

**Okehampton Town Council**  
**Full Council Meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2021**  
**Meeting Report**

<b>Date:</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
<b>Name:</b>	Emma James

11. **Pedestrian Crossings** – To consider the correspondence received from a member of the public requesting improved pedestrian crossing facilities in the town for visually impaired persons

Good Morning Emma,

Having consulted Devon County Council, they have instructed me to contact the RNIB and my local Town Council. So that being the case, I am writing on behalf of myself and other visually impaired people in the town in regards to having additional pedestrian crossings installed in the town. These would be on the junction of Exeter road and Barton Road as there is already lights in place, they would just need the installation of the push button box with the revolving cone system to allow visually impaired people to use this crossing correctly and safely. The next one on the junction of Mill Road and Exeter Road, it already has two on the Exeter Road but does not have one on Mill Road, this makes it extremely hazardous to cross on Mill Road as there is then traffic coming from various directions. The final one is the main crossroads in town itself outside the town hall and the Plume of Feathers, which has the lights there already so would only be a matter of installing the relevant equipment to make these crossings accessible.

Can you please forward this onto the relevant people on the Town Council and ask them to contact me as soon as they can.

I am approaching this subject from the point of those with visual Impairments but also from the point of the town itself as a whole, the town is expanding and can only get busier and more hazardous for everyone.

Please find attached the RNIB policy with regards safe crossings.

## **Pedestrian Crossings**

### **August 2019**

#### **What we think**

This policy position statement addresses the need for pedestrian crossings and contrasts different types of pedestrian crossings in terms of their impact on accessibility.

Blind and partially sighted people rely on accessible streets in order to make walking journeys to access local amenities and public transport links. Their ability to get around on similar terms to everyone else is strongly affected by how the public space is designed.

A public space where blind and partially sighted people feel confident to move around independently is inclusive.

In contrast, a non-inclusive public space is where people report they find it difficult to navigate, feel out of control in judging what other road users may be doing and at risk of personal injury. Typically, people react to these experiences by choosing not to use walking routes through those areas. This is called 'self-exclusion' and unless picked up by surveys and monitoring exercises, will not show up on usage statistics.

Public spaces must be designed inclusively so blind and partially sighted people do not self-exclude, and like everyone else, can create and maintain their home and family life, access key services, commute to work and keep active and healthy.

The purpose of a pedestrian crossing is not only to provide a safe route across a cycletrack or road, but to provide an auxiliary aid that says when it is safe to cross for people who cannot visually detect the presence or intentions of other road users.

Importantly there are two categories of pedestrian crossing; formal crossings and informal crossings. Formal crossings give the pedestrian right of way either after a signal is given, or by stepping onto the crossing itself. Informal crossings do not provide pedestrians with either facility.

We think formal crossings that provide blind and partially sighted pedestrians with an accessible signal when it is safe to cross (such as Pelican and Puffin crossings that provide an audio and rotating tactile cone facility) are the only fully inclusive pedestrian crossing designs at the current time.

Formal crossings that do not provide the audio or tactile signal facility to indicate when it is safe to cross (such as Zebra crossings) do provide the right of way, but do not enable a blind or partially sighted person to judge when other road users are stopping to let them cross. There is an inherent 'danger zone' with this design which is normally avoided via visual communication between the pedestrian and the drivers or cyclists approaching or near the crossing. For example, where a pedestrian sees the vehicle is moving too fast to stop in time they will judge it safer not to attempt to cross. Where a driver or cyclist is preparing to stop, the pedestrian will see and cross when they are sure. However, the danger zone with Zebra crossings cannot be independently managed by people with sight loss who aren't able to see the presence or intentions of other road users. They may be unable to detect the sounds the vehicles are making either, especially where the vehicle is a bicycle or an electrically powered device or motor vehicle.

Informal crossing points (courtesy crossings) and open areas where everyone is expected to cross when appropriate such as in a shared space or shared use area, rely on pedestrians and other road users regulating their movement principally through visual communication. These are experienced as non-inclusive spaces to blind and partially sighted people.

## **What's happening now**

First introduced fifty years ago, the Pelican crossing has been gradually disappearing from many streets across the UK as part of re-development schemes.

