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SIGNPOSTS

News and views from Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling group
Issue 3

Welcome to our latest issue, with features on the school run, the new highway code and potential improvements to Church End.

With this in mind, we hope as many of you as possible were able to attend the Streetscape project consultation event. Feedback on the day seemed very positive, although a common view amongst villagers who attended was that we could afford to be more radical!

Don't worry if you missed it though, as you can see the initial design ideas that were presented for three different parts of the village [here](#)¹. The following is an example.

Initial Idea 2



- Creation of a new green space at junction of Church Way and Station Road
- Improved surface materials to help soften impact of vehicles
- Removal of formal road markings
- Improved pedestrian crossing points

Most importantly, on the same webpage, you will also find a link to a short [survey](#)² to complete. It is crucial that as many villagers as possible respond to the survey, both to provide evidence of community support to Bucks Council, and to ensure that everyone's views and issues are taken into account.

The survey asks for your views on the suggested improvements to three specific areas – Fort End, Church End and the Woodways double roundabout – but also on a potential 'palette' of options to be applied around the village, such as removing white lines to slow traffic, visual narrowing of roads, or improved pedestrian routes. If feedback is positive, the consultants will look at expanding the approach to more of the village

There are also several boxes where you can add your own thoughts and suggest other areas and issues that need to be addressed. Now's the time to give them all your ideas, no matter how big or small!

Alan Thawley

Chair, Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling group (HaddSWAC)

¹ A request for feedback including a link to sketches of initial design ideas can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y88d87p3>

² The Streetscape survey can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/yeytv7af>

THE SCHOOL RUN: WHAT WOULD HELP



As a mum of primary school-aged boys I have been asked to share my experiences of trying (and failing) to do the school-run on bikes. I suspect my circumstances are fairly common: more than one child, at different stages of ability on their bikes, or with one child still in a bike seat/trailer.

Despite best efforts, ultimately I reverted to walking. Had I lived further from the school, I would probably have ended up in the car.

For me, converting us back to cycling would mean addressing two issues:

- **The route:** Though children are not legally allowed to cycle on pavements, asking a six-year-old to cycle along Churchway or Thame Road, navigate multiple parked cars, and cross a petrol station entrance and side-streets is undesirable. Instead, I tried cycling on the road with my elder son cycling on the pavement. Still we struggled, with me feeling unable to help him cross side-streets without stalling traffic and him having to wobble around the many pedestrians.

- **Cycle parking:** As an alternative we tried using Willis Road, much quieter, and then the cycle lane along the playing fields. This works much better until we reach the end, skirting a car park (always a fraught experience for parents with small children) and a need to still cover the final yards; manoeuvring my son's bike along a packed Woodways, whilst trying to stash my bike somewhere out of the way of other pedestrians so I can hold my youngest son's hand along the busy road.

What would help? Only a dedicated cycle lane, separate from the traffic and not part of a busy pavement, would make a meaningful difference. But any such lane needs to actually get us right to our destination, not end someway short, leaving parents to navigate past either the busy entrance to the parade of shops or worse, tackle a double roundabout. I'd love to see it end in a safe, car-free area, easy to pull into (i.e., not turning across a busy main road), where children's bikes can be stored for the school day and adults' bikes can be parked temporarily whilst bags are redistributed, hugs are given and children are seen onto school premises.

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NEW CODE, NEW PRIORITIES



The new Highway Code runs to 172 pages and states on its first page that it is essential reading for everyone. That includes pedestrians and, presumably, unaccompanied children. A fair bit of homework!

In truth, much of the new code is common sense, as it always has been. But there are some important changes intended to even up the relationship between pedestrians, cyclists and car drivers. All street users should feel equally at ease as they go about their own village.

Extra consideration for those more vulnerable than yourself is the new theme. At the same time, it remains the obligation of all street users to have regard to their own safety and that of others.

What is the status of the code? Watch its language. Where it says 'must', that is the

law; where it says 'do' or 'should', that is just code. A breach of code is not illegal but can be taken into account in establishing liability in court. Nearly all the new precepts are either 'do' or 'should'.

