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Winter 2026

SIGNPOSTS

News and views from Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling group
Issue 22

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CRUCIAL GREENWAY CONSULTATION

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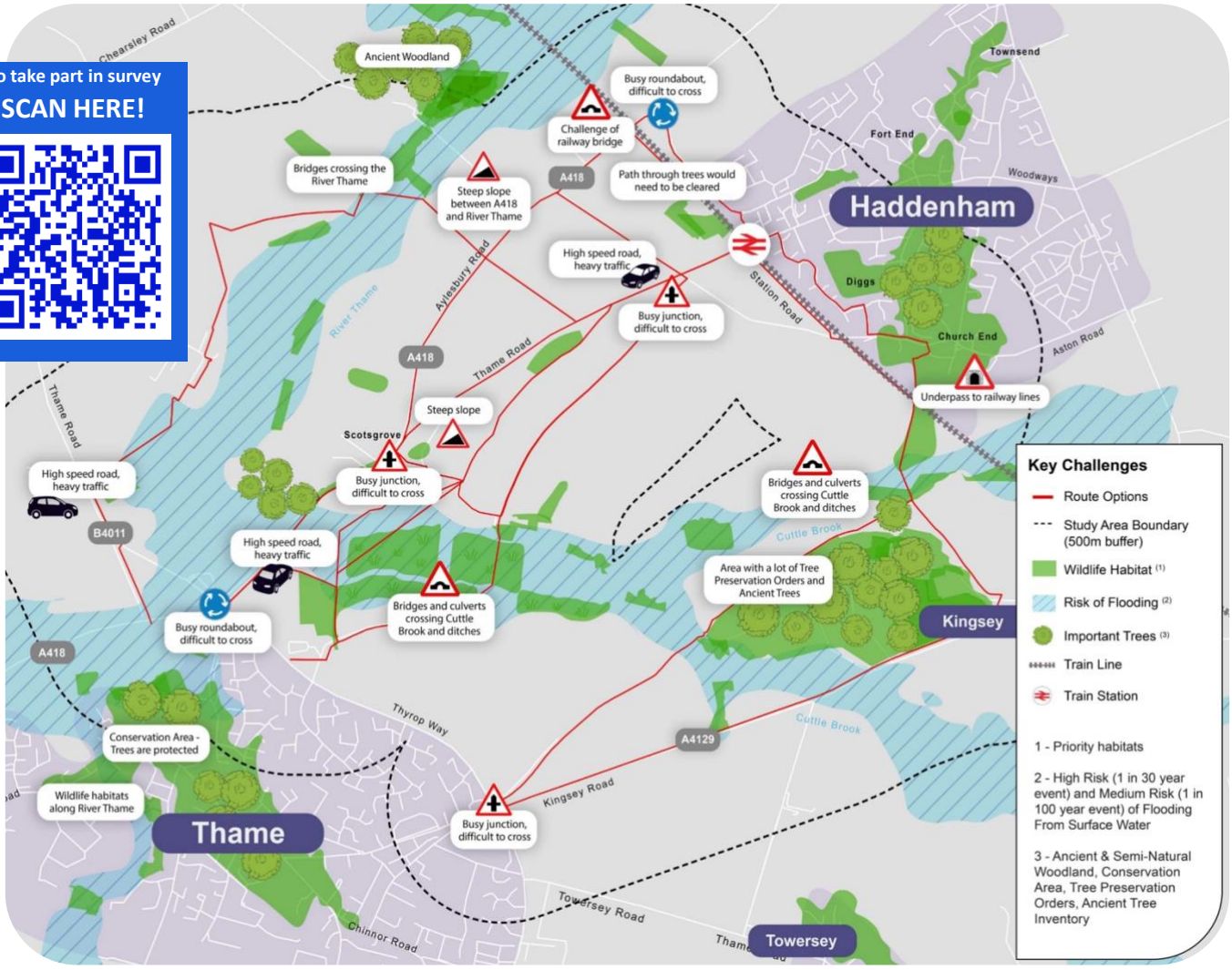


Image: "How we assessed the options" showing all 22 route sub-options, from the Greenway Consultation documents

It has been a long time coming, but we have finally moved a step closer to a safe route between Haddenham and Thame! Now we need you to keep the momentum going by responding to the consultation, which runs until Tuesday 24th November.

Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Councils have been assessing 22 different route sub-options and are now asking for public feedback. Out of these, eight are identified as "recommended options", meaning they've scored the highest on how easy they would be to build and the supposed benefits for future users (see map of these eight routes, over).

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All this means that the consultation might seem a little overcomplicated, but we think the most important question is "how likely would you be to use a dedicated route for walking, wheeling and cycling?". We need a huge response to demonstrate once again the depth of local support.

You'll also be invited to give feedback on the recommended options, which all follow the Thame Road or the A418 for some or all of their length. It's important to let the councils know what you think of a roadside route, and whether it would make a difference if it was separated from the road by a hedge, for instance.

You can also comment on any of the other route options, so if your preferred route would go across the fields, for instance, or via Tythrop, or at least avoid the roundabout (as in option 3d?), this is the time to make your views clear.

So please do spend a few minutes to fill in the questionnaire and help move the project on to the next stage!

To respond, you may need to set up an account on the website, but that's quite easy to do. You'll then need to have a look at the supporting documents, which describe the different route options and show them on a map, before clicking on "Take Survey". Alternatively, you can attend one of the two in-person drop-in events, in Haddenham Village Hall on Thursday 5th November, 3pm – 8pm, or Thame Town Hall on Saturday 14th November, 10am- 3pm.

Alan Thawley, chair
Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling group

HaddSWAC is very grateful for financial support from **Haddenham Village Fête** (next 12th June 2027) and **Haddenham Beer Festivals Trust (Winterfest on 12th December 2026),** *and* **Haddenham Garden Centre**.

SIGNPOSTS, a community newsletter, receives no grants and is in continuing need of donations, applied entirely to print costs.

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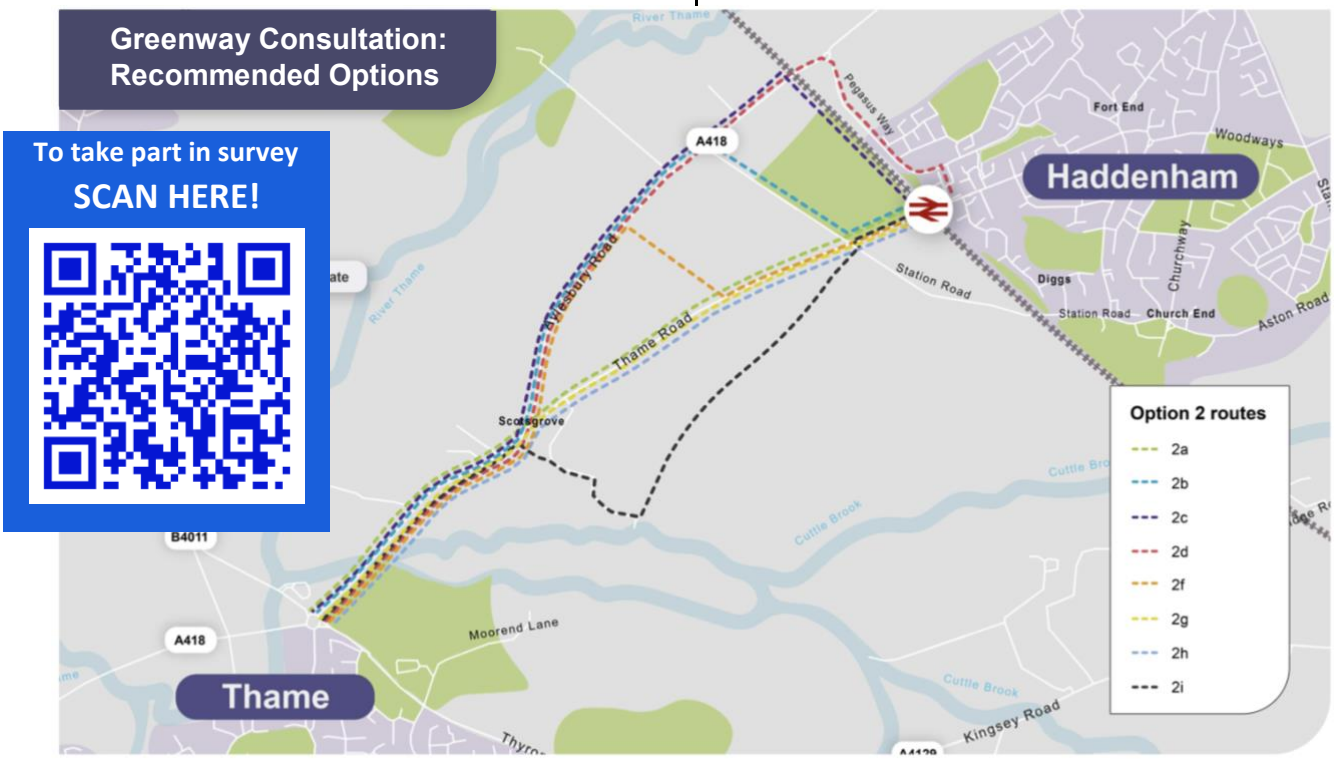


