

From the Lookout Post

January 2015

St Martin's Centre

At the Planning Applications Committee 12 November 2014, it was agreed to meet the request from Hermes to defer a decision until the next meeting on 10 December 2014. The Committee concluded that the design did not relate to Caversham as well as it should. Councillors supported concerns over the lack of tree coverage on Church Street and in particular, the conflict between the proposed building and the 150 year old Holm Oak. Without amended plans, a substantial part of the tree will require removal and there will be ongoing conflict with the residents of the new flats, whose living space will face into the canopy of the tree.

Hermes was asked to give due regard to these concerns before the December meeting.

A permanent site for the Heights Primary School

Following letters from the Education Funding Agency to Rob Wilson, MP and to the Head of Education, Reading Borough Council, a press release was issued by the Council on 21 November 2014. This explained that the EFA has concluded that the Council is best placed to take this issue forward *'with the people of Caversham, to ensure the community is happy that the benefits the school brings, outweigh any compromises'*.

Before the Council can proceed with a consultation, it will be necessary to separate the Council's role as Trustees of Mapledurham Playing Fields, from its responsibilities as the Local Education Authority tasked by the EFA to engage with the local community. The proposal is therefore to set up a Sub Committee of Councillors who would fulfil the Council's responsibility of independent Trustees. A report is to go to a meeting of the Council's Policy Committee on 1 December 2014.

The press release is available at www.reading.gov.uk by selecting: *About the Council –Media Releases – Press Releases -November 2014*. Other documents are shown on local websites including CADRA, Rob Wilson MP and Local Councillor Blogs.

While details of the consultation may be a little clearer by the time you read this, it is sadly inevitable that this will be a divisive time for Caversham. Let us hope that all parties can work together to mitigate the impact of whichever compromise decision is finally adopted.

Adult Care Services in Reading

The Care Act became law in May 2014. Most of the changes come into effect in April 2015, and reforms to the way care is funded come in from April 2016. The changes from April 2015 are wide-

ranging. They cover assessment, eligibility, care planning, carers, the local care market, safeguarding, and prevention. There are also some changes to how care is funded, in preparation for 2016.

From April 2015, a person who can afford to pay for their care and support in full and has support needs that can be met in their own home (e.g. with homecare visits or in Supported Living) can ask the local authority to arrange their care on their behalf. This can include planning with the person the best services to meet their needs and organising a person's care with their chosen provider. The local authority is able to charge for some of these services, to cover the costs of providing this support.

The Council has launched a consultation and a series of events from November to February including:

Talkback Matters session (for people with learning disabilities)

Tuesday 13th January 10.30am - 12pm

Emmanuel Methodist Church, Oxford Road

Older People's Working Group

Friday 6th February 2pm - 4pm

Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LU

It may also be possible for Officers to come explain and discuss the proposals with small groups.

Contact the Consultation & Engagement Officer on 0118 937 2383 or email

careact.consultation@reading.gov.uk . You can also contact Healthwatch Reading on 0118 902 3912

for support with sharing your views about the proposals.

More information and the on line survey (open to 16 February) are available at www.reading.gov.uk by selecting: *About the Council – Consultations – Open Consultations – the Care Act In Reading.*

Sharing our Streets – Achieving the Vision

Over a hundred people attended a joint meeting in November held by the Caversham Traders Association and CADRA, the Caversham and District Residents' Association. The Sharing our Streets project was first launched at a meeting in November 2013. There was a clear message from Caversham people attending that first meeting and a new 'Vision' for Caversham village centre was agreed.

Paul Matthews, CADRA Committee member with over 40 years experience in the design and construction of highway and traffic schemes, received a warm welcome. He set out the way that traffic management has evolved and a range of ideas for possible changes to Caversham Centre.

Traditional Traffic Management has been very successful in managing unprecedented flows and keeping British roads among the safest in the developed world. However, it has reinforced the dominance of motor traffic in places like Caversham. Our streets are now cluttered with signs and road markings and green traffic signals means 'GO' or speed through. A Contemporary Approach moves away from segregating road users.

Instead, much of the paraphernalia is swept away. The driving environment is changed to introduce uncertainty, causing drivers to naturally modify their driving behaviour.

These techniques have been successfully introduced in other centres and elsewhere in Reading. Paul Matthews set out how they might be implemented in Caversham: as a Bare Minimum, a Transitional Level or as a Comprehensive Scheme.

You can see the presentation or read the full report at www.cadra.org.uk. CADRA and Caversham Traders would welcome comments to info@cadra.org.uk or cavershamtraders@googlemail.com. Those present at the meeting agreed that many of the ideas seem at first to be counterintuitive but there was nevertheless considerable support for a comprehensive scheme. If progress is to be made towards a clear strategy for Caversham Centre, it will need the support of Councillors and Council Officers and of the people of Caversham.

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