

WADRA AGM 2020 Newsletter
Wednesday 28 October 2020 19:30-21:30
(final draft version)

Meeting details

This year due to Covid 19 restrictions, WADRA will be running the AGM as a virtual online meeting via Zoom. Please see the instructions and link below for joining the meeting on 22 October. We will open the meeting 15 minutes before the start time to give members the opportunity to ensure that their systems are working properly. Please note that this meeting is for WADRA members only.

Zoom Meeting Instructions

Wednesday 28 October 2020

19:30-21:30 (meeting will open at 19:15)

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_pJ_DBXCrTha6Nb1Jvx0TTg

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

How the meeting will be conducted:

Unfortunately, we will not be able to take **questions or comments** from attendees during the meeting, so will ask that any members questions are provided no later than 21 October 2020. Please send your questions to committee@wadra.org. Questions will be addressed during Any Other Business or under a related topic in the Agenda. If you have questions resulting from the meeting, please send them to the same address. The Committee will send all answers via email to members.

We will be voting on new and returning Committee members during the meeting. Please ensure that when you register for the meeting you clearly identify yourself with your name (first and last) or your home address, to ensure that your votes are counted.

The meeting will be recorded and put on the WADRA website.

Call for Committee member nominations

If you have an interest in supporting your community by working with other residents to preserve, protect and enhance the character of the area, as well as help to run community events and initiatives, please consider running for a position on the WADRA Committee. Nominations for Committee places (total of 10), supported by a proposer and second from separate member households other than that of the nominee, must be received by the Secretary or Chair (secretary@WADRA.org or chair@wadra.org) at least 14 days before the AGM (deadline is 15 October 2020). Full details of Committee elections can be found here <https://wadra.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ConstitutionV1.2Signed14Nov2017.pdf>, section 4, The Committee.

Call for Members

For information on eligibility and instructions for new members joining go to <https://wadra.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ConstitutionV1.2Signed14Nov2017.pdf> section 3 for details of membership. You can apply for membership here <https://wadra.org/join-us/>.

AGM Meeting Agenda

1. A message from the Chair
2. Minutes of AGM 2019 (digital vote)
3. Matter Arising
4. Elections of new committee members or those returning (digital vote)
5. Planning
6. Our Environment
7. North Reading Safer Neighbourhood Forum
8. Events, Community Initiatives, and Fundraising
9. Mapledurham Playing Fields and Pavilion
10. The Heights School
11. Treasurer's Report
12. AoB
13. Invited speaker (approx. 8:45pm): David Stevens, Reading Mayor, will be speaking and answering questions concerning the planned changed of RBC ward boundaries in 2022.

WADRA Committee Report AGM 2020

5. Planning

The WADRA Committee continue to monitor Planning Applications filed with Reading Borough Council. Over the past year, WADRA has submitted objections on the following planning applications:

8 Kelmscott Close: Demolition of existing and replace with new. WADRA considered the proposals to be unsuitable for the location and not in keeping with surrounding properties. The application has now been withdrawn.

Chazey Road (Pump Station): Demolition of existing and replace with new House. WADRA considered this proposal was totally out of character for this location. The application is pending.

Mapledurham Playing Fields: Amendments to Condition 20, (Drainage Scheme). This application was submitted by Kier Construction to discharge surface water run-off from the school into an aquifer, via 3 boreholes 26 metres deep. WADRA has objected to this proposal on the basis that it is a major change to the original proposals and that there is the potential for the run-off to pollute the underground water regimes, which in turn could contaminate drinking water. for residential properties within the area.

Reading Golf Club: Although not within the WADRA catchment, we have objected to this proposal to build 260 new homes, on the basis of the increase in traffic through Caversham, the negative impact the proposal will have upon education facilities and an increase in pollution. WADRA also promote the protection of the Green Belt and existing green spaces in and around Caversham. This application is currently pending.

The Heights School: WADRA submitted a complaint to RBC regarding the noise and vibrations limits set in the Planning Permission for the construction of the school. Residents living adjacent to the construction site have been subjected to excessive noise, dust, fumes, and vibration at high levels throughout the Lock-Down period and this has resulted in anxiety and unacceptable levels of stress for these residents. RBC has rejected this complaint and WADRA is now considering referring the matter to the Ombudsman, in an effort to improve the quality of life for the residents.

