



Street Naming and Numbering: Options on renaming Slave Hill, Haddenham

Author: Jacqueline Williams & Keith Shearman

Date: 1st September 2020

Table of Contents

Street Naming and Numbering: Options on renaming Slave Hill, Haddenham.....	1
The Street Naming and Numbering Function.....	3
Background	3
Policy and Law.....	4
Consultation Outcome.....	5
Equality Impact Assessment	6
Supplementary Information	7
Options	7
Recommendation	8
Appendix A – Information received from Haddenham Parish Council	10
Appendix B – Timeline of events prior to consultation	12
Appendix C: Draft Equality Impact Screening and Full Assessment	13

The Street Naming and Numbering Function

Street Naming and Numbering (SN&N) is the business area that assigns official names to properties and streets. SN&N has a direct link to the Local Land & Property Gazetteer (LLPG) which holds details of all properties in Buckinghamshire. The 2 functions use the same module of the software application Uniform and Buckinghamshire Council has already introduced one instance of Uniform for use across its entire area for these two functions. SN&N attracts an income forecasted to be £90k for 2020/21. The work is commonly very straightforward and comprises of naming new streets and adding names to houses in collaboration with residents, Parish Councils, developers and Royal Mail.

It is extremely rare that a street would be renamed because of a problem with the street name and certainly has not happened since 2003. Any renaming is normally needed because of development e.g. a bypass splitting an existing street causing each section to be renamed Example Road North and Example Road South.

SN&N is a former District Authority function and is delegated to the Corporate Director for Planning although the staff performing the day to day work sit across several business areas. Staff in the Aylesbury Vale area sit within System Administration (ICT), for the Wycombe area they sit within Building Control (Planning) and for Chiltern and South Bucks area they sit within Estates (Property & Assets). Officers perform the SN&N function as part of their role and there is no full time SN&N officer or manager post within Buckinghamshire Council.

Officers should consider whether to exercise delegated powers and can instead refer to the appropriate Council Body to decide.

Background

During the week beginning 8 June 2020, a resident of Haddenham (but not of the street concerned) contacted SN&N at Aylesbury Vale to enquire about changing the street name of Slave Hill, Haddenham as a result of the national and international spotlight on buildings, statues etc that had a perceived historical link or association to the slave trade.

SN&N's records do not reach back past the early 2000s and Haddenham Parish Council was contacted for background information around historic street names in their parish. The Parish Clerk advised that the street was named after allotments that were previously present on part of the site [Appendix A]. These allotments were nicknamed Slave Hill as the ground was hard to cultivate, causing one to 'slave away' to work the earth.

The street was therefore historically named by local people due to a specific local connection. While there is no association with the slave trade, without local knowledge it may be that a link to slavery could be inferred. It should be noted that Slave Hill is the only street in the country containing the word 'slave'. It is understood that since it being named there has been no other challenge to date.

Policy and Law

On 10 March 2020 the Council adopted a Street Naming and Numbering Policy. As well as new street names, this deals with the renaming of existing streets.

Paragraph 1.2 of the Policy states that the Council “uses Sections 17,18 & 19 of the Public Health Act 1925 for the purposes of naming streets and for the purpose of numbering properties.”

The Policy also requires that street names are not racist and do not contravene the Council’s equal opportunities policies. It encourages the use of historic names, themes or references when deciding on street names.

Renaming of streets is carried out under s.18(1) of the 1925 Act and is extracted below:

18 Alteration of name of street.

- (1) The urban authority by order may alter the name of any street, or part of a street, or may assign a name to any street, or part of a street, to which a name has not been given.*

The Act does not set out any legislative criteria or threshold required in order to rename or alter a street name. The Council’s Policy does however require that two-thirds of the Council Tax or Non-Domestic Rates payers must be in favour of the proposed change to proceed. This criterion is considered to be a reasonable requirement as it is the required threshold for an alternative legislative procedure¹ not adopted by the Council. The relevant paragraph from the Council Policy is:

3.7 The changing of a street name or sequence of property numbering shall be avoided, unless there is specific and sufficient reason to do so. This may come in the form of a new development in the street, or a request from the emergency services. The council will pursue alternative solutions and only change the name or numbering as a last resort. In the event that the street name or numbering needs to be changed the following steps shall be taken:

