

October  
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# SIGNPOSTS

News and views from Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling group  
Issue 6

## STREETSCAPE REPORT HAS LANDED ...



*Image: Artist's impression of proposed new raised crossing outside Haddenham Medical Centre*

The final Streetscape report, recommending major improvements in eight locations around the village, has now been delivered to the Parish Council. The report, which could result in a new look for areas including Thame Road, Fort End, the Churchway-Woodways junction and Church End, follows three rounds of consultation during which villagers fed in their suggestions and discussed them with the consultants, Phil Jones Associates (PJA). You can download it [here](#)<sup>1</sup>.

This is just the beginning, however. Alterations to roads are expensive, so we will need outside funding,

and the current designs are only indicative – much more work and consultation will be required before they are ‘shovel ready’. But crucially we now have a document that shows what the community wants and where our priorities lie. This can be used by Bucks Council in internal discussions and negotiations with developers and other sources of funds.

### ... 20mph could be the first step

The most popular measure among residents was a 20mph speed limit across the village (89% support in stage three of the consultation). This could be a relatively quick and low-cost change, so the Parish Council has commissioned PJA to explore what needs to be done to implement the scheme. Given Bucks Council’s requirement that 20mph limits should be ‘self-enforcing’, some street design interventions will be required to reduce speeds, particularly on Thame Road and Stanbridge Road.

There’s also plenty to think about beyond Streetscape, as you’ll see from the rest of our articles, plus the latest in our occasional series of walks. Happy reading!

Alan Thawley

Chair, Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling Group

<sup>1</sup> The report is available at [https://www.haddenham-bucks-pc.gov.uk/\\_VirDir/CoreContents/News/Display.aspx?id=52428](https://www.haddenham-bucks-pc.gov.uk/_VirDir/CoreContents/News/Display.aspx?id=52428)

## POTHOLES



**W**hy have we got so many potholes in Haddenham and how could we get safe, smooth surfaces on our pavements and roads?

Potholes are a hazard for every one of us; not just for the motorists who worry about their car suspension. Pedestrians trip up as they walk along the pavements or cross the road, cyclists fall off onto the road and into the traffic when they hit one, buggies, wheelchairs and mobility scooters wobble, judder or even tip over! Potholes should be a high priority for action.

Transport for Bucks (TfB) is Buckinghamshire Council's transport department, in charge of 3,200 km of roads and 2,480 km of footpaths. The criteria for resurfacing roads and mending potholes have been set by Buckinghamshire Councillors<sup>2</sup>, but the current

<sup>2</sup> The policy has recently been updated: see <https://tinyurl.com/d7tray2c> and "Minimum Recording Levels" at <https://tinyurl.com/mryke3a4>.

### Did you know?

The immediate confines of Haddenham had 16 separate "open" reports of pothole, pavement and road surface problems, on "FixMyStreet" in early October 2022.



Potholes should be a high priority for action ... and pavements seem to be at the back of the queue

criteria are set solely with the motorist in mind. Cracks in the surface which trap bike wheels are ignored; the edges of the road don't count, even though everyone, except motorists, uses them; a residential street, such as Willis Road, collected 138 potholes before it was resurfaced – as a special case – not a planned repair; and pavements seem to be at the back of the queue. Moreover, many potholes are mended badly, individually, instead of as part of a planned resurfacing.

Do we continue to report these dangers to [FixMyStreet](https://www.fixmystreet.com/)<sup>3</sup> and just grumble about surfaces? Or do we start a campaign to change the repair criteria?

Roads and pavements belong to all of us, not just motorists.

CF

<sup>3</sup> Report defective streets at <https://www.fixmystreet.com/>. Current reports of Haddenham defects can be reviewed at <https://tinyurl.com/are4tn98>.

## CAR-LESS IN HADDENHAM



“ In hindsight, we probably used the car excessively ...

We went car-free by accident. Our old Ford Focus was just too expensive to repair. What with the cost of buying, insuring and taxing another car, we decided to try life without one. A friend of mine in Bledlow had done it. Why not us?

