



Caversham GLOBE – Brief Annual Report on activities in 2019

INTRODUCTION. This report provides a summary of GLOBE supporters' work and the group's contributions during 2019 to a cleaner more pleasant locality. Caversham GLOBE group is now more than 20 years old. The group, originally set up by RBC with funding and support but now completely independent of the council, aims to improve the local environment 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 thanks to a core group of activists and the continued support of interested residents. Much more could be done if more residents would contribute to our work.

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 liaises with RBC Councillors/Officers, the Reading Tree Wardens and, residents groups (CADRA & EGRA) on landscaping, litter and other issues concerning many green and open spaces.

The 20 RBC wooden Planters along Church Street and Church Road continue to be planted with shrubs and seasonal bedding plants and watered, tidied and maintained. The structural framework is deteriorating. Some repairs have been carried out but more work will be needed to stop them deteriorating further. Thanks to the resourceful GLOBE activists for their good work on the planters over the past year.

Thames Parks, including Christchurch Meadows, Hill's Meadow and View Island. The hedge by the laundry had to be partially re-planted by GLOBE supporters in early 2019 following damage by Environment Agency contractors. A new section of hedge was also planted behind the old pavilion. We reported issues with debris obstructing **The Danall**, which is an ongoing problem. Regular contact with RBC Parks officials has taken place as necessary.

Balmore Walk – Occasional litter picking and watering of newly planted trees.

Richfield Avenue and adjacent Thames Prom green space – Major litter pick carried out in April 2019.

Environment Agency proposed flood alleviation scheme. In January GLOBE initiated a meeting of residents leading to the establishment of CABFAS - Campaign for a Better Flood Alleviation Scheme. Cabfas is challenging the basis for these controversial proposals which, if implemented, would result in the building of walls and bunds extending some 5km through Caversham and next to the Towpath on the south bank. This would result in the loss of many mature trees and hedges. A 'Conveyance Channel' would cut through Christchurch and Hill's Meadow leading to loss of amenity space and the removal of many landmark trees.

In March 2019 we raised complaints over clearance of vegetation during the nesting season as well as damage to protected trees and to GLOBE hedging by the EA and their contractors.

We continue to monitor EA proposals and raise concerns direct with the EA as necessary.

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 2019 major planning matters that occupied GLOBE's time and attention included:

St Martin's Precinct: We commented on the need for more trees and planters on Church Street.

The CAGE Dunsden campaign successfully defeated plans for building on farmland north of Emmer Green;

SSE site Vastern Rd - we attended several pre-planning meetings with the developer and commented on Landscaping and environmental issues. We are also monitoring the proposals for major developments on the nearby Royal Mail site in Caversham Rd and on the Vastern Rd station shopping park.
Abbotsmead Place infill housing - commented on landscaping issues (construction now in progress).
Proposed new hotel on the Crowne Plaza car park (planning refused)
We support KEG (Keep Emmer Green) which campaigns against building on Reading Golf Club and other open space in Emmer Green.
We commented on the Height's School facilities on Westfield Rec and St Anne's School Field.

3. CLEANER CAVERSHAM

In January 2019 we carried out a litterpick covering Hill's Meadow, View Island and Christchurch Meadow. 16 sacks collected. In April 2019 we carried out a litterpick of the Thames Prom/Rivermead area.
During the Reading Festival in August 2019 13 GLOBE volunteers carried out daily litter picks around central Caversham to keep the area clean over the long weekend, supplementing RBC's cleanup effort.
We reported problems with the private car park in Bridge Street and flytipping behind the planters on the BT frontage, resulting these areas being cleaned up on a number of occasions.
Thanks to all supporters 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 2018 GLOBE carried out monitoring of air quality at 4 locations in central Caversham. This showed illegally high levels of nitrogen dioxide in Prospect Street and Church Rd. We have continued to press RBC and local councillors for remedial action although there has been very little progress to date. GLOBE is participating in RBC's Reading Climate Change Strategy and the Cleaner Air & Safer Transport Forum.

4. OTHER MATTERS

Finances Our costs of monthly meeting room hire were met from current funds. Our public liability insurance fees were partly covered by the Trust for Conservation Volunteers (TCV). We benefited from donations from local businesses whose names are displayed on our website. A separate financial report for 2019 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>

Graffiti cleaning wipes - we have purchased a supply of wipes which are proving very effective at cleaning graffiti off green telecom cabinets, street furniture etc

Purchase of GLOBE business cards – a further supply of these contact cards was obtained for publicity purposes.

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 initiate, lead or help with 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.

(NB This report covers GLOBE activities prior to the Covid-19 emergency in March 2020 when all meetings and practical events were suspended until further notice.)