



Walk Talk

Newsletter of Oxford Pedestrians Association

October 2016

Welcome to Newsletter 119



photo courtesy of OCC

Active Healthy Travel in LPT4

At our September meeting, Robert Freshwater, Senior Transport Planner at Oxfordshire County Council, spoke about the Active Healthy Travel component of LTP 4's Oxford Transport Strategy (OTS). OTS has 3 components: mass transit; walking/cycling; and managing traffic and traffic demand. The aims, to be achieved incrementally by 2035, are for walking to be pleasant and comfortable throughout the city and district centres, and cycling to be safe and accessible to all. Responding to disappointment that the completion date was so far in the future, Robert explained that work would start immediately but there are challenges that could take years to overcome, including increased building in Oxfordshire, where the population is expected to double over 20 years. Shoppers in the Westgate Centre are expected to increase from 5 million a year to 16 million but it is hoped that many will arrive by P&R, rail (to rise by 2 million per year), walking and bus. A zero emission zone starting in the city centre will expand over time to include Hythe Bridge St, George St, Broad St, St Giles, and Oxpens, all ultimately to be closed to private through traffic. Significantly for our St Giles campaign, St Giles is envisaged as a wide open space, free from general traffic and with an electric tram. An average of 47,000 pedestrians per day currently pass through Queen St. for which the short term plan proposes two-way cycling for an experimental period of 18 months, with a bus turnaround and zebra crossings at the junction of Worcester St and Park End St. Questions were raised about too many and too large buses on the potentially beautiful St Aldates, which is currently a horrible experience for pedestrians; it is grimy, crowded, and polluted, with pavements too narrow and in bad repair. Utilities companies leave carriageways in an unsafe state, with trip hazards and pot holes. Doubts were expressed about cyclists on Queen St taking proper account of hard-of-hearing, slower, or very young walkers. Getting across Oxford by public transport remains a problem (a bus going from east to north Oxford along Longwall Street is envisaged), as does adequate provision for wheelchair users (eg more pavement extensions, better pavement repair etc.). Numbers of people travelling into and through Oxford will rise, but general traffic should not increase as walking, cycling, and extended public transport improve accessibility. Robert was thanked for a full and informative presentation and knowledgeable responses to questions and comments.

Current Consultation on Queen Street:

includes removal of all buses, cycling permitted in both directions at all times and a new bus-turning facility: For full details visit <https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/QueenStreetProject/consultationHome>
Deadline for responses October 14th.

Broad Street lights (continued)

In our last Newsletter we commented on the shrouding of the lights at the east end of Broad Street, so we are pleased to report that OxPA has now been consulted on whether this temporary improvement should become permanent. Our response to the interim proposals was to welcome removing lights that had no pedestrian phase and which caused excessive delay without enhancing safety. Observations during recent weeks suggested that the absence of lights were not a problem for pedestrians or cyclists, possibly because the uncertainty factor results in more courteous and cautious behaviour by drivers at a junction where most traffic is on foot or cycle. It is hoped that low-cost interim measures, removal of the signals and distinctive surfacing at the entry points, will be followed by a more permanent design when funding becomes available.

AGM Tuesday October 25th 7pm Town Hall

Our AGM, for members only, will start promptly at 7pm. Current officers are willing to stand again, but **new nominations** are welcomed. At 7.30pm our guest speaker, **Network Rail's Communications Manager Amy Harland, will speak on "Network Rail - Working in Oxford"**. All are welcome.

Air Pollution: Royal Geographical Society Report

There has been little improvement in UK air pollution caused by road transport in the last twenty years, according to a recent study. Professor Graham Pankhurst said: "Air pollution is perhaps the grossest manifestation of a general failure of UK transport planning to take the environmental impacts of transport choices sufficiently into account. Road transport causes over 95% of air pollution in designated "Air Quality Management Areas", and current estimates suggest that over 50,000 deaths a year can be linked to air pollution. "Currently air pollution is a shared priority between Defra and DfT, but shared priority does not mean equal priority". The study also points to a problematic policy 'tone' that "continues to provide for the private car as central to national transport policy," as well as a lack of regulatory and financial support for alternative modes of transport and for local authorities looking to introduce air improvement measures.

International Walk to School Month

This month, organisations all over the world will be working to get more children walking to school, aiming to promote healthier habits, protect the environment, enhance the local community and economy, reduce public health costs, increase safety and improve air quality. All these aims are thoroughly endorsed by OxPA.

Medical Royal Colleges report on CWIS

A recent submission by three Medical Royal Colleges to DfT on the Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) concluded that the proposed level of funding for CWIS will be inadequate to achieve its aims of improving health through better air quality, and reduced obesity and long-term medical conditions. The Colleges recommend that health impact assessments should be incorporated into the strategy, that CWIS must be joined up with existing government health initiatives, and that initiatives to promote walking and cycling must be coupled with strategies to increase safety of active travel. The estimated cost of physical inactivity in the UK is £1.06bn but increased walking and cycling could save NHS £17bn over the next 20 years.

"Adding lanes to solve traffic congestion is like loosening your belt to solve obesity" Glen Hiemstra of *Futurist.com*

Green Fair 3 December 10am Town Hall

Put the date in your diary and contact Felicity on Ox.251212 if you would like to help at the OxPA stall.

Meetings:

October 25th Town Hall 7pm. AGM, followed by Amy Harland "Network Rail - Working in Oxford"

November 22nd Town Hall 7pm. Guest speaker **Laurie-Jane Taylor** : The challenges and opportunities, managing the city centre'.

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