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Winter 2025-26 SIGNPOSTS

News and views from Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling group
Issue 18

HAVE YOU SIGNED YET?



The [petition in support of the Haddenham-Thame Greenway](#)¹ has just powered through an important milestone – as of early October, we have over 3,000 signatures! This should not come as a surprise given the overwhelming local support for the project and rock-solid usage case.

A previous petition in 2009 achieved 1,500 signatures, so we have already doubled that, but of course, the population of Haddenham and Thame is also a lot bigger now. The combined figure was just under 19,000 in the 2021 census, so we must be comfortably over 20,000. That still means around one in every seven people has signed.

But we can do even better, so please, if you haven't already, make sure that everyone aged 16 or over in your household has signed, and spread the word far and wide!

We are told that in November, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire councils are due to take the next step

¹ <https://www.change.org/p/support-for-a-greenway-between-haddenham-and-thame>

following their lengthy investigation of different route options, which will pave the way for a green light to progress the project. But this will require a political decision.

The aim is therefore to send a really strong message that there will be thousands of locals ready to use the route once it's built, so our two councils can anticipate the kudos of a popular project that will make a real difference to people's lives. And, of course, the councils should infer those same people will not look kindly on any further delays.

Alan Thawley, chair

Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling group

November 2025?

Our local county councillors elected on 1 May 2025 are following progress on the Haddenham-Thame greenway [as they promised us](#).

"Definitely Maybe" is the first advice they have received from Bucks Council officers, regarding the above potential milestone in November.

Watch this space as we report back on the results of their two greenway commitments: to provide a clearer picture of what's going on, and to drive progress so that implementation is started by the next election!

SIGNPOSTS receives financial support so that some printed copies – primarily for those without digital access – are available at village outlets. Funds are running out. We are urgently looking for sponsors. If you can help, please email HaddSWAC@gmail.com as soon as possible!

WHO'S GOT A CRUSH ON E-BIKES, THEN?



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Behind the scenes, serious work is underway to take illegal bikes and conversion kits off the market ...

A lot of us have. They're great – those electrically assisted pedal cycles (EAPCs). They have a max of 250 watts power unleashed by your own pedal power. And are limited to 15.5mph. What's not to like? Nothing, if ridden responsibly (pavement riding is of course a no-no).

But there are *some* e-bikes that are just plain illegal. They exceed the criteria of 250 watts of power; the motor doesn't cut out at 15.5mph; they don't need pedal power; they have open throttles.

You might have seen them. And the Police may have quite a different sort of crush on those sorts of e-bikes. Truly industrial. Just this last September the police seized 16 illegal e-bikes and e-scooters in Chorley, 24 in Burnley, and around a 100 in Nottinghamshire. 118 were seized in Thames Valley region in the 3 months up to 8th September. The problem is growing and big. London transport chiefs estimate that tens of thousands (sic) of delivery riders use illegal e-bikes. Some are capable of speeds of 50mph. Some are ridden by children under 14 – illegal in itself.

New powers under the Crime and Policing Bill will give the police the power to seize illegal e-bikes *immediately* if they have been driven in an anti-social way (currently this is dependent on continuing misbehaviour). The Bill has passed the Commons and is before the Lords. The Police are already using existing powers to turn illegal e-bikes into scrap, albeit after time-absorbing administrative procedures.

Just to be clear, a “legal” that is modified so that higher speeds can be reached or pedalling isn't needed is not, of course, classed as an EAPC. To keep it on the road – it could not be used on cycle tracks, etc – the rider would need a valid driving licence (you can apply for a moped licence at 16), insurance, vehicle registration and tax, and a helmet.

So that's the law. The problem of illegal e-bikes is growing fast in cities. Behind the scenes, serious work is underway to take illegal bikes and conversion kits off the market. But until then, is it just a matter of time before one is seen in Haddenham? If/when one is, let us know!

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WALKING BUSES: WHICH HADDENHAM ROUTE WILL BE FIRST?



Marlow also struggling to reduce school run congestion.

Have you ever thought of volunteering for a walking bus for your school?

A walking bus is much like a traditional school bus, except on foot. There is typically a group of adults, who agree to walk a certain route to or from school at a certain time. Children wait along the way and join the bus at the designed stops.

Commonly the parents walk with the children, but if there is sufficient supervision and maturity, the children can join the bus unaccompanied, under the control of the driver and conductor adults.

For safety reasons, the participants usually wear high-viz vests and should follow road safety rules.

Obvious benefits are the children are involved in physical activity, which goes some way to tackle the sedentary lifestyles. It is well known that walking can reduce stress and tackle mental health. And the

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Calling for parent volunteers:

On a rota, your participation in a walking bus could help our youngsters get fitter while freeing you from the daily stress of trying to park by the school. Or the rota could give you time-off from school walks every day. Perhaps just one day a week. Perhaps from The Grove or from the Airfield housing development?

