



CADRA news

Caversham And District Residents' Association

The First edition of CADRA News in this format was very well received, so we have decided to adopt the style for future editions. Here you will find more news about CADRA and the Caversham area.

The 34th CADRA AGM was held on the 9th April. The members present, after a lively discussion, adopted the proposed New Constitution in its entirety. All current Members have received a copy, as will all new members. The main changes are new objectives and responsibilities and the need for Committee Members to stand for re-election in rotation every three years.

The second event was the election of the Committee for the coming year. (See back page.) Three members retired, Cllr Annette Hendry, May Leach and Dorothy Gardiner. The Chairman

...ensuring that the Association is always run for the benefit of its members.

paid tribute to their contribution over the years, and presented bouquets and certificates. Recently we were sad to hear that our excellent Secretary,

Tom Chadwick, had also decided to retire. Tom has worked hard for CADRA; we are very grateful and wish him well. We are pleased to welcome Linda Watsham to the post.

The new Constitution and Committee will help us to develop CADRA, incorporating new ideas while keeping the best of the old, and ensuring that the Association is always run for the benefit of its members. Of course, nine people cannot presume to know all the various views of our members. We must encourage dialogue, and provide opportunities for all members to reach us and share their views;

these Newsletters are part of that process. We want to encourage a common purpose, to preserve and enhance the quality of life in Caversham and the surrounding district. We hope that you will continue to support us, and help us to attract new members.

Caversham is much larger than many people realise, with an amazing variety of people living and working here; all are important to us.

Please talk to us.

STOP PRESS Electoral Ward Boundary Review

We have just received notice that there is to be a review of Electoral Ward Boundaries in Reading. Owing to recent expansion, there are now too few Councillors to represent us in Caversham. One proposal is to create a new ward which straddles the Thames, another is to introduce a new small ward (one Councillor) at Mapledurham, and shuffle the

boundaries of Caversham, Peppard and Thames wards. The latter seems vastly preferable to us, but please contact RBC with *your* views. Please write to: Head of Legal Services, Civic Centre, Reading RG1 7TD BEFORE 31 August. Write to us if you want us to present your views anonymously. *More information can be found at www.reading.gov.uk/wardreview*

Inside this issue:

Editorial	1
Travel Information	2
Impact of Development	2
Recycling	2
Letters	3
Boundary Review	3
Voluntary Action	3
How to contact CADRA	4
Safer Caversham Forum	4
Caversham Court	4

The Impact of Small Housebuilding Developments

Derek Bartlett

For some time, the CADRA committee has been concerned about the cumulative affect of small building developments on our already over-crowded roads and primary schools. When a major development is contemplated, such as 96 homes behind Lower Henley Road, 130 homes behind Henley Road, 50 homes behind Queen's Road and 41 more homes on Bugs Bottom, the Council's Planning Department takes account of the impact on neighbouring road and educational resources. When a planning application is received for just one or two houses on a plot of unused land or on part of a back garden, traffic and schools considerations do not impact on the determination of the application. Yet our research shows that during the 18 months till 30th June, applications

were received to build 324 dwellings on small plots. This is more than the total number of homes in the four major building projects listed above.

It is only too evident that our major roads carry too much traffic at peak times and that our primary school population is not concentrated where the primary schools are located. In our view, this unhappy situation has been made worse by the practice of considering small building applications in isolation. If planners could find a way of taking into account infrastructural impact by relating new small applications to similar applications already granted within a defined area and to the potential for future such applications within the same area, the CADRA committee believes

some of the problems arising from the present approach could be eased or avoided. We have advised other residents' associations of our views and invited them to join with us in making representations to the Planning Department. We emphasise that we do not want to stop anyone from selling his spare land or garden for house building. Our sole concern is to ensure that the planners take into account the drip-feed effect on the infrastructure and make suitable provision for it.

This is a controversial and complex subject which affects us all. We are very keen to hear the views of our members on this matter, so please do contact us if you wish to enter this debate. Editor.

Recycling in Caversham

Pamela Manning

Although most people seem to support the recycling of paper products and other packaging materials, it also causes many problems. The mess created by thoughtless people around the recycling centres, for example at Hills Meadow, is unbelievable. Driving to the bins generates greenhouse gasses, and in some cases the recycling process costs more than making new material.

Some of these problems will be solved by a doorstep collection of recyclable materials, and at long last RBC is about to mount a pilot scheme. 15,000 addresses across Reading will be given special boxes which will be emptied once a fortnight, on normal bin days.

