Can city walks help us think?
Progress on pavement parking
Creating a walking nation
Welcome to your first WALK, TALK, THINK

Last year we asked for thoughts on our magazine, Street Life. We wanted to make sure we were producing something which was relevant and interesting to you – our supporters.

You wanted to hear about what we’ve been doing and our upcoming priorities. You wanted more images showing what we were doing on the ground to encourage walking. And you wanted to hear the voices of other people. We hope WALK, TALK, THINK gives you that.

In this issue, learn about what we’re doing to put a stop to pavement parking, hear from an expert at the Centre for Transport and Society on the urban walking experience and read fellow supporters’ thoughts in ‘Word on the street’.

We’d love to know what you think.

Happy walking!
Kathryn, Amy and Tanya

CONTENTS

Creating a walking nation 3
Street dreams: can city walks help us think? 4
A day in the life of… 6
Walkie snaps 7
Hot topic: pavement parking 8
Help us create a walking nation 10
Word on the street 11

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CREATING A WALKING NATION

Walking. We all do it, right? It unites us. Except that as a nation we walk a third less than we did 20 years ago. Our mission is to see this trend reversed and put walking first. Our Chief Executive, Joe Irvin, tells us more:

We’ve engineered walking out of so much of our daily lives and in its place we’ve created huge problems. Our country is congested and polluted. Travelling long distances is the norm. Local shops are getting fewer customers through their doors and older people are left feeling isolated. Our physical and mental health is suffering too, and the cost of this to the NHS is rising dramatically.

But it’s not too late to turn things around.

We have a bold ambition to build a nation that puts walking first; a nation where people of all generations enjoy the benefits that this simple act brings, on streets that are fit for walking.

Why WALK, TALK, THINK?

We WALK with people of all generations. A third of children in the UK are overweight yet 2012 marked the first time that more primary school children were driven to school than walked. With help and encouragement young and old can form new habits that make their present and future brighter.

We TALK to planners, local authorities and transport bodies to overcome the barriers to walking that so many people face.

We THINK walking first and push for change. In the early days our campaigning led to the zebra crossing and first speed limits. Now our campaigns for 20mph, more time for people to cross the road or pedestrianising iconic streets can achieve real change.

Living Streets – a beacon for walking for 85 years

Our updated logo gives a nod to the zebra crossing, one of our greatest achievements and an iconic symbol of our streets. People freely walking across the logo sums up our message that everyday walking has a huge significance in our daily lives and is at the heart of all we do.

We can engineer walking back into our lives.

Let’s walk forward together. Let’s be a movement about movement.

Progress starts here: one street, one school, one step at a time.
In order to answer that question we have to look at how pedestrians interact with their surroundings – noise, traffic, obstructions etc. My research did just that, examining the urban walking experience in Bristol by walking and talking with 31 residents in a series of hour-long interviews.

For some types of thinking, the walker wishes to ignore their surroundings as much as possible and go off into a world of their own. This kind of ‘inner world’ thinking sees people use urban walking as a time to daydream, process problems, or for personal reflection. People reported reflecting on their working day whilst walking home, when they weren’t surrounded by other pressures or distractions and left free to think.

These useful and enjoyable types of thinking all require a mental retreat into a private world. However, the people interviewed suggested that this retreat can be intruded upon by elements in the city: other pedestrians, cyclists, and particularly motor traffic.

One man talked about getting so involved in thinking about life issues whilst walking that he would almost collide with a street object or fellow pedestrian, which would snap him back into an awareness of his surroundings. Another summed it up as being like swimming in which cars were the ‘sharks’, keeping him on edge and stopping him from relaxing fully into his thoughts.

In contrast to retreating into an inner world, some pedestrian thoughts are actively inspired by what is seen and heard in the surrounding city. Small elements in the surroundings can trigger positive or negative mood changes, with one participant saying that seeing some unsightly steps in her local park often led to a chain of negative thoughts.

How can thinking be catered for by the city?

We all need space and time away from our ever-increasingly digital lives. My findings suggest that everyday walks can offer that. Whilst there are elements in a city that can restrict thinking, short urban walks do offer bite-size daily opportunities for various sorts of contemplation. This has implications for how urban walking environments should be designed and managed.
It’s already understood that pedestrians should be able to walk easily through a city with minimum obstacles and interruptions to negotiate.

Allowing pedestrians to contemplate problems and reflect on life in relative peace can have positive implications for well-being. This in turn may make walking an appealing option and increase walking rates.

