



CADRA News

Caversham & District Residents' Association

The Voice of Caversham since 1967



Local Planning

A strong voice in local planning decisions has long been a central concern for CADRA. With changes in central and local planning policy over the past few years, there is a range of opportunities for local people to make an input. But you need to know how!

For some years now, there have been fewer planning applications north of the river but as the recession lifts, we can expect to see more new applications. There is substantial unmet demand for housing and decisions have to be made.

Your interest may be triggered by a yellow notice in your street or a letter on your doormat about an application near you. You may be concerned about proposals in Caversham Centre or the impact on open spaces. Understanding something of the process will help you to respond more effectively.

With the introduction of the Localism Bill, there is now a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Alongside this, there are processes designed to give people more control over the development of their local area.



Neighbourhood Planning should allow communities to help set priorities for development in their area. Consultation by local planning authorities as they draw up Local Plans in line with the National Planning Policy Framework should allow reflection of local views on how the area should develop (<https://www.planningportal.gov.uk/inyourarea/neighbourhood>). Local councils have powers to raise a community infrastructure levy and communities

have a right to receive a proportion of this for local facilities.

Lynette Baker is the Area Planning Manager heading up the team of planning officers handling applications in Caversham and elsewhere. Professor Gavin Parker, Chair of Planning Studies at Reading University, will have just returned from a two year secondment to the Royal Town Planning Institute as Director of Professional Standards and Director of Planning Aid England, a role that also includes responsibility for planning education.

We look forward to welcoming them both and to learning about the principles and practicalities of local planning.

Your friends and neighbours would be very welcome and we hope they will take the opportunity to sign up as members.

Helen Lambert

Annual General Meeting

Thursday 8 May 2014, 7.30pm
Thameside Primary School, Harley Road

Following the brief formal business, there will be a presentation on

Local Planning

by Lynette Baker, Area Planning Officer, RBC,
and Gavin Parker, Professor of Planning Studies,
University of Reading

Transport

Sharing our Streets

A very clear message was received from Caversham people who attended the CADRA/CTA meeting at Thameside School in November – a new ‘vision’ for Caversham village centre is needed. The most popular topics are: pedestrian crossings; street appearance, junctions, 20mph speed limit, raised crossings, speed; traffic reduction and heavy vehicles. Two clear attitudes towards cycling were expressed: poor facilities and illegal use of footways.

CADRA and CTA are drafting a ‘vision’ that will show how connectivity, movement and sense of place can be improved within the ‘village’. This will be supported by a list of measures that could achieve this and a design guide that will ensure a consistency of appearance throughout the centre. We hope that Caversham residents and traders, with Reading Borough Council officers and Elected Members, will be able to produce a list of improvements.

Gosbrook Road/Prospect Street mini-roundabout

Reading Borough Council has developed a scheme to reduce accidents at the Gosbrook Road/Prospect Street mini-roundabout junction and entrance to the Waitrose car park. Many of CADRA’s suggestions to slow traffic, improve conditions for elderly, young and mobility impaired pedestrians and cyclists have been incorporated into the design. The new layout will be a double mini-roundabout with domed islands and better conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.

Road works were originally intended to start during school half term but the Council decided to postpone them due to local flooding problems. Work on the junctions is due to start at Easter and is expected to take about four weeks to complete.

Thames bridges

Reading East MP Rob Wilson organised a public meeting at Highdown School on 6 February to gauge public opinion on the need for a third Reading Bridge. Each member of the panel of Councillors from Reading, Wokingham and Oxfordshire and a representative of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership gave a short address about their views on the possible third bridge. Members of the public were then able to air their views and put questions to the panel. A show of hands gave overwhelming support for a new bridge, with flood-resilient approach roads to relieve traffic congestion on Caversham, Reading, Sonning, Henley and Whitchurch bridges.

On 3 March Rob Wilson together with Henley MP John Howell chaired a summit meeting in Westminster which brought together local authorities whose areas are affected by traffic problems. It appears that long standing differences

of opinion between Oxfordshire and Berkshire remain unresolved. However, Council officers from the various Authorities are to share their traffic data with the others and work together to address the Oxfordshire councils’ concern that a bridge could increase in traffic in their villages.