A couple of selections for the village. Walkers on the hundred metre stretch between Snakemoor and the start of Millers Way (illustrated) will be delighted that motorists are now expected to give them at least two metres berth and to pass at moderate speed. And cyclists on the shared Green Lane path are asked not to pass walkers at speed and to give warning of approach from behind, not forgetting the possibility of impaired hearing.

The new code can be found online [here](#)³. It is well arranged and easy to navigate, and there is a helpful short guide to the changes [here](#)⁴. The print version costs £4.99.

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³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code>

⁴<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022>

WHERE IS OUR CYCLE PATH TO THAME?



There is a growing network of cycle paths between towns in our region. Thame is linked with Princes Risborough by the Phoenix Trail and Aylesbury with Waddesdon by a new 'Greenway' (as they are now called). Haddenham has a new greenway taking us about a mile towards Dinton and studies are afoot to extend this to Aylesbury. What Haddenham does not have is a dedicated cycle path to Thame.

The journey to Thame by bike is unpleasant and dangerous. A safe cycle route to Thame could be even more useful than the more leisure-oriented routes mentioned above. Users would include work and school commuters, visitors to the shops in Thame and Thame-based rail commuters (our station handles about half a million return journeys a year). The route could be just as attractive as other greenways and also enjoyed by wheelchair users and young families (walkers can take the Millers Way).

The cycle path to Thame has been discussed and professionally studied for at least 20 years. There are a number of possible routes. Each has problems of engineering, flood control, accommodation with agriculture or agreement with landowners, but all are soluble in principle. There is also a problem with the priority given to the project by each of the two councils involved. All too often, on one side or the other, the focus shifts to easier undertakings.

The economic case for the greenway has now been boosted by climate change and the zero-carbon movement. If the two authorities could decide on a route and concentrate their energies on making it happen, there is little doubt that the funds would flow. What is needed now is strong and maintained pressure on each of the two councils FROM ALL OF US!

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⁵ This bike shed at Haddenham and Thame Parkway station was successfully campaigned for by Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling group, opened in 2014 (for more information, see: <https://www.haddenham.net/newsroom/haddenham-welcomes-cyclists.html>)

CHURCH END CHALLENGE



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Parts of Haddenham are picture perfect. No wonder TV, film companies and photographers queue up to visit. Haddenham's Green at the church with duckpond, fêtes, maypole- dancing has come to epitomise the village and Buckinghamshire country life. It's glorious. But too good to be true, it ain't.

Zoom out on google earth, say, and take a look from above: there's a great smudge of tarmac with extravagant white hatchings that'd do an airport runway proud. Objections to this aren't merely aesthetic, though more considered planted is surely needed. Walkers, cyclists, even timorous motorists, need an advanced degree in visuo-spatiality just to cross the place. It's confusing and risky. Of course, it has to serve many different functions. Crucially and importantly buses turn here to collect and drop their fares at this end of the village. Then there's the through-traffic along Aston and Station Roads.

At the arrival- and departure-times for St Mary's School things are even worse. Scores of cars clutter the roads by the Green. This leads to Piccadilly-style jams for residents and the very cars transporting children. There's St Mary's Centre too with its regular visitors. Not to mention traffic associated with the Church. All this with residents' carparking, many with no choice but to stay on the streets overnight.

The Streetscape Consultants have their work cut out!

Measures to encourage walking or cycling to school or indeed anywhere are one way. There's a vicious cycle at work here (no pun intended!): if Haddenham's roads were safer from speeding traffic, more would get out of their cars. And specifically for all the schools of Haddenham what about allocated nearby parking, to encourage ride-and-stride?

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

Please, do share this newsletter with your friends, colleagues and family! Previous issues are available at <https://www.villagesociety.org/haddswac.html>.

⁶ Picture courtesy of the Halifax (a financial services company) from its 2017 video advertisement. For more details see <https://www.haddenham.net/newsroom/lady-penelope-lives-in-haddenham.html>