

CADRA news

Caversham And District Residents' Association

Welcome to the first edition of CADRA news, and a few words of introduction.

Over the past few months, the CADRA Committee has been developing new ideas about the form and structure of your Association. Our discussions have covered the role we could and should play in the light of changes in Local Government, the ways in which we communicate with the members, other groups and Reading Borough Council, and how we can best represent the interests of Caversham residents.

Last year we sent out a letter from the Chairman to all members, asking for their opinions. Overwhelmingly, the responses included requests to improve the ways in which we collect and act on information from members. Many peo-

ple also wanted to see a more modern approach to the running of CADRA.

To meet these challenges, the first task which the Committee tackled was the creation of a new Constitution for CADRA.

Other plans for the future include providing better ways to contact us...

The Constitution is the foundation upon which we will build a new 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.

Members will be asked to vote for the acceptance of the proposed new Constitution at the AGM on the 9th of April; a copy is enclosed, and a summary of the main points appears below.

At this point I would like to pay a grateful tribute to my fellow Committee Members. When an organisation with a 35 year history decides to embark on major changes, it can be a very stressful and frustrating process, as long-held values are challenged. The Committee has taken all this on board without complaint, although not always with complete agreement! It was not without some trepidation that I offered myself for re-election at the end of my first year as Chairman.

Other plans for the future include providing better ways to contact us, a greater presence in local

news media, and the inevitable web site.

Of course, all this will take time, effort and a little money. Thanks to all of you who have encouraged us in the past. We hope that you will continue to support us, especially those with special skills and knowledge to share. In particular we hope to attract many new members, so that we can better represent the views of the residents of Caversham and the surrounding district.

Please tell us your views.

Bruce Manning, Chairman

New Constitution: Summary of main points

Membership

- Open to residents in the Caversham area
- One subscription = one vote per household

The Committee

- Nine elected plus three co-opted members
- Each member has specified responsibilities
- One third retire annually for re-election
- Chairman is principal spokesman
- Chairman replaced or re-elected after 3 yrs

In addition, the proposed new Constitution imposes duties on the Chairman, to ensure representation on appropriate bodies and to promote the Association. There are also measures to control the process of elections, co-options and changes to the rules, all of which are in response to members' requests.

Please see attached document for details

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CADRA 2001 AGM Calling Notice

The CADRA 2001 AGM
will take place on
Monday 9th April
At the Baptist Centre
South Street, Caversham
Starting at 7.45pm
All CADRA Members
are invited to attend this
important meeting

Please Note: Items to be raised under AOB must be advised to the Secretary by 2nd April

AGENDA

1. Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting
2. Proposal for new Constitution
3. Chairman's Annual Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Election of Committee
6. Any Other Business (Pre-advised only)

Note: Only paid-up members may vote at the AGM

After the AGM there will be an illustrated presentation by

Mildred Cookson
 On *The Mapledurham Watermill*

Committee: Retiring Members

Under the new Constitution, one third of the Committee members will retire every three years, in rotation. The retirees may offer themselves for re-election if they so wish. This is normal practice, and is a very sound way to keep the Committee fresh, and allow for change if necessary. When such a scheme is first introduced, however, it is nobody's "turn" to retire for the first two years, so volunteers are required. This year, the following people have offered to retire, and all have indicated their willingness to stand for re-election at the AGM:

Bruce Manning, Chairman; **Derek Bartlett**, Planning Officer; **Linda Watsham**, Committee Member.

Nominations for Committee

Any Member may be nominated for election to the Committee at the AGM, subject to the conditions in the Constitution. The Nominee must give a signed declaration of his/her willingness to serve, proposed and seconded by two other members. Please use the format below, and deliver completed nominations to the Secretary no less than 14 days before the AGM.

