

Campus Cycling News

Autumn 2020

Welcome

With so much positive happening for cycling in the Science Vale, HarBUG thought it would be an ideal opportunity to highlight the progress in a newsletter.

There will be quite a few photos of building works as there are many projects taking shape from various organisations and funding 'pots'.

What's Inside

- Chilton Road -Now Traffic Free.
- New Campus Cycle-Transit.
- HarBUG Signs the Way.
- Cycling from Abingdon.
- Didcot Updates.
- A Tale of Two Counties.
- The Vision for a Science Vale Cycle Network
- Wantage Market Place.
- Cycling in the 'Footsteps' of King Alfred.
- Emergency Active Travel Funding.
- A34 Bridge to Berkshire.
- Campus Cycle Facilities
- Harwell Campus Bicycle Users Group

New Ginge Brook Bridge in Place

Despite current restrictions, construction work is proceeding on the new 'Icknield Greenway' from the Campus to Wantage.

This exciting new route will be more direct - and less hilly - than the existing Route 544 via Ginge and won't have to rely on permitted access. The new route passes through beautiful countryside and about half-way along features a significant new bridge over the Ginge Brook.

In the last few days the new bridge has been installed – although it's not quite ready for use yet. The remainder of the new route has been roughly surfaced and is now being allowed to settle prior to finishing-off. Official completion is scheduled for late October. The new route is a major development for our area, for the Campus, and for HarBUG.





Chilton Road: Now Traffic Free!

Chilton Road, running from Upton to Hagbourne Hill has long been a fast cut through for motorists on Sustrans route 544. Now traffic has been banned from using this stretch until early 2022 as part of the County Council's emergency active travel bid from Government funds.

This means that apart from a short stretch in Upton village the route from Didcot to the Harwell Campus is now traffic free. Motorists are directed to use the Hagbourne Hill Road which recently received a £6m upgrade as part of wider road improvements including Harwell Link Road (£11m) and Chilton Slip Roads (£11m).

HarBUG has been trying for many years to get improvements to Chilton Road and Sustrans recently identified it as one of their improvement projects. HarBUG met Sustrans in late 2019 to discuss options however the active travel funding has accelerated the changes.

We hope that the closure will become permanent and include safe crossing points of the A417 in Upton and of Hagbourne Hill Road at the end of Chilton Road.

New Cycle-Transit to Campus - 'hop on'

To make the most of the Chilton Road closure HarBUG are running a regular Cycle-Transit to the Campus from Didcot. The Cycle-Transit is to help any Campus personnel to start commuting by cycle. Whatever your fitness level or cycling experience if you would like to try cycling to the Campus then 'hop on'. It is ideal if you are unsure about the route or just prefer to cycle with others.

The Cycle-Transit will run **every Wednesday** starting at **07:50 from Didcot Parkway** and will run past various stops in Didcot where you can join. The route is using Sustrans route 544 via the old railway track and Upton. The route is off-road except for a small section through Upton Village. Just 'hop on' at one of the stops and start enjoying your commute.

For more details and timetable see our webpage at : https://harbug.org.uk/?page_id=5049

HarBUG Signs the Way!

HarBUG have put up signs in Didcot to let people know that Chilton Hill is traffic free. Hopefully this will encourage cyclists to go beyond Upton village.





Cycling from Abingdon

There is a longer term plan to improve cycling to the Campus from Abingdon via Milton Park. There has already been improvements on the route to and through Milton Park from Abingdon:

- Peep-o-Day Lane from Abingdon to Drayton Road has been rebuilt and resurfaced.
- Kelart's Field path is due to be started soon. This connects the back of Milton Park to the edge of Sutton Courtenay.
- New 'pipeline' path open through Milton Park to connect with Backhill Tunnel and A4130.

Later in 2021 a new bridge across the A34 will be built for pedestrians and cyclists. This will be built at Milton Heights and will have a new path connecting it to the A4130 crossing at Backhill Tunnel. This will provide an alternative from Abingdon to cycling on main roads through Drayton or trying to navigate the Milton Interchange. The route will bring you back onto the A4130 at the Packhorse pub. There are ideas to extend the route from the Packhorse pub via the old Newbury Road track to the Campus, although this is at an early stage.

Didcot Updates

Wantage Road Cycle Lanes

Construction has started on hybrid cycle lanes along Wantage Road from Foxhall Road Roundabout through to just past Didcot Hospital. Hybrid cycle lanes run alongside the main carriageway with a small kerb between them and with priority over traffic joining from side streets and driveways (see example photo below).

