

Caversham and District Residents' Association Annual General Meeting Thursday 8 May 2014

Chairman's report 2013/2014

Transport

This has been a major part of our work this year, particularly with the Sharing our Streets project, run jointly with the Caversham Traders Association. CADRA and CTA members are being asked to comment on a draft Vision statement, as a precursor to more detailed proposals. With the Reading Station project and associated road works, the planned pedestrian/ cycle bridge over the Thames, revised road layouts and road resurfacing, there is a lot happening locally. CADRA continues to be represented at the Transport Users Forum by Paul Matthews with support from John Lee.

Caversham Centre

We have worked closely with Caversham Traders Association over the year, particularly on the Sharing our Streets project and on the potential redevelopment of St Martin's precinct. With the three Ward Councillors, we have together kept in touch with Hermes and were pleased to accept their offer a private session for CADRA members, ahead of the public exhibitions. We congratulate CTA on the launch of the Caversham Rewards scheme. This gives worthwhile reductions for shoppers, supports local trade, raises funds for schools, clubs, churches or charities and builds up a fund for local improvements: http://www.choosescaversham.co.uk/caversham_rewards.php

Planning

New planning applications are still relatively few. Plans to develop the site of the old Arthur Legge centre are being finalised. Sites where plans have been approved but work has not yet started include: Caversham House, Church Road; the Old Bakery on the corner of Hemdean Road and Rectory Road; work on Caversham Laundry, George Street. We are grateful to Mo Prins who continues to monitor local applications and post a monthly summary on the website and to Liz Killick for the expertise she brings to analysis of applications and policies.

The Council have now started to develop a new Local Plan from the previous Local Development Framework. Work to date includes an invitation to nominate sites for development or for protection. When the existing Local Development Framework was drawn up, CADRA and other local organisations undertook a substantial piece of work to identify important open spaces north of the river and between the Thames and railway and to propose protection where appropriate. The Council are also consulting on the application of the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and a more limited use of the previous Section 106 payment.

South Oxfordshire follows a different programme to Reading. A recent study indicates the need for additional 725-825 houses per year across South Oxfordshire. Recognising that their villages will expand, both Woodcote and Sonning Common are developing Neighbourhood Plans to influence how development will proceed.

We have been in regular contact with the Council over the past year, concerning the worrying deterioration of the Grade I listed Chazey Court barn, built around 1611, which is on the English Heritage at risk register.

Local Policing

The two Neighbourhood Action Groups, covering upper and lower Caversham, continue to meet regularly. Mike Gilbert, CADRA Vice- Chair chairs the Upper Caversham group. Together, Mike Gilbert and John Roach ensure that CADRA is regularly represented and provide a link to the Neighbourhood Police team. The regular police reports outline actions to address problems with traffic, burglary and litter - the three agreed priorities.

Licensing

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

Schools

The parent group developing the new Free School, The Heights Primary School, was set up following the CADRA meeting in 2012 about the major shortfall in school places. The group has worked hard to keep in touch with the local community through their website and regular newsletters. Obtaining a site has been the responsibility of the Department of Education and the uncertainty has been a difficult time for everyone. For the permanent site, it is already clear that it will be in the catchment area and is not Mapledurham Playing Fields. The school will open September 2014, with two Reception classes and one Year 1, based at the vacant premises of the old Caversham Nursery on Gosbrook Road. It is recognised that this is not ideal and a number of measures are being put in place, including breakfast and after school clubs and a flexible drop off.

Mapledurham Pavilion

Stewart Bolton, CADRA Treasurer continues to attend the Management Committee. The fundraising team are getting closer to the target to cover the first phase of redevelopment. The next major event is the Summer Fete on Saturday 5 July from 12 noon – 5:30pm. Please note that donations, including Gift Aid, can be made at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/giving/make-a-donation/>

Caversham 100 Years On

A few activities from the project continue. In September 2013, CADRA again worked with the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens lead Heritage Walks around Caversham during the Heritage Weekend. The Local History web page is at www.cadra.org.uk/history.php and there are still occasional offers of new material. An exhibition to commemorate the start of WWI is being produced for display in Caversham Library throughout August.

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 would like to thank Ann Goodridge for all her work in setting up the current website. Sadly, Ann has had to stand down. Lloyd Pople kindly responded to our appeal and has now taken over responsibility for the website and joined the committee as a co-opted member. We would also like to thank Edge Impact for their help and support.

Membership

Organisations like CADRA need a substantial membership to remain strong. To ease the problems of renewal, payment can be by bank transfer or standing order though we still accept cheques - where possible to cover three years membership. New members can sign up via the website or by using a membership form which is 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 75% 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 support 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!*