

Redland & Cotham Amenities Society



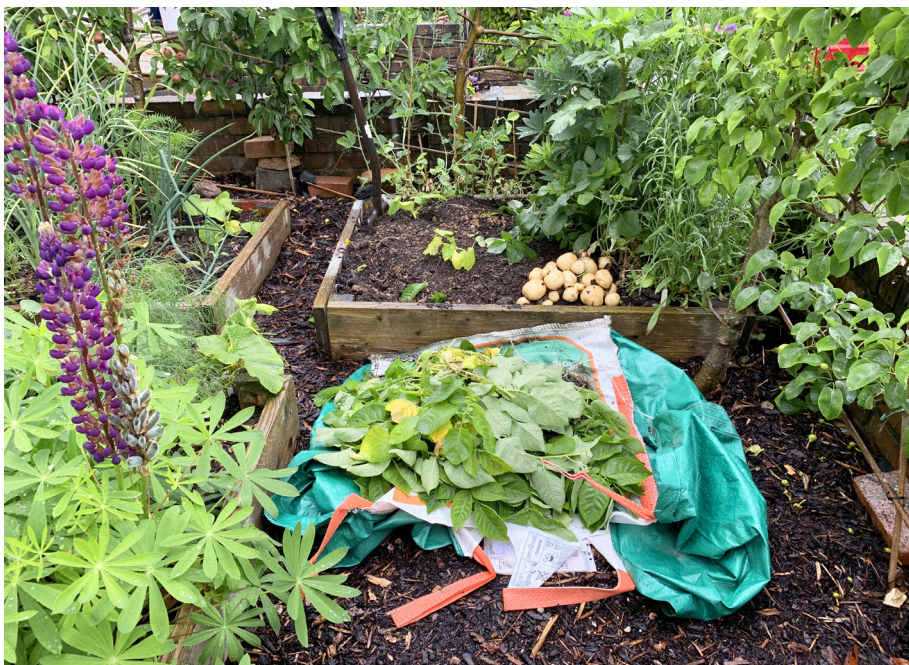
Annual Report
Open Gardens
Student Liaison
Planning, Parks
Small Grants, Trees



Number 185 - September 2019



Top; Siddhartha and Chandan Sen always come up trumps with their lovely garden.
Bottom; Produce proudly on show!



ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

This is our Annual Report on the society's activities over the year. As always, I would like to thank the committee members, the members of the subgroups and the newsletter distributors, especially Kate Reading who has taken over the bulk distribution from Helen and Peter this year. RCAS depends on volunteers to help with the various tasks necessary to keep the society going.

Despite the poor weather, many members visited the Open Gardens; we do appreciate the generosity of those residents who put their gardens on show, as well as the hard work from the Open Gardens group, Kelly-Ann, Abi and Judith, who put together the programme. Some wonderful photographs inside show many of the gardens and the allotments open this year.

We are delighted that, following Peter Wilde's announcement of his retirement from the post of Newsletter Editor, we have gained two volunteers to take on the task. We thank Peter for his hard work over the last 15 years and for inducting the two new editors. The newsletter is highly valued by the members and we look forward to working with Melanie Gallop and Abi Heath on future editions.

WE NEED A SECRETARY: to attend 6 committee meetings a year plus the AGM; not a heavy workload. Kathryn Armitstead has helped out this year but it is important that we have a properly elected secretary under our constitution. Could you offer? Or know someone who might?

You will see in the centre of this newsletter a lovely guide to the trees

in Cotham Gardens which has been prepared by Roger Mortimer. You can read it in the newsletter or, if you prefer, remove it and use it to identify trees as you walk round.

We are often surprised by the number of local people who have not heard of RCAS. Could you support RCAS by telling them about the work of the society in improving the area and the benefits they could get and bring by being part of the RCAS?

Many people do not want to join a committee but would be happy to join tidying-up workshops, or help get new projects off the ground. Do you have a proposal for local improvements that you could help with, or know of a local issue that residents are trying to resolve that RCAS could support?

Get in touch if you can help the society in any way and do come to the AGM in November. We have an interesting speaker and topic at the AGM. Tricia Roweth will be telling us more about the CHEESE project which helps to identify unnecessary heat loss from our homes. It's a great way to save money yourself and also help others who might be in fuel poverty.

If any other members are part of local groups undertaking activities of interest, please let me know before the AGM and we should be able to find a spot on the agenda to hear about what you are doing.

Alison Bromilow
alison@rcas.org.uk
0117 942 5420



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Once again, a big 'thank you' to our distributors who have been busy over the summer delivering the May newsletter and collecting subscriptions. Members continue to sign up to paying by standing order and if anyone else would like to set up a mandate in advance of the 2020 subscriptions please contact Kathryn Armitstead, membership secretary, (contact email below).

There has been a relatively small drop in households belonging to RCAS over the year, a fall of 10 households, meaning that we now have around 660 households as members; a very healthy total.

Almost all new members now join via standing order mandate which (very slowly!) is helping our distributors who

collect subscriptions each year. If you would like to pay by standing order, please find the mandate on the RCAS website

(<https://rcas.org.uk/contact/join/>) and send it to Kathryn Armitstead. Details are on the mandate.

We would like to extend our membership to be more representative of our area, for example increasing the number of families with young children or people who may be renting. If any of your neighbours might be interested in joining, please do draw their attention to our website and get in touch with Kathryn if you would like to share an old newsletter.

Kathryn Armitstead
membership@rcas.org.uk

47th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 6th November (please note this is a **Wednesday**)

7.30 start - refreshments - all members welcome

The Redland Club

Burlington Road,
Bristol BS6 6TN

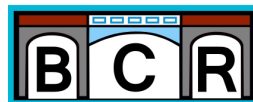
Is your home cold in winter?
Would you like to reduce your energy bills?
Would you like to reduce energy waste?

Tricia Roweth

from **Cold Homes Energy Efficiency Survey Experts** project
will explain how this community interest company can use thermal imaging to
save you money and also help those affected by fuel poverty

Nominations for the committee should be sent to Alison Bromilow

BISHOPSTON, COTHAM AND REDLAND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP



bcrp.org.uk

The Bishopston, Cotham and Redland Community Partnership has again been awarded funding from the local councillors to hold meetings in the 3 wards for the year 2019/20. This funding can only be used by local organisations appointed by councillors. Councillors cannot directly pay for meetings etc themselves. BCR CP has agreed to hold 3 meetings, one in each ward, and to also support CP meetings which address topics of interest to the wider area.

