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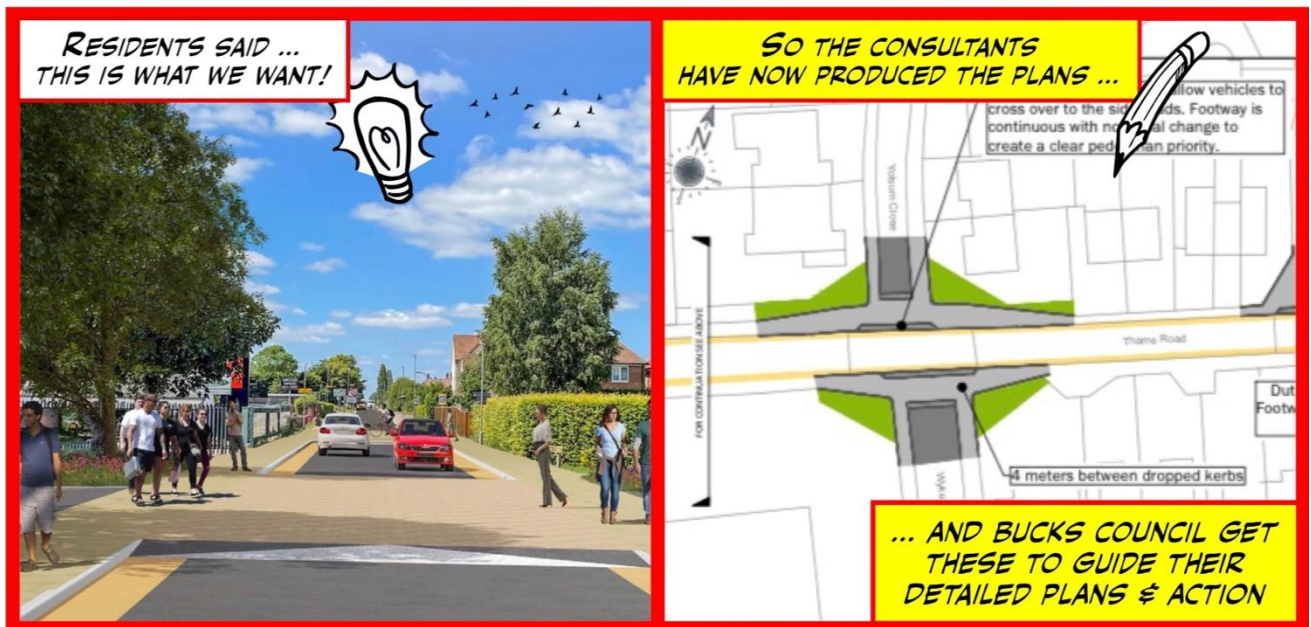


Summer 2023

SIGNPOSTS

News and views from Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling group
Issue 9

THAME ROAD - NOT AS YOU KNOW IT



Slowly but surely, the Parish Council's Streetscape study is starting to bear fruit.

And it may help us to finally get some action on promised improvements to Thame Road for pedestrians and cyclists.

Why not just fix the potholes, I hear people shouting! Yes, the road is crying out for resurfacing, and that will also help pedestrians, as they won't be soaked by cars racing through the giant puddles every time it rains.

BUT WE COULD ALSO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO MUCH MORE. / ... [continued on the [back page](#)]

Amongst other things, INSIDE:

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- [Business case for Haddenham & Thame Greenway, p. 3](#)
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¹ Images: Thame Road 'vision' illustration and plans ©2022,2023 Haddenham Parish Council / Phil Jones Associates Ltd

STREETSCAPE GERMAN-STYLE



Haddenham resident Oli Moore visited Freiburg im Breisgau a few weeks ago. It's in the southern tip of the Black Forest – near Strasbourg, France, and Zurich, Switzerland. Freiburg is determinedly green, with credentials going back to the 1970s.