Image: "The recommended options", from the Greenway Consultation documents

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GREENWAYS MUST BE GREEN



Image from Laura Laker's blog, Potholes and Pavements.

The Romans left us a fine network of highways. For some 1,500 years the traffic was entirely on foot, on horseback or horsedrawn. Highway traffic saw much greeting and badinage between passers-by, storytelling and exchanges of news; there was always a hint of danger and nights were pitch-black. The roads were an adventure in themselves as well as avenues to adventure. For some the highways were a life. As the vagabond sang: "All I ask is the heaven above, and the road below me"[1].

Then came the horseless carriage, the motor coach and ultimately the heavy goods vehicle, bringing endless noise, noxious gases and new dangers for the motorless. The poor independent traveller, unpowered out of necessity or seeking traditional outdoor pleasure, was for long more or less disregarded by planners in the rush of "progress".

The formal oversight of our roads has changed in organisation and scope many times over the years. Agencies have come and gone and their responsibilities redefined as new laws and regulations emerge in response to technology and public priorities. Since 2015 in charge of the "Strategic Road Network" of trunk roads, we have Highways England, now renamed National Highways.

> "the agency has gone so far as to close a couple of walking and cycling paths in recent months …

National Highways takes a fashionably pious view of its responsibility for the trunk road environment and to the local communities served. Albeit on the fringe of its main business, it is establishing a series of 'designated funds' for active travel along its major routes.

A report by Laura Laker that the agency has gone so far as to close a couple of walking and cycling paths in recent months on grounds of proximity to its excessively polluted roads (and is considering others) has aroused some interest on our part.

First, the closures put into clear relief the loss of ancient travel facility suffered by the unpowered traveller resulting from the technical developments of the last hundred years, a loss which should in equity be made good. So we look forward to many new footpaths and cycle paths, indeed greenways, in the coming years providing alternatives to highway links now unusable.

Secondly, the closures highlight the need, when it comes to planning the route of a greenway, to take air quality into account and neighbouring vehicle emissions, providing mitigation measures if necessary, such as screening with effective hedgerows.

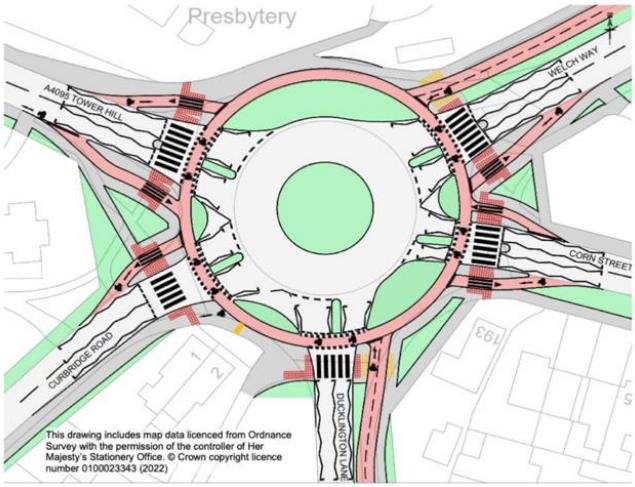
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[1] Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Vagabond,* 1896

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CYCLOPS: COMPLEX MONSTER OR CONSIDERATE OF VULNERABLE?



