

Roundup April 2021

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

The CADRA AGM

For a second year, COVID precautions prevent us all from meeting in person, so we must repeat last year's arrangements, but with an addition.

As before, you will get two emails. The first will be the required formal notification of the AGM, but with the addition of an invitation to **meet your committee on-line** and to raise any questions which concern you. This session will take place on **11 May** and the email will ask you to indicate whether you wish to take part and the questions you wish to raise.

The second email, 28 days later, will ask you to vote on the formal business. We would appreciate your help with this, to fulfil our obligations.

The AGM provides an **opportunity to join the CADRA committee**, and new recruits would be very welcome. We are especially short of help on planning issues, which are a big part of CADRA's business. We would be equally happy to welcome either members with skills in that area, or recruits who are interested in it and would like to learn more. The email will explain how to go about it.

An On-line Talk

On the **22 June**, to replace the talk we usually have at the AGM, there will be an on-line talk on **The History of Reading Abbey and the Gaol** by John Painter (Friends of Reading Abbey). The Abbey and the Gaol have an overlapping history and Matt Emmett ([Forgotten Heritage](#)) has given permission to include the beautiful photographs taken in the Gaol while it was open for visitors.

Nationwide Building Society Closure

Nationwide have programmed closure for 22 April, and while campaigning continues the absence of any further news makes us fear the worst.

Planning

The new application ([210018](#)) for 257 new homes on the Reading portion of **Reading Golf Club** is unlikely to be determined before June. There is a complex mix of issues to address, alongside the large number of comments - many of them objections.

The application for a mainly residential scheme of up to 11 storeys, across the river on the **SSE site, Vastern Road**, has been refused by RBC because of concerns about the impact on the river and of living alongside the huge remaining electrical transformers, but principally because of the lack of a clear and direct pedestrian and cycle route between the station and Christchurch Bridge. While the scheme has some merit, CADRA has consistently argued that the development of all three sites in the area north of the station needs coordinating to ensure a coherent layout, and the decision supports that view.

An application has been submitted at **389 Gosbrook Road** ([210279](#)) to demolish an existing building and build six apartments. As this is next to the 17th Century farmhouse at the Lower

Caversham roundabout it will need to be a sensitive design. CADRA is considering it and will comment.

CADRA has written to the Mapledurham Estate about the continuing concern over access to **Chazey Wood** and a reply is awaited.

Just over the border in South Oxfordshire, but very much part of the Caversham area, there is an application for six homes on **The Piggery, Gravel Hill** ([P21/SO897/ND1](#)). An application for a single house had been approved previously. This application is higher, occupying a larger footprint and CADRA has raised concerns. It is the site on your right if you are walking down Gravel Hill from Emmer Green and is an open one which is important in views.

Rogue Traders

The recent conviction of a local trader, whose estimate of £40 for gutter clearance grew to a £30,000 roof replacement, shows the need for real vigilance, but also the protection which can be provided by RBC's Trading Standards, who commented:

"This case highlights the very serious problem with rogue traders cold calling members of the public and defrauding them into parting with thousands of pounds by making false and misleading claims. In some cases, life savings are lost and victims who are often elderly and vulnerable are left in a distressed state and in fear of being targeted in the future.

"Residents are reminded to always thoroughly research any company or business before hiring them to carry out work. Our advice is never to agree to work on the doorstep even if the trader says that it is urgent. If you do need work done to your property, get written quotes from two or three reputable traders and compare them."

The Countryside During Lockdown

So many of us enjoying walks and other ways of using nearby countryside during lockdown has had a real impact, including littering, the hanging of dog poo bags in trees, gradual widening of footpaths and damage to farming, often unintentional. And lots of new users have been attracted to such pursuits who may be less aware of the impact they are having.

The Countryside Code has useful advice: [Natural England Countryside Code](#)