The greenest part of this greenest city in the greenest province of Germany is Vauban, named ironically for a celebrated 17th Century military architect who built forts to be impregnable to gunpowder. Now it defends itself against traffic. By promoting three principles:

1. avoidance - it's a 'city of short distances';
2. shifting traffic modes to more sustainable transport; and
3. making the private car as unnecessary as possible.

There's a big difference between a city of a quarter of a million (Freiburg) and a village of 6-7,000 (Haddenham). We're big, but not that big! But though the Vauban neighbourhood is urban it actually has a population similar to Haddenham's. Oli saw several pointers, some of which chime with what Haddenham's already doing or might in future.

Freiburg has 40% coverage of trees. Haddenham has its reLEAF team founded in 2020. It's planted over 230 trees and over 1500 hedging plants. And rising ...

“ The greenest part of this greenest city in the greenest province of Germany is Vauban ... a population similar to Haddenham's ...

Vauban and reLEAF instinctively recognise the benefit of 'green lungs' in residential environments. (Find more on reLEAF at <https://zeroch.org/releaf/>.)

One appealing Freiburg designation is child-priority areas, in carefully chosen zones. These 'Home Zones' give priority to children so that cars are clearly required to defer to children playing. Sustrans' notion of DIY streets looks at the same situation (see <https://tinyurl.com/343ybcxp>). Here the impetus is 'home grown', springing up through local initiatives. Freiburg started small, with citizen-led initiatives.

Oli liked Freiburg's smart photovoltaic lights that go on and off as cyclists or walkers pass. This is a serious gesture towards 'feeling safe'. Also the reduction in light pollution encourages wildlife.

Freiburg cyclists have priority; when a cyclist isn't in a cycle lane a motorist can't overtake. No honking of horns either. (The city has registered a threefold increase in cyclists in thirty years, measured now by permanent cycle-counting cameras.)

Vauban was designed for 'short distances', so shops and residential areas are close. Like Haddenham's [Blooming Fruity \(village-owned greengrocer\)](#)²: not more than 15 minutes' walk from anywhere in the village.

OM

² See <https://tinyurl.com/2s3e3nkk>; other excellent shops support us, as in our previous article at <https://tinyurl.com/2sp3yzn9>

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR HADDENHAM AND THAME GREENWAY



“ ... Now, a joint working party set up by the two councils promises to report this autumn on ‘detailed options’ for the project. ...

Could the ice be breaking for the long-frozen project to open a cycle path between Haddenham and Thame?

The case for an H-T ‘greenway’ has been studied on and off by Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire councils at least 20 years but has always ended in the pending tray. Now, a joint working party set up by the two councils promises to report this autumn on ‘detailed options’ for the project. And there is an added stimulus this time round with the national government’s Active Travel Strategy. This requires each council to formulate plans to encourage walking and cycling and holds out the prospect of financial support for projects of merit.

For the people of Haddenham and Thame, the greenway not only has merit in spades but is an essential piece of missing transport infrastructure.

- ✓ Thame has a population of 13,000, Haddenham about 6,000, which gives the link more of the utility of an urban than a rural cycle path;
- ✓ Haddenham is Thame’s railway station, the principal link with the country’s first and second cities, handling some 2,400 journeys a day;
- ✓ Thame is the main shopping centre for people living in Haddenham;
- ✓ The settlements are only three miles apart, an easy cycle ride, including for children;
- ✓ The countryside between is attractive, an enjoyable leisure ride;

- ✓ The road alternative is exceptionally dangerous;
- ✓ The path would be an important link in the strategic cycle route between Oxford and Aylesbury, much of which is already complete;
- ✓ Commuters switching from car to bike would relieve pressure on the much-disliked daytime parking in Haddenham village streets.