The Cotham Ward meeting was held on June 10th at Cotham parish church hall. The next meeting will be in Redland ward and will be held in November to avoid clashing with other BCR meetings.

On September 21st, Bishopston library is hosting a community fair where local voluntary, not-for-profit and charitable groups will showcase their wares and activities.

On 1st October The Bishopston Society is holding their AGM with a focus on sustainable transport in Bishopston; this meeting is open to all (see their website for details). An additional meeting focussing on parking issues in the areas where residents' parking schemes are not in operation, such as the North Redland area and Bishopston and Ashley Down ward, is also proposed.

Alison Bromilow

ANNUAL PLANNING REPORT

Redland Court

We understand that work on the approved scheme 17/04263/F for 44 residential units will shortly start on site. This is welcome news as the empty property has attracted vandalism and stone boundary walls have been tagged.

The restoration of the existing building and garden will be welcome though there are still concerns about impact of the new development, particularly the new properties on Redland Court Road. There has been concern raised too about the number of trees which are to be felled on the site; many of these are self-set sycamores along the Clarendon Road frontage, which will be replaced by new trees. A number of applications on details set out in the conditions of approval are awaiting decision.

The work to the Redland Junior School buildings on Redland Road and Grove Park has now been completed and the new glazed entrance hall introduced between the two villas on the corner is very discreet. Many people will not be aware of it at all. The temporary entrance to the school through the stone wall on Grove Park will be closed off and the wall will be reinstated.

The Vincent (Queen Victoria House)

This project nears completion. A recent concern was the loss of trees on the boundary on Redland Hill which was initially blamed on the developers. It turned out that loss was down to a Bristol City Council contractor who carried out some tree felling on Redland Hill to remove some small trees on a verge that were getting too close to a retaining wall and beginning to block the pavement, and a large Beech tree that was decaying

at the base. Unfortunately, due to a communication error, more trees were felled than was requested. A row of silver birch has been planted along this wall as replacement but the loss of mature trees is regretted.

The retaining wall at the Spire Hospital, opposite the new Vincent development, is still fenced off and awaits repair. Apparently, the damage was caused in a vehicle accident in 2017 and the owners have been pursuing the insurance company to get this repaired. According to the Bristol Post, in view of the danger for pedestrians who are often obliged to walk in the roadway, the council has now said it will undertake the repairs.

The majority of applications this year have been for tree works, residential conversions and new build to create small units, as well as the perennial applications for off-street parking bays in front gardens.

RCAS has continued to press for loss of front gardens to be resisted. Royal Horticultural Society research reports that front garden hedges cut particulate matter by 15% and reduce noise by 6-9 decibels. In addition to this garden trees and hedges reduce the risk of local flooding by slowing the rate of rainwater reaching the drainage system. They also increase the value of a house by 5% - 10%. Loss of front gardens to hard surfaces, whether for parking or just to reduce maintenance, and loss of trees and other foliage from front gardens, is a loss of amenity for houseowner as well as the wider community.

See www.rhs.org.uk/science/articles/reduce-flood-risk

We will therefore continue to oppose

such applications wherever possible and press for all applications to be in line with BCC Policy Advice Note 6 on Off Street Parking in Conservation Areas.

There have been a number of applications for HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation) in the area. The continued intensification of this type of residential use is stimulated by the unceasing expansion of the University of Bristol and the lack of restriction on the minimum sizes of student rooms, which leads to the creation of mean-sized accommodation, unusable by any other members of the community, usually with poor outlook and no outside amenity space.

We are told by the university that UK students prefer to live in converted houses in existing communities rather

than the purpose-built blocks which are being provided, particularly around the new Temple Meads campus. This pressure does not look as if it will stop, although the new Licensing requirement for small HMOs (for 3 - 6 unrelated adults) may improve housing standards and reduce the attraction of the purchase of family houses by buy-to-let landlords.

We are sometimes asked to comment on applications outside our area. We do not think that this is appropriate unless it is in an area where developments will directly affect our members, such as the recent but still undecided proposals to make changes to the road systems around the university, which would affect the buses serving the RCAS area.

Alison Bromilow
Simon Birch

CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS

93 Cotham Brow

Proposal for a single storey 1 bed unit in the rear garden. RCAS objected in terms of overdevelopment and potential issues of overlooking to adjacent properties. Proposal subsequently revised to overcome our objections. Application approved.

Kingdom Hall, 64 Hampton Park

Proposal to convert this into 3 cramped and poorly designed residential units. RCAS objected due to the poor quality of the conversion; a 2 unit scheme would create much more appropriate and acceptable accommodation. Decision awaited.

17 Alexandra Park

Proposal to replace wooden framed windows with upvc. RCAS objected on the grounds of harm to the visual

appearance of the Conservation Area. Decision awaited.

Site to rear of 43 Cotham Hill

Proposal to replace a garage and shed with a new build residential scheme comprising 2 two bedroom units. RCAS objected on grounds of overdevelopment and adverse impact on adjacent properties and on the street scene. Decision awaited.

Land adjacent to Kingsley House, Kingsley Road

Latest application is for a single storey garage. No objection from RCAS but, if constructed, a close eye will be kept for possible future change of use!

Alison Bromilow, Simon Birch,
Gillian Penrose

ANNUAL TREE REPORT

September 2018 - August 2019

Of the many tree applications over the last year, sadly too many were to fell trees. In rear gardens with no public view it was difficult to assess the reasons or possible effects on our environment and so RCAS usually made no comment.

In a conservation area any proposal to prune, top or fell a tree usually requires planning permission. Most mature trees are much appreciated by wildlife and can provide valuable habitats and food for squirrels, insects and especially birds.

Some tree species have a particular aesthetic and environmental benefit in the street scene. We are fighting to maintain mature beeches and copper beeches when threatened with felling. They make very attractive points of interest in Redland and Cotham and must have been planted in Victorian or Edwardian times (see article below by Rupert Crosbee). We have had some success in persuading the council to award two (initially three) more Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) this year where appropriate.