We now get around on foot and by using public transport, our pre-loved cargo-bike or by skating. Occasionally we borrow a family car. (We had a recent weekend in Dorset.) And we can't wait to join Haddenham's electric car club.

The benefits to the environment are obvious, and we've experienced improved fitness and mood (it is well-researched how exercise creates more positive attitudes).

In hindsight, we probably used the car excessively – trips to Co-op, the garden centre, Thame, etc. Now, we jump on our bikes, a bus or train.

It was definitely easier and more convenient having a car. Now weekend outings need to be planned around public transport and our cargo-bike can only carry so much. It is also a challenge to get to places like Whipsnade Zoo. Life would be easier with travel clubs and shared vehicles.

Another issue – long-standing in Haddenham – is no cycle route to Thame and Aylesbury and onto the national cycle network. And wouldn't it be great if more Haddenham streets were “no through roads”?

Car-free isn't easy, but it's easier than we imagined. Also we're free of the stresses and cost of driving. The more people on people-powered wheels, the safer Haddenham will be. Whether it's cycling, skating or scooting. The more people doing that, the more cautious drivers will be. And then, even more will be inspired to join us.

LW



## EASIER WALKING FROM NEW ESTATES, PLEASE



*Satellite image highlighting services on the fringes of Haddenham <sup>4</sup>*

A walking and cycling village. Not everyone can walk or cycle, but we should make it as easy and safe as possible for those who can. That has long been our aim in the Safe Walking and Cycling group. That is not to exclude cars but to curb their dominance of the public space. Which is, indeed, a principal aim of the current Streetscape project.

A village or town is considered 'walkable' by planners if any resident can reach any part in 20 minutes. While the recent expansion of the village poses little problem for cyclists, walkers from parts of the new estates will face a longer trek than this norm for some of their regular journeys.

Their problem is not helped by the location of many important services not at the centre but on the fringes of the village, such as the medical centre, the

pharmacy, the post office, St Mary's infant school, the railway station. From Sedgwick Street (in Aspen Park) to St Mary's infant school is about 30 minutes (at adult speed) and the same to the Post Office. A visit to The Grove would be about 35 minutes.

Haddenham is reasonably well-off for footpaths but walkability from the new estates could be much improved with some new alleyways. For The Grove, Willis Road is a 650-metre barrier separating it from the village centre. For Sedgwick Street, Haddenham Business Park is a similar barrier: a pedestrian passage through (which looks easy to arrange) could take 10 minutes off a trip to the Post Office or medical centre.

Easier walking means fewer cars and more people in the street: a health and social benefit to all.

AG

<sup>4</sup>Haddenham satellite view: ©2022 Google – Imagery ©2022 CNES / Airbus, Getmapping plc, Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky, Maxer Technologies, The GeoInformation Group, Map data ©2022.

## DON'T LET TRAFFIC EAT OUR GREENS



**A**larmist talk? We all like Haddenham's Greens – they're photogenic and archetypal – along with witchert walls and winding pathways. And they're protected. Two are designated Village Greens (Church End and Townsend) and two are officially areas of Common Land (Fort End Green and Skittles Green). All protectable therefore from, amongst other things, egregious parking.

But there is a tension between legal fact and daily life. Only real traffic reduction will help. Streetscape addresses the problem with hope. The theory goes through-traffic will be so inconvenienced by the time it takes to cross the village that it'll find other routes. Maybe. After all, Concern for Others = Time, and through-traffic always seems in a hurry.

But then there's driving *within* the village. To reduce that, we need more cross-village paths. There's a good example coming up: the developers of The

“ Let's think bigger ... Time to start thinking outside the (metal) box!

Grove are committed to a path to Church End. It'll emerge at the point where the present footpath is temporarily closed, cross Aston Road to the south and go to the vehicle entrance to St Mary's School. According to the Planning Inspector this will “provide improved access towards the school for pedestrians and [encourage] reduced use of private cars”. Bravo.