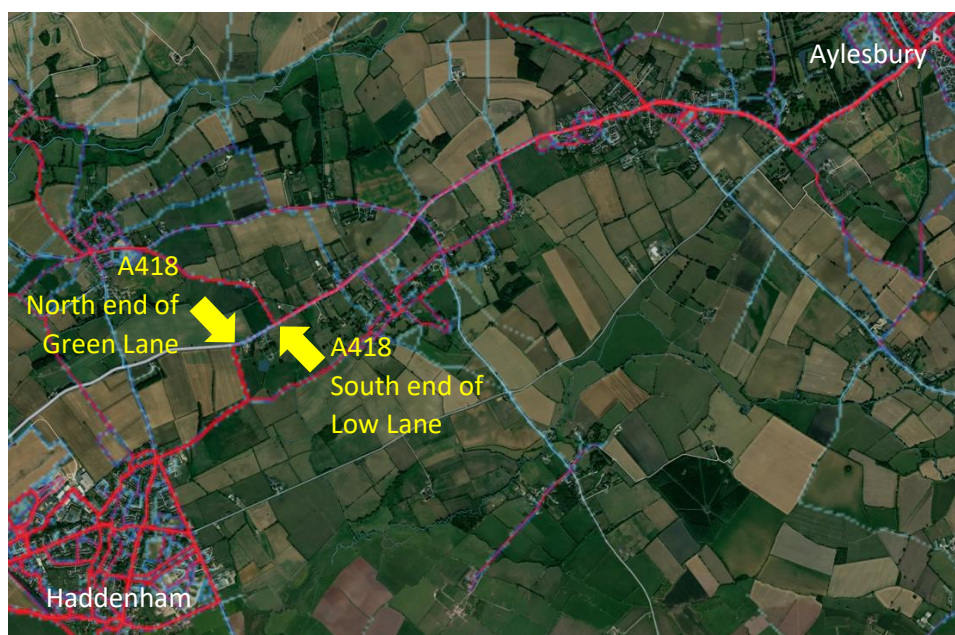
A cycle path is ultimately justified by the number of people who use it and, perhaps more importantly these days, by the number who would otherwise be making the journey by car. The principal users of the greenway would be:

- ✓ Commuters from Thame and around to the railway station and Haddenham businesses;
- ✓ Commuters from Haddenham to Thame commerce and industry;
- ✓ Haddenham teenagers to school in Thame;
- ✓ Haddenham residents to Thame shopping and services;
- ✓ Leisure excursions out of either Haddenham or Thame;
- ✓ Longer distance leisure or club travel, employing regional cycle paths (actual and planned).

The inter-council study is an encouraging development and the working group’s report should be an important step on the right path. Let’s hope we shall soon be talking business.

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CLAIRE'S FOUR-HUNDRED METRES



... potential to unlock the Green Lane that currently ends in limbo; and this is within “our” public control ...

Map by kind permission: © 2023 Strava Inc.. Strava Metro ‘Heatmap’ presents aggregated and anonymised data on the use of routes by its users, to help planners. This map shows the intensity of use of local routes by foot, by the redness of lines.

What request in June 2023 was most popular on Haddenham.net, over the previous three months?

Judging by the number of “likes”, one by Claire wins the prize, successfully rallying support for a “small length of grass verge along the A418 [to be] converted to a footpath”.

The strip involved is just four-hundred metres that would complete a seven-mile footpath between Haddenham and Aylesbury (joining the “Pebble Way”). So why not just get on with it? What is needed to get things moving? Why has nothing been done already?

Claire wants her young son to be able to go safely, independently, to see family and friends. And walking along the relevant roadside, the trampled grass bank shows that many are already braving this four-hundred metres: from Redmayes Farm at the end of the Green Lane from Haddenham, to reach an existing all-weather path onwards to Dinton, Stone and Aylesbury, or turning left up Low Lane for the scenic route to Cuddington.

Failure to pave this four-hundred metres will not stop pioneers already using the route. A footpath and, if

judged necessary, reasonable safety measures to help with crossing the A418, will extend the benefits to less adventurous and more vulnerable walkers, as well as giving more protection to existing trailblazers.

There is another walking route eastwards from Haddenham (from the elbow in the Green Lane, to Westlington), which is far from all-weather and across private land, slowing any potential development to tortoise pace. Many look forward to this, one day.