No spoilers here, for this article is nothing to do with the cyclops in Homer's The Odyssey, in case you haven't yet read the poem or seen one of the three films. The fictional one-eyed creature in the story has leant its name to, of all things, an innovative approach to roundabouts and road junctions.

In case roundabouts and crossroads are not normally your thing, hopefully this article will intrigue you about some new possibilities.

Originally roundabouts were all about monumental display, with a statement centrepiece or periphery. Traffic movement was random. Following these eighteenth-century beginnings, it was not until 1966 that there was formal standardisation of roundabouts in the UK, of giving way to those already circulating rather than the old "first arrival" priority.

A recent variant is the cyclops. It is different for recognising the needs of vulnerable road users.

The concentric circles of the mythical creature's single eye – lids, white, pupil and iris – are applied to the plan of junctions to define distinct areas for pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles (see, left, the Witney plan, with routes for cyclists in pink).

This approach has been applied to cross-roads as well as roundabouts. Like a proposed design in Headington below.

There are various subspecies of cyclops around the country. One much-simplified version, without the cycle lane, is proposed for Haddenham by the Streetscape Project.

The "full cyclops" is certainly complex. But, with more traffic generated by Haddenham housing development, and all recommended options for the Haddenham-Thame Greenway passing through the five-ways roundabout on the edge of Thame, should we now be thinking about some cyclops variant for that junction, to protect those on foot or a bicycle?

DS



Visualisation of Cyclops approach at the Old Road-Gipsy Lane junction by Cheney School, commissioned by Headington Liveable Streets and produced by Infra CGI.

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WHEN TEMPORARY TURNS TIMELESS



Diversion at The Maltings: 2022 to 2026?

Footpaths are well protected by planning laws. Until they're not. If land with a footpath over it is to be developed, the developer can apply for a diversion while works are carried out. Fair enough. You can't have walkers crossing an active building site.

Developers need a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) – a footpath is a public right of way, after all. But too often there are no effective conditions attached to any diversion. Neither as to the total length of time it might last, nor how direct any temporary alternative route should be, nor how it might be signposted.

We have experienced this on The Grove (five-year closure from 2018) and The Maltings to the west of Churchway (closed in 2022 and due to be re-opened – let's see – in December 2026). Temporarily closed footpaths remain shut for literally years. The re-opening of a footpath so often seems to be at the bottom of the list when it comes to any site being readied for occupation.

> In these days of "Considerate Construction" …

In fact the law is that any temporary closure of a footpath shouldn't last for more than six months (Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 s14). But – and here's the catch – any extension of the closure is a different matter. Developers can apply and merely put a notice in a local paper or two. These temporary extensions can last years. As we've seen.

Another point: at the time of writing, The Maltings has a 60m footpath closure with a diversion more than fifteen times as long, over an often-muddy route. At The Grove the signage simply said, "The alternative route … will be via the existing public highway network." Well, thanks a bunch!

Would it be too much to ask for tighter conditions to be applied to TTROs? As to timespan, quality of alternative routes, signage, etc.?

The closure of a footpath is an important matter.

Might not some information be shown as to the progress of work that necessitates the closure? How about a monthly bulletin having to be attached to the barrier where any path is diverted? In these days of "Considerate Construction", announcements to the effect of "Watch This Space" are a horrible and indeed enraging fob-off to the conscientious walker. Frankly it'd be more interesting to learn *when* people can "*Walk* This Space".

The time to intervene and ensure sensible and meaningful conditions are attached to temporary closures is BEFORE THEIR START. Why not have notices posted on site calling for comments and objections, as with planning applications?

Whatever we think of more housing in Haddenham, surely the actual process of new houses arriving can be dealt with more sympathetically than at present. Shouldn't we – Haddenham's residents and walkers – have more detail about disruptive building?

BA

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PUTTING ONE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER AND MOVING FORWARD WITHOUT FALLING OVER!



