



CADRA News

Caversham & District Residents' Association

The Voice of Caversham since 1967



The changing River Thames



Continuing the theme of what makes Caversham special, we turn this autumn to the River Thames, which marks our southern border and has been central to Caversham's history. Our speaker, Terry Marsh, has spent most of his working life on the Thames floodplain – most recently at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, where he led the National Hydrological Programme for over 20 years. He has commissioned reports on water resources, floods and droughts, with a recent focus on the impact of climate change.

The Thames has played a central role in the history and culture of the UK, and extensive studies of it have

contributed substantially to advances in river and water management both in the UK and internationally. It has undergone major transformations over time and served as a strategic barrier, an important source of food and power generation, a major transport hub and focus for commercial development, a primary source of water supply and as a recreational space. Sewage disposal, which peaked in the nineteenth century, has impacted its water quality and limited the variety of wildlife the river can sustain. Caversham has been directly or indirectly affected by most of these changes.

Since the early 1960s, a revised legislative framework has enabled more

integrated management of the river, leading to improved water quality and, latterly, greater ecological diversity. But continuing population growth and the threats posed by global warming have become a major cause for concern and a perception in the media that the risk of flood and drought in the Thames basin may increase substantially. While continuing floodplain development has increased vulnerability to flood events, river flow patterns have in fact displayed considerable resilience to the exceptional increase in temperatures over the last 50 years. Nonetheless, careful management remains essential to maintain this cherished regional and national asset.

Helen Lambert

Open Meeting

Tuesday 6 November 2018, 7.45pm
Thameside School, Harley Road

The Changing River Thames

Speaker: Terry Marsh, Honorary Fellow of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Wallingford

Contacting members

In addition to the newsletter and ad hoc news, we now also email a round-up of the main issues and decisions from each monthly committee meeting. Please let us know if you find this useful. The policy to cover data protection as set out in the May 2018 GDPR legislation is available at www.cadra.org.uk/en/Join-Us

Transport

Caversham Bus Services

Early in July, Reading Buses announced to RBC their intention to reduce frequencies on the Caversham routes. Although local organisations were then also informed, the only consultation required was through the Council. Residents' Associations and Concerned of Caversham worked with Matt Rodda's office to publicise the changes and details of an open meeting on 1 August.

Over 250 people filled Caversham Baptist Church to make their concerns known. Reading Buses, Councillors and our MP were left in no doubt of the overwhelming concern that Caversham needs a viable alternative to the car.

Reading Buses explain that they operate as a Council owned but standalone commercial business, with the network self-funded through the re-investment of underlying profits, without any overarching subsidies. They report that Caversham has far lower bus use.

Sadly, the reductions have now been implemented and timetables are available at www.reading-buses.co.uk/timetable-change-monday-3-september. A new CEO starts in October and we all hope that effective joint working can explore a positive way forward. To help make that possible, we all need to take the bus.

Bridges

The Cross Thames Travel Group is exploring options to fund the next stage of development including production of the full scheme business case for a Third Thames Crossing. In the interim, the working group is developing options for a high-level feasibility study to consider the 'buildability', outline costs and programme, and mitigation measures on the existing road network.

Traffic flow under Cow Lane bridge returned to two-way in July 2018 with traffic light controls. Full completion is anticipated early 2019.

Crossings and Junctions

Improvements at these locations were recommended to the Traffic Management Committee for further investigation:

- Briants Avenue near to South View Avenue
- Bridge Street junction of Bridge Street, Church Street and Church Road
- footway and junction improvements – Gosbrook Road/Westfield Road
- Henley Road/Peppard Road/Prospect Street/Westfield Road – improve for pedestrians
- Upper Woodcote Road – better crossings in more places
- Conisboro Avenue/Sandcroft Road – better signage.

A crossing at Gosbrook Road towards the Christchurch Meadows footpath and pedestrian/cycle bridge is recommended for progression. Funding has not yet been identified for a 20mph zone for Lower Caversham and Amersham Road area.

Safer Caversham

Our local Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) is now called the North Reading Safer Neighbourhood Forum (SNF). The committee is chaired by Nick Haskins, with a Thames Valley Police (TVP) nomination and two RBC representatives. It also includes a CADRA representative. The group aims to help resolve safety and crime-related issues.

Caversham's two PCSOs on the beat, Ian Chaston and Priya Bangor, are backed up by Neighbourhood Officer, PC Mike Havers, and based centrally in Reading, with PS Lee Leggett overseeing. Plans are in place for a third PCSO.

