

Redland & Cotham Amenities Society



Report from the Chair
Planning & Parks
Redland Churchyard
Student affairs
Community Partnership



Number 190 - March 2021

Report from the Chair

Everything seems to be getting brighter with the longer days, the warmer weather and the good news on vaccination and the reduction in infection levels in our area.

This latest lockdown has tested us more, perhaps because of the time of year and perhaps because of the better understanding of the longer-term impact of Covid and of the measures needed. I hope you are all feeling more positive and looking forward to getting out and about more.

Our parks and green spaces, like the main 'destination parks' have been used intensively and are showing signs of wear. It will be good when it is less muddy everywhere. We have been in close

contact with the new BCC Parks officers over projects and issues in our parks and look forward to seeing improvements particularly including increasing the wildlife

value of our area. This is something that members with outdoor space can also support by planting trees, shrubs and flowers which help pollinators.

We see a very large number of planning applications for tree felling in our area and a large majority are approved; replacement with appropriate planting would help to offset the impact of the loss of tree canopy on wildlife, air quality and flood mitigation. Do look at our website where we share pictures of our green assets via Facebook, changing them regularly.



Front cover: a brief flurry of snow swirling in front of Redland Parish Church
Above: Early blossom in the winter sun

Over this year, we have had a large number of emails from members and non-members asking that we object to planning applications in their area. RCAS planning group assess proposals against local and national planning policy and takes into account material considerations like the need for housing to address national shortage and protection of green belt and whether, if refused, it is likely to pass on appeal.

RCAS endeavours to raise points which may not be apparent for planning officers, who do not know the area and local issues as well as the local community do. It is very important though that people living near the proposed development raise issues that concern them as well, so that the planning officer can take all the views into account. Thank you to everyone who has contacted us about local applications to ensure that we are aware of them.

We send out occasional updates by email which are more time sensitive, such as alerts and information about consultations in our area. The most recent one on February 13th included updates on the following:

- Chandos Window Wanderland event
- Electric scooters update
- Cotham school computer request
- Clean Air Zone options
- University news/ noise patrols
- FFA family food action
- Covid 19 scams
- Car theft update from A&S police
- Local Highways schemes

If you wish to receive these updates, please ensure that we have your up-to-date email addresses by signing up for email alerts via our website or emailing membership@rcas.org.uk

Finally, I would just like to remind you about FFA, Family Food Action, which now has a webpage at bcrp.org.uk/ffa, where you can read about the great support being provided for Bristol families in food poverty via 4 partner organisations by local donations. Get in touch with them if you want to find out how you can help, and many thanks to the members who already donate.

Alison Bromilow

Planning Report

Redland Court proceeds at pace. There are certainly a lot of workmen on site! Today they were contouring the ground in front of the house where the top netball/tennis courts have been removed. All the courts will be removed in time and the grass replaced to create wildflower lawns.

A number of trees along the Clarendon Road perimeter have been felled; this was agreed as part of the planning permission in 2018. New trees are to be planted along this boundary in groups leaving gaps for views into the site from the west. The existing beech hedge along the East perimeter is to be reinforced with new species including some evergreens. Additional trees are to be planted behind the hedge.

The town houses on the Redland Court Road frontage are nearly complete, and the old Art Block in no 10 Woodstock Road is occupied already. The new West Villa and the extra floors on top of the science block are up, as is the 'underground house' Woodstock Lodge, at the curve of Woodstock Road, just visible under its green roof.



The 19th C top floor extension has been removed from the East Pavilion to restore the symmetry of the main house and a new cupola to match the existing one on the West Pavilion is to be installed. The new houses on the East Range which sit on top of the underground parking are just being constructed; the Belvedere terrace has been extended in front of these houses, (the Juniper site hut is currently on the terrace), and the main house is being refurbished. The hall has been subdivided with some double height living spaces in some of the units, as those of you who attended the Zoom AGM will have seen illustrated.



