



Walk Talk

Newsletter of Oxford Pedestrians Association
February 2022

Welcome to Newsletter 141

OxPA's Bollards Success!



OxPA members celebrated with Bucks Fizz at the Oriel Square bollards, now working after the end of our successful Human Bollards campaign. This time last year we thought up how to move to direct action, after 26 years of campaigning had led to little change on the ground. We agreed to put together the actions of a small number of people with social media, which worked well. The irony is that it was not just the bravery of the Human Bollards that got the media attention, but the abusive and threatening behaviour of the drivers trying to pass illegally that attracted the attention of the BBC, and ensured widespread condemnation of the drivers' behaviour. Our Facebook page became lively and many people started to follow OxPA, meaning more people joined. The pressure this put on the County Council ensured that the bollards were finally repaired. Now we turn our attention to accessibility of all places to people in wheelchairs, and the narrowness of many of Oxford's pavements, and will try to tackle these as we move forward, again using filming, photographs, and social media as our core tools.

The new Highway Code

The amended Highway Code came into force on 29th January. We responded in October 2020 to the consultation on the changes to be made.



The new Code establishes a hierarchy of road users, with pedestrians at the top: the underlying principle is that those with potential to cause the most harm are subservient to those more vulnerable. The biggest change for pedestrians is that we have right of way when crossing at a junction: "when people are crossing or waiting to cross at a junction, other traffic should give way; if people have started crossing and traffic wants to turn into the road, the people crossing have priority and the traffic should give way; people driving, riding a motorcycle or cycling must give way to people on a zebra crossing and people walking and cycling on a parallel crossing".

There has already been (predictable) backlash from motorists, with the President of the AA

claiming that drivers are "likely to get hit by another vehicle from behind" if they stop on busy roads to allow someone to cross. We would be interested to hear your experiences. The experience of your Newsletter Editor so far is that most car drivers either have not read the new rules, or are not interested in abiding by them. Photo from <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022>

North Parade update

In WalkTalk 140 we reported on issues for pedestrians and wheelchair users in North Parade, despite it having been recently closed to traffic. Unfortunately these issues continue.

OxPA member Don O'Neal has recently experienced the pavement in North Parade being blocked by one of the shops, with a bench being used as a vegetable stall. On a number of occasions the shop was asked not to block the pavement. It was pointed out that the bench was a hazard for wheelchair users and for blind and partially-sighted people, but the shop continued to block the pavement.

The pavement by the shop has a dropped kerb, and to go past the shop on the pavement a wheelchair user needed to be as close to the shop front as possible, otherwise the wheelchair slips off the pavement into the road due to the camber. Also, the path on the other side of the street cannot be used as it is blocked by a bollard and the road is blocked by gates.



In the end, a formal complaint had to be made to Oxford City Council requesting the shop be instructed not to block the pavement. When last visited, the pavement in North Parade was no longer being blocked. We hope that is still the case. Pavements should never be blocked or obstructed.

OxPA at the Green Fair

At the Green Fair in the Town Hall on 4th December the OxPA stall proved popular, and we recruited 6 new members, despite the fair being very quiet. Many people bought our Pavement Parking stickers, and many others commented

that they would like us to write a new book of walks, having had our original one for some time. Altogether our first stall in two years felt like a great success, and we hope to be able to run more stalls in 2022.

Survey of Oxford's green spaces

The City Council is conducting a survey of green spaces: https://consultation.oxford.gov.uk/community-services/parks-survey/consult_view/, closing date 31st March. It's your chance to have your say on our nature reserves and parks.

OxPA's AGM will be held (on Zoom: link will be circulated) at 7 pm on Tuesday February 22nd 2022 (NB not 24th as reported in the last Walk Talk). Reports from the Chair and the Treasurer have been sent out by email. We will be electing officers to posts that keep our organisation running and effective. We need volunteers to take on the roles of Secretary and Newsletter Editor. The Secretary post can be paid (at £10/hour, for up 6 hours a month). You need to be able to take minutes and keep them safely, attend meetings (one committee meeting and one general meeting a month), and send notifications to members as and when needed. Please consider standing, and contact us at oxford.pedestrians.association@gmail.com if you are interested. 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 at 7:30 pm will be **Drs Suzanne Bartington** and **Felix Leach** of the Universities of Birmingham and Oxford respectively, who will talk to us about the research project OxAria, looking at air quality in Oxford, and what we can learn from the lockdown.

Meetings (all at 7 pm):

February 22nd: OxPA AGM, details as above

March 22nd: Details t.b.c.

Contacts:

Chair: Sushila Dhall, 01865 790783

Secretary: Chris Cowley until the AGM

Treasurer and Membership: Don O'Neal

Newsletter Editor: Keith Frayn until the AGM

Stalls goods: Deborah Glass-Woodin

Social media coordinator: Cinderella Lingwood until the AGM

Email: oxford.pedestrians.association@gmail.com

Website: www.oxpa.org.uk

Facebook: Oxford Pedestrians Association - OxPA

Twitter: @OxfPedestrians

Write to: OxPA, 12 Stable Close, Rewley Park, Oxford OX1 2RF.

Living Streets: 0207 377 4900