

Caversham and District Residents' Association

Chairman's report 2020/2021

Covid – 19

We have missed having the opportunity to meet our members in person and sadly no open meetings have been possible. Instead, the two newsletters in 2020 were extended to cover more detailed information on the flood compensation scheme and on the ward boundary review which will take effect for the local elections next year. <https://www.cadra.org.uk/en/CADRA-Newsletters> We plan an online talk on the evening of 22 June on the history of Reading Abbey and the Gaol, to link with the 900th anniversary of Reading Abbey. More details will follow with the CADRA newsletter.

The committee has met monthly online. We have continued to look for ways of helping the community through this difficult time. With an uncertain Christmas 2020, the Happy Caversham Christmas project with its delightful drawings brought a little cheer. We have continued to update the Covid-19 webpage <https://www.cadra.org.uk/en/Covid-19-Local-Resources> . And with reduced costs, we were able to make substantial donations to the Weller Centre and Thames Valley Ambulance. It has been a challenging time for our local traders and we wish them well as shops are able to reopen.

Planning

The planning application to develop the Reading section of Reading Golf Club presents major issues for Caversham. A committee decision is now expected in June. This also brings attention to potential development in South Oxfordshire. Following pressure from government, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan was formally adopted in December.

Across the river, we await the outcome of an appeal for the Drews site. We have continued to follow the three major schemes north of the station and continue to push for interlinking design. Government proposals for changes to the planning system have caused alarm in many quarters and we face a worrying reduction in local influence.

In Caversham Centre, we still await the outcome of an application to provide a cinema in the space vacated by the Gym.

Local Heritage

CADRA has four members on the Conservation Area Advisory Committee and has been contributing to the substantial task of reappraising Conservation Areas in Reading town centre. The CAAC provides important links to Senior Planning Managers and to the newly appointed Conservation and Urban Design Officer, as well as a strong informal network across Reading.

Transport

CADRA sent a detailed response to the Reading and Oxfordshire draft Transport Plans, urging closer cooperation. Government funding to create more space for pedestrians and cyclists came in two tranches. The first, to be implemented rapidly, created the short lived one-way system. The second tranche will affect several routes out of Reading. CADRA attends the RBC 'Cleaner Air and Safer Transport Forum.'

Safer Caversham

This has been a challenging year for the community and the local police. The Caversham Safer Neighbourhood Forum meets regularly with representatives from the Police, RBC and community members including Alan Wright for the CADRA committee. It is an important mechanism for a combined

proactive approach to local problems. Police resources are limited, and local people can help by providing local intelligence and by reporting crime, as this significantly influences the allocation of scarce resources.

Nationwide Building Society

The potential loss of the Caversham branch will leave Caversham with no bank or building society. CADRA took part in a meeting with Nationwide Senior Managers and has been in correspondence with them.

Caversham Bridge Newspaper

The editorial team have worked fantastically hard over the past year and the paper is looking fresh and new with a real community focus. We have been delighted to contribute copy including a short monthly update on planning issues. You can subscribe for £5 a year. Contact subscriptions@cavershambridge.org or write c/o Church House, Church Street, RG4 8AX. Individual copies are available at Caversham Emporium, Fourbears Books or True Food Co-op. You can also view the paper online at <http://www.cavershambridge.org/>.

Membership

A substantial membership keeps CADRA strong, so new members are always welcome. Subscriptions and renewals can be paid online by Paypal or credit card, as well by bank transfer or standing order. We still accept cheques - where possible to cover three years to save time for both sides. Membership forms would normally be available from the library or Waltons Jewellers. 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**. Emails about membership renewal now come via a membership system which allows you to view and update your details at <https://membermojo.co.uk/cadra/signin>

Members on email receive an update each month and a link to the newsletter twice a year. If those are not reaching you, please let us know. Members not on email receive paper copies of newsletters.

CADRA Committee

Our Treasurer Colin Hall moved away from Caversham last summer and we were pleased to welcome his successor, Jill Dibben. We also welcomed Aidan Costelloe who has done extensive research on issues around footpaths – particularly around Chazey Wood. James Tyson has provided invaluable assistance with regular posts on the CADRA Facebook Page. <https://www.facebook.com/cavershamresidents>

Particular thanks are due to Malcolm Pemble who, in addition to the regular review of planning applications, has been updating the website, including the Covid-19 page and has implemented the new membership system.

And finally ...

We join the WADRA team in mourning the death of Robin Bentham who, as WADRA Chair for 20 years, worked hard for the community. We express our thanks to the many local groups and welcome our excellent working links with them.

I pay tribute to the work of all the committee and I would like to record my thanks to them for all their work through a year with new challenges. 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!*