The Tithe Barn: After 20 years of procrastination, some small steps have been taken recently to prevent the collapse of the grade 1 listed Tithe Barn at **Chazey Court Farm** (at the end of The Warren). Scaffolding has been erected to shore up the barn and a tin roof put over the tiles to prevent leakage and further damage. This temporary repair work has been done by In Mind, a healthcare services group (successor to Westfield Estates) that owns an adjacent site on which it plans to build a nursing home. In Mind is hoping to develop a 78-bed nursing home under a 1996 Planning Application which was approved after Appeal in July 2004.

While most Residents welcome the saving of the Tithe Barn, many are opposed to the nursing home development. The recent work has involved more than 80 deliveries by 30-ton HGV's travelling along the narrow

Warren delivering hard core to the site over a 10-day period at the end of April. Since then a number of trees have fallen or had to be cut down due to subsidence on the road. Reading Borough Council, RBC, will not allow development to proceed until a "Certificate of Lawfulness" has been presented. As of 18 June, this was said to be near completion.

The decision on whether the building goes ahead seems to hinge on whether there was a "Deemed Start" to the work in 2009, whether the site was abandoned between July/Aug 2009 and April 2020, and whether the developers have complied with various conditions imposed by RBC, the Environment Agency, and the Appeal Conditions. RBC has stated they will inform residents (including hopefully WADRA) and allow comments on the contents of the "Certificate of Lawfulness" before any decision is made.

If you are concerned about a Planning Application within the WADRA boundary and would like support from the committee, please contact us at info@wadra.org.uk

6. Our environment

Wildflower verges: Last autumn wildflowers and crocus were planted along some of the verges in Hewett Avenue as part of a trial across Reading to improve the environment and to monitor the impact of RBCs mowing schedule on the wildflowers and wildlife.

WADRA is now in discussion with RBC to extend the area of wildflower planting and plant trees. This will fit with RBC's climate change work.

Tree planting: WADRA has committed to plant new trees around Mapledurham Playing Fields to replace some of the many trees that have been cut down because of the building of a school and rearrangement of the football pitches.

Initial plans are to plant 3 beech trees and groups of smaller trees in the area immediately adjacent to the school on Footpath 43 (see below). Crocus and wildflowers will be planted along the edge of this area and on the opposite of Hewett Avenue.

We are liaising with RBC, MPF Management Committee and the Trustees. We have not been able to hold fundraising events to support the purchase of trees and plants, due to Covid. If you would like to support this initiative please contact the Committee at info@wadra.org.uk.

Footpath 43: This is the small grassed area bounded by Hewett Avenue, the school boundary and the properties in Hewett Close and Hewett Avenue. It is an **active footpath** and therefore the public need to be allowed access at all times.

Access to and from the playing fields is being denied at present because the school building contractor has erected a fence. RBC should have applied for a footpath closure order when it approved planning permission for the new school. WADRA has been in consultation with RBC and the Government Ombudsman to have the fence removed and the footpath reopened.

As a result, RBC has had to confirm to the Ombudsman that works to make an alternative access footpath safe have been completed and pay the complainant £100 for time and trouble in bringing his complaint. (This has been donated to WADRA).

7. North Reading Safer Neighbourhood Forum

The Safer Neighbourhood Forum is a voluntary community group of residents working with relevant partner agencies, most notably Thames Valley Police and RBC, to help resolve any community safety and crime related issues in North Reading. Attendees at the forum include, local councillors, representatives from Residents Associations and interested groups such as Globe and Friends of Caversham Court with a limited number of residents. The Forum meets every 2 months and Martin Brommell represents WADRA. Next meeting is 8 October 2020.

8. Events and Fundraising

Covid 19 restrictions and the Pavilion refurbishment have prevented WADRA holding its usual events this year.

We did manage a small number of activities, including the **Yard Sale Trail** in late July, a coordinated day where residents all across Caversham could sell off all of their still usable, but unwanted items from their front garden. For a small fee, WADRA provided a map of all locations to the public. We plan to run this event again next year.

As part of the requirement to empty the Pavilion before the refurbishment work began, WADRA donated all of the remaining camping gear stock to the organisation **Care for Calais**. We hope to re-instate the Reading Festival Recycling for Tickets programme in 2021.

We are currently working with a Caversham resident, Caroline Foulkes, to organise a **Caversham Halloween Hunt, Saturday 31 October 2020**. This is an opportunity to have some socially distanced fun at Halloween. There will be NO door knocking or treat expectations.

WADRA will create a digital map of houses decorated for Halloween and host this on our website. If you are interested in participating, more information can be found on the Facebook group, Caversham Halloween Hunt.