However, Claire’s four-hundred metres has the potential to unlock the Green Lane that currently ends in limbo; and this is within “our” public control.

The first step would be for Buckinghamshire Council to carry out an “initial assessment”. Haddenham Parish Council has discussed this twice and decided the appropriate agency is Buckinghamshire Council. There, SIGNPOSTS understands, two of our three local county councillors are promoting this.

Hopefully, Buckinghamshire Council is listening and will give due weighting to the public support already expressed. You could even email a councillor now ...

DS

THE YEAR OF THE POTHOLE



Never have 'road up' barriers been more welcome than in recent weeks as the council's pothole fillers have got to work. After the worst winter for potholes for many years, our council now appears to be getting on top of the job. Pothole reports keep coming in so it's a catch-up exercise, but the Haddenham roll of more than 50 open reported street defects in April had fallen to less than 20 in July³.

Haddenham was not alone – the pothole scourge was national. This winter's reported potholes across the UK were up by about a third on the year before. Buckinghamshire had twice the number of car damage compensation claims, many of which will be still in process. The AA has dubbed this winter 'The Year of the Pothole'.

Why has the year been so bad for potholes? No single factor, it seems. Cold weather was not exceptional but there were quite a few frost-thaw cycles, which progressively open up the tiny cracks in the road surface, allowing traffic to break it further and form potholes. Potholes get larger the longer they are

“... For drivers the main risk is of damage to the vehicle, while for the cyclist a large pothole or snaking crack in the road surface can spell life-changing injury or worse ...

untreated and cash-strapped councils were probably less quick than they should have been to deal with reported cases.

Potholes are much more dangerous for cyclists than they are for car drivers. For drivers the main risk is of damage to the vehicle, while for the cyclist a large pothole or snaking crack in the road surface can spell life-changing injury or worse. Bucks has precise rules for assessing potholes, taking account of both the degree and probability of damage, and for any part of the road marked off as a cycle track the depth of pothole that triggers remedial action is halved.

In the future, however, we could be more concerned with asphalt melting in summer rather than cracking in winter. A heat-absorbing blacktop surface in sunlight can easily reach the melting point of 50 degrees with an air temperature merely in the high twenties. Special formula asphalt is available but it's expensive and reserved for the busiest roads. Away from these, we could be complaining about ruts and ridges rather than potholes.

AG

³ The street defects in question are potholes, and damaged road surfaces, pavements and kerbs reported as 'open' on www.FixMyStreet.com.

SO, ALL CYCLISTS ARE THE SAME, EH?



“ The *Bicycling* magazine website tells of 14 different types of bike ...

1. pedestrians/wheelchair-users; 2. cyclists/horse-riders; 3. motor-cyclists; 4. cars; 5. vans; 6. HGVs ... in that order. The Highway Codes' Hierarchy of Road Users is a necessary framework. BUT if our understanding stops at rigid numbers, we're missing the point. No, the Hierarchy is shorthand for THINK OF OTHERS.

Blindly *assuming* priority is plain dangerous. The Hierarchy implies awareness. The intricacy of village streets makes that even more important. Somewhat surprisingly the new Highway Code doesn't talk of 'eye contact'. Doing things 'The Haddenham Way' should.

It's all about situations. And sharing them. We behave better on the road if we *find out* if the other person is on our wave length.

It's easy to jump to conclusions.

Take cyclists. The *Bicycling* magazine website tells of 14 different types of bike. And that's without all the sub-types of the main types. There are road-, mountain-, adventure, utility, fitness, fat, triathlon, tandem, BMX, kids', tricycles, recumbent, track. All bikes. And e-bikes. Though they have limiters e-bikes

can go at 15mph (20mph in the US; no limit in Belgium). Small surprise perhaps that in Italy there are calls for all bikes to be registered and have numbers. North Korea leads the pack here; they've implemented such things.

But all cyclists are different. (As, of course, are walkers, drivers, etc..) Find out about the other person. *Then* take them as they come. Remote and righteous indignation does no one any good.

