

Wirral Pedestrians Association Newsletter



Number 4 August 2013

Annual General Meeting 13 April 2013

At the AGM the following members were elected to the Committee: Geoff Dormand, Helen McCall, Ian Campbell, Ian Gilmour, Keith Dawson, (Cllr) Mike Sullivan, Paul Wiggins and Victoria Doran. Sgt Paul Mountford of Merseyside Police Collision Reduction Team attended and described his work including the Community Speedwatch initiative (see below). Problems discussed at the AGM included the difficulties faced by people with visual impairment in being obstructed by street furniture (posts, bollards and 'A' boards), and in crossing the road. A common experience was that "nobody seemed to want to know".

At the subsequent committee meeting, officers were re-elected as follows: Chair: Geoff Dormand; Secretary: Ian Campbell; and Treasurer: Victoria Doran. Sadly, we have since learned that Geoff Dormand has suffered a stroke, but we understand that he is making a good recovery. We send him our best wishes.

The campaigning priorities for the year will be campaigning in favour of 20 mph speed limits and against illegal parking on pavements

Affiliation with Living Streets

Wirral Pedestrians Association is now a Living Streets Affiliated Group. Living Streets is the national charity working to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets where people want to walk - see the website: www.livingstreets.org.uk. Living Streets produces a regular free email newsletter - sign up at www.livingstreets.org.uk/enews. Living Streets is currently running a Save our Lollipop People campaign.

Association Meeting in October/November

We are planning a general meeting in late October / early November on a topic to be decided - further details soon.

Progress on 20 mph speed limits on Wirral residential roads

Wirral Council has been putting up signs for the four areas with 20 mph speed limits (enforceable by the police). They are in Rock Ferry, Bromborough, Liscard and Moreton.

Read more on the Council's website <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/transport-and-streets/roads-highways-and-pavements/traffic-management/20-mph-speed-limits>

At this year's Bikeathon, Chris Boardman showed



his support for the lower limits.

National 20 mph campaigns

The national 20'sPlentyForUs campaign now has 205 local groups around the UK, an increase of 60 in the last year. More and more councils (including Liverpool and Cheshire West & Chester) are moving towards 20 mph speed limits in all residential areas. At the national 20mph conference in Coventry in May, Catherine Purcell of the University of South Wales reported on her research that has found that the visual system of children is not sufficiently developed to be able to judge speed accurately, so no amount of "education" of primary school children will enable them to cope with fast vehicles. Elderly people were also found to have poor speed perception, again indicating that slower speeds are needed. Drivers in favour of slower speeds can start driving at slower speeds now - they don't have to wait for a reduction in the legal maximum.

Illegal parking on pavements

More national organisations have joined campaigns against parking on pavements. The Leonard Cheshire Disability organisation is supporting the Living Streets campaign. One of its members commented "pavement parking is one of the big issues that can stop me from going out and being independent. It makes me feel unsafe as I have no guarantee that I will be able to get around the streets safely on my own." Age UK and Civic Voice have also joined the campaign.



We would like to congratulate Wirral Council and Merseyside Police for launching their new scheme to tackle parking on pavements. The campaign features a leaflet placed on vehicles which council or police officers deem to be causing an obstruction. Persistent offenders face being fined. There are more details on the Council website at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/news/18-07-2013/ticket-campaign-targets-pavement-parkers>

Merseyside Police has helped to clarify the law on parking on pavements via a change to its website. This now includes the statement that it is an offence to drive on to a pavement (as well the offence of causing an obstruction), and so it is illegal to park on a pavement except in an emergency or where signs permit it, whether or not there is an obstruction.



Our last newsletter included a photograph of a TNT van parked across a Hamilton Square pavement. The company responded very promptly to our contact, and has informed all the drivers of the depot that the parking was not acceptable. The driver has voluntarily made a donation to charity as an apology.

Members of the Association have also had some success with Royal Mail, Tesco, Sainsburys and Morrisons. After contact via phone, email and Twitter, managers have made commitments to stop delivery vans parking on pavements. Of course, words are cheap, and so we will be monitoring the behaviour of the drivers of these and other companies.

We have reviewed all the comments in response to our proposals to tackle illegal parking on pavements and have decided to convert them to recommendations. We will be seeking support from a number of organisations.

Police-Community Speedwatch

Merseyside Police is asking for Wirral volunteers to help curb speeding drivers. The Community Speedwatch scheme recruits volunteers to monitor motorists' speed using radar guns. Motorists found to be speeding are sent warning letters that explain the problems that speeding causes. Persistent offenders can receive a visit from a police officer. The volunteers are accompanied by police officers at all times and are given training before they begin their work. Find out more from the Merseyside Police website:

www.merseyside.police.uk or contact Carolyne Hankey on 0151 606 5491.

Latest (2012) national road casualties

In June, the DfT published a summary of the road casualties of 2012. There was an increase of 1% to 5,979 in the total of pedestrians killed or seriously injured (KSI). This follows a 5% increase in 2011. The total cyclist KSI casualties increased by 5% (the eighth increase in a row). There was a further fall of 2% in car occupant KSI casualties.

New government roads funding ignores pedestrians

In July, the Government published its plans to spend £50 billion on roads, but these plans ignore pedestrians. We feel that "essential infrastructure" includes children being able to walk safely to school.

Free email newsletter list

If you have received this newsletter indirectly, you can in future have it sent free by email - see the website. You can also join as a member.

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