

Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association

Lots of ideas
for meeting
neighbours

Plans for High-Rise Tower Blocks

Our Neighbourhood

Broad Street Mall



Reading Borough Council (RBC) has recently announced plans to build multiple high-rise tower blocks up to 20 storeys high right next to our neighbourhood. There will also be many other new buildings reaching up to 12 storeys.

The development site includes the old civic office grounds, the top of the Broad Street Mall and the surrounding open public space. Eventually the police station will be demolished to form part of the development area. It is expected that between 800 to 1,200 new dwellings will be built with around 2,000 to 3,000 people living in this relatively small area.

(continued on the next page)

The Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association's activities are supported by our generous grant from the People's Health Trust using money raised by Health Strength Community Interest Company through The Health Lottery.

money raised by
health**Confirm**
through



people's
health
trust

This is a huge development that will help shape and define Reading for many years to come. The development is in the early planning stage and RBC is seeking to engage with BSANA and other interested groups as part of a community consultation process. We have started to evaluate the development so that we can provide an informed response to the proposal.

Here are some of our immediate concerns:

- The tall buildings will have an overbearing effect on much of our historic neighbourhood with many of our homes being over looked. The plan is primarily focused on reducing the visual impact on Reading Minster which comes at a very heavy cost to our neighbourhood and to our Conservation Area.
- Not only does the development come with very little public open green space it also either builds on top of, or encloses much of the existing open public space. Our neighbourhood has no parks of its own, so this development will just compound the problem we face in our area.
- Having such a high concentration of large buildings will lead to its narrow streets being in the shade and may make the whole area feel very claustrophobic and unwelcoming.
- This development is what is classed as super-density housing due to the proposed large number of people living on the relatively small area of land. This level of density is typically associated with very large cities where they have the appropriate facilities and infrastructure, it is not something that you would expect to see in a place the size of Reading.
- For super-density housing to be successful requires excellent infrastructure, however, the infrastructure around this site is already under immense pressure with roads getting grid-locked whenever there is even a minor problem and there is a lack of good quality cycles paths. Local school and healthcare provision will need very careful consideration if services aren't to deteriorate.



An artist's very quick interpretation of the location and size of the high-rise tower block, please note other mid-rise tower blocks that may also be prominent



- Super-density housing requires intensive management to keep safe and clean, they are not cheap options, so often work for the well-off, but fail for poorer people, as we have witnessed with many tower blocks from the 1960s and 70s being demolished.
- We don't believe that this will be a child friendly place to live as there will be insufficient play areas and tall buildings have often proved to be incompatible with family life. For a well-balanced community to establish then a development has to work for all people regardless of their age or circumstances.
- We believe that insufficient thought has been given to access requirements by fire and rescue services and to policing.
- Permission has recently been granted to convert Sainsbury's on Friar Street into flats. The old civic office development site has recently been identified as being suitable for providing a full-sized supermarket to serve the increasing numbers of people who don't own a car and live in central Reading, we believe that this opportunity can't be lost.
- The development site is right next to the historic heart of Reading and we think that it warrants very careful treatment with an iconic development that will make a very positive contribution to Reading's character for many years to come.

BSANA recognise the substantial demand for housing, however, we believe that all developments should be focused on providing good quality housing where people can live healthy and happy lives, the impact on existing neighbourhoods also needs to be given careful consideration.

If you are interested in finding out more about this development, we will be holding a meeting (with food) on Thursday the 4th October at 7pm at the Salvation Army on Anstey Road, we have invited our local politicians so that they can listen to our concerns.

Further information is available from RBC's website <http://www.reading.gov.uk/> and searching for "Hosier Street". We encourage you to leave comments on the website and / or write to your local politicians if you wish to express any concerns you may have, please note that the closing date for the consultation period is the 28th September. Please contact us if you want to help us in our evaluation of this development.

Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association Meeting with a meal

*Thursday the 4th October 2018 - 7pm
Salvation Army, Anstey Road*

Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Presentation of our evaluation of the Hosier Street Area Outline Development Framework

drum4fun (www.drum4fun.co.uk) is a new community drum circle venture run by Kate Cooper, a gigging musician, ukulele group facilitator and performer from Reading. It's fun, it's noisy, it's good for you! Truly inclusive fun and exciting drum circle experiences for everyone.



BSANA MUSIC NIGHT
at the CASTLE TAP
Friday night
14 September - 8-10 p.m.
The Castle Tap
120 Castle Street
First drink always free to
BSANA RESIDENTS

Do you have something you would like to do in our neighbourhood to make a difference?

Tell us your idea and how you would like to go about making it happen. We particularly like ideas that bring people together so that they can get to know their neighbours. We have funds to cover things like venue hire and any other costs associated with putting on events. Please also let us know what funds you would need.

