



Round Up December 2024

We bring you the latest update after the last committee meeting of 2024. As always, please share it with others who are concerned for our local community. For just £3 a year, they could [receive copies directly](#).

Planning

At the Planning Applications Committee on 4 December, Councillors debated a recommendation to increase class sizes at the **Heights Primary School** from 25 to 30. A joint letter from Head Teachers of the other North Reading Primary Schools, expressed concern about the serious financial impact on their schools while so many schools have vacant places. After public representations, the Committee decided to refuse the application.

Following the planning application last year for modifications to the front of the [Spice Oven](#) and changes to the rear, an application for Listed Building Consent has been submitted. In the meantime, the building continues to deteriorate. The retrospective applications for the for [Chilis signs](#) and [shopfront](#) in Church Street have been refused. After the refusal to add upper storeys to [Great Brighams Mead](#), an extension of time has been approved for the original application to convert from offices to residential.

The Joint **Local Plan** for South Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse has now been submitted to the Secretary of State. The Reading Borough Council [Local Plan Partial Update](#) is open for comments on the pre-submission draft up to 18 December. CADRA is preparing comments about the Hemdean House School site and a few other issues. Sites for development in Caversham and Emmer Green are listed in section 8.3.

Chiltern Edge Secondary School has applied [to build 50 dwellings](#) on a part of their site.

Emmer Green

We have continued to chase Vistry for action to restore the parking signs and markings on **Kidmore End Road**. This has now been outstanding for six months and we have again raised it with RBC Officers and Councillors.

Replacement carvings for the **Emmer Green sign** have been made by Reading Men's Shed and we are putting plans in place for cleaning the sign when the weather is better.

Safer Neighbourhood Forum

Following changes in the organisation of the local forums, we are waiting to hear how the North Reading Forum will proceed. CADRA continues to be represented on the Reading wide Forum, and liaises with the local Police team on specific issues.

We are pleased to hear that PC Adrianna Bilanska will be staying with the North Reading Police team following her 12-month placement. She will continue to work alongside PC Graham Ammundsen.

River Levels

River levels on the Thames appear to have peaked following Storm Darragh. It was good that the Environment Agency was able to operate Weir Gate 6 and that obstacles around the Weir had been removed prior to the arrival of Storm Bert, given the concerns that residents had earlier in the year.

Reading Gaol

The new owner of the gaol and his planning team held a meeting to explain their plans to about 30 people from different community groups. It was chaired by former Councillor Tony Page. The reaction has been very positive, and we look forward to hearing more as this very complex project moves forward. [BBC News: Owner shares plans to transform historic jail](#)

Licensing

The Alto Lounge applied to extend their premises into the adjacent shop, and their licensing hours to midnight. The Licensing Panel heard a statement from CADRA on the importance of practical measures to minimise the impact on residents nearby. The application was approved by the panel subject to a list of conditions.

And finally

As we move into 2025, please look out for our appeals for help in sustaining CADRA's work across the community. We are particularly looking for help with:

- Preparing bulletins and newsletters
- Social media posts
- Examining planning applications and preparing comments

If you or anyone you know could offer help, please reply to this email or contact info@cadra.org.uk.

We take this opportunity to thank all our members for their support and feedback. We wish you a very Happy Christmas and many good things ahead in 2025.