> It's always good to do some rethinking re die-hard habits. New thinking might just lead to new feeling. …

Trudging, plodding, tramp, marching, sauntering, slouching. There are plenty of words for it and most of us have been doing it since we were one or two. It's a minor miracle, this dicing with gravity. Everyone comes to an agreement with themselves as to how to walk. We're probably pretty convinced we're doing it right. But are we relying on habits which – shall we say? – do not bring the most physically efficient results? And might also bring pain: joint- or back-?

It's always good to do some rethinking re die-hard habits. New thinking might just lead to new feeling.

Walking begins with the feet. We have 26 bones and 29 muscles in each one. Not so much plates of meat as flexible friends. First to contact the ground is the heel. Then the foot is designed to roll forward so that we reach the ball of the foot and take off from that, as it becomes ready behind us. Our glutes propel us forward. (A walker's engine is in the rear, like Volkswagens of old.)

Remember, it's Mother Earth you're treading on. Be kind. Your head floats at rest on top of your spine as you proceed. It's a gyroscope. Your spine is long. Shoulders no longer hunched over a desk or a smart phone, say. Well, the heart *is* the seat of courage.

Eyes are pretty extraordinary. In a sense there's no such thing as just looking straight ahead. We've a big, wide view – 200 degrees horizontally, 135 vertically – to range over the savannah or scan the sky. So look ahead for puddles, potholes or the like. With the right visual attitude there's little need to look down.

The NHS performs at least 80,000 hip replacements and 100,000 knee replacements every year. Clearly don't rush back to "normal" walking if you've had an op., but you might want to take the opportunity to think about how you actually do walk. Why, it *might* even be that the problems that brought about your op. were caused by how you were walking in the first place.

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CHURCH END POND



> Every morning my first task was to look out of the bedroom window to check up on the ducks.

About 25 years ago, out of the blue, I received a phone call asking me to look after the ducks on the Church End Pond whilst the unknown caller went on holiday.

I am not sure if he ever came back from his holiday; but, from then, as ducks died I replaced them. Haddenham Village Society provided the money. Christmas was always a dangerous time for duck disappearances. Every morning my first task was to look out of the bedroom window to check up on the ducks. One morning I saw a couple sitting on a bench near the road feeding the ducks and then grabbing one, stuffing it in a rucksack and disappearing.

Replacing ducks involved visiting the many duck-breeders in those days around Haddenham, in my 1934 Austin 10 Clifton Sports. The ducks sat with me in the front in a box, my grandchildren in the "dicky seat"

One breeder, I contacted by email, replied I could have genuine Aylesbury Ducks either frozen or oven ready. When I telephoned and explained they were to go on the pond, he said he was the only person in the World with the genuine item, and they were sold either frozen or oven ready.

More recently I had been buying at duck auctions held in the Midlands; but post-Covid this source seems to have dried up.

I contacted a duck rescue charity but, not unreasonably, they required a safe floating area for the ducks overnight.

This has now been provided, with a duck-house with an entrance too small for mature Aylesbury Ducks. The reason is that they are hopeless mothers and cannot/will not incubate their eggs. But the house will give shelter for ducklings. This year two families of coots have grown up there.

Years ago, when the ducks were laying eggs all over The Green, I collected a load of eggs which I took to Brian Burch, milkman and fellow resident of Church End, who had chickens in those days, so he could put the eggs in with a broody hen.

As I write this the pond is being filled nightly by a water bowser for a film. Hopefully, the water will remain and I can now acquire some new ducks for it.

I must get out and clean up the duck-house so as not to let "Duck Mad Haddenham" down in the film[2].

BB

[2] For an update on sustaining the appearance of the pond see Haddenham Village Newsletter, Issue 178 – October 2026, item 3.

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WHEN YOU HAVE TO …



A small structure, vaguely police-box shaped, recently materialised on the edge of the Haddenham Village Hall car park; but there was no need to fear Cybermen chasing a Time Lord's TARDIS.

The Portaloo-style "Disabled Toilet" was instigated by Haddenham Dental, appearing in August 2026. While a WC that is fully accessible to wheelchair users is planned for the surgery's ground floor in the practice's hoped-for upgrade, this temporary facility provides respite. The locked free-standing unit is only provided for patients, "for insurance reasons".

It cannot be opened by a RADAR key.