If you would like to pitch the idea at one of our meetings please get in touch so that we can include it on the agenda. You can also email details of your idea to pitch@bsana.org and we will see if we can make it happen. The next one is in September. You can also phone and speak to BSANA's Community Liaison Officer Paul on 07380 297250.

Join our mailing list!

We are really eager to bump up our mailing list and we'd appreciate you giving us your email address. It is the best way to keep informed of upcoming events. Send your email address to contact@bsana.org



Our Artisan Food Fairs are starting again

We are pleased to announce our Artisan Food Fairs are starting again! Join us for free tea, coffee and waffles. Fresh bread from the Nomad Bakery and other products will be for sale. We are also looking for volunteers to welcome people at the door or make and serve waffles (slots: 8:30-10 or 10-12:30).

EAT LOCAL LOVE LOCAL

Celebrate great food from local producers

The Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association hosts
The Artisan Community Food Fair at

TheOasis

at the corner of Baker Street and Carey Street



**Baker Street Area
Neighbourhood
Association**

Last Saturday of every month
From 9 until noon
Free coffee, tea and waffles

NOMAD
Bakery



Be your own
in-house
**MASTER
SUSHI CHEF!!**



Always wanted to learn how to make **sushi...**
...but you wouldn't know where to start?

COME ON ALONG and **FIND OUT ALL**
you need to know to get going!

SATURDAY 29 September
from 1-3

at the Oasis
(corner of Baker Street and Carey Street)

just bring yourself!...supplies included!

You must confirm by Wednesday the 26th to sushi@bsana.org

Conservation Streets

Hosier Street's past link with Baker Street

When you walk along Baker Street towards the town centre, the route ends abruptly at the IDR cutting. There is Howard Street on your left and Body Road on your right. The photo below was taken at the end of Baker Street shortly before the IDR cutting was dug in the 1960's. It shows how Baker Street used to lead on into Hosier Street which eventually emerged – and still emerges - into The Butts, directly opposite St Mary's minster church.

The photo below shows in the foreground the kerbs of Hosier Street curving to the left, into Howard Street and to the right, into Body Road. The shop on the right was the local grocer's E.C. Baynes. Immediately beyond the shop can be seen part of the historic Finch's Buildings. Those are shown more clearly in the photo opposite which looks back, past Baynes's to the corner of Body Road. It can be seen (perhaps needing the aid of a magnifying glass) that a car has turned into Body Road. Beyond that car is the end wall and chimney stack of No 3 Baker Street which, of course, is still standing.





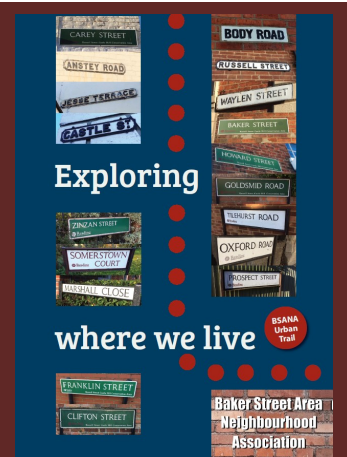
Finch's Buildings is the main subject of the above picture. According to information published by Reading Museum they were originally weaver's cottages named after an eighteenth century occupier, but were also known as Lady Vachel's House. They were probably built in the late sixteenth century re-using stone from Reading Abbey. That information and the photos in this article are reproduced by permission of the Reading Museum.

As reported elsewhere in this Newsletter, the Reading Borough Council has published a draft planning framework for the redevelopment of the Hosier Street area and the proposals include construction of a pedestrian bridge across the IDR to restore a direct link between the end of Baker Street and the regenerated Hosier Street area.

Interested in discovering more?

Enjoy a walk around the neighbourhood with BSANA's *Exploring Where We Live!* It is a book designed for children and adults to take a fun and insightful tour of our neighbourhood. It provides details of the fascinating history of many local buildings and the varied architectural styles of our neighbourhood.

Pick up a free copy at any of our events





Heritage Open Days are across two weekends 6-9th and 13-16th September.

Living Reading UK has published a free map guide to Heritage Open Days in Reading which can be picked up from libraries and leisure centres and is available in the Oasis (or download here: livingreading.co.uk/public/downloads/VDNzG/HOD2018_Leaflet_digital.pdf). Full details of all the events/locations may be found at www.heritageopendays.org.uk.

