



## **CADRA MARCH ROUND UP**

As spring edges in, there's certainly no shortage of activity across north Reading. We bring you our thoughts on the South Oxfordshire houses appeal, whose dismissal many of us want. There are river-related and wastewater processing concerns, possible movement on traffic safety measures and help improving public safety orders. On a lighter side, there are new trees in Caversham, the May Walks Festival and an uplifting concert in Emmer Green.

## **PLANNING**

### **Land west of Kidmore End Road – Appeal Update**

The main news is again about the appeal to allow a 70-home development on the former golf course land whose refusal will be defended by South Oxfordshire, and permission for an access road onto Emmer Green Drive involving Reading Borough Council.

With the public inquiry in May, and documents required in advance, CADRA has been drafting its formal submission and working closely with Kidmore End Parish Council (KEPC). Whilst we will both address the issues from our own perspectives, the cooperation has underlined how much we all value the Chiltern landscape and how concerned we both are at how easily what we have could be damaged if care is not taken. This land in Oxfordshire is part of its continuous rural fringe of woods and valleys that parish councils have recognised in their Local Plans as providing an important separation for rural communities in Oxfordshire, while Reading residents understand that these areas provide them access to countryside for leisure activities.

Whilst recognising the need for homes, we are also very aware of current residents' concerns about North Reading's already stretched GP surgeries, schools, utilities and roads. It is obvious that the roads in the areas are heavily congested, even out of peak times, as traffic competes to cross the bridges, and there are no obvious solutions planned for or funded to alleviate the problems.

Would the development function as part of Emmer Green? Yet all council tax, police and fire services revenue would be expected to go to South Oxfordshire. It appears to us that Reading would be unlikely to receive sufficient funding to support the extra demand and cost of its services.

### **In Other Planning News**

All this month's new applications are for the redevelopment of **Caversham Park House**, and some of the park, for use as retirement housing and a care home. The applications are the first of many conditions that need approval so meaningful work can start. They include how the removal and reinstatement of the site's historic gate piers will be managed ([PL/26/0188](#)), land contamination assessments ([PL/26/0190](#)), wastewater network capacity, and minor amendments to bin and cycle storage arrangements ([PL/26/0246](#)). While most of these pose no concern, CADRA understands that processing the extra wastewater ([PL/26/0204](#)) may need infrastructure work by Thames Water, whose plans are not entirely clear. We have more on this later. As we know, the ecological damage from untreated wastewater into our rivers is of national concern.

On **Bridge Street**, Caversham ([PL/25/1693](#)) an application to add an extra bedroom to the ground floor flat within an approved mixed-use development (which includes a shop and upper-floor HMO) has now been approved with conditions covering refuse management, flood mitigation, and bat and swift boxes.

## WHAT A STINK!

Evidence at the **Reading Local Plan Partial Update** examination has revealed serious questions about the real capacity of Reading Sewage Treatment Works (STW).

Thames Water had already warned South Oxfordshire District Council that it could not confirm whether the foul water network could support new development without major upgrades. But the situation proved even more concerning when the Environment Agency (EA) clarified that Reading STW operates under a different permit than the one assumed in the Local Plan.

This appears to mean its effective treatment capacity is significantly lower than previously stated, and the flows into the STW have breached that limit in three of the last four years. In other words, the plant is already running close to the edge. Next, in our River News, you'll read about the current effect of the heavy rains.

The EA has now warned that any additional flows could trigger pumping station failures and cause environmental harm to Foudry Brook. Their position is clear: no further housing or growth should be connected until essential network improvements are delivered.

## RIVER NEWS

With high rainfall earlier this year, all eyes were on the river. The high flow rate resulted in several issues. We are glad that the boat jammed in between main gates 1 and 2 at Caversham Weir has been removed. This limited the Environment Agency's ability to respond to the volume of water in the river and is still true for side weir gate number 6, which seemed to have an issue with its motor and is locked in the closed position. Higher upstream there is a tree that has fallen in the river and blocking the navigation channel by Poplar Island. Trees can have a significant impact if they come loose and reach the weir. We have reported all these to the Environment Agency and the River User Group and look forward to the Environment Agency resolving these issues.

