

From the Lookout Post April 2016

Crossrail comes to Reading

On completion, Crossrail will connect 40 stations from Reading and Heathrow Airport through 42km of new tunnels underneath London to Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east. Crossrail's Community Relations Manager, John Goldsmith will be the speaker at the **CADRA AGM at 7.30pm, Tuesday 26 April at Thameside School**. The formal AGM business will be brief and will include a round up of the year and current local issues. John Goldsmith will then give an overview of the Crossrail project, share some of the iconic images from the construction phase, discuss the wider benefits from the project and how the service will operate at Reading from December 2019.

Crossrail is the biggest construction project in Europe and is one of the largest single infrastructure investments undertaken in the UK. The project is now two thirds complete and remains on time and within funding. From December 2019, passengers in Reading will be able to travel direct on Crossrail services to locations such as Bond Street, Tottenham Court Road, Liverpool Street and Canary Wharf on brand new 200m long trains without the need to change.

Everyone is welcome to attend and it is a good opportunity to sign up as a CADRA member. . You can also sign up and pay online to support CADRA's work in giving a local voice for Caversham. www.cadra.org.uk Do look out for the CADRA Facebook page with up to the minute local news. You do **not** need to register with Facebook to see the page. It is easy to use and you will find it on the Home page of the website.

Albert Road Extra Care Housing

The planning application for extra care housing was made available in January 2016, reference 152277.

CADRA met recently with a2dominion and is waiting to hear back what changes might be made to the plans. The extra care housing is much needed and very welcome but there are concerns over the proposed height, tree cover, parking and the effect on nearby properties. Local residents have been very active campaigning, particularly in relation to the 4th storey and the impact on neighbouring properties. www.cadra.org.uk/planning.php gives links to further information.

A new Local Plan for Reading

The Council is working on producing a new Local Plan, which will replace the current development plans (the Core Strategy, Reading Central Area Action Plan and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) with a new plan setting out how Reading will develop up to 2036. A consultation on a discussion paper (Issues and Options) closed on 7 March 2016. This paper examines what the plan should cover and how it should be addressed. While policy may seem dry and dull, it has a major impact on the decisions ahead.

The Government has made it a task for local authorities, together with their neighbours, to identify how much new housing they will provide. This is one of the main questions raised – alongside the difficult issue of where new homes should be sited, at what level of density and how they would relate to existing buildings.

Other issues include the opportunity for the new national designation of 'Local Green Space.' In the current policies, a number of areas are designated as 'Public and Strategic Open Space' which is

protected from development. These and other sites could be considered for the national level policy protection if they meet the criteria. The paper also seeks views and ideas as to what should be contained in a positive strategy for the Historic Environment.

CADRA has worked with other groups north of the river on a response on green spaces and also with Reading Civic Society and other neighbourhood groups in Reading on a combined response on the historic environment.

Enhancing Reading's Conservation Areas

Work continues between community groups and the Council on how Reading's Conservation Areas can be protected and improved. In February, Council staff and volunteers came together for a training day run by Historic England who are working with the Council in a number of areas. An interesting project in the pipeline is a potential study of views from Reading's waterways and how these can be protected. There will increasingly be opportunities to get involved in this type of project. If you are interested, you can email helen.lambert@cadra.org.uk for more information.

Post Office Counters

It was extremely disappointing that the Post Office brushed aside the many concerns raised by local people about the move of Woodcote Way Post Office and the loss of a dedicated Post Office counter. This is part of a wider change to "new-style local branches". A similar consultation took place regarding the Post Office counter in the Co-op on Henley Road. <http://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/modernising-post-office>

Burglaries and Internet Scams

Caversham is still suffering from a number of burglaries and these usually increase as summer approaches and more doors and windows are left open. The local police have been successful at finding many of the culprits but they do need local reports and information. You can call 101 to pass on non-urgent information.

There are regular warnings of internet scams. You can register to receive these from www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk. Summaries of warnings of particular local concern are often posted on the CADRA Facebook page which anyone can access from www.cadra.org.uk.

St Martin's Centre

Hermes the landowner have said they wish to proceed with part of the scheme, starting nearest to the Telephone Exchange. At the end of February 2016, there was still no news of how this might proceed and whether permission will be granted.