

Caversham and District Residents' Association Annual General Meeting Tuesday 12 May 2015

Chairman's report 2014/2015

Transport

The 'Sharing our Streets' project, run jointly with the Caversham Traders Association, has continued to move forward. The principles are being examined by Transport Officers with a view to a consultation on a scheme for Caversham Centre, funded by the Transport contribution from the St Martin's Centre scheme. This is an important step towards gaining funding for a comprehensive remodelling of the centre of Caversham Village. We are very grateful to Paul Matthews for his professional input.

CADRA continues to monitor various transport projects in the area including: the new pedestrian and cycle bridgeworks; the repair of Reading Bridge; the safety of Highmoor Road/Albert Road junction; public transport provision and cycling facilities. CADRA continues to be represented at the Borough's Transport Users Forum/Traffic Management Sub-Committee by Paul Matthews with support from John Lee.

Caversham Centre

After a long period of discussion and amendments, plans for St Martin's Centre were approved in February 2015 and we are waiting for news of a start date. CADRA engaged with with Hermes and with Planning Officers over a long period and followed each stage with care. We secured important changes to materials and further tree planting in Church Street to help compensate for the loss of the horse chestnuts. We also obtained some design changes to the flats in the vicinity of the Holm Oak. Our concern was to seize the opportunity to regenerate the tired precinct and to achieve a design which fits well in the historic heart of Caversham. While we still have some concerns about the final plans, we believe it is a much more appropriate design than the generic high street style first proposed.

We continue to work closely with Caversham Traders Association which has been very successful with the Caversham Rewards scheme and other local improvements.

http://www.choosecaversham.co.uk/caversham_rewards.php

Planning

Work on the old Arthur Legge centre is in progress and work on Caversham House, Church Road is nearing completion. We objected, along with many others, to the planning application for 'Swan Heights' – three tall towers on the Coopers site. This application was refused by the Planning Committee. Pre-application details are available on the CADRA website for the Extra Care apartments on Albert Road.

We are grateful to Mo Prins who continues to monitor local applications and post a monthly summary on the website, to Liz Killick for the expertise she brings to analysis of applications and policies and to Kim Pearce who has recently joined the committee, bringing valuable architectural expertise.

Reading Council's work to develop a new Local Plan from the previous Local Development Framework has moved slowly in the last year. In relation to work on the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, we were relieved to learn that the option of building 6,000 homes on the outskirts of Oxford and Reading has been rejected. We are following details of housing plans for the villages near the border which will inevitably impact on Caversham and Reading.

Neighbourhood Action Groups

The two Neighbourhood Action Groups, covering upper and lower Caversham, have met regularly over the past year. As part of a wider review, there will now be a single group for everywhere north of the river. The group will meet every six weeks and will rotate across different areas. We are very grateful to Mike Gilbert, former CADRA Vice-Chair and Chair the Upper Caversham group. Mike moved away from Reading before Christmas. John Roach has been a member of the committee for over ten years and has been involved in so many ways – not least with Safer

Caversham. He has decided the time is right to stand back but will continue to be involved through the Committee Support team. We are keen to continue the important link between CADRA and the revised NAG and Michael Howes has agreed to join the Committee Support team.

Every two years, the NAGs undertake local surveys. The next survey is now due. The results will help to inform our RBC Neighbourhood Working and find out what issues residents consider to be their highest priority at present.

Licensing

New applications in Caversham are infrequent. We continue to attend meetings with the Reading Festival organisers.

Schools

The decision on a permanent site the Heights Primary School has been divisive for Caversham. CADRA made clear at an early stage that it would remain neutral on individual sites. We remained in contact with all the groups and organisations involved and contributed to the information pack. The public consultation closed 1 May. Results will be analysed and forwarded to the Education Funding Agency who will decide which site to take forward for detailed planning and any other processes required. The school will continue in the temporary facilities off Gosbrook Road and additional funding should ensure more space for the children before the next intake in September.

Mapledurham Pavilion

Stewart Bolton, CADRA Treasurer continues to attend the Management Committee. Fundraising continues with a metal recycling event held in March and a fete planned for 25 July 2015. Donations, including Gift Aid, can be made at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/giving/make-a-donation/>

Caversham Bridge Newspaper

Members of the committee write the column 'From the Lookout Post' which appears on alternate months. Copies are on sale in WordPlay or you can subscribe for just £3.00 p.a. Call 947 1370 or email cemoloney@yahoo.co.uk

CADRA website

We are grateful to Lloyd Pople for the management of the website and thank Edge Impact for their help and support. On the Home page, you will see a link to the new Facebook page with up to date news and links. Anyone can access this page.

Membership

Organisations like CADRA need a substantial membership to remain strong so new members are always welcome. Subscriptions can now be paid on line by Paypal or credit card. This means new members can complete everything necessary via the website. Renewal can also be paid on line as well by bank transfer or standing order though we still accept cheques - where possible to cover three years membership. Membership forms are available from the library, WordPlay or Delicious. We are very grateful to Jacque Tomson for looking after membership arrangements as well as sending and receiving emails on behalf of CADRA.

Over 80% of our members now use email and this is the main method of communication with members. Members not on email receive copies of newsletters by post. We hope you find the occasional emails helpful. Our aim is to pass on useful information without overloading you. **Please let us know if you change your email address and look out for CADRA messages going to Spam.**

CADRA committee

I am extremely grateful to all members of the committee and the committee support team for all their work through the year. Every organisation needs new blood and we would be delighted to hear from anyone who could offer support in some way so that Caversham can always be *a Great Place to Live!*