Pelican crossings were originally put in to improve pedestrian safety. The reasons for removing these crossings varies but it is clear the comparatively recent trend to manage vehicle speeds through 'shared space' and 'shared use' design has had a major impact. The 'shared' theory assumes drivers behave more responsibly and drive more slowly when there are no traffic light controlled crossings for pedestrians to use. However, recently published traffic speed measurements taken at the flagship shared space scheme built by Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council on Exhibition Road in London shows average traffic speeds have risen substantially since the introduction of the shared space scheme (RBKC, 2018).

The recent increases in investment in cycling and cycleway infrastructure in the UK has also caused a greater need for cycleway crossings for pedestrians. At present this need is only partly being met by mini-Zebra crossings installed in some locations. However, because of the need for pedestrians to make and read visual cues to use Zebra crossings to safely cross cycleways, and because cycles are too quiet to safely detect by listening alone, these are not fully inclusive crossings for blind and partially sighted people.

We are concerned wherever inclusive crossings are being removed or replaced by less accessible crossings, such as Zebra crossings. We think it is vital to get inclusive design right from the start. Spending public money building non-inclusive pedestrian routes and crossings, and then having to retrofit accessibility, is inefficient and endangers both pedestrians and road users.

The problems associated with the lack of inclusive crossing points are made clear by increasing numbers of reported incidents. They are forced to step out in front of on-coming traffic with no facility that provides them with an auxiliary aid to tell them when drivers and cyclists have stopped.

Blind and partially sighted people tell us this results in them reducing or 'self-excluding' from making walking journeys. They also tell us they are forced to make walking journeys much longer than they need to be just to get to the section of a road where an inclusive crossing point has been retained or installed. We are also receiving reports of blind and partially sighted people hit by bicycles, which have caused significant injury to one or both parties.

Other issues relate to the way inclusive crossing facilities are built and maintained. People report regularly that audio and tactile cone facilities on the beacons are faulty, or that audio and tactile indicators are completely missing. Where a crossing is not fitted with dual audio and tactile indicators, it creates a hazard. For many blind and partially sighted people who cannot see on-coming traffic they rely entirely on the audio and tactile indicators as their primary source of safety information.

## **What must happen**

Local authorities must embed accessibility into everything they do; including the provision of fully inclusive and accessible pedestrian crossings that provide the pedestrian with an accessible signal when it is safe to cross. New cycleways, pedestrian routes and public spaces must be designed to promote inclusion for everyone and proactively address and manage danger zones and street designs that create areas that people may avoid or self-exclude.

### **Local authorities should:**

- Follow best practice set out by the Department of Transport and ensure that all Pelican and controlled crossings are fitted with both audio and tactile indicators, have dropped kerbs with red blister tactile paving.
- Importantly, local authorities must ensure blind and partially sighted people can get in touch via email, telephone and online, to notify the authority of:
- Obstructed crossing points, damaged equipment including faults with audio / tactile indicators.
- Crossing beacons with no audio / tactile indicators fitted.
- Locations where traffic flow has undergone a significant change and where a crossing may have been removed, relocated or where there is a need for a new inclusive crossing facility.

Local authorities should react quickly to these reports, sending an engineer to assess the site, and to keep people affected properly informed of action taken.

Signal controlled pedestrian crossings such as Pelican and Puffin crossings must be installed within reasonable distances, particularly along key routes used to access important services (for example: hospitals, schools, council services, transport links and community spaces).

## **What RNIB is doing**

We support blind and partially sighted people to campaign locally on accessible streets and transport, including to promote inclusive crossings and design and challenge design when it is not accessible.

At present there are no provisions in regulation for audible and tactile beacons on Zebra, mini-Zebra or cycleway crossings, unless a full Pelican or Puffin crossing is used. With a dramatic increase in the need for fully inclusive crossings and walking routes to ensure new schemes that are being developed are inclusive, we are actively pressing for new inclusive crossing facilities to be developed.

We are keen to engage with local authorities, planners, designers and engineers to identify solutions to the current problems and welcome the opportunity to discuss any issue covered in this RNIB policy position statement.

