

ROUND UP JANUARY 2026

Welcome to 2026! We hope that there is something here that inspires and interests you. As well as our regular safer neighbourhood and planning sections, we have anniversaries to celebrate and opportunities for volunteering.

VOLUNTEERING

If you are looking to volunteer in 2026 there are some great groups in Caversham such as [Friends of Caversham Court Gardens](#), [Caversham Globe](#) and of course [CADRA](#)! Many thanks to Sarah Jones who has joined CADRA's Committee Support team to help with planning matters, focussing on Emmer Green.

ON THE BUSES

If your resolution is to use public transport more, then we have mixed news for you. Adult single fares within Reading are going up to £2.90 on the app and £3 on the bus. The short hop fare will also increase to £2, except for the short hop fare to Caversham, which we are pleased to see will remain at £1.50.

SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS

CADRA is deeply concerned about the destruction of a memorial bench in Mapledurham Playing Fields on New Years Eve. The bench was dedicated to Liz and Les Killick, both members of the CADRA team. Liz did a huge amount of work on the St Peter's Conservation Area Appraisal, recognised by it being dedicated to her memory. The bench and its plaque are expected to be replaced.

We know that a bench in Bugs Bottom was also recently damaged and we will be raising this issue at the next North Reading Safer Neighbourhood Forum.

We are working with WADRA, Thames Valley Police, RBC and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue to implement procedures to help prevent similar instances occurring.

North Reading Safer Neighbourhood Forum's (NRSNF) next meeting is on Monday 19th January at the Weller centre at 7pm. This is your opportunity to meet the local police team and representatives from Reading Borough Council. It is a free event and all are welcome.

CHAZEY BARN

There are only six Grade I Listed Buildings in Reading and just one north of the river. Tucked away at the end of The Warren is Chazey Barn, built around 1611 and largely unaltered. It is in a terrible state, and locals have recently reported to us that the scaffolding supporting the structure has been partially removed, allegedly due to unpaid invoices. We are very worried that unless something is done soon it will collapse, leaving it beyond repair. We are trying to get a resolution and are in contact with Historic England, RBC and a local councillor who understands the background—[Historic Official Listing](#)—[CADRA Local History](#)

PLANNING

Emmer Green

Application [PL/25/0691](#) requests Reading Borough Council (RBC) to permit road access into the borough from the proposed development of 70 homes on **Land West of Kidmore End Road** in South Oxfordshire. Despite South Oxfordshire District Council's (SODC) refusal of the development, the RBC planning officer has advised the Planning Applications Committee (PAC) to debate this in February and record the decision they would have taken, since an appeal is very likely.

CADRA believes a debate could address its specific concerns on the boundary and give transparency to the planning process, because PAC submitted their comments on the SODC development application, saying it would be minded to object to the application without increased S106 contributions. To ensure PAC debates it, we have asked ward councillors to call it in, to force a debate.

RBC Local Plan Partial Update

CADRA has now submitted evidence to the Government Inspector for the Stage 2 examination in February. We wrote that the land behind the Reading University Boat Club, accessed from Abbotsmead Place, is not suitable for new homes due to a significant risk of flooding and should be removed from the list of possible sites, as it would be in breach of national planning regulations. We are pleased that the Environment Agency's comments appear to be very similar to ours, with their suggestion that any development on this land is not deliverable and "would be inconsistent with national policy".

The Hemdean House School land entry has been amended to reflect its Local Listing, which CADRA obtained. Recently, [Churchill Living](#) published their proposals for building retirement units there.

Eye & Dunsden Parish Neighbourhood Plan

In South Oxfordshire, in addition to the District Local Plan, each parish has its own plan. These are statutory documents that give communities the direct power to shape and set policies for development in their local area. As Kidmore End and Eye & Dunsden parishes both border north Reading, their plans can affect us. Eye & Dunsden are consulting on their plan, on which CADRA has submitted supportive comments. One of their key policies is maintaining the green gap between parish developments and the Reading border, which is a particular concern for Caversham and Emmer Green.

St Peter's Conservation Area

2-4 Church Street (PL/25/1828) - Renovation of what was the Spice Oven (a listed building) has already been granted, subject to conditions, and this application describes the proposed external materials to be used. Most importantly, the Church Street facing side should be in keeping with its historic nature and its neighbouring buildings. As we previously reported, CADRA continues to request answers about the nature and quality of the work that has started, contacting both the Council and ward Councillors. We are also asking the Conservation Area Advisory Committee for its help and expertise, given that this is a Grade 2 listed building and the first building that people see as they enter Caversham from Caversham Bridge.

10B Bridge Street (PL/25/1693) - A proposal for a partial demolition and new rear extension, to provide a ground-floor flat and shop, with a five-bedroom HMO above. This is one more bedroom than the previously approved scheme. Given the site's location on a busy street and with several properties already converted to HMOs, on which CADRA has raised concerns regarding increased noise, refuse management, and the ever higher residential density.

18 Church Road (PL/25/1597) - Permission is sought for a substantial extension, which has prompted concerns about flood risk. CADRA has requested Council planners that the Environment Agency reviews the flood risks associated with this proposal.

43 Church Road (PL/25/1017) - This charming eighteenth-century Grade II listed building has received approval for a roof replacement.

Caversham Centre

3 Prospect Street (PL/25/1211) - This proposes a change of use into a tanning and beauty salon. CADRA has requested information on the plans for the shopfront, which must demonstrate compliance with Reading's Shop Front Design Code.

Phone Box outside 29 Church Street - An appeal has been made against the refusal of applications ([PL/25/1352](#)) and ([PL/25/1357](#)) seeking to replace it with a BT Street Hub and LED display. Refusal was on the grounds of their height, being visual clutter, pedestrian obstruction, noise, and light pollution. The Council have refused all recent BT Hub applications across the town.

CADRA's CHRISTMAS COLOURING COMPETITION

We are delighted to say the winner of our competition was an 8-year-old with this wonderful entry, which was based on a drawing of Caversham Court Gardens, a place dear to the hearts of many residents.



TRUE FOOD CO-OP

Emmer Green's [True Food Co-op](#), around for over 25 years, might meet your healthy eating and wellness goal resolutions. It provides a comprehensive range of premium organic groceries, unpackaged produce, artisan bread, and organic meats. Their stock includes a variety of dry goods and tinned foods, complemented by a refill station where customers can top up their own containers with household and body care liquids.

ANNIVERSARIES

A new year brings new anniversaries and here are two.

This year marks the centenary of Caversham Bridge. Look out for the CADRA booklet about the bridge which will be launched later this year. You will be able to find out more about Caversham Bridge at CADRA's AGM and open meeting on 19th May 2026.

2026 is also the 100th year anniversary of the founding of Reading University as an independent organisation.

CONSULTATIONS

Now is the time to get your views heard on a couple of key issues in Reading:

[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—**Closes 18th Feb.**

[Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal](#) - The Council is consulting on a new appraisal for this conservation area. This amazing piece of work has been prepared on behalf of RBC by the volunteers at the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee, so please comment even if it is just to say thank you - **Closes 20th Jan.**

FINALLY—If you are reading this as a non-member, why not make a New Year resolution to [Join CADRA](#).