CAVERSHAM & DISTRICT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT
Mrs M Casey

CHAIRMAN
Mr. I. K. Brown

SECRETARY
Mr. T Chadwick

TREASURER
Mr. S Bolton

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2000

The 32nd. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held on MONDAY APRIL 10th, 2000 at the Baptist Free Church Centre at 8.00pm.

AGENDA

- Minutes of the last AGM and matters arising
- Annual Reports
- Statement of Accounts
- Election of Committee
- Any Other Business

After the business of the AGM Ms. Tina Gower will speak on Environmental matters, to be followed by a short session for questions on this subject.

ANNUAL REPORT

Throughout the past twelve months your Committee has met monthly to consider a wide variety of topics. Planning applications for development of land adjacent to existing property, or infill between or behind properties have been considered and in some cases objected to on grounds of overcrowding, increase in traffic or unsuitability. Objections were also raised to the increasing practice of developers felling trees on land prior to submission of building plans, thereby frustrating the placement of Tree Preservation Orders, which in turn could affect planning permission.

We corresponded with St. Martins Precinct Management regarding replacement of the Community Notice Board at the pavement edge by the new Board within the Precinct.

An application for a Millennium Award was submitted for help with the refurbishment of the large clock which used to stand above Nash's Jewellers in Bridge Street. This had the support of the Mayor (Cllr. Waite) and the Caversham Trader's Association but the application was not successful. An alternative Millennium Project is under consideration while the clock replacement is still outstanding.

The Association was closely involved in the consultation regarding the refurbishment of Church Street including the removal of the Hemdean Road Traffic Lights and other alterations to the area. Disappointment has been expressed by many people in that the original plans have not been followed, nor have the trees, which were to enhance the scheme, been planted, although recent enquiries reveal that the latest uprooting of footpaths is connected with this omission. Associated alterations to the area immediately around the Library have yet to be concluded while a bus shelter has been erected away from the footpath edge and open to all weathers. The railings along the disabled access are still only temporary. We await developments.

We are represented on the Safer Reading Campaign Caversham Forum and through this link we strongly support the both the Neighbourhood Watch and the Caversham Trader's 'Shop Watch' schemes. In regard to the latter, it was understood that as part of the Church Street refurbishment, provision of ducting to facilitate the installation of CCTV cameras would be made. However, it appears that only half of the ducting was installed and we await the Council's response to our concern over this matter.

Amersham Road residents were supported in their campaign for an improvement to the existing bus service but up to now, we have been unable to persuade bus operators to divert an occasional bus along the full length of Henley Road in order to provide a service to the new residents in Henley Rise.

We have pressed strongly for the restoration of the recycling facilities which were removed from the rear of the Waitrose/St. Martins car park when the building work on the new flats began. This is an ongoing situation, delayed by the fact that the land which accommodates the car park is now under new ownership.

We registered strong protests when the proposal to impose toll charges on traffic entering Reading came to our notice. This plan was subsequently withdrawn. However, we gave full support to the plan to provide comprehensive facilities to the rear of the children's paddling pool in Christchurch Meadow a scheme which includes a new toilet block and a small catering facility.

When initially presented to us, we considered the (now controversial) Balmore Walk/Sustrans proposals favourably, but we were alarmed when later plans involved some horrendous scars across the green sward. Residents in the locality felt that the broad paths would be both unsightly and intrusive. A more acceptable cycle path has now been completed, but we are still not clear how Sustrans will connect each end of this pathway into their national network.

Last September, the first of the new 'Scrutiny Panels' into Local Government was formed. We have a representative on this Panel which is concerned with Town Cleanliness. Other members of the Committee have attended a meeting to discuss improvements to Caversham Bridge.

Your Association organised an 'Information Meeting' last October, when a member of the Chief Executive's Department of Reading Borough Council explained the changes resulting from the formation of the Unitary Authority.

Despite objections by the local residents, which we supported, planning permission was given to the installation of floodlights (subject to the provision of screening trees) at the Mapledurham Tennis Club. We have also consistently opposed the nuisance associated with the Nue Valbonne night club and we hope that the proposal to change the premises into a restaurant will improve the situation.

We cannot stand in the way of progress, but this often makes unwelcome demands on pleasant areas such as ours. It is through a large general membership that we can have a significant voice in local matters and, although we have over 600 households in our membership, new members are always welcome. We are grateful to all those who help us in delivering Newsletters and we would much appreciate any offers from new volunteers to help us in this work.

We look forward to seeing you at the AGM.