My findings suggest that city walking environments can also be inspiring for the thought life of a pedestrian. Much policy on walking environments in the past has highlighted the importance of practical and aesthetically pleasing walking conditions. While these are obviously important, perhaps the city could be made more inspirational for the thought life, emotions and imagination of pedestrians.

Walkability is like a tree. In order to understand a tree, the roots below ground must be understood, as well as what is seen above ground. In the same way, only half of walkability can be seen in the city itself. The other half is hidden in the inner world and thought life of the person walking.

Dr Tom Calvert is from the Centre for Transport and Society at the University of the West of England, where he recently completed his PhD. To read his thesis, visit eprints.uwe.ac.uk and search ‘Calvert’.
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A ... CAMPAIGNS MANAGER

What’s a typical day like for you?
A typical day could involve meetings with Transport for London and the Greater London Authority, talking to volunteers, and coordinating the London campaign to put walking first. I’ll attend events to discuss the campaign and keep an eye on profile-raising opportunities.

What are you currently working on?
My focus is making sure that the next Mayor of London puts walking first. London is predicted to grow to over 10 million people by 2030. To continue its global prominence we need streets with walking and people at their heart. We want to see this happen through investment in town centres, smarter road user charging, safer speeds, and iconic streets to be proud of.

What are some of your favourite campaigns?
I’m really enjoying our campaign to pedestrianise Oxford Street. Events like Lumiere London, when roads were closed off to vehicles and opened up to people, show the power of creativity in reimagining our streets. We’ve done a great job in raising the campaign up the political agenda and I’m looking forward to seeing commitments from Mayoral candidates turn into real change.

Sarah Williams
London Policy and Campaigns Manager

WALKIE SNAPS

Here’s Rebecca with some of this year’s WoW badge competition entries. The theme is ‘My Neighbourhood’ and pupils have been drawing things they love about their communities.
This Valentine’s Day, we asked supporters to nominate their most romantic walk. Chester, Scarborough, London, Glasgow and Oxford made the shortlist. Over 1000 votes later and the title went to …Scarborough!

28 Axbridge residents joined us for a Street Route Audit to see how the walking environment could be improved for residents.

These mini Striders have been popping up in selected schools as part of an Early Years pilot to engage 3-5 year olds with the Walk to School programme and values.

This spring we’re challenging workplaces to walk more with Put Your Feet to Work Week. Staff are organising walks and offering advice on how to fit more walking into everyday life.

Our Snow Angels have been out clearing streets in the wintry months, including this young pair in Scotland.

Here we are at the Senedd, Cardiff, launching our ‘Get Wales Walking’ manifesto. We’re continuing to work with key figures in Wales and calling on political parties to make Wales a nation that walks more.
HOT TOPIC: PAVEMENT PARKING

Pavement parking irritates a lot of us and is one of the issues we’re contacted about most. In December, the Government committed to a pavement parking review; could things finally be about to change?

Dr Rachel Lee
Living Streets
Pavement parking is much more than just an irritant for vulnerable pedestrians; such as wheelchair users, parents with pushchairs and people living with sight loss. They face barriers many of us wouldn’t even notice.

A lack of clear legislation leads drivers to assume pavement parking is acceptable, in fact, 54 per cent admit to doing it.

Driving on the pavement is illegal, but you are unlikely to get a ticket for parking there unless you live in London. Councils can use Traffic Regulation Orders to manage the problem on individual streets, but it’s an expensive and ad hoc approach to a nationwide epidemic.

Simon Hoare MP’s Pavement Parking Bill called for the law to be made the same as London, making pavement parking the exception rather than the rule.

Support from MPs across political parties resulted in a government commitment to review current legislation. We’ll be sitting at the table with the Department for Transport doing our bit to make sure our streets are safe for all.

Jennifer Keen
Guide Dogs
A few years ago Guide Dogs asked people with sight loss what obstacles they encountered when out and about. Shockingly, cars on pavements were a problem for over 90 per cent.

We’ve campaigned for car-free pavements ever since, discovering along the way that it isn’t just a problem for guide dog owners, but for all pedestrians, so we weren’t surprised when MPs got behind the campaign. In 2014, two MPs: one Labour, one Liberal Democrat, spearheaded attempts to change the law in Westminster, with SNP leading the charge in the Scottish Parliament.

We got the full set of parties in 2015 when Conservative MP Simon Hoare agreed to champion the Pavement Parking Bill, which would stop pavement parking, except in places where councils deemed it safe.