Yes, residents of The Grove might well be encouraged to walk to Church End. But what of drivers from further afield? Let's think bigger: somewhere to leave your car for a short while near the Green? What?! A carpark?! Swathes of tarmac!? Well, even carparks can be 'green' nowadays<sup>5</sup>. Further what's the alternative? At present there's too often the downright danger of the Church End free-for-all.

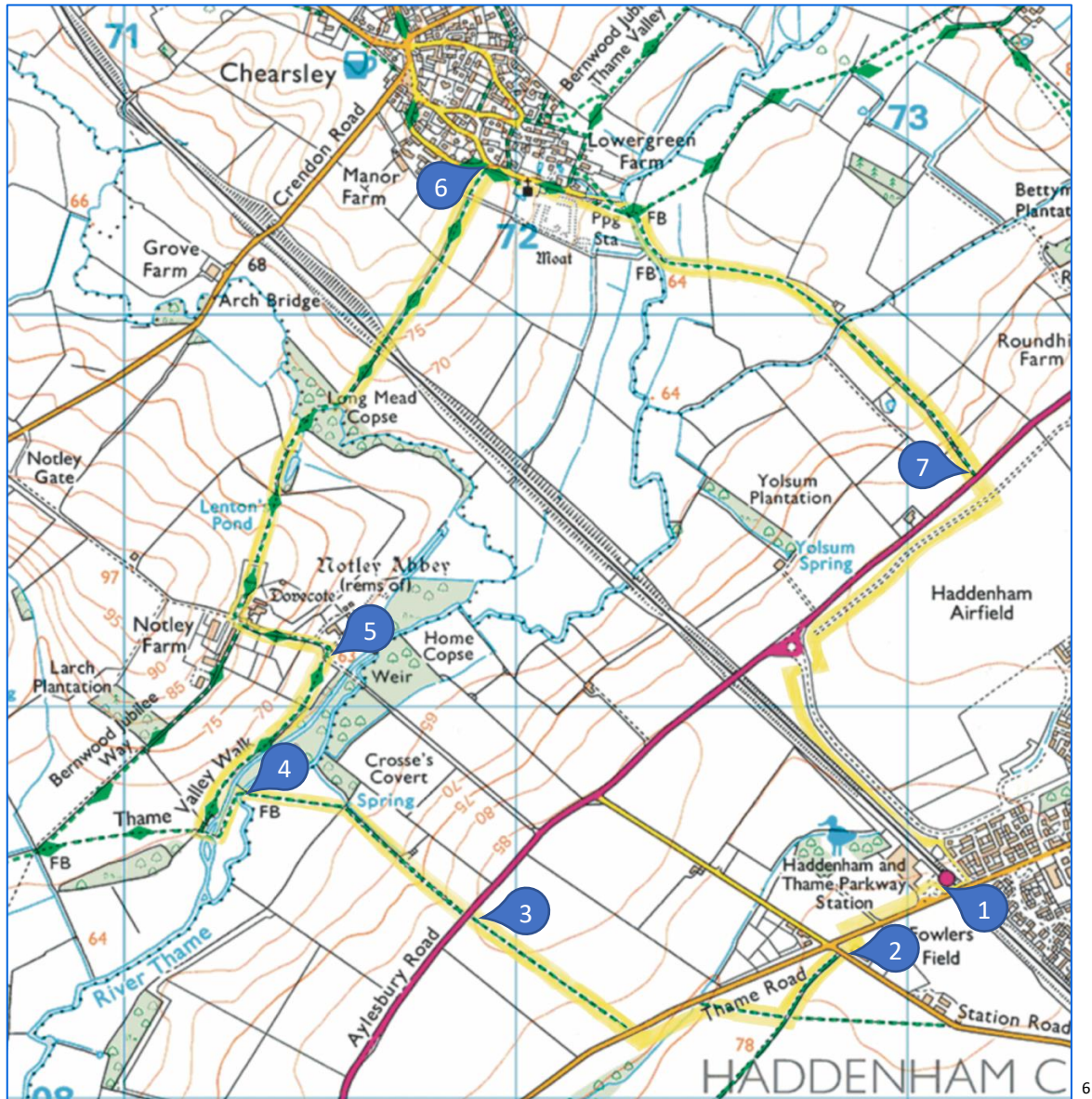
Time to start thinking outside the (metal) box!!