It is important to make objections if you think felling is unwarranted, especially if the tree contributes to the visual amenity of the street in the conservation area. Public support is growing for the value of trees which help combat polluted air, keep us cool in summer and help to mop up excessive rainfall and its cumulative effects on hard surfaces.

How to get a Tree Protection Order put on a tree

A TPO is made to protect specific trees or a particular woodland from deliberate damage or destruction without the

permission of the local planning authority. A discretionary power, it can be done very quickly and is for trees that are worthy and capable of protection ie. significant within the street scene.

Once a TPO is made, the council has the duty to enforce it. If the tree dies or must be felled, the Council can require a replacement tree to be planted which will have the same legal protection as its forerunner.

The following tree applications were of particular interest or importance :

28 Redland Grove

Proposal to fell a mature yew tree in the front garden. RCAS objected, suggesting it was worthy of a TPO and that pruning would be appropriate instead. Being evergreen it contributed to the visual attractiveness of that side of the street. Two applications were made and withdrawn each time. A later application for pruning was not commented on and was allowed.

20 Redland Grove

Due to RCAS objections to the proposed felling of a mature cherry tree which overhangs the pavement and roadway it was awarded a TPO. We suggested appropriate pruning to re-balance the tree's shape.

Elmgrove Road

We supported the felling of specific trees in the grounds of The Elmgrove Centre because it would be reasonable to manage the extensive tree stock and not adversely affect the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Rear of 114 Hampton Road and 14 Clyde Park

As part of an extensive development of the back land it was proposed to fell the tall deodar cedar. RCAS was over-ruled in their objection because the felling would be compensated by the planting of 9 new trees.

15 Southfield Road Cotham

The first application proposed felling a mature beech tree in the front garden. RCAS objected and a TPO was awarded. However, a second application gave more information, the property being on clay ground, there was probable subsidence, and the tree was located close to the house. The council lifted the TPO so felling is allowed!

6 Cotham Lawn Road

Proposed felling of a mature copper beech in front garden. RCAS objected as it was visually attractive in the street scene and there was a bird's nest in the tree, thus beneficial to wild life. RCAS suggested improvements to the garden wall around the tree. The council awarded a TPO.

114 Cotham Brow

This mature and prominent copper beech was already the subject of a TPO. Although local residents objected, felling was allowed because it had been served with a dead or dangerous tree notice. A replacement copper beech tree has been required by the council and will have the same legal protection as before.

Gillian Penrose

COPPER BEECHES

A distinctive feature of Redland and Cotham is the number of large mature copper beech trees prominent on many streets. Always growing in private gardens, they often mark the junction of two or more streets and are visible from a distance.

One mature copper beech at 60 Woodstock Avenue was felled last year. As reported in the newsletter, an application for felling was made by the owner, but despite objections, the tree was felled, even though no evidence of any reason for felling was presented.

Trees within the conservation area have a measure of protection through the planning system, but this loss suggests that it is not enough. RCAS is hoping to explore with the council how these significant trees can be given stronger protection, and as a first step has mapped all 41 copper beeches in the RCAS area. Only nine of the trees have a tree protection order; we hope that the council will extend orders to them all.

Rupert Crosbee

PLANNING ISSUES FURTHER AFIELD

Western Harbour

The elected Mayor commissioned consultants to carry out feasibility studies for the area around Cumberland Basin, now called Western Harbour. This has been sparked by the need for approximately £40k to maintain the existing Plimsol Swing Bridge structure over the entrance to the floating harbour. The opportunity to consider alternatives has been taken.

Bristol City Council is currently asking for responses to three of the road options which the team came up with. This is specifically not referred to as a consultation and it does not comply with bestpractice and Bristol City Council consultation standards.

The option to repair the existing bridge and remodel the junction by removing some of the slip roads to release some land for development is not included.

Joint Spatial Plan

The planning policy for the West of England councils Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucester was submitted for examination by the inspectors for the Secretary of State. The plan set out how the four councils are going to ensure that the area can plan and build 85,000 new homes in the area in the next 20 years.

The inspectors have said that they are concerned about the process the West of England have used to choose the preferred options for locating these homes referred to as the Strategic Development Locations. They are expected to tell the West of England

authority that the joint spatial plan is to be withdrawn and further work and consultation should be undertaken before it can be taken forward. This may impact on the programme for the Bristol Local Plan, which is also currently being updated.

LOCAL TRANSPORT NEWS

Another reduction to our bus services. There are changes to the frequency of the 72 bus (running from Temple Meads station through Cotham and Redland to the Frenchay campus) on Saturdays. The frequency is reduced from 30 minutes to 60 minutes.

This is a further reduction to the bus service for our area on top of the removal of evening services for the service number 9. This is a disappointing decision by First Bus who some years ago explained that by running a more frequent service in the area they had increased passenger numbers, improving the viability of the route.

A petition 'Take Control of Bristol's Buses' has achieved 3,728 signatures and was debated by full council in July. The Metro Mayor, Tim Bowles, has the authority to create a regional transport franchise like the Transport for London model.

Alison Bromilow

PARKS REPORT

The Bristol and Bath Parks Foundation, which has funding from the National Lottery and NESTA to support the setting up of the organisation as part of 'Rethinking Parks' project, has now appointed a Director until Feb 2021.

The Foundation aims to identify how to raise funding for parks from outside the council and central government and to increase volunteering to support parks maintenance. The day-to-day grass cutting etc. and play equipment maintenance will still be funded by Bristol City Council (BCC), albeit with a reduced budget. Parks group members of the Bristol Parks Forum (BPF) will be meeting the director at the BPF meeting in October.

Cotham Gardens

Volunteers were out in force in Cotham Gardens in July and they tackled the epicormic growth round the bases of the lime trees in the Redland Grove avenue as well as repainting the sides of the Cart in the play area, weeding and pruning the flower bed and litter picking the park. We had 20 people helping, which was a great turnout. If you would be interested in hearing about future workdays please let me know (at alison@rcas.org.uk)

Health and Safety training days are also being held for volunteers, allowing them to lead work parties in parks. If you would like to get trained up, or know someone who might, please let me know.