## **Staff contact**

If you have been affected by this issue and would like to take action or tell us about your experience, then please get in touch with us.

**Telephone RNIB's Helpline: 0303 123 9999**

**Email: [campaigns@RNIB.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@RNIB.org.uk)**

RNIB has a growing range of accessible and easy to use campaign resources on our website, and we are always keen to hear about people's experiences of getting around. Case studies help us to understand the problems and explain these to policy and decision makers.

This position statement will be reviewed in November 2019 or as needed.

#### **References:**

RBKC (2018) 'Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea: Exhibition Road Pedestrian Behaviour Study.' London: WSP. Available

at: [https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/exhibitionroad/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Exhibition\\_Road\\_Pedestrian\\_Behaviour\\_Study\\_0.pdf](https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/exhibitionroad/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Exhibition_Road_Pedestrian_Behaviour_Study_0.pdf) (Accessed 13 August 2019).

#### **Related Policy Position Statements**

- Cycling and Cycleways Policy Position Statement
- Shared Use Areas and Pathways Policy Position Statement
- Access to bus stops (Bus Stop Bypasses and Bus Stop Borders) Policy Position Statement
- Kerbs: Detectable Footways, Cycleways and Roads Policy Position Statement
- Continuous Footways Policy Position Statement

#### **Appendix**

##### **What are the main types of pedestrian crossings?**

##### **Pelican (Pedestrian Light Controlled) Crossings**

Pelicans are signal-controlled crossings operated by pedestrians. Control push buttons located on the traffic light posts on either sides of the road activate the traffic lights. To signal to pedestrians when it is safe to cross, a green walking person symbol is shown on the opposite side of the road. Pelican crossings should have non-visual cues such as audio bleeps and tactile rotating cones on the underside of the push button boxes, to indicate to blind and partially sighted pedestrians when it is safe to cross.

Having the audio bleeps emitting from the opposite side of the road gives blind and partially sighted pedestrians an audio beacon to follow, helping them move out of the road and locate the pavement on the other side quickly and safely. Red blister tactile paving should also lead to the crossing point to enable blind and partially sighted people to locate it and the push button box. Because of these specific features, Pelican crossings are generally the most accessible for disabled pedestrians, including those who are blind and partially.

##### **Puffin (Pedestrian User-Friendly Intelligent) Crossings**

Puffins are signal-controlled crossings operated by pedestrian control push buttons and smart infrared cameras (and sometimes heat sensors) which detect the presence of pedestrians at the

crossing point and the speed at which they cross the road. The smart technology can extend the time that the red signal light shows for traffic if pedestrians are taking longer to cross than expected, and can also cancel a request to cross (by push button) if it detects the pedestrian has moved away from the crossing point.

To signal to pedestrians when it is safe to cross, a green walking person symbol is shown at eye level directly above the push button box (this is different to pelican crossings where pedestrian signal lights are on the opposite side of the road). Some Puffin crossings have non-visual cues such as audio bleeps and tactile rotating cones on the underside of the push button boxes, to indicate to blind and partially sighted pedestrians when it is safe to cross. Red blister tactile paving should also lead to the crossing point to enable blind and partially sighted people to locate it and the push button box. Similar to Pelican crossings, the audio and tactile aids mean Puffin crossings are inclusive crossings and accessible for blind and partially sighted pedestrians.

### **Zebra Crossings**

Zebras are crossings where a path across the carriageway for pedestrians is marked by white and black stripes and sometimes flashing yellow (Belisha) beacons on poles at either side of the road crossing. They do not have any traffic control lights. Red blister tactile paving should also lead to the crossing point to enable blind and partially sighted people to locate it.

When pedestrians want to cross, they must step out on to the carriageway to indicate their intentions to road users who should then stop to allow them to cross safely. To signal to pedestrians when it is safe to cross (i.e. when the road users have seen that they are intending to do so), road users make eye contact with pedestrians and offer visual cues such as a nod. Pedestrians must look and listen out for road users while using zebra crossings to ensure they have been seen.

