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SIGNPOSTS

News and views from Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling group
Issue 7

SAFER SPEED LIMITS COMING SOON?



Our group has been campaigning for a 20mph speed limit for many years, and the village took a big step towards making this a reality at the end of last year, after the Parish Council commissioned a feasibility study from the consultants who delivered the Streetscape project. A village-wide 20mph limit emerged as the project's most popular proposal, with 89% support, and is also relatively low-cost compared to altering the road layout.

Using Ordnance Survey average speed data based on mobile phone and GPS tracking, the [study](#)² confirmed that the majority of village roads meet the Department for Transport's criteria for a 'sign-only'

limit. For certain 'edge cases' – faster roads, coloured blue on the map – some traffic calming may be required, but overall, the report found that Haddenham is suitable for a village-wide limit.

The principle now requires approval from Bucks Council – our highway authority – and the report has been sent to council officers for comment. Implementation will then require a Traffic Regulation Order, involving further public consultation.

I believe 20mph will make Haddenham a much friendlier environment and remove a significant barrier to walking and cycling, particularly on the busier roads, but speed limits are not a silver bullet, as one of our writers argues [inside](#).

Alan Thawley,

Chair, Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling Group

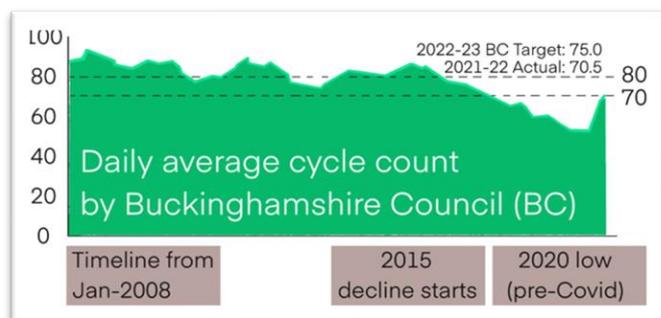
✉ Please write to HaddSWAC@gmail.com with:

- What you would like to read about,
- Points-of-view for publication,
- 'News In Brief' items, and
- How you think we are doing!

¹ Image: Gateways to 20mph speed limit as recommended by consultancy, PJA. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2022.

² See <https://tinyurl.com/27upafh9>.

GREEN SHOOTS FOR CYCLING IN BUCKS?



Whilst campaigning for much-needed cycling infrastructure can often seem like a long, uphill struggle, there do seem to be some positive moves afoot at Buckinghamshire Council. At the most recent meeting of the Transport, Environment and Climate Change (TECC) select committee³, Steve Broadbent, cabinet member for transport, revealed that a team member has been recruited specifically to encourage active travel⁴. And we've just learnt that Bucks has been awarded a further £397,000 in 'capability and ambition funding' to support active travel⁵.

The new specialist in travel planning and behaviour change promotion will "deliver targeted promotional campaigns along our new and improved active travel routes," stated Cllr Broadbent. "This will include engaging with local schools, businesses and communities and raising awareness of the benefits to health, pollution and climate change amongst residents and visitors of making the choice to travel actively."

They will also be reporting on the results of their efforts. In addition to the network of around 30 cycle

³ Bucks Council's select committees provide one of our few opportunities to question cabinet members directly and receive a response on the record, although time allowed for questions is limited, they must relate to agenda items and must be submitted before midday three working days before the meeting. You can find the dates of the meetings here: <https://tinyurl.com/5b3wtsnj>. The next meeting of the TECC committee is on 2 February 2023.

“ Buckinghamshire Council continues to work closely with Oxfordshire County Council on the aspiration for an active travel link connecting Haddenham and Thame.

— Steve Broadbent, cabinet member for transport

counters across the county, they are now installing walking and cycling counters on new routes as standard, and will be monitoring the increase in uptake via a Key Performance Indicator (KPI), with a target of 7% increase this year. This stands in stark contrast to the alarming decline of up to 40% reported between 2015 and 2019, although this was measured only on monitored routes, mainly in Aylesbury⁶.

Of course, to encourage walking and cycling, you need safe infrastructure. Aylesbury has a comprehensive, if neglected, network, whereas Haddenham still lacks safe routes to its neighbouring towns. According to Cllr Broadbent, "Buckinghamshire Council continues to work closely with Oxfordshire County Council on the aspiration for an active travel link connecting Haddenham and Thame. Schemes of this nature and scale are complex and can require significant background feasibility work to be undertaken." HaddSWAC is pressing the council for much firmer commitments than this, and hopes to be reporting on proper progress shortly.

AT

⁴ For the full questions and response see item 4 here:

<https://tinyurl.com/4n6cevcd>.

