxham out in the shires and 15 County Councillors were elected to represent city wards.** However in the light of his self-made appointment he has been taken on a City ‘Walkabout’ and found many things unacceptable, including the walk from the railway station to the centre, the traffic nipping through the west end of Broad St, and the state of city footways. He did not agree that traffic was an issue in the city, but did concede that too much space is wasted on St Giles roadway (space for 6 lanes acting in effect as 2) and that more could be done to make St Giles beautiful and useable. However he is also the driver behind the move to make evening and Sunday parking free in our City from October.

For anybody wishing to contact the County Council ‘City Liaison’ person, his email address is keith.mitchell@oxfordshire.gov.uk. Messages can be left for him at County Hall, tel no 792422, or drop him a line c/o County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND.

- 5) **Contrary to what the Oxford Times front page article of September 9th claims, no ‘deal has been struck’ with anyone about Queen St being or not being pedestrianised as part of the proposed Westgate re-development.** The Westgate partnership is trying to persuade the Councils to accept a plan which does not include full pedestrianisation of Queen St. As yet Capital Shopping have not even got outline planning permission to proceed with a plan, let alone having submitted an actual plan for consideration. Their proposed plan so far is for a huge shopping mall, with some housing around the fringes, and a small bus-turning circle squeezed in at the edge, too small to take all buses. In order to squeeze this in they would need more land, including what is now housing on Abbey Place. **It is vital to bear in mind that this plan has no official status whatsoever, and that Councils are being asked to consider what their reactions may be if this was to be the plan submitted.**

To attend our AGM and get involved in a dynamic and empowering organisation please come to our next two meetings, on Tuesdays September 27th, and October 25th, at 7pm in Oxford Town Hall. Please come, and please invite a friend. Everybody is welcome!

Contact Numbers

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday September 27

at 7pm

Plowman Room, Oxford Town Hall

BILL McCARDLE

Chief Executive of OXI

will address the meeting at 7.45pm on

'The Work of OXI'

All welcome

www.oxpa.org