



Walk Talk

Newsletter of Oxford Pedestrians Association
July 2023

Welcome to Newsletter 146

Botley Road audit



Botley Road is currently closed to traffic at the railway bridge for six months. In order to find out what the closure means for pedestrians, OxPA held our first outdoor meeting of 2023 there in April, when the road had been closed for a fortnight.

We gathered on Frideswide Square on the wide (shared) pavement in front of the Said Business School, but reaching the tunnel on the south side of the bridge required crossing the square, not always easy. And the tunnel has never been the most welcoming space - dark and covered with graffiti.

Two weeks into the closure, most people seemed to have got used to it, although a minority of cyclists were riding through rather than pushing.



The photo shows a food delivery driver pushing their bike, and we saw a motorcyclist dismount and push - but there are pinch points by the lampposts. Network Rail has provided marshals who were on duty at each end of the tunnel, and also at Mill Street where there are turning vehicles. Approaching Osney Bridge, the pavement gets very narrow.

Pedestrians who need to catch a bus from town must now walk to St Frideswide's Church, nearly half a mile. The westbound bus stop has very little space for passengers to wait, while on the opposite side of Botley Road, signs warning motorists about the closure also serve to obstruct the pavement at the bus stop.

Our group noted that the pedestrian crossings are poorly located: there is a desire line between the church and West Oxford Community Centre, but the crossing is offset 40 yards, and at Ferry Hinksey Road, reaching the lights-controlled crossing requires a similarly long detour.



We took the main road (Bridge Street) on to Osney Island. The road is wide here, with space for cars dominating the access to a small island, yet the pavement on the east side is cobbled, making it inaccessible for anyone using a wheelchair. The pavements in Osney are narrow with a poor camber towards the kerb. There are few front gardens, so bikes are left obstructing the pavement - but there is plenty of on-street car parking, some of which could be exchanged for multiple bike racks.

We finished at a riverside pub, The Punter. The main entrance has three steps and no handrail; there is a small ramp into the beer garden, but the nearest dropped kerb is all the way around the corner! Nonetheless, our group enjoyed a well-earned drink in the garden.

Network Rail appear to be active in monitoring the works. They have given the railway tunnel a fresh coat of paint (inevitably attracting new graffiti!) and are making arrangements to relocate the westbound bus stop. You can sign up for their email updates at <https://lineside.networkrail.co.uk/oxfordshireconnect>

Article written by Owen McKnight

Oxford Open Doors – request for volunteer couriers

We have been approached by Oxford Preservation Trust to co-ordinate, once more, a cohort of volunteers to deliver, **on foot or by bicycle**, venue packs for the sites participating in this year's [Oxford Open Doors](#) weekend, taking place from the 9th – 10th September.

OxPA members were a great help with this last year and OPT included the OxPA logo when thanking organisations for supporting Oxford Open Doors 2022. If you are willing to assist as a volunteer courier, please contact (Ruth Davis) at harefields@hotmail.com for further details. Volunteering would involve collecting a few donation buckets and venue packs from OPT offices at 10

Turn Again Lane, OX1 1QL towards the end of August and delivering them on foot or by bicycle before 4th September. The collection buckets are for city centre venues within easy walking distance of OPT offices. Delivery of venue packs further from the city centre is allocated to volunteers on bicycles.

The venue packs are A4 envelopes containing information and leaflets for the participating venues. There's no need to commit at this stage. However, if those potentially interested can let me know, then I'll send them further details.

HIF1 road rejected

Oxfordshire County Council last week, against the planning advice of County officers (John Disley and Owen Jenkins), rejected the proposal to build a big

new road in south Oxfordshire dubbed the HIF1. This is a triumph of groups working together, and courageous councillors voting against officers' advice. As one of the groups opposing the road building OxPA cited County policies to reduce car dependency and promote walking, cycling and public transport use - and it was the departure from County policies that led to the rejection of the road building plans.

JR Hospital pedestrian audit

OxPA audited access at the JR hospital site on foot and found it a positively hostile environment for pedestrians, who have no direct routes from the entrance to the site to the main JR hospital entrance, and whose needs are at or near the bottom of the road users' hierarchy. Pavements on the JR site are narrow, sloped, dirty, neglected and indirect.

We can make our findings available on request to members - please get in touch if you are interested.

Headington Festival stall

On Sunday 4th June we had a stall at Headington Festival. As always our pavement parking stickers were the best seller. We noticed that more people than usual seemed angry about pavements and road issues, and had to explain repeatedly that we are not a part of the Council but a small lobby group doing our best with our small resources.

OxPA August Social

Please come to our social on **Tuesday August 15th at 7pm at the Friends Meeting House** on St Giles, where we can chat, share refreshments, and think about current issues and consultations in an informal and relaxed way. Councillor Coyne from Northfield will be attending to let us know about her campaign to make walking easier for elderly people.

In addition OxPA committee will be carrying out a survey of members attending the social event to ask for views on whether cycling between 10am and 6pm should be allowed on Queen St and Cornmarket.

Volunteer vacancy: Newsletter Editor

OxPA is looking for a **Newsletter Editor** to put together our quarterly newsletter. The job is not onerous as a template is available, and all articles are provided each quarter. You would be a member of OxPA's committee which is a small but hard-working group at the core of the organisation. Please get in touch if you think this role may be for you.

Volunteer vacancy: Stalls Officer

OxPA is looking for a **Stalls Officer** to store our stall items (photos, merchandise, leaflets, our banner) which do not take up much space), and to ensure they are available for our 2-3 stalls per year. Please

let us know if you can help. A bonus is you get to be on the Committee and meet the core group once a month for a management meeting, deciding what we do and how and when we do it. Please contact us at oxford.pedestrians.association@gmail.com if you are interested or would like to ask any questions about either of these roles.

Contacts

Sushila Dhall: Chair

Don O'Neal: Treasurer and Membership

Stalls: Vacant, volunteer needed

Owen McKnight: Social Media Co-ordinator

Jamie Blomfield: Secretary

Enquiries:

oxford.pedestrians.association@gmail.com