Recent tragic cases have involved boys on e-bikes. What happened in Cardiff and Salford? Where did fault lie? With the fullest sympathy extended to the families of those involved, let's kick the generalisation habit. For all road-users. Haddenham will be a safer village if we do.

All road-use has the potential for danger. Eye contact is a good start at safety.

Oh, by the way, someone cycling dangerously can be prosecuted under the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 for "wanton and furious driving". Quaint? Not for an injured party, it ain't!!

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SIGNPOSTS

Summer 2023

AT THE SCHOOL GATE

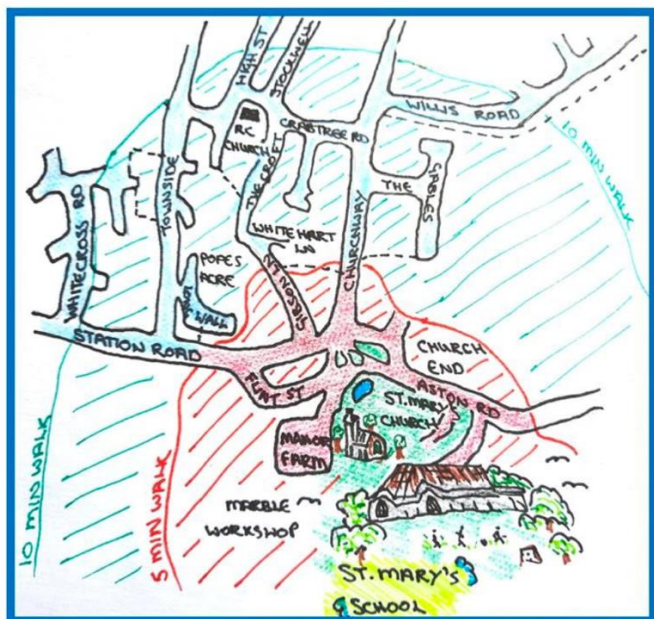


Image: From St Mary's Infant School Travel Plan

“ The schools regularly exhort parents to keep their cars at a distance, they provide maps showing ‘exclusion zones’ ...



There are two characters who pop up when discussing behaviour or manners. The first is *Doasyouwouldbedoneby*: the one who always acts in a way they hope others will act. Let us call people who live by this elementary principle Alpha.

The second character, of whom we must take account, is *Dowhatyoucangetawaywith*. This one complies with the law but otherwise takes advantage of any opportunity that presents itself. Let's call them Beta.

If we are honest, there will be some Alpha and some Beta in each of us. We may be Alpha in our home street but Beta in the big city. More Beta at work in competitive business; mostly Alpha if an NHS nurse.

The school gate brings a close encounter between these two characters (or tendencies). It is obviously impossible for all children who come by car to be dropped outside the school within the narrow school-arrival timeframe. The traffic chaos, danger to small children and clouds of exhaust gas make for a clearly unacceptable scene. The motorised Beta can just about get away with dropping at the gate, but the conforming Alpha and all the children suffer the consequences.

The schools regularly exhort parents to keep their cars at a distance, they provide maps showing ‘exclusion zones’, they give merit stars to children arriving on foot, cycle or scooter, and they hold special events, like walk-to-school weeks, to drive the issue home.

To little avail, it seems. Special events may be hailed as a success, but with the next cold weather or rain traffic chaos, shameless parking and engines left running continue. The occasional survey reveals some of the attitudes of the Beta tendency: ‘The safety of my child is paramount’, ‘I was late for work’, ‘My other child goes to another school’, ‘It was raining’.

