

OXFORD PEDESTRIANS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO. 73
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2007

Welcome to Issue number 73 of OxPA's Newsletter! A Happy New Year to everyone. Let's hope everyone in Oxford, whether resident, visitor, shopper or worker, will in the coming year enjoy the experience of being in the 'Great Outdoors' that is Oxford's street environment.

1) Wheelie Bins. The City Council is introducing wheelie bins across the City. This has been a controversial move. Whatever the health and recycling pros and cons, there is no doubt that wheelie bins are big, and can cause considerable footway obstructions. In a city with a transient population as big as Oxford's, there is huge potential for short term residents and visitors (as well as the rest of the population) to quite simply use the footway as bin storage. OxPA is adopting a wait and see approach before saying anything about wheelie bins, but if you have views or experiences to share, send them to us please. **For those with e-mail, we can be reached at info@oxpa.org.uk .**

2) The High Street. Following its successful works to de-clutter the western end of High Street, the County Council has set up a steering group to address issues further east, as it progresses works towards Longwall. OxPA has been invited to join the steering group, the first meeting of which will take place on 22nd January (and a full report of the meeting will be given at the OxPA monthly meeting the following day). **If you have experiences of using the High Street that you think should be addressed, or you have views about what the next phase of works should deliver, do telephone Paul on 426805, or e-mail OxPA at info@oxpa.org.uk .**

3) New Westgate Centre approved. In late December the government Secretary of State, Ruth Kelly, confirmed that the planning application for the £300 million refurbishment, part redevelopment and extension of the existing Westgate Shopping Centre in Oxford city centre would not be 'called in'. Oxford City Council will now be responsible for issuing final planning permission for the scheme.

The site, redeveloped by Capital Shopping, will include a John Lewis store, other chain stores, new cafes and restaurants, 127 private and social apartments, a smaller library. But despite improved public transport links, Queen Street will not be pedestrianised, and much more traffic will be seen all day on the Botley and Abingdon Roads. Work on the main construction contract could start in spring 2008 and the completed shops open to the public in autumn 2011. OxPA has been among the consultees, and we will continue to press for high quality public realm developments which contribute to a more walkable city.

4) Next 20's Plenty Action Day – Wednesday 25th April. Following the last national 20's Plenty Action Day, OxPA and cycling group Cyclox have established '**Life Begins At 20**', Oxford's own campaign for 20mph speed limits throughout the city. There is plenty of evidence to support the case for 20mph speed limits; collisions between drivers and vulnerable road users are reduced, and the severity of collisions is reduced too. There can be less street clutter, and parents feel able to let the children out by themselves once more. We hope as many streets in Oxford will have '20's Plenty' and '**Life Begins at 20**' posters on display, and perhaps even an active presence on street during 20's Plenty Action Day. **Phone Paul Cullen (426805) ,for a brochure or download everything you need from the 'Life Begins at 20' website www.lifebeginsat20.org.uk.** Do let Paul have your details, so that you can be kept up to date as we approach the April action day.

5) The Police's Safer Streets Campaign. Thames Valley Police have recently published some results of their Safer Streets campaign. They say that the campaign, which initially had a three pronged approach (focusing on alcohol related violent crime, robbery of young people and possession and use of guns by young people) has seen an overall decrease in violent crime during its first six months. Vandalism is also now being tackled, and there are plans to tackle knife crime through 'Operation Blunt'. OxPA supports the police in these campaigns. If you have views about areas which they should target in order to achieve safer streets for everybody, let OxPA know.

6) Can we publish your favourite local walk? 'Walks in Hidden Oxford' is the title of a small book written by a Marston resident John Scott. John has kindly given permission for his book of four walks to be updated and published by OxPA, bringing the delights of 'unknown' Oxford to people's attention and helping raise funds for OxPA at the same time. We want to add more walks, as well as to 'test' John's four walks. Do you have a favourite Oxford walk that you would like to share? Or would you like to test a walk? We want to focus on more than the most popular places and sights that are already covered by the many guides published over the years. Oxford is changing, and we hope you can suggest some walk routes that will help bring those changes to people's notice. **Contact Corinne on 779663 if you can offer help.**

7) Oxford Health Walks. If you want to improve your health and well-being, there is no better way to do so than by walking. Oxford City Primary Care Trust is developing a number of Health Walks so that people can walk in the company of others. The arrangements are as follows:

Kennington – Monday 10am (longer route) – contact Rosemary Aldgate on 735419

Kennington – Thursday 10am (shorter route) – contact Rosemary Aldgate on 735419

Blackbird Leys – Monday 2pm – contact number 467020

Summertown – Tuesday 10am – contact 552295

Botley - Wednesday 9.30 am – contact Briony Newport on 246497

West Oxford – Wednesday 11.30am – contact Susanna Pressel on 554001

For more information on present or planned Health Walks contact Kate King, Public Health Manager on 226844 or e-mail her at kate.king2@oxfordshirepct.nhs.uk .

The Primary Care Trust would like to train more walks leaders so that more Health Walks can be developed. If you are interested, call Maggie Dent, Health Promotion Manager, on 01295 814185 or e-mail her at maggie.dent@oxfordshirepct.nhs.uk

OUR NEXT MEETINGS – 7pm on fourth Tuesday of the month at the Town Hall Tuesday 23rd January, Meetings Planning. Our experiments with a spring walk and summer picnic were popular in 2006, and we intend to plan more; but when would be the most convenient days and times for OxPA to meet? Is 7pm on a weekday convenient? What about some daytime meetings on Saturdays? Come along on **Tuesday 23rd, 7pm at the Town Hall**, and help plan our 2007 programme. Our February meeting will be at **7pm, Town Hall, on Tuesday 27th February**

Contact Numbers (all are Oxford – prefix 01865)

Paul Cullen (Chair).....426805

Corinne Grimley-Evans (Secretary)779663

Ray Jones (Membership Secretary and Treasurer)865070

Michaela Philbin (Stalls).....201541

Sushila Dhall (Newsletter Editor).....553415

National Pedestrians Association (Living Streets).....0207 820 1010