

OXFORD PEDESTRIANS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER No. 72
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2006

Welcome to OxPA's Newsletter number 72. The summer crowds have disappeared from the city centre, and walking conditions in High Street are greatly improved with the widening of pavements and removal of clutter. County Councillor David Robertson wants ideas of where else to apply the treatment. We think that walking to and from the station has to be a major candidate. Not only do thousands of Oxford's residents, workers and shoppers tread along Hythe Bridge Street daily, but the narrow crowded pavements with people having to step into the narrow carriageways to pass, are the first and last impressions that many of Oxford's visitors have of our wonderful city. What do you think? Let us know please – and better still, tell Councillor Robertson via County Hall.

1) OxPA's AGM At our AGM on 24th October, Paul Cullen was re-elected Chair, with Corinne Grimley-Evans as Secretary and Ray Jones as Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Sushila Dhall is your Editor and Michael Philbin continues to organise and manage our stalls. Paul said that he hopes that in the year ahead OxPA can engage more with City and County politicians in order to widen the understanding of what better outdoor conditions can mean for our city. We were also privileged to hear a presentation by Inspector Graham Sutherland of Thames Valley Police on 'Policing the City'. Insp. Sutherland, who uses a bike to get about the City, said that there were 26 Police officers dedicated to the City Centre; night and day policing were very different from each other. Night-time policing was 'robust', with night time patrols, officers going in pairs in George Street/ Park End Street and Hythe Bridge Street. A 'yellow card' for under age drinkers, 'Pub Watch' whereby licencees have to meet the police, and a 'saturation policy' cap on drinking spaces, were among measures to manage the centre. An attempt was being made at getting a constable for every ward, with more Community Support Officers. Neighbourhood Action groups (NAGs) were being formed. Although Insp. Sutherland's talk had not covered many of OxPA's concerns, he was prepared to listen and took away the concerns raised, including those about the effects of increased crowding if the Westgate re-development proceeds.

2) HELP WANTED OxPA is getting busier. We'd like to know of members who would be prepared to offer some back-up. None of what we do takes much time, but increasing the core of active supporters would help deal with some of our 'peak demands'; and as we always say, you enjoy yourself and meet like minded people too. If you can offer a couple of hours a month on average, we'd love to hear from you. Call Paul or Corinne (numbers on the other page).

3) IN TOWN WITHOUT MY CAR (CAR FREE DAY) With the City Council having committed to greater support for 'In Town Without My Car' Day, we expected this year's events to be wonderful – which they were, but it poured with rain for most of the day. Spirits weren't dampened but other things were; and of course people weren't out on the street. The people of Headington had a very successful closure in the Highfield Road Area in the late afternoon, and the theme of returning local streets to people will hopefully grow. We hope there will be more local streets participating next year, when the celebrations will be on a September Saturday.

4) LIFE BEGINS AT 20 There's increasing support for 20mph speed limits on local streets everywhere. The major political parties support it; it saves lives and money, and it is very popular with residents who can use their streets more in the ways originally intended – including letting the children go down to the shops or the bus stop alone. Oxford's contribution to the national '20's Plenty' campaign is 'Life Begins At 20'. It aims to persuade the County of the benefits of more 20mph limits across Oxford. The City Council has already put its weight behind the campaign. If you would like your local community to benefit, get in touch (see addresses etc on next page). Portsmouth will become almost 100% 20mph by 2008. Other cities will too. Oxford next?

5) PROPOSALS FOR SUMMERTOWN The County Council has published proposals for improving the street environment in Banbury Road at the Summertown shopping centre. These embrace numerous proposals for improving the pedestrian's lot; better footways, raised footways to give a level footway crossing across side road junctions; better bus stops; a new signal controlled crossing. See and comment on the proposals via the 'oxfordshire.gov.uk' website – select 'Roads and Transport/ Major Projects'.

6) WALKING WHERE YOU LIVE The City NHS Primary Care Trust has produced a very useful set of pamphlets giving encouragement to walk, accompanied by maps showing four local walks – a River Walk; Temple Cowley; 'Insite' (St Clement's); and Blackbird Leys. We would like to work with the Trust to produce more walks. They're happy to train walks leaders too. Interested? Pick up a copy of the leaflets from OxPA, or contact the PCT Public Health team on 01865 226843.

7) OUR NASTY STREETS SURVEY Thanks to everybody who sent in details of nasty streets, including those who sent photos. More about the results and what we'll be doing with them in the next newsletter.

8) THE BIG OXFORDSHIRE SCHOOL TRAVEL SURVEY

In September the County conducted a survey of pupil travel habits at over one hundred schools, with a view to reducing car journeys 'on the school run'. The results will help feed the preparation of more school travel plans, which are proven to increase the number of pupils walking and cycling to school, and to reduce car usage and traffic congestion. Apparently one in five Oxford shire school journeys transferred from car to public transport, walking and cycling when School travel Plans are introduced.

9) WEB SITE TO WATCH – SHARED SPACE Interested in shared space and whether it works? Think about Queen Street. More of the same is planned for Castle Street and Norfolk Street if the Westgate proposals go ahead. It's described as 'innovative' but does that mean 'experimental, little evidence it will work'? Find out about shared space and what it can do for you at the European Community sponsored web site www.shared-space.org

10) VISIT YOUR OxPA STALL See us at the ONE WORLD FAIR on Saturday 18th November, and at the GREEN FAIR on Saturday 16th December – both at the Town Hall. Pick up those gifts from OxPA.

11) NEXT MEETING – TUESDAY 28TH NOVEMBER 7PM

Our next meeting will be the last of 2006, on Tuesday 28th November at 7pm in the Town Hall, when we will be discussing '**Oxford – a 20mph city – can we make it happen?**'. We will also be planning our meetings programme for 2007. Should we have more daytime weekend meetings and fewer weekday evening meetings? More walking, less talking? Let us know.

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