- (i) Consultation takes place with all affected rate-payers and the appropriate Ward and Parish Councillors. Two-thirds of the Council Tax or Non- Domestic Rates payers must be in favour of the proposed change to proceed.*
- (ii) A report, with evidence of the rate-payers’ approval, shall be made to the Corporate Director with responsibility for Street Naming and Numbering, seeking their endorsement to instigate the change.*

As the consultation responses indicate (see below) the threshold of two-thirds of the affected ratepayer in favour of the change has not been reached and so a strict interpretation of the Policy suggests that the proposed change should not proceed. However, it was considered that given the national focus and the name of the street the Council could still exercise its discretion and given consideration to the request to change the street name. Within the terms of the council’s policy the

¹ S21 Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907

available options were therefore presented and reviewed by the designated responsible Corporate and Service Directors, Tony Ellis, Steve Bambrick, Ian Thompson and Sarah Murphy-Brookman. In line with the Council's SN&N Policy the recommendation to consult the rate payers and property owners for the street was agreed. A timeline of events prior to consultation is found in Appendix B.

Consultation Outcome

In accordance with the requirements of the Policy, on 3 July 2020, the 40 households of Slave Hill were consulted and asked if they wanted the street name to be changed. This consultation was in the form of a hand delivered letter.

A new street name of Shipton Furlong – named after a parcel of land next to Slave Hill was proposed by Haddenham Parish Council as the SN&N Policy encourages names with a local connection and the Parish Council are best placed to provide these due to the historical records they hold.

All households were asked to contact SN&N by 19 July 2020 if they objected to the change. Out of the 40 homeowners consulted, the results were as follows:

Agreement to change: 4

Neutral to change: 1

Objections to change: 26

No response: 9

To comply with the council's SN&N Policy, two thirds (66%) of residents must agree if the street name is to be changed. The results were that only one tenth (10%) were in favour and therefore the threshold for change within the Policy was not met.

Some of the comments received from the residents who responded were:

- *As one of the few remaining residents of Slave Hill who has lived here since the houses were built in 1976 it is important that I let you know that I strongly object to the name being changed. The choice of the name Slave Hill was given to part of the development called The Meadows after appropriate consideration and I can testify that it was well chosen. The digging of the stoney, heavy soil in my garden especially when a patch of witchert is encountered merits the name. It does not matter how many times the stones are cleared, more will always appear the next time round. In return for the hard labour, plants thrive and flourish here. The name therefore has a rustic charm all of its own and should be allowed to remain.*
- *Regarding the letter we received about the proposed name change of Slave Hill in Haddenham, we as residents object to any change in the name. We are comfortable that the existing name is not an indication of any BAME or BLM related issues given the history of the original name which relates to the working of the land.*
- *My wife and I both understand that the name "Slave Hill" has a historical background and is not just linked to recent national events, however, we both think that the name Slave Hill*

was inappropriate 40 years ago when the houses were first built and is now quite offensive to a large proportion of the population of the UK. We therefore both strongly believe that the name change should go ahead.

- *I fully support the sentiments behind the Black Lives Matter movement. As someone who was born and brought up in and around Bristol, I agree with the removal of Edward Colston's statue from the centre of Bristol, though would have preferred the City Council to have removed the statue and placed it into a museum years ago. However, the name "Slave Hill" has nothing whatever to do with slavery or exploitation. Its derivation is clear and based on historical records, because of the toil required to work the ground near the former track. There is great danger in erasing any word that some might consider to be offensive through vague association. The danger is that it stops us asking "why" and "how", being inquisitive and wanting to understand.*
- *Obliterating a name will not change history and in this case it is totally unnecessary. We have lived at this address for 35 years and have not received any complaints or objections about it's name.*

The Council's Policy states at 4.4 that *"Street names that may be considered or construed as obscene or racist which would contravene any aspect of the council's equal opportunities policies will not be acceptable."*

As indicated, given the sensitivities it was considered that a further and more detailed consideration of the request to rename should nevertheless take place.

Equality Impact Assessment

The issue with the street name relates to its potential connection to the slave trade and the impact this has on race and ethnicity. As these are protected characteristics an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening [Appendix C] was carried out in relation to renaming Slave Hill on 4th August 2020 and resulted in the need for a full EqIA to ensure the Council had considered whether the potential decisions regarding a name change would have negative or unclear impacts on protected groups.

