

Neighbourhood News

from the Bell Tower Community Association

Issue 21 - September 2010



The big get-together



EATING TOGETHER: Neighbours relax and share their food (photo: Paolo Del Pup)

On Sunday 18 July we got together with neighbours for lunch in the school playground. Local people enjoyed some lively conversation and the chance to share food from different cultures.

The event was part of the Eden Project's annual Big Lunch event, which attracted a million participants nationwide.

We hope to hold an even bigger event next year - look out for details in *Neighbourhood News*.

News in brief

● The application to close the Denbeigh Place play area was resubmitted in March, and the Bell Tower Community Association represented the majority of residents in opposing its closure. Decision was deferred in April and the matter was eventually discussed by the planning committee in May. The committee was minded to accept the application subject to reports on the reason for closure.

After a meeting with Bell Tower committee members, a large number of concerned residents petitioned the council to reconsider the decision. The council finally withdrew the application at the end of July because of the number of objections received.

● Can you spare a little time? We are looking for a minutes secretary for our monthly committee meetings. We also need help with weeding the garden area in Randolph Road. If you can help us please contact Barbara at 77 Addison Road.

● Caversham Road will need to be closed at the railway bridge to allow for construction work. Closure dates are 11-12 and 18-19 September (night time only), and continuously from 30 December to 3 January. Access to Northfield Road will be via Swansea Road only.

● Finally, don't forget the police surgery on the first Monday of each month. The next one is on Monday 6 September at 7.00 at New Hope.

We've cleaned up again!

The big skip was back for the fourth time in August for our ever-popular community tidy-up day, now a regular feature in the calendar.

The event, kindly sponsored by Reading Festival organisers Festival Republic, gave neighbours the chance to clear out their houses, gardens and sheds. Old furniture, mattresses and many other items were brought to the skip.



MEASURING UP: Old doors find a new home

Despite the showery weather over 100 locals took the opportunity to have a good clear-out, and a recycling service was provided too, which proved to be popular. Among items claimed were several bikes and a complete set of doors.

Bell Tower Community Association members also helped neighbours clear their front gardens and carry bulky items to the skip, which was filled within four hours.

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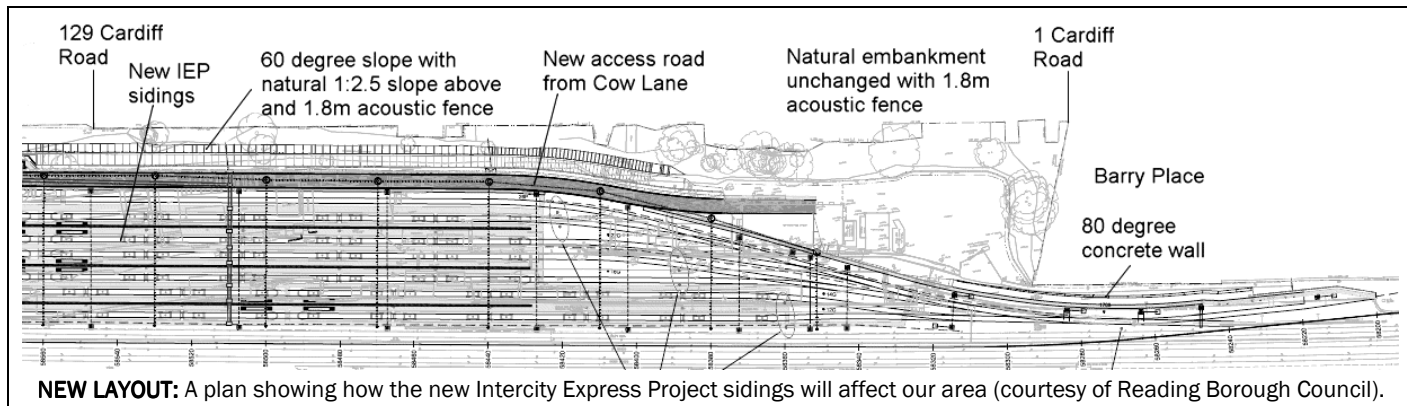
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What's happening behind Cardiff Road?

David Neale takes a look at plans for the new train depot.

viaduct over this area, and there will be an extra new line under the viaduct. These additions cutting through the train depot land mean that the depot will have to be moved, and the proposed site for this is the other side of Cow Lane, on

If you have been to the far end of Cardiff Road recently you will have noticed that number 189 has been demolished and replaced with an access road for the development. This replaces the road between Caversham Road railway bridge and



By now readers will be aware of the Reading station development, with its intention to double train traffic through the area and eliminate one of the worst bottlenecks on the rail network.

Outline plans have been available for several months showing the proposed new station layout. However, only limited details of the track changes have appeared up to now. The first detailed plans, released in late July, show the phase of the development that will have the greatest effect on our area - the new train depot and sidings.

The existing First Great Western depot is off Cow Lane, in the 'railway triangle' area between the two bridges. The main line to Didcot will eventually run on a new

land occupied up to now by allotments.

New sidings will be required for Intercity Express Project (IEP) trains, and it is the construction of these that will affect Cardiff Road and Barry Place residents. It appears that all buildings on the embankment will be demolished and several new sidings built, extending most of the way along the embankment behind Cardiff Road. A permanent access road will also be built along the edge of the embankment from Cow Lane.

To allow for this construction the embankment will have to be changed as follows:

- From the far end of Cardiff Road up to the middle of the terraces there will be a new embankment profile, with a 60 degree 'reinforced earth' slope at the bottom and a natural 1:2.5 slope at the top (at the industrial end of Cardiff Road there are a few variations from this).
- From the middle to the eastern end of the terraces the existing embankment slope will be unchanged.
- Behind Barry Place there will be an 80 degree concrete retaining wall.

There will be a new 1.8m high acoustic fence along the top of the embankment, presumably to reduce traffic noise. There is a landscaping plan showing new trees on the remodelled embankment, but it is not clear whether any measures will be taken to improve the view of the concrete wall behind Barry Place.

the fire station, which has been closed to allow the bridge to be widened; the entrance in Cardiff Road is understood to be temporary.

Network Rail have submitted a formal planning application, which can be viewed at the Civic Centre or on the web at <http://planning.reading.gov.uk>. The application number is 10/01380/FUL. We urge all concerned residents to examine the plans as soon as possible, since the deadline for comments is in early September.

Cardiff Road residents have set up a group to discuss the development at <http://www.weartheodds.co.uk>.

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