Reading Civic Society and BSANA together are running a walk of the Russell Street/ Castle Hill Conservation Area on 6th (pm) and 15th September (am). Starting at The Oasis (Baker Street) the walks will take around 90 minutes. At the end of the walk on the 6th and perhaps on the 15th, there will be the opportunity to see pictures of old Reading displayed by a long time resident of Jesse Terrace. On the 6th this

will be in The Oasis and the 15th in The Lifespring Church, Oxford Road. Also on display will be information about Reading Borough Council's Hosier Street Development. So please do come along and give your assessment, is it at Risk or is it far better than that.

On the 6th Terry of Terry's Reading Walkabouts (www.facebook.com/terrysreadingwalkabouts) will lead the charge, on the 15th it is members of the Civic Society/BSANA. There is a maximum of 15 people on each walk so booking essential on Eventbrite. Full details, including the link to Eventbrite to book, are on the Civic Society's web page (www.readingcivicsociety.org.uk). The walks are filling up quickly. If they are oversubscribed a further walk may be organised.

We ask participants to make a voluntary donation of £5 each. Students and children free. The donations will go to Terry's Walks Charities; Daisy's Dream and No 5 Reading.

Oxford Road Safer Neighbourhood Forum

The forum is a group that discusses the issues affecting residents who live along or near the Oxford Road. The focus of the meetings is on crime issues, such as drugs and anti-social behaviour. Anyone who lives or works in or near Oxford Road in Reading is welcome to come along to any meeting. The remaining meetings in 2018 are:

Wednesday 12th September 2018, 7-9pm, The Oasis, 21 Baker St

Wednesday 21st November 2018, 7-9pm, The Salvation Army Centre, 522 Oxford Road (opposite Brock Barracks).

If you would like to be kept informed as to what's happening with the Forum, please fill in the form at <https://consult.reading.gov.uk/dens/d55e5741/>

Your Local Book Group

For just under 6 months a handful of us have got together in the back room of the pub to chat about books – books that have made us smile, made us emotional, made us think and made us disagree. Everyone who comes has been looking for encouragement to read something they wouldn't necessarily pick up and we have different skills and interests but always find something to talk about. We meet on the second Monday evening of the month and pick books two or three months in advance.

So far we have read something close to home, an investigation into loneliness & friendship in old age by a Reading author – *Mrs Palfrey at the Claremont*; something from further afield, a tale of families, tribes and colonialism in the Biafran war in Nigeria – *Half a Yellow Sun*; an interesting blend between the two in the form friendship and families across 60s London & Civil War Spain *The Muse* and most recently a collection of feminist poetry – *The World's Wife*.

The next meeting is on the 10th September and we will be talking about *Beatrice & Virgil* by Yann Martel. If you want to borrow a copy before then ask at the bar in The Castle Tap. In October we will talk about *The Shadow of the Wind* by Carlos Ruiz Zafron and that will be available to borrow from the September meeting onwards.

The meetings are very informal so don't worry if you don't finish the book before we get together, don't enjoy the book or can't make a particular meeting and of course feel free to bring cake!

books.castletap@gmail.com; The Castle Tap, 120 Castle St



image from "I'd Rather be Reading" by Julia Rothman



<http://www.transitionreading.org.uk/projects/reading-repair-cafe/>

Sunday 21 October
12:30-4:30pm

The Oasis, 21 Bakers St, Reading

Get help to repair a wide range of items covering areas such as:

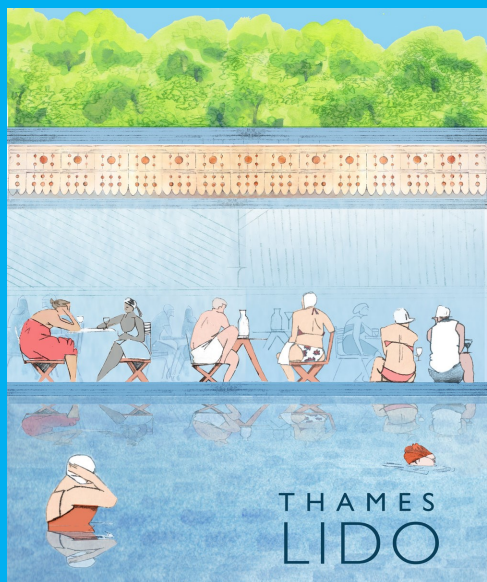
- Electronics
- Mechanical items
- Computers (hardware/software)
- Toys/Furniture
- Clothing/Textiles
- Tool sharpening

In fact, if it's broken, bring it along and the Repair Café team are sure to have a go or at least provide some advice about what your best course of action might be.

You're also welcome to come along with repairs you want to do yourself or craft projects you're working on and you'll find a friendly helpful bunch ready to welcome you.