Other applications:

1a-d Chandos Road. A new application to build on top of the single-storey shops has been made following the refusal of the previous scheme. The proposed first floor flats have been set back from the building line to make them less dominant. The principle of development has not been accepted; the previous application was refused because of the importance of this parade of shops in the Conservation area.

Gibson Road. An application to demolish a row of garages and erect two houses has been made. The application is contentious because of the proposal to include a roof terrace. RCAS normally objects to roof terraces where this leads to overlooking of adjacent properties and gardens. The Covid pandemic has shown the need for everyone to have some accessible outdoor space and we have previously objected to developments without this. There is also local concern about the possible impact of noise from these roof terraces. The rear gardens of 32 and 33 Sydenham Road which adjoin the site are used for car parking. RCAS has raised these issues in a comment but has not objected.

85 Whiteladies Road. The appeal against refusal of the student housing development was successful.

Rear of 3 Clyde Road. Application resubmitted with revised materials and reduced height. RCAS objected to principle of development, impact on important tree and overlooking.

125 Redland Road. Application to lower eills of dormer windows. Application refused. RCAS objected. Appeal against decision lodged.

Land by Kingsley House. Applications previously refused for residential and a garage. New application for a single storey office building. RCAS objected. Inspector's opinion in appeal against refusal for garage was that this clear site was part of the character of the Conservation area and provided a positive break between the Cotham Brow and the Kingsley Road houses.

Garages adjacent to 2 Elliston Road. Demolition with 2-storey house development (basement and ground floor). Overdevelopment of site and lack of usable outside amenity space, RCAS objecting.

21 Cotham Grove. Demolition of garage facing onto Fremantle Road with single-aspect single-storey residential development. RCAS objected.

13 St Ronan's Avenue. Raised ground level rear extension taking up v large proportion of the garden which will be visible from Kenilworth Road. RCAS objected to loss of green space and to overlarge extension.

42 Trelawney Road. Subdivision of house into two flats and roof extension. RCAS has objected to the proposed overlarge dormer window which, although it is on the rear elevation, will be visible from many local viewpoints.

24 Cotham Vale. Appeal against refusal of HMO change of use. RCAS objected. The Inspector has dismissed the appeal; the house cannot be used as a HMO. This decision is a very important precedent for future applications for HMOs.

Alison Bromilow
Simon Birch

Parks

Cotham Gardens

RCAS is progressing plans with Bristol City Council Parks Department to replace the curved bench by the sundial. Finding a supplier who can replace like for like, and recreate the curved sections, has been a challenge, but a solution seems to be in sight. The council is confirming with a wood sculptor who is able to do the work using green oak which will be bent to the curve. The other contractors approached were not only more expensive but also only able to offer to use straight sections of timber. We look forward to having this bench back in use again.

Unfortunately, the newly-upgraded play bark area has been the victim of several acts of vandalism, in the form of broken glass. BCC and the police have been involved, signs have been put up on the park gates, and local residents and users are all encouraged to report anything relevant which they may see.

Councillor Negus met with Governors of Cotham Gardens Primary school in January to discuss ways in which the school can evolve a closer relationship with Cotham Gardens Park. Governors and the PTAF have responded enthusiastically, and I will be talking to the chair of the PTAF this week about school events and projects which might embrace the park in the future.

Local residents have removed the epicormic growth from the avenue of trees in the



Redland Grove greenspace section of Lovers Walk. If anyone is able to help with doing the same for the section of the lime avenue by Cotham Gardens play area, or to help with clearing up the flowerbed in preparation for Spring, please do get in touch info@rcas.org.uk We are very pleased to welcome another volunteer who regularly does litter picks in the park as well as the volunteers who have cleared the path edges and planted bulbs.

Sarah Cuthill

Redland Green

The Redland Green Community Group intend to clean up the bird boxes and check how many were occupied last year but have been delayed partly because of the restrictions/social distancing, and partly because the weather has been so poor; they know definitely that 4 boxes were occupied.