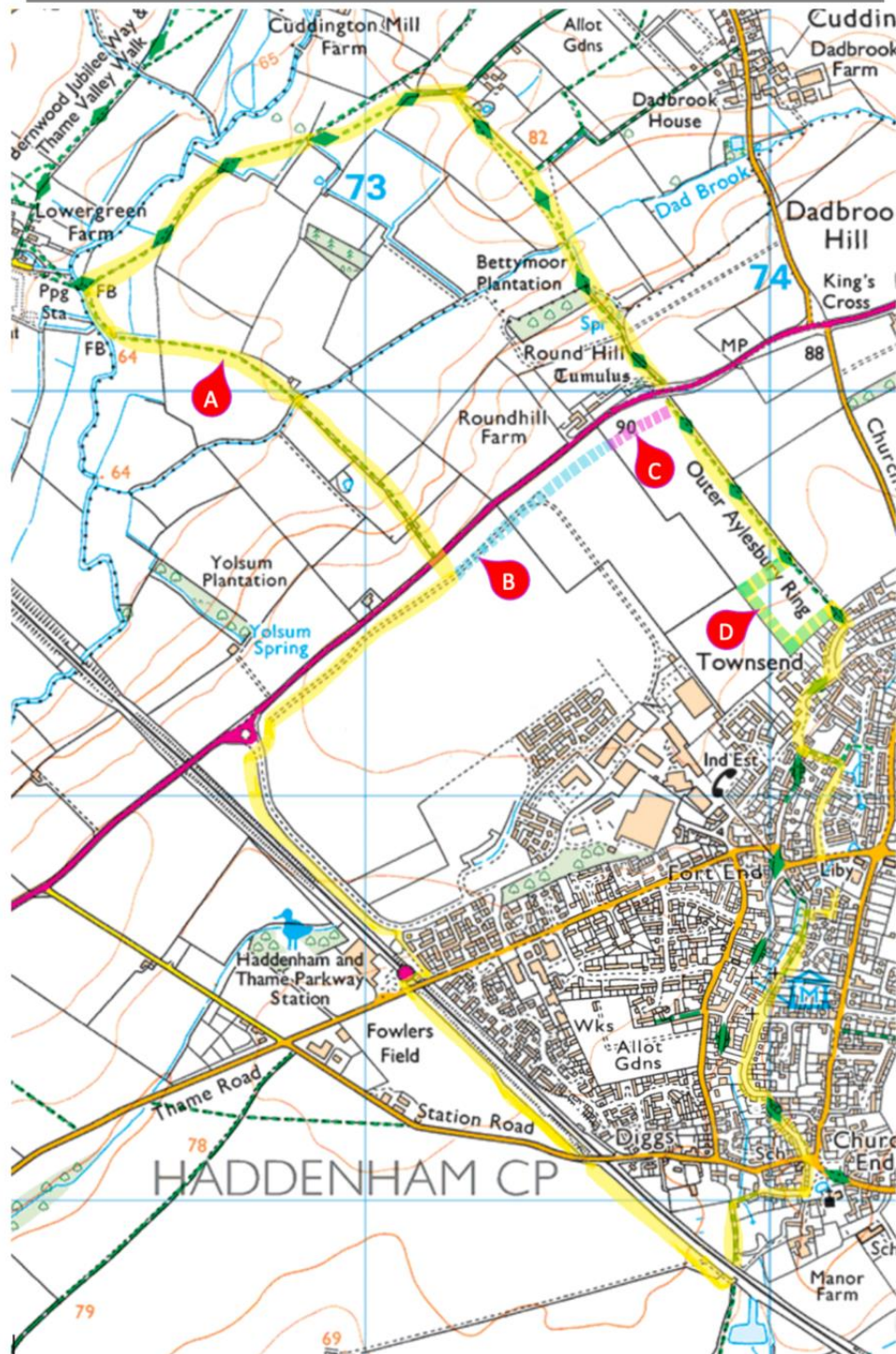
None of these excuses is compelling. Why couldn't Beta get up a bit earlier or bring the right clothes? A short walk from outside the school zone, whatever the weather, is a bracing start to the day, as enjoyed by school kids down the ages.

Restrained car behaviour in the vicinity of the school simply doesn't rank high enough in the imperatives of daily life for many people. If, however, there were firm rules and a uniformed presence of some kind, there is little doubt that Beta would be happy to comply.

