



Caversham GLOBE – Brief Annual Report on activities during 2017

INTRODUCTION. Caversham GLOBE group is now more than 20 years old. The group, originally set up by RBC with funding and support, aims to improve and protect green spaces for the benefit of residents & wildlife by taking practical action on the ground and influencing policy & planning decisions. Much has changed since the early days of the GLOBE groups in Reading in the late-1990s when there was abundant and active Council sponsorship, liaison, support and cooperation on many projects. In the current challenging times the group continues to make a difference locally due to a core group of activists and the continued support of interested residents. This 2017 report provides a summary of GLOBE supporters' work and the group's contributions during 2017 to a cleaner more pleasant locality.

1. PARKS, TREES AND GREEN SPACES

There are a lot of **trees and hedges planted by GLOBE** over the past 20 years that continue to enhance various parks, public spaces and private land. GLOBE liaised with RBC Councillors/Officers, Reading Tree Wardens, residents groups (CADRA & EGRA) and worked with residents on landscaping, litter and other issues concerning many green and open spaces. However, there is not always the positive and timely co-operation on issues we raise with RBC Parks. Maintenance schedules for cutting hedges and conservation grassland are not always adhered to, foot and cycle paths are overgrown in places, some issues are not resolved speedily.

The 20 RBC wooden Planters along Church Street and Church Road continue to be planted with seasonal bedding plants then watered, tidied and maintained. The structural framework has been treated and minor repairs made.

Christchurch Meadows. We insisted on the promised re-instatement of the hedge by the laundry following new buildings and incompatible industrial security fencing being installed. (Hedge was eventually re-planted by GLOBE supporters in early 2018). The group also monitored concerns over the felling of poplars and we are liaising with RBC over the planting of replacement trees. We cleaned rubbish and tree debris obstructing **The Danall**, which is a regular occurrence. Occasional litter picking was also done.

Hill's Meadow – We cleaned rubbish and tree debris obstructing **The Danall**, which is a regular occurrence. Occasional litter picking was also done.

View Island – Commented on and investigated the proposed site for Hydro Power project and Fish Pass. Occasional litter picking also done.

Warren Woodlands – Litter picking undertaken

Baltimore Walk – In January 2017, without prior notice or consultation, many trees were inexplicably being felled by unidentified workmen in the memorial woods in the back field. Some valued trees were felled. Immediate liaison with RBC Officer and monitoring resulted in some trees being saved. An explanation was eventually given by RBC that the trees were being "thinned" as part of a woodland management programme and the work was concluded. We continued to insist on the replacement of the broken National Cycle Route milepost millennium sign badly damaged by machinery used by RBC in March 2016. (eventually done in April 2018!). The conservation grassland on Hemdean Valley slope was not cut at all during 2017, despite an undertaking that it would be cut 2 or 3 times per year.

Veteran Oaks. Off road car parking had started at the base of the large veteran oak tree in Queen Elizabeth House grounds next to Westfield Road Rec. This matter was raised with RBC. The tree has a TPO and compaction of roots was endangering it. Resultant fence protection is thanks to a GLOBE activist. GLOBE also provided Woodland Trust advice to owners to stop further ill-advised lopping of some major limbs of a Veteran oak tree on private land next to Baltimore Walk. No lopping was done on that oak, which features in the Caversham Tree Walk.

2. PLANNING MATTERS GLOBE monitors RBC planning applications, including applications for work on protected trees. Site meetings and consultations are attended, comments and objections are submitted, as time permits, particularly regarding environmental issues. During 2017 representations continued to be made on: Former Arthur Clark Care Home site Albert Road. RBC Draft Local Plan. The site of the new Heights Primary School. Farmland north of Emmer Green between Peppard Rd & Kiln Rd, a scheme to build homes on this open farmland immediately adjacent to Emmer Green. Rivermead Leisure Complex landscaping/trees. Commercial/residential developments in central Caversham. East Reading MRT scheme.

3. CLEANER CAVERSHAM

During 2017 GLOBE supporters collected from public spaces the following: more than **101 sacks of rubbish (including 30 sacks of cans and plastic bottles for recycling), more than 100 glass bottles for recycling, plus fly tipped items.** GLOBE supporters collected all this from parts of Emmer Green/Caversham borders (including Caversham Lakes), Warren Woodlands, Thames Parks, central Caversham and periodic litter picks of green verges, pavements and footpaths to make Caversham cleaner. **Thanks to those people who invested their time to make Caversham a lot cleaner.**

RBC operates a “Residents Adopt Your Street” scheme known as RAYS. GLOBE promotes this and co-operates with RBC Streetcare. Some GLOBE activists are RAYS members who keep a designated area free of litter. GLOBE supporters report issues such as fly tipping, graffiti, abandoned shopping trolleys, potholes, defective street lights etc either direct to RBC or through the **Love Clean Reading** technology app. GLOBE supporters also take personal direct action to clean or paint over graffiti & clear litter & fly tipping.

Air Quality in central Caversham. In November 2017 a GLOBE activist drew attention to actions by local people and Friends of the Earth (FoE) to monitor air quality (AQ) near major traffic routes in east Reading. Caversham GLOBE purchased one AQ testing kit to monitor levels of Nitrogen Dioxide at the junction of Church Street and St Anne’s Road. This action and subsequent testing in March 2018 has resulted in major concerns and an emerging campaign for remedial action by RBC in Caversham.

4. OTHER MATTERS

Finances We no longer receive a grant from Reading Borough Council to cover the costs of our monthly meeting room hire and public liability insurance. Consequently, the group is now reliant on donations, sponsorship and grants from other sources. This aspect of our continued existence needs further work. A separate financial report for 2017 is available.

Local publicity GLOBE has a website and Facebook pages where events are publicised, and details of meetings are available. Our **web site** and **Facebook** pages are kept updated www.cavershamglobe.org.uk and <https://www.facebook.com/cavershamglobe>

Volunteers: The GLOBE group relies on the active support, time and expertise of a dedicated group of supporters and residents. More participants are always welcome to help with our projects. There is no financial subscription or formality to joining in our activities, which are covered by public liability insurance. The group holds evening meetings monthly on the 4th Tuesday.

Richard Denney
Caversham GLOBE June 2018

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