⁵ <https://tinyurl.com/4z2vzfcx>.

⁶ See the fascinating report prepared for an earlier meeting of the TECC committee, which sets out a very positive and ambitious vision, on paper at least. See item 7 at <https://tinyurl.com/yckhvxva>.

WHO'S THE VILLAIN?



HaddSWAC promotes safe walking and cycling. Yet perhaps we're inclined not to talk about the manner of walking, cycling or driving. Understandably. Who wants to finger-point? And tread the vexed and primrose path of Heroes and Villains?

Tell you what. Just for now. Let's!

You'll be a pretty unusual reader who ISN'T also a car driver or someone dependent on the car from time to time.

So let's admit it: something happens to the human psyche when it gets behind a wheel. It CAN (needn't of course, but can) get strident and self-absorbed, not to say self-important. All that expensive, throbbing machinery at our beck and call? How resistible is that?

If anyone claims to be a 100% good-driver all the time – recognise anyone, do you? – shouldn't we at least raise an eyebrow or two?

Get in a car and we can all too easily surrender to its seductive power. Car adverts boast of the 'open road'. But in a village, roads are constrained and we share them with others. For now, let's hear it for Haddenham not horsepower. Good drivers surely think of others, not what's under the bonnet.

“ Let's hear it for Haddenham, not horsepower ...

And what of the cyclist kitted out in the latest lycra? Or the walker with thrusting Alpine poles? Come off it, you say, they're hardly capable of causing the same damage as a car! Maybe not. But what of attitudes to others? Isn't that our theme?

Donning 'expert' trappings – car, bike, even boots – can excite us into putting the blinkers on.

I dedicate this article to the memory of a friend, knocked over as a pedestrian in a London street by a one-speed courier cyclist. My friend's head was smashed against a granite kerb. He died instantly.

Who knows what was going through the courier's mind just before impact? Maybe something like: "Get out of my way..." [Probable expletive deleted.] Have we ever let impatience get the better of us?

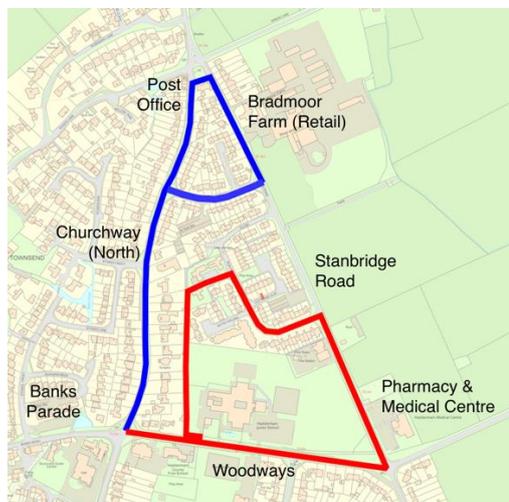
In a car, on two wheels, on foot, impatience – while it lasts – brings blindness.

Anything can be dangerous in inconsiderate hands and in the 'wrong' place. At the twitch of a brain cell we can all be 'villains'.

Yet all said and done, people getting around Haddenham are pretty considerate. Aren't they?

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SAFER PATHWAYS PILOT



“ A meeting with residents, HaddSWAC, U3A and other community groups identified an initial route ...

H addSWAC is pleased to support a new ‘disability friendly’ walking routes initiative. The issue was taken up by our local Green Party councillor, Greg Smith , after hearing from residents who felt unable to use the pavements in the village for fear of tripping on the poorly maintained surfaces. Many people discovered the health benefits of walking in the village when streets were quieter during the pandemic, but some elderly residents have since stopped this exercise routine because of the fear of tripping, which could lead to avoidable hospital admissions.

An initial meeting with Transport for Bucks unfortunately revealed that most of the hazards identified simply do not meet the criteria for priority repair within their very limited pavement repair budget. Instead, Greg suggested a different approach in which the budget would be focussed on a defined route rather than spread thinly over a wide area, so that a good quality, trip free surface could be maintained as a circuit for light exercise. The approach has caught the attention of Transport for Bucks, who are keen to see this as an experiment that could be duplicated elsewhere.

A meeting with residents, HaddSWAC, U3A and other community groups identified an initial pilot route that would serve the Woodlands sheltered housing complex, connecting it to the Pharmacy, along Woodways and back along the Woodlands Footpath (the red route on the map above). A potential second route would run past Bradmoor farm and the Post Office and along Churchway (North), taking in the Abbeyfield care home (the blue route). We are waiting for Transport for Bucks to come back with costings to determine the scope of the project. The owners at Bradmoor Farm have already indicated their support, with an intention to improve pedestrian access to the complex and potentially contributing to the cost of a level crossing point on Stanbridge Rd.

