CAVERSHAM AND DISTRICT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2003/04

Although I have recently ceased to be your Chairman, I have to account to you for my stewardship of that office for the 10 months of the year that I served.

Readers of our Newsletter, CADRA News will know that during that period, our web site was finally launched and can be found at www.cadra.org.uk

At the same time, we began a recruitment drive which produced over 50 new member households in its first 9 months. This project will continue and I am grateful to my committee colleague, Tom Chadwick, for taking over the organisation of this campaign and to CADRA member Ruth Perkins for her invaluable contribution. Any help members can give will be most welcome.

Throughout the past year, CADRA has continued to work closely with those professional agencies whose activities affect the life of our community. We were pleased to facilitate the Caversham end of a wider public consultation relating to the future of Reading's Kennet and Thames riversides. In particular, we have invited Reading Borough Council to involve us in consultation on any plans that may emerge from its review of proposals for the development of Caversham Lock island and the area on the south bank of the river facing the island. Also, we expect to be involved in constructive discussions with the Council should the possibility of re-locating the Hexagon on Hills Meadow become a reality.

Away from the riverside, CADRA committee was represented at the first meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership Forum. This body has been established to provide a sounding board for those authorities charged with the implementation of a strategy for making Reading a better place in which to live and work. The strategy is set out in a document called 'Moving Forward in Partnership' and is the subject of a consultation process that ended in February.

The committee has continued to be represented on the Safer Caversham Forum, the Transport Users Forum and the Woodlands and Waterways Forum.

On the Town Planning front, your committee submitted comments to the Planning Department of Reading Borough Council on several applications. From the standpoint of their effect on our community as a whole, perhaps the most important of these proposals were those for more than 90 homes behind the Lower Henley Road, 54 flats behind Queens Road, flats at the corner of Richmond Road, a nursing home at Chazey Court Farm and 172 dwellings on a redundant SEC site in Amersham Road. As I leave CADRA, all of these except the Richmond Road flats and, possibly, the 54 flats behind Queens Road are still awaiting resolution.

Before leaving the subject of planning, it must be recorded that CADRA, along with local councillors, local residents and traders made strong representations to the Council's Licensing Committee against the granting of the licence needed for the opening of a night-club at 2, Bridge Street. We applauded the Licensing Committee's decision to reject the application and, therefore, shared in the later disappointment when the magistrates overturned the Licensing Committee's decision on appeal.

My leaving means that the role of the Association's Planning Officer is currently vacant, but committee member Jennifer Millest has very kindly agreed to hold a watching brief until a replacement comes forward. My thanks go to Jennifer and to CADRA member Lin Godfrey for obtaining details from the Civic Centre on my behalf.

I must also record, posthumously, my gratitude for the support of the late Mrs. Rosemary Chapman OBE who died last October. She was a stalwart of this Association and for many years, a committee member and later secretary. Following her retirement from the committee she had, to use her own words, 'manned our border observation post'. Rosemary

frequently contacted me about planning applications submitted to South Oxfordshire that she thought would be of interest to CADRA. She was invariably right. I have missed her cheery greetings and the benefit of her wide experience.

Mapledurham Pavilion has exercised the minds of committee members again recently. Following a selective consultation, the Council and the Playing Fields Management Committee declared that the building would be demolished and a new one built. This work would be financed from the sale of a parcel of land for, house building. To achieve this, the Council and the Management Committee, as trustees, need the permission of the Charity Commissioners and of Reading Borough Council as the Planning Authority. Once applications are submitted to those authorities, a short period of public consultation will be a statutory requirement. CADRA, working with the Warren and District Residents Association, is determined to do everything it can to ensure that all residents who wish to make representations do not miss the opportunity to do so.

Your committee has continued to work closely with the other local residents groups throughout the year. We have forged particularly strong links with our colleagues in Emmer Green, Lower Caversham, Amersham Road and Caversham Globe. With colleagues from the last three groups, we organised a very effective public meeting on the subject of the proposed new development by Wimpey's in Amersham Road.

As usual, it has been a busy and exciting year. It is with very real regret that I have vacated the chairmanship of CADRA after such a year and such a short time in this office. With the inevitable continuation of population growth in our area, there is an ever-increasing need for strong residents' associations and groups to work together and in partnership with councillors, schools, the police and other agencies to ensure that the growth is managed for the benefit of the entire community. For CADRA's effectiveness and role in the future, I have no worries. Your association is fortunate to have a very experienced and strong committee and I am grateful for the support and encouragement they have given me since I first joined the committee.

Finally, I wish my successor, Tom Chadwick, and CADRA continuing success.

Derek Bartlett.