We hope to be able to run some socially distanced events soon. We have had some discussions with Caversham Oxfam to collaborate on a **community book sale/swap** when conditions allow. As soon as we are able, we will run an event for the **Pavilion Re-opening**.

9. Mapledurham Playing Fields and Pavilion

The Mapledurham Playing Fields Management Committee: The MPF Management Committee is responsible matters such as general supervision over activities at the playing field, conformance of the charity along with governing regulations and practises of RBC in relation to finances, including determining the charges to be applied for hire of the Pavilion. It is also responsible to reviewing, on a regular basis, the terms and conditions for lettings, bookings received and use of the pavilion.

Due to increasing pressure from residents and users of Mapledurham Playing Fields and Pavilion, RBC who are the Trustees, have extended the membership of the Management Committee. The Committee will now be made up of a minimum of seven (7) and a maximum of nine (9) individuals (each a 'Member') appointed as follows:

- Councillors Paul Carnell & Janette Skeats, appointed by Reading Borough Council.
- Isobel Ballsdon who is the Borough Council member elected for the electoral ward in which the recreation ground belonging to the Charity is located.
- Jane Bowen for Mapledurham Parish Council
- Steve Brown, Secretary of Caversham Trents Football Club
- Philip De Sausmarez, chairman of Mapledurham Lawn Tennis Club
- Daniel Mander representing Major Users in accordance with paragraph 5(3) of the Charity Scheme,
- Martin Brommell, Secretary of Warren and District Residents Association
- Esme Tiplady for The Heights Primary School.

The first meeting of the new Management Committee is scheduled for Tues 13th Oct'20 at 18.30hrs and will be via Microsoft Teams due to Covid restrictions. Attendance for observers is by invitation only.

Pavilion refurbishment Pavilion refurbishment: Via a donation from WADRA of over £45k and the project management support of David Maynard, Martin Brommell, and Alistair McLean, WADRA was able to finance the structural work which enabled the re-opening of the Pavilion in late 2019/early 2020, after four years of closure. There was a small window of use as the remaining refurbishment and side extension were commenced within a few months. The structural work financed by WADRA funds helped to dismiss RBC proposals to remove or significantly reduce the size of the Pavilion. The WADRA funded refurbishment ensured that the overall structure would remain in place by making it safe and ready for refurbishment.

AYM (the Pavilion contractors) have now built the new side extension, installed the new roofs, windows and external cladding at high level. Work is progressing inside installing new heating, electrics, new toilets and changing room showers. The tennis club room is nearing completion to be handed soon.

WADRA was offered the opportunity to take relevant kitchen equipment from the Happy Diner Restaurant on Prospect Street that is no longer trading. Shaun Tanner, a WADRA member, arranged with the owners via their Estate Agent, for the equipment to be donated for the Pavilion kitchen. Unfortunately, RBC and the Trustees did not make any provision for the new kitchen at the pavilion to be fitted with the necessary, work units, storage, refrigerator, cooker or hob. WADRA was able to 'reclaim' a double sink, a number of free-standing units and shelves, a hand washing sink, drinks fridge and ice maker. We were also able to reclaim smaller items such as dishes and cutlery. WADRA is in discussion with Caversham Treants FC to share the cost of a still needed refrigerator and oven/hob.

The refurbishment works are expected to be completed by late November and a fully refurbished kitchen should be installed before the end of the year.

Deed of Dedication: RBC has been liaising with their solicitors, Veale Wasborough Vizards (VWV), in respect of minor outstanding issues to the existing licences and the granting of any future licences. This is required before presenting an application to Fields In Trust and the completions of the Deed of Dedication. RBC was expecting to complete the application to Fields in Trust that will dedicate the ground and settle the deed of dedication by the end of September. Unfortunately, this has been delayed.

10. The Heights School

Progress of the permanent building for the Heights Primary school is on track for opening Spring 2021 with parents, teachers and children excited to see their new school close to completion. Despite opposition to the plans to locate the school on trust land at MPF, WADRA is nonetheless delighted that future generations of children will benefit from what is certain to be a first-class establishment.