As a public authority the Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires that all decisions by the Council should be taken with due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality legislation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality Act describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. It states that compliance with the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.

An EqIA is an assessment to help ensure that decision makers are aware of the impacts or potential impacts on any groups of people so that there is due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty within the decision making process.

The full EqIA assessment was carried out on 5th August [Appendix C] and was submitted to Maria Damigos in Legal and to the Equalities Group for feedback upon Maria's recommendation. Whilst the EqIA is a living document and will change over time, the conclusion was that the name Slave Hill could divide people, even if they know the history behind the name as there is an implied connection to slavery which is offensive and racist. The EqIA also contains proposals to tackle this and promote understanding. The proposals are not exhaustive, and it is suggested that the circumstances in this case require further engagement with the community which may result in further suggestions and/or proposals. The Council's Community Engagement Officer has already been liaising with various groups about this matter.

We are currently awaiting sign off of the EqIA by the Equalities Lead and it will then require sign off by the relevant Director, Sarah Murphy-Brookman.

Supplementary Information

The potential change of name for Slave Hill attracted some local media attention following a press release by Haddenham Parish Council. Most of the posts on Facebook about the change have since been deleted however those remaining are referenced in the full EqIA assessment [Appendix C].

A Facebook Group created to originally promote the Haddenham Neighbourhood Plan changed its name to 'Save Slave Hill Haddenham' and a petition was created to keep the original name on Change.Org. Supporters are asked to sign to 'stop the street name change of Slave Hill'. This petition, created on 3 July 2020, had 238 signatures as at 1 September 2020.

An alternative petition is also available on Change.org, created by the organiser of the Black Lives Matter protest in Aylesbury, that has attracted 316 signatures as at 1 September 2020 in support of removing the 'offensive' street sign and renaming the street. People are asked to sign to 'remove and rename a street sign in Haddenham, Buckinghamshire' if they support the petition.

Options

As the decision is around whether the street name should be changed or retained and consultation has taken place, there are now 2 options to be considered.

i) Retain the street name of Slave Hill

This option follows the outcome of the consultation that took place and is in accordance with the Policy threshold. This option would retain the name due to its local connection but it is considered would require explanation to interested parties, potentially at the site and to provide information and detail relating to the origin of the name and reason for decision.

ii) Enforce a change of street name

As the authority with legislative power over Street Naming and Numbering, Buckinghamshire Council could decide to change the street name despite the outcome of the consultation.

As already indicated, a name change can still take place if considered appropriate even though the threshold criteria has not been reached.

Where other Local Authorities have enacted a name change there is a precedent to make a compensation payment to each household to cover any charges incurred to amend their address. Research into how much compensation Local Authorities award in such circumstances showed that up to £200 per household was the recognised figure. This level of compensation would amount to a figure of up to £8,000.00 for this street.

Factors to consider

In coming to a decision there are a number of factors to take into account and balanced.

The equalities position as detailed in the attached EqIA and the Public Sector Equality Duty must be considered and taken into account. Although this decision relates to one street name, the wider implications do need to be taken into account including historic, cultural and racial issues.

All available information indicates the name was based on historical colloquial references relating to the difficulty of working the land and had no links with celebrating or glorifying the slave trade. The name does not give prominence to the slave trade or individuals within the slave trade and in itself, especially taking into account its origins, the name is difficult to construe in a pejorative way. The name therefore has historical reference and importance to the area and there are strong views in favour of keeping the name, not least by residents of the street itself and within the village.

On the other hand the Council must consider equalities issues. The name itself raises issues and questions, not least its origins and history. It could easily be construed negatively and the continuance of this position by the Council can reasonably raise questions of accountabilities and views. There are likewise strong opinions in favour of changing the name from a local and national perspective.

As well as the views on the decision to be made, the impact and effect of any decision on the residents, the village and the wider community as well as nationally should be considered. If there are adverse impacts and effects action to minimise should also be considered as part of the Council's duties.

Recommendation

In line with the Street Naming and Numbering Policy agreed by Buckinghamshire Council on 10 March 2020 and the consultation with local residents, and in consideration of the Equality Impact Assessment, it is recommended that the street name is retained. We further recommend that Buckinghamshire Council work with Haddenham Parish Council to erect a sign on site at Slave Hill to provide some context to the street name and that further consideration is given to implementing

the other actions detailed in the EqIA to work with representatives of affected groups and consider more meaningful ways to move issues forward and minimise any adverse effects

The Street Naming and Numbering Policy is next due for review in January 2021. Although the Policy does deal with equalities issues, it is recommended that a full EqIA assessment and review is nevertheless carried out.