A new memorial bench has been installed overlooking the play area. This took dedication from both funder and RCAS to get the parks department to carry out the work, but eventually an appropriate bench was found, refurbished and

installed with a concrete base by BCC.

The flower bed was planted up this year with a number of plants from the Urban Buzz programme to extend the season for plants for pollinators. The new plants have mostly settled in well and the toadflax in particular has flourished. A penstemon from one of the planters removed from Gloucester Road (because the planters were not being maintained and were attracting rubbish) has survived the transplant and has joined the rest of the display. The bed attracts many compliments from passers-by.

Redland Green

RCAS has supported a number of projects put forward by the Redland Green Community Group as set out in the Small Grants report. The hedges around the Metford Road allotments which were layed by volunteers in the spring have flourished and amazed all the doubters who couldn't believe the plants would survive their almost complete severing. This will create a dense protective hedge in place of the previous unmaintained one where the plants had become trees without low level foliage. It also provides a great wildlife habitat for nesting birds.

We were very pleased to support the new Redland Green Community Fair using funding from the May Fair account. This was a welcome return to the intention of the early May Fairs to be a community event and was much appreciated. We look forward to next year's event, which will again avoid the Bank Holiday Monday which has become less popular as families now prefer to take advantage of the long weekend to get away.

Alison Bromilow

UNDERNEATH COTHAM GARDENS

Many people are unaware of what lies beneath the large manhole covers in the grassy area in Cotham Gardens. We have often had requests to see if we can get these removed, but..... anyone who has been there when the engineers go down to check the drain will realise the significance of this cover. It gives access to the Northern Storm Water Interceptor (NSWI), the large stormwater tunnel that acts as a flood prevention measure for Bristol.

Building of the storm drain started in 1951 to relieve flooding over many parts of Bristol and it was completed in 1962. It is some 4-5 metres in diameter and runs from the River Frome at Eastville to the Black Rocks Quarry in the Avon Gorge. It was originally proposed by the county surveyors in the 1890s but, due to the Great War, the depression and the Second World War, construction did not start until 1951.

The scheme was reborn after the floods in Bristol 1947. The tunnel, designed by Bristol City Engineers, was blasted through limestone, dolimitic conglomerate and keuper marl and was lined with a 375mm thick concrete lining. At its deepest the tunnel is 90 metres below ground.

The NSWI starts from the river Frome near Ikea, runs parallel to the rail line and turns west under Montpelier and St Andrews north of railway line. Then, crossing railway at the Gloucester Road/Cheltenham Road low point, it runs south of the Severn Beach line under Cotham Gardens to Whiteladies Road. It heads north-west under St Johns Road to the Downs, finally flowing to the outfall south of the Circular Road viewpoint.

It is used to control the volume of water which enters the floating harbour where flooding at times of high spring tide levels and periods of heavy rainfall can affect many houses and businesses in the docks, Redcliffe, Harbourside, St Philips and the Cumberland Basin area. The Cranbrook, which runs along the line of Cranbrook Road, partly in culverts and partly open, also runs into the NSWI.

In 2003/4, major works were also carried out to tackle local flooding issues with combined stormwater and sewage drainage in the Redland and Cotham area. Four large Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) chambers were constructed; in Alma Road at the vehicular entrance to the Clifton Down shopping centre, in the Clifton Down station car park area, in Cotham Hill and in Hampton Park. All four CSOs spill into a 30m deep side tunnel of the NSWI via shafts and drop-pipes.

Alison Bromilow



Volunteer painting play equipment in Cotham Gardens (see previous page)



Top; Maintenance engineers inspecting the Northern Storm Water Interceptor in Cotham Gardens
 Bottom; Map showing the route of the interceptor, see article opposite.



SMALL GRANTS REPORT

This year's Small Grants programme has supported a number of local projects brought forward by local people and organisations with great ideas and volunteers to take them forward but in need of financial support.

- £2,260 Redland Green hedge laying. This financed two sessions of hedge-laying, one along the rear boundaries of St Oswald's Road houses and one around the boundary with the Metford Road allotments. The hedges had both been poorly maintained and had been allowed to grow out as individual trees so the hedge-laying exercise, which was carried out by Redland Green Community Group (RGCG) and RCAS volunteers under the guidance of an expert, has recreated a healthy hedge along these park boundaries.

- £500 contribution to Streetscene Group. RCAS supported the Bishopston, Cotham and Redland Street Scene Groups work in the Redland and Cotham area. This group of volunteers are no longer supported by council funding through the Neighbourhood Partnership and are reliant on obtaining contributions from donors and applying for grants. This is an added workload to an already fully stretched team so RCAS was happy to offer funding to provide materials for the removal or obliteration of tagging and graffiti in our area.

- £523 Redland Green trees. RGCG has a continuing programme of replacing trees and planting new ones on the green which RCAS was happy to support with funding. The group carried out the work.

- £500 Redland Station mural. RCAS were approached by Cotham Gardens Primary School and Severnside railway

to support a project for a mural on the station to be prepared by artists through workshops with the schoolchildren. This project still awaits permissions from Network Rail and this has set the programme back from its original intention to have the mural completed by the end of the summer term.

- £330 Chandos in Bloom. Chandos Neighbourhood Association and the local businesses have organised the annual floral display and RCAS was happy to support this project by funding two of the hanging baskets.

- £150 Carols by Lantern Light. RGCG ran a community event on Redland Green in December 2018 with lanterns made by the children, song sheets to download and refreshments at Redland Church.

- £400 Redland Green bird and bat boxes. RGCG proposes to install a number of bird and bat boxes in the park in the Autumn in time for the next nesting season.

- £3,300 Redland Club (matched funding) By obtaining this seed-funding from RCAS, the Redland Club was able to access funding from Enovert (Landfill operator) of £30,000. The project will allow the club to install a new boiler, improve insulation and introduce LED lighting all of which will make it more sustainable. The club is run by a not-for-profit organisation Tango West, to promote, enable and facilitate a wide range of leisure and recreational activities associated with a focus on health and well-being and that contribute to reducing social isolation.

RCAS is looking for projects to support but does not currently have the capacity to do the work so welcomes applications from local voluntary organisations who will be enabled to carry the project forward using RCAS Small Grant funding. If you have an idea and are happy to do the work, or know an organisation who could, to get it done, we would love to

hear from you. Projects need to support the society's aim to protect and enhance our area, its architecture, streets, trees, parks, open spaces and amenities for present and future residents.

