



Walk Talk

Newsletter of Oxford Pedestrians Association

July 2017

Welcome to Newsletter 122



Oxford in 8 Breaths

OxPA was recently invited to join an unusual type of Oxford tour - a tour that focused on Oxford's airspace rather than the familiar historical townscape! The creators of this event have adopted a novel approach to raising awareness of air pollution, to use people's imaginations while absorbing some chilling facts about air pollution. The 8 deep breaths were taken in the contrasting conditions of Christchurch Meadow, the High and St Aldates, while we were invited to imagine contrasting scenarios of air pollution in cities ancient and modern around the world. The aim is to bring home to us how urgently we need to reduce the deadly presence of pollutants in Oxford's atmosphere, and inspire us to action by putting pressure on our politicians to give us clean air! For more information or to join one of the walks contact Katherine or Mariana katmcgaving@hotmail.com or visit <https://www.facebook.com/oxfordin8breaths>

Queen Street and environs

OxPA responded to a consultation about traffic changes around Queen Street in order to make Queen Street pedestrianisation work. We had already responded objecting to the central proposal, saying that although we would like to be able to welcome the closure of a street to motorised traffic, in this case we could not do so owing to the knock-on impact in terms of congestion and pollution in St Aldates. OxPA welcomed the proposals to site zebra crossings on Park End Street, criticised the proposal to install light-controlled crossings off desire lines at the junction of Hythe Bridge Street and George Street, and omitting one across the top of Hythe Bridge Street. We also objected to proposals to have taxis using part of Cornmarket as a turning and waiting place.

Cowley Road

OxPA was invited to contribute recommendations for low-cost measures to improve transport and accessibility in the Cowley Road, which could be incorporated during future highway maintenance works. We surveyed the road between the Plain and Magdalen Road and submitted detailed observations. Generally, we welcome the presence of pavement extensions but have noted other places where they could be installed. Many zebra crossings need re-painting, textured slabs at junctions and crossings are mostly in poor condition, pavements are sometimes too sloping for people with poor mobility. Several badly sited poles/bollards/cycle racks unnecessarily obstruct the pavement in narrow stretches. There are many sections of damaged and uneven paving which are hazardous and unsightly.

Oxford's Buses

OxPA is increasingly concerned about the number and size of buses and coaches, many of them almost empty, clogging up our historic streets. When the Westgate opens this autumn we can expect more buses as increasing numbers of shoppers are forecast to access the shops and cinemas via P&R. OxPA members will be undertaking a survey of buses passing certain points during different times of day, counting the number of passengers and the frequency of services. We will use this information to inform our campaigns.

Hythe Bridge Street

At this time of year Hythe Bridge Street is full of tourists and visitors to Oxford, filing on pavements that are far too narrow past lines of choking traffic to George Street. Nuffield Tower is the only glimpse of what most have come to see of our historic city. Once they have navigated the pedestrian-unfriendly junction onto George St they walk up dirty narrow crowded pavements towards the city centre, and only then reach Broad St where the area of Oxford University's beauty begins properly. It is to the shame of Oxford's councils that the experience of arriving in Oxford is horrible because of the priority given to motorised traffic. Oxford University is becoming a tourist attraction surrounded by ugliness, something which need not have been allowed to happen, and if policy documents written over the past three decades are to be believed, should never have happened.

Pavement Parking

One of the most frequent enquiries OxPA receives is about pavement parking. People turn to us for advice on how to prevent pavements in their area becoming obstructed and damaged by illegally parked vehicles. After the issue was raised at its recent AGM, The Friends of Iffley Village is to provide stickers for residents to post on vehicles blocking Iffley's narrow pavements. Commercial vehicles, parking on pavements to make deliveries, empty post boxes or for longer periods during building works, are more difficult to tackle, but Wirral Pedestrians Association has mounted a successful campaign to prevent this practice by writing to the CEOs of the businesses concerned. Details of the campaign at: www.wirralpedestrians.org.uk/company_organisation_letters.html



Botley Road

OxPA has been asked to support the County's bid for £5m from the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) to support work arising from the Botley Road

Corridor Study carried out in 2016. These proposals focus on providing consistent pedestrian, cyclist, and public transport facilities, with segregated routes where possible, along the length of the route from Binsey Lane to Eynsham Road. We have responded positively and will be walking the route in July to make detailed observations.

Oxford's community markets

What have Oxford's community markets to do with pedestrians? Well, some of them are out on the streets and all have the intention of saving car journeys and food miles. Headington Market is an example, serving the greater Headington community every Saturday from 10 am to 2 pm. It is run by local charity Headington Action. The stall fees go towards Headington Action's community grants and other activities in Headington, including Headington Festival. The South Oxford Farmers and Community Market is a weekly market selling ethically-produced local, seasonal and/or organic food and non-food goods, held in South Oxford Community Centre every Sunday from 9.30am to 12pm. Oxford's community markets are listed on the City Council's website at https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20035/events/791/markets_and_fairs. These Markets all have to be approved by the appropriate authorities. As a street market, Headington market has the approval of the County's Highways & Transport Department, to ensure no danger or obstruction is caused to pedestrians or traffic. It's sometimes a tight juggling act ensuring room for pedestrians with mobility aids, or parents with baby buggies, between the stalls and the shops, but it promotes interaction between people on the streets and creates a good community feeling. Local businesses, far from being worried by the stalls outside their frontages, welcome the Market as it brings more people onto the streets. If you have a local market, please consider supporting it and perhaps helping. It all goes towards using our streets better for people on foot.

Elder Stubbs Festival: Saturday August 19th

OxPA will as usual be (wo)manning a stall at this wonderful event. Volunteers to help for an hour or two are warmly welcomed. Contact Felicity or Sushila 251212 or 790783

Meetings:

Tuesday July 25th **Botley Road walk**, meet at the Jam Factory 7pm. **Phone Sushila/Corinne 790783/779663 if weather is doubtful**

No meeting in August

Tuesday September 26th details to follow

Contacts:

Chair Sushila Dhall 790783

Secretary Corinne Grimley Evans 779663

Treasurer Christine Hamand 559856

Membership Michael Philbin 201541

Website <http://www.oxpa.org.uk>

Facebook Oxford Pedestrians Association - OxPA

Write OxPA, 431 Meadow Lane, Oxford OX4 4ED

National Pedestrians Association 0207 737 4900