The PCSOs now have a local hot desk based in the Weller Centre, Amersham Road. The TVP Acting Inspector, Sarah Sanderson, will be meeting with all SNF Chairs to develop partnership intelligence-sharing across the groups.

The Community Safety Survey identified the priorities for local action as 1. speeding, 2. groups hanging around (including drug dealing), 3. burglary. These will now be the focus for the SNF. Other feedback included potholes, parking and fly-tipping, all of which will be referred to RBC.

Several people have recently been charged and remanded and burglaries have lessened to some extent, but thefts from cars are increasing and police continue to target this problem. Check that doors are locked, windows closed, and valuables are not on view. Illegal mooring and associated ASB on Christchurch Meadows and Thames Promenade has been dealt with by a combined operation involving the police, Environment Agency and RBC.

Air quality

With funding from CADRA, Caversham GLOBE recently tested air quality levels in four locations in Church Road and Prospect Street, showing results well above the legal mean annual limit. Local Councillors have raised concerns and a RBC monitoring station will be relocated to Caversham Centre. RBC action across all of the Air Quality Management Area includes a 'no idling' campaign. Other local suggestions include 20mph zones and more tree planting.

CADRA Treasurer

Stewart Bolton will retire early in 2019 after 25 years as Treasurer so we are looking ahead for his successor.

The role includes internet banking, banking some cheques, paying about 20 bills a year, keeping a simple record to show financial history, and producing accounts for the year-end (28th February). Training and external audit are available. The committee meets monthly on the second Tuesday of the month, giving an excellent opportunity to take part in local issues. Please contact us for further information.

Planning

South Oxfordshire plans

Development in South Oxfordshire on the rural edge of Caversham has been a key concern. The Draft South Oxfordshire Local Plan was rejected by the Council over uncertainty about land at Chalgrove for 3000 houses. During this period of uncertainty, an internal SODC exercise is examining sites that might be suitable for allocation for housing. These include Reading Golf Club, Palmers Riding Stables and land at Playhatch, all on the rural border with Reading, where until now development has been contrary to the policies in the Draft Local Plan. The results of this exercise are not expected before December, which will be the first opportunity for public comment.

Gladman

The planning enquiry for 245 homes on the edge on Emmer Green was completed in August with a decision now expected in October. The ability of SODC to document a five-year supply of housing is critically important to the outcome. SODC argued that it can demonstrate a sound 5-year supply of housing. This argument has been accepted at two recent appeals but Gladman argued this was invalidated by further housing requirements as part of the Oxfordshire Growth Deal.

The reassignment of 6000 patients from Priory Avenue Surgery and the reduction in Caversham bus services have shone a spotlight on the availability of services in Caversham. Any housing built on the edge of Caversham

would inevitably increase traffic through Caversham and the need for services.

Paul Matthews gave expert transport evidence. CADRA worked with the other members of the campaign group CAGE in all the build-up, was represented throughout the appeal and made two statements. Thanks to the financial support from organisations and individuals, including a CADRA contribution, CAGE was able to engage a barrister. His contribution was very important. His closing statement and other statements can be read on the CADRA website at www.cadra.org.uk/en/Planning.

Local planning applications

Planning permission for the Heights Primary School on Mapledurham Playing Field was approved in August, including plans for landscaping Mapledurham Playing Field and revised road layouts.

BBC Monitoring moved out of Caversham Park in May, and the site is under offer.

Revised plans for Block A of St Martins - the site next to Marc Antoni's - have been submitted, and it was felt that they included improved details. We do not know when development is planned to start.

CADRA objected to a proposal for a budget hotel on the car park of the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The building would be higher than the Crowne Plaza, would result in a loss of trees and parking for riverside visitors and would also affect views from Caversham Court Gardens.

Review of St Peters Conservation Area

CADRA has been working closely with the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee in the review of the St Peters Conservation Area Appraisal. The Reading CAAC has been formally recognised by Reading Borough Council to undertake the review of the 15 Conservation Area appraisals for Reading. Several CADRA members are also members of the Reading CAAC and have carried out the work on St Peters. The new St Peters appraisal is the first to be completed and will act as a template for others to follow.

Following agreement with Planning Officers, the final draft of the new updated appraisal was presented to the Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee of RBC in July,

where it was very well received. RBC are now carrying out the final statutory public consultation. This was launched by CADRA at Caversham Church Fete on July 14th and the consultation ended on September 14th. It is hoped that the new appraisal will be adopted by the Council by the end of 2018.