Alison Bromilow
Carew Reynell



Above; The bare hedge after relaying.

Below; The new bushy growth at ground level is very vigorous.





Cotham and Redland Community Sponsorship is a new group of local people and organisations with a shared desire to make a positive difference in the face of the ongoing refugee crisis. We are working towards supporting a displaced Syrian family make a new home in our community.

We are supported by Citizens UK, www.citizensuk.org/ which works with diverse community groups to teach them community organising skills for achieving change locally, through training and mentorship. They have particular expertise in sponsoring refugees www.sponsorrefugees.org/

As well as preparing ourselves to be a sponsoring body for a family we have a fundraising target of £10,000 and we have to find a suitable house in our community which can be let to the

family. The rent needs to fall within the government's housing subsidy budget: do you know a philanthropic landlord? All this is necessary to demonstrate to the Home Office that we have a team and necessary resources to achieve our aim before they allocate a family. There is also local expertise to draw upon: Westbury on Trym welcomed their first family in 2018 and a Taunton group have supported 3 families.

We would welcome your support!
All are welcome at our meetings at Cotham Church, Cotham Road
For further information contact

cothamredlandwelcome@gmail.com



RCAS Committee is looking for a new secretary

The society is very vibrant, lots is going on and membership and finances are in good shape!

The role of the secretary would be to support our committee at meetings six times a year and at the AGM in November

The commitment is not arduous and committee meetings are friendly and fun. If you would like to be our committee secretary, or you know someone who might be interested,

please contact Alison Bromilow

alison@rcas.org.uk

OPEN GARDENS REPORT

A lot of work goes into organising the annual RCAS Open Gardens event; trekking around the relevant area cajoling members to participate, chasing up those who said 'maybe', putting the programme together whilst trying to be aware of outliers who might not get enough visitors and ensuring enough cups of tea will be available across the route. Of course there is all the actual 'gardening' and trips to garden centres by those opening to ensure that their gardens are looking at their best.

After all this, it is of course extremely disappointing to wake up on the day itself to a forecast of torrential rain, which despite our combined crossed fingers unfortunately arrived as predicted on the dot of 2pm!

We're extremely grateful to those hardy souls who donned wellies and raincoats and ventured forth, umbrellas raised at the appropriate hour, and of course to the gardeners and allotment owners who waited patiently huddled under tarpaulins or in their sheds and summer houses. One family even had a fire going to keep warm! Fortunately, as the afternoon progressed, the weather brightened and right at the end the sun shone, allowing us to dry off and enjoy the occasion.

A special 'Thank You' to Jenny and Trevor for providing impromptu wine and cake at the end of the gardeners' tour on the Saturday afternoon – it was much appreciated. Many thanks of course to all the cake bakers for raising money for their chosen charities during the event itself.

The state of the weather influenced many of the comments we received at the time and subsequently from some of the 'gardeners' themselves:

'The weather was, ah well, what to write? all, I can say is that I am laughing as I type. I really did not mind that at one point I had puddles under my arms - and not because I was overly hot!'

'In spite of the inclement weather I really enjoyed Open Gardens today. It's now a quarter to five and I don't think it's rained since four - which was when I arrived home after my two hours with umbrella mainly up! But the gardens still looked good and I managed to see 17 and meet some lovely people.'

'I've lived in Redland since before RCAS was formed and it's so good to have the opportunity of seeing bits that are normally private. We've certainly got a lot of talented gardeners and residents that encourage wildlife too.'

'I think the term 'hardy stalwart' is how I would describe the visitors to my garden this year – A very few regulars braved the very inclement conditions! However, on a very positive note, the possibility of opening my garden to public gaze galvanised me into early gardening action which I have reaped the rewards of all summer! Lucky me!'

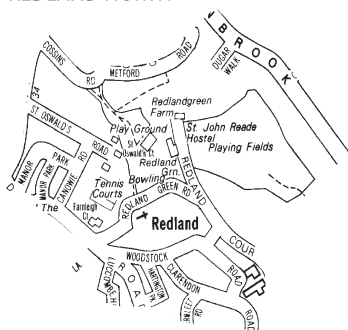
'In true British style, despite, or perhaps because of the inclement weather, a large number of people sallied forth on Open Gardens afternoon with their large umbrellas and appeared in our garden. A constant flow of visitors made the whole experience worthwhile and fulfilling. Much interest shown. Many questions asked. Several connections made. Quantities of tea drunk. Piles

of cake eaten. By six o'clock we were ready for a G&T!

'The weather was obviously a deterrent for a lot of people but those that braved the rain seemed to enjoy sitting under our gazebo enjoying a cuppa and cake. We only did the usual tidying in the garden beforehand but there was a lot of baking done! Worth doing even for the smaller number of visitors.'

'We enjoyed it enormously and had a lot of visitors – maybe 25 or 30 ish. Not sure but a lot. We didn't really prepare much on the grounds that it was a 'see us as we are' sort of thing. Definitely a fun thing to do.'

REDLAND NORTH



The event even inspired a poem:

*A gust blew at precisely 2, and the skies
opened too.*

*But the determination of those wanting to
see the gardens, simply grew.*

*As wet and emboldened groups did appear,
my tricoloured hydrangeas, their heads
would not rear,*

*And in a betrayal to the gardener be, a
clump of weeds nodded knowingly there
was no time to clear.*

*It was the Pimms methinks, rather than
the Posies that gave those who came much
to cheer,*

*I look forward to, and know it will be as
much fun, and better, another year.*

If you live in north Redland we hope to see you when we start walking around looking for gardens in 2020.

Judith Headley, Abi Heath, Lesley Benson and KellyAnn Hocking
Open Gardens team

Abi Heath, Judith Headley and Pat Rice enjoy the sun at the end of the afternoon.