The experience for many residents over the past eight months has, however, been highly distressing with most feeling let down by the manner in which this project has been managed and the impact it is having on their lives. Since March'20, when Coronavirus lockdown restrictions began, WADRA has received and addressed numerous pleas for help from residents whose lives have been blighted by KEIR's work on the school site. Issues included noise levels, vibrations from pile driving, loss of privacy, congestion caused by heavy delivery trucks, working outside of hours dictated by planning permission, fumes from machinery, the destruction of Footpath 43 and abuse of the details in the planning permission. The construction site noise has been relentless and has proven particularly stressful for residents whose homes directly back onto the site. Many of these residents were restricted to their properties during Covid-19 lockdown due to vulnerabilities and underlying health issues.

In June, WADRA contacted BBC South Today who gave coverage of the disruption. The seasoned reporter, James Ingham, was shocked to see for himself just how badly construction was affecting residents. His report featured on the 6.0'clock news. Kier subsequently appointed a Liaison Officer and WADRA organized a meeting with affected residents. Amongst the many grievances discussed was the fact that there appears to have been damage caused to a number of homes in close proximity to the construction site because of strong vibrations from pile driving and compaction operations.

Little has improved or changed since June which has left some residents suffering from PTSD symptoms. Pam Reynolds, WADRA Committee member who possesses skills she has acquired from working with military veterans who have suffered similar trauma in the battlefield, stepped in to contact affected residents with calming advice to assist them in coping as far as possible with the trauma. Construction continues with little consideration for local residents. Kier workers shout at the top of their voices, bang girders loudly, use machines which echo like riveting guns and pollute the atmosphere with harmful machinery fumes. Local residents feel abandoned and overlooked, whilst WADRA continues to fight for mitigation on their behalf.

School Streets: WADRA wrote to The Heights headmistress to establish what plans exist to apply for "School Streets" status for roads immediately in the vicinity of the school and MPF. A School Street is a road outside or in close proximity to a school with a temporary restriction on motorised traffic at busy school drop-off and pick-up times. The restriction applies to all school traffic and all through traffic. The result is a safer, healthier and more pleasant environment for everyone. School Streets also provide more space for parents and pupils to adhere to social distancing measures during the Covid-19 pandemic.

WADRA is hopeful that The Heights will apply for School Streets status to help improve safety for visitors and residents by minimising traffic and parking issues in the area immediately surrounding the school. Higher parking levels in Hewett Avenue and Chazey Road are already being experienced where greater usage of MPF for football training and matches is leading to an influx of cars several weekday evenings and at weekends. Caversham Trents FC have been actively encouraging members to use the MPF car park whenever possible and only to use adjacent streets when the car park is full. Improvements have already been seen in recent days.

11. Treasurer's Report

WADRA Accounts		01/09/2019 - 31/08/2020	
WADRA Santander Savings Account			
Opening Balance		£25,470.68	
Withdrawals			
Deposits			
Interest		£137.73	
Balance 31/08/2019		£25,608.41	
WADRA Santander Current Account			
		Pavilion Funds	WADRA Funds
Opening Balance		£5,243.50	£1,140.62
Deposits /Fundraising		£565.00	£496.00
Withdrawals - Web hosting [£67.06], RBC/Pavilion [£1,356.74], Van hire & petrol [£105.01], Zoom acct [£143.88]		1,461.75	570.94
Balance 31/08/2019		£4,346.75	£1,065.68
Petty Cash			
Opening Balance		£30.00	
Deposits		£27.00	
Withdrawals		£0.00	
Balance		£57.00	
GRAND TOTAL		£31,077.84	

Communicating with Members

We would like to improve our communication with our members. We will use MailChimp which is a free service for groups with under 2000 members. In order for this to truly improve our communication and not just make it easier for the Committee, we need to ensure that we have the current email address of all of our members. For those members who do not have an email, we will continue to deliver correspondence to their home. **Can you please send an email to info@wadra.org.uk - stating your name, and address so we can ensure that we are up-to-date.**

Information that is not limited to 'members only' will continue to be posted on the WADRA Facebook Group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/warrenanddistrict/>).

WADRA Website (www.wadra.org.uk) has been updated and we will continue to add content relevant to members.

Volunteering to support WADRA

If you have an idea for a community event, a fundraising event or a community initiative or would like to volunteer to help with the running of an event, please contact the WADRA Committee at info@wadra.org.uk.

Best regards,

The WADRA Committee

Elisa Miles, Chair

Martin Brommell, Secretary (Up for re-election)

Hayley Brommell, Treasurer

Robin Bentham

Phil Darlow (retiring)

Pam Reynolds

Robert O'Neill (Up for re-election)

Alistair McLean (up for re-election)

Jane Bickerstaffe