



ROUND UP JULY 2026

Welcome to our July Round Up and it's been another busy month in North Reading. Saving the No. 22 bus route is such good news for so many members who relied on that service. It proves that a community pulling together and having a strong relationship with councillors and local service chiefs can make a difference.

PLANNING

Kidmore End Road Appeal Court Challenge (Golf Course)

CADRA has now received formal notification that Fairfax, acting for Reading Golf Club, has lodged a High Court challenge to the Inspector's dismissal of the Kidmore End Road appeal. As a Rule 6 Party, we will receive all court documents throughout the process.

The challenge begins with the Permission Stage, where a judge in chambers considers written submissions from Fairfax and from the Government Legal Department, acting for the Planning Inspectorate. At this stage, the judge decides only whether the challenge is arguable in law — not whether the Inspector's planning judgement was correct. Permission may be granted, refused, or refused with the option of a short oral hearing.

We have received both Fairfax's initial challenge statement and the Government Legal Department's response. For those interested, we have bundled them together, starting with the decision notice, at: [Challenge Documents](#).

In summary, the Inspector's decision notice identifies three principal reasons for dismissal: conflict with South Oxfordshire's spatial strategy, harm to the locally valued landscape, and incompatibility with the established rural settlement pattern.

The appellant's challenge argues that the Inspector misapplied planning policy and reached legally flawed conclusions, particularly regarding landscape value, settlement pattern, and the interpretation of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It also questions whether appropriate weight was given to housing need, whether the neighbourhood plan was applied correctly, and whether the assessments of landscape harm and locational sustainability were reasonable.

The Government Legal Department's response addresses each point and explains how the Inspector's reasoning was proper, policy-compliant, and robust.

We think the challenge reads more like a disagreement with the Inspector's judgement than a claim of legal procedural flaws, and therefore should be dismissed.

Caversham Court (PL/26/0617)

A comprehensive package of repair and conservation works is proposed for the Gazebo, Causeway, Stable Block boundary wall, gate piers, and the East screen wall. As this is the Council's own application and affects Listed Buildings, the Planning Applications Committee will meet to consider a recommendation to approve with conditions. These works are important to safeguard one of Caversham's most significant heritage assets.

2 Bridge Street (PL/26/0736)

At the former Persian Palace site, the application relates to the waterfront extension and seeks approval of Condition 1 (Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment). CADRA commented that the plan is not workable. It does not address debris management, which is a key factor during flooding events and can significantly increase

blockage and flow risk. Debris also accumulates as a consequence of the normal flow of the river, as well as waste from the premises.

Land at the Rear of 88 Knights Way (PL/26/0679)

Emmer Green Kindergarten proposes installing a Portakabin to provide 30 additional nursery places and space for three staff. The site backs onto a service road used by nearby flats and shops. While the expansion would support much-needed early years provision, local concerns include noise and traffic impacts. It is also important that educational safeguards — such as staff ratios and outdoor space — are maintained and that environmental impact is minimised.

2–4 Church Street (PL/19/1530)

Over several years there have been renovation applications for the Listed 2–4 Church Street, formerly the Spice Oven, without any work being done. The recently approved application proposes demolishing part of the rear of the restaurant, constructing four flats, and updating the Church Street frontage to create two retail units. This building and its neighbours form a key historic gateway into Caversham. CADRA has followed and commented on all related applications. We recently raised concerns with the Planning Officer about which of two permissions is operative and how the quality of the ongoing work will be ensured. Given the importance of preserving the heritage of this Listed Building, we also informed Ward Councillors. The Planning Officer has confirmed they share some of our concerns, will be undertaking a site visit, and will keep CADRA informed.

OXFORDSHIRE REORGANISATION

The Government has confirmed that Oxfordshire will move to unitary councils from April 2028. There are no changes to Reading's borders, but we will have a new neighbour: Ridgeway Council, formed from three existing councils, with a population of almost half a million and an area considerably larger than South Oxfordshire District Council. The new Greater Oxford Council will have a similar population, taking in many parishes around the old city and extending south to the edge of Benson.

The announcement emphasises that Greater Oxford will have a distinct voice in future devolution arrangements and could be a preferred partner for a possible Development Corporation. One sentence could apply equally to Reading: *“some of our smaller cities are highly productive, but have been constrained by tight boundaries, set decades ago, which stop them from building the homes they need.”* It goes on to say that any Reading expansion into West Berkshire settlements is a matter for the Local Government Boundary Commission.

BUS ROUTE 22 – SAVED FOR NOW

The proposed withdrawal of Route 22 caused deep upset and frustration across Caversham Heights. The meeting hosted by Matt Rodda MP at Highdown School brought those concerns into sharp focus. The room was full, the discussion lively, and residents spoke clearly about how the withdrawal would affect their lives. Many explained how unsuitable the X40 is as an alternative — the long walks to stops, steep gradients, ticketing incompatibility, crossing the A4074 and reliability issues are all major barriers.

CADRA Chair Nick Haskins gave a balanced report, acknowledging the difficulties but urging the Council to listen and explore the suggestions we and others have put forward. Crucially, local councillors acknowledged the scale of community concern, highlighted survey responses, and recognised the social need for this route. The Lead Councillor for Transport stated that he wanted the 22 to continue in some form and recognised the urgency.

