



CADRA Monthly Roundup: April 2020

Your committee met via the web this month and our update summarises what is going on. Please share it with anyone you feel might be interested.

The Covid-19 Outbreak

In common with many organisations, the AGM planned for May has had to be postponed until further notice and we are exploring options within our constitution. In the meantime, the 2019/2020 annual accounts will proceed to independent examination.

CADRA's website [Covid-19 Local Resources](#) page provides a wide range of very useful local information and is proving very popular, with over 2000 viewings. Please alert all your contacts to it and, if they find it useful, encourage them to invest £3 to join and support CADRA.

We have established a 'telephone buddy' service for CADRA members without access to the internet and have so far received seven calls.

Transport

The [Reading Transport Strategy 2036](#) (Consultation Draft) has been approved and there will be a 12-week consultation. Its more radical proposals include three Park and Ride sites north of Caversham, linked by an outer orbital route joining the Woodcote, Peppard and Henley Roads. We are starting the considerable task of digesting it and will bring you more comments when we have them.

Ward Boundaries

The Local Government Commission has been seeking comments on a proposed reorganisation of Ward boundaries to create Wards of similar population with three Councillors each. This is a sensible aim but we have expressed some concern on the details: that Caversham centre and its Conservation Area would be split between two Wards, and that the proposed names for some of the Wards do not properly reflect local geography or community preferences.

Planning

Three very large planning applications are currently under consideration on the Caversham side of Reading station: a full application for the old SSE Vastern Road site (application number [200188](#)), an outline application on the land from The Range to TGI Fridays ([200328](#)) and an outline application on the former Royal Mail site ([182252](#)). Together they amount to over 1800 new apartments plus offices, about twice what the Local Plan indicates. We have expressed concern about the amount of

development, the lack of open space and other amenities, and the failure of the three schemes to coordinate as an overall piece of urban design.

Conservation Area

The re-appraisal of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area, with its proposals to extend the area, has been formally adopted by the Council. This was considerably helped by expert input from CADRA and we are delighted at the outcome.

Reading Gaol

You may have seen from the local press, and several articles in the national press, that RBC has not been selected as the preferred bidder for the Gaol. The Ministry of Justice has stated they are in discussions with their preferred bidder, understood to be a commercial developer, so as far as we know it has not been formally sold. MP, Matt Rodda continues to press the case. The Save Reading Gaol Campaign has shared a new petition, seeking to lobby the MOJ to reconsider the preferred bidder. You can sign it at [Petition](#).