Bills led by individual MPs need support from the Government to stand any chance of success, so Living Streets and Guide Dogs campaigners got writing in their thousands to MPs and councillors.

The Government’s agreement to fund research and work with Guide Dogs and Living Streets to find a solution is a huge step towards clearer pavements! Watch this space…
Simon Hoare MP
At an event in Parliament last year, guide dog owners shared evidence of being forced out onto the road into oncoming traffic because cars were parked on pavements. These stories are all too common with thoughtless behaviour from drivers putting people at risk on a daily basis.

I was shocked to learn that pavement parking is perfectly legal in most of the UK and that the current legal framework surrounding it is inconsistent which is why I chose it as my Private Member’s Bill.

The Bill was withdrawn at its second reading but only after the Government showed recognition of the problem and made it clear that improving access for disabled people is a key priority.

A government examination of current issues gives us the best opportunity of securing backing for legislative change. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in Parliament and the organisations which supported the Pavement Parking Bill to move this issue forward and ensure that pedestrians throughout the country are kept safe on our streets.

The Transport Minister is convening a roundtable to undertake a policy review, demonstrating the Government’s commitment to tackling this problem.

MEANWHILE, IN SCOTLAND…

The current Scottish Government has pledged to ban pavement parking and in late February, the Lords in Westminster devolved powers surrounding pavement parking to them. This is a historical first and has been greatly celebrated by us. We now know that everyone will be able to walk along the pavement without being stopped by parked cars.

With the Scottish elections imminent, we don’t expect to see parking on footways and dropped kerbs banned for a number of months but we’re one step closer to making a big change to all of our lives.

Please join us in asking all Scottish party leaders to commit to ending pavement parking in their 2016 manifesto so that it stays on everyone’s agenda.

www.livingstreets.org.uk/scotland
HELP US CREATE A WALKING NATION

Walking has been engineered out of our lives but we’re committed to reversing this decline. And, as you’ve seen in this magazine, together we are making change happen.

Scotland: STUART is working with the Scottish Government to cut barriers to walking.

North East: ALISON is working with schools in Tyneside to get more children walking to school.

Wales: RACHEL M is advising the Welsh Government on how active travel ambitions can be realised.

Midlands: ALICIA is volunteering with us in Leicester to clear snow so her elderly neighbours can get to the shops.

London: RACHEL L continues to work with partners to develop policy, around issues like pavement parking, which make everyday walking easier for all.

Devon: KEVIN and his team are coordinating the production and distribution of millions of walk to school packs. The scheme is now launching in Torbay.

We can only continue this work with your support. We rely on donations for much of our campaign work. Please give us a small donation of £10 (or whatever you can afford); it will make a big difference to walking across the nation.

MAKE A GIFT

To make a donation to Living Streets, please fill in your details and all relevant sections of this form and return it to: Freepost RSAY BXAK KSBK, Living Streets, 4th Floor, Universal House, 88-94 Wentworth Street, London E1 7SA. If you would prefer to donate online, please visit www.livingstreets.org.uk/donate

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Signed: Date:
**WORD ON THE STREET**

**Rebekah Dressel**
@Rebekahd691, Aberdeen

GP’s amazing new drug #pedometer #walking @ExercisesMed @exerciseworks @Walk4LifeInfo @PathsforAll @livingstreets

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**Paul**
University of Manchester on board for #putyourfeettowork week. Lots of walking and healthy travel. @livingstreets

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**Neville Wilson**
Change of location for today’s walk to work… @livingstreets #livingstreets

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**Wei Du**
@WeiDuStreets

New Zebra crossing as a result of @livingstreets school route audit in Chadwell Heath! Thanks @lbbdcouncil!

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**Marian**
On behalf of South Tyneside Visually Impaired Council and its members, I thank Living Streets and Guide Dogs for spearheading the Pavement Parking campaign! Well done and best wishes.

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**Therese, London**
on Oxford Street

I definitely support pedestrianisation of this street. I came down to Oxford Street to see the Christmas lights. I was on a bus but when I got here I didn’t dare get off because of the congestion. In fact, I was scared to get off.

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**Tim**
Students responding positively to this important initiative – thanks @livingstreets for your support! #FreeYourFeet

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**Alan Benson, Richmond**

About 20 years ago I had my very own Snow Angel help me and I don’t think they even realised. I lived in a block of flats and one winter it snowed heavily. Someone kept clearing the outside path from the front door enabling me to get out. I’m forever grateful; it was such a generous act.

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**Share your thoughts on all things walking:**

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WALK THIS MAY #Try20

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