The event is run entirely by volunteers and anyone can pop in! As well as repairs, you can pop in for a cuppa and homemade cake. BSANA is also treating attendees to pizza and cold drinks. Everything is free, but we encourage donations to the Repair Café team are encouraged to ensure they can keep running in future.

Meet your neighbours at the Thames Lido



Fancy a swim at Reading's recently restored lido?

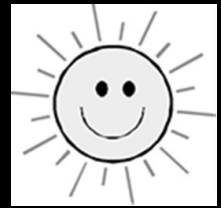
The swimming pool is on the site of the former riverside Edwardian women's bath. We thought that living in a Conservation Area many BSANA residents might have an interest in seeing the inside of one of Readings many historic sites.

We are offering free tickets to BSANA residents over the age of 18 who want to go swimming as part of a group of four residents. No need to find someone to go with as we will facilitate that and arrange payment.

Please email (swim@bsana.org) or phone BSANA's Community Liaison Officer Paul on 07380 297250. Phone us if you want to be contacted about available slots during one of the Lido's non-member swimming sessions.

Help our area shine with the **WAYS** scheme

The **Reading Adopt Your Street** scheme is a partnership between local residents volunteering to help keep our streets tidy. Reading Council will still do all the street cleaning it already does. In addition the Council now provides BSANA with gloves, litter pickers and bags as long as volunteers agree to clean a street (or two) at least once a month.



If you would like to help and become part of the scheme, please email cleanstreets@bsana.org and let us know which streets you would like to do. If you can give us a choice, in case someone else has agreed to do your first choice, that would be appreciated. Remember, if streets are generally clean, that discourages others from dropping litter, so they tend to remain cleaner.

Pick up gloves, litter pickers at any Artisan Food Fair.

www.readingbicyclekitchen.org

Reading Bicycle Kitchen

EVERY Saturday (12-3pm), The Nag's Head, 5 Russell Street. Check website for changes. They have 4 fully equipped work stands and a host of enthusiastic volunteers to help you. This community project provides a space where cyclists can get access to workstands and good quality tools, along with experienced mechanics to help them do everything on their bike from simple maintenance to a complete rebuild. If you have a bike that needs attention and don't stock a range of tools at home (who does?!) then stop by and they can help you to do a variety of work. It's held under a marquee in the car park behind the pub in a safe and dry environment.

If you know what you're doing then they will leave you to it, but if you need their help then just ask and one of the volunteers will show you what to do and get you going. ***You will be required to be with your bike at all times. They DO NOT take bikes in for service or repairs. They show you how to do the work and assist you in doing it yourself. This is a fun, interactive experience and you will get your hands dirty. When you arrive please allow time to complete the work.***

Reading Bicycle Kitchen is proud to offer support to refugees and asylum seekers. They are a supporter of Reading City of Sanctuary. They will take unwanted bikes and pass them on to refugees and asylum seekers so they have a means of getting around Reading. In addition they direct people to cycling projects to be more confident cycling around Reading, and learn how to navigate the town. Some refugees come back to help out, use our sessions to improve their English, and use the Bicycle Kitchen to make friends and become better integrated into our community. If you have a bike that is in reasonable condition that you would like to be used in this project please email them: info@readingbicyclekitchen

BSANA's weekly and (bi)monthly events

Café at the Oasis

Tuesdays

1-4pm, The Oasis, 21 Baker St

Stop by for a delicious cake and tea & a chat with your neighbours.

The Castle Neighbourhood Book Club

2nd Monday of every month

7:30pm, The Castle Tap, 120 Castle Street

Relaxed evening chatting about the book we chose to read and discuss.

BSANA Meetup

Fridays

Noon-2pm, The Oasis, 21 Baker St

Always something good for a great lunch in a sociable atmosphere.

BSANA Music Night

A Friday or Saturday every other month

8-10pm, The Castle Tap, 120 Castle Street

Enjoy listening to local music talent. First drink always free to BSANA residents. Join our mailing list to make sure you receive alerts.

BSANA Games & Chat Nights

Fridays

7-10pm, The Oasis, 21 Baker St

Free tea & coffee provided & there's a chance to chat about what's happening locally.

Artisan Food Fair

Last Saturday of every month

9am-Noon, The Oasis, 21 Baker St

Local products and produce for sale. Free tea, coffee & waffles provided.

BSANA Management Meeting

Second Tuesday of the month every other month

7-9pm, see our website for the venue

Become a member of the Management Committee or attend as an observer.

BSANA Meeting with a Meal

Approximately every other month

7-9pm, see our website for the venue

Enjoy a meal with neighbours and to hear about and discuss local issues.



Email: contact@bsana.org

Post: 44b Baker Street, Reading RG1 7XY

Phone/Text: 07380 297250

Website: www.bsana.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BSANARdguk