The scheme will start in September with one vehicle; after an initial analysis, the plan is to introduce more vehicles until the whole area is covered. Much of the waste will go to the new Grondon site at Beenham for processing.

The Hills Meadow recycling bin station has been improved, but the work is still not complete. The signs are to be renewed and repositioned, which will allow the bins to be sited further back, and the planting and landscaping work will be done in the autumn. The money to carry out this work came from a fund which was negotiated as a planning gain arising from the building of the Oracle centre.

Many people have contacted us about the loss of the recycling bins at Waitrose, and CADRA has had a protracted dialogue with Waitrose, the landlord and RBC. Recently, after agreement had apparently been reached, RBC received a demand for proof of indemnity insurance and an invoice for administrative work done to date. That has gone before RBC officers for consideration; if agreed, we should see bottle banks restored soon. Unfortunately that is all that the restricted site will support.

A leaflet, "Go Loopy", and further information are available from Oliver Burt at RBC

Information: Caversham area bus services and Reading station access

For many months, CADRA has been lobbying for an improved bus service for Caversham and Emmer Green. The following changes were due to be implemented as we went to press.

Daytime Services 23 and 24 and the evening service 40 to be withdrawn. Services 44 and 45 will be extended to cover the "Emmer Green Loop" consisting of Courtenay Drive and Kidmore End Road in both directions. During the daytime there will be a twenty minute frequency and an hourly service in the evenings. (Part of the route currently has an hourly daytime frequency.) Please contact Andrew Low at Reading Buses (0118 959 4000) for timetables and more information if needed.

Although not related to the above, commuters should also note that, in a completely separate project, the approach to Reading Station is due to be closed to through traffic from 13th August.

For more information please contact RBC on 0118 939 0300

*St Andrews Road
Caversham*

Dear Sir,

As a relatively new family to Caversham Heights, we have been amazed at the amount of house building taking place in the area. My concern, as a mother of very young children, is the effect of this building boom on Caversham Primary School. The pressure for places there is acute enough now. With the state of the housing market likely to fuel even more building in the area, such pressure must intensify. One wonders whether even more families in this part of Caversham can be expected to outhouse their children to schools in Emmer Green and Kidmore End. It seems to me that either the school buildings at Caversham Primary must be enlarged or we must press for a new school.

Older neighbours say the Mapledurham Playing Field was once suggested as a site for a school, and there was a lot of opposition to the idea, but it seems to me that the idea is a good one. Can I ask if CADRA supports this idea?

(Name and address supplied)

Now here is a subject guaranteed to polarise the views of our members! Strong feelings were expressed at the public meeting at Mapledurham Pavilion earlier this year; the state of the building is undeniably unacceptable. Before commenting further on this subject, we would like to invite your considered responses. However, before putting pen to paper, could you consider this. Just suppose that a solution could be found which would provide much needed new school facilities and yield greatly enhanced sports facilities at Mapledurham Fields, with an ongoing obligation for maintenance and improvement, would you support it?

Please address your response, by post or e-mail, to the Chairman.

VANDALISM IN CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS

CADRA organised an open meeting on 8th August which filled the Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. The audience included almost 200 residents, three RBC Councillors and one MP. Acting Inspector Matt Gray gave a summary of the events of the past few months, explained how the police had reacted, and told us of some of their plans and frustrations. Derek Bartlett, Caversham Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, then illustrated how the community could benefit from a Street Watch Scheme. The rest of the evening was an open discussion, including the level of police resource required to offer an adequate service, why it is essential to report observed crime, when to dial 999, the use of CCTV and several more points and questions from the audience. Finally, in response to several audience comments, Derek Bartlett offered to help residents form a Street Watch.

Reading Voluntary Action

James Frost

Based above a shop in Cross Street, Reading Voluntary Action is a small charity offering advice, information, support and training courses on all matters relating to charities, voluntary organisations and self-help groups. On its database it has over four hundred registered groups, there are certainly many more who are not registered. At Cross Street there is an information room, open to the public from 2.30pm to 4.30pm every Wednesday, with an events noticeboard and a library of books to borrow or browse. One can also telephone for an appointment at other times except Fridays.

RVA promotes and covers a considerable range of activities, including:

- Training workshops on developing a policy for the appropriate level of reserves in a voluntary organisation;
- Legal responsibilities of Management Committees;
- RBC's Policy on Grant Applications;
- RAISE Conference (Regional Action and Involvement), part of the Government's Policy on Regionalisation;
- Meet the new RBC Director of Housing and Social Services;
- Other speakers from the Voluntary Sector, often from outside Reading.

