

LIVING STREETS

PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

Living Streets Guernsey LBG Newsletter— April 2012

A look back at 10 years of standing up for pedestrians

On Wednesday 23rd May we will be celebrating our 10th anniversary at our AGM. It seems fitting to devote this newsletter to looking back over those 10 years.

We were launched as STEPS at an evening event at St. Andrew's Primary School on 23rd May 2002. Around 60 islanders joined us and we became the Guernsey branch of Living Streets.



The following day was Car Free Day and Ann Robilliard (our first Chair), Val Rowland and Pat Wisler walked up the High Street with Billy and Belinda Belisha (the Living Streets mascots) giving out balloons to children.

The aim of STEPS was to promote and safeguard the interests of pedestrians. We wanted to encourage more islanders to walk by removing the barriers to walking—making it safer for everyone.

Living Streets in the UK has always had a wider mandate than simply pedestrian safety issues and we have followed their lead by involving ourselves in general road

safety issues and ensuring that planning decisions take into account the needs of people on foot.

Looking back to 2002, it was the year when 2,685 more vehicles were registered. There was no traffic strategy (that came out in 2003). The volume and speed of traffic on island roads resulted in serious crashes doubling during 2002. Out of 19 new members who undertook a Liveability audit 13 gave a score of poor or very poor on the "walkability" factor.

Sadly, two of the issues we faced in 2002 are still with us—pavement parking and pavement surfing, in spite of a close working relationship with the Police to try to break these dangerous habits.

From the start our main work was undertaking walking audits on behalf of islanders or when planning proposals needed scrutinising. Over the years we have undertaken in excess of 50 of these safety audits—each one resulting in a report to the Traffic section.



Audit of Les Petites Fontaines
Don McKay &
Denise Thoumine

In addition our first major report involved a safety audit of 39 zebra crossings across the island.



The zebra crossing survey was accepted by the Traffic Committee. It agreed that there were deficiencies and set about implementing our proposals. In the early days of STEPS our success rate was high - mainly because Pat, Tom and John were all on Traffic. As the years went by it was far more difficult - particularly after the introduction of the new machinery of government in 2004.

In 2003 STEPS organised a conference on "Travel Plans" which was sponsored by Traffic and the Health Dept. We brought over from the UK four experts and 80 islanders attended. In spite of following up with a seminar for businesses the following year we have had little success in this area other than our work with primary schools.

However, we are currently working with Stephen Bridgman to try to encourage more islanders to exercise by linking obesity with active travel—using the daily commute.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 23rd May
7.30 pm Emma Ferbrache at the PEH (AGM) Our guest will be Chief Officer of Police, Patrick Rice

Sunday 15th July 2.30pm
The Living Streets Tranquillity Walk—a walk around St. Pierre du Bois and Torteval
Please join us and help us raise sponsorship money

Also in 2003 we brought together interested parties to form the Road Safety Week committee and chaired it for 5 years. The committee organised a week of events starting with an impressive crash extrication demonstration by the three emergency services. Our message during the week was on safe walking at night.



Road Safety Week 2007

In 2004 we had success in persuading Traffic to introduce speed cushions (rather than bumps) for traffic calming. These were used successfully in Courtil St. Jacques. In the same year we managed (with GBG) to get a cycle contraflow in Rue es Ronces to help Mare de Carteret cyclists.

Our walking audits led to two initiatives in 2004—"Rough Crossings" and "Disappearing Footpaths" but we had little success in getting any improvements. (continued over) →

10 years of standing up for pedestrians—continued

In 2006 we produced a report entitled “What Price Road Safety—proposals for reducing Guernsey’s Road Traffic Collisions.” We made 11 proposals under the headings of Education, Enforcement & Engineering. Based on statistics for 2004 we estimated the cost to our economy of RTCs that year was almost £11 million. Although few of our proposals have been implemented we are pleased to see that the Police traffic section has been re-built by bringing back the motorcycle team.

In June 2007 we started our campaign for safe routes to the new Baubigny Schools. We held a meeting at Capelles Church to discuss how we could find the safest possible solution to encourage walking and cycling to the new schools. We were concerned about both the lack of footpaths in the Baubigny Road and the lack of plans to develop a green lane route for St. Peter Port students. We put forward proposals for a one way system, a cycle contra-flow and traffic calming in Baubigny but the current Environment Department failed to listen. It took a change of government in 2008 before a decision was made and we have to thank Peter Sirett and his Board for this.



No place for pedestrians—Baubigny Road before the one way system

In April 2008 we finally changed our name from STEPS (Stop Traffic Endangering Pedestrian Safety) to Living Streets. Chief Executive of Living Streets UK, Tony Armstrong, came over to our AGM to celebrate the change.

Throughout 2008 we struggled to try to persuade the various departments to invest in the green lane route to the new schools for students coming from St. Peter Port. In July 2008 we opened up a suggested route so that everyone could see what it was like.



Islanders try out the proposed cross country route

In December 2008 both Environment and Home withdrew their support for the green lane route and so Living Streets decided to go it alone and raise the funds necessary to make it happen. The route was finally opened in September 2010 thanks to the generosity of businesses and the support of islanders at our fund raising events.

There is no doubt that the Baubigny Schools pathway has dominated our work over the past 4 years. It has been our greatest achievement. Safe routes to schools has always been high on our agenda and we will be continuing to look

for further opportunities.



The Baubigny pathway September 2010

Although the Road Safety Week Committee folded in 2007, we continue to promote the “Be Safe Be Seen” message and many other pedestrian safety messages through our poster competition with schools. We also encourage Walk to School and Walk to Work initiatives every May.

Our close working relationship with the Police has led to two “pavement surfing” initiatives over the past year.

Walking audits continue and we have had two recent successes—making both Cornet Street and Rocquaine Bay safer for pedestrians.

“20’s Plenty” is our campaign to reduce speed limits around schools and parish centres and we continue to lobby the Environment Department on this issue.

Our annual “Tranquillity Walk”, our regular quizzes and our “Guernsey Country Walks” greeting cards raise finances for the Baubigny pathway and also raise awareness of our work.

We look forward to the next 10 years of campaigning for better streets and public places for people on foot.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Wild Crossing

Zebra print road markings outside two schools in Bristol have caused confusion. The council has said they are a “fun” way to help children cross.

(Daily Telegraph 25.2.12.)

Free range kids

Sustrans has been encouraging everyone to write to their MP to get them to support its Early Day Motion “Free Range Kids”. Sustrans wants to see future generations of happy, healthy, bright and independent free range kids with the freedom, confidence, skills and opportunities to get around from their front door. (Sustrans—March 2012)

Political correctness?

Lincolnshire Council has decided that the traditional green man crossing sign may be offensive to women! New signs are being put up asking people to wait for the “green figure” before they cross the road. (Telegraph 31.12.11)

iPod road casualties treble in six years in the USA

Experts found a dramatic rise in injuries to people wearing headphones while walking in the street, particularly among teenagers, men and young adults. Previous studies have shown that people wearing headphones—or being distracted by talking on a mobile phone—can suffer “inattentive blindness”. (Telegraph 17.1.12)

It’s fun to deliberately soak a pedestrian

A poll by the company webuyanycar.com has shown that 39% of drivers admitted to laughing if they saw a pedestrian being splashed, while 16% have soaked them on purpose. (Telegraph 14.11.11)

Drivers respect others in Home Zones

Recent IAM research has shown that 58% of people think that drivers should be held legally responsible for accidents between cars and more vulnerable road users in shared space zones. (RoadSafe—Sept.2011)