

The silent killer on Caversham’s busy roads - 2018

The harm to human health and our environment of “Poor Air Quality” has been the subject of international, UK and local media discussion for some years. The alarming measurements taken by Caversham GLOBE (**Go Local On a Better Environment**) group, as part of a national campaign organised by Friends of the Earth (FoE), reveal the dangerous levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in central Caversham. Special test tubes were obtained and installed to measure the amount of harmful and dangerous nitrogen dioxide (micro-grams per cubic metre) on some local roads and the results were analysed by Gradko Laboratories of Winchester. These **results, in µg/m³ (micrograms per cubic metre) are as follows:**

Caversham Location	Dec 2017	March 2018	July 2018	Sept 2018
Church Street/Prospect Street jnc	Not tested	41 µg/m ³	41 µg/m ³	34 µg/m ³
Near Church St/Priory Ave jnc	Not tested	47 µg/m ³	49 µg/m ³	40.5 µg/m ³
Church Road/St Anne's Road jnc	56 µg/m ³	57 µg/m ³	50 µg/m ³	41.5 µg/m ³
Peppard Rd near Prospect St jnc	Not tested	54 µg/m ³	71 µg/m ³	48.5 µg/m ³

This means we're breathing in dangerous particles! The **legal MEAN ANNUAL limit for nitrogen dioxide is 40µg/m³**. These alarming results show just how bad pollution is on our roads and how dangerous they are for residents, pedestrians and cyclists.

Of more concern is the equivalent information that RBC has collected for air quality measurement – see below – showing that **THREE CAVERSHAM LOCATIONS HAVE EXCEEDED THE MEAN ANNUAL LEGAL LIMIT FOR THE PAST NINE YEARS!**

131 Caversham Road	471261	174236	Yes	BORDERLINE	45	41	49	43	43	47	40	36	36
14 Church Road	471103	174774	Yes	BORDERLINE	41	38	38	41	41	42	35	37	36
Baron Cadogan PH	471461	174840	Yes	EXCEEDING AQO	60	49	50	52	51	50	44	46	44
45 Prospect Street	471558	174919	Yes	BORDERLINE	45	40	42	45	45	44	39	38	37
59 Prospect Street	471599	174966	Yes	EXCEEDING AQO	58	50	50	50	49	58	49	48	45
60 Prospect Street	471557	174944	Yes	BELOW AQO	41	40	35	38	40	38	35	34	33
212 Gosbrook Road	471904	174635	No	BELOW AQO	38	31	37	43	34	40	-	-	
241 Gosbrook Road	471942	174600	Yes	BELOW AQO	33	34	38	43	38	40	35	35	34
2 Kings Road	471928	174548	No	BELOW AQO	37	32	33	35	33	39	-	-	
68 George Street	471913	174490	Yes	BELOW AQO	36	36	33	37	36	38	34	33	31
40 George Street	471909	174543	Yes	EXCEEDING AQO	52	46	48	50	44	52	42	44	47
					2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

What is to be done? Who will do it? When? These crucial questions and many more need some answers. This matter has now been raised with the RBC Strategic Environment and Transport Committee. However, the agenda papers of 21 November 2018 on Air Quality (search for 7 page RBC document at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/article/11415/Archived-meetings-from-01-September-to-31-December-2018>) does not make any reference to AQ readings north of the

Thames, even though Prospect Street readings have been above the illegal limit for many years and GLOBE's AQ readings are not mentioned. Residents groups and RBC Councillors in north Reading need to develop a joint approach for remedial action underpinned with funding and commitment from RBC This could include more trees, street planters and green walls. However, only by reducing the levels of polluting traffic exhaust fumes will residents, pedestrians and cyclists be able to breathe cleaner air in the long term.

Readers should also note that the infamous Cow Lane Bridges project will be completed in Spring 2019. This will result in increased eastbound vehicle traffic coming to Caversham Bridge junction with Richfield Avenue as well as more traffic coming from the north and east seeking a westbound route across town. Reading Borough Council proposes to restrict traffic in west Reading, on the Oxford Road, so that Portman Road, Richfield Avenue and Caversham Road will be an alternative route. High density of residential apartment blocks planned for Caversham Road, Vastern Road and nearby locations will also bring heavier vehicle traffic. Anyone can reasonably predict longer traffic queues, slower journey times and increased air pollution. Action is overdue. Meantime, best advice might be "hold your breath"?

Contacts:

www.cavershamglobe.org.uk

<https://www.facebook.com/cavershamglobe/>

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