

OXFORD PEDESTRIANS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO.77
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2007

Welcome to Issue number 77 of OxPA's Newsletter! At the time of writing, St Giles Fair is in full swing and road, which is usually a lot of car parking ranks and several lanes of traffic, is transformed for its annual two days into a place of racketing music competing from every ride, flashing lights, and pedestrians everywhere! Walton Street has more traffic than usual, carefully driving over the traffic calming humps, but Beaumont Street is a joy; easy to cross, and its fine architecture on display to anyone who wishes to walk up the middle of the road, for two days a year.

- 1) Everyone in Oxford was affected, or knows someone who was affected by the recent flooding.** After months of record-breaking drought and low rainfall, unusually heavy rain meant flooding in several parts of the city. Emergency services worked around the clock providing sandbags, advice and help for those who needed it, and Botley and Abingdon Roads were closed to all but emergency traffic for several days. So, in the face of the horror of uncontrollable flood waters, the air above two of Oxford's arterial routes was clear and bright. Crowds of residents who congregated in the streets commiserating with and supporting one another, praised the unusually clean air, and many loved the main roads free of traffic and fumes, even though at the same time they were anxious and upset by the floods.
- 2) Apologies that the picnic in Cutteslowe Park had to be cancelled last month;** the weather was too bad and unpredictable to allow for it.
- 3) Local groups campaigning for 20 miles per hour in their neighbourhoods recently met the County's representative with responsibility for implementing transport schemes, Councillor Ian Hudspeth.** Everybody present aired their views, and the Councillor was attentive, coming across as supportive of an expansion of 20mph zones in the City. The meeting, which has helped carry the '**Life Begins At 20**' message forward, was complemented by good press coverage in both the Oxford Mail and Times. Our next project is to compare journey times for cars travelling at 20 or 30mph from the ring road to the city centre: we suspect the higher speed won't result in a shorter journey. **If you want to campaign for more civilised streets, please contact Corinne (details at end of Newsletter), who is a joint coordinator of the Life Begins At 20 campaign.**
- 4) OxPA Walks Book.** We have received some excellent contributions to the proposed books of walks and still have space for a couple more if anyone has a favourite walk they would like to contribute. Contact Corinne (details at end of Newsletter).
- 5) Westgate Capital Shopping development update.** There is to be a Public Inquiry into the Compulsory Purchase Order of Abbey Place housing, which Capital Shopping wants to demolish to make room for a huge new multi-storey car park in the city centre. Unless they can demolish these 14 housing units Capital Shopping and City Planning officers say the multi-million pound development cannot go ahead, as John Lewis will not agree to have a shop in Oxford without the multi-storey car park. The Public Inquiry is expected to take place towards the end of this year.
- 6) September 22nd is Streets For People day (see enclosed flyer).** It used to be called European Car-Free day, but has been locally renamed to make it more positive and welcoming; however the message remains the same. Walk, cycle, or take public transport into Oxford, and have a free breakfast on Broad Street to start your day. Enjoy music, fun and stalls as various groups promote enjoyment of the benefits of public space not used as a through-route for vehicles.

7) **Canalside development issues.** The land known as Jericho Boatyard near the city centre, which has been derelict for over a year since British Waterways forcibly evicted the boatyard, has a planning application on it (07/01234/FUL), likely to be considered by South West Central Area Committee (SWCAC) at its October meeting. This affects walkers who have hitherto enjoyed the view of the boatyard and St Barnabas Church as they walk along this part of the canal, either as a short cut between Hythe Bridge Street and Port Meadow/North Oxford, or for pleasure. If you wish to have your say contact the eight city councillors on SWCAC, and write to Murray Hancock at Ramsey House, St Ebbes (where plans can be viewed during office hours). You can also speak at the decision-making meeting. **For more information contact your Newsletter Editor (details at end of Newsletter).**

8) **The government-produced Manual for Streets (MfS)** was published in March 2007. It confirms that the welfare of streets rests with Planning as well as Highway authorities. MfS states that in the past street design has been dominated by some stakeholders at the expense of others, often resulting in unimaginatively designed streets which favour motorists over other users. It suggests that a new hierarchy be applied in the design of new streets. The following grid shows how it should be applied, but it will be interesting to see if this works out when offered to Planners who have got into the habit of putting motorised vehicles first for decades, backed up by a government with an agenda of economic growth above all other considerations!

MfS has stated (Table 4.1) the approaches to be considered for improving provision for pedestrian and cyclists, as in the table below:

	Pedestrians	Cyclists
Consider first	Traffic volume reduction	Traffic volume reduction
	Traffic speed reduction	Traffic speed reduction
	Reallocation of road space to pedestrians	Junction treatment, hazard site treatment, traffic management
	Provision of direct at-grade crossings, improved pedestrian routes on existing desire lines	Cycle tracks away from roads
Consider last	New pedestrian alignment or grade separation	Conversion of footways/ footpaths to adjacent- or shared use routes for pedestrians and cyclists

There will be no OxPA meeting in September as we are having our Streets for People celebration (Sat 22nd).

Our next meeting will therefore be our AGM, on Tuesday October 23rd at 7pm, in the Town Hall, St Aldates. There will be no speaker; we will discuss our coming year. Please come with your ideas and input. Everybody is welcome!

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