

OXFORD PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO. 83  
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Welcome to Issue number 83 of OxPA's Newsletter! There are very promising signs that Oxford is on the verge of becoming a 20mph city. Attached to this e-mail is a letter from our Chairman, Paul Cullen asking us to lobby in the most effective way we can. However, the Italian university town of Turin has beaten Oxford to it, planning to introduce 30kph [19mph] to the whole city centre in August, with extensions citywide probable, because in "an unusual display of unity" all local politicians are in favour. And in Spain plans are proposed to reduce speed limits to 25mph in towns and 50mph on motorways as fuel-economy measures. Climate change and fuel scarcity, if not care for vulnerable road users, may yet bring about welcome changes to British roads!

- 1) **OxPA's book of walks; 'Oxford on Foot': The first printing of 300 sold out in little more than a month!** We have had it re-printed. Our most popular outlets have been the Information Centre in Broad Street, St Michaels Fairtrade shop and Blackwells. It can now also be bought at the City of Oxford Museum, the Inner Bookshop in Magdalen Road, Age Concern [183 Cowley Road], Iffley Community shop, and Summertown Book House, and also of course from our website [[www.oxpa.org.uk](http://www.oxpa.org.uk)] and directly from Corinne or Paul. **Please let us know if you can think of other places to sell it. People have said it is a really useful little book to have in the house, and makes an ideal present for visiting friends and relations.**
- 2) **New 'Report It!' form for road and footpath hazards.** The City Council has produced an excellent form with which to report road or footpath problems, for example potholes or missing uneven or damaged paving slabs or kerbs. **It can be obtained from Council offices, and contains a postcard on which you can report any problems. Postage is pre-paid. You can also telephone 01865 252900 or if you have the internet, you can report matters to [streetscene@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:streetscene@oxford.gov.uk).**
- 3) **Premium Bus Routes are a concept which sounds good,** as on the face of it they are about prioritising bus routes in the city. However, when the proposals are examined more closely it is clear this is a way of speeding up all traffic by altering junctions and traffic lights in favour of motorised traffic and to the detriment of pedestrians, wheelchair users, and cyclists. **An initial consultation is underway, with responses and objections needed by September 26<sup>th</sup>. For more information and to have your say, contact County Council Officer Mark Bostock, on 815789, or email [mark.bostock@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:mark.bostock@oxfordshire.gov.uk).**
- 4) **Work on the towpath is continuing in various places,** with the resulting path reassuringly solid and properly finished in a way that should mean it endures for many years without becoming unsafe. Closures have been planned in advance and affected bodies warned in time to make alternative arrangements. **Would that neighbouring districts could let people know when towpaths are being closed in the same way!** As you walk/cycle along the canal towpath to Yarnton, it is unexpectedly closed without warning and no alternative route signed. With difficulty and by retracing ones steps one comes upon the diversion, a very stony loosely packed shoddy track going half a mile out of the way. It is hard not to reflect how different this would be if it was for motorised vehicles and not mere walkers.
- 5) **Pedestrians and cyclists [and boatmen] may like to visit the recently re-opened Isis Farmhouse pub [[enquiries@theisis.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@theisis.co.uk)] on the tow path in Iffley.** As it is only accessible by foot, boat and bike, and sources its food locally, it is an enterprise well worth supporting, as well as a lovely place to enjoy good food and drink [closed Mondays and Tuesdays].

- 6) **Coming to a road near you, when it needs re-surfacing! In recent years, due to cuts in frontline public spending, there has been a tendency to resurface residential streets by covering them with a layer of sticky oil and then covering this with a layer of grit.** This is unpopular with all road users for a number of valid reasons; the grit flies out from under car wheels and can cause damage and injuries, the surface is terrible to fall on, it can settle unevenly with lumps being pushed to the sides by the wheels of heavy vehicles, it cannot be used by roller-blades, skateboarders, or children's bikes and scooters meaning these have to share the [often narrow] footways with pedestrians. **If you have any objection to this form of re-surfacing being automatically applied to roads, please let your local councillors know so they can speak up when informed this is about to happen in your area.**
- 7) **Live in a big city and you risk suffering from fumes, breathing problems, even premature death. Yet the Government has spent 10 years in denial about the UK's air-quality problems.** Poor air quality has serious implications for public health. It results in between 12,000 and 24,000 premature deaths each year in the UK. Those with asthma, lung diseases and heart conditions are most susceptible. The Government has admitted that road transport is the cause of all breaches of air quality laws in the UK. In Oxford one of the problems with tackling air pollution is that because so many expensive reports have been written about doing something, a lot of people, including councillors, think something is being done about air pollution on the ground. **However, it is one of the most serious issues yet to be dealt with in our city. Roger Pitman is our City Officer overseeing this area, but he cannot do anything when developments and policies are allowed by both Councils which encourage more and more traffic into Oxford.**
- 8) **Has anyone got an hour or so free on a Saturday to help run a stall for OxPA at the East Oxford Farmers Market?** A lovely place to buy delicious food on a Saturday morning. It runs from 12-3pm but we could do short shifts to suit ourselves. **Please get in touch with Corinne [779663] if you are interested.**

**Our apologies for misleading dates regarding our July and August meetings. Our meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month, at 7pm in the Town Hall. We intend to devote our September 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting to discussing where OxPA should channel its energies in the next 12 months.** The management team want to recruit volunteers to attend each City Council Area Committee meeting, and the Neighbourhood Action Groups, to ensure pedestrians' needs are fully considered.

**On Tuesday 28th October, at our Annual General Meeting, Muir Gray, prominent health practitioner and advocate of healthy lifestyle walking, is our speaker.**

The subject of his talk is 'Ten Thousand Steps', a campaign that he spearheads.

We will also be appointing the management team and seeking volunteers to give a little support when and where needed. **Please come, everybody is welcome!**

#### Contacts

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