The high flow rate meant that **Reading University Boat Club Head (RUBC)**, which was due to run on 7th March, unfortunately had to be cancelled. RUBC will have been disappointed to cancel this prestigious race in its centenary year. RUBC Head is the only race on Caversham Stretch which is given permission to close the river.

## ROADS, TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT

RBC has been awarded £33.7m capital grant and £4.9m revenue grant from government. RBC's **Local Transport Delivery Plan** sets down the ways this will be spent. This would seem to potentially allow funding for the road safety schemes raised by north Reading residents that are on the [RBC's Principle Measures List](#).

## NORTH READING SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

The next meeting will be on 1st June. NRSNF is very aware of the recent issues in Clayfield Copse and has been contacted by a Councillor about this issue.

The new **Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)** in Reading will come into force from the 24th March 2026. It aims to curb anti-social behaviour, including aggressive begging, street drinking, misuse of e-bikes/e-scooters, and dog fouling. It empowers police and council officers to issue fines or enforce restrictions to maintain public safety.

## OTHER NEWS

### Caversham Court Gardens

CADRA was pleased to recently join councillors, Friends of Caversham Court, Caversham GLOBE, Reading Tree Wardens and RBC's tree team for the planting of **three new trees** in Caversham Court Gardens, with more replacement trees to come. This is part of a series of tree planting to replace felled trees elsewhere in Reading. We look forward to watching these trees develop!

## **Olly's Work**

CADRA was delighted to attend their **Community Concert** at Highdown School. Martyn Strong arranged a wonderful concert of musical talent. The Vocalese Choir opened and closed the event with beautiful renditions of one of Olly's favourite songs 'Starman'. Local singers Lisa Winship, Julie Kench, Martyn Strong and Highdown pupils Aaditva and Ashni all gave fantastic performances of audience favourites including songs written just for the concert. Martyn is hoping to turn the event into an annual occurrence. We hope that he does and will thoroughly recommend the event for next year!

Olly's Work would like you to know that the government is consulting on the impact of social media use on young people. This consultation closes on 26 May 2026. There are three surveys to choose from:

[Full consultation for anyone](#)

[Survey for parents and carers of young people aged 21 and under](#)

[Survey for children and young people \(aged 10 to 21\)](#)

## **Then and Now**

We would also recommend the [Then and Now](#) exhibition that is currently showing at Reading Museum. The exhibition includes photos and pictures from the past 250 years, right up to 2026 and is supported by Reading Civic Society.

One of the photographers who provided the photos was the wonderful local photographer **Clive Ormonde** who has helped with so many projects including many in Emmer Green along with his wife. Sadly, Clive passed away shortly after the exhibition opened. He will be fondly remembered by all of us at CADRA and our thoughts are with his wife and family.

## **Mapledurham Playing Fields**

In other news, we are delighted to see that Liz and Les Killick's memorial bench has been replaced, just in time for the sunshine. Thank you to the RBC officers that expedited this matter quickly.

## **Do you have green fingers?**

If you live in Emmer Green and would like to help with the plant beds near Budgens, could you please let us know? Or, if you live in Caversham and would like to help watering the planters in Caversham then please let us know and we will put you in contact with Caversham Globe.

## **Lace Up for the Reading Walks Festival 2026**

Get ready to explore our town on foot from **9th - 17th May**. This year's theme celebrates Reading's waterways, featuring 43 guided walks including the Thames, River Kennet, Holybrook and the Kennet & Avon Canal. Whether you're interested in local history or nature, you can [browse and book now](#), but don't wait; one walk has already sold out.

## **AND FINALLY**

Please make a note that the **CADRA AGM and open meeting will be on 19th May at Caversham Baptist Church**. We look forward to seeing you then.

We hope our monthly update is a reminder of what makes our corner of Reading so special: a community that pays attention, gets involved, and celebrates the good things together. We believe CADRA makes a difference, demonstrated by us having a record number of new members last month, to whom we say welcome. To all our members, thank you for your support and as usual please encourage your friends and neighbours to [join-us](#).