It is not permitted for motorists to park or wait in the cycle lanes (including disabled parking), we will need to wait and see if this is observed although these are the preferred type of cycle lanes on roads and we want to encourage them to be built.



Didcot Parkway Cycle Hub

Construction has started for a cycle hub at Didcot Parkway rail station. This will expand the cycle parking capacity (all covered) and there will be cycle repair stands.

This is ideal if you want to combine a cycle and rail commute to get to the Campus by leaving your cycle at the station when travelling to and from home.

A Tale of Two Counties

It was the best of road designs, it was the worst of road designs

As Cambridgeshire opens the UK's first Dutch style roundabout (below left) giving priority for cyclists and pedestrians, Oxfordshire has allowed developers in Didcot to stick with 'car first' 20th century road designs, creating obstacles to cycling and walking.

The proposed five arm Valley Park Roundabout (below right) is to be built on the premium cycle route from Didcot to the Harwell Campus to the dismay of cyclists and Harwell villagers. The plans proudly state DMRB compliance (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges) which is the Highways England standard for motorways and trunk roads and completely the wrong standard for a town road. Consequently cyclists and pedestrian provision is very poor especially east-west into Harwell village.

When Valley Park plans were first revealed in 2015, HarBUG suggested that a Dutch style roundabout would be a good option for the junction. This was ignored in favour of the usual designs. Recently Harwell villagers (with HarBUG and Oxfordshire Cycling Network support) have been trying to get the design reviewed. Harwell Campus businesses, who are actively encouraging sustainable commuting, have also expressed their objection to the poor roundabout design.

HarBUG contacted Councillor Liam Walker, cabinet member for highways delivery and operations, about this subject but received a dismissive reply. Councillor Walker also tweeted a negative response about the new Cambridgeshire roundabout (see below) following an incident where a motorist managed to hit one of the roundabout's flashing Belisha beacons. HarBUG is still campaigning for the Valley Park Roundabout to be re-designed to allow use by cyclists, hoping that Oxfordshire and the developers will take a more inclusive and forward thinking approach to the design.

A Dutch style roundabout has a protected cycle lane around the outside of the roundabout. Motorists give way to cyclists and pedestrians when entering and exiting the roundabout, this improves the flow for all users. See the roundabout in action: <https://youtu.be/IHLOXRXYQm0>

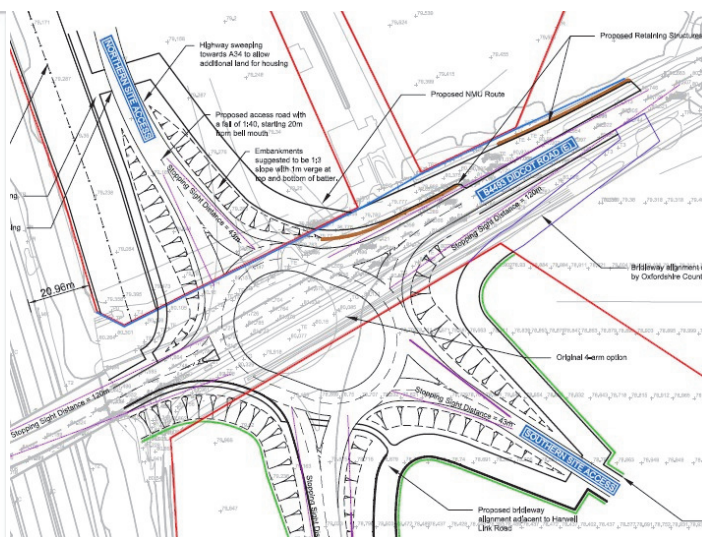


I'm not surprised at all. I suspect more incidents will follow here.



The Telegraph

Britain's first 'Dutch-style' roundabout closes after car ploughs into beacon
Motorists must give way to pedestrians and to cyclists when joining and leaving the Fendon Road roundabout in Cambridge
[telegraph.co.uk](https://www.telegraph.co.uk)



Oxfordshire's Proposed Valley Park Roundabout (above)
Cambridgeshire's New Fendon Road 'Dutch Style' Roundabout (left)

The Vision For a Science Vale Cycle Network

HarBUG supports the County Council's plan to create a Science Vale Cycle Network, connecting towns to major employment areas. Many sections of the network are built or due to be built, however some of the existing sections need to be modified or upgraded.