Unfortunately, Covid has meant the Carols on the Green and Community Fete for 2020 were both cancelled, and the 2021 Fete will not take place in April, but may be possible later in the summer.

The tree officer has agreed a plan for some new and replacement trees on the green. These now are shown as possible sponsorship trees on the council's mapping system <https://maps.bristol.gov.uk/pinpoint/>.

A new Silver Birch is going in next to the carved wooden seating just outside the fenced play area. A section of new hedge to replace the brambles along the back of the Coldharbour Road houses is also planned.

Alison Bromilow



Laura Emms planting a silver birch, also on behalf of her brothers James and Nicholas, on Redland Green in memory of her mother Janice Emms on the 29th anniversary of her death. Laura was helped by her son Zachary, as well as members of the Redland Green Community Group

Student Liaison

The impact of lockdown on the Universities

25 years ago Eli Noam of Columbia University published an article in the journal Science 'Electronics and the Dim Future of the University' He was writing about the possible impact of the internet on higher education and predicted that although tech will strengthen research it will also weaken traditional institutions of learning, the universities. He suggests that this is because the traditional functions of universities will be superseded and their role in intellectual inquiry reduced.

Education basically consists of three elements: the creation of knowledge and checking its validity, knowledge preservation and the transmission of this knowledge to others.

His point is that in the past people came to the information but now the information comes to the people where ever they are.

The effects of lockdown has caused the universities to enact a considerable amount of distance learning for a majority of the courses it offers to its students. There is still the need for human interaction; science labs and hands on skill learning for medical students etc. How much learning can be carried out at a distance? Reform is happening at a pace, the universities embracing tech, how much further could this be taken and what might the consequences be?, Economics, technology, history and politics established our education system - change technology and economics and the institutions must change with it.

Operation Beech autumn term 2020

Operation Beech, the police patrol paid for by UoB, responded to 128 mostly noise related incidents in the autumn term of 2020. This is based on police information as reported on the 'noisepages'

Between 23 September and 19 December 2020, Beech officers were on duty for 40 nights, usually Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Residents can request assistance from the police by texting this dedicated mobile-phone number. 07773 816248

Beech is now well known and residents are making good use of it. For more information see the UoB website, as below.

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/accommodation/community/complaints.html>

Sound proofing of HMOs

A resident in Stevenage, Hertfordshire, has created an online petition to Parliament urging that HMOs should be "sound-proofed". The petition states that excessive noise is created by the slamming of fire doors. The majority of doors in the adjacent HMO to his house are fitted with fire safety door closure systems which cause doors to automatically close after being opened but with a loud bang. The noise is causing health problems for this neighbour and he is requesting that a 'soft' closure type should be used as these are much quieter and that this measure should become compulsory in all HMOs. He has raised the problem with his local council.

The outcome of this could be significant if Parliament decides to support the petition meaning that noise created in an HMO should satisfy certain sound level requirements.

Recent Articles in the local press

There have been various press reports of large gatherings breaking Covid rules, over the last few months in and around our area. Some of the gatherings involved students.

The Police were called to several gatherings at the weekend of Jan 30th, including one which involved 30 people in Ashgrove Road, Redland. The police had to close down the gathering, putting themselves at risk, and have issued substantial fines.

A UoB spokesperson said: "We were disappointed to receive reports of gatherings this weekend involving students living in the Clifton area that breached Covid regulations.

"This kind of behaviour is unacceptable, particularly as we have regularly reminded students of the importance of adhering to the guidelines and the risks associated with not doing so.

"As a university we will not hesitate to take action against those who disregard the rules. It must be stressed that the vast majority of our students have behaved impeccably since the start of this academic year and have followed Government and university guidance around social distancing and keeping to their living circles."

The noise pages

Cllr Anthony Negus has asked BCC officers to respond to issues raised by Andrew Waller of the 'noisepages' about Bristol's noise-enforcement policies. This follows a public-forum statement he made to a February 8 meeting of BCCs Communities Scrutiny Commission, which Cllr Negus chairs.

