

## **ROUND UP FEBRUARY 2026**

February continues our busy start to 2026. Our focus remains on the planning appeals for the land off **Kidmore End Road**, and the **Reading Local Plan** hearings, where the recent record-breaking days of rain mean flood risk and sewage issues seem even more relevant. We celebrate the **reopening of Kidmore Road**, the return of the no. 22 bus, and include important updates on local policing. We hope our news is interesting.

## **PLANNING**

### **Land west of Kidmore End Road**

We lead again with an update on the proposed 70 additional homes. The developers have now lodged appeals for **both** the South Oxfordshire (SODC) and Reading Borough Council (RBC) applications. The RBC application was for a road connecting the SODC housing site and the Reading development which is currently nearing completion.

The process is moving quickly, with all parties required to submit statements by **11th March**, and a public inquiry is expected to be in May.

Whilst SODC explicitly refused the plans ([P25/S1431/O](#)), the appeal against RBC is being made because RBC did not issue a decision within the required timeframe.

RBC's Planning Applications Committee (PAC) were advised to meet and agree that their decision would have been to approve the application ([PL/25/0691](#)). The actual decision on the road connection will be made by the Planning Inspector at the same time as the SODC housing appeal.

CADRA addressed the Committee but was disappointed that councillors did not discuss our key point that the proposal conflicts with Reading's own policies on cross-boundary development. This was one reason SODC gave for its own refusal.

The Committee discussed Section 106 payments (S106) at length. They resolved to increase the Council officer's recommendation of £50,000 for traffic improvements to £150,000. CADRA maintained that this is woefully low, as we understand the cost of upgrading The Last Crumb crossing alone could be £500,000 (Although we recognise the difficulties of the way that S106 contributions are calculated).

We remain concerned that Reading taxpayers will face the cost of infrastructure upgrades, with no adequate S106 compensation, to which Reading has no right. This will mean worsening traffic congestion and increased pressure on health services, whilst SODC receives the additional Council Tax from the 70 homes.

We thank those councillors who listened to our comments and then voted against the application.

### **Reading Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU)**

CADRA has been participating in the Inspector's Hearings to examine the LPPU, relating to our concern about the flood risk for new housing development at the site owned by Reading University on Christchurch Meadows. We are pleased to note that our comments echoed those of the Environment Agency (EA) who suggested that the proposal to build there is 'unsound'.

The EA also raised worrying comments regarding the lack of capacity at the Reading Sewage Treatment Works.

We also expressed our concern at the potential loss of trees from the proposed redevelopment of the Hemdean House site.

### **Caversham Park House**

Both the park and house are listed, and their major redevelopment ([PL/22/0409](#)) was permitted last year. It involves a substantial renovation of the house, with new houses and changes to the park layout, to create a care home, sheltered housing and new public access. The 141 conditions attached to the permission have now been published, and the developers will submit applications to discharge them. CADRA, RBC's Conservation Officer and Historic England have previously raised concerns about heritage protection and ecological impact, which will remain important when considering these conditions.

### **Caversham Centre**

The proposal for a new apartment block at **St Martins Precinct** ([PL/25/1608](#)) was refused because it represented a substantial change rather than a non-material amendment to the original 2014 permission ([PL/14/0997](#)). A full application will need to address appearance and landscaping and include consultations.

At **3 Prospect Street** ([PL/25/1211](#)), the change of use to a tanning and beauty salon has been approved. It will be welcome to see these long vacant premises occupied again, and CADRA hopes the conditions on refuse handling and the shopfront design will help ensure a positive contribution to the street scene.

In the **Conservation Area** in areas prone to flooding: at **6 Church Street** ([PL/26/0053](#)), a listed building application proposes internal works to provide essential flood mitigation measures. And at **18 Church Road** ([PL/25/1597](#)), where a substantial house extension has been refused on the grounds that its massing would harm the character of the Conservation Area.

### **Park Farm, Mapledurham**

This SODC application ([P26/S3688/FUL](#)) proposes converting the former dairy cattle barns to B8 commercial storage. CADRA has raised concerns about whether traffic would genuinely remain at current levels along the narrow lanes and farm roads popular with walkers and cyclists. Also of concern is the loss of biodiversity previously provided by the dairy herd that supported wildlife.

### **Across the river**

You may also be interested in the outline application for the redevelopment of **Forbury Retail Park, Kenavon Drive** ([PL/25/1706](#)), which proposes up to 700 homes and 3,000 sqm of commercial space across 12 blocks ranging from seven to twelve storeys on the site of the furniture warehouses.

### **KIDMORE ROAD SINK HOLE**

CADRA members will be pleased to note that **Kidmore Road has finally reopened**, following over a year of disruption caused by the sinkhole. We are sure residents are grateful to those who actively worked with Thames Water and RBC to get it sorted and keep them updated.