Because of the need for pedestrians to make and read visual cues to use zebra crossings to safely cross carriageways, these are not accessible crossings for blind and partially sighted people. The rise in use of silent vehicle, such as cycles and electric vehicles, means relying on listening alone is no longer a safe way for blind and partially sighted people to judge if it is safe to cross.

### **Toucan (Two Can) Crossings**

Toucans are signal-controlled crossings where both pedestrians and cycles can cross the carriageway. Control push buttons located on the traffic light posts on either side of the road activate the traffic lights, which can be activated by pedestrians and by cycles.

To signal to pedestrians and cycles when it is safe to cross, a green walking man symbol and a green cycle symbol are shown. The pedestrian/cycle signal lights can be directly above the push button box (as with puffin crossing), or on the opposite side of the road (as with pelican crossings). Sometimes pedestrians and cycles are segregated when crossing by markings on the road, sometimes crossings are shared use. Toucans should have non-visual cues such as tactile rotating cones on the underside of the push button boxes and sometimes audio bleeps, to indicate to blind and partially sighted pedestrians when it is safe to cross. Red blister tactile paving should also lead

to the crossing point to enable blind and partially sighted people to locate it and the push button box.

Because cycles are so hard to see or hear for blind and partially sighted people, and because Toucan crossings encourage shared use between cycles and pedestrians, they are not an inclusive or accessible crossing type.

### **Courtesy Crossings**

Courtesy crossings are points where pedestrians are encouraged to cross the road. To indicate this, Courtesy crossings sometimes have dropped kerbs on either side of the road, or have raised tables where the road is raised to pavement level to create a continuous footway crossing, or have colour paint or treatment on the road crossing surface. They do not have any traffic control lights. Yellow blister tactile paving should also lead to the crossing point to enable blind and partially sighted people to locate it.

When pedestrians want to cross, they must either wait for a gap in traffic or step out on to the carriageway to indicate their intentions to road users who should then stop to allow them to cross safely. To signal to pedestrians when it is safe to cross (i.e. when the road users have seen that they are intending to do so), road users make eye contact with pedestrians and offer visual cues such as a nod. Pedestrians must look and listen out for road users while using courtesy crossings to ensure they have been seen.

Because of the need for pedestrians to make and read visual cues to use Courtesy crossings to safely cross carriageways, these are not accessible crossings for blind and partially sighted people. The rise in use of silent vehicle, such as cycles and electric vehicles, means relying on listening alone is no longer a safe way for blind and partially sighted people to judge if it is safe to cross.

13. **CCTV** – To receive an update on progress from the Clerk and Cllr Leech and to resolve any actions required.

To note that previous permission for a camera to be fixed to the outside of The Nook has been withdrawn and a new lighting column is being installed in near to the premises in order to site the camera thereon. Cllr Leech has confirmed with WDBC that installation of the column is allowed under permitted development.

To approve retrospectively the following orders that have been raised with the agreement of the Mayor and Cllr Leech without receipt of three quotations due to the timescale, that he has permission to access DCC's streetlights, the necessary equipment and previous agreement to use this contractor for the CCTV electrical work.

Mike Harding Lighting Solutions:

<b>Purchase Order</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Quote £</b>
1510	Installation of column and electrical connection in Simmons Park in the vicinity of The Nook	726.73
1511	Electrical supply for CCTV cameras and equipment on various lighting columns	632.50

- 16. Consultation – Shaping the Future of Transport Across the South West** – To resolve to approve the daft response prepared by Cllr Ireland and the Assistant Clerk.

**PENINSULA TRANSPORT: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF TRANSPORT ACROSS THE SOUTHWEST**

Stakeholder briefing: High-level Vision Consultation, July 2021

Q1. - Strongly agree

Okehampton Town Council feel that it is very important that the vision statement represents an integrated approach to transport in the peninsula that achieves a balance between rail and road use and carbon admissions.

Q2. - Strongly agree all points

The Council welcomes the goals set out in the Peninsula Transport Vision Statement but would ask how these goals be implemented?

Q3.

In the next 30-year period road infrastructure needs to be improved in the Sub Region of North and West Devon, and North Cornwall between Barnstable and Newquay. The reintroduction of the railway between Bude, Holsworthy and Okehampton alongside improved road infrastructure to provide access to the railway.