The statement is available to read in detail on the 'noisepages' - see "Noise Enforcement in Bristol: A Failure to Protect Communities" - it calls for a review of current policies, in particular calling for response to one off reports of noise disturbance. NET (noise enforcement team) is not a well staffed BCC department and it elected to introduce the 14-day noise diary system to overcome the overwhelming public response to them of single incident noise events. Most nighttime disturbances tend to be one off events but the one off event can become a regular event in high density student areas, but cannot be successfully reported at present.

All of this is a bid to ensure residents are protected against night-time disturbances that prevent them from sleeping.

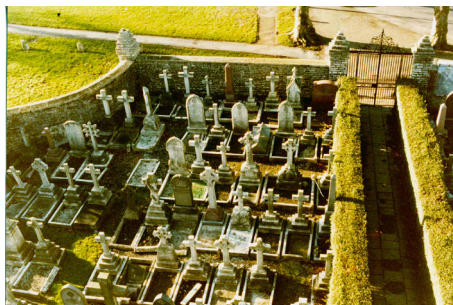
<https://www.thenoisepages.com>

Rob Harris

Redland Parish Churchyard

Recent History

The beautiful Redland Chapel building of 1743 is grade 1 listed, and the stone boundary walls of the churchyard are grade 2* listed. The church members have the privilege of and responsibility for this small piece of land, part of God's world. The churchyard was completely full of graves, and so was closed to burials in May 1979 (photo 1 on right). In 1986-88 following the appropriate legalities the front area was opened up, to create a space for meeting and welcoming. (photo 2 lower right)



Although the front area was maintained, by 2011 the rest had become very neglected and very overgrown. The choysa shrubs either side of the path by the gateway were difficult to pass when wet! (photo 3 below) Ivy, brambles and self sown saplings had taken over the rest of the churchyard, some of the trees had died and others needed attention.



The churchyard contains the graves and memorials of many interesting people, including a holder of a Victoria Cross, a Manx Poet, The Railwaymen's Friend, and the first Lord Mayor of Bristol.

Some church members had the idea that the churchyard could become a quiet peaceful place in which to sit and relax, and a moderately controlled, wildlife friendly, biodiverse habitat, that could be open to the community from time to time. Work began in late 2011.

Three years ago we started opening the churchyard and chapel to visitors on Sunday afternoons between April to October. We had 200 visitors in 2018 and 290 in 2019, but sadly we were not able to open during 2020. We look forward to opening again as soon as possible.

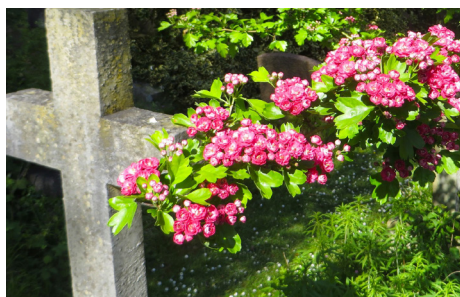
What have we done?

Almost every month, on a Saturday, up to a dozen volunteers have worked on maintenance and clearing. Plant growth, in particular ivy has been repeatedly removed from all the upright parts of the memorial stones, the walls of the Chapel building and the boundary walls. The front beds have been planted with spring bulbs, heuchera, and cornus shrubs with differing stem colours (photo 4 to right).



On the advice of Avon Wildlife two areas have been set apart for the wildlife, and they are cut down alternately every 4 years. In the rest of the churchyard we have a continuing battle with brambles and convolvulus (bind weed). For the past 30 plus years foxes have taken advantage of the wild areas and cubs have been spotted.

Tree surgeons have cleared dead trees and tidied up the rest. Five trees have been planted, magnolia, crab apple, scarlet hawthorn, medlar and an acer palmatum, which unfortunately was stolen! There are now twenty different tree species in the churchyard. The ones most asked about are the two paulownias (foxglove, or princess tree) at the front. They have lovely purple/blue flowers that appear in spring well before the huge leaves (photo 5 above left).



