

Wirral Pedestrians Association Newsletter



Number 2 November 2012

Wirral Pedestrians Association is now recruiting members

The Association is now fully set up and is recruiting members at the bargain rate of £2 per year (or £10 for 5 years to save administration), but larger donations are welcome. You can download a form from the website or ask a member of the Committee for a paper form.

AGM

Our first AGM was held in June 2012 at the Birkenhead YMCA. It was agreed that the current campaigning priorities would be

- against illegal parking on pavements
- for 20 mph speed limits
- for a flexible approach to where bins are left for emptying, to avoid obstructing narrow pavements.

Our strategy to tackle illegal parking on pavements

We are putting forward the following 10-point strategy.

- Merseyside Police officers should stop parking illegally on pavements.
- Wirral Council officers and contractors should stop parking illegally on pavements.
- Police officers should stop giving wrong information concerning the legality of parking on pavements
- Council officers should stop giving wrong information concerning the legality of parking on pavements.
- A clear joint statement of what is legal and what is not should be agreed by Police and Council and websites should be updated accordingly.
- Police and Council officers should adopt a less complacent and more urgent attitude to the problem.
- The areas around schools and accommodation for elderly and disabled people should be prioritised to be kept free of illegally parked vehicles by a combination of education and enforcement.
- Companies involved in breaking the law should be advised of the legal situation by a joint (Council-Police) letter, and by other means.
- An education programme (via posters, leaflets, windscreen stickers etc) should be started to advise drivers of the law and possible consequences.
- Enforcement action should then be commenced where necessary to ensure compliance.

The full document is available from our website. We are inviting comments from individuals and groups (to our email address), and have asked a wide range of local politicians and organisations for their views. We plan to publish these on our website (anonymously if from an individual).

Parking on pavements petition

We believe that it is vital to clear up the confusion about the law concerning parking on pavements, especially after a number of near-misses, and we are therefore organising a petition asking Wirral Council and Merseyside Police to take effective action against illegal parking on pavements through

- (1) development of a clear policy of what is acceptable and what is not
- (2) proper enforcement of sanctions against those deemed to have offended.

If you feel strongly on this issue, please download a copy of the petition from the website, or ask a committee member for a paper copy, or contact us by email - and start collecting signatures.

Wirral Council pavement parking windscreen flyer

We welcome the Council's new initiative to place information / warning flyers on windscreens of offending vehicles. Trials are due to start soon.

20 mph speed limits on residential roads

Wirral Council's rollout of 20 mph speed limits has paused while the budget overspend is being addressed. We are hoping this is just temporary. Nationally, the momentum for safer streets is picking up and the 20's Plenty for Us organisation (www.20splentyforus.org.uk) now has 163 local groups. The UK organisation has joined with other European groups to make 20 mph / 30 kph the European norm - you can sign a petition at <http://en.30kmh.eu> - the target is 1 million signatures.

Positioning of wheelie bins for collection: pavements or carriageway?

One of our members lives in a road in Heswall with very narrow pavements - so narrow that they become impassible when wheelie bins are put out in line with the Council's instructions. This means that pedestrians, especially those in wheelchairs or buggies, are put at risk by having to share the carriageway with vehicles. Keith Dawson felt that it would be better if bins were put in the carriageway and pedestrians used the pavement, and asked the Council if this could be made the routine in his road. The Council and police response was that the bins on the carriageway might cause an obstruction for fast moving traffic. Dissatisfied that the safety of car occupants is being given a higher priority than the safety of pedestrian (especially those with disabilities), Keith went through the Council's complaints process and has now appealed to the Ombudsman. The full story is on the website.

Compensation claims for pavement defects

A member of the Committee has used the Freedom of Information Act to obtain the costs of compensation payments paid out by Wirral Council for trips over paving defects. Over the four years from 2008 to 2011, there was an average of 15 payments each year at an average total cost of £78,000 per year. Now if only there was some way of reducing damage to pavements...

Inspiration from Bristol

Campaigning for pedestrians can be a frustrating experience, so it is nice to see something really inspiring. The Playing Out scheme (short after-school road closures) won the Best Project Award at the Living Streets Supporters Conference in June. See <http://playingout.net>. Not to be missed.



Contacts

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

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

Merseyside Police: 0151 709 6010 or 101, or PO Box 59, Liverpool L69 1JD