

**OXFORD PEDESTRIANS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO. 76
JULY/AUGUST 2007**

Welcome to issue no. 76 of OxPA's Newsletter!

It would be nice at this time of year to write something about the pleasant heat which makes for good walks in Oxford and in the city's green spaces; however we are currently deluged with rain, so that there are puddles wherever the drainage is poor (usually at junctions, crossings, corners, and wherever vehicles regularly park on brick surfacing and footways). Despite the threat of rain on Sunday July 1st, Cowley Road Carnival was held, with Cowley Road closed to through traffic from midday until what in the event was after 8pm. The street was alive with stalls, circus performances, music, food, bright banners and masks, and a party atmosphere. Thousands of people roamed freely and chatted, bringing to life what 'Living Streets' means; streets full of people and activity, public space full of potential and change rather than used primarily as a vehicular through route.

West End Programme. This innocuous title hides the fact that many decisions are being made about the future use of the large tract of land from George Street, to the Railway Station, incorporating Oxpens Road, St Thomas', Thames St and the land surrounding and including Oxford's Ice Rink. These decisions ring-fence the use of land so that future consultations on planning applications will be made within the parameters of what this Plan has said should happen in one area or another. The Plan that has come out of many meetings, and some consultation, is called the 'West End Area Action Plan'. Its focus is on commercial development, transport changes (both of which have major implications for walkers) and a housing element. The West End Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on June 15th this year. **There is now a further period of public consultation until July 27th 2007. Objections and comments can be left at the City Council Planning Department in Ramsey House, St Ebbe's, where documents can also be viewed. An 'Examination in Public' is expected in early 2008, and the City hopes, if there are no obstacles to this, to adopt the Plan by autumn 2008.**

Canalside views. The land that was Jericho Boatyard until it was evicted by British Waterways a year ago (and has since lain derelict) is now the subject of a planning application. Spring Residences, a subsidiary of Castlemore Holdings, has put in an application (07/01234/FUL) for as many residences as can be built on top of one another on the site. Their proposed dwellings are only 33% 'affordable' and there is the point, as yet undecided, about whether the needs of Oxford's residential boaters have been met with a replacement boatyard, as the Inspector stipulated in the report, which governs the possible uses of this land, and the responsibilities of the City Council in approving an application. In terms of pedestrian concerns, part of the Spring proposal is for a new pedestrian and cycle bridge to cross the canal from Jericho to the footpath leading to the railway station. Many designs of bridge could be put in here; the one Spring has chosen includes a feature which works electrically, to lift wheelchairs up on to the bridge and put them down on the other side.

The other general pedestrian issue is the view from the walk along the canal. Although the 3-week period for consultation ended on Sunday July 1st, it is not too late to contact the 8 City Councillors making the decision, in August or September at **South West Central Area Committee, who are Cllrs Colin Cook, Matt Selwood, Richard Huzzey, Bob Price, Suzanna Pressel, Sushila Dhall, Paul Sargent, and Oscar van Nooijen.** All can be contacted c/o the Town Hall, St Aldates. The officer advising these Councillors how to vote is **Mr Murray Hancock, Ramsey House, St Ebbes.** Members of the public can speak at the decision-making meeting, **either on August 7th or September 11th, starting at 5.30pm.** Please ring the Town Hall on 249811 to find out where the meeting will be, as it is held in a rotating venue.

About 30 months ago, Mr Ashley Prior, County Highways, took a personal decision to remove the pedestrian priority brick surfacing from George St outside the cinema, and replace it with tarmac roadway and granite kerbs. The kerbs are pretty, but unfortunately the message to drivers is that this is primarily a through route, when in fact pedestrians, including high numbers of children and slow-moving people, are by far the greatest users of this space, it being a main pedestrian through route between Queen St and Gloucester Green, and the markets and cinemas. All attempts to get Mr Prior to reinstate the brick-look surfacing, or indeed put in any form or reminder to drivers to slow down and be aware of walkers here have come to nothing. **To encourage Mr Prior to do something to remedy this, please write him a note c/o Oxfordshire County Council, Highways Department, 23 Oxford Road, Kidlington OX5 2BP.**

Plans are afoot to make changes to the Headington/London Road area. These include facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, a new 20mph zone, and some pavement narrowing to create new bus lay-bys. **To see the plans in detail pick up a booklet and a feedback form, from Speedwell House, Speedwell St, Mon-Thurs 8.30am-5pm, Fridays 8.30am-4pm, or log on to www.oxfordshire.gov.uk.** The decision on this will be made at County Hall by the Transport Decisions Committee on September 6th.

OxPA's summer picnic will be on Sunday August 19th, in Cutteslowe Park. Keith Holly, an OxPA member, will be the day's guide, revealing many of the delights of the park. Please bring a picnic lunch. If the weather permits lunch will be by the duck pond. Meet at the Harbord Road car park at 11am. The Kidlington buses from Magdalen St go along Banbury Road and the Harbord Road stop is the second one after the by-pass. **Further details from Paul on (01865) 426805.**

OxPA's next two meetings are on Tuesdays July 24th and August 28th, in Oxford Town Hall, at 7pm. Please come, everybody is welcome!

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