RADAR stands for the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation, which has now been merged into a larger charitable organisation called Disability Rights UK. This organisation administers more than 10,000 toilets that are accessible 24-hours-per-day to wheelchair and other keyholding users across the UK,

> Are there enough loos open to the public in Haddenham?
> Take our quick survey!

locked to minimise vandalism and abuse. Disability Rights UK issues keys to those who need them, posted to their home currently for £6.75. Alternatively, you can contact Aylesbury Town Hall and collect a key for £4 (£5 if posted). The scheme is operated based on trust – no proof of disability is required.

Nowadays, more RADAR toilets are owned and maintained by private businesses than by councils. This reflects lack of council funds, and businesses' growing understanding of all customers' needs, and a desire to attract more "footfall" and to be seen to be acting considerately. Not to forget that guidelines and regulations in some situations require provision of toilets for disabled persons.

Our loo's arrival was welcomed by the dentist's patients. But there are many others who may be occasionally or frequently "caught short" – surely, one of the most prevalent "hidden disabilities".

Whether by reason of age, disease, impairment or condition, including pregnancy, many people do not enjoy the luxury of "being able to wait". It is suggested that one in five people do not leave home as much as they would like to, because of anxiety about lack of public toilets (updated in 2026, still cited, here).

Regarding our car-park-based toilet, non-patients and patients outside dentist opening hours, will have to hope the Community Library or Village Hall facilities are open, for immediate relief. For more distant choices, they will have to search the RADAR map, or Great British Public Toilet Map, or use their favourite phone app, e.g. Flush (our favourite).

Are there enough loos in Haddenham? Click here for our one-question survey (open in mail if prompted); or if you are not the clicking sort, participate by emailing HaddSWAC@gmail.com with subject line "Loos" and we'll send the survey to you. DS

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WHAT BLOOMED THANKS TO BLOOMERS



In 1897 *Cycling: An Illustrated Weekly* published a poem:

> "I ask not for beau or cavalier
> To help me out of ditches;
> I go in for independence,
> For women's rights and […er…] rational dress"

The very word "britches" was unspeakable, never mind their actual wearing. Forty years earlier, Amelia Bloomer, who produced a temperance magazine, took a liking to a pair of Turkish trousers gathered at the ankles topped by a relatively short skirt. The publicity was instant and enormous.

At that time the penny-farthing was still THE bike to ride. But ever tried mounting one? Later, in 1885, along came the Rover Safety Bicycle – recognisable as an ancestor of our bikes. The "freedom machine" had arrived. A woman's bicycle was her "steed upon which [she] rode into a new world". Bloomers and the Safety Bicycle was a marriage made in heaven.

Male resistance to women cycling was huge. "Get 'em off" was the least of it. A meat hook was thrown at a woman cycling in Kilburn. Engagements were broken off. Hooting and derision were rife, although some men did admire "the pluck" shown. In 1880, The Cyclists Touring Club (precursor to Cycling UK) had 3,500 members of whom two were women. In the next decade female membership was about a third. Soon women were setting up their own clubs.

"…overtaking the nearest male cyclist and handing him a liquorice allsort as she did so.

But the act of women cycling was considered antagonistic. Even by some women. The magazine *Wheelwomen*, for women by women, described women's races as "hideous spectacles". In 1893 Tessie Reynolds, a sixteen-year-old, rode Brighton-London-Brighton in about 8½ hours. *Cycling* called it a "lamentable incident".

Then there was a further lull. True, Annie Londonderry cycled round the world in 1895, but women's cycling was rejected as a sport for the Olympics the following year. In the 1930s women's races were banned in many countries – like the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany. The United States, Britain, Switzerland and Italy imposed significant restrictions. And in 1958 the International Cycling Union embargoed women's road races on medical grounds.

But you couldn't restrain the "freedom machine". What of the phenomenon that was Beryl Burton? She, who amongst many other records, beat the British All-Rounder record for the 12-hour time trial in 1967, overtaking the nearest male cyclist and handing him a liquorice allsort as she did so. Feisty doesn't cover it!