A follow-up summit meeting in June aims to reach a common view on what is required for a third Reading Bridge. This will be followed by detailed traffic modelling of the projected traffic patterns and development of options for delivering and managing the bridge. Construction of a third bridge could have a positive effect upon the Sharing Our Streets initiative.

Plans for the new pedestrian and cycle bridge were approved in November 2013. Many people had raised concerns about the design of the bridge, particularly the lack of segregation between cyclists and pedestrians but the Council took the view that unsegregated bridges have worked well elsewhere. The bridge is scheduled to open by summer 2015.

The route over Sonning Bridge has now re-opened with temporary traffic lights. Oxfordshire County Council engineers were able to carry out a structural survey of the Playhatch Road on 12 March as flood waters have receded and repairs are underway.

Reading Bridge has suffered deterioration as a result of water leakage through the structure over a period of time. In summer 2013, the Council secured funding for essential works including structural strengthening, re-waterproofing and resurfacing. Programming of the work is complicated by closures elsewhere and we await further information.

Reading Station

Work at Reading Station and the railway through the town remains on target for completion in summer 2015. The emphasis of the work has moved to the new viaduct to the west of the station which will complete the widening of Cow Lane. However, tidying up at the northern interchange has still not been completed.

Full details of the timetables can be viewed at firstgreatwestern.co.uk/About-Us/Rail-improvements/Reading-station-improvements.

Cycle hire

The Reading cycle hire scheme, called ReadyBike, is in the process of being implemented. The 200 pink ReadyBikes will be located at 29 docking stations to encourage more local cycling journeys.

One of the docking stations will be in Church Street, Caversham, near to the Telephone Exchange. When completed, it will be possible to hire bikes via www.readybike.co.uk where real-time information will show how many are available at each location.

Planning

As the Council begins to prepare a new Local Plan for Reading, a list of potential sites is being compiled to meet future needs and to add or review sites that could be identified for other designations, including protection of open space. When the existing Plan was prepared, CADRA worked with other local groups to call for protection of our important open spaces. We have asked for that protection to be carried forward into the new Plan (www.tinyurl.com/nrqd8j8).

Proposals for high wire and adventure golf on Christchurch Meadows are no longer being pursued by the Council but it is still hoped to provide extra café and boat hire facilities. As the meadows dry out, we are thankful that

residents in Lower Caversham largely escaped flooding into their homes, though many came uncomfortably close.

We understand informally that there is to be a public consultation on plans for St Martin's Precinct prior to a formal planning application but are still waiting to hear more.

CADRA and other local organisations are in regular contact with Planning Officers about the worrying condition of the Grade I listed Chazey Barn. The planning background is complex and the Council is working with English Heritage to secure remedial work. The Council has invited comments on a draft Heritage Statement. CADRA would like to see a stronger emphasis on enforcement action.

Mapledurham Pavilion

Fundraising for the refurbishment of the pavilion continues and the next main event is the Summer Fete on 5 July 2014. The daytime entertainment includes sports, shopping, eating and drinking together with a Vintage Car Rally and Dog Show. In the evening there will be a Music Festival. For more information contact info@wadra.org.uk. Gift Aid donations can now be made to Virgin Money Giving. Go to uk.virginmoneygiving.com/giving, then enter 'Mapledurham' under 'Donate to a charity'.

Safer Caversham

Working with the two Caversham Neighbourhood Action Groups, the Neighbourhood Police team is focusing on traffic issues (speeding, parking, cycling etc.), burglary and litter/flytipping. Checks have resulted in warning letters and speed enforcement tickets, and roads have been identified for future speed checks. In Caversham Centre, police have stopped cyclists riding on the pavement and through red traffic light signals, warning that a fixed penalty can be issued.

In February, four local men were arrested in connection with burglaries in the neighbourhood. Leaflet drops on burglary prevention are planned for identified 'hot spots' before summer, when doors and windows are often left unsecured.

Action has been taken on abandoned vehicles and fly tipping. You can report dumped waste to Street Care on 0800 626 540 or to the Police on 101. If you actually witness it being 'fly-tipped', call 999 as this is a crime in progress.

Increasingly, the Neighbourhood Action Groups link with the Traffic Management team on issues such as problem crossings, commuter parking in residential roads and monitoring progress for possible 20mph zones.

