

Wirral Pedestrians Association Newsletter



Number 7 Autumn 2014

Walk around Hoylake



In May, as part of Wirral's Walking Festival, we led a guided walk around Hoylake. Despite the autumnal weather, we had a good turnout and took in many of the older buildings in Hoylake.

Problems continue from illegal parking on pavements

Problems from illegal parking on pavements continue around the Wirral. We have been contacted by a Birkenhead resident who is registered blind and wrote to support our campaigning:

I have experienced many situations where I have had to step onto a busy road nearly getting knocked down in order to continue my journey because a vehicle is parked on the pavement. Will it take a blind person being killed to help change the law because that's what will happen? Pavements are there for pedestrians use only, not vehicles, no matter what the reason. I look forward to safer streets for everyone, especially those with disabilities.

Meanwhile, illegal driving and parking around Greasby Junior School in Mill Lane is causing problems when children are being collected. The speed limit in the vicinity of the school is 30 mph, but many drivers exceed it, or use mobile phones. Cars are parked on the zigzag markings or half on the pavement, and some vehicles have been witnessed mounting the kerb and driving along the pavement in front of the school in order to bypass the congestion in the carriageway, even while children are coming out of the school gates. The Police have been contacted, but a single visit on one day has made no difference.

These incidents are being repeated many times around the Wirral.

Private Members Bill to strengthen the law against pavement parking

A new law, sponsored by the Guide Dogs Association and Living Streets, has been making some slow progress in the House of Commons. The law would strengthen the law against pavement parking by transferring the responsibility for enforcement from the police to local authorities. Sadly, as it is a Private Members Bill, and is low down on the list, it is unlikely that enough time will be allocated for it to become law.

House of Commons Library note clarifies the law on pavement parking

One positive development from Westminster is that the House of Commons Library has produced a note summarising the law on pavement parking. These notes are designed to inform MPs on topical issues. The note clarifies that "driving actually *onto* the pavement or footway (to park or otherwise) is an offence under section 72 of the *Highways Act 1835*" - it can be read at <http://t.co/h0SULZe21C>.

Letters to companies parking illegally

Illegal parking by company vehicles is common. This Sainsbury's delivery van is typical of many.



We believe that a cost-effective way of dealing with this is by writing to the companies' head offices and we have drafted a standard letter to be used in these circumstances, together with relevant photographs. We have asked a number of people to join us as co-signatories in order to strengthen the letter.

So far, we have had agreement from six councillors.

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside, Jane Kennedy, has refused, saying that "it does not fall within my power to enforce parking restrictions nor can I require such enforcement". We do not understand this comment since the driver in the photograph committed two offences of (a) driving on to the footway and (b) obstructing pedestrians, and both of these are matters for the police to enforce. We are hoping that she will change her mind.

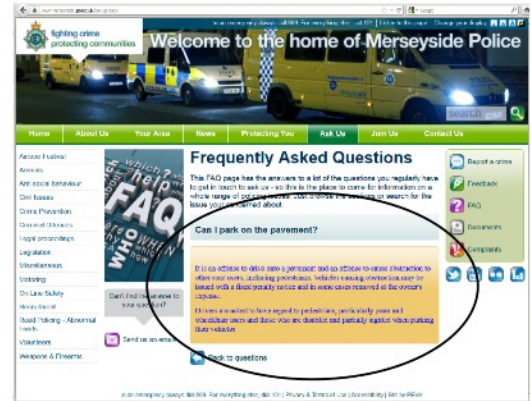
After two months, we are still waiting for replies from Wirral Council's Cabinet Member for Streetscene (Cllr Stuart Whittingham), and from Merseyside Police.

A5 flyer on footway parking

The Merseyside Police information on parking on pavements is now available as an A5 double-sided flyer, which can be downloaded from our website (www.wirralpedestrians.org.uk).

Anyone considering distributing these might be advised to bear in mind that several members who have raised concerns with drivers have received abuse and/or threats of violence.

Merseyside Police website information on parking on pavements:



Merseyside Police website information on parking on pavements:

Can I park on the pavement?

It is an offence to drive onto a pavement and an offence to cause obstruction to other road users, including pedestrians. Vehicles causing obstruction may be issued with a fixed penalty notice and in some cases removed at the owner's expense.

Drivers are asked to have regard to pedestrians, particularly pram and wheelchair users and those who are disabled and partially sighted when parking their vehicles.

Child pedestrian killed in Liverpool

A six-year-old boy was tragically killed by a van outside his school in West Derby in October. This brings the total of child pedestrians or cyclists killed in Merseyside to three in the last 18 months.

It might be expected that those in positions of authority would be saying that this must never happen again, and would be launching a whole series of measures to achieve this - but we have heard of nothing of this kind. It seems that our own Vision Zero Merseyside proposals (produced in partnership with Merseyside Cycle Campaign), which were circulated last year, have been ignored.

An e-petition for action has been started, and currently has 4,500 signatures - see

(<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/71318>).

Pedestrian knocked down and killed in New Brighton

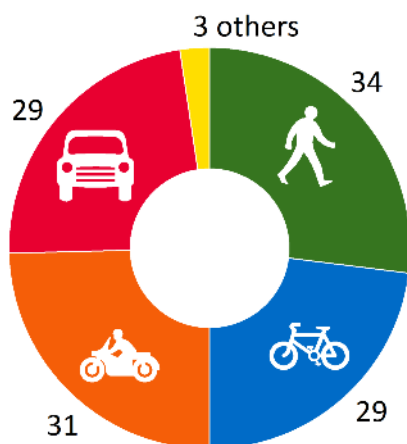
A pedestrian was knocked down by a quadricycle in New Brighton in July. He died six days later. The quadricycle is a four-seater pedal-powered vehicle the size of a van. It was being driven in a pedestrian area.