### **ON THE BUSES**

With the reopening of Kidmore Road, the **no. 22 bus** has returned to its original route. Reading Buses has extended its **£1.50 short-hop fare** to include Caversham Heights on the 22 route up to the 28th February. We urge residents to support the service by using it as much as possible.

### **SURLEY ROW CONSERVATION AREA**

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) is an excellent group responsible for appraising conservation areas across the town, with whom CADRA has worked closely on our two conservation areas. The [Surley Row Conservation Area Appraisal](#) is now being updated and we would love to hear from residents of Surley Row who are interested in helping.

### **CAVERSHAM BRIDGE NEWSPAPER**

We work closely with this wonderful local community newspaper and write the monthly Planning Bulletin. Caversham Bridge can be bought at several local shops or delivered to your door for £7 a year. They have asked us to remind their readers that subscriptions will be due on 1st April. Details at <https://cavershambridge.org>

The [Back Copies](#) of the newspaper going back to 1964 make fascinating reading. You may like to read this recent [article about CADRA!](#)

### **POST OFFICE WOES**

We are very worried about the closure of the post office on Conisboro Avenue. This is a real shock after the closure of the Henley Road post office.

### **RIVER NEWS**

It has been raining continuously for a record-breaking number of days, and the rivers are flowing very fast. The Thames and Kennet are both on flood alert and we would remind residents to be careful when walking near the river. Anyone crossing the weir at Caversham may have seen a boat trapped between two weir gates that allow the lock keeper to control the height of the river during periods of high rainfall. Boats on the weir gates will have an impact on the amount of water that can flow through those gates and thus impact the capacity of the weir. We have made both RBC and the Environment Agency aware so it can be removed when the river speed drops to a safe level.

### **KATESGROVE MURAL**

It is not in North Reading, but the Katesgrove Residents' Association has installed an amazing mural about Reading in the underpass. It is well worth a look on a day when it is not raining.

### **SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS**

#### **North Reading Safer Neighbourhood Forum (NRSNF)**

A well-attended meeting received an update on recent **Thames Valley Police** operations targeting shoplifting, drug enforcement and the seizure of illegal e-scooters and non-compliant e-bikes. Reading has recorded the highest number (26) of seized "Surron-style" bikes within the Thames Valley Police area.

**Drug enforcement operations** were carried out in local pubs, with one establishment in North Reading receiving a formal reminder of its licensing conditions.

Sergeant Abhilasha Bajwa has officially succeeded Sergeant Betsy Palmer.

The **Royal Berkshire and Reading Fire Services** (RBRFS) reported many fires in bins and parks across Reading and particularly in North Reading. It is thought that this might be related to a group of youths (although it is far from certain). RBC, RBRFS and groups like No.5 have said that they intend to do some education work with the schools, to try and mitigate the issue.

Residents raised several concerns including:

**Speeding on the A4074** approaching the Caversham section is a long-term issue. The forum will ask TVP to do some speed patrols in that area. Kidmore Road was also raised as a concern.

**Pedestrians walking at night in dark clothing:** Given a series of near misses in Upper Warren Avenue, residents have asked that anyone walking after dark could ensure that they and their dogs are wearing reflective clothing or carrying a light, and to walk on the right facing the oncoming traffic. Also of concern is The Warren, another popular walking route with no pavement.

**Dangerous Dogs:** There have been a series of incidents concerning one dog, some of which were not reported. It is worth noting that this is covered by the new Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) and we encourage you to report any worrying incidents.

**Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs):** RBC asked that we remind residents that the PSPOs will come into force on 24th March, covering e-bikes and e-scooters, street drinking, on street begging, dog control and dog fouling. Expect to see more media on this topic in the next month.

### **Safer Reading Forum (SRF)**

We have been asked by NRSNF's parent group to make residents aware that every three months the police will be seeking help to set their priorities. This will be done via Thames Valley Alert Surveys, which CADRA will post on its Facebook page.

There is a new Ai assistant on the TVP website called [Bobbi Ai Virtual Assistant](#).

### **CONSULTATIONS**

A reminder about the Priorities for Neighbourhood Spending of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - This consultation is about how RBC should prioritise spending the 15% CIL which will be allocated to North Reading. Since 2021 £4.7m has been allocated throughout the town. It closes on 18th Feb.

### **READING CITY OF CULTURE 2029**

The Council is considering applying for Reading to be the [City of Culture 2029](#).

### **AND FINALLY**

Each of you, by being a CADRA member makes our non-political voice stronger and helps us influence local authorities and key organisations that affect how North Reading is shaped. Thank you and the more the merrier, so please ask your friends and neighbours to [Join-us](#).