BA

<sup>5</sup> For example, see: <https://www.abg-geosynthetics.com/applications/national-trust-english-heritage-car-parking/>



## KEEP WALKING!



### SUMMARY

This is the second of a series of walks starting in Haddenham using parts of the [Wychert Way](#)<sup>7</sup> and a proposed "Round Haddenham Path" (the latter to be reviewed in a future issue). It is about 5 miles, with a convenient pub with children's play equipment halfway round. Allow 2½ hrs for the walk. One stile. Needs walking boots or Wellingtons when wet. Indeed, beware! In very wet conditions the ground round the River Thames may be impassable.

<sup>6</sup> Map by kind permission: © Crown copyright 2022 Ordnance Survey. Media 048/22. Licence valid until 31 December 2022.

<sup>7</sup> For a guide to the full 12-mile length of Wychert Way, see: <https://www.wychert.org.uk>.

## DIRECTIONS<sup>8</sup>

START AT HADDENHAM AND THAME PARKWAY RAILWAY STATION.

1. Follow path to entrance to Snakemoor Nature Reserve. Continue, taking care, along Thame Road to crossroads. Turn left onto Station Road.

2. After a few yards turn right down Miller's Way bridleway for about 100 yards to a well sign-posted crossing. Turn right. (From here until crossing the river in step 6, follow "Wychert Way" waymarks.) Cross field to road. DO NOT GO OUT ONTO ROAD. Bear left, keeping to path on field side of hedge for about 150 yards. Go through large gap in hedge. Cross Thame Road. Straight across field to A418.

3. Cross A418. Take Care! Follow farm track. Continue straight along narrow field-edge path to kissing gate. Go diagonally left across field to gated footbridge. IF FLOODED DO NOT ATTEMPT TO GET THROUGH – RETURN TO HADDENHAM.

4. Cross bridge and turn left following the main watercourse on your right-hand side to ruins of Notley watermill mentioned in The Domesday Book (1086). The mill stopped working around 1924. Here, cross the two mill races. Turn right through gate with river on your right-hand side. Go through several gates towards the originally 12th Century Notley Abbey<sup>9</sup>, once home to Laurence Olivier and Vivienne Leigh.

5. Turn left past Notley Abbey and Notley Tythe Barn. The estate to your left is where the XT brewery<sup>10</sup> is located. Turn right keeping farm buildings on your right-hand side, then bear left to pass a 16th or 17th Century dovecote on your right-hand side. Join a new chalk road to its end. Go through gate and keep

straight on past a redundant stile and into woods by a metal gate. Follow path through the woods beside a River Thame tributary, currently subject to conservation work<sup>11</sup>, and then follow a fenced path to the railway line with steps down and traffic lights. Obey lights. Trains travel unbelievably fast on this section. Climb steps up opposite side and follow path to steps down to road. (If going to pub turn left uphill to Chearsley Village Green and The Bell<sup>12</sup>).

6. Turn right and follow Church Lane downhill. Note 13th Century Church and site of medieval moat on right-hand side. Straight on at end of road along footpath signposted Cuddington. Cross footbridge over River Thame and immediately turn right, then onwards to small footbridge over ditch. Can be wet. Cross bridge and turn left. Follow "Wychert Way Link" waymarks aiming for a dilapidated barn. Note ridge-and-furrow surface of fields from pre-Enclosure ploughing (this has been pasture since the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century). Pass dilapidated barn on left-hand side. Through kissing gate and follow gentle slope up to A418 passing another dilapidated barn on your right.