With the pruning of trees and shrubs, and the keeping down of saplings and brambles, more light has penetrated to the ground and at least 50 different species of wild flower have been noted.

21 species of bird have been spotted. Bird boxes have been erected, blackbirds, wrens and blue tits have been seen nesting in the churchyard.

Two wood piles have been created and left to rot, and two compost bin areas created.

Frogs and toads have been seen, and at least 7 species of butterfly. We have not as yet surveyed the lichens or insect life, but we would welcome a volunteer with good knowledge of either of these to come and carry out a survey. Please contact me by email at

Arnold.Mayes@doctors.org.uk if you can help identify lichens or insects.

Unfortunately, with the lockdowns of these last 12 months, we now have a lot of catching up to do once work parties are allowed again.

Arnold Mayes



RCAS Open Gardens Event

Sadly another year on and we are unsure whether it will be possible for this year's event, planned for Sunday June 13th, to go ahead. We will update members via email and the RCAS website as soon as we know definitely one way or the other.

The Open Gardens team will continue with preparations for the event with the obvious constraint of not being able to do our normal door-to-door canvassing. Therefore we would like to hear from anyone who would like to take part or who would like more information about this popular community event. As happened last year, if circumstances do not allow for a 'real' event, we will look forward to receiving your photos of your beautiful gardens and publish them both on the RCAS website and also in the next edition of this newsletter.

Please contact us at rcasopengardens@gmail.com or phone Kellyann 07866 460912, Judith 07904 375953 or Abi 07976 610801

The area in the spotlight this year is Redland North which covers the area shown below in the map.



Scooters

Impossible to miss, our area is busy with e-scooters. The 12-month trial of e-scooters in the West of England Combined Authority area has been made to encourage a green mode of transport and relieve the pressure on public transport, especially whilst social distancing is required.

These e-scooters, operated by the company Voi Technology, are the only ones that are legally allowed to be used in public spaces and they can be hired or leased by anyone over 18 with a full or provisional driving licence. Riders are encouraged to wear a helmet but this isn't compulsory. Riding is only legal on roads, cycle paths and cycle tracks and is strictly prohibited from pavements. E-scooter speeds are regulated with a maximum of 10mph.

The e-scooters are managed by a local team co-ordinating with the police to ensure that riders park in designated places and don't impact on other road and pavement users. Each e-scooter has a unique number plate



for easy identification. The system uses incentives (discounts on future hire costs) to encourage good behaviour from riders.

The trial ends at the end of October. Details of the scheme are found at <https://travelwest.info/projects/e-scooter-trial>

Breaking Bread

Team Love the company that brought Breaking Bread to Durdham Downs last summer have submitted a Premises Licence Application to Bristol City Council to run a similar venture this summer. Breaking Bread is a socially distanced pop-up environment where a number of Bristol's restaurants and bars are set up in large teepee tents and marquees. The Breaking Bread venture directly employed over 100 people across the project, as well as hundreds more across their supply chains and producers, and allowed many companies to remain viable during lockdown.

In addition a proportion of the profits were used to fund initiatives around the city to help support local community projects and the local hospitality sector. This included providing free meals and packed lunches to those facing food vulnerability.

The application for this year also includes the provision for live and recorded music, theatre and cinema.

Bishopston Cotham and Redland Community Partnership

BCR CP meeting March 15th at 7pm

The BCR committee continues to meet to share local issues and plan for CP actions and activities.

Following a year without meetings, the Bishopston Cotham and Redland Community Partnership is to hold a virtual public meeting to bring forward local infrastructure project suggestions. These will then be taken to the Area Committee (councillors for BCR + Henbury, Southmead and Horfield) to consider when making funding decisions for the use of the local portion (15%) of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

There is not much CIL available in our area; we are not in a group where large projects that generate this funding are being brought forward. Much of the money is already pre-committed to projects such as the Cranbrook Road pedestrian crossing. All highways projects are significantly delayed because the officers cannot cope with the amount of work that is needed to bring traffic schemes forward including making Traffic Regulation Orders as well as the work in drawing up the schemes.

