



Walk Talk

Newsletter of Oxford Pedestrians Association

July / August 2009

Welcome to Newsletter 88 of the Oxford Pedestrians Association

Now is the season of festivals and parties, but this year Cowley Road Carnival was in South Park, rather than closing Cowley Road to through traffic. This is a mixed blessing; everyone had a happy time in South Park, where the grass and trees make for a pleasant open feel, and it was not as hot as asphalt. On the other had it meant that space for traffic was protected, and there was not one day when the public space was used in another way - by the public not in vehicles. Imagine main streets grassed over and planted with trees, and available for public use; what a different society that change would make...

Pavement Parking

The county council is keen to tackle parking problems in East Oxford by making parking on the pavement legal, and painting white lines on the pavements to legitimise this. This would mean that pavements would forever be too narrow for double buggies, or people walking hand-in-hand, or for people stopping to chat to one another, without blocking the footway. OxPA is resisting this move in east Oxford as we have resisted it elsewhere, because it does what has been done for decades now, takes public space away from walkers to give it to vehicle users; in other words, takes it from the vulnerable majority and gives it to the protected minority. Pavements then become yet another vehicle subsidy, and pedestrians lose out. **To resist this measure, please contact Cllr Keith Mitchell, leader of the county council, keith.mitchell@oxfordshire.gov.uk, Ring Oxford 815283.**

New Transport 'Tsar'

Councillor Ian Hudspeth is no longer Oxford's only Transport 'Tsar', although he retains responsibility for Transform Oxford [the proposal to take motorised transport out of several central Oxford streets] and

the city-wide 20 mph scheme. He is now supported by a new Conservative Councillor for Transport, Rodney Rose, representing Wychwood but overseeing central Oxford. All Oxfordshire's Conservative Councillors represent divisions miles away from Central Oxford and yet dictate policy we in Oxford have to live with.

Happy 80th Birthday, Living Streets!

Eighty years ago on August 13th the Pedestrians Association was born in Essex Hall in London [which, fittingly, was also the venue for its supporters conference earlier this year]. **Since 1929, the Pedestrians Association, now 'Living Streets' (LS) has been standing up for pedestrians' rights**, and is rightly proud of what it has achieved, and continues to achieve together with groups like OxPA. When formed, with 2 million cars on our roads, LS fought for 30 mph speed limits, and won. Today, with over 28 million cars on our roads, their anniversary is being marked with a new campaign for 20 mph as a default limit. **Here are a couple of ways that you can help Living Streets celebrate its 80 years:**

Hold a 'Living Street Party' on Your Street

Living Streets will be working nationally with local groups and supporters to organise a series of street parties on weekends during August around the country. Organising a street party is easier than you think. There are street party packs available that include stickers, special LS branded bunting, banners, t-shirts and more! **Reserve now to avoid disappointment!** Streets Alive, an organisation dedicated to promoting street parties, have produced a handy leaflet that guides you through the process of getting your neighbours together and organising your own Living Street Party. Log onto <http://www.streetparty.org.uk/residents/> For more information and support, and to register your street party and reserve a pack, contact Charlotte Gilhooly, Campaigns Assistant on 0207 377 4900 or charlotte.gilhooly@livingstreets.org.uk. For specific questions about the mechanics of organising a street party, contact Chris Gittins, Director, Streets Alive 0117 922 5708 chris@streetsalive.net

Streets of the Past

If you or anyone you know is over the age of 80, Living Streets want to hear from our octogenarians what street life was like before the Pedestrians Association was formed in 1929. **Please send quotes, along with name and location to anna.powell@livingstreets.org.uk 0207 377 4914.**

Tackle Dropped-Kerb Parking

From 1st June 2009, local authorities throughout England and Wales have the ability to issue Penalty Charge Notices [PCNs] to motor vehicles blocking dropped kerbs even in areas with no signage. Previously this was only the case in London. Living Streets and OxPA applaud this move and encourage the Department for Transport [DfT] to similarly empower local authorities to keep all pavements themselves clear of parked cars.

Is the local authority taking steps to ticket cars that block dropped kerbs or ramps? If blocked access is an important issue where you live, it might be a good time to

get in touch with the County Council, reminding them of their new powers, and asking what they will do, and how soon!

New Inn Hall Street is being beautifully paved right across, with cobbled drainage channels along the sides which should also enable blind people to know where the delivery traffic is not going to be. This should mean that pedestrians in future have a higher sense of priority on New Inn Hall Street. The only problem is that cyclists, who always had equal priority on this street, have lost their little signs painted onto the road, which the County Council do not intend to replace. This one omission could mean conflict between cyclists and pedestrians where very little existed before. However, the era of no street signage is upon us, and we have to see where it takes us. **Meanwhile, the new paving looks very fine; let us hope no one ever spits chewing gum on to it!**

Next meetings

There will be no OxPA meetings in July and August. BUT OxPA's summer walk and picnic will take place on Bank Holiday Monday 31st August. Meet on the Town Hall steps at 11.00 to enjoy a walk from our popular book 'Oxford on Foot', to be followed by a picnic [so bring some food too].

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