

CADRA News

Caversham & District Residents' Association

The Voice of Caversham since 1967



October's Round Up brings major planning updates, local history talks on those topical Normans, upcoming events, and ways to have your say in council consultations. Read on for all this and more from across Caversham and the wider community.

AUTUMN MEETING: CAVERSHAM AND THE NORMANS

The Bayeux Tapestry and the Baa-Ewe Tapestry (Shaun the Sheep) continue to be hot news. We are sure that some of you will have seen the Reading Museum social media about why Battle in Reading is so named. Well, it is all because of '1066 and all that'!

Our Autumn meeting on **Wednesday 18 November 2026** begins with John Painter (Friends of Reading Abbey) and Anne Curry (Professor Emeritus Southampton University) explaining the huge impact of the Normans in Caversham and beyond. Then, highlighting just how much the Normans are still in our psyche, Toby Davies (Artistic Director RABBLE Theatre) will describe RABBLE's 2027 production about the most famous Norman of all; William the Conqueror.

CADRA Autumn Open Meeting - 7.30pm Wednesday 18 November 2026, Caversham Baptist Church, doors open at 7pm.

PLANNING National Policy Update: What's Changing

Recent regulatory changes are reshaping how local developments are handled. New planning delegation rules, effective from the 31 October, mean most applications and conditions will be decided directly by planning officers rather than a Council's Planning Committee. Read CADRA's Delegation Review. And a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) introduces tighter protections for National Landscapes alongside powerful new housing-supply rules affecting cross-border areas like South Oxfordshire. Read CADRA's NPPF Review.

Together they shift the emphasis to officer-led decisions and tighter national policies, though our community's right to comment and object remains. Larger developments may still be considered by the Planning Committee.

The RBC Planning Committee discussed these changes at their October meeting. The briefing papers they received provide a comprehensive description of both the Delegation Rules and the NPPF Changes, which members may find interesting.

Land West of Kidmore End Road (70 Houses)

As many will know, a senior High Court judge has refused Fairfax (acting on Reading Golf Club's behalf) permission for a high court review of the planning appeal dismissal (Refusal Letter). He found all the grounds made in Fairfax's submitted papers unarguable. It is great news for Emmer Green and the wider community that a judge has upheld the government appeal inspector's decision. However, Fairfax have exercised their right to request a short court plea before a judge, to argue for permission to have a full court review. Overturning both a previous High Court judge's paper refusal and the original planning inspector's decision means they must meet a very high legal threshold. The oral hearing is scheduled for one hour on 25 February 2027, with the decision handed down at the hearing or very shortly after.

Thank you to all our members and residents for your continued support, vigilance, and commitment to safeguarding our neighbourhood's future.

New Applications

3 Gravel Hill Cottages, Blagrave Lane (PL/26/1295): For this Grade II listed detached cottage, a 1.5-storey rear extension of two floors and an internal wall reinstatement is proposed. Ideally, heritage preservation seeks to ensure that such historic buildings continue to stand entirely independently, but modern living standards require adaptation. The extension stands apart at the rear and is shown connected to the cottage via a singlestorey glazed walkway.

2–4 Church Street aka Spice Oven (PL/26/1083): This describes how several conditions required by application PL/19/1530 will be met, such as: materials (e.g. types of bricks, roofs, and windows), a construction management scheme, provision of cycle spaces, refuse and recycling arrangements, a biodiversity enhancement statement, hard and soft landscaping design, meeting building regulations and sustainability, and also an archaeological report. While these go some way towards addressing CADRA's concerns, we are still looking for detail to fill gaps and reassure us that this key heritage and listed building is restored appropriately.

Hills Meadow Car Park, George Street (PL/26/1116): Permission has been granted for this year's Christmas festival featuring an ice rink, marquee, fairground rides and stalls, which runs from 7 November 2026 to 3 January 2027. CADRA had commented, reiterating similar concerns we made in previous years regarding potential damage to the vulnerable green edge between the footpath and site by heavy lorries during set-up and removal.

Application Updates

Land to the rear of 88 Knights Way (PL/26/0679): The proposed extension of the Emmer Green Kindergarten was refused due to its impact on surrounding residents, inadequate parking, design and landscaping concerns, and its failure to meet environmental, climate change, and mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements.

18 Church Road (PL/25/1597): This proposal for a 1.5-storey side extension, double-storey rear extension, and garden alterations has had the owner's planning appeal allowed, despite local and Council concerns over massing, conservation area impact and flood risk.

