

Caversham and District Residents Association Annual General Meeting
Tuesday 6 May 2008
Chair's Report on the year 2007/08

40 years of CADRA

October 2007 marked the 40th anniversary of CADRA's formation. Thanks in part to documents kept by the late Molly Casey, CADRA President, we were able to mount a fascinating display and an account of "40 years of CADRA" in the special Ruby Anniversary edition of CADRA News. We are very grateful for the excellent work of John Mullaney and his family on both the research and the presentation.

CADRA should never dwell in the past and so the anniversary celebration looked at Caversham: past, Present and Future. We would like to express our thanks to the many services and associations who joined us for the event and helped to make it a very memorable community occasion.
Wind Vane, Caversham Court Gazebo

There was a very generous response from members of CADRA and Reading Civic Society towards the commissioning of a replica wind vane in memory of the Molly Casey. The vane was produced by a specialist in copper vanes and on Thursday 21 June around 150 people gathered in St Peter's Church to pay tribute to Molly's exceptional work for Caversham and Reading and to see the vane dedicated, blessed and formally presented to the Mayor of Reading. It is now being held in safekeeping awaiting the restoration of the gazebo.

There will be a balance of donated funds after full payment for the vane. CADRA is currently working with Reading Civic Society, Caversham Court Gazebo Trust and Reading Borough Council Parks Department to agree how an explanation of the replica vane and how it came to be produced, can be incorporated within the internal work in the gazebo.

Planning

We continue to review the published lists of planning applications and to comment on proposals of significance to Caversham. A monthly summary is produced, which is also available on the CADRA website. The Planning Inspector upheld the refusal of plans for the Caversham Laundry site. The appeal against refusal of the application for sheltered housing between School Lane and Wolsey Road was heard on 1 May and a decision is awaited.

The Planning Inspector, while approving an application on All Hallows Road, stipulated that the roots of the tree which forms part of the avenue leading to the cemetery should be carefully protected. CADRA has followed the implementation of that requirement. On Upper Woodcote Road, development in back gardens adjoining the golf course has so far been avoided. The east side of Kidmore Road has been a focus for developers. A further application has been approved and another is pending. Henley Road continues to see new applications.

We continue to follow the various stages of the proposed Local Development Framework which will replace the Local Plan including the Reading Central Area Action Plan. Most recently, we responded jointly with EGRA, WADRA and Caversham Globe to a consultation on the designation of sites over the next 20 years. South Oxfordshire is also setting out plans for the future, with alternative sites to locate 1,400 homes and sites for mineral extraction.

Safer Caversham

CADRA is an established member of the Safer Caversham Forum, meeting quarterly with a range of RBC staff, Police, other residents and housing associations, representatives of traders and Councillors, to discuss issues to promote a safe and attractive environment.

The establishment of Neighbourhood Policing last year has been well received in Caversham. The Neighbourhood Action Groups have enabled the police to target specific areas of local concern. The four Police community Support Officers dedicated to Caversham provided a very visible police presence. Records of local crime are critical to the allocation of police resources in Caversham and to the way they are deployed. Levels are down on last year which is very positive but under-recording can lead to under-funding. Please do report all crime!

Transport

Three members of CADRA committee met with Tom Crisp, Lead Councillor to express concerns and explore opportunities to influence decisions. A detailed submission was sent to the Transport Commissioners and CADRA was called to give evidence at a public hearing. Comments were sent in response to the Council's draft Cycling Strategy. CADRA has repeatedly sought information on the projected impact on Caversham roads of the Oxford Road relief road. A combined response to the consultation was sent from CADRA, EGRA and WADRA.

Licensing

We continue to monitor any new or revised applications. Good progress is being made in establishing lines of communication with the organisers of Reading Festival to ensure that local concerns are taken into account in the planning of the event.

Communication to Members

The CADRA website aims to provide up to date information on a range of issues in Caversham with an easy link for further information. It gives an opportunity to support other groups, including the organisers of Caversham Festival. We have continued to develop the site and try to keep it up to date with current issues. We would welcome any comments or suggestions. Our thanks to Edge Impact Consulting, who continue to host the site and provide the software for us free of charge.

Membership continues at around 550 households. Over half our members are on email and this gives us the opportunity to contact those members as issues arise and to seek members' views. We try to strike the right balance on how much to send and would welcome feedback. If you have email and are not receiving emails from us, please contact us at info@cadra.org.co.uk

We continue to distribute two newsletters a year and contribute an article each month to the 'Caversham Bridge'.

Thank you

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the members of the committee, the team of committee support, newsletter deliverers and all those who help CADRA to serve the community north of the river. We are also grateful to anyone who can encourage new members and keep a strong voice for Caversham. Membership leaflets are available on request or from the Library and Wordplay.

Helen Lambert, Chair