



EMMER GREEN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

serving the local community

WINTER NEWSLETTER

December 2014

www.egra.co.uk

The EGRA Committee wishes all its members Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy 2015! Please put the date for next year's AGM in your diary now - 7.30pm on **Wednesday 15 April 2014** at St Barnabas Church Hall, Emmer Green.

The evening will begin with refreshments and a complimentary glass of wine. Following the AGM, **Rachel Sanderson** from the Chilterns Conservation Board will speak on her Chilterns Commons project.

Committee Update

As a result of an appeal for additional help this summer, we are pleased to welcome three new members to the committee into the following roles. Annette Fairweather has taken over as Membership Secretary from Liz Lyke, (who becomes a non-designated committee member). Doris Hiscox is attending Neighbourhood Action Group meetings on our behalf and Veronica Leeke is following planning matters.

The chair would like to thank Mark Hutchings, who resigned from the committee in July, for his work with the association over the past year.



Replacement Tree in Park

The dead Turner's Oak has now been replaced. EGRA member, Diana Hartrup located a Tulip Tree which has been purchased by the association and was planted on 17th November.

The photo shows Diana with Dave Kenny from Caversham Globe and Duncan Coles who helped plant the tree.

Highdown School Swimming Pool

The pool is still accessible to clubs and schools, but for the time being there are no open public sessions. EGRA is liaising with the school regarding reopening of the pool for community use.

Community Noticeboard in Emmer Green Precinct

The noticeboard is well used by many organisations to advertise a huge variety of local events. EGRA secretary, Jane Handley, manages a hardworking team of volunteers who keep the board current and attractive. Please use only drawing pins to attach notices. The team will remove posters that have been stapled, glued or fastened to the frame itself because these methods damage the noticeboard.

The Heights School

An RBC press release on 21st November announced, that in a change to their usual approach of selecting sites, the Education Funding Agency (EFA) has decided to ask the Council to assist in finding a community-backed permanent location. The final decision still remains with the EFA.

Whilst primarily an issue for the residents and parents of Caversham Heights, EGRA has said from the outset we would not support any location that exacerbated the traffic congestion in Emmer Green. We also hope any chosen site would alleviate pressures on our already overcrowded schools.

EGRA was founded and heavily involved in the fight to save The Hemdean Valley. When half of the valley was built on, significant legal protection was built in for the remaining part. More recently, EGRA has also supported CADRA and other Caversham groups to ensure protection of all open spaces within the Reading Borough strategic plans. The Hemdean Valley is currently designated as 'Public and Strategic Open Space' under policy SA16 and also designated as a 'Landscape Feature.'

We are fully aware there are active campaign groups, each with valid reasons why their particular site is not suitable. We, like CADRA, support calm engagement in a constructive manner, and above all hope the future of our children and the next generation be given priority.

Crossing the River 1 – New Pedestrian Bridge

Work is underway on the new shared pedestrian and cycle bridge which, when complete, will be approximately 120m long, with a 68m span over the River Thames. It will provide a key new route for pedestrians and cyclists from Caversham into the town centre, and to and from Reading Station. On the northern side it will link to the existing paths running through Christchurch Meadows. To the south it will link to an improved riverside foot and cycle path and connect via Norman Place onto Vastern Road. Weather permitting, the bridge should be completed by early Summer 2015.

Crossing the River 2 - Strengthening of Reading Bridge

Reading Bridge is almost 100 years old and in need of essential strengthening and waterproofing. Off-peak lane closure to enable foam concrete to be pumped under the bridge began in mid- November. The concrete will take three months to settle and during this time other repair work will take place. At some point the bridge will need to be fully closed; details will be publicised widely. The project is due for completion by Summer 2015. Road users can check the traffic cameras on the Council's Travel-info website www.reading-travelinfo.co.uk

Crossing the River 3 – Third Thames Bridge

Rob Wilson has circulated news of the Third Thames Bridge and the involvement of Oxfordshire CC. A full traffic study will be undertaken to assess all likely traffic impacts from a third bridge.

<http://www.robwilsonmp.com/news/rob-reports-back-latest-third-thames-bridge-meeting-0>

St Martins Precinct Development, Caversham

Reading Borough Council's planning application committee have deferred a decision on the revised plan, which includes an extended Waitrose, leisure facilities, improved parking and landscaping. The delay is due to concern expressed by CADRA for the 150 year-old Holm oak.

Dunsden Owen Association Exhibition and Concert

A successful WWI exhibition, with over 450 visitors, was held over the weekend 7-9 November. In Dunsden Village Hall, which Owen would have known as the Village School, an absorbing exhibition was staged, funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and supported by local sponsors. It featured a 'room setting' depicting life in rural Dunsden in the WWI period and used local archives, letters from Wilfred Owen and oral histories of residents who then had family in the village, to capture a sense of the period and of Dunsden at this time. On Saturday evening a concert. 'Letters to my Mother' was held in All Saints' Church. Readings, drama and song formed the narrative of Wilfred Owen's life in Dunsden until his death in Ors, France. The association's next planned event is the opening of the trail in Spring 2015. Follow progress on <http://www.owenindunsden.org> or <https://www.facebook.com/dunsdenowen>

EGRA continues to monitor any threat to our precious South Oxfordshire countryside. We listen to the community and liaise with Parish & District Councils and other elected representatives. In the summer we responded to the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 questionnaire and await the results.