

Caversham and District Residents' Association

Chair's report 2023-24

A firm future for CADRA

At the start of 2024 we announced our intention to look ahead at how CADRA can remain a thriving organisation in future years. No organisation can stand still in a changing world. We have welcomed new members to the committee and to the wider team who provide specific support outside of committee. We are actively seeking more new members from Caversham and Emmer Green to both teams, along with new ideas and new skills. To help us focus on what matters to our members, we are launching a survey – the first in many years. We would value your help in completing that. Sharing your monthly update emails helps to reach more people who are concerned for their community and helps to build membership.

Planning

This remains a major part of our work each month. Our planning list is shared with other groups and via the website, giving links to both CADRA comments and the full plans. The application for retirement living at Caversham Park remains the most significant application. Successive revisions have been made but Historic England and other bodies remain opposed and overspill parking on Peppard Road is still unresolved.

The nationally imposed 35% uplift on Reading housing numbers is increasing the pressure to build ever higher. We have been following the Aviva plan for Vastern Court submitted over four years ago. Despite its departure from the Local Plan and a carefully considered refusal by the Planning Inspector, this has now been approved by the Secretary of State. We support the challenge by the Council. There is to be a partial update of the Local Plan and we submitted detailed comments in January. The next consultation is expected in November with completion in 2025.

Local Heritage

CADRA remains active on the Conservation Area Advisory Committee providing important links to Senior Planning Managers and the Conservation Officer. Reading Bridge celebrated its centenary in October 2023. The CADRA booklet was well received, and we were successful in an application for Local Listing.

Emmer Green

Membership from Emmer Green continues to grow and there is much to do there. There are still issues to be resolved in relation to Reading Golf Club including some around Kidmore End Road. We shared a summary of key responses at the public meeting in October. Importantly, there is an opportunity to bid for 'Neighbourhood' funding and we are keen to work with other organisations and individuals on nominations.

After the success of the reprint of *Emmer Green Past and Present*, we funded a second print run. The Community Noticeboard has just been restored and the next project will be care of the Emmer Green sign. We look forward to joining the St Barnabas centenary celebrations on 14 September. CADRA documentation is being reviewed to include Emmer Green, along with the proposed change in the constitution.

Caversham Centre

Caversham Traders Association remains very active and keen to get Caversham “on the map.” The triangle of land on George Street/Gosbrook Road remains a concern and we are in contact with Councillors. The very prominent Spice Oven continues to deteriorate, and we continue to press for a decision on the planning application. A recent planning application for the former Barclays Bank seeks to provide a new purpose. The Environment Agency has raised multiple objections to the new seating area at the Persian Palace.

Transport

Following the last open meeting about the Reading Transport Strategy, we pressed for a package of measures to be included for North Reading, recognising that any major scheme with a third bridge is a long way off. The *principal list of requests for Traffic Management Measures* includes new items north of the river but these all require funding.

Safer Caversham

We are active members of the North Reading Safer Neighbourhood Forum helping to share information and support collaboration to resolve problems.

Website and Facebook

The CADRA website remains the most extensive local website. More up to date news is shared on both the CADRA Facebook Page and the Emmer Green Residents Page.

Caversham Bridge Newspaper

We strongly recommend this monthly community paper which can be delivered to your door for just £7 a year, or you can view the paper online at www.cavershambridge.org

Membership

You can join, renew, and pay online - just £3 a year for the household. Please let us know if you are changing your email address and look out for CADRA messages going to Spam. Members not on email receive paper copies of newsletters.

And finally ...

CADRA's work is a team effort with mutual support from committee members and the wider support team and I am hugely grateful to them all. Please consider whether you could offer some support to keep the team strong for the future.