**18. Public Toilets –**

**18.1 Market Street** - To consider:

- a) A proposal from WDBC for a six year renewal of the lease, from its expiration in December 2021, on the same full repairing basis as existing
- b) If accepted, the extension of the cleaning contract to March 2022 to line up with that at Fairplace Public Toilets

The existing lease is a full repairing lease. Should the Council resolve to accept a renewal of the lease repairs works consisting of the following as a minimum will be required to be undertaken:

- New locks on the doors
- Decoration of woodwork including doors and frames
- Ventilation lattice slats decoration/replacement

Cost of the facility in 2020/21 and this year to date:

	<b>2020/21 £</b>	<b>2021/22 (to date) £</b>
Legionella monitoring	540	180
Insurance	155	160
Cleaning	4,482	
Lock Repairs	465	
Misc repairs	58	227
Water*		
Electricity*		
Business Rates*		
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>5,700</b>	<b>567</b>

\* These items were paid for by WDBC in 2020/21, payment of business rates for public toilets is no longer applicable having been revoked by the Government from this current financial year



**18.2** To resolve to request financial assistance towards the 2022/23 running costs of public toilets from Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council and the amount be to be suggested

The agreement between the two Councils for payments in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan is based on the electorate: 19% OHPC/81% OTC. This could be used as the basis on which to suggest a figure that relates to the actual running costs from the 2020/21 financial year:

Running costs for 2020/21 amounted to:

Fairplace	£ 10,623	
<u>Market St</u>	<u>£ 5,700</u>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 16,323</b>	<b>19% = £3,010</b>

**19. Welcome Back Fund** – To consider the attached report and to resolve the priorities for the spending of the funding

As previously reported, OTC has been awarded £10,000 by WDBC from European funding for the following:

- Refurbishment of benches
- Painting of railings and the pig bike racks
- Planting of low maintenance insect friendly shrubs on verges
- Planters

Spend to date:

	<b>Quoted</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Pig Bike Racks		£450	£9,550
West Bridge (Corner Pieces and plaques)	£540		£9,010
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£540</b>	<b>£450</b>	

The Council is requested to resolve the priority it would like to give each element, noting the recommendation that a) and b) would have greatest impact on the visual look of the town centre.

- a) i) Refurbishment of the seating area adjacent to the Plymouth Inn incorporating the removal of the wooden seating so that it is finished in stone, similar to that on the West Bridge wildflower verge, and therefore maintenance free in the future.  
 ii) The planting of insect friendly low maintenance shrubs in the centre

Bench outside Plymouth Inn



Bench on Wildflower Verge



- b) Refurbishment of benches throughout the town centre
- c) Painting of any remaining unpainted railings either side of East Bridge, landowners permission required
- d) Painting of the two archways over the pedestrian entrances into Simmons Park
- e) Purchase of planters for the front of the Town Hall and in the vicinity of St James' Chapel, permission required
- f) Painting of the railings of Park Way Bridge

**20. Climate Working Group** – Councillors to consider their requirement for receipt of hard copies of meeting documentation and to resolve that this be an item for consideration annually in May.

There is a statutory requirement for agendas to be printed and provided to Councillors in paper format unless they specifically individually agree to receive them electronically.

Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, paras 10 (2)(b) as amended by the Local Government (Electronic Communications) (England) Order 2015.

**23. New Carpark Agreement** – To consider and resolve to approve the recommendations of the Task & Finish Group and that this be progressed through Stephens & Scown Solicitors who have been acting for the Council on legal issues within the park.

**Suggestion for split of income/expenses:**

It was noted that for approx. 38 weeks of the year DMAT's car park is only available for use by the paying public from 4pm weekdays and Saturday mornings. (Approx. 27% of the year) DMAT staff access the car park across Council land as do vehicles delivering to the College. OTC pays all maintenance costs for the access road.

It is not possible from ticket machine income to ascertain public usage of DMAT's car park in relation to OTC's. This is because those parking in OTC's carpark often use the ticket machine in DMAT's car park and the cashless payment system does not distinguish between the two machines.