KERSTEMAN ROAD ALLOTMENTS - An editor's view

As someone who has tried over the years to grow my own vegetables (with rather limited success) I have always admired people who have allotments. They seem to have an affinity with plants that creates lovely produce from the land. I know that knowledge is important, but I suspect consistent hard work is the most likely contributor to their success. Anyway, on Open Gardens day I was



Lesley Benson (left) and Sandy Ayton took on the work of managing Kersteman Road Allotment Site 5 years ago. Kersteman is one of over 100 hundred Bristol City Council sites and the Reps do their best to keep the tenants working happily and being productive.

determined to visit the Kersteman Road allotments. It was my first port of call and as the rain fell and my expectations were low, I arrived at the entrance under my umbrella, to be given a friendly greeting by a small group of allotment holders. Amongst them were Lesley Benson and Sandy Ayton, allotment reps. Lesley very kindly offered to show me round. Her warm welcome might have been due to her knowledge that I was the RCAS newsletter editor, armed with a camera, but I suspect it was mostly because

she and her colleagues were just very friendly, welcoming and pleased to show off their 'patch'.

Walking up to the top, the most striking first impression was of the magnificent vista of the city and nearby countryside. The rising ground takes you above the level of the surrounding houses and all at once you can look over the city centre to the Somerset hills.

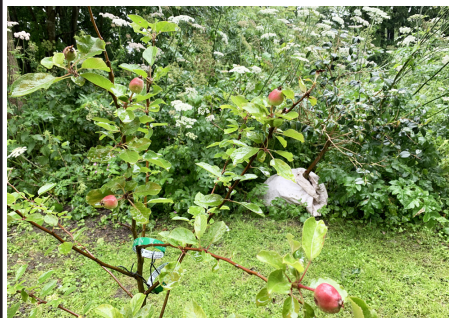
The allotments are very diverse in character and yet there is an orderliness about the environment, and a strong sense that everyone has their own different aims and objectives and were determined to achieve them. Neat rows of healthy vegetables are ubiquitous but there are many more flowers than I expected and numerous other aesthetically pleasing touches. The sloping ground necessitates terracing of many of the beds and this creates visual interest as well as being practical.



Tenants voluntarily maintain the communal paths, develop irrigation systems, and show prospective tenants around. Pete Thornley and Paul Robinson (in the picture) are among a few who act as mentors to new tenants.



There is a 'wild' area to the west of the site on which allotments have not thrived due to the shade cast by big trees, as well as building rubble and the dreaded knotweed.



Sandy and Lesley (or The Reps) have organised working parties and there is now a little orchard. In addition to this the



tenants are now well trained in dividing their organic waste for the bonfire, and the magnificent communal compost piles.

As we walked round, it became apparent that there was a sense of community and collaboration in the landscape. The community orchard was an obvious example of this but collaboration over practicalities also clearly showed how people were working together. The communal composting area, well ordered and sequential, and the timber recycling were obvious examples.

Doubtless due to the rain, there were fewer people working on their plots but on closer examination, quite a number



Greg Poole was a 'wild life artist' whose skill derived from a deep understanding of the living world'. As allotment tenants are required to make sure that 75% of their plot is under food cultivation at any one point, some years ago Greg applied to the council for permission to degrade the soil on part of his plot so he could create a tiny wild meadow.

Greg very sadly died in December 2018. (Please see the link below for a full obituary.) Sue Morgan his partner is now learning to maintain the wild plants that have flourished and that in turn have encouraged several species of insects.

www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jan/11/greg-poole-obituary



A brand new allotment being developed by Ben Anderson, an intrepid, strong and hard working new tenant. The amount of inorganic rubbish extracted from this small area could easily have filled a skip.

of people were sheltering in sheds and others were taking visitors round the site. We did meet Paul Robinson, who while not a rep. on site, is emerging as an allotment wise elder mentoring a number of new tenants.

Oh yes, did I mention the vegetables? Brilliant stuff everywhere; salad leaves and fruit, leeks and onions, beans and

broccoli and so much more.

Reluctantly I had to leave as I had lots more gardens to visit but I really got a 'buzz' from my walk round with Lesley. Thanks to her and all those who work so hard on this beautiful green gem in our area.

Peter Wilde
Newsletter editor



Toddler Corner. One of the many rewarding aspects of being a Rep is welcoming families on to the site. Toddler corner is gardened by three children under five, their parents and grandfather.





STUDENT LIAISON ANNUAL REPORT

This year for RCAS has been productive on the student liaison front. Our efforts have helped to persuade the University of Bristol (UoB) to focus more on managing students in the community. This includes welfare and health, the use of antisocial behaviour classes and fines for students as part of the university's disciplinary process.

The rolling out of 'Operation Beech' by the Police was encouraging; more about this later. The Chief Constable has stated several times that he is concerned about the welfare of the young people attending the big parties.

Meeting in July with Lynn Robinson UoB (Deputy Registrar); 'Student Big Parties'

The main focus of the meeting was for residents to share their concerns and questions with Lynn particularly around noise and disruption from student parties. Chandos area has 800 student residents making up 46% of the population and is the most densely populated part of Bristol.

It was reported that Chandos Neighbourhood Association (CNA) was aware of 13 large and intrusive student gatherings in the last year. Some of these parties had over 100 guests in a household for 5-12 people. Some of these parties were professional, with bouncers, DJs and professional sound systems, often starting after 10pm and finishing at 4-5am in the morning or later. Partygoers often spill into the street and the next day the streets show damage, debris and litter such as broken glass, vomit and the smell of urine.

These events are reported to Joni Lloyd at UoB who gives great support. At the meeting it was said that UoB could take more ownership of the problem. Students and landlords pay no council tax. With UoB planning to increase student numbers by 25%, it was suggested that some of the money generated from students could be put back in to finding solutions for the student noise and behaviour problem.

Initiatives in other cities to manage students in the community were discussed. Newcastle has run 'Operation Oak', where police, council and university work together to provide extra patrols, paid for by the university, with on the spot fines for unacceptable behaviour. Manchester University has funded additional police patrols and applies noise abatement tactics with a 24hr helpline for residents. Loughborough University runs a 24hr helpline and has university trained student wardens which patrol. Oxford Brookes university has paid for extra policing.

In Bristol police will only respond if a public order offence has been committed, such as trouble in the street, and will usually not deal with noise inside a property. Bristol City Council (BCC) is responsible for noise issues but has no night time service and relies on residents logging incidents.

