

## Caversham Bus Services

Early in July, Reading Buses contacted Councillors and then a number of community contacts to advise of planned changes from 3 September 2018 and the reasons for them. For Caversham, these are as follows:



### **Red 22**

*Revert to its previous routing as far as the town centre only.*

*Weekday peak time two buses per hour services to/from Reading to depart from Caversham Heights at 05:50, 06:20, 06:40, 07:00, 07:25, 08:02 08:35, 09:00 and 09:30, and returning from Friar Street at 15:15, 15:45, 16:15, 16:45, 17:15, 17:45, 18:15, 18:45, 19:15 and 19:45.*

*A new partnership with 'VAMOOZ' will see the cross-town school time links continue to be offered by a new speculative 'V81' route (in addition to the existing Reading Buses 981) should sufficient interest be generated through the VAMOOZ app and book in advance platform.*

*Sunday service will be reduced to two-hourly.*

### **Pink (soon to be rebranded Berry) 23 & 24**

*Monday to Saturday frequency of these combined (clockwise and anti-clockwise) services will be reduced to half hourly, still providing up to four buses per hour (every 15 minutes at key points) to and from Reading from alternate sides of the road on these loop services.*

*Sunday service will be reduced to every hour, so two buses per hour combined (every 30 minutes at key points) from both sides of the road.*

### **Pink 25**

*Weekday off peak service will be reduced to hourly (but continuing to be maintained with 2 buses per hour during commuter peak times, including with the use of a double deck bus on the busiest school time journeys).*

*Hourly all day on Saturdays and two-hourly on Sundays.*

Further cuts to Caversham services are extremely unwelcome and CADRA, EGRA and Concerned of Caversham were busy campaigning together in July, with Matt Rodda MP and local Councillors. Reading Buses explain that they operate as a Council owned but standalone commercial business, with the network self-funded through the re-investment of underlying profits, without any overarching subsidies. They report that Caversham is a challenging operating environment, with far lower bus use than elsewhere across the Borough. Major road works, including those at Cow Lane, have posed problems in maintaining a reliable service.

Matt Rodda and his team set up a public meeting for 1 August. Teams of volunteers put the word out within the space of just one week and over 250 people filled Caversham Baptist Church to make their concerns known. Although it is unlikely that the September changes have been halted, Reading Buses, Councillors and our MP can be in no doubt of the overwhelming concern that Caversham needs a viable alternative to the car.

If there is not enough capacity at peak times and gaps are too long at off peak, people who have other options cease to use the bus and there are more cars on the road. Those without access to a car make fewer journeys and are stuck at home. And so social isolation increases, and congestion and air quality get worse. This is not just a problem for Caversham but for all of Reading. It is too serious a problem to give up on.

A new CEO has been appointed from October and we all hope that effective joint working can explore a positive way forward. **To help make that possible, we all need to take the bus.** Timetables will be available at <https://www.reading-buses.co.uk/services>

*Caversham and District Residents Association (CADRA) [www.cadra.org.uk](http://www.cadra.org.uk)*