Apart from these, and other activities, there is an annual meeting of the Voluntary Sector Forum, to which all voluntary groups are invited, to discuss and share their experiences. Where appropriate, output from this Forum is fed back to Reading Borough Council.

For further information, please contact:
Mike Martin, Manager, RVA
First Floor, 8 Cross Street,
READING RG1 1SN

Tel 0118 957 4123, Fax 0118 939 1355
E-mail: rva@volaction.demon.co.uk

As part of our representation policy, Jim Frost reports back to CADRA on the actions of RVA and VSF

Caversham And District Residents' Association

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The Purpose of CADRA

CADRA has been in continuous existence for over 35 years. A lot has been achieved, and CADRA is widely respected as a voice for Caversham.

We resolutely avoid party political bias. Our aim, quoted in the Constitution, is "to preserve and enhance the quality of life in Caversham and the surrounding district." In practice, this means to try to keep the good parts, improve the undesirable parts and prevent detrimental change. Most of this inevitably relates to planning and environmental issues, which absorb most of our time and effort. We work with Reading Councillors and Officers, other local groups, the Police, companies and individuals. To be effective, we have to be able to hear members' opinions, and represent their views. These Newsletters are an indication of our commitment to this process, but our effectiveness will greatly increase with more members. At just two pounds per year per household, membership of CADRA represents amazing value.

*Please pass this on to anyone you know who might like to join CADRA
Membership forms can be obtained from Marian Fallowfield, tel 0118 954 6899*

Contacting CADRA

We prefer you to contact us in writing, so that we can give full attention to your requirements, and give a considered response. We are all busy people, and we may need to discuss your points before responding. In general, please write to the Secretary, or better still, use e-mail. Our e-mail address is CADRA2001@aol.com
For urgent matters only, Officers' telephone numbers are given above, but please use them with consideration.

The Safer Caversham Forum

Derek Bartlett, SCF Chairman

Tom Chadwick, has retired as the CADRA representative on the Safer Caversham Forum. The CADRA Committee has appointed Ian Brown to replace him.

increasing police resources and has secured funding for small capital projects which will have a direct impact on the reduction of crime and the fear of crime.

The Safer Caversham Forum is an important vehicle for bringing together the professionals concerned with crime in our area and the representatives of the various residents' groups. It provides an opportunity for residents to spell out their concerns to the professionals and to receive advice from them and from each other. At the same time it gives the professionals a chance to explain their viewpoints, to listen to suggestions and to invite assistance. Over the recent months, the Forum has focussed on anti-social behaviour (including graffiti), criminal damage (including walls in Caversham Heights), violent crime and the abuse of open spaces by motor cycling hooligans. It has loudly joined the clamour for

Important as this type of work is, the Forum is also an action group that carries out specifically targeted practical work in partnership with the professionals. Recently, the Forum has contributed to a week long anti-car crime blitz which harnessed the combined strength of the residents' associations, traders, police and traffic wardens in an attempt to achieve a significant reduction in the levels of thefts from cars and thefts of cars. Over a three-year period, car related crime is one category that has stubbornly refused to decline in Caversham.

If you have a particular concern relating to crime or a suggestion to help combat crime or anti-social behaviour, why not give Ian Brown a call on 0118 947 4201 or e-mail CADRA2001@aol.com?

Caversham Court Update

Rodney Oliver, Trustee, Gazebo Trust

Part of the stable block at Caversham Court is now let to Urban Renewal Forum on a short term lease. It is hoped that they will apply for Lottery Heritage funding which could refurbish most of Caversham Court, including the gazebo. Many conservation groups have been meeting in a room in the stable block and using the garages as a storage centre. A consultation meeting took place at the Canoe Club on 9th August to consider the possibility of relocating these groups; we will report on the results of the meeting in the next issue.

The plans for the site include options to expand Caversham Court in a sympathetic way, including building an extension onto the grotto side. The steps would be replaced by a gradual slope. St Peter's Church would gain a suitably sized meeting room with 'facilities'.

Long term plans for the garden could include creating a Victorian garden. This is currently an allotment site and home of Berkshire Organic Gardeners. Plans also include a full time minder and gardener at the site.

There has been vandalism at the gazebo.

The top storey has been broken into and cracks have appeared on the south east corner; this may be due to water-logging. Tell-tales were put in place last year which will reveal any further movement. English Heritage have inspected it, and report that remedial work such as metal bracing round that corner should be tried first. Talk of underpinning is premature. The causeway would also be restored. Hopefully, funding for all these plans will come from Urban Parks Renewals' efforts to secure Heritage Lottery funding and from St Peter's Church.