“By redefining the problem as a disability access issue, encouraging light exercise and the avoiding the need for ambulance call outs we expect to be able to draw down additional funding,” says Greg. “We see it as stage one for Haddenham, hopefully with other routes to follow.”

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⁷ Image: By kind permission of Haddenham Parish Council. Crown copyright and database right. All rights reserved (100051997) 2022. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2022.

DRIVING BY NUMBERS



We certainly need speed limits, but they ain't no panaceas. Rather, Haddenham needs a fundamental change in drivers' attitudes. Once the red, black and shiny white lollipops have arrived does driving suddenly improve?

Haddenham is a 30mph village right now. One Sunday, walking in Haddenham, we saw a friend, gesticulating after a driver. Cars were parked on our side of the road, leaving only a single lane. Our friend was trimming his hedge on the far side, where there's no pavement.

We'd witnessed the aftermath of a close call. The car in question was a wide, low-slung piece of tech. We crossed the road. "Bloody cars," said our friend.

To our surprise the car returned, with lowered window. "You know the speed limit here?" the driver shouted. He'd felt aggrieved at our friend's gesturings – just as our friend had been startled by his driving.

The driver announced he'd been doing 26mph. Loudly. Three times. Not countenancing conversation. I spluttered about consideration for others and 'driving to conditions'. We were both quickly consumed by an anger-fest of self-righteousness.

“ We were both quickly consumed by an anger-fest of self-righteousness ...

Speed limits are blunt and negative. They can encourage drivers to think that responsibility for their lethal weapon stops with a number. Even, that they can 'game' that limit.

By all means announce Haddenham as a 20mph-village, but how do we actually achieve 'better' driving? With a plethora of garish signs? With flashing emoji faces grinning or scowling, and reducing the ethos of our streets to a computer game? With the stick of too-often-flouted law?

Of course, there are other number-based solutions. The Times' correspondence pages tell of traffic-lights in the Savoie département activated by speeding drivers: one person's fault means everyone halts. Or how about a friend who used cruise-control to stick at 30? He was fined when gravity 'cruised' him downhill at 34!

Sorry drivers everywhere, there can be no substitute for thinking, for alertness to circumstance, for consideration for soft-skulled locals. Numbers can be a distraction. Subtle road design is worth a thousand signs.

BA

DRIVE LESS, DRIVE BETTER WITH THE EV HIRE CLUB



Haddenham's very own EV Hire Club⁸ was officially launched on Saturday 3rd December. For those unfamiliar with the concept, the difference between a car club and regular hiring is that you can book the car for as little as an hour, so you only need to pay for it when you need it. You also pick it up the car from a dedicated parking space (ours is at the Village Hall) rather than having to collect it from the hire firm.

The hope is that this more convenient, flexible and cost-effective solution can serve as an alternative to an underused second vehicle in households with more than one car. Instead of the considerable expense of replacing it with an electric vehicle, you can take advantage of one parked down the road for a fraction of the cost.

So good news for climate change and our wallets, but where's the relevance to Signposts readers, who are interested in how we get around when we AREN'T

⁸ The hire club is a joint initiative, operated by local vehicle hire firm 3B in collaboration with Haddenham Parish Council and Haddenham Village Hall, who have provided the charging facilities and the parking space but have no financial interest other than to cover the cost of running the chargers. It is a commercial operation on the part of

“ an alternative to an underused second vehicle in households with more than one car ...

driving? Firstly, given that one car club car has the potential to replace up to 20 private cars, there could be fewer vehicles parked around the village, cluttering up the roads. And secondly, the data shows that car club members tend to drive less, opting to walk, cycle or take public transport more frequently.

This is partly because a car on your driveway is essentially free at the point of use (if you forget about the average of £3,600 that we spend per year running a car in the UK). With the Hire Club, you can make a straight cost comparison between driving and taking the train or the bus, or choose to travel for free under your own steam.

So my advice to SIGNPOSTS readers is to think about whether you could save money by hiring rather than owning a car, sign up to the Hire Club for free at <https://3bhire.co.uk/ev-hire-club/> and then see how little you can use it!

AT

3B, although prices are significantly discounted compared to their usual rental charges. Zero Carbon Haddenham have also been instrumental in setting up the scheme. For insurance reasons, the car is only available to those aged 25-75, but we hope to look at this in the future.

A 'HELLO' VILLAGE



Not so long ago, in remoter parts of the New Guinea highlands, anyone out walking from their village and seeing a stranger on the same path would feel obliged either to kill them or to hide¹⁰.