Lynn outlined the university's approach to managing student antisocial behaviour. There will be a standard fine of £100 per householder for the first offence of an antisocial party and compulsory attendance at an impact awareness

course (costing £50) on antisocial behaviour. Students are required to write to their neighbours to apologise and the students' head of school is notified. A repeat offence causes the fine to go up to £250 per householder.

Antisocial Behaviour Impact Awareness sessions. This is a new scheme being used by UoB for students who have had serious complaints made against them. It is co-produced with Victim Support, who deliver the sessions, and aims to encourage students to see ongoing noise disturbance or house party disruption from their neighbour's perspective. The students have to pay £50 to attend. Apparently results are positive and students said they would think again about having another party.

This is a positive and helpful effort by UoB which has become more aware of the effect of the 'big parties' on the local residents. I think they are very concerned about the negative effect this has on their public relations.

It is therefore even more important now to notify the University of any student anti social behaviour.

Report on big student party at Rokeby Avenue in March

Cotham councillor Anthony Negus has called on the university, police, council and fire authorities to join in a 'multi-agency approach' to safety risks posed by large student parties. Councillor Negus said the party at Rokeby Avenue on 16 March, attended by more than 150 party-goers, raised a set of issues that 'needs to be seen to be tackled'. He

has also documented that these concerns will be submitted to any enquiry into an accident which he believes will be inevitable if nothing is done. Councillor Negus makes a very good point. The concern with personal welfare is a major issue.

The Police and the management of big student parties

RCAS has been canvassing for action to deal with the problems of antisocial behaviour in our area. We contacted the Chief Constable Andy Marsh and highlighted the problems that can occur with students integrating into a residential area; in particular noise and antisocial behaviour. We explained that RCAS has petitioned UoB to take much more responsibility for the management of their students' behaviour in the community for the benefit of all long term residents and students alike.

We outlined the Newcastle scheme 'Operation Oak' and asked him if this would be something that he would be prepared to take on with appropriate funding from UoB. Not surprisingly he responded very positively and has asked his seconded university officer to look into it. The hope is that pressure from the police will help UoB realise the seriousness of this issue and agree to pay for police involvement.

During October Diana Swain and Fiona McVey of Chandos Neighbourhood Association and Andrew Waller of the Noise Pages website met Sergeant Scott, a local police sergeant. They had a lengthy discussion with him about the problems of noise in the neighbourhood. He

listened attentively and was sympathetic about the problem. As a result, the police presence was considerably heightened around Chandos Road during the lead-up to Halloween through the evening, although the patrols were called away during the night to other areas. He was keen that residents should phone 101 to register unacceptable noise, and of course inform the university and Bristol City Council.

For more information on contact details see the RCAS website.

Operation Oak, Newcastle (more bobbies on the beat)

Newcastle's universities are paying to put police on the streets to keep the lid on end-of-exam celebration parties.

Through 'Operation Oak' a £50,000 joint initiative, which pays for extra patrols on Friday and Saturday nights during term time, the universities are now providing extra funding for more patrols on the streets for every night during the last 4 weeks of term. The operation was extended after residents in areas with lots of student accommodation raised concerns about noise following the exam period.

Both of Newcastle's universities and the police have said that Operation Oak has been a great success.

Operation Beech (Bristol's more bobbies on the beat)

It was very good news to hear of UoB's commitment to supporting the policing of problem student areas with 'Operation Beech' which is based on the similar scheme in Newcastle where the police will patrol through certain areas with high levels of students in an attempt to manage possible big parties. This is a significant moment where UoB

is effectively conceding that there is a problem in the community with their students that requires the intervention of an external agency.

However, for this scheme to be successful, the police need to have a more robust approach. For example two recent big rowdy parties were visited by the Police to no avail both parties continued after their visits to well into the morning, 6am for one of the parties, causing much disturbance and causing one family to leave their house for the welfare of their family!

The police at the moment appear to be reluctant to use the powers granted in the 'Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014'

Operation Beech has now been and gone, initial feedback via Andrew Waller (AW) and Chandos Neighbourhood Association is that a more energetic response from the police would have been good!

Media interest in the activities of students

Several articles focusing on student behaviour and the University of Bristol's disciplinary approach have appeared in the Times, The Guardian, The Bristol Post, Radio Bristol, Points West, etc. It was said by UoB that the article in the Guardian was fair. This interest by the media is probably as a result of the profile raised by the 'Noise Pages', a local blog carried out by Andrew Waller about antisocial behaviour and noisy student parties in Redland.

An article in the Sunday Times claimed that large organised student parties in Redland were funded by the sales of nitrous oxide (NO). The Police say that it is an offence to sell NO but not own it.

UoB and the Noise Pages

UoB community liaison has reported that the 'Noise Pages' has caused a significant impact on their work this term and that some of their students reported as being involved in noisy parties have identified themselves as victims and as having been harassed. The university needs to be careful about the way it deals with the current effect on their students of the public information on the 'Noise Pages'.

It must be right that those affected by sleepless nights on a recurring basis, caused by noisy antisocial behaviour, should be able to report their concerns and ask for some remedy. The 'Noise Pages' has acted as a portal for these people. Andrew does not report house numbers from the blog, so it is not possible to identify the party house by simply reading the blog.

See the article below from Andrew Waller of the 'Noise Pages'.

Central Additional Licensing Scheme (Additional licensing of private rented houses in multiple occupation; HMOs)

The scheme came into force on 8th July 2019 in Cotham and Redland and other central wards. The scheme will be in operation for five years.

Additional licensing covers smaller houses in multiple occupation that do not come under the existing mandatory scheme. When the process is complete we will have a record at BCC, available to the public, of all HMOs in our area. It will make it easier for us to log student numbers in each ward and furthermore help to increase the standards and safety of rented accommodation generally over the city.

BCC will, however, have to find a way of finding and dealing with landlords who don't know they have to apply for a licence and indeed how will they know who has not applied who should have? A bit of a Donald Rumsfeld scenario?

UoB expansion plans

UoB have not provided formal assurance that they will stick to their plans of limiting the increase in student numbers to one year MA students and international students, who both prefer purpose built student accommodation (PBSA). Therefore the increase could be in undergraduates, which could create pressure for more HMOs after their first year in PBSA.