The principal new proposals are the extension of Conservation Area to the east, to include the Church St/Bridge St junction, Bridge St itself and Caversham Bridge. They also include a new Action Plan which will need continuing community involvement to succeed.

The proposed extension has proved timely as several of the buildings in the extended area have been the subject of proposals for change. The three

Bank buildings are considered to be of townscape merit and two have closed. It is hoped that the new designation will help ensure that the buildings are carefully treated as new uses are found. A listed building application for the Grade II listed Spice Oven has recently been approved and CADRA/CAAC were able to offer suggestions for proper restoration. Proposals for the land behind are still to be resolved.

The owners of the former Priory Avenue Surgery, an interesting building in the 'arts and crafts' style, approached CADRA and we have been able to offer initial advice on the importance of retaining the arts and craft elements both internally and externally.

About CADRA

Our aim is to *preserve and enhance the quality of life in Caversham and the surrounding District*, or, in other words, that Caversham should always be...

...a great place to live!

We work closely with Reading Councillors and Officers, other local groups, the Police, companies and individuals, always avoiding party political bias.

Together, we can make it better.

We issue two newsletters a year, hold two public meetings, write columns for the *Caversham Bridge* local newspaper and maintain a website with information on local issues and links to relevant official websites. The Facebook page (shown on the CADRA homepage) gives up-to-the-minute local news. You do *not* need to register with Facebook.

Contacting CADRA

Please write to the Secretary or better still, email us at info@cadra.org.uk. Please let us know if you change your email address.

Membership

Membership of CADRA is just £3 per year per household. Leaflets are available from Caversham Library or Waltons, Prospect Street, or from the Membership Secretary, Tel: 947 6984. Join and pay online at www.cadra.org.uk/application_form.php.

The Committee

Chairman: Helen Lambert, 5 Derby Road, RG4 5HE,
Tel: 947 3165

Treasurer: Stewart Bolton, 11 Graveney Drive, RG4 7EG,
Tel: 948 2687

Secretary: Linda Watsham, 159 Kidmore Road, RG4 7NJ,
Tel: 947 8744

Membership: Jacque Tomson, 121 Upper Woodcote Road,
RG4 7LB, Tel: 9476984

Website: Lloyd Pople, Upper Woodcote Road

Planning: Liz Killick, Upper Woodcote Road; John Nicholls (co-opted), Sandcroft Road; Kim Pearce, The Mount; Malcolm Pemble, Shepherds Lane

Safer Caversham: Alan Wright, Upper Warren Avenue

COMMITTEE SUPPORT

Transport: Paul Matthews, Albert Road; John Lee, Hemdean Road

Planning support: Ray Emmett, Westdene Crescent

Informal Links: Jo Munday, South View Avenue; Mo Prins, Haldane Road

General support: John Boucher, Highmoor Road; Les James, Wincroft Road; John Roach, St Peter's Avenue

Newsletter Editor: Helen Lambert

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The opinions expressed are those of the contributors.

Useful info

Ward Councillors

Caversham: Adele Barnett-Ward, Richard Davies, Claire McDonald

Mapledurham: Isobel Ballsdon

Peppard: Clare Grashoff, Simon Robinson, Jane Stanford-Beale

Thames: Ed Hopper, Jeanette Skeats, David Stevens

Individual contact details can be found at

www.reading.gov.uk/councillorsbyward

Reporting crime and nuisance

To report **non-emergency crime call 101**, or go to www.thamesvalley.police.uk or email MapledurhamandthamesNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk or PeppardandcavershamNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk.

Call 999 in an emergency.

To report crime anonymously, call Crimestoppers on **0800 555111**.

Anti-social behaviour: Report ASB on **0118 937 2161** or email ASB.Team@reading.gov.uk with as much detail as possible.

Fly-tipping: Call RBC on **0118 937 3787**

Noise: For noise outside of acceptable and/or permitted hours, contact the RBC call centre on **0118 937 3787** and you will be put through to Environmental Health or the Anti-Social Behaviour team, depending on the problem.

Litter and dumped rubbish: Register online or download the free app at <http://loveclean.reading.gov.uk/account.logon> to report any environmental issues, including graffiti, dog mess, etc. (you can also send photos of the problem) or call RBC on **0118 937 3787**. Keep a note of the reference number.

Parking: For persistent parking on pavements call the Police on 101, with details of vehicle and location. Photos are helpful, but do not endanger yourself when taking them.

Other RBC services

Contact online via www.reading.gov.uk, see also links to specific services from www.cadra.org.uk, call **0118 937 3787**, or see www.reading.gov.uk/contactus for individual services.