Nominee: I am willing to serve on the Committee of CADRA, carry out duties as agreed, and to act at all times in the best interests of CADRA and its members. Proposed

Name	Signature & Date	Seconded
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Relationships with other Groups

Derek Bartlett

CADRA has maintained and strengthened its links with other residents' and community associations. In June 2000 we convened a meeting to discuss matters of common concern. Representatives from the Emmer Green Residents' Association, the Heron Island Residents' Association, the Lower Caversham Community Association, Caversham Park Village Association and Caversham Globe met us. Collectively we discussed the refurbishment of

Caversham Bridge, traffic calming and the cumulative affect of infill development on the district's infrastructure. The last subject led, subsequently, to close co-operation between CADRA and some of the other groups, particularly Emmer Green Residents' Association, Caversham Globe and, more recently, the Warren Residents' Association, in planning matters. Through our participation in the Safer Caversham Forum, we regularly ex-

change ideas on crime and safety issues with all the major residents' associations in the district as well as with the Housing Associations, NHW, the police and other professional agencies whose task it is to address these concerns. Last September we were pleased to organise a public event, "Operation Safeguard", in partnership with the Safer Caversham Forum. The event was designed to raise the profile of home security in the run up to Christmas, always a vulnerable period.

Millennium Projects

Tom Chadwick, Honorary Secretary

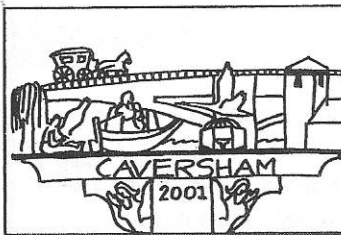
We received a number of suggestions for ways in which to mark the Millennium, and twice sought funding from the Millennium Festival Awards scheme. In March 2000 we made a bid for funds to restore the large bracket clock which was sited above Nash's Jewellers on Bridge Street; sadly this was rejected, and the clock has since been removed.

We then commissioned a design and applied for funds for a village sign, carved in local hardwood, to stand in the centre of Caversham. We were very disappointed to learn eventually that this too had been rejected, but now the

Northern Area Consultative Committee has made sufficient funds available for this to proceed.

The sign, which will provide a much-needed focal point, will be similar in concept to those often seen in the villages of Essex and Suffolk. A working party from CADRA and RBC has been set

up to manage the project, consider visual aspects and vandal resistance, and to agree on final location and design details.



From the carver's original sketch for the Caversham Village Sign

A suitable Oak tree, felled for other reasons in Caversham Park, has been offered for our use. This is especially interesting, as the oak is old enough to have been part of Capability Brown's original 18th century landscaping scheme.

Although the actual date has now passed, we still feel it is very important to mark the passing of the millennium. That feeling was expressed at the last AGM, and we will therefore pursue this project to a successful conclusion.

Planning Report 2000

Derek Bartlett, CADRA Planning Officer

In the field of town planning, a major feature of the last year has been the number of applications to build on land between and behind existing houses. We have tried to focus the planning authorities on the creeping effect which a series of minor developments will have on the district's already strained infrastructure. Two major proposals involving the construction of 233 homes behind Henley Road and Lower Henley Road have led to meetings with RBC planning officers. Besides the general concerns, already mentioned, these two developments also have significant implications for trees, wild life and susceptibility to flooding. Because of this, CADRA has joined with other residents'

associations and GLOBE to share information and pool expertise. We hope that together we can ensure that the authorities understand all aspects of these significant proposals before final decisions are taken.

It now seems likely that a night club will return to Caversham. In the light of past experience, we had hoped that the united opposition of ourselves, Councillors and immediate neighbours would prevent a repetition. However, reason has been defeated by a quirk in planning law that allows previous consents to remain valid indefinitely.

On the happier side, CADRA has been pleased to support planning applications to replace the changing rooms on

Christchurch Playing Fields with a modern *en-suite* pavilion, and to allow Thameside School to develop a much needed playing field on a former industrial site. We have also given a cautious welcome to the proposal to develop Caversham Lakes as an Olympic standard training course for the national rowing teams. Given the nature of previous proposals for that area, the rowing course, with its attendant facilities, offers the least harmful outcome for neighbouring residents and wild life. Nevertheless, aspects of the proposals require careful monitoring, work which we are pleased to share with other interested groups and the Eye and Dunsden Parish Council.

The Consultation Process

Ian Brown

Throughout its 35 years existence, CADRA has always been involved in consultation, with members, other groups and RBC. Sometimes our preferences and/or objections have been accepted, sometimes not; that is the nature of consultation. What is important is that we are part of the democratic process, and that our views are taken into account by the paid and unpaid officials who are charged with making the decisions. It is naïve to think that the consultation process has failed because the decision taken was not the one you wanted.