Merseyside worst in Great Britain for pedestrian casualties

Figures for 2013 released by the Department for Transport (DfT) showed that, for the third year running, Merseyside's figures for pedestrians killed or seriously injured (KSI) per 100,000 population were the worst in Great Britain. Merseyside was also the worst for child pedestrian KSIs, with a rate double the national average. We have not heard of any police or council plans to tackle this.

The Wirral figures for pedestrian KSIs were well above the national average; pedestrians formed the largest group; and pedestrian and cyclist KSIs together formed 50% of the total Wirral KSIs.

Fatal or Serious Injuries
Wirral Reported Casualties 2013



Liverpool Pedestrian Association

We are pleased to report that a new Pedestrians Association has been formed in Liverpool. The contact email address is livpeds@gmail.com and there is a Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Liverpool-Pedestrians-Association/279578895586640>.

Street audit and speed survey in Heswall

One of our members who is severely visually impaired has reported considerable difficulty crossing Dawstone Road in Gayton; so our Association carried out a street audit in September.

The crossing point is a natural one for pedestrians, situated at the end of both a side road and a nearby public footpath. It is used by people to reach the bus stop and side roads opposite; and by children on their way to school.

The audit found that at the optimum crossing point

- Because of the twisting nature of the road, only 80 metres of road can be seen in each direction.
- The road width at this crossing point is 10.2 metres
- Our member took 11 seconds to cross here - giving a walking speed of 0.93m per sec (the DfT assumed walking speed is 1.2m per sec)
- Vehicles appearing into view typically reached the crossing point in 6 seconds from either direction. So potentially pedestrians will be in the middle of the road as vehicles reach them from either direction. This is in practice a common occurrence, and vehicle drivers generally do not slow down.
- Speed measurements found 13% of vehicles were exceeding the speed limit of 30mph, with a top speed of 37mph

The official policy following a visit by a Council officer is that the location is not a priority because nobody has yet been injured there.

Our main conclusions were that

- The crossing point is not safe for pedestrians due to (a) the width and (b) vehicle speeds.
- To cross safely, with current vehicle speeds and road width would require pedestrians to run across the road, which is not acceptable.

Our main recommendation is that the crossing distance should be reduced via a central reservation. We will be pursuing this with the Council. A detailed report is on our website.

£24bn announced for road building

The Government announced in October an ambitious road building programme, planning to spend £24bn in this Parliament and the next.

Department for Transport cycling and walking delivery plans

The Government has published a draft plan for cycling and walking for consultation. The pre-publicity promised a Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan, but when it was published, it was termed merely a *Cycling Delivery Plan*, and specific references to walking were restricted to two paragraphs out of 16 pages. In contrast to the plans for £24bn to be spent on road building, there was no funding commitment for walking. Cyclists are also very disappointed at the lack of funding commitment for cycling, with the main membership organisation (the CTC) calling the document a *Cycling Derisory Plan*.

We have responded to the consultation by (a) saying that we were expecting a plan which dealt with both walking and cycling, and (b) asking when the equivalent Walking Delivery Plan is expected to be available for consultation.

Campaign for 20mph speed limits

Finally, some good news: some new 20mph areas have been approved for parts of Pensby. This has come from constituency funding. The areas are relatively small, and this is still a long way from the 20mph limits with compliance that we want to see in all urban areas, but we feel that all good news should be celebrated. It shows that campaigning works.

Blue Badge misuse

We have heard that there has been an increase in prosecutions for Blue Badge fraud. Anyone suspicious that the system is being abused is being urged to tip off the Council.

Free email newsletter list

If you have received this newsletter indirectly, you can, in future, have it sent free by email - just let us know via the website or via email.

How Can You Get Involved?

If you feel strongly about any of the issues raised in this newsletter, why not get involved? You can:

- **Join the Association** - Membership is only £2 per year, or £10 for 5 years, and could make the perfect Christmas present for a loved one...
- **Come to our bimonthly meetings** - The Wirral Pedestrians Association meets every two months to discuss campaigns, events and other pedestrian related news. Meetings are generally held in Wetherspoon's in West Kirby (on Grange Road, opposite the bus and train stations) on the first Wednesday morning of alternate months. The next meeting is planned for 7th January 2015 at 10:30am, but if intending to come, please check the week before in case of rearrangement.
- **Attend our AGM** - In 2014 we had talks from the local Living Streets Project Co-ordinator and from Sgt Paul Mountford of Merseyside Roads Policing Department (Collision Reduction). This year promises to be bigger and better! So save the date: the evening of Wednesday 18th March, 2015 at the United Reformed Church, West Kirby (time to be announced).
- **Contribute to the next newsletter** - Have you seen something in your local area that we should know about? Or are you encountering problems getting around on foot in your area? Let us know and we can publish your story in our next newsletter.

Contacts

Chair: Geoff Dormand

Secretary: Ian Campbell 0151 625 1449

Treasurer: Victoria Doran

Email: wirralpedestrians@gmail.com

Website: www.wirralpedestrians.org.uk

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/WirPedestrians>

Living Streets (national organisation): 0207 737 4900 and www.livingstreets.org.uk

Wirral Council Streetscene: Tel: 606 2004, email: streetscene@wirral.gov.uk