

The Lookout Post – August 2011

Policing Matters

Caversham policing staff changes continue with PC Debbie Smith leaving to taking up a new role in Thames Valley Police. Filling the position of Neighbourhood Specialist Officer for Lower Caversham will be PC Joe Evans. Two years ago PC Evans had a three month stint with the Caversham policing team. PC Leon Cunningham will also be attached to the local team for the summer period.

The summer period has shown an increase in various types of crime and anti-social behaviour. One worrying development is the increase in the use of mini moto and off road motor bikes, which are unlicensed and uninsured, and driven in a dangerous manner by individuals with no license and no helmet. They have been sighted both on public roadways and on private land. A major concern is that the erratic driving could result in an accident, resulting in injury to vulnerable pedestrians, notably the elderly and/or children. Good intelligence has resulted in the identification of three offenders who have been visited by the police. However, further identification is sought from the public. The non-emergency 'phone number is 0845 8 505 505, or if the informant wishes to remain anonymous call crime stoppers on 0800 555 111.

Burglaries of homes and sheds and garages are also occurring and theft of bicycles is on the increase. The warmer weather often creates easier access for criminals. Police advise residents to still take measures to keep their buildings secure by locking doors and ground floor windows and not leaving tools or equipment available to be used to break in. Bicycle thefts often occur when inadequate locks are used, or when they are stored in less secure garages or sheds. Owners of expensive bikes are urged to invest in quality locks and, if possible, store the bike in a more secure location, including in the house.

Trees in St Martin's Precinct

On Sunday 26 June, tree surgery was carried out on trees in the precinct. Prior notice had been given by the Council to CADRA and Caversham GLOBE. Following discussions with the owners, an independent assessment and report was commissioned by the Council which recommended that all the trees except one (the Sycamore at the rear of the Precinct) could be retained, for the time being, subject to various necessary specified works. Council officers approved a tree work application to reduce the Horse Chestnut trees and the Holm oak within the centre of St Martins Precinct by a limited amount. The reductions are in line with the recommendations of the independent report.

In the longer term, it is considered that, in view of the expected continued decline in the condition of the two Chestnuts on the frontage, they will need to be replaced by new trees as a part of a wider upgrade of the centre sometime in the future.

Parking in Caversham Centre

The absence of parking controls on the section of the car park near Iceland led to all day parking in that area. As a consequence there was regularly excess pressure on the car park which often led to a tailback of traffic through Caversham. There are now controls on that section of the car park and a three hour maximum stayed is being imposed.

Gravel Works near Sonning

Phase two of the current works is now underway, works for phase three are planned for May 2012 and progressive restoration is due for completion in 2010. A new planning application for the much larger area beyond Spring Lane is in progress. This will include consideration of hydrology and flooding issues in consultation with the Environment Agency.

Plans are being drawn up for the marina site restoration near Caversham and we hope to see new footpaths and interpretation boards.

Buses

Reading Buses have been collating comments about bus services to and from Caversham following the changes in bus routes and bus stops in the town centre. CADRA (the Caversham and District Residents' Association) is also feeding in comments and would be glad to receive individual views. Contact: info@cadra.org.uk.