



Walk Talk

Newsletter of Oxford Pedestrians Association
May 2021

Welcome to Newsletter 138

Bollards to the lot of them



Thanks to Klub Kakofenny newsletter for strapline.

After 3-4 years of asking the County Council to repair the rising bollards, which should prevent motorised traffic from rat-running through Broad St, Turl St and Oriel Square, OxPA supporters decided to become the bollards themselves. Each week we choose random days to put on our OxPA high-vis jackets and take the place of the bollards for an hour, peacefully forming an obstacle to drivers wishing to illegally pass the signs prohibiting access. Unable to drive through, some drivers have behaved shockingly, with rage, heckling, abuse, swearing, driving at us, and threatening us. Three times drivers have phoned the police to have the human bollards arrested, only to find that the police uphold the lawfulness of what we are doing, and turn the drivers back themselves. Not an action for the nervous, nevertheless we will continue our campaign until the bollards are repaired. An FOI request has shown that since 2014 the County Council has spent almost £600,000 'maintaining' non-functional bollards. The County Council also revealed that the issue lies with the broadband connection between the ANPR cameras and rising bollards. Our actions have gained us widespread coverage, and much support on the ground from residents and walkers in the city. We are grateful to Thames Valley Police who have supported our right to peaceful protest and upheld the lawfulness of this particular Action.

Keith Holly's legacy – ideas needed

OxPA has a generous legacy for urban walking improvements from late member Keith Holly. We propose giving two benches to each arterial route (Woodstock, Banbury, Botley, Cowley, Iffley etc Rds) into the city centre. Please send us photos or clear descriptions of places where a bench would enhance the walking route without compromising pavement space (e.g. by a bus shelter or where pavements are particularly wide).

OxPA's current and future campaigns

For the rising bollards campaigns, this will mainly be direct action and publicity of the direct action via social media and traditional media. We have already had great coverage on twitter and Facebook and the Oxford Mail, Oxford Times, The Times, Jack FM radio and local television. The issue now is, how can we best leverage this publicity to put pressure on councillors to make the changes we want? We urge members to please send us their ideas.

The accessibility campaign will look at the accessibility of pavements, towpaths and bridges for wheelchair users and the general public. Tackling pavement parking and pavements blocked by café/restaurant seating will be part of this campaign. We would like this campaign to include some direct action and media publicity, and other aspects of campaigning. Again, we would love members to please send us their ideas about how and where we should campaign. Also, let us know how you would like to be involved.



Inaccessibility at Iffley Lock – photo by Don O’Neal

Co-production: a collaborating approach to Banbury Rd-Woodstock Rd corridors redesign

The County Council have started using Co-production to engage with the public in looking at solutions for transport problems. It involves people who use, or are affected by, services being consulted, and working together from the start to the end of any project that affects them. It is a technique previously used in health and social care provision. OxPA, together with Cyclox, Oxford Civic Society and N. Oxford Neighbourhood Planning Forum reps, the local bus companies and City and County officers have had three productive, collaborative meetings looking at the issues, and discussing solutions. So far, it has resulted in a more radical re-imagined street design. Highlights (from an OxPA perspective):

- the Stagecoach rep (who has been an outspoken advocate for walking and cycling throughout) suggesting conceding road space for buses at a pinchpoint on Woodstock Rd to enable a segregated two-way cycle lane; and
- Cyclox endorsing OxPA's request that extended pavement treatments at side-road junctions be broad and straight across the widest part and not slightly set back, away from the direct desire-line.

Let's hope what we're offering as best-practice solutions are implemented.

Electric scooters are coming to your area

Following the trial of e-scooters in the Headington Area, and long before the consultation period has finished, the County Council are proposing to introduce e-scooters to the whole of the city. Most concern in the Headington area has come from the parking of these scooters on pavements,

causing obstruction for pedestrians and particularly for wheelchair users, and hazards for the visually impaired. Given that these e-scooters are treated legally as motor vehicles, we have asked the County Council to explain why they are not being parked on the roads, where they belong.

Photo thanks to Stephanie Jenkins



Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

To the great disappointment of local campaigners, Walton St has been re-opened to through motorised traffic, with the community told to get together behind a plan for traffic restraint so that the County Council can proceed with it without huge amounts of opposition. Residents of streets north of the closure were upset by increased rat-running on their streets, and, as usual, traders wanted the drivers back. Meanwhile LTNs in Cowley and Florence Park areas are increasingly popular with local residents who are enjoying more peaceful and safe public spaces. There are plans to put LTNs in St Clements and Divinity Road areas, and three areas in Headington, again cutting off rat-runs whilst enabling access. Initially controversial, as the LTNs settle we are sure that many people will come to embrace the new-found sense of peaceful space and safety.

Meetings:

May 25th 7 pm (by Zoom): Discussion: Direct Action, and the 17 benches.

June 22nd: Walk – details t.b.c.

July 27th: Walk, Barton Park, meet 7 pm

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