7. Climb over stile, cross A418 and enter through open metal gates onto former airfield<sup>13</sup>. Turn right and follow perimeter road (used for motorcycle racing<sup>14</sup> after the Second World War) past the concrete foundations of old airfield control tower on your right, to path and through gate in hedge. Cross Pegasus Way. Through gate, turn left – near area of proposed Village Wood. Follow track, then Spitfire Path to Thame Road. Turn right to return to the station.

BB

<sup>8</sup> The written directions for this walk were checked for accuracy on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2022. It remains walkers' responsibility to keep to footpaths. Walkers should follow the Countryside Code, which can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/247cfnrn>.

<sup>9</sup> For more on the Abbey's history see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Notley\\_Abbey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Notley_Abbey).

<sup>10</sup> For more on the brewery see <https://www.xtbrewing.com/xt-brewery>.

<sup>11</sup> For details of the exciting work a half-mile downstream, see <https://riverthame.org/chearsley-wetland-creation/>.

<sup>12</sup> For open times, menu, etc., for The Bell in Chearsley, see <https://thebellchearsley.co.uk>.

<sup>13</sup> For airfield origins see <http://www.haddenhamairfieldhistory.co.uk/beginning.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> For Haddenham's motorcycle racing history see <http://www.haddenhamairfieldhistory.co.uk/motorcycles.htm>.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### WITNEY AND THAME 20MPH

[Thame](#)<sup>15</sup> and [Witney](#)<sup>16</sup> (12 miles West of Oxford) have followed the Welsh decision to set a default 20mph speed limit in residential areas.

### LEISURELY CYCLING

Aylesbury Cycling Tourist Club has relaunched sessions for newcomers and leisurely bike rides – with tea and cake breaks. One popular route seems to be between the Bugle Horn and Haddenham. For more details, click [here](#)<sup>17</sup>.

### CYCLE TO SCHOOL WEEK

Congratulations to local Haddenham schools supporting this [annual event](#)<sup>18</sup> in the first week of October. It is claimed that swapping the car for cycling to school could save families £160 per year and in 2021 across the UK, Cycle to School Week saved £20,000 of fuel – not to mention potentially contributing to the health of the junior cyclists taking part.

### BANK INTEREST

The River Thames is a beautiful place to walk so an initiative to improve a riverbank path close to Haddenham is to be welcomed. By chance, the work is taking place at step four of our walk, featured on page seven [above](#).

### KEEPING OUR ROADS PHONE-FREE

One of our readers has pointed out [a trial](#)<sup>19</sup> happening right now to enforce safer roads. A stationary van is using technology to identify drivers illegally using their phones.

### POLICE WARNING TO CYCLISTS

Thames Valley Police warn this area is a cycle theft hotspot. See also a Haddenham.net Facebook posting on 29<sup>th</sup> September. Click [here](#)<sup>20</sup> for the Police's recent advice. In short: [lock it, mark it, register it!](#)

Don't miss out on SIGNPOSTS news and views: just email [HaddSWAC@gmail.com](mailto:HaddSWAC@gmail.com) asking to subscribe, free. Or scan the following to save some typing!



SCAN ME

Previous issues are available at <https://www.villagesociety.org/haddswac.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Oxfordshire County Council has approved implementation in Thame (excluding the ring-road) and Moreton in 2023/24: see <https://tinyurl.com/5bau6b9m>.

<sup>16</sup> Details for Witney: see <https://tinyurl.com/ce7b4tas>.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.cyclinguk.org/group/aylesbury-ctc>

<sup>18</sup> More details can be found at: <https://www.bikeability.org.uk/cycletoschoolweek/>.

<sup>19</sup> Details from The Guardian newspaper can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/ypwn3tda>.

<sup>20</sup> For advice on pedal bike security in August 2022 see: <https://tinyurl.com/4pb8svka>. Generally, to protect your bike see <https://tinyurl.com/4euvpvzc>.