If curious, why not test the interest of others, at the school gate or with a Facebook post?

children can perhaps gain a bit of independence in a managed environment.

There are also the environmental benefits. Walking imposes a lower carbon footprint. Air quality is improved nearer to the school as there are lower emissions. Even drivers benefit from less congestion, and parents save money, not having fuel costs.

There is much to be said of the social benefits of walking buses in Haddenham. I know on the walk to school I've met other parents and had the opportunity to develop deep friendships. There is an increase in traffic safety, on that basis of fewer cars means fewer collisions, and walking buses are more inclusive for families without access to cars.

And is there any greater way to give back, than volunteering for your community?

AO

A PLAN FOR HADDENHAM PLEASE



The areas coloured salmon are currently subject to, or expected in the short term to be affected by planning applications²

In 2011 Haddenham had just under 4,400 people living in about 1750 houses. Since then, the village has been designated a growth area (thanks mainly to its railway station) and some 1200 houses have been added. The population is now about 6,250, an increase of 42%.

We now have developer proposals for nearly 1000 houses – 800 on the airfield and 192 west of the railway line (the ‘Station Road proposal’) – which, if realised, will bring the population to just under 10,000, or about 2¼ times the size of the village in 2011.

No one can say that Haddenham hasn’t done its bit to help with the national housing crisis. Despite natural resistance to further housing, the view gaining weight is that growth is inevitable and future effort should be concentrated on securing the best possible outcome for the larger village.

But there is serious concern at the way the speculative proposals of developers are brought forward. While they commonly include attractive amenities, such as green space and playgrounds, they do not provide for the consequential needs of the village for incremental infrastructure: school places,

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school transport, medical facilities, storm drainage, main sewerage etc, many of which are already functioning beyond capacity.

The village can urge Bucks Council that it require the developer to contribute to specific infrastructure projects, but the amounts are small, sticking plaster for major needs, and delivery not easily monitored by the affected public. More seriously, neither the developments nor the add-ons are integrated into an overall plan for the expanded village.

The proposal for Station Road – land west of the railway – brings the need for a plan into sharp focus. How would the development relate to the ‘heart of the village’? Does the village have or need a heart? The railway has served as a clearly defined boundary between the village and open country – should it be breached? What about connectivity, a particular interest of SIGNPOSTS? We need paths between estates so people can mix without having to walk along busy roads. Impossible if you live the other side of the tracks.

What Haddenham needs is a strategic plan, professionally underpinned, for the next, say, 20 years, anticipating the stages of likely growth and the consequences for infrastructure: a plan that is comprehensive and explicitly acknowledged by the council. The village's recent discussion of various ‘scenarios’ is a step in this direction. The initiative should be encouraged, with more of us involved.

AG

Scenario consultation
extended to
26 October 2025

² Image from the “Future Haddenham” presentation, prepared for Haddenham Parish Council by [ONH](#), a planning consultancy. The full presentation has been the basis of a consultation open to everyone, from residents to local employers to infrastructure providers. For full details see: https://www.haddenham-bucks-pc.gov.uk/Future_Haddenham_50019.aspx.

A SALUTE FOR THE POSTIE



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All are subject to increasing demand for efficiency and have little time for exchange of friendly words. Some make no contact at all, but take a quick snap of parcel at front door and run.

Let us honour our posties. As walkers of every one of our village streets every working day of the year they naturally compel the admiration of SIGNPOSTS, devoted as we are to safe and agreeable walking through all our streets and alleys. The cheerful bustling postie is always welcome, even if much of what they bring these days is mostly unwanted promotions, to be consigned directly to the recycle bin.

Much as we love and admire our posties (each walks about 10 miles a day) our feelings are tinged with apprehension, since the calling is so clearly in a state of change. So much of what we actually do want is now delivered by others, not in uniform and certainly not on foot. Apart from Christmas, when posties really come into their own, the postie's daily role has been sadly diminishing, and, as stamps get more and more expensive, it is hard to see where it will go.

Who now remembers when the postman knew everyone in the street and carried news and humour back and forth – ‘New baby at No 9’, ‘Mrs P got her washing out first again’. He (hardly any women back then, except in wartime, and they’d be called ‘postman’ anyway) – he would be an essential part of

the neighbourhood glue. Glue sadly missing now that so much of life is lived online and neighbourly contact often rare and awkward.

With delivery people, you rarely see the same face twice, and even posties change quite frequently. And all are subject to increasing demand for efficiency and have little time for exchange of friendly words. Some make no contact at all, but take a quick snap of parcel at front door and run, confirming delivery by email when safely back in the van.