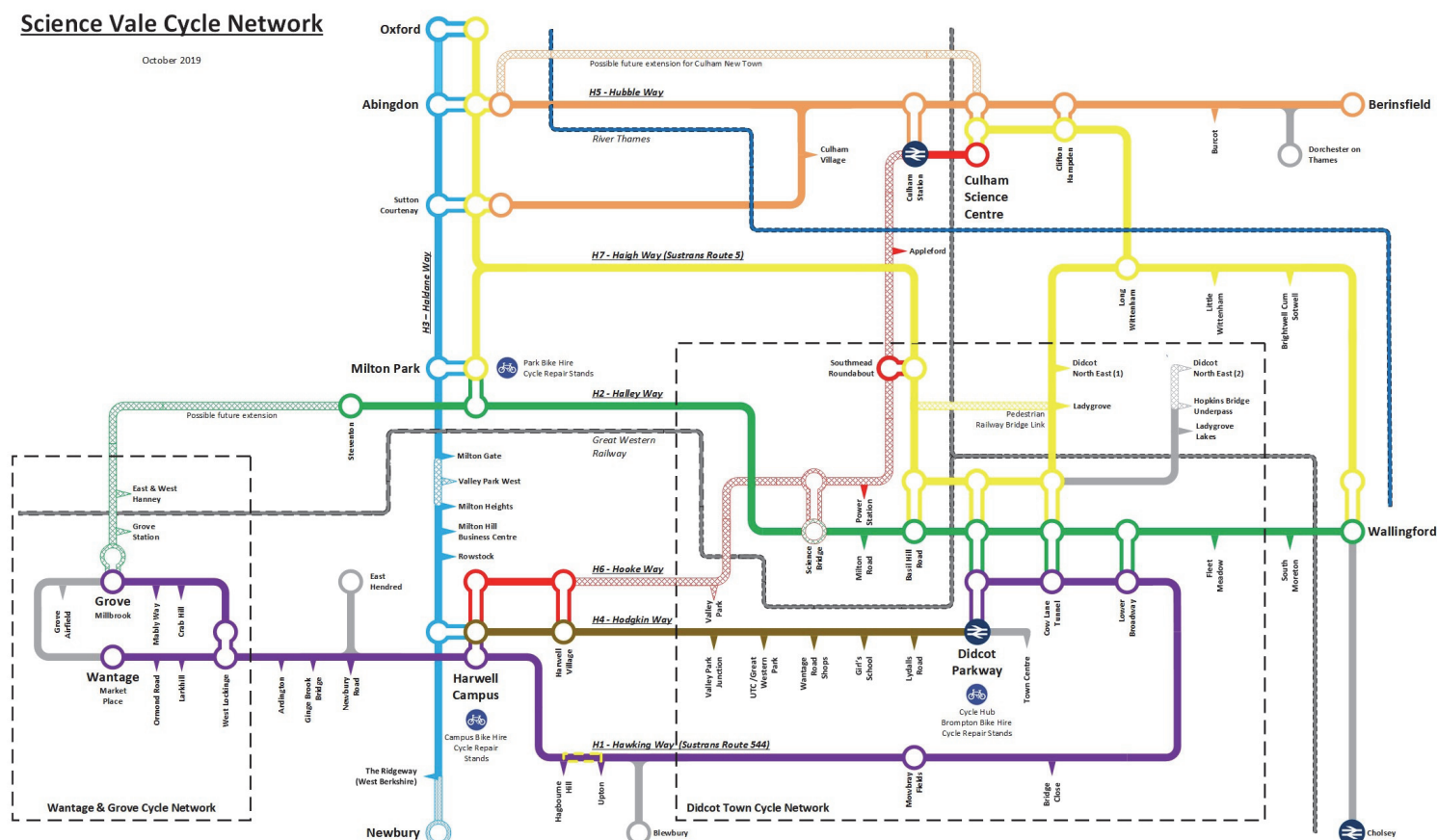
HarBUG has proposed a network of routes named after famous Scientists who have been awarded a degree by Oxford University, coincidentally they all have surnames beginning with the letter H. We have also created a 'tube style' map (below) showing routes and connections in the Science Vale.

We hope that this proposal is adopted and we have a network of easy to follow routes with co-ordinated signage and maps.

More details about the HarBUG route proposals can be found at: https://harbug.org.uk/?page_id=78 from this page you can also link through to the County Council's Science Vale Cycle Network site.

