

Wirral Pedestrians Association

Newsletter



Number 5 November 2013

Campaign for 20mph speed limits

We can report two items of good news. In October, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) updated its guidance on enforcement of speed limits. Enforcement will be via a new speed awareness course for 20mph speed limits, by fixed penalty notices and by summons. 20mph speed limits will be enforced in the same way as other limits. Previously, ACPO recommended that 20mph limits would be enforced only where traffic calming measures had been implemented.

An area in Pensby is due to have 20mph speed limits implemented soon. Lack of funding is holding up further implementation elsewhere.

Merseyside worst for pedestrian casualties

The Department for Transport recently published the road casualty figures for 2012. Nationally, serious or fatal injuries to pedestrians increased for the second year running; and serious or fatal injuries to cyclists increased for the 8th year running. Car occupant casualties continued to decline.

For pedestrians, Merseyside was the worst police area in Great Britain for serious or fatal injuries per head of population, with an 11% increase in 2012 over 2011. Merseyside was also worst for serious injuries to child cyclists, with a rate *three times* the national average, and serious injuries to cyclists reached a 16-year high.

A vision of zero serious road casualties

In response to these 2012 road casualty figures, Wirral Pedestrians Association has joined with Merseyside Cycle Campaign in producing a document titled *Vision Zero Merseyside*. We feel that we should be aiming for *zero* serious or fatal injuries to pedestrians and cyclists, since they are not the ones who are creating the dangers on our roads. The document is available on our website and that of Merseyside Cycle Campaign. We have published outline proposals and we will be developing these over the coming months.

Problems around the Wirral

Our correspondent in **Oxton** has written:

Where are the children hiding? The calm of what should be a quiet leafy street in the relatively peaceful oasis of Oxton Village is frequently disturbed by thoughtless speeding motorists. Bennett's Hill and its continuation Victoria Mount run up the hill to the centre of the village. They are entirely residential apart from the historic Shrewsbury Arms halfway up the hill and at a junction of five also totally residential streets. The population of the streets is a mixture of ages but one welcome development in recent years is the arrival of a number of families with small children - who are never seen on the streets. And hardly surprising. Vehicles often race up the hill at reckless speeds especially on the one-way narrow second half where householders' vehicles are parked and visibility is limited. There have been two trial display periods of 20mph posters but these, in the opinion of residents, appeared to make little or no difference; hugely excessive breaches of 20mph - and also of 30mph - were and are witnessed on many occasions. The solution? There has to be some physical system of pavement design to force slower speeds. A roundabout outside the Shrewsbury Arms could also be effective (and prevent the occasional errant drinker from leaving the pub car park in the wrong direction down the one way street). Posters and exhortations simply don't work. One day soon, unless action is taken, there may be a reduction in the numbers of children living on the street. Or perhaps they will have all hidden for ever.

In **Heswall**, one of our members who has a visual impairment has difficulty crossing the roads near his home because of motor vehicles exceeding the speed limit. He has asked for action from Wirral Council, but has been told that the area is not a priority *because no one has been injured there yet*.

In **Moreton**, the problems facing residents wanting to walk are vehicles parked partially or even completely on the pavements, and shop displays obstructing pavements. We have heard that it has been hard to persuade police and council officers to take any action.

£35 million for road-widening and junction schemes in Merseyside

Whereas there is little or no public money allocated for pedestrian or cycle safety, several large schemes are planned around Merseyside to widen carriageways and alter junctions in an attempt to deal with congestion which is causing some motorists some delays at peak times.

Illegal parking on pavements

The Association's recommendations for tackling illegal parking on pavements have been finalised and sent to Wirral Council's Chief Executive, the Merseyside Chief Constable and the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner (Jane Kennedy). So far, responses have been slow, and after 2 months, we have received just a partial response from Merseyside Police and two acknowledgements.

Cases of illegal parking by police and council officers have continued. In the worst, the Council driver delivering to Hoylake Libray avoided parking on the double yellow lines by parking on the crossing zigzags and on the pavement, when he could have parked in the Library car park.



Meetings - all welcome

The Association Committee has now been meeting for two years, and the basic details such as constitution and bank account have been sorted out. From now on, we will be making our regular meetings open to all members since most matters on the agenda are of general interest. So why not come along to Wetherspoons in West Kirby on the first Wednesday morning of alternate months. The next meeting is due on 8th January at 10:30, but if intending to come, please check the week before in case of rearrangement. For non-members to join costs only £2.

Living Streets Campaign on crossing times

Living Streets (the national pedestrians charity) has launched its latest campaign: *Give Us Time To Cross*. Lights-controlled crossings are programmed according to the Department for Transport's assumptions on walking speeds. But many people, especially older people or those with disabilities cannot walk at this speed and cannot cross in the time allowed. They can be intimidated by impatient motorists revving their engines or creeping forward. You can write to your MP to support the campaign - details are on the Living Streets website.

What Really Matters consultation

Wirral Council is consulting on cuts in services (the *What Really Matters* consultation). One item that is a concern is a proposal to do away with gritting bins that residents can use for their local pavements. You can register your opposition to this via completing a paper copy of the consultation booklet (available at libraries) or by responding online. We feel that there should be more gritting of pavements, not less (some councils grit footways routinely, to reduce falls and fractures).

New bridge over Rhyl harbour

Outside the region, a spectacular new bridge over the harbour in Rhyl opened recently. Limited to pedestrians and cyclists, this closes a critical gap in the north Wales off-road Sustrans network.



Contributions invited for next newsletter

Are you experiencing a problem getting around on foot in your area? Let us know and we will aim to publicize it in our next newsletter, due in February.

Contacts

Chair: Geoff Dormand

Secretary: Ian Campbell 0151 625 1449

Treasurer: Victoria Doran

Email: wirralpedestrians@gmail.com

Website: www.wirralpedestrians.org.uk

Living Streets www.livingstreets.org.uk