

Oxford Pedestrians Association

OXFORD PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO. 68
MARCH/APRIL 2006

Welcome to Issue of OxPA's number 68 Newsletter!

Subscriptions for 2006 are now due. Thank you to those who pay by standing order (over 50% of members). If you have not yet paid, a reminder is enclosed.

- 1) **Highway Code Consultation.** The Driving Standards Agency has begun a public consultation on a revised draft of the Highway Code. The first section in this draft, headed 'Pedestrians', contains the following gems (paraphrased) all of which, and more, we are invited to comment on: Pedestrians should walk in single file along roads without pavements; Restrain young children firmly and do not let them go out alone; Very young children should be in pushchairs or on reins; Watch out for cyclists when getting off buses. Also useful pieces of information such as **that on zebra crossings traffic does not have to stop until someone has moved onto the crossing, and that no wheeled vehicle should go at more than 4mph in areas where they mix freely with pedestrians.** It also contains a section on Home Zones - streets where pedestrians and residents have priority and vehicles fit in around them. **To have your say either access www.dsa.gov.uk/highwaycode, or write to: Karen Lees, Publications Department, Driving Standards Agency, The Training Centre, Harrowden Lane, Cardington, Bedford MK44 3ST. Responses must be received by May 10th 2006.**
- 2) **The Westgate Development Proposal.** Although a planning application has not yet been submitted to Oxford City Council by Capital Shopping, their proposals are known to Officers and Councillors, and have been made available to members of the public. The proposal involves an increase in traffic accessing the Westgate car park, which will be rebuilt as 7 storeys, 2 of them underground. Capital Shopping hope to attract 10,000 extra people a day to Oxford city to shop in 50 new shops and department stores. **Capital Shopping say traffic levels, if they get planning permission, will be 'like the run-up to Christmas, but every day'.** However, as the proposal involves the demolition of Abbey Place social housing for very vulnerable disabled residents, and as the proposal also involves increased traffic in city centre areas, where air pollution levels regularly breach EEC statutory guidelines, it is very important that people make sure to have their say when the application is finally submitted.
- 3) **Queen Street pedestrianisation.** It was made a condition of the Westgate's proposal that it should involve the pedestrianisation of Queen St. However the developers say that the scheme will be 'economically unviable' if land between the current Westgate Centre and Thames St includes room for buses currently using Queen St. **As Queen St is the most dangerously and highly polluted of all the city centre streets in the polluted zone, it is vitally important that room is made for the buses elsewhere on the land available.** So far City Councillors of all political parties have made this a condition of the proposal being considered at all. **Please lobby your City Councillors to ensure this condition is held on to.**
- 4) **Giant puddles on pavements and at crossings.** During the recent rain, huge pools of water collected on George St and at various crossing points throughout the city. Sometimes this indicates poor drainage, other times it is careless designing. **If you come across a big puddle that obstructs you as you walk about Oxford, please ring 792422, and ask to be put through to Gordon Hunt, the County drainage specialist.**

- 5) **Thanks to all of you who responded to the consultation on the Whitehouse Road proposals. Both OxPA and Cyclox submitted strong representations against the County's proposals to put cyclists on to the footway in Whitehouse Road, arguing that the carriageway near St Ebbe's school should be made safer for cyclists, many of whom are children going to and from school. A decision by the County is now awaited.**
- 6) **The way the County consults, has been troubling OxPA for some time. We only found out about the Whitehouse Road proposals through spotting the notice at the back of the Oxford Times. Sometimes OxPA is consulted and sometimes we are not. Sometimes, after lengthy submissions, our comments have been ignored without any reason given. However at the end of February OxPA reps were invited to a County meeting where staff and representatives discussed issues around consultation. The County say they are determined to do things better. Let us hope that this is the case!**
- 7) **Please lobby your MP to sign the Early Day Motion promoted by Diana Johnson (EDM 913, 1 Nov 2005) on Improving Child Road Safety. So far neither of Oxford's MPs have signed. The motion calls, among other things, for 'an increase in the number of 20mph zones in places where children are vulnerable.' For those readers with internet access, details can be found on the UK Parliament website.**
- 8) **Oxford City Council has joined 19 other Local Authorities in forming the 'Sticky Issue' alliance. Anyone walking through Oxford cannot fail to notice how some streets are coated with chewing gum, and on others certain shops and clubs have chewing gum plastered to the ground outside, an unsightly and sticky sight. On Oxford Street in London there are over 300,000 blobs of gum. Following lobbying by all groups the City Council is now looking at ways to tackle this menace, from fining offenders, to educating the public, to promoting bio-degradable gum. For those who are interested and have internet access find out more from www.stickyissue.co.uk.**
- 9) **On Sunday April 30th OxPA is taking a city walk. Details will be finalised at the end of March. Please let our Chair (details at end of Newsletter) know what you would like to see on this walk.**

Our next two meetings are on Tuesday March 28th and Sunday April 30th, at 7pm, in Oxford Town Hall. On March 28th we have Inspector Graham Sutherland of Thames Valley Police coming to discuss our three current campaigns (for a 20mph city, and to reduce footway car parking and footway cycling) Come and hear what he has to say. Everybody is welcome!

Contact Numbers

Paul Cullen (Chair)426805.

Corinne Grimley-Evans (Secretary)779663

Ray Jones (Membership Secretary and Treasurer)865070

Michaela Philbin (Stalls)201541

Jill Haas (Consultation Process Reviewer)766368

Sushila Dhall (Newsletter Editor)553415

National Pedestrians Association (Living Streets) 0207 820 1010

OxPA website: www.oxpa.org.uk

