

Sharing Our Streets

CAVERSHAM VILLAGE

Achieving the Vision

Joint Meeting November 2014

Caversham Baptist Church

The VISION

'To enhance Caversham centre as a high quality place for shopping, working, living and leisure and to promote an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable village centre for the 21st Century'

Residents and traders have endorsed the Vision for Caversham Centre and the purpose of this year's meeting is to explore possible ways of Achieving the Vision.

'Traditional' Traffic Management has been so successful that there are now unprecedented flows of people, goods and services throughout the country. Road safety has improved to the point where British roads are some of the safest in the developed world. Unfortunately, these same traffic engineering techniques have reinforced the dominance of motor traffic in places like Caversham. Our streets are cluttered with signs, 'tram lined' with edge and centre line markings and a green traffic signal means 'GO' or 'speed through the junction as quickly as possible'.

The **Contemporary Approach** moves away from the vehicle-focussed practice of segregating road users. This places pedestrians at the top of the pecking order rather than motor vehicles.

Much of the paraphernalia used to manage motorised traffic is swept away and engineers are now encouraged to adopt minimalist methods. Superfluous signs, markings and street furniture are removed. The most effective schemes use subtle ways to influence driver behaviour and involve a complete redesign of the public realm.

Psychological' traffic calming is used to influence driver behaviour and reduce speeds without using speed humps. The driving environment is changed to introduce uncertainty that causes drivers to adapt their conduct, naturally, to suit the environment. Integration of vehicles and pedestrians is encouraged. A good scheme softens the street scene and encourages drivers to behave more calmly and courteously than before.



Caversham Village centre has fallen far behind similar places and, perhaps, now is the time to **tackle the problem**. Residents and traders have demonstrated their support for the Vision. This needs to be matched by support from Councillors and Council Officers if the necessary funding is to be sought.

Outlined here are **three levels of intervention** that might be achievable, depending on the levels of support. Of course, there may be people who do not agree with any or all of the possible changes and are happy to **Do Nothing**.

As a **Bare Minimum**, the appearance of the centre could be improved by rationalising street furniture, traffic signing and road markings. There are numerous places where ineffective road markings do little to assist motorists but add to the urbanised appearance of the streets.

Minor alterations would be a start for improving the centre but, though 'cleaned up', it would remain much the same as it is now.

A **Transitional** level of changes could produce a more comfortable and safer pedestrian

environment. The carriageway at pedestrian crossings and side roads would be raised to footway level to reduce vehicle speeds and make road crossings easier for pedestrians and particularly for those who are less physically able. These methods have already been used extensively within Reading Borough.

A **Comprehensive** scheme would include the bare minimum and transitional changes alongside more radical changes. All traffic signals could be removed. The Church Street/Bridge Street signals and the Prospect Street/Gosbrook Road mini-roundabouts could be converted to 'Poynton style' traffic circles. Closely spaced raised zebra or informal crossings could replace the existing crossings. Church Street could be narrowed to 8.0 metres and traffic islands removed. Slightly raised loading bays could be provided, where necessary.

The entrances to the Esso station could be given an entry treatment,

Your views on **Achieving the Vision**.

We would like to know what you think about our ideas for possible changes to Caversham Centre.

Please send us your comments in writing.

You can drop a note in to:

Walton's Jewellers or email

info@cadra.org.uk or

cavershamtraders@googlemail.com

Please send by 1st December 2014

When we have received your views we will try our best to summarise them.

We hope to distribute the summary to CADRA and CTA members early in the New Year and will use this as a basis for further discussion with Councillors and Officers.

If you are willing to be contacted in the future, please give your name and email address or other contact details.