

What future for Pedestrians in Wandsworth Borough?

Wandsworth Living Streets Update No. 6, 23 September, 2014

I hope you all got Update No. 5, dated 19 June. Just in case some of you did not, I attach it, along with this Update (if you want to see the visuals).

REMINDER

Wandsworth Living Streets Meeting, Monday 6 October 2014, 7.15 for prompt start 7.30pm

KEEPING HEALTHY

Encouraging Walking & Cycling in Wandsworth

Jane Ellison, M.P. for Battersea

Venue: The Alma Pub

Upstairs function room

Address: 499 Old York Road, SW18 1TF

How to get there: Opposite Wandsworth Town Station; and on Nos. 28 and 44 bus routes; and nearest Barclays Cycle Hire docking station is Podmore Road (right by the Alma Pub)

Streetmap at: <http://tinyurl.com/ygwtk4z>

Jane Ellison is one of Wandsworth Borough's three Members of Parliament. We have asked her to talk about:

- The health benefits of encouraging us to do more short trips on foot
- Why Government supports more walking and cycling (in the jargon, 'active travel')
- What Government is doing to encourage us to walk more
- What Wandsworth Council, along with all local authorities, can do to make the walking experience more attractive and safer
- Future horizons – what more can be done.

The Wandsworth Living Streets AGM will follow this meeting. Our Chair, Dr Susie Morrow, and Treasurer, Alan Fennell, will present their Reports. And a Committee will be elected for the coming year. **Would you like to consider standing for the**

Committee? If so, please let Robert Molteno, Secretary WLS, know in advance at Robert.molteno@googlemail.com

Do come with your ideas and questions. Please bring a friend or neighbour.

SOME LOCAL GOOD NEWS

Brighton Yard Entrance to Clapham Junction Station – the new signals-controlled pedestrian crossing is now operational

This is a concrete achievement. When the new station entrance was completed by Network Rail some years ago, no pedestrian crossing was built to enable commuters and other rail travellers to cross St John's Hill safely. Various local groups pressed Wandsworth Council to act. Wandsworth Living Streets even made a short video (which can be seen on YouTube) which filmed residents on foot trying to negotiate the rush hour traffic! Now at last the new crossing exists. Congratulations all round – to everyone who lobbied for it, and to the Council and Transport for London (TfL) for installing it.

Queen's Circus, Queenstown Road, near Battersea Park

Local residents and Wandsworth Living Streets have been campaigning for ages for safe and convenient provision for pedestrians to be able to cross this hugely busy road (especially during the rush hour). For years it has been a nightmare for anyone on foot. Here's a picture of what it is like now.



What we have pressed for are signals-controlled pedestrian crossings on all four points of the roundabout. And for re-routing the Cycle Superhighway off the pavement (currently pedestrians have to share sections of pavement with commuting cyclists). And this now is what we are going to get. By late Spring next year. TfL's detailed plans try to cater to the needs of pedestrians, as well as cyclists (who will get a lightly segregated cycle lane all round the roundabout), and vehicles. This is how it will be. And if you go and take a look, you will see that earth-moving equipment is already at work.



OTHER PEDESTRIAN-RELEVANT PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The newly constituted Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, chaired by Councillor Kim Caddy, is meeting on Thursday, 25 September. There are some really positive decisions pending. Here are some of the highlights.

20mph for the whole of Bedford Ward

Local Councillors took the initiative to collect people's signatures on a petition. The Council agreed to consult residents systematically. It got leaflets out to households and asked them to post the completed questionnaire back to the Council. The result was a very disappointing 9% response rate. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked Officers to conduct a more thorough consultation. The results have just been released. They are remarkable. Of 2,007 responses, 76% want a 20mph speed limit for the whole of Bedford

Ward. Only 14% do not, with a further 10% who expressed no opinion. (Council Paper 14-494)

This shows how, when residents are asked whether they would like quieter, safer, and more people-friendly local streets, the overwhelming majority welcome a lower speed limit for their whole area. It looks pretty certain that Balham will go 20mph in the near future.

20mph for the whole of Furzedown Ward also

This is much the same story. In this ward there were 2,186 responses. And of these, an even bigger proportion of people – 79% -- want 20mph across their ward. 13% said No, and 7% had no opinion.

The significance of this expression of Residents' views on 20mph: The Council is carrying through on its commitment made last year to consider the views of whole areas (including whole wards) who ask to be consulted on a new 20mph speed limit. And the Council does a consultation carefully, a huge majority of residents clearly want a lower speed limit on their residential streets. This is as in West Putney a couple of years ago or the Shaftesbury Estate in Battersea. Little wonder that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has before it a proposed allocation of £800,000 to implement 20mph schemes and other neighbourhood improvements to residential streets in the years 2015 to 2018.

Wandsworth Living Streets continues to make the argument that it would be much cheaper, and speedier, if the Council now recognised where public opinion in Wandsworth is on this issue, and agreed to consult the whole population of the Borough now. Doing this would save the much bigger costs of piecemeal consultation, area by area. And there would be even bigger savings when implementing a borough-wide 20mph scheme because so much less signage would be required. This is not even to speak of the human suffering which we would be spared as lower vehicle speeds lead to fewer and less serious collisions. The time has come for Wandsworth to move boldly like many Inner London boroughs and ask all its residents whether they want a borough-wide scheme on our residential streets. Doing so would give real substance to democratic commitment.

***Legible London* signage for pedestrians to be extended to more areas of Wandsworth**

You have all probably seen these beautiful, eye-height vertical maps of local streets indicating how many minutes it would take to walk to particular destinations. The Council is allocating funds to extend this signage scheme, which is specifically designed for us pedestrians, to Roehampton and Putney Heath, as well as central Wandsworth, in the years 2015-18.

The air we pedestrians breathe – Air Quality is an issue being taken more seriously

When we are on foot, our traffic-dominated streets are not simply physically dangerous, noisy, and unpleasant parts of the public realm. There is mounting medical evidence that the air pollutants, notably what is called particulate matter (PMs) and Nitrous Oxides -- which are caused by motor vehicles – damage our lungs and cardio-vascular systems, and shorten life expectancy. The Putney Society has long campaigned to clean up Putney High Street. It is organising a meeting on the issue on Thursday 23 October, 7.30pm, at St Mary's Church, with experts and Cllr Jonathan Cook, who is responsible for environmental and transport matters, present.

The Battersea Society has also been very active measuring air pollution in its parts of the Borough. And the Wandsworth Society is organising its own meeting on Thursday 16 October, at the church hall, corner of Melody Road and Allfarthing Lane.

The Council is taking the issue more and more seriously. Over the 3 year period, 2015-18, it is allocating modest funding in this area. One particularly innovative idea it will fund is an Air Quality theatre show for schools.

This Update for Wandsworth Living Streets supporters has been prepared by Robert Molteno, Secretary, Wandsworth Living Streets

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