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ROUND HADDENHAM WALK





Chearsley



A418
Aylesbury

A418
Thame

KEY

 Current Walk	 Provisional Extension	 Missing Link	 Footpath Diversion
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Map by kind permission: © Crown copyright 2023 Ordnance Survey. Media 17/23. Licence valid until 31 December 2023.

IMPORTANT: It is walkers' responsibility to keep to footpaths and respect the Countryside Code (<https://tinyurl.com/247cfrrn>).

SIGNPOSTS

Summer 2023

Start: Village Hall carpark. Leave through gap in fence by recycling container(s). Go straight, keeping black lamppost on your left. Go right to gap in wall and down steps to 'Stockwell'. Turn left. Pass Baptist Chapel and Burial Ground.

The Chapel is said to be the widest witchert building in the world! Built 1809. It's now in serious need of repair. Got £1 or 2m? At least consider a donation to its 'Hat and Boots'

Appeal!

Cross road, keeping Roman Catholic Church on your right. Continue down The Croft which bears left. Turn right into Gibson Lane. At Church End Green keep War Memorial on your left. Turn right down Flint St.

This was called Duck Lane until the middle of the Nineteenth Century when flints were laid down. It was the centre of Haddenham's famous duck trade.

Take footpath to left of "Duck Bottom". This leads to railway bridge, go under (can be very wet). Turn right, keeping railway on right.

At first kissing gate, on your right, cross road and take kissing gate opposite.

Continue to road, turning right over railway bridge. Then left down what becomes Spitfire Path.

With playground on your left and road on your right go through five-barred metal gate into area bounded by "may-trees" (hawthorn), site of a possible future wood. Walk to end, exit by wooden gate.

Cross Pegasus Way and enter the old Airfield by another wooden gate.

Haddenham aerodrome was the home of the No 1 Glider Training School during WW2 when George VI

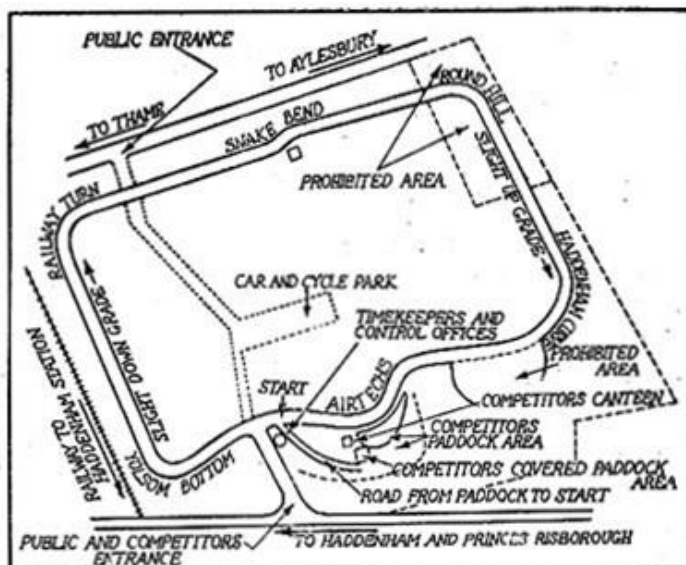
came for a demonstration. Later, in 1949, four national motorcycle race-meetings were held here. But locals objected to 'riff-raff from London'. Besides the organisers found they couldn't charge entrance to sporting events on Sundays.

Keep the A418 on your left until you reach signpost pointing left. **(There are agreements for Permissive Paths with landowners as far as the field opposite**

Roundhill Farm. There is no access across this last field at the moment. Hence earlier left turn.)

Cross A418.

Keep straight, following map across 3 fields (can be very wet). Ignore bridge over River Thames (unless to visit The Bell in Chearsley – ¾ mile. If so, cross bridge, follow road past Church.) Bearing right, cross field diagonally to gateway in right corner. Straight to another gateway and then to a gate



Haddenham Aerodrome, around 1949 (© 2009 Peter Chamberlain; see <http://www.haddenhamairfieldhistory.co.uk/motorcycles.htm>)

and kissing gate. Go up lane. Take obscured path to right in about 100 yards. Follow left side of field to path junction at top corner of the field.