While the current agreement records a percentage as to how receipts are retained, OTC has historically held all receipts and applied them to meeting maintenance costs of the car park. To this end, it would be sensible for this to be reflected in the new agreement going forward as outlined below.

For the reasons above it is suggested that OTC retains the parking income and in return continues to meet the revenue costs for DMAT's car park as well as some maintenance tasks as listed:

- Ticket machine
- Lining
- Light column
- Pothole repair
- Maintain the hedge between the two car parks, with the exception of the trees which will remain DMAT's responsibility

DMAT will be responsible for:

- Resurfacing work with a contribution from OTC of up to 30% of the net cost
- Business rates

- Capital light column costs
- Fencing between the carpark and college
- All insurance costs

### **Amendments to Agreement**

- 4.2 Change May and October to 'when necessary'  
 5.2 out of date  
 7 DMAT to arrange own insurance for car park use at all times

### Schedule 1

DCC to change to DMAT

### Schedule 2

- 1.1 all day parking now in existence, amend to incorporate  
 1.3 DMAT to have responsibility for issuing of staff stickers/permits for parking in their car parking area only (move to Schedule 1?)  
 1.4 parking permits issued to the public by OTC can be used in DMAT carpark out of school hours  
 1.5 Amend to remove sentence in relation to consultation.  
 1.6 Cash to be collected as necessary (currently twice weekly)

Consider additional Schedule for OTC's responsibilities

## **24. Finance –**

**24.2** To resolve to approve the virements listed on the meeting report

<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount £</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To (nominal code)</b>
Zip Wire purchase	12,000	EMR – Replacement of Play Equipment	Play Equipment and Maintenance (4164/302)
Ash Tree Dieback Felling (Clapps Wood)	1,000	EMR – Ash Tree Dieback Removal & Replacement	Tree Survey & Works (4148/302)
	13,000	General Reserves	Tree Survey & Works (4148/302)

## **25. Civic Diary Report – To note events attended by the Mayor during July 2021**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
16 <sup>th</sup> July 2021	Hanging basket judging with Mayor of WDBC
20 <sup>th</sup> July 2021	Online Okehampton College Major Awards evening
31 <sup>st</sup> July	Mayors Coffee Morning

**26. Civic Service, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2021 – To note the arrangements for the event:**

This is one of the occasions when Members are expected to attend, and it is the only annual occasion when the Town Council would normally lead a Parade in Okehampton.

As usual for Civic Ceremonies medals, where relevant, can be worn.

It would not be appropriate for the Council to be arranging an event that would facilitate the gathering of a large number of people in a confined indoor space at this time, therefore Cllr Tolley and the Clerk have agreed the following:

There will not be a Parade this year for the following reasons:

- The band are unable to attend as they do not have enough members available
- The Air Cadets are not currently permitted to parade, and the Army Cadets have yet to provide advice as to their status, but it is assumed that it will be the same for similar groups
- The Air Cadets are not able to provide a Parade Commander and the Army Cadets have not respond to the query.

So that Fairplace Church is not filled with people and some social distancing can be adhered to, invitations will be limited to:

- OTC Councillors and spouses
- Mace Bearers
- Mayor's Cadet
- Representatives from Okehampton based organisations and groups
- DCC Leader of the Council and Councillor representative
- WDBC Mayor, Consort and representatives
- Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council Chairman and Consort

At the request of Fairplace Church, the Covid Precautions are as follows:

- Doors at the front and rear of the Church will remain open throughout the service
- Attendees will be asked to wear a face covering when moving around or standing whilst on the premises, including for singing
- There will be a collection basket at the main doors instead of it being passed around
- Service sheets will be provided for each individual person where possible to limit sharing

The Service

- Councillors, the Mayoress, Mace Bearers, Mayor's Cadet and the Clerk will meet at the Town Hall and walk together to Fairplace Church, meeting other invitees there – route along George Street or through the Victorian Arcade to be confirmed.
- The Mayoral Party will enter the Church once all others are seated and will exit the Church first directly behind Rev Newcombe
- The Church congregation will be present

Following the service, the Mayoral party and those invited to the event will return to the Charter Hall for light refreshment, consisting of coffee and cake.