There will also be an update of the past year's activities and accounts and an invitation for new committee members.

Alison Bromilow



There has been a beautiful show of snowdrops this year. The flowers, in so many varieties, were abundant and a real pleasure to look at all around the area

Local Councillor Clive Stevens retires from the Council

Many of you will have come across Clive in his role as councillor for Clifton Down ward. Many of you will also know that Clive was for many years the tree rep for RCAS and committee member and then chairman of the Bishopston Cotham and Redland Community Partnership.

During the last four years, he has been progressing planning policy to control the loss of family houses to Houses in Multiple Occupation, a particular issue for our area but also across the city, and the Supplementary Planning Document for HMOs will be a lasting legacy. He has been key to opening up scrutiny of some of the decision making over the past 5 years and brought his business experience to examining proposed council cuts, sometimes showing that they would cost the council more in the future.

Clive had planned to stand down last May but the postponement of the local elections due to Covid-19 meant that he had to stay in post for longer. We are very sorry to hear of his decision to retire, and even sorrier that the stress of the job has had an adverse effect on his health. We wish him all the very best and a recovery to full health.

Redland Green Community Fete

Redland Green Community Group regret to announce that the fete, which was due to be held at the end of April, has sadly been cancelled. It may be possible to hold the fete later in the summer. Please check our website rgcg.org.uk or find us on Facebook (search for Redland Green Community Group) or Twitter (@RedlandGreenCG) for further updates and information about the group.

Emily Smithson
Chair of Redland Green Community Group

Walking around Cotham and Redland

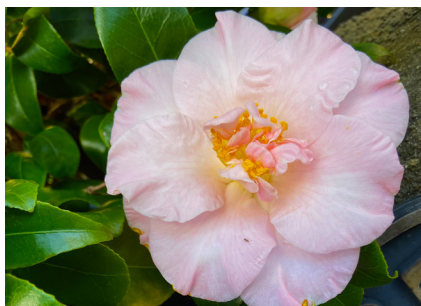
During the last year many of us have had the opportunity to walk around the area and discover new sights.

A chance to look at the front gardens of the houses we pass and maybe get some ideas for plants for our own gardens.

On Redland Green we enjoyed the story of the advent created by the children.

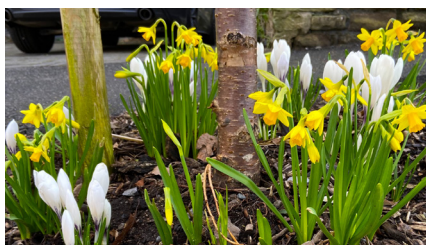
Christmas lights were put up on many houses to brighten the dark days and also decorated the tree on the roundabout at the top of Redland Road (thanks to Nos 172 and 174).

Winter Wanderland in Chandos Road showcased the creative imagination of all those involved. Here are photos of a few of those sights.



Above: Beautiful camellia

Below: Miniture narcissus and crocus. Spring is on the way



Nativity scene on Redland Green photo by Richard Jarratt



Above: Christmas lights on roundabout photo by Arnold Mayes

Below: Perfumed Edgeworthia chysantha or Paper tree





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 in order to reduce work for our distributors. We will supply a Standing Order mandate form on request. For those who do not wish to use Standing Order, subscriptions will be collected by distributors in May

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 a full contact address and telephone number. Please include your e-mail address if available.

Alternatively, please complete a new member form which can be found on our website, rcas.org.uk under the 'contact us' page

Please make the following declaration if you are a taxpayer - and sign and date it. This means that 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'

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



Although the snow didn't last long everyone made the most of it (as seen on this page and the back cover)



