

Future Events

Open Meeting

Wednesday 13th November, 7pm

An open meeting at The Oasis (corner of Baker Street and Carey Street) with drinks and nibbles. The focus is on crime in the area. We are also hoping for a guest speaker. All welcome. And please do bring some nibbles for us all to share.

Annual Holiday Social

Tuesday 17th December, 7pm

A chance to relax, meet local people and join in the holiday activities. You are welcome to bring along some food or drink (non-alcoholic) and we can all share in the festivities. Note: this is not linked to any one religion. Whatever your beliefs, you are all welcome. Location: The Oasis.



Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association

Our Area

Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association (BSANA) covers the area between the Inner Distribution Road (IDR) and Prospect Street (shown left).

In our area, we have shops and businesses, places of worship and social centres, Bed and Breakfast and public facilities.

Did you know that Russell Street is named after Charles Russell, Reading MP and became chairman of the Great Western Railway. Back in 30 March 1840, he was on the first train that arrived in Reading.



Historical Reading

Reading suffered little physical damage during either of the two World Wars that afflicted the 20th century, although many citizens were killed or injured in the conflicts. One significant air raid occurred on 10 February 1943, when a single Luftwaffe plane machine-gunned and bombed the town centre, resulting in 41 deaths and over 100 injuries.

This is a view of Broad Street as it looked around 1950, when it was a road through Reading. You will see the trolley bus and other shops and vehicles at the time.



Your chance to participate

Either come along to any of our open meetings, or just contact us. The best way to get in touch is by email.

Email

bsana@bsana.org



Via post, to the secretary

Richard Rowlands,
28 Anstey Road, RG1 7JR

Web Site

www.bsana.org

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BSANA's Aim

The objects of the Association shall be to improve the quality of life for present and future residents of the Area by promoting a sense of community and by action to conserve, protect and improve the character of the Area.



BSANA Newsletter: Autumn 2013

Summer clean up



On 20th July 2013, Reading Streetcare joined up with local Baker Street Area residents and other helpers to tidy up the local neighbourhood. We sent out leaflets to ask people to hand in items or help collect.

On the left is one of the items we were handed (it's the one on the left!)

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Volunteers Wanted

BSANA has been going for a year and is keen to do more. Do you support our aims? If so, please would you be willing to join in and help? We need volunteer support in the following ways:

- Newsletter delivery ● Street Rep ●
- Street clean-ups ● Social Events ●
- Planning ● Newsletter reporter ●

We are all local residents, with an interest in helping to improve the area. If you can help from time to time, you are all welcome.

Just get in touch with us (page 4) and let us know what you would like to do.



Ward Councillors meet with BSANA

All three Abbey Ward Councillors met with BSANA on 5th September. Our neighbourhood falls almost entirely within Abbey ward. The Councillors had asked to meet BSANA's management committee in answer to questions we had previously raised about the Council's Streetcare enforcement policy.

As reported in our previous issue, waste bins kept on pavements and overflowing bins were the top two concerns of residents who responded to the house to house consultation we carried out in the Neighbourhood earlier this year. Dog fouling was a close runner up. We therefore took these issues up with the Councillors with a view to achieving improvements through closer co-operation.

The meeting on 5 September was very cordial and constructive and we are currently waiting for feedback on action promised at the meeting.

Preserving the beauty of our streets

British Telecom Openreach (BT) thought it could get away with putting up two new telegraph poles in our Conservation Area - intending to sling a hosepipe-sized cable between them - at the top of Jesse Terrace, without planning permission or consultation! After we confronted them, they eventually applied for retrospective planning permission from Reading Borough Council (RBC).



However, they reckoned without BSANA and the strength of local feeling - 16 objections were received. We successfully challenged their applications for retrospective permission. Councillor Tony Page cogently disputed the legality of BT's actions in a Conservation Area. We demolished the engineering case and showed how putting cable underground would be more efficient and provide everyone involved with the solution they needed. We also pointed out that the cable would be slung through the branches of a local-landmark poplar tree - endangering the tree in contravention of RBC's tree conservation policies. Roisin McAuley demonstrated that BT's failure to consult any resident or any representative of the residents e.g. BSANA, directly contradicted BT's own stated policies on social responsibility.

The result? A unanimous rejection by the Planning Committee of BT's applications and red faces on the BT team. A victory for BSANA - and for common sense; and a good example of the community and Council working together.

BSANA & Reading Rescue

On Saturday 12th October, ten BSANA members met with sunny skies to get out and tend to some of the litter and debris in our neighbourhood in conjunction with Reading Rescue, an effort supported by the Reading Borough Council. We managed to clean up debris along our green areas and in our streets, reaching every street by the end of the day. We even had time to do some hoeing along the pavements and gutters which is always fun and so satisfying! Thank you to everyone that came out!

We also cleaned up the large parking area off Baker Street between Russell Street and Waylen Street where there was evidence of much prostitution and drugs. This was absolutely horrible to see with the extent of evidence there and BSANA is doing everything that we can do to try to stem the tide on the crime in this area.

Another case in point: Please – If you see something that needs cleaning up, contact us. If it's illegal, call the police free on 101 and report it. Every report is appreciated and helps tremendously.

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Summer Clean-up

It's easy to get rid of our smaller rubbish. With red bins for recycling, grey/black bins for landfill and other recycling facilities on Howard street, small items are easily disposed of. But what about larger items? Reading Council will collect them, but there is a charge. BSANA used a good portion of our Community First funding to hire skips and organise a weekend to collect these from people, for free.

From first thing on Saturday 20th July through to the end of Sunday local residents got together to help clear mattresses and other large items from people's gardens and front yards. Thanks must go to everyone who attended. It was a monumental task.

Thanks also to Reading Council Streetcare, who provided a van to help collect the goods and a driver and helper to work with us both days. BSANA provided two huge skips which we completely filled, in addition to filling an adjacent garage. Here's what happened to one of them:

From this



... to this ...



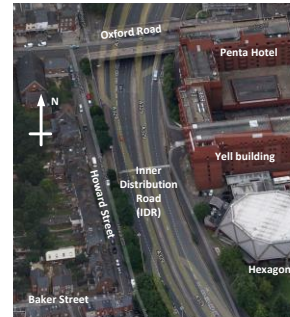
... to this



Both skips and the garage were filled to bulging.

Meanwhile other volunteers helped clear weeds and fill bin bags with rubbish from some of the passages behind the houses. Also volunteers hoed the weeds from the pavement and gutters.

BSANA Chair Karen said "It's fantastic to see a community come together and help to make the whole area look nicer".



Planning Applications

The following applications have been made to Reading Council:

- Change of use of existing building known as Yell House (between the Penta Hotel and the Hexagon) to comprise approximately 115 apartments.
- The erection of a terrace of three 2-bed houses following demolition of garages on land to the rear of 52 Russell Street.

New Church

LifeSpring Church began in 1979 when a small group of Christians began to meet together in Southcote Library Hall. Recently they bought the old Riley's Snooker Hall on Oxford Road and have converted it into a new church, a member of the Evangelical Alliance, restoring many of the features of the Pavilion Cinema that was originally on the site.

If you are interested, the church currently meets together on Sunday mornings.



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