Services for older people

Following the success of the new Amersham Road Social club, a club is to be started at the Milestone Centre in Caversham Park Village. There will be a launch party on Thursday 10 April 2014. Call Michelle on 07834 335103 or Cheryl Maxwell on 0118 9470433.

Plans are being developed to provide up to 40 extra care housing units, with shared facilities which could be also be used for day services, on the site of the Arthur Clarke Care Home and Albert Road Day Care Centre.

The Heights Primary School

The new Head Teacher, Karen Edwards, has been working with the team since her appointment in November and takes up the post full time in April. Applications for class teacher positions have been short-listed and first round applications for transfers into Year 1 and 3 have closed. Offers to places in Reception, Year 1 and Year 3 will be sent out on 16 April, although the later years are subject to enough parents wanting to transfer their children. The detailed Education Brief has been approved by the Department of Education, along with the report for the recent consultation. All of this is a huge achievement towards securing more school places for children in Caversham.

The critical decision by the Education Funding Agency on the temporary and permanent location for the school has still to be announced and we are waiting for news on the signing of the Funding Agreement giving final approval by the Secretary of State for the school to open. An open afternoon is planned for Saturday 26 April at Caversham Heights Methodist Church on Highmoor Road. For more information see theheightsprimary.co.uk.

About CADRA

Our aim is to *preserve and enhance the quality of life in Caversham and the surrounding District*; in other words, that Caversham should always be

a great place to live!

We work closely with Reading Councillors and Officers, other local groups, the Police, companies and individuals, always avoiding party political bias.

Together, we can make it better.

We issue two newsletters a year, hold two public meetings, write columns for the Caversham Bridge local newspaper and maintain a website (www.cadra.org.uk) with a wide range of information on local issues and quick links to relevant detail on large official websites.

We are always keen to hear local news and views from CADRA members.

Contacting CADRA

Please write to the Secretary or better still, email us at info@cadra.org.uk

Membership

Membership of CADRA is just £3 per year for the household. Leaflets are available in Caversham Library and Wordplay in Prospect Street or from the Membership Secretary, Tel: 947 6984.

The Committee

Chairman: Helen Lambert, 5 Derby Road, RG4 5HE, Tel: 947 3165

Treasurer: Stewart Bolton, 11 Graveney Drive, RG4 7EG, Tel: 948 2687

Secretary: Linda Watsham, 159 Kidmore Road, RG4 7NJ, Tel: 947 8744

Membership: Jacque Tomson, 121 Upper Woodcote Rd, RG4 7LB, Tel: 9476984

Vice Chairman, Licensing & NAGs: Mike Gilbert, 4 Notley Place, RG4 8PW, Tel: 947 4437

Website: Lloyd Pople, Upper Woodcote Road (co-opted)

Transport: Paul Matthews, Albert Road

Planning: Mo Prins, Haldane Road, and Liz Killick, Upper Woodcote Road (co-opted)

Safer Caversham: John Roach, St. Peter's Avenue

COMMITTEE SUPPORT

Transport and footpaths: John Lee, Hemdean Road

Informal Links: Jo Munday, South View Avenue

General support: John Boucher, Highmoor Road and Les James, Wincroft Road

Newsletter Editor: Helen Lambert

Design: Anke Ueberberg

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The opinions expressed are those of the contributors.

The Annual General Meeting

Thursday 8 May 2014, 7.30pm
Thameside Primary School, Harley Road

Note: Only paid-up members of CADRA may vote at the AGM

AGENDA

1. Minutes of 2013 AGM
2. Chairman's Annual Report
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Election of Committee
5. Any Other Business (items advised in advance only)

COMMITTEE:

RETIRING AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Under the rules of the Constitution, Stewart Bolton and Mo Prins will retire at the AGM. They have each indicated their willingness to stand for re-election. Sadly, Ann Goodridge is unable to continue on the committee. Other co-opted members would be welcome. Please do get in touch.

NOMINATIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE

Any member may be nominated for election to the Committee at the AGM, subject to the conditions in the Constitution. The Nominee must have a proposer and seconder who are both members. Please use the form below and return the completed nomination to the Secretary no less than 14 days before the AGM.

NOMINEE: I am willing to serve on the Committee of CADRA, carry out duties as agreed and act at all times in the best interests of CADRA and its members.

Name

Signature & Date

Proposed by

Seconded by