

# Redland & Cotham Amenities Society



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Number 191 - May 2021

# Report from the Chair

As I write this, times are changing. We will be moving into the next stage of Covid 'opening up' with larger gatherings being allowed outside and indoor meetings now permitted. This good news means that our Open Gardens event will be going ahead as planned this year and there are full details in the newsletter centre section. My thanks go to the OG team who have been working under difficult circumstances and to the gardeners who are opening up their gardens. Let us hope for good weather. This newsletter includes an article by one of the gardeners responsible for the magnificent displays on Carnarvon Road which we feature regularly on our online posts.

Recent elections have seen changes of personnel in our area, which includes two new councillors in Cotham Ward. We welcome Guy Poultney and Mohamed Makawi, and one new councillor, Tom Hathway in Clifton Down ward. We congratulate returning Redland Councillors Fi Hance and Martin Fodor and Carla Denyer for Clifton Down. All our councillors are now Green!

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to outgoing councillor Anthony Negus who has been a tireless campaigner for the Cotham (and Redland) community. His work on promoting community involvement through Neighbourhood Partnerships, on protecting and improving our built environment, campaigning against the closure of local libraries, on promoting wildlife and green infrastructure and on tackling university and student issues across our area, among other things, including in his former role

as lead on planning and as previous chair of scrutiny commissions, has been invaluable both to our local community and for the whole of Bristol. He, together with former councillor Clive Stevens, was instrumental in bringing forward the new supplementary planning document on Houses in Multiple Occupation, which sets the standards for assessment of new applications and will help control further over-concentrations of HMO accommodation both in our area and in the rest of Bristol. We will miss his valued input as a councillor and wish him well in his 'retirement' from his council role; we look forward to welcoming him to future RCAS events and meetings.

Our links with the BCR community partnership, the voluntary group which replaced the Neighbourhood Partnership, continue and we hope that in summer there will be in-person meetings, particularly to discuss neighbourhood priorities for allocation of infrastructure funding devolved to our area. There is not much money available but what there is will be allocated to projects like highways improvements, tree planting etc by the Area Committee of councillors at the end of summer. We hope that a public meeting will be possible before the short list is agreed but if you have any suggestions for projects, please contact your councillors with details asap and let BCR CP know as well.

RCAS have allocated some funding through our Small Grants fund and there are reports in this newsletter. We are very happy to support the BCR Street Scene Group, Chandos Neighbourhood Association and the Redland Green Community Group with projects to improve the area.

Cover photo: The pedestrianised Cotham Hill with restaurants, bars and cafes extended onto the road. See article on Liveable Neighbourhoods on p16

The RCAS planning group endeavour to assess all planning applications in the area, including tree works applications, and make comments through the Planning Online website when RCAS feels that the application will have an impact on the wider community.

We monitor alerts from Bristol City Council (through Planning Online) and also receive many emails from members and non-members asking for RCAS to object to applications. It is important that neighbours, particularly those who are notified of local applications, make their own responses raising their concerns, as RCAS planning group will only object on planning grounds and will take into account wider issues such as the Bristol policy to increase residential density in the city.

We consider that our representations will have most influence with the planners if we are always reasonable, sometimes supporting proposals, often suggesting improvements, and only very rarely voicing outright objection, and only then on clear planning grounds. We have adopted this approach over many years with a good track record of being listened to.

Unfortunately, there is no consultation process for licensing of HMOs and there is historically little departmental coordination with planning. The new HMO SPD has increased the interaction between these two processes, but it is important to understand that they are not dependent on each other and to report planning breaches and licensing breaches separately. Planning officers cannot enforce licensing breaches nor vice versa.

There are links on the Bristol City Council website for reporting a breach of planning and for reporting a breach of HMO licensing. There are also details of all HMO licenced properties.

RCAS responds to consultations and works with officers to get the policies right; we feel that this is the most effective way of supporting the preservation of the area for our present and future residents.

The current government is proposing to change planning law so that communities are expected to get involved at this 'front-loading' stage of policy making, with a view to removing elements of the planning application consultation process in the future. We have raised concerns about this proposal in consultation responses because we have found that people rarely get engaged until they can see that it directly affects them.

Alison Bromilow

# Planning Report

## Decisions:

**1a-d Chandos Road.** 2 flats above existing single storey shops. REFUSED

**Gibson Road.** An application to demolish a row of garages and erect two houses. REFUSED. Grounds: Standards of accommodation and roