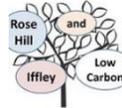


Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel

About CoHSAT

The Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel (CoHSAT) is a group of voluntary and campaigning organisations working across Oxfordshire to create attractive, accessible and people-friendly streets. We will do this by encouraging efficient, active, low carbon and sustainable travel, which will reduce traffic, air pollution and noise, and enable healthy and thriving communities. More details can be seen at <http://www.cohsat.org.uk>.

The 10 CoHSAT members are: Low Carbon Oxford North, Low Carbon West Oxford, Pedal and Post, Oxford Friends of the Earth, Oxford Pedestrians Association, Oxford Civic Society, CycloX, Rose Hill and Iffley Low Carbon, Oxfordshire Liveable Streets and Oxfordshire Cycling Network.



Healthy Streets and Active Travel, 2020-21 – summary of findings

Our five activities have focused primarily on awareness-raising and education. We are particularly delighted about the success of the popup shop and that we have helped six of the market towns take up active travel initiatives. The Walkability Index is a unique contribution to identifying neighbourhoods that lack amenities within easy access. The data project will help groups access active travel data which support their researches and discussions on the way that active travel is developing in Oxfordshire. And our briefing paper on Bike Hangars provides the launch-pad for Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council to make cycle parking safer.

We have enjoyed undertaking these five activities and hope that our findings will promote action on active travel and healthy streets in Oxfordshire. With thanks to the Low Carbon Hub for its essential support.

The opportunities to convert St Giles into a public space

The time has come to transform St Giles, to make it a more important attribute in Oxford's historic centre through a focus on pedestrians and cyclists, rather than cars and parking. The County Council has been proposing substantial, but piecemeal, changes since 2016, but has not activated them yet. The public are extremely enthusiastic about the benefits of a newly-configured space. And changes, such as removing the parking, could happen now, without being dependent on any other city-centre developments. The narrowing of the traffic lanes could similarly occur, though would be more sensible if linked to the installation of the Worcester Street bus gate. Any loss in revenue from the car-parking would be offset by re-invigorating the whole area with new cafés, greenery, florists, sculptures and even an Oxford Eye (a smaller version of the London one). As the retail sector declines, post-Covid, the benefits of new

attractions are needed to enhance the City's historic centre. Similar arguments apply to Broad Street as we portrayed last year.

Led by Low Carbon Oxford North, CoHSAT gives an inspirational overview of what this important townscape could look like. All that is needed now is the political determination to deliver a new and inspirational piece of public realm for Oxford.

Creation of a Popup Experience on projects to improve active travel in Oxford

CoHSAT opened a popup shop in the centre of Oxford to feature projects that improve active travel in Oxford. It was open from 26 July to 1 August 2020. There were 360 visitors, mainly those already interested and semi-knowledgeable about the proposals. There were 14 major initiatives displayed representing options that would improve many areas of Oxford – not all in the City centre. We believe the shop has advanced awareness of what could be achieved while making the City healthier, safer and more attractive, whether for pedestrians or cyclists, residents or tourists.

The most support was given to our proposals for:

- Broad Street to be car-free;
- St Giles to be mainly pedestrianised, with no parking and narrower road;
- Hythe Bridge Street to be pedestrianised and Worcester Street car park made into a public space
- Iffley Road with wide, segregated cycle paths and off-street parking;
- Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) – with several requests for new areas, eg Marston, Wolvercote, Kennington, Littlemore, New Hinksey.

There was little support for proposals to make Cowley Road and the High Street one-way and, generally, there is widespread concern about how the disabled and elderly move around. Bus gates were the focus of considerable debate. Over half our visitors were supportive and many of the remainder were happy to have accurate information and to enter into reasoned discussions. Generally, those in support of bus gates are looking at the wider Oxford picture, whereas many of those most worried have a personal perspective and would need to make real changes to their lives, so timing and communications are key to allow for these adjustments.

CoHSAT is delighted to have run the shop and particularly glad that so many people demonstrated their support and pleasure at the exhibition. We had a lot of good discussions: the calibre of the comments was high, with most visitors giving the issues real thought.

The provision of good quality, on-road cycle parking where none exists at present

There is increasing interest in the way that bikes are stored on the street, particularly from:

- Those households living in properties with no front gardens;
- People with expensive, electric bikes that want to make sure they are securely protected;
- People concerned about bike theft generally.

One solution is to install bike hangars that provide covered, lockable storage for six bikes at a time. These are placed on the road, not the pavement and each internal space is rented out to a bike owner. The bike hangar is big enough to accommodate most bikes with a trailer.

We discovered there is a lack of advice about how to get a bike hangar installed. We have – led by Low Carbon West Oxford – collated the available information, talked to the suppliers, to Oxford City Council and to communities who have them. We have written up our findings in an accessible advice guide. This

includes who to contact for permission, what the costs are, when to contact the local residents and so forth. We have also assembled the names of some suitable streets in Oxford. As a result, there is an opportunity for Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council to use this research as a launch pad and to progress with installing bike hangars into Oxford. The experience of other communities is that once one or two are installed, there is a proliferation of demand. Some people use the arrival of a bike hangar as the spur to get an (electric) bike and to become a regular cyclist.

Assisting the development of new Healthy Streets and Active Travel groups in several market towns

CoHSAT wanted to use its campaigning experience in Oxford to help develop active travel plans in some of the other 19 major towns in Oxfordshire. There is growing and widespread interest throughout the county. We originally planned to help 5 towns, but have managed to support initiatives in 6 so far. Collectively this involves 143,400 Oxfordshire residents.

- Abingdon – developed a detailed Local Cycling and Walking Plan, which is being considered by the County Council. If adopted it assists in securing investment;
- Banbury - an enthusiastic and growing group to improve cycling and reduce some of the worst air pollution in the county;
- Bicester BUG (Bicycle Users Group) - has had to focus on roundabout design, but is ready to tackle more active travel issues;
- Chipping Norton – planning a new cycle track to link with Kingham station;
- Faringdon – developing a cycling plan;
- Wantage – pedestrianisation of the Market Place is expanding into work on a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

The outreach has been led by Oxfordshire Liveable Streets, with financial support from the Midlands Co-op. One important lesson is that there are often several groups in an area that, with a little networking and prompting, can coalesce into a self-sustaining and pro-active hub. The enthusiasm is often there, but disparate.

Feasibility of producing a 15 minute neighbourhood tool to understand Walkability in Oxfordshire

The unique and innovative Walkability Index has been produced by Cyclox through a very useful collaboration with one of their members, Will Ray – a highly skilled geospatial statistician. This, we hope, will develop into a useful tool for local authorities to identify where support for active travel is most needed.

The map of the Walkability Index shows who in Oxford can walk, on existing routes, to five basic amenities in less than 15 minutes: the core concept behind the 15-minute neighbourhood (15MN). The measurements are based on walking, though anyone on a bike could get there more quickly. The information was collated from a range of sources and the basic amenities chosen by the team were:

- General practice surgeries (GPs);
- Supermarkets;
- Schools;
- Pubs, and;
- Publicly-accessible green spaces.

The resultant map rates streets in terms of their walkability. The index creates a score for proximity of each amenity and creates an overall score at street level which is plotted on the map to give a visualisation of those streets and communities close to and further away from basic amenities. Residents living in less walkable areas are more likely to get into a car, or need a good bus service. The Walkability Index, therefore, identifies where additional amenities and services need to be provided, so people can be encouraged to cycle or walk, rather than use the car. This will result in less air pollution and carbon dioxide emissions.

In a parallel activity, CoHSAT has started to assemble a digital resource that lists the sources and types of information about travel-related issues generally, such as those used in the Walkability Index. The aim is to help those wanting to understand the statistics and trends in Oxford and Oxfordshire or produce their own reports. This is an ongoing project and will help to identify where there are omissions, as well as where contributory data (eg on obesity and collisions) can be found.

Statistical analysis of travel trends is becoming more important. For instance, the new Local Travel and Connectivity Plan consultation from Oxfordshire County Council lists several measurable items. These are often based on what is available, but not necessarily those central to the topic. For instance, there is nothing mentioned about the length of segregated cycle paths, nor on the width of pavements.

For further information on these five investigations and other CoHSAT activities see <http://www.cohsat.org.uk> or email us at CoHSATOxon@gmail.com.