2 Norman Place (PL/24/0958) on Vastern Road: This major rental residential 11 storey redevelopment has seen revisions that include a reduction in homes from 254 down to 236, an expanded roof terrace, improved public spaces, an added green roof, and a revised Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

OUR REGULAR NEWS TOPICS North Reading Safer Neighbourhood Forum

There was a very constructive meeting in Emmer Green this month. It is always interesting to hear what residents have to say. It became clear that the anti-social behaviour (ASB) events which concerned them were committed by the same group of individuals. This also highlighted the benefit of having both the police and the RBC ASB team at these meetings.

The police gave us an update on recent issues. This included changes to the way that retail crime is being dealt with across Reading and how this will improve their ability to prevent crime. They also described an undercover drug-dealing operation in North Reading that resulted in a four-year conviction.

The police regularly ask residents about what their priorities should be focussed on. Recently the top priority has been modified e-bikes on pavements, leading to an operation where two bikes and an e-scooter were seized, and liaising with immigration officials to identify e-bike users. The operation also resulted in an arrest for suspected burglary, multiple searches for drugs and chasing down a shop lifter.

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services also reminded residents at the forum of how to stay safe with fireworks. They always **recommend** attending an organised event rather than setting off fireworks on your own. More details on firework and bonfire safety are available here: Celebrating Safely

River Matters
Caversham lock has suffered a series of mechanical failures during the latter part of 2026. We know that the Environment Agency is working on repairs to this and other locks. It has informed residents that "We are planning lock gate winch point works at Boulters, Cookham, Hurley, Caversham, Mapledurham, Cleeve and Abingdon locks between March and August 2027". These works typically close the footpath crossing at the lock. We will keep members informed once we have more details.

OTHER NEWS Halloween in Caversham
Two dates for your Halloween diary: The Friends of Caversham Court Gardens are hosting their Halloween Trail on 31 October and 1 November. This spooktacular trail of over 20 creepy ghosts, witches and other frightening creatures is made from recycled materials by a wonderful local artist, Hester Casey. All are welcome but children must be accompanied by an adult. It is a free event, but trail guides are available for £1 minimum cash donation.

And Caversham Traders have joined together to create a Trick or Treat Trail. The Trail date is 31 October and they would love to see you dressed up in Caversham. The traders' windows will be dressed well before then, and it is rumoured that Lisa Goddard actor will be awarding a prize for the spookiest window!

And while we are talking about Caversham Traders, many of you will have seen that The Edit has moved next to Waitrose and their vacated shop is being renovated. Men's fashion boutique 'Slow Time Monday' will be opening on 23rd October in the vacated shop on Prospect Street. We hope that their first physical store is a success and are delighted that they chose Caversham.

Olly's Work at Alto Lounge
A big thank you to the staff at Alto Lounge in Caversham who have organised several events to support Amanda Stephen's charity Olly's Work. Members of the CADRA committee thoroughly enjoyed the cakes at the first sale. The next event is a Halloween Quiz on 22nd October followed by another cake sale on 30th October.

CADRA Donations
From time to time CADRA makes donations to good causes. This year the committee decided to make a donation of £600 to Caversham Globe and £200 to Caversham AFC Football Club.

Caversham Globe maintains all the planters in the centre of Caversham, replacing the plants and flowers, and organising volunteers to water them. CADRA's £600 donation will buy a replacement hardwood planter in Caversham Centre. Click the link above if you want to help or know more.

Caversham AFC Football Club is one of several excellent football clubs in North Reading. They are in the process of improving the pavilion on their grounds next to Clayfield Copse. Such clubs are incredibly important in terms of providing safe spaces for young people away from home and school and promoting physical and mental wellbeing.

St Peter's Church Yard
The Church has asked us to make residents aware that building works to repair the roof will begin shortly. This will result in a temporary weekday closure of the much-used asphalt footpath next to Caversham Court which runs to The Warren. It is likely that there will be an alternative route through the churchyard itself, but this route is unlikely to be suitable for those with mobility or visibility impairments. See the Church's Notice.

Alan Wright
Alan Wright passed away at the end of August 2026. He was a highly valued and well-respected committee member of both CADRA and of The North Reading Safer Neighbourhood Forum. He made a significant contribution to both organisations for many years. He will be missed by all of us.

RBC CONSULTATIONS

Amersham Road estate 20mph Zone Proposal - There is a proposed introduction of a 20mph zone for the Amersham Road estate. This will require some additional street furniture. This is the statutory consultation on that proposal.

Reading Town Centre Vision - Help shape the future of the town centre. The Council has prepared a Draft Town Centre Vision and Delivery Plan, which sets out a long-term vision for Central Reading and identifies priority projects to help deliver it.

Council Tax Support Scheme - The Council is looking for comments on its proposal to replace its current Tax Support Scheme for working-age residents with a new simplified income-banded scheme from April 2027.

And as usual, please forward this email to those who might be interested and encourage them to Join-us.