One consequence is that mistakes are made. Usually these have to be sorted out between neighbours, who may hardly have spoken before. So, if we no longer have the postie's gossip, it is the random errors of deliverers that will help us keep in touch with our neighbours. A heartening thought in today's ever more atomised society.

Nevertheless, as long as we still have our cheerful uniformed posties, we at SIGNPOSTS salute you.

AG

WHO PUT THE 'PARK' IN PARKWAY?



Unlucky: Haddenham & Thame Parkway car park full today, with empty areas waiting for refurbishment!

Great name for a station: Parkway. The first one was Bristol Parkway in 1972. Now there are over 30 Parkway stations in the UK near urban conglomerations. Including Haddenham-Thame's opened in 1987. The notion of Park-and-Ride is integral to Parkways, as it is to railway policy generally. The implied message is: Take cars off the road. But here in Haddenham the Parkway involves putting cars *on* the roads! Let the train take the strain by all means but should this mean our streets take the heat?

It costs £8.50 to park for a day at peak times; over 30% of a single to London. Small wonder too many choose to drive here and park in our streets. Even within Haddenham some jump in their cars and park up in Sheerstock before boarding a train.

HTP's carpark is to be refurbished. Chiltern Railways say that the project is going out to tender this

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HTP's carpark is to be refurbished. Chiltern Railways say that the project is going out to tender this autumn. Work, they say, *could* start in January 2026.

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autumn. Work, they say, *could* start in January 2026. That'd be good, but history does not inspire confidence. The upper level was closed for safety reasons after less than a few years of service. (Was the work botched perhaps? Or maybe the short life was planned?! In all events who paid or will pay for that?)

Chiltern Railways' franchise has fallen in. The company stands to be nationalised. Joined-up transport policy would suggest an abatement – at the very least – of parking charges so cars park in the Parkway's parking spaces.

Of course, many of us dream of the Haddenham-Thame Greenway. Cycling to the station, rather than driving, would also alleviate the problem. Yet another good reason to get that project to materialise out of the admin fog it seems lost in.

BA

CITY, TOWN, VILLAGE ...?



St Mary's Church, Haddenham – not a cathedral, but in 1889 the strict association of a city with a cathedral [ceased](#).³

The other day, filling in a form online to register my [support for the Haddenham-Thame Greenway](#) I was asked – in a little box marked “CITY” – where I lived. Should I put AYLESBURY, though our county town isn't in fact a city? Yet the box had to be filled for me to record my enthusiasm. Okay, I thought, ‘I'll put HADDENHAM’. So there we are, folks: Haddenham's a city! ‘Sofficial!

All these terms are pretty loose. Actually, “CITY” on the form was clearly US-inspired. There, everywhere's a city. The city of Ruso in North Dakota has a population of ... just one. Here, in the UK, cities are designated by letters patent or royal charter. We have 76 of them. Towns too used to be places with charters, now however the term is much looser. And what about a ‘village’? The term's equally vague. The difference between a town and a village is in the eye of the beholder.

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Haddenham may well be nudging up against what outsiders see, at first demographic glance, as a town.

A briefing from the House of Commons Library is expressed in terms of populations. It tells us that: villages and small communities have under 7,500 residents; towns have residents numbering between 7501 and 174,999; cities have 175,000+. All very precise. Except it isn't. The city of St David's in Pembrokeshire has under 2,000; Wells in Somerset has under 12,000; and the mummy of all cities – the City of London – has pushing 9,000. At the other end of the scale Northampton has a quarter of a million and Reading half as much again. They're *not* cities because they don't have royal charters.

Haddenham may well be nudging up against what outsiders see, at first demographic glance, as a town. But consider Cranleigh in Surrey with over 11,000 and Lancing in West Sussex with 15,000. Both have parish councils which seem to be the real determinant of village status. And who decides if you have a parish council? Or a town council? Well, the parish council ultimately. So surely the villagers then. Theoretically anywhere *could* call itself a town and get itself a mayor. Even if only two crusties and a goat live there...

Frankly we're pretty happy as a village, aren't we? But the decision *is* OURS.

BA

³ Photo: Oswald Bertram / [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)



REMEMBER, REMEMBER, 2ND NOVEMBER!



Benjamin Franklin lived in Paris in the 1780s. Ever the practical man, he found himself wondering how many candles might be saved at night in summer if people got up earlier and so went to bed earlier. He advocated waking sluggards with cannon-fire. During World War I, the urge came to save not candles, but coal. In 1916 'Daylight Saving' regulations were introduced, which involved changing the clocks. ('Spring Forward⁴ to Victory'?) This owed a lot to a campaign started 20 years before by a Surrey builder, William Willett. (There's still The Daylight Inn in Petts Wood, Kent where Willett lived.)

