



# Walk Talk

Newsletter of Oxford Pedestrians Association  
November 2021

Welcome to Newsletter 140

## Pavement parking still a curse on Oxford



We have reported on the problems caused by parking on pavements many times. The practice has now become normalised in Oxford, so that even in quiet roads with very little traffic, motorists will park over the pavement, presumably thinking that it's more important to give unobstructed passage to a small number of vehicles than to allow pedestrians and wheelchair users to move freely. A bill to outlaw pavement parking, as is the case already in London, is working very slowly through parliament (as reported in Walk Talk 134 of May 2020), and in January this year Oxford City Councillors agreed that the council will now urge the Government to "ban pavement parking as soon as possible". OxPA has stickers that may be placed on the windscreen of cars parked over pavements (email us for details), but these may also be downloaded and printed off from the City Council website at [https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/2243/pavements\\_are\\_for\\_people\\_poster](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/2243/pavements_are_for_people_poster).

(Picture: from the Facebook page of a local flooring firm: their intention was to show how busy they are, but they attracted a number of adverse comments about their parking habits.)

### Responses to local consultations

After 26 years of working on responses to consultations where wording is seen as being of the utmost importance, we have realised that this is not good when fine words in policy documents on both City and County Council lead to little or no meaningful change on the ground for pedestrians. Therefore OxPA has adopted a standard response saying that "...In practice, over the past 26 years, conditions for walkers and wheelchair users in Oxford's urban spaces have become worse, if anything ... We have therefore begun to question whether it is of value for us to respond to these consultations in the detailed and time-consuming way we always have done..

When the time comes that already-existing policy is followed, and walkers and wheelchair users start to be able to get about in comfort and ease in Oxford, we will feel it is valuable to have our say and to spend time on this."

### Thames pedestrian bridge closed

The pedestrian bridge from Grandpont to Friars Wharf has been closed for some time. Deborah reports: "According to the latest local Labour news: the bridge needs to be 'replaced or upgraded to meet modern safety standards for bikes and pedestrians'. They are going for upgrading and 'will be meeting with consultants and officers in the coming weeks to ensure there is a safe and accessible route across the river in place for the winter months'. Wonder when winter starts..."



## 15-Minute neighbourhoods

The Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel is asking people about the amenities they have near their home and what they would like. This is part of a process of increasing active travel – being able to walk or cycle to these facilities, rather than getting in a car or on a bus. The results will be available for your community to use and to inform planning policy. There is a short survey at:

<https://form.jotform.com/212745898967075>.

Deadline for responses is 19th December 2021.

## Update on the (occasionally) rising bollards

We are pleased to see that the rising bollards in Turl Steet appear to be fully functional again, but those in Oriol Square are erratic, with most of the time just one operating. We remain hopeful that the County Council will be able to resolve this continuing problem, spurred on by the direct actions of OxPA supporters.



## Other relevant consultations

e-Scooters have been rolled out across the city, and the County Council is consulting on residents' views: <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/e-scooter-trial-your-views-2021>. Deadline is 15<sup>th</sup> December. One very real issue of concern to us is the parking spaces marked out on pavements.

The present Masterplan for development of the OxPens area is open for consultation:

<https://www.oxpensoxford.uk/nov-updateplans>.

No deadline is specified but the intention is to move to a formal planning application in "Feb/March 2022" so please respond urgently. One issue is the aim to provide 3,000 jobs with only limited housing provision, thus inevitably increasing traffic entering the city.

## Our campaign for accessibility *still* continues



Don, our Treasurer, comments that "North Parade, Oxford, is an example of how not to pedestrianise a road. The road is blocked to wheelchair users by excessively large gates and chairs and tables. The pavement is blocked to wheelchair users by road signs, bicycles and bollards. Oxfordshire County Council should have consulted wheelchair users first."

## Recent meetings: Tim Bearder

On 27<sup>th</sup> November, Tim Bearder, Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet member for transport and the environment, spoke to us about the current transport strategy for Oxford. A full report of the meeting will appear on the OxPA website in due course.

## Oxford Green Fair

The first Green Fair in two years will be held in Oxford Town Hall on Saturday December 4<sup>th</sup>, where OxPA will have a stall from 10am to 4pm. We ask that members volunteer to give an hour or two to being on stall duty - always fun and interesting. Please let us know if you can come and when.

**OxPA's AGM** will be held on Tuesday February 24<sup>th</sup> 2022. We will be electing officers to posts that keep our organisation running and effective.

Please consider standing, and contact Sushila if you are interested in talking about what being elected may involve. You would join a small team of people dedicated to putting pedestrians and wheelchair users at the heart of transport planning in Oxford. Our AGM speakers will be Drs Suzanne Bartington and Felix Leach, who will talk to us about their research into air quality and what we can learn from the lockdown.

## Meetings (all at 7 pm):

**December 2021:** no meeting

**2022:**

**January 25<sup>th</sup>:** OxPA social, details t.b.c.

**February 24<sup>th</sup>:** OxPA AGM, details as above

**March 22<sup>nd</sup>:** Details t.b.c.

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