Turn sharp right (continue ahead if you want to visit The Crown in Cuddington – ½ mile) down slope to kissing gate. Cross field and enter woodland. Through trees to fields. Cross two fields. *Remains of 4,000-year-old Bronze Age barrow on right.*

Cross A418 to join footpath to Rosemary Lane. This is diverted because of Redrow building work – you walk three sides of a rectangle, rather than one.

At Rosemary Lane, turn right. Crossing Rudds Lane, go down tarmacked path into Stokes End, then right at T-junction over bridge and quick left through houses to Stokes Croft. This takes you to shops at Banks Parade, opposite the Village Hall.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

MORE PLEASANT TO WALK AROUND?

So far (26th July), 197 drivers will have received reminders from the police to slow down in the village, since Haddenham's Community Speedwatch resumed.

More volunteers would mean more reminders: please contact HaddWatch@gmail.com to help!

AYLESBURY LINKS

Improvements to two walking, wheeling and cycling routes centred on Aylesbury have been opened, respectively in May and June: the [Platinum Way](#)⁴ to Aylesbury Vale Parkway Station, and [along the 'Aylesbury Arm' Canal Towpath](#)⁵.

When Haddenham is linked to Aylesbury via an extended Pebble Way (see page 4), walkers and wheelers will have a twelve-mile safe – and reasonably level – route all the way to Waddesdon Manor (following the Waddesdon Greenway from the Parkway station).

THAME ROAD, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT [continued from the front page]

The Streetscape report suggested new raised crossings to replace the unpopular chicanes, as well as general principles for the village such as continuous footways across side roads as a clear reminder that pedestrians have priority, and tighter corners at junction mouths to encourage slower speeds. These have now been worked up into a comprehensive proposal for Thame Road, which has been submitted to Bucks Council. On the Parish Council website you can read the full [report](#)⁸ and see a [plan](#)⁹ of all the proposed interventions. Our front-page image shows one section.

There were two reasons for doing the work: first because Bucks have been sitting on a pot of developer

REGION BACKS HADDENHAM AND THAME GREENWAY

Our long-awaited Greenway has been included in a [shortlist of top cross-border connections](#)⁶ with high potential to increase active travel, by England's Economic Heartland (EEH).

SIGNPOSTS hopes that this endorsement by EEH (the multi-county region covering from Swindon eastwards to Cambridgeshire) will strongly influence Buckinghamshire's decision on our Greenway due this Autumn 2023.

Oxfordshire has just included the Greenway in their [active travel consultation](#), proposing it as a "strategic /primary route".

SAFER PAVEMENTS CIRCUIT BROKEN?

Bucks Council has postponed several opportunities to progress [this proposal](#)⁷ for a safe walking circuit in Haddenham. At stake: 31 per cent of adults aged 65+ say they are prevented from walking more, or at all, on their local streets because of uneven pavements.

contributions earmarked for these improvements, but the money has an expiry date so they needed to be spurred into action. And secondly because if we are to have a 20mph limit across the village, Bucks Council policy states that average speeds need to be below 24mph, and this is one of the few roads where measurements show they slightly exceed that level.

Any further work, including the detailed design, will have to be done by the County Council's own contractors, but the Parish Council's consultants have drawn up the report to emphasise what has been established through the Streetscape consultation, making any County alterations less likely to diverge. We would love to know [what you think](#).

Alan Thawley,
Chair of Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling group

⁴ See <https://tinyurl.com/4dpj63n4>

⁵ See <https://tinyurl.com/3k2msdmf>

⁶ See pages 8 to 11, <https://tinyurl.com/3uk8xjm3>

⁷ See page 4 at <https://tinyurl.com/mr2jku5d>

⁸ See <https://tinyurl.com/36w6duds>

⁹ See <https://tinyurl.com/3beehcvk>