CADRA had suggested to local councillors and the Lead Councillor for Transport that an existing government funding stream might offer a practical way forward. We were therefore pleased to see that the eventual solution followed the same principle. The Council announced that they *“will provide a one-off capital grant to Reading Buses to purchase a new electric bus which, alongside the existing Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) funding grant from Government, will allow the valuable service between Caversham Heights and Reading Town Centre to continue to operate”*.

Residents will have noted that the proposed timetable will still be reduced and that the subsidy has a limited timescale. Reading Buses has urged residents to make use of the bus to show support for this decision. CADRA would like to thank residents, councillors, RBC and Reading Buses for their hard work and for finding a solution. We will continue to keep the dialogue open.

READING FESTIVAL

The festival has applied to extend its licence for live music to include Thursday and to increase alcohol sales hours to 3am. CADRA has been speaking to several stakeholders about this proposal. If you are concerned that these changes might impact you, please let us know.

NORTH READING SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Reading's Community Safety Survey

This annual survey is your chance to share your views on how safe you feel and the crime issues affecting you. Your feedback helps make Reading safer and is important, as the Council uses it to set priorities for the Community Safety Partnership. Please take a minute to complete the survey at: [Community Safety Survey 2026](#)

Younger readers can complete the [No 5 Safety Survey](#), which collects similar data in a slightly different format.

Fires

There have been several fires across North Reading recently. Everywhere is very dry and the wildfire severity index is currently "very high". We are working with Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service (RBFRS) to highlight areas at risk. If there is an area you are particularly worried about, please let us know.

OTHER RBC CONSULTATIONS

The Council is consulting on a draft appraisal for The Mount Conservation Area, covering streets between Allcroft Road and Christchurch Road near RBH. The appraisal has been prepared by the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC). These are always fascinating pieces of work highlighting the character and heritage of a particular area. Please take a minute to read this appraisal at: [The Mount Conservation Area](#)

And a reminder that CAAC are asking for help with the Surley Row appraisal in Emmer Green. If you can help or contribute information about Surley Row, please let us know.

HEDGEHOGS IN FOCUS

A researcher at the University of Reading is looking for volunteers to help with a project on hedgehogs. Volunteers can choose to participate in one, two, or all three projects, and no prior experience is needed. If you are interested, you can find more details at: [Garden Wildlife Watch](#)

CAVERSHAM CENTRE PLANTERS

A huge thank you to the Caversham Globe volunteers who are replacing some of the planters in the centre of Caversham. The team maintains all the planters, helping to keep the centre looking wonderful.

ST PETER'S RAISE THE ROOF FETE

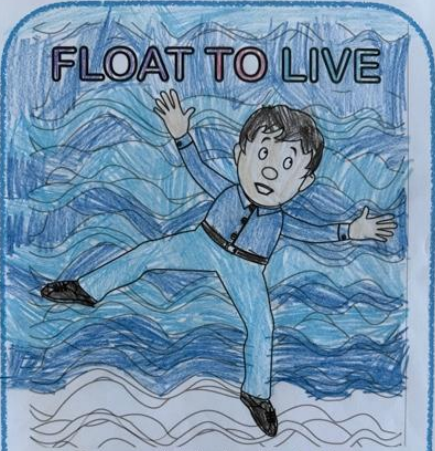
Thank you to everyone who visited us at the fete. We were delighted that our special guests: local councillors, the Mayor and our MP came to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of Caversham Bridge and the launch of CADRA's book about it (available from Fourbears bookshop). We were pleased to host Caversham Bridge Newspaper, Friends of Caversham Court Gardens and Caversham Globe on our stalls.

Each year we try to focus on a safety topic, and we were thrilled that our special guests all took the opportunity to learn about throw lines for river rescues. Our colouring competition also had a safety theme, supporting the Fire Brigade's Float to Live campaign. At the end are the two winners — the first chosen by the CADRA committee, the second by RBFRS Service Prevention Manager Gail Muirhead.

Heading into the summer holiday period, we hope all our members enjoy a well-earned break, whether staying close to home or travelling further afield. CADRA will continue to monitor local issues throughout and keep in touch with partners where needed. Wherever you are, don't forget to look out for our August Round Up. For general queries email us: info@cadra.org.uk and for all membership [Join-us](#).

CADRA

FLOAT TO LIVE



If you get into trouble in the water, lie on your back, make a star shape and float.

in partnership with ROYAL RESCUE CHARTER

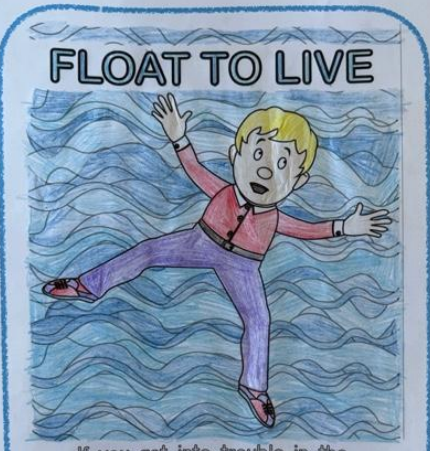
TICK ☒

I know how to float like a BIG STARFISH

Parent name: _____ My age: 5

CADRA

FLOAT TO LIVE



If you get into trouble in the water, lie on your back, make a star shape and float.

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TICK ☒

I know how to float like a BIG STARFISH

Parent name: _____ My age: 9