Slowly women's cycling has been rehabilitated as a sport, though average pay and sponsorship deals for women professionals lag seriously behind. But the spirit of the "freedom machine" lives on. And World Bicycle Relief opens educational and working possibilities for women in many parts of the world.

BA

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PARKING: AN EASIER LIFE FOR SUVS?



POINT-OF-VIEW? Less or more parking space? Haddenham's Banks Parade is experiencing queues for spaces. Should there be parking time limits? Should there be a dedicated disabled bay(s)? Other ideas?

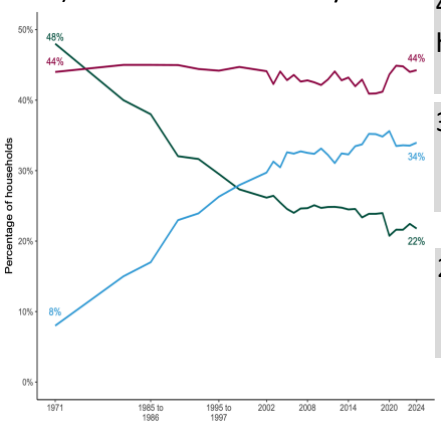
> This level of car ownership, which is not confined to our village, is beginning to restrict the pleasures and convenience of owning a car.

How will it be when every adult has a car? At present about 60 per cent of the adult population owns a car. Car ownership in London is probably lower, given the emissions regulations and excellent public transport. Public transport and lower incomes probably make for below average car ownership in other large cities. So one can reasonably conclude that car ownership in a place like Haddenham will be well above average. Perhaps as many as three quarters of Haddenham adults own cars. And more next year ...

This level of ownership, which is not confined to our village, is beginning to restrict the pleasures and convenience of owning a car. Consider: traffic jams and the need for ever more road capacity; tension over access to popular facilities (hospitals, schools, shopping, entertainments); uglification of townscapes by large car parks, ditto our village streetscape, with added strife over claims to public space (especially near the station).

Some people think we should be encouraged to make less use of cars, but our council, leaning into public desire, has been consulting with developers over updated parking provision in new estates. The result will be what the council deems "the most appropriate amount of parking required to support growth without causing adverse effects to our residents, visitors and neighbourhoods".

Chart: **Household car access**
Great Britain (1971 to 1988) and England (1989 to 2024) National Travel Survey



44% of households have access to one car or van

34% of households – two or more cars or vans

22% of households – no car or van (in 2024)

Under current proposals for our area, new estates must provide parking at the rate of 1.5 spaces for each 1-bedroom dwelling, 2 spaces per 2- and 3-bedroom dwellings, 2.5 spaces per 4-bedroom and 3 spaces per 5-bedroom dwelling. Plus 20 per cent extra spaces for visitors.

The council has also noticed that modern cars are getting wider and that the standard bay width of 2.4 metres can sometimes annoy. Exploiting a provision in the National Planning Policy Framework allowing councils to set "context sensitive" minimum standards, our council has proposed that Buckinghamshire should have a minimum bay-width of 2.8 metres.

An extra 8 inches each side! Quite a relief: like letting your belt out a couple of notches. A faithful reflection of our times.

AG

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WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THAME GAVE ITS PARKING SPACES BACK



Image: Thame High Street car park on Park(ing) Day; photo from Edge Urban Design, Thame.

For one day, 18 parking spaces in Thame's High Street car park became something very different: places to play, sit, chat, explore and meet.

Organised by Edge Urban Design, with support from 21st Century Thame and Thame Town Council, Thame's first Park(ing) Day brought different parts of the community together to imagine how these spaces could be used if they were designed around people rather than parked cars.

The atmosphere was relaxed and friendly, with people stopping to talk and explore. Children played with Lego from Thame Library and a train set from Red Kite Centre, while the library hosted a popular story time. Kubota brought a sandpit and diggers, Thame Runners ran activities, and local groups including Chinnor and Thame Friends of the Earth, Her Land and Edge created green spaces.

One parking space was even enough for 12 bicycles.

It sounds like a small detail, but it makes visible something we rarely think about: just how much space we dedicate to storing empty cars. That is the idea behind Park(ing) Day, the global event that began in San Francisco in 2005.

> If we want more space in the town centre for people, we first need to make it easier for more people to get there without a car.

