



Round Up September 2023

Your committee met this week and there is plenty of news to share with you and anyone you would like to forward it to.

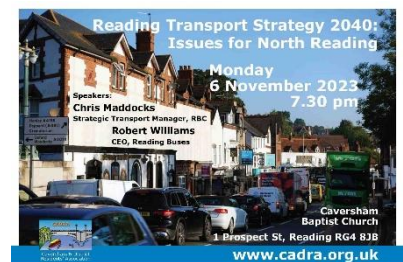
Autumn Open Meeting

The open meeting will take place at **7.30pm on Monday 6 November** in the Caversham Baptist Church, Prospect Street. As the Council prepares to launch its consultation on the [Draft Transport Strategy 2040](#), we are delighted to welcome Chris Maddocks, Strategic Transport Manager for Reading Borough Council and Robert Williams, CEO of Reading Buses to talk on the subject: **Reading Transport Strategy 2040 – Issues for North Reading**

We are all very aware of the downward spiral, where traffic congestion leads to unreliable public transport, which leads to lower usage, reduced income and hence further reductions in service. There are some significant challenges ahead so this promises to be an interesting evening on a subject which affects us all. Everyone is welcome. The **Autumn Newsletter** will be issued in October with further information about the meeting.

The Heights Primary School

As a result of changes in funding structure, the school is being urged by the Department of Education to increase class sizes from 25 to 30 and a [Planning Application](#) is in progress. This is a divisive issue. While there is a waiting list for the Heights School, the change may result in lower pupil numbers for other schools in Caversham, and hence reduced funding. There are existing issues with noise for neighbouring properties. The CADRA Committee took the decision to remain neutral and make no comment on the planning application. If you wish to comment, we understand the closing date has been extended and the application is being called in to the Planning Applications Committee.



Planning

There are still conditions to be discharged in relation to building on **Reading Golf Club**, including schemes for hard and soft landscaping. Thames Water has raised concerns over the potential for ground water contamination.

Large numbers of amended plans were added to the application for [Caversham Park](#) during August. These include radical changes to the proposed housing areas and the new care home. More of the main rooms in the house will be for communal use rather than conversion to apartments. A transport plan is available and a Construction Method Statement showing the route for construction traffic. One pillar of the entrance will need to be removed to allow large vehicles to pass and then be replaced as the project completes. We have [Commented](#) that the changes represent a considerable improvement over the original plans, but further work is still needed to meet the high standards appropriate for this unique site.

We continue to monitor for any planning application for either of the **triangles in central Caversham** – George Street/Gosbrook Road and Bridge Street/ Church Road. We share the concern that both are unsightly and are liaising with Councillors.

A request for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening opinion has been submitted for **Napier Court**, Napier Road ([231263](#)). This would provide 570 'build-to-rent' residential units over 11 storeys.

The application for the **Thames Valley Service Station** George Street (for provision of electric charging but removal of trees) has been withdrawn. A second application for a **15m 5G telecoms** installation on the corner of All Hallows Road and Henley Road ([231064](#)) has not yet been decided. There is an application for **tree work at St Peter's Church** ([231218](#)).

Centenary of Reading Bridge

Following a [Nomination](#) submitted jointly by CADRA and the Conservation Area Advisory Committee, the Planning Applications Committee agreed to add Reading Bridge to the Council's list of [Locally Important Buildings](#) and structures. This gives Reading Bridge equivalent status to Caversham Bridge which was built three years later and is recognised within St Peters Conservation Area. Preparations for the centenary on 3 October are in hand and it's hoped that the final lamp will be in place and the two plaques cleaned. The CADRA booklet on the history of the bridge is available from Fourbears Books or can be downloaded from our [Website](#). We also produced a guest blog for Reading Museum, which will be available from 3 October at [Guest Blog](#).

Reading Gaol

There is still no official information, but it appears that a sale has been agreed by the Ministry of Justice. There is talk that the 'preferred bidder' does not intend the site for commercial development but for charitable purposes. We will update you if we learn more.

Air quality – a Borough wide Smoke Control Area

Although much of Reading is within a Smoke Control Area (SCA), Caversham and Emmer Green are not yet included. When wood and coal is burned, fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) is released, with the potential to cause organ damage. Wood smoke also contains toxic and carcinogenic substances. A consultation has just been launched, proposing to extend the SCA across the Borough, including Caversham and Emmer Green. If you have an open fire or wood burning stove, you should study this to understand the restrictions imposed. The closing date is 16 October. [Have your say on plans to improve air quality](#)

Changes to local bus routes.

From 4 September, changes were introduced to the 23/24 and the 25 service and some minor timing changes to the 22. [Timetable Changes](#). The revised timetables are now available.

Kidmore End Road

CADRA and Ward Councillors pressed hard for the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) and parking restrictions to be held in abeyance with a one-way system in place for construction traffic. The one-way system will not be introduced until the new bell mouth junction has been constructed. Work on the junction has not yet started and not all the conditions have yet been discharged to allow the main work to start.

Congratulations to the volunteers who have secured funding for 280 new hedging plants to infill the Kidmore End Road hedge ready for a community planting task at the end of November.

Feedback on Reading Festival

We will shortly be sending comments to feed into the annual review process. If you have anything, positive or negative, you would like to add, or any suggestions for future years, please reply to this email before **Friday 22 September**.

South Oxfordshire Landscape Consultation

As part of the preparation for the Joint Local Plan for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, a new study has been launched to better understand, protect and enhance the unique landscapes across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, and we are all invited to have a say ([Landscape Character Assessment Background](#)). This is a very welcome initiative. If you value the countryside on our doorstep, please take the opportunity to say why you value those landscapes and what you think is impacting them. The closing date is **29 September** - [Start Responding](#).

Community Centres Consultation

The Council is carrying out a consultation seeking views on the area where you live and what you would like to see improved, both at community centres and in the wider area. This includes the Emmer Green Community Centre. [Community Centres Consultation](#). Closing date 13 October.

Christmas late night shopping in Caversham

The very popular annual event, with entertainment, market stalls, 'Reverse Santa' in Fourbears and much more, will take place on **Friday 8 December 2023**.

And finally

Between these monthly updates we share local information on the CADRA Facebook Page. It is available to everyone without joining Facebook, by going to our website [Home Page](#) and just scrolling down. The links are also at the end of this email. We make the monthly summaries freely available. If you find them useful and value what CADRA does please encourage others [to join](#), and of course keep your membership going - it's just £3 a year for the household.