It is also crucial that anyone who claims

to represent a group does have a valid claim; that is one of the main reasons why CADRA is determined to improve its communication with its members, and to increase its membership. Recently RBC have tried a new process, called a Citizen's Jury, as part of the process to decide what to do about the traffic conflicts around Reading Station. The Jury included two CADRA members, selected for very different reasons; one was a regular rail commuter and car driver, the other a bus user and non-driver. That was the essence of the group, disparate with different and sometimes conflicting views.

The issues were complex and not immediately obvious; possible solutions were limited by legal, planning, safety, practical and cost constraints. Other people apart from the Jury were consulted, and decisions were made.

Sadly, the inevitable public criticism has confused the issues, the process and the result. In fact RBC should be congratulated on their willingness to consult, but we should all realise that both they and those of us who are consulted need to learn how to do it better; take the trouble to identify and understand the relevant issues, stick to the point and take responsibility for the results.

Caversham And District Residents' Association

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CAN WE USE YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS?

E-mail is the most efficient way of communicating simultaneously with many people. Just drop us a line by e-mail, and we will put you on our list, and use e-mail to contact you in future.

We will soon have our own web-site, which will open up more opportunities for us to share information with members and other interested parties.

DO WE HAVE YOUR CORRECT POSTAL ADDRESS?

You may have received this Newsletter by post; was it sent to the correct address? Please contact the Secretary to keep us informed of any changes.

CADRA has been in continuous existence for over 35 years. A lot has been achieved, and we are 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.

To be effective in this, we have to be able to hear members' opinions, and represent their views. This Newsletter is an indication of our commitment to this process, but what we really need is more members.

Please pass this on to anyone you know who might be interested in joining CADRA

Recycling in Caversham

Following the completion of the Abbotsmead development behind the Caversham Telephone Exchange, CADRA has been constantly engaged in pressing for the reinstatement of the recycling bins that were once sited in the Waitrose car park.

Caversham GLOBE has supported us in these efforts and after an on-site meeting in January, we understand that four glass collection skips will be re-installed on a trial basis. Unfortunately, at this time there is no provision for the collection of waste paper, cardboard, plastic or tins. In view of this, we are trying to find alternative sites as near as

HELP PRESERVE OUR ENVIRONMENT



PLACE RECYCLABLE PRODUCTS IN THEIR APPROPRIATE CONTAINER

possible to Caversham centre. Until then, it will be necessary to continue to use the facilities at Hills Meadow, Rivermead or Tesco. Non-recyclable waste can be taken to the excellent facilities near the Madejski Stadium, any day from dawn to dusk.

It is worth noting that one of the problems has been the appalling mess which a few people create at these sites, making it almost impossible to find a landlord prepared to accept them. We are delighted to report that the NACC has awarded funds and agreed a design for a screening fence to be placed around the Hills Meadow bins, together with suitable planting, but it will still be necessary to find volunteers to keep it tidy.

The Greening of Caversham Centre

Molly Casey, President

Changes that all can see have recently taken place in the centre of Caversham. These are the result of an extensive public consultation exercise to discover what people would like to see to mark the Millennium. The most favoured request was for more trees.

However, when it came to suitable places to dig a hole to plant them, it was practically impossible to find anywhere without pipes, tubes or cables carrying essential services. That is why there are large planters at vari-

ous points. They have to be large enough to take trees and not to require constant watering. There have been complaints that they obstruct the pavement, but mostly there is plenty of room to get past them. Particularly welcome are those outside the telephone exchange, a gaunt building. To date they seem to have acquired no graffiti and little rubbish; long may this last.

It has been claimed that they are made from tropical hardwood, from the diminishing rain forest. If so, this

is most regrettable for a Borough that prides itself on its green policies.

Editor: We looked into this; an RBC spokesman confirmed that they are made from a tropical hardwood called Greenheart, one of the most durable timbers. RBC claims that the source is both managed and sustainable, but we wonder why Greenheart was imported from half way around the world, when English Oak is almost as durable, cheaper and arguably greener. Should we not be supporting the British timber industry as part of our green policy?