Science Vale Cycle Network

October 2019





Wantage Market Place

Visit the Wantage Town Council website to see and comment on the proposals for extending pedestrianisation of the Market Place. Comments to be in before the end of October, please. Naturally HarBUG and Cycling UK support any measures which help people to walk and cycle. We think the Market Place proposals are a good step forward, but we'd like to see much more being done to reduce levels of through-traffic in the town centre. Please support our views if you can.

The website and survey can be found here:
<https://wantagecouncil.gov.uk/covid-19-safer-public-spaces-market-place-pedestrianisation-survey/>

HarBUG and Cycling UK have also been engaging with the local councils on some issues relating to new development. For example, new roads and building accesses pose a threat to the main cycle path between Wantage and Grove alongside the A338.

Cycling in the 'footsteps' of King Alfred

Cycling UK have created a 350km looped cycling route in historic Wessex. The route passes right by the Campus as part of its Ridgeway section. It connects with several other long distance paths, including the Thames path at Goring and Streatley.

The route passes through Reading, Winchester and Salisbury taking in Stonehenge, Avebury stone circles and Iron Age forts. Not forgetting that King Alfred was a local lad, born in Wantage.

More details can be found on Cycling UK's route page: <https://www.cyclinguk.org/king-alfreds-way>



Emergency Active Travel Funding

The Government has announced funding for a active travel schemes to help with the return to normal after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Tranche 1 funds were available for temporary schemes with a particular focus on road closures, widened footways, pop up cycle lanes, temporary cycle parking and social distancing signage. Oxfordshire failed to get allocated the amount they bid for, mainly because they bid for schemes that the Government clearly stated they would not pay for e.g. vegetation clearance. However the County Council have committed to fund those schemes that did not meet the tranche 1 criteria.

The Chilton Hill closure to traffic was part of the tranche 1 funding schemes.

Tranche 2 funding is for more permanent active travel schemes. HarBUG has forwarded ideas for tranche 2 projects in Didcot, Wantage and Grove. Schemes in Didcot include improving cycle access / routes to St. Birinus School and Didcot Girl's School. In addition a new crossing of Hagbourne Road and new path along Bridge Close to upgrade Sustrans route 544 through the town. Wantage schemes include the Market Place pedestrianisation.

Despite the HarBUG input, the County Council's tranche 2 bid does not include any schemes in South Oxfordshire or the Vale of White Horse. The County Council did re-state their commitment to the Science Vale Cycle Network.



A34 Bridge to Berkshire

If you are familiar with the area, you will know that cycling south from the Campus is not an easy task. There are no road links south in the immediate area apart from the A34, which of course nobody wants to cycle on.

HarBUG has, for many years, campaigned for a shared use / cycle path to be built in-between the Chilton and West Ilsley Junctions on the A34 to create a safe cycle route or bridge to Berkshire.

Recently Highways England were awarded money by UK Government to improve their network of motorways and trunk routes for cyclists and the bridge to Berkshire was one of the projects selected.

HarBUG worked with the designers looking at various routes and the requirements.

The latest news we have received from Highways England is that they are legal issues that need to be resolved before they can continue with the scheme.

Campus Cycle Facilities



Cycle Repair Stands

If you find the need to make a quick repair to your cycle there are three cycle repair stands on the Campus with inbuilt pump and tools.

The stands are located on Fermi Avenue, Becquerel Avenue and the Pavilion on Thomson Avenue.

For more information on the location and how to use the cycle repair stands see our web page: https://harbug.org.uk/?page_id=4100



Campus Cycle Hire

The Campus now has hire bikes available to zip around the Campus. Hiring a cycle is free for Campus employees. All you need to do is download the Donkey Republic app on your phone using your work email address and your off.

For more information on where you can pick up a hire bike and how the system works see our web page: https://harbug.org.uk/?page_id=4537

Harwell Campus Bicycle Users Group

HarBUG are a group of cyclists who work on the Harwell Campus and campaign for better cycle facilities on the Campus and better routes to the Campus from local towns and villages. We are independent from the Harwell Campus management. We campaign to improve cycling within the Science Vale area and to make cycling a safe, convenient and quick transport choice for the fast growing towns of Didcot, Wantage and Grove. HarBUG is a member of the Oxfordshire Cycling Network.

If you work on the Campus you can join HarBUG for free but if you would like to help with our campaigning please donate to HarBUG. For more information on how to join and donate to HarBUG see our web page: https://harbug.org.uk/?page_id=659

