

Oct 2006

From the Lookout Post

Reading Festival

The previous issue of this column asked for the residents north of the river to act as a mass team of inspectors for the festival. What was your verdict? Part of the licensing agreement was that a leaflet would be distributed to affected areas with details of the hotline and who to contact with concerns. Did you receive a leaflet? What was your experience of the festival? About 80 complaints were received during the festival. Most were about noise levels and particularly noise from the campsite between midnight and 3 - 4 am. The majority were from Caversham Heights with a number from Caversham Park Village. Please do register your comments or concerns. They are important to allow a proper review to take place and to seek any changes for future festivals. You can contact the Licensing section at the Civic Centre, the Warren and District Residents Association or the Caversham and District Residents Association.

Number 9 Sunday Bus Service - It is good to see the new Sunday Number 9 Bus service being well utilised so soon. As noted in last months Ex Libris, this is a trial operation and it is in all our interests to make certain that the level of usage makes it a viable operation for Reading Buses. Use it or lose it!

Mapledurham Playing Fields Consultation

Consultation on the future of Mapledurham Playing Fields is due on the 8 September, with the 7 week consultation period closing on 27 October 2006. Four options are presented. Three of them are for the construction of a building varying from a near complete replacement including the hall, to only a meeting room plus changing facilities and finally changing rooms only. Financing possibilities for each proposal include an area of land to be sold to fund that proposal - the larger the building, the larger the land sold to pay for it. For the more modest proposals other funding sources are also mentioned. The new fourth option is for the relocation of Caversham Primary School on to the site. All the options, except the changing room only proposal, will require RBC to provide compensatory open land. This will be at Clayfield Copse.

Displays on these proposals are planned at Mapledurham Pavilion, the Milestone Centre, Caversham Library and the Civic Centre. Consultation forms should be available at the library and Civic Centre during the entire period, and completed forms may be left there. There will also be a roadshow at Mapledurham Pavilion when RBC representatives will be present to discuss the proposals. The RBC website should also have this consultation document on it, and a facility to submit views. Unfortunately more precise details were not available as we went to press.

The RBC distribution of leaflets is likely to be very limited and therefore all interested parties should make the effort to obtain a copy of the consultation leaflet and to submit their views to the Council. The two residents associations, CADRA and Warren and District, will be endeavouring to give a wider door to door distribution of the consultation leaflet, and to advise residents of the various events.

It is not possible to provide a comprehensive summary of the proposals and their implications for Caversham residents in this column. The advice must be to consider

carefully what is stated in the consultation document, and any other information source, and to assess if the promises will be fulfilled. If you take the view that historically RBC have not fulfilled their trustee responsibility in maintaining the playing fields and pavilion, then what evidence is there that they will they improve their performance in the future? The wider implications of the proposals, and particularly the school relocation option, need to be considered in depth. This school relocation option brings in to play many more factors such as transportation and access issues - not just for site access- but also issues such as parking and the safety of pupils having to cross a busy and dangerous A road.

We strongly urge residents to make their views known. However, the final decision on these proposals is in the gift of the National Playing Fields Association and Charity Commission. Both organisations will need to be satisfied that the recommended proposal complies with the trust deeds. NPFA and Charity Commission approval is far from being a forgone conclusion!

Decisions expected

By the time you read this article, a number of decisions are likely to have been made. The most significant is the vexed question of the proposed **one-way IDR** which has been strongly opposed by many residents as well as by neighbouring authorities. The Council are seeking to start work early in 2007. The Council's own assessment confirms that journey times will increase, the cycle routes are inadequate and the impact on Caversham Centre remains a common concern.

Two licensing decisions are also expected. The Island restaurant has applied to have its alcohol license extended to midnight every day. The Riverside Brasserie has applied to remain open to the general public to 3am. At present admission after specified hours is to club members only.

Caversham Court

Plans are progressing for the restoration of the gardens and the gazebo at Caversham Court supported by a major grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. A Project Development Officer and a Head Gardener should now both be in post. If you would like to know more about the proposed plans why not come to the CADRA OPEN MEETING on TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER, 7.45pm at the BAPTIST CENTRE. The Parks Team and others will outline the background to the proposals and the current plans. Even more importantly, they want to hear from interested groups and individuals. If you have an affection for the park, if you visit it or if you just want to know a bit more – please do come. Non-members are always welcome; it is easy to join on the night. (£2 p.a. per household)