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SIGNPOSTS

News and views from Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling group.

Welcome to our first newsletter! We hope you find it both informative and thought-provoking. Our group has campaigned for many years to make the village a safer and more welcoming place, achieving results such as the Woodways zebra crossing and the improvements to Green Lane.

We now have another exciting opportunity thanks to the parish council's Streetscape project, which is taking a long overdue look at how to ensure our streets are designed for everyone, not just motor vehicles. Please do take the opportunity to contribute, as this is a project for the whole village – a public workshop is planned but you can also email clerk@haddenham-bucks-pc.gov.uk.

In the meantime, we'll also keep pushing Bucks Council as hard as we can on the much-needed walking and cycling route to Thame, and will keep you updated in future issues.

Happy reading! Alan Thawley, Chair, Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling group (HaddSWAC)

ACTIVE TRAVEL POP-UP: NEXT STEPS

By the time you read this, Haddenham's Emergency Active Travel Scheme may well have gone. All elements will be removed after Bucks Council decided against a consultation on whether to make it permanent. Given its shortcomings – only going in one direction, stopping short of the two Woodways schools and only providing a short section separated from traffic – it was unlikely to entice many new cyclists onto a busy road. But was it still a worthwhile experiment?

Dire warnings of 'accidents waiting to happen' turned out to be unfounded, and many villagers appreciated the protection and slower traffic around the S-bend. The most popular aspect was the 20mph advisory speed limit, which seems to have had some success in slowing traffic. Additional speed monitoring will be carried out post-removal to verify how much.

We hope that at the very least, this imperfect experiment will help the Streetscape project to deliver a more successful solution to what we can all agree is one of Haddenham's thorniest traffic problems.



STREETSCAPE: WHAT AN OPPORTUNITY



The Parish Council recently kicked off “Streetscape”. You can read the [latest update](#)¹ on their website. Go there to see data gathered from us all mapped out in three plans.

Streetscape will be an overarching look at our roads, the first for nearly two hundred years. That was well before the car was a glint in even the keenest petrol-head’s eye. Cars have come to dominate the way we move around. Most of us are drivers, but there must surely be a better relationship between Car and Village. Phil Jones Associates – consultants in ‘transport, engineering and place-making’ – are charged with redressing imbalance. How about an environment where we all feel safer on village roads? Sounds like a dream? How might it come true?

The solution can’t just be more signs for drivers to ‘obey’. There is a radical movement in modern

transport for engineers to encourage safety through and by design, encouraging awareness of others in us all. Drivers won’t feel they’re on anonymous tarmac, but in a unique village. Speed will be ‘naturally’ constrained by the design of our surroundings.

Things that flow from this:

- the possible exclusion of all through-traffic
- enhancement of the ‘specialness’ of Haddenham
- encouragement of communal spirit, with a reduction in car use
- better arrangements for visitors to Haddenham – its station, schools and amenities

Streetscape could be revolutionary. The devil will be in the detail. PJA’s expertise will be crucial, but we can all contribute. Let the Parish Council know your views – clerk@haddenham-bucks-pc.gov.uk.

¹ Update 1st March 2022: https://www.haddenham-bucks-pc.gov.uk/_VirDir/CoreContents/News/Display.aspx?id=47663

WHAT'S THE RIGHT SPEED FOR HADDENHAM?



In 1935 it was not statues that were torn down and thrown into the river: it was the newly introduced speed limit signs. With very little in the way of evidence, 30mph had been selected as the fair compromise between drivers (a small but vocal minority in those days) and other road users in all built-up areas, and has remained the standard limit to this day.

But we now live in a very different world. Car ownership is almost universal, and we demand much higher standards of safety. Following systematic study by the Transport Research Laboratory and others, our [government now recommends 20mph²](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-local-speed-limits/setting-local-speed-limits#contents) as more appropriate for the streets where people live, but the choice is left to individual councils or communities.

Drivers will have noticed an increasing number of 20mph limits appearing in towns and villages in the last few years, notably in Oxford. The change is generally popular with residents, but is it right for Haddenham?

Supporters see calmer streets, more people walking and cycling, more children going unescorted to school, cleaner air, better health and a more sociable community. Opponents complain about further restrictions, unnecessarily long journeys and likely poor compliance.

There is a third view: that vehicle speeds should be controlled not by legal limits but by intelligent road design. This would involve much road engineering, however, take years to implement, and cost a lot more than a new speed limit.

² Refer to Section 6.1,
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-local-speed-limits/setting-local-speed-limits#contents>

WE'RE NOT ALONE!



Photo © JCDecaux

We almost all rely on our cars. But the days are numbered when you slammed the door, grabbed the wheel and drove off like Mr Toad. A car is only as good as its driver. And attitudes are changing. France, for example, has gone as far as to legislate that new-car adverts must include reminders about car-pools, public transport and other answers to short journeys.

Local authorities everywhere are looking at traffic management and street design, so that drivers integrate with others. There are examples in London, Caernarfon, Brighton, Ashford, Ipswich ... One option is to create 'shared spaces' where the segregation of cars, cyclists and pedestrians is minimised and everyone finds themselves on the look-out for everyone else. Results show a big drop in serious

accidents and a reduction in vehicle use, even where speed limits aren't changed.

Clearly there's no 'one-size-fits-all'. Design needs to be tailored to place. This March marks the second anniversary of the death of Ben Hamilton-Baillie. His [Traffic in Villages – A Toolkit for Communities](#) (2012)³ is well worth reading.

It's an introduction to reducing speed, improving safety and enhancing village distinctiveness. The subject is vast, with input from around the world – the Netherlands, Australia, the US, Sweden, Denmark ...

Cars are wonderful things, but their bulk and speed have been allowed to dominate our communities. There are plenty of examples around the world showing a more balanced way forward.

You can be first to hear the news: just email HaddSWAC@gmail.com requesting an email when there is a new newsletter. We shall only use your email address for newsletter details and you can unsubscribe at any time.

We also welcome feedback and ideas, to the same email address please.

Please, do share this newsletter with your friends, colleagues and family!

³ Available at <http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Traffic-in-villages.pdf>