One visitor to Thame Parking Day commented: "There is a lack of space where people can sit in a green area where they could meet their friends, chat and eat a sandwich. A few more trees would be nice!"

Another wrote: "Shows why the largest part of the town centre should be space for people, not their empty cars."

That doesn't mean pretending cars don't have a role. People need to be able to get to Thame and some have little choice but to drive. But many people shouldn't need to.

If we want more space in the town centre for people, we first need to make it easier for more people to get there without a car.

That means safe, attractive walking and wheeling routes from surrounding communities, including the proposed Haddenham and Thame Greenway and reliable bus connections to Thame.

Creating a more people-friendly town centre isn't simply about making somewhere nicer to visit. It can also help create a stronger local economy, with people spending more time in town and supporting local businesses. Research from Transport for London has found that people who walk, cycle or use public transport spend up to 40 per cent more in high streets and town centres than those who drive.

With Park(ing) Day, for a few hours, a car park became a playground, a garden, a meeting place and a community space.

Then the cars came back.

The question is whether we can keep seeing what is possible without them.

RH

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NEWS IN BRIEF

DON'T ASK ME, I ONLY LIVE HERE

Work on Thame Road pavements between Pegasus Way and Fort End has raised some questions about accessibility. Beyond these, it has crystalised an issue about how maintenance works are planned.

The response from a Bucks Council Cabinet Member to issues about suitability for partially sighted walkers and consistency with local Streetscape plans was "if I allowed every town and parish to customise essential maintenance work around the county I would run out of budget …"

This pavement maintenance was welcomed, as many other initiatives in Haddenham would be. It had not been prioritised locally. So how do we ensure the budget (our council tax) is efficiently spent when so much needs to be done?

HOW DO YOU EAT AN ELEPHANT?

… One mouthful at a time.

And so it will be fixing dropped kerbs – essential for the less mobile and wheelchair and mobility scooter users, who are already dealt a challenging lot.

Volunteers have identified well over a hundred dropped kerb issues in Haddenham and we are now seeking, with our local councillors, to prioritise attention.

The need for maintenance may be "an objective judgement" and a "statutory duty" (referred to by the Cabinet Member, above), but local knowledge can help allocate the budget to maximum effect for the community.

95 PER CENT OF ADULT CYCLISTS

… have received no adult cycle training. This survey result was revealed by Bikeability, which delivers training to schoolchildren, as it launched "CycleIn" in September 2026: an on-line cycling course, complete with videos and quizzes, designed for adults. Learn about it here: https://www.cyclein.co.uk/training.

Drivers might also find it interesting!

PATH OPENED AND CLOSED

A welcome new path around Haddenham's promised new cricket pitch, next to The Grove, had to be partially closed for works on the new cricket pavilion.

The path will be a useful training circuit for those anticipating the Haddenham-Thame Greenway. We estimate that five times around the loop will be equivalent to the distance from Haddenham and Thame Parkway station to Thame Cattle Market.

A418: SMALLER GAP, MORE UNSAFE

In the past we have asked Bucks Council for a 400-metre footway along the A418 between the end of Green Lane at Redmayes Farm, and Low Lane, which would complete a hardstanding route all the way to Aylesbury and a safer way between Haddenham and Cuddington avoiding treacherous Kings Cross (where Churchway meets the A418, scene of multiple collisions).

To no avail. Not ideal, but at least we had a verge to walk along, which Bucks Council acknowledged.

Now the Council has implemented new verge maintenance that leaves 40 metres of the 400-metre verge totally overgrown, forcing pedestrians onto the carriageway. Take great care if using this route!

OXFORD JOINS THE NETHERLANDS

An Oxford Greenways plan was unveiled on 30th September 2026 for 18 walking, wheeling and cycling routes connecting the city centre to nearby towns and villages, employment centres and green spaces, and 200,000 residents. Developed over several years with consultation, routes will include traffic-free sections, segregated paths alongside roads and quieter on-road links.

Separately, The Oxford Clarion calculated that with Oxfordshire planning to spend £23 million on its walking and cycling network over the next four years its expenditure per resident will be up to the same level as the Netherlands – though without that country's 50-year headstart!

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