So far so simple; the answer owed everything to economic logic, little to the effect on the human body of messing with our relationship to sunrise and sunset. In fact, people by and large *don't* get up earlier to benefit from more sun. Even though early-morning sun is best. They simply change routines – like exercising – to the evening.

Daylight Saving misaligns our body clocks, especially

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... pedestrian deaths increased by an average of 40% in the month after the clocks 'Fell Back'.

when evenings remain bright for longer. We might go to sleep later, leading to sleep deprivation affecting overall health. Our biological clocks are naturally set by the rising and setting sun, but DST forces us to follow an artificial clock, creating a mismatch that can have consequences for sleep, concentration and wellbeing. I know an ex-policeman who felt his work, ducking in and out of 'nights', severely affected his restorative sleep. After ten years he finally left the force and now finds he sleeps like a baby – well, when his baby lets him (but that's another story) ...

A report earlier this year from the University of Kent⁵ found that 'springing-forward' is associated with an increased risk of heart attacks (acute myocardial infarction) and fatal traffic accidents. They're not the only ones. A few years ago (2021 actually) ROSPA reported that pedestrian deaths increased by an average of 40% over two years in the month after the clocks 'Fell Back'⁶. They called for an end to clocks changing altogether.

Further, if drivers are near home, accidents are more likely to happen. Haddenham beware!

You might be able to acclimatise yourself to change gradually. Or, more likely, just BE MORE ALERT. This year:

Remember, remember 2nd November.

BA

⁴ For the uninitiated: Daylight Saving is made up of 'springing forward' in the spring and 'falling back' in autumn (the 'fall', in US).

⁵ www.kent.ac.uk/news/health-social-care-and-wellbeing/36373/how-daylight-saving-time-affects-our-health

⁶ <https://tinyurl.com/48yaa9m4>



NEWS IN BRIEF

SHORTCUT

We are continuing to press Lands Improvement Holdings to provide a link through to the village from the Airfield development via the industrial estate, ideally prior to development of the second phase, should it get planning permission.

MINISTER FOR FUTURE: PAST TENSE?

[Our article in Issue 17 of SIGNPOSTS](#) mentioned Lilian Greenwood's portentous title: Minister for the Future (of Roads). So we were surprised to learn that her role is, er, terminated, as part of the latest government reshuffle.

Ms Greenwood however remains responsible for pavement parking and road safety – two good reasons to continue to follow her progress – under a new title of Local Transport Minister.

A case of a Time Lord regenerating?

On pavement parking Ms Greenwood is on record saying, "the status quo is not acceptable ... a blight on our towns, cities and villages, undermining inclusivity and equitable access".

We've been promised an announcement "very soon".

TRANSFORMING MOBILITY

A [new report](#) has found that almost half (48%) of disabled people think both national and their local governments are not doing enough to ensure accessibility is a priority. One of the report's five big ideas is [side road zebras](#), commonly used across Europe, which do not include beacons or zig-zag markings to make them affordable to councils.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR SCHOOLS

The morning school drop-off now apparently makes up more than a quarter of rush-hour traffic and since 2005, the proportion of children driven to school in England has risen by over 20%. Essex has run a trial of [software using Artificial Intelligence](#) that allows their council officers to "pinpoint where safer crossings, new cycle routes or targeted bus subsidies would make the biggest difference".

In the short term, see [page 2](#) for our suggestion regarding an improved school run!

FIVE A DAY?

Transport for London (TfL) has recently launched a [campaign to raise awareness of the Highway Code](#), with a particular focus on five rules designed to protect people walking, wheeling, cycling and motorcycling.

The rules spotlighted by the new campaign are: -

- You must stop for people on zebra crossings.
- Always let people cross before you turn.
- Always let cyclists pass before you turn.
- Always stop for people at zebra crossings on cycle tracks.
- Cyclists must always stop at red lights.

This follows a [similar campaign from Bucks Council](#) – did it reach you? – from July to the end of September 2025. The council chose its own five highlights, which overlapped TfL's but added

- passing horses at under 10mph,
- allowing a safe distance – generally two metres – to pass more vulnerable road users, and
- using the "[Dutch Reach](#)" to open car doors.

*HaddSWAC is very grateful for financial support from **Haddenham Village Fête, The Haddenham Beer Festivals Trust and Thame Cycles.***

This support is now running out meaning that soon, printed copies – primarily for those unable to access SIGNPOSTS digitally – will no longer be available at village outlets. We are now urgently looking for additional funds to cover printing costs. Please contact HaddSWAC@gmail.com if you can help!

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