Mercifully, we live in a gentler world, although the instinct to send out a 'peace' signal to strangers remains, and probably accounts for our smile, to uncover potential weaponry without threat.

Time was when all villagers would know each other, but today we are all used to cities and crowded streets, where the idea of emitting peace signals to all passers-by is absurd, although we do take trouble to avoid offence, and even to show respect.

But in our village (and around), where there are relatively few people in the street or on footpaths, one does, or least did, acknowledge the passer-by, if not with a 'hello', at least with eye contact and a nod. Even if we don't know them, they are likely to be neighbours or newcomers or guests in the village, and for the one to acknowledge the presence of the other is an elementary social grace.

“ many people avoid any contact with passers-by, sometimes taking positive steps to do so ...

A grace, however, that appears to be in decline. Whether due to the enlargement of the village, fear of stranger raised by newspaper stories, or the plugging of ears with personal sound, many people avoid any contact with passers-by, sometimes taking positive steps to do so, such as attending needlessly to the dog.

Covid brought a certain reversal to this trend, as people stepped into the road to maintain social distance and received at least nods of thanks for their trouble. Happily, this effect has endured to some extent as fear of Covid has subsided, but we are still a long way from the old courtesies.

There are those who greet strangers about the village with positive cheer on every possible occasion. They lift the atmosphere of the street. Think: you can make someone's day with a friendly greeting.

Better than raising fists or seeking cover in the nearest doorway. And I'm told they're really quite friendly these days in the highlands of New Guinea.

AG

⁹ Image: Arrival at a ball in Colonial Philadelphia by J. L. G. Ferris: <https://nobility.org/2016/04/etiquette-history-hat-tipping/>

¹⁰ Jared Diamond: The World until Yesterday (2012)

NEWS IN BRIEF

COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH IS BACK

Drivers will see Speedwatch teams beside Haddenham's roads again, following a volunteer coming forward as local coordinator. The more in the team, the more checks, so please let HaddWatch@gmail.com know your interest in giving an hour or so to help. All that is required is to set up, mind and dismantle an automatic speed monitor. Training is provided.

Separately, you can let the [coordinator](#) know hotspots you would like to see monitored!

CORNWALL TO SLOW DOWN

Cornwall [seems](#)¹¹ very likely to join other councils in setting a 20mph default speed limit in its residential areas. This follows a manifesto pledge by the local Conservative Party in the 2021 council elections and successful trials across three towns. The final decision will be taken this March 2023, with implementation planned in five stages up to 2026.

POTHoles UPDATE

On 30th December 2022 there were 33 'open' Haddenham reports of pothole, pavement and road surface problems, compared with 16 in October 2022¹².

One Haddenham resident submitting reports said they were disappointed to find their reports deleted, after being acknowledged for action *without a date*.

See also '[Safer Pathways Pilot](#)' on page 4.

ASTON ROAD PATH

Further to the [mention](#)¹³ in the last issue of SIGNPOSTS, the planned footway on Aston Road (between The Grove and St Mary's school) is waiting for technical design approval from Buckinghamshire Council. This path is planned to encourage walking and reduce road traffic.

SLOW WAYS

Did you know that there is a growing network of triple-checked paths connecting British towns, such as Thame, Aylesbury, Princes Risborough and Brill, to encourage confidence in trusted walking routes? See <https://beta.slowways.org>.

Would you like to check parts of the [Thame-Aylesbury route](#)¹⁴ (HS2 allowing) and report back on its quality?

MORE TALES OF THE RIVERBANK

Out walking along Scotsgrove Brook, it might be better not to look too closely at what floats by. [Latest data from Thames Water](#)¹⁵ reveals it has recently discharged untreated sewage upstream, at Stone sewage treatment works. So-called 'storm overflow' was still being discharged at the time of writing (7th January) having started on 28th December. Similar, shorter incidents occurred most recently at Thame and Haddenham works on 3rd January 2023 and 24th October 2022 respectively.

[Thames Water has assured the River Thame Conservation Trust](#)¹⁶ that it is 'more than capable of dealing with the loads' from new housing estates in our area.



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Previous issues of SIGNPOSTS are available at www.villagesociety.org/haddswac.html.

¹¹ See: <https://tinyurl.com/46dfwhut>.

¹² See SIGNPOSTS Issue 6: <https://tinyurl.com/mpp4hjvh>.

¹³ See SIGNPOSTS Issue 6: <https://tinyurl.com/3vujnazb>.

¹⁴ See <https://beta.slowways.org/Route/Thaayl/867>.

¹⁵ See interactive map based on 'near real-time' data at <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/edm-map>.

¹⁶ See 'Description' at <https://riverthame.org/scotsgrove-brook/>.