

THAME GREEN LIVING PLAN

A 10-year plan for a cleaner, greener Thame

Summer 2020

A summary of some selected projects from
the Recommended Actions in section 3 of the GLP

HADDENHAM & THAME GREENWAY

Objective

- **A shared off-road cycling and walking route between Thame and the station**
- **Major public support – would make a huge difference**
- **Gives exercise, fresh air and limits car pollution**

Issues

- Limited s106 funds but OGB finance allocated (subject to Local Plan!)
- Largely driven by Bucks CC – needs much more active OCC support
- Funding window means timing may become critical
- Viable route available but Sustrans negotiations with landowners taking time
- Not known how/ where will enter Thame or cross-Thame route
- Need for CCs and Sustrans to talk to GLP cycling group!

RYCOTE MEADOW

Objective and approach

Opening up TTC land between Oxford Road and Thame Meadows Estate

- **Planting scheme to include trees, shrubs, hedges and meadow**
- **Attractive footpaths and cycle route**

Assess site boundaries and objectives

- Links with CBCV, neighbours, Bloor Homes, Wild Oxfordshire etc.
- TTC budget available – poss. additional funds for extras
- Needs working group and project plan – allowance for flooding
- Benefits – good recreational space, walking/cycling friendly, carbon capture

WALKING AND CYCLING IN AND AROUND THAME

The issue

- Vehicles dominate the streets in and around Thame, especially the town centre
- Apart from pollution (below) vehicles add noise and create fear for personal safety
- Pedestrians and cyclist are pushed to the margins – as are shoppers
- Social distancing queues of people form on pavements with cars still having free rein

The approach – Reclaim the Streets!

- Traffic needs to be constrained and people given more space to walk, cycle and relax
- Add suitable trees, shrubs and hedges
- Create a town where people will want to come and will be safe
- Very little traffic needs go through the town centre – parking in the centre is largely unnecessary
- Pavements should be widened and more room given over to outdoor seating and cafes
- Dedicated cycle lanes should connect key routes east-west and south-north
- These plans should be part of an holistic town centre and transport policy based on GLP principles

MOOREND LANE – safe road crossing

Issue

- current crossing of Tythrop Way by Cromwell Ave is dangerous
- Footpath leads across busy main road with junction and poor sight lines

Approach

- **Use existing light-controlled crossing to skateboard park**
- **Open gate to access TTC field and footpath by sewage works to Moorend Lane**
- **Enhance safe access to Ham Wood and walks to Haddenham**
- **Could lead to development of ‘green halo’ around Ham Wood**
- **Immediately possible and low cost (add tree/hedge planting in field?)**

Issues

- Need to liaise with Thames Water (but path runs round their site anyway)
- Future of reclamation/ commercial recycling plan uncertain

OLD CRENDON ROAD CROSSING

The problem

- Unrestricted speed A418 by-pass has no pedestrian crossing at all
- Foot and bike access to Long Crendon or countryside very unsafe
- Plans to build original crossing overlooked
- Aylesbury Rd roundabout unsafe on foot or by bike

The benefits

- **The Old Crendon Road is a much-needed route for walkers and cyclists – now cut off**
- **Bridge over River only public access to Thame but route limited**
- **During lockdown great numbers could cross safely – real demand**
- **Provide (only immediate) access to Thame Valley Walk and Bernwood Jubilee Way**

What is needed

- Bridge ideal – underpass liable to flooding – central reservation minimum or Pelican crossing
- Speed limits on this section which is used as race track
- Support from OCC – this should have been installed originally!

BIODIVERSE GREEN SPACES

Issue and approach

The GLP recognises the harsh decline in ecosystems and biodiversity

- These are essential for crops as well as plants, animals, birds and insects
- Constant grass mowing adds to CO2 and damages biodiversity

Even small meadows, like trees, hedges and shrubs, absorb CO2

- **We should adopt new strategies to give nature a helping hand**
- **Encourage more meadow features and wild flowers**
- **Open spaces should have cut pathways and sight lines for traffic safety**
- **Vibrant green spaces enhance mental health**

Ongoing

- Open spaces still need management – but on a sustainable basis
- Examples: grass verges, Lenthall Green (Lea Park), Greyhound Lane (Churchill)
- Key verges to aid walking – e.g. Thame Park Road approach to Thame Park
- Encouragement of resident groups to contribute on new estate spaces

CLEAN AIR IN THAME (1)

The issue - Thame's air is polluted – and getting worse

- Cars and car use increasing all the time
- petrol = CO₂; diesel = particulates (need masks!)
- Most polluted areas are the most used – e.g. High Street

Pollution damages health, especially young, old and unwell

- **School gates pollution damages health of children**
- **Shops next to constant vehicle movements a health hazard**

The Approach - A radical new way of thinking how to cut back vehicle emissions

- Fewer and cleaner vehicles
- Carbon capture, cleaner energy and energy management
- Increased awareness of issues and options

Thame Clean Air Week – ‘no idling’ campaign, pollution awareness, walking and cycling options, EVs etc

CLEAN AIR IN THAME (2)

- a multi-layered approach

Private vehicles

- Need dramatically to reduce traffic through centre – it's rarely necessary
- Reduce speeds to improve safety and reduce pollution
- A new approach to parking

Publicly available transport

- Plan a holistic low-cost transport support network into and around town
- Cover less mobile as well as viable alternatives to private car use
- Look at full range of options, costs and benefits

Green energy

- Electric vehicles powered by renewable energy
- Use of sustainable energy sources

More carbon capture

- More trees, shrubs and hedges

CLEAN ENERGY FOR THAME

A 'community-funded sustainable energy supply' for Thame

- locally generated sustainable energy (e.g. solar arrays) available for Thame - similar schemes already operating
- good support networks (e.g. Low Carbon Hub)
- community support from businesses and individuals for sites and shareholdings

Use our roofs!

- Ideal for solar power capture
- Businesses and public buildings with large roofs can achieve rapid payback
- Domestic schemes can benefit from economies of scale

Heating systems – new sources and decreased consumption

- Ground and air source heating
- Replacing gas boilers – green electricity or hydrogen?
- Cavity wall and loft insulation – many grants and offers available.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES FOR THAME

- **EVs are not THE answer but are the major part of AN answer**
 - Have issues on materials and transport but no exhaust fumes
 - Peaceful – EVs are quiet (even if sometimes too quiet!)
 - ‘Pure’ and hybrid – only green if used in electric mode
- Plug-ins – at home, on street or car parks – spaces and cables
 - Fast and ultra-fast chargers – different makes
 - Discussions already taking place + great options for local employers
- Major increase in EV take up in 2020!
 - Tax breaks (incl. P11D benefits)
 - Thame liable to miss out if doesn't provide charging facilities
- EV car clubs – treble benefit:
 - a) green
 - b) no capex
 - c) reduced parking!

THAME GREEN LIVING PLAN – what next?

These project ideas are derived from the 2020 Thame Green Living Plan now before councillors for approval

As requested by some councillors these projects give examples of how the GLP principles might operate in practice.

The GLP is a plan unique to Thame, but it is not perfect, finite or fixed and will evolve over its lifetime.

We seek councillors' enthusiastic support for the plan in its present form and to work actively with us in making Thame a clean, green town and a model of sustainability for 2030!

RSA Thame Group/ Thame Green Living - July 2020