

## FROM THE LOOKOUT POST

## EX LIBRIS

## WASTE COLLECTION

I doubt if any reasonable person would argue against the benefits of recycling our waste. Firstly it will make our immediate environment more attractive and secondly contribute, in some small way, to preserving our planet.

Are these criteria fulfilled with the new waste collection scheme starting this October? If it brings significant benefits, it is a price well worth paying. This is true even if it is at the cost of some, if not considerable, inconvenience. Only time will tell, but I for one sincerely hope that it does work and that it does help.

I do have some concerns, however.

My main worry is that in hot weather neither criterion will be fulfilled. In fact there could be just the opposite effect. No matter how well one wraps meat in plastic bags, no matter that it is in a container, it will indeed rot and produce noxious gases which attract flies and other undesirable insects and, of course, rats as well as foxes. In the case of rats it should be noted that the Council, alongside the new collection plan, has announced that it will now charge for their disposal!

Reading can boast some beautiful terraced streets. These houses will now have to accommodate up to three bins, one of which, if left for two weeks, could cause significant health problems at worst and, at best, an aesthetically unpleasant environment. Socially this could have undesirable consequences. The less attractive a neighbourhood, the less care people take of their surroundings, and so the vicious circle of neglect widens. But can anyone come up with an alternative?

Cllr Steve Waite rightly says that we must improve our recycling rates. The landfill site in Reading will be full in two years and such sites give off gases harmful to the environment.

I am sure a lot of thought and planning has gone into the new scheme. At the same time I am sure changes and improvements will be made as it is put into practice. I trust that these will be driven by genuinely environmental concerns, not by financial considerations

## TRANSPORT ISSUES

### ON THE BUSES

As I noted in a previous issue, CADRA was delighted with Reading Buses' decision to run a Sunday service for the No 9. I thought I would put in the timetable here to help readers plan their journeys and encourage them to use it. As those of you who have followed this campaign know, the service is on probation. The Council will run it for a year but if its usage is insufficient they will be compelled by Central Government regulations to stop it.

So here is the timetable for Sundays:

Buses depart St. Andrew's Church at 1020 and every hour until 1720 for Central Reading.

Buses depart St. Mary's Butts (stop CR) for Caversham Heights at 1103 and every hour until 1703. An additional journey departs Friar Street at 1006.

(Source Reading Borough Council website)

Do let you friends know about it and encourage them to use it. 'Use it or lose it'

I have also long argued for a circular public transport route around the Caversham. – Emmer Green area. This would ease car parking in Caversham and sustain the shops in various parts of Caversham. It would also help other business and commercial centres in the area, such as Emmer Green or Donkin Hill. Most important of all, continuing the theme above, it would be encourage the use of public transport and be environmentally friendly.

#### ON YOUR BIKE

Provision of cycling facilities is another issue CADRA is keen to pursue. We would like to see more cycle lanes in Caversham and from Caversham into Reading. The Government wants to encourage a healthier life style for our children and is encouraging them to cycle to school? How much better if they could use safe cycle routes! Whilst on the subject of bikes I asked a local Council officer about 'bike parking'. Caversham is sorely lacking bike racks. The Officer suggested that we should write to our local Councillors. Judging by the number of bikes chained to the railings outside Waitrose, I believe more bike parks, in safe places, are needed. Once again this depends on public demand. So, if this is an issue you feel needs addressing, write to your Councillor and let us, at CADRA, know.

#### CHRISTMAS IN CAVERSHAM

Waitrose, M&S and Costa Coffee! Large multi-national firms are becoming a feature of Caversham. On one hand it is exciting to see that such prestigious

businesses are attracted to our village. On the other I fear that rents will be pushed up and we shall lose even more of our small independent shops. In the last 25 years or so we have lost three greengrocers, a small newsagents, a country shop, an antique business, a large general gift shop, an independent Reading based supermarket, two 'delis', an art shop and a toy shop, to name but a few. We have still got our hardware shop, book/toyshop and no doubt other businesses dear to the readers. However I know that trading at this time is not easy. I do fear that an increase in rental values, as occurred in Woodley, will make trading for the small business uneconomic. I also know that it is attractive to go 'online' or into Reading and pick up 'special offers'. However, if we want to preserve the personal service and genuine concern that independent traders have for their customers, then there is one solution. We must use them, use them regularly and use them even if there is a financial disadvantage.

This month's column started with a debate based on our concern for our environment. The survival of the small shop, part of the quality of our lives in the face of, or alongside, big business, is very much part of this debate. Just as recycling might mean some inconvenience and even extra expense, so too, another part of preserving the social fabric of our way of life might entail similar sacrifices of time and money. The choice is ours, to be made by each one of us. If we want to go down the road of seeing Caversham become just another 'cloned village' of big chain stores, then visit Amazon, find your bargains in the big shops. At the moment we may just be able to preserve Caversham as a village.

It is good for shoppers to have the choice of a Waitrose and an M&S, but if we are to preserve a certain independent quality of life, there has to be a balance. What a

difference it would make if every reader bought at least one significant Christmas present from an independent Caversham shop.

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