It is also recommended that the review considers the procedure for changing a street name and that Cabinet oversight may wish to be introduced to this process and for any other situations that may involve contentious street names.

Appendix A – Information received from Haddenham Parish Council

Extract from The Haddenham Chronicles No 4 published Autumn 2007:

Slave Hill (1976) The Parish Council minutes for May 1974 say 'it was resolved that the names White Cross Road and Slave Hill should be given to the two main roads on the new development off Station Rd' and the Parish Council list says it was named 'After part of the allotments on this site; nicknamed Slave Hill because it was considered hard to work'.

Alan Rose amplified this brief explanation in the Haddenham Museum Trust's newsletter for February 2005: 'Peter Gulland recalled that he was on the Parish Council at the time of the naming and that the chairman Ian Chalk was responsible for pressing the case. There was some resistance, particularly from the developers who were advertising the estate by the genteel title of "The Meadows". The story is that the Parish Council consulted Roger William Rose's pre-enclosure map but there were no names of fields in that area.

However, there used to be a road [or track] running parallel to Townside through what is now the allotments and the Slave Hill estate. It ran from the end of Greenway through to Station Road (... then called Whitecross Road). It was shown as road number VI on the [commissioners'] 1831 [pre-enclosure] map but it was one of those extinguished at the time of Enclosure in 1830-1834. Haddenham had plenty of stones in the arable fields and these were put onto the roadways, filling in the ruts, and over time the roads became mounded.

When the road was extinguished it left a stony mound and this is still visible today [from the alleyway alongside the allotments' south boundary]. The ground was hard to cultivate, one had to work like a slave, and this area thus became known as Slave Hill.

It is not remembered who on the Parish Council recalled this name but I found an advert in the Bucks Herald in 1896 for the sale of a field in Haddenham of 6 acres 0 roods 38 poles known as Slave Hill [see Lot 3 in the advert]. It was said to be let out as allotments in the occupation of J Will, J Piggott, F Rose, T Bates, J Richmond, and others.

By Messrs. MUMFORD & BOND.

HADDENHAM, BUCKS.

VALUABLE ACCOMMODATION LAND.

MUMFORD & BOND

Are instructed by the Representatives of the late Mrs.
Richmond, deceased,

TO SELL BY AUCTION,

At the SPREAD EAGLE HOTEL, THAME,

On *TUESDAY Next, FEBRUARY 18th, 1896*, at
Three for Four o'Clock in the Afternoon,

The undermentioned

VALUABLE PROPERTIES:—

LOT 1.

ALL that VALUABLE ENCLOSURE of
SOUND OLD PASTURE LAND, containing
1a. 0a. 16r., having a double frontage to the road,
situate in the Back Street, Haddenham, in the occu-
pation of Mr. C. Pigott, as yearly tenant at £5:10
per annum.

LOT 2.

The VALUABLE ACCOMMODATION CLOSE of
OLD PASTURE, known as "CYDER HOUSE
CLOSE," containing 0a. 2a. 10r., situate abutting
on the road leading from Haddenham to Cuddington,
and adjoining the Cyder House Inn.

LOT 3

The Highly Valuable ENCLOSURE of most
PRODUCTIVE ARABLE LAND, known as "Slave
Hill," situate in the Back Street, Haddenham, con-
taining 6a. 0a. 28r., of which 1a. 1a. 9r. is
Freehold, let out in Allotments, in the respective
occupations of J. Will, J. Pigott, F. Ross, T. Bates,
J. Richmond, and others, and producing £23:9:3
per annum.

The Properties are Copyhold in composition of the
Manor of Haddenham, except 2a. 2r. of Lot 3,
which is Copyhold out of composition. Land Tax of
£1:9:11, which will have to be apportioned.

For further Particulars apply to H. F. Galpin,
Esq., Solicitor, 4, George Street, Oxford; or to the
Auctioneers, Brill and Thame.

Appendix B – Timeline of events prior to consultation

See separate document attached.

Appendix C: Draft Equality Impact Screening and Full Assessment

See separate document attached.