There is concern that the new UoB central area development at the old post office sorting office site (adjacent to Temple Meads station) may affect housing in nearby areas with demand for student HMOs in Totterdown and also in existing student areas close to the existing UoB campus.

Of course we all benefit from the cultural and employment aspects of being in a university town and our efforts dealing with student liaison will help us all to benefit more.

Rob Harris

INFORMATION FROM 'THE NOISE PAGES'

A website operated by RCAS member Andrew Waller

www.thenoisepages.com

At a liaison meeting with residents associations in July, University of Bristol (UoB) plans to repeat 'Operation Beech' police patrols to curb student noise. UoB will pay for extra police patrols to curb night-time student noise in parts of Redland and Cotham when the new academic year starts in September.

During the initial trial of Operation Beech, two officers in a police vehicle were on duty to respond to requests for assistance texted to a publicly advertised phone number. The officers generally asked students to turn music down, close doors or windows, or go inside. However, the district was relatively quiet during the trial, so it remains to be seen how Operation Beech will deal with larger parties. The operation covers known noise hotspots such as the Chandos and Waverley Road areas, Manor Park, Highbury Villas, Ashgrove Road and two sites in Clifton.

Total noise incidents fell 6% to 205 compared with the previous year. However, numbers for the two main categories of noise went in different directions. Complaints about parties fell 24% to 78, but general-noise incidents rose 9% to 127 (see chart below). More than half of all party complaints came from Redland.

Noise was by far the biggest category of complaints. Other issues included waste recycling and antisocial behaviour. The university had some success with recycling problems; complaints fell to 36 and have almost halved over the past two years.

In response to complaints (all categories), 91 student households were called to a disciplinary meeting; 10 were fined up to £150 per person; 15 were required to attend an anti-social behaviour "impact awareness" course costing £50 per person. Five cases were escalated to higher levels of the disciplinary system. The university doesn't disclose what happened in individual cases, citing data-privacy rules.

As many as 60% of complaints related to second-year students renting private accommodation for the first time, of whom a surprisingly large share, 79%, had lived in catered halls at the university's 'North Village' (Stoke Bishop) the previous year. In December, the university said more than half of year-two students who featured in complaints, and had been at North Village, had previously been educated at private schools: 'Students who have moved from boarding school to a catered hall to [the] private sector may be least experienced at living in the community.'

The university tries to educate first-years about issues they will face once they 'live out'. The latest report said 128 Senior Residents in halls had been trained to 'cascade' information to students, and had spoken to 2,844 of them at 'kitchen talks'. These and other efforts generated face-to-face contact with 47% of first-year students, rising to 54% at North Village. The problem, however, is that attendance at these meetings isn't mandatory—which is probably why residents encounter lots of students who claim not to know about the UoB's rules.

Over the year, I have also collated my own database of noise incidents, chiefly in Redland and Cotham. These were based on my own observations and reports from residents. I received 179 emails. If you were one of the people who contacted me, thanks and please keep doing so! Making this information public in my view keeps pressure on the university to step up its efforts.

I logged 95 incidents in all, comprising 52 parties, 30 cases of 'general noise' associated with an address, and 13 instances of street noise, the perpetrators of which are usually not traceable. (Street noise is a big problem, but most people don't report it.)

I also put out an occasional e-newsletter which now has more than 200 subscribers, including many RCAS members. To sign up, go to 'Join' in the site's top menu.

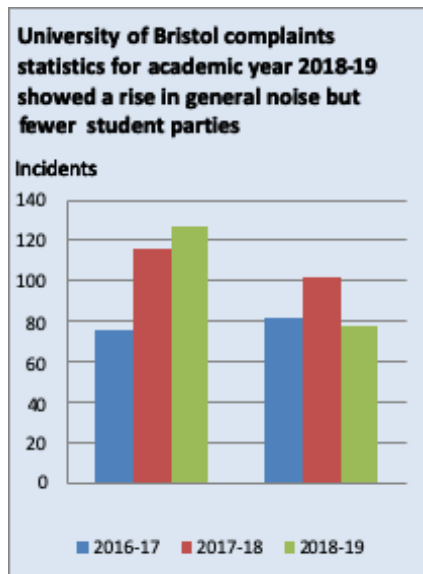
The data yield some interesting insights. Contrary to the university's claim that its fines must be working, because few households reoffend, I found that quite a lot of addresses came up more than once, 15 of them, in fact. That's almost one-fifth of all incidents associated with an address.

I also note that three student houses in Ashgrove Road all attracted complaints, some of them more than once, and that these houses are all run by the same landlord and managing agents.

I logged six 'large' parties. These are extremely loud, with powerful

amplifiers, may involve more than 100 people and often last all night. As I've reported on the website, Chandos Neighbourhood Association, Councillor Negus (Cotham ward) and RCAS itself have all urged the authorities to halt these events. The police point to certain practical difficulties. How, or whether, Operation Beech will deal with those challenges, we will have to wait and see.

Andrew Waller
thenoisepages@gmail.com



Columns on left show noise incidents, on the right they show complaints about parties.

RCAS WEBSITE

Have you used the new improved Website? If not, do check it out on

<https://rcas.org.uk>

Lots of work has been put in to inform and entertain members as well as allow easier communications between members, supporters and organisers. Members can see previous editions of the newsletter by going to 'publications' and 'newsletter' and clicking on the link using **News** as the password.

We also have an active Facebook page
Redland & Cotham Amenities Society

The link to this can also be found on the front page of the website.

FRIENDS and NEIGHBOURS may want to join RCAS

The annual subscription is £10 per household. The postal subscription for those living outside the RCAS area is also £10.

We prefer to collect subscriptions by Standing Order to reduce our distributors' work and we will supply a Standing Order mandate form on request.

Those wishing to join should contact the Membership Secretary

Kathryn Armitstead
52 Redland Court Road
Redland, Bristol, BS6 7EH
Email: membership@rcas.org.uk
Please give your contact details and your e-mail address.

If you are a taxpayer and make the following declaration, the Society can claim Gift Aid.

I want the Redland & Cotham Amenities Society to treat all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid. I know that I must pay an amount of income/capital gains tax at least equal to the tax the charity reclaims on my donations in the tax year. Signed and dated.

Do mention if you are able to help with any RCAS activities



