

Caversham and District Residents' Association Annual General Meeting Tuesday 17 April 2018

Chairman's report 2017/2018

Looking ahead after 50 years

It has been another busy year for the CADRA team. Marking 50 years, a new copper beech tree was planted by the Caversham War Memorial, a special extended anniversary edition of the newsletter was delivered to all members, a new membership leaflet was produced and about 100 people came together to celebrate the achievements over the past 50 years and drink a toast to the future. The theme has been to focus on what makes Caversham special. At the AGM tonight, we celebrate the lovely countryside on our northern border.

Local Heritage

The Conservation Area Advisory Committee has gone from strength to strength and with work on Reading Abbey nearing completion, heritage issues are gaining importance in the town. While information on the Council website remains limited, there is a wealth of information at <http://www.readingcivicsociety.org.uk/wordpress/>

Work with the Council aims to safeguard some of the period lamp stands as new LED lighting is installed. The lampstands on Caversham Bridge were made by the nationally important Bromsgrove Guild of Applied Arts.

The CAAC were able to secure considerable improvements on heritage issues in the Reading Local Plan. Among these is an important protection for a list of 'Heritage Views' including a number around Caversham. This was only possible through a substantial contribution from volunteers working with Council Officers.

The consultation on St Peter's Conservation Area, undertaken last summer showed overwhelming support. The appraisal was formally submitted to the Council in December. Following discussions, the Planning Officers have given their support to the proposals which will be considered at the July meeting of the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee. A further consultation will follow, and it is hoped the re-appraisal with the extended area can be adopted before the end of the year.

These are all extensive pieces of work and we are grateful to the Caversham CAAC members: John Nicholls, Liz Killick, Vickie Abel and particularly Kim Pearce who completed most of the work on Heritage Views.

As you will see from the accounts, management of the residual fund from the 'Caversham 100 Years On' has passed to CADRA. The project was finalised five years ago but limitations on use of the funds continue for a further period.

Planning

The Committee continue to monitor applications in and adjacent to Caversham. The first phase of the St Martins development was completed with the planting of new trees. No dates have been issued for the start of the next phase. Revised plans are expected in some sections and CADRA was invited to discuss initial plans for a new cinema above Superdrug. We have received confirmation of a replacement hedge in front of the Albert Road Extra Care housing and held discussions with architects drawing up plans to restore the front of the Spice Oven. Plans approved but not yet started, include 315 units on the Coopers BMW site and 42 new homes at 203 Henley Road. Caversham Park is showing as 'Under Offer' and we understand there are pre-applications discussions underway. Malcolm Pemble tracks progress for the team and the monthly list is posted on the CADRA website with links to the detailed plans for each application.

In South Oxfordshire, the Local Plan is in its final stages. CADRA submitted comments in May 2017. An application has been made to create a nursing home at Greendene Farm, Chazey Heath. Most significantly, the appeal by Gladman takes place at the beginning of May, against the refusal of an outline application for 245 houses on the border with Emmer Green. It is increasingly clear that this would open the way for substantial development across to Shiplake and Sonning Common with major implications for infrastructure in Caversham. Paul Matthews represents CADRA in the combined team of Parish Councils and residents' associations preparing for the appeal.

Transport

Other commitments obliged Paul Matthews to stand down from the committee. We are very grateful for the substantial contribution he continues to make, including ongoing work for the 'Sharing our Streets' project and 20mph zone and particularly his substantial work on the traffic implications of the Gladman scheme. Caversham bus routes changed in February. The 22 service remains unsatisfactory and CADRA has made representations.

Caversham Centre

Caversham Library looks to lose another full day after a further consultation. CADRA has given some financial support to Caversham GLOBE in testing air quality across Caversham centre. Initial results are alarmingly high.

Safer Caversham

The Neighbourhood Action Group has been renamed the Caversham Safer Neighbourhood Forum as the groups seek a more effective way of working. The local Police team has also seen changes including the closure of the base in Church House and a new base in the Weller Centre. We are grateful to Alan Wright who attends meetings for CADRA.

The Heights Primary School and Mapledurham Pavilion

The decision on a permanent site the Heights Primary School remains divisive for Caversham. CADRA has continued to remain neutral on individual sites but has sent comments on transport concerns. The planning application for school buildings on the corner of the playing fields was approved by the Planning Committee subject to further agreements.

Caversham Bridge Newspaper

Members of the committee write the column 'From the Lookout Post' which appears from time to time. Copies are on sale from the Parish Office in Church House or you can subscribe for just £4.00 p.a. Call 947 1370 or email cemoloney@yahoo.co.uk. The paper is also available on line at <http://www.cavershambridge.org/>.

CADRA website and Facebook Page

The CADRA website has been comprehensively revamped and reviewed. We are grateful to Lloyd Pople for his excellent technical lead, Malcolm Pemble for a substantial update and Liz Killick for updating the all-important Planning page. The Facebook page is available to everyone from the Home page. With over 250 'likes' this makes contact with well over 1000 people per month, extending CADRA's reach across the local community.

Membership

A substantial membership keeps CADRA strong, so new members are always welcome. Subscriptions and renewals can be paid on line by Paypal or credit card, as well by bank transfer or standing order though we still accept cheques - where possible to cover three years membership. Membership forms are available from the library or Waltons Jewellers. We are very grateful to Jacque Tomson for looking after membership arrangements as well as sending and receiving emails on behalf of CADRA. Email is the main method of communication so **please let us know if you change your email address and look out for CADRA messages going to Spam**. Members not on email receive copies of newsletters by post.

CADRA committee

I am extremely grateful to all members of the committee and the committee support team for all their work through the year. We are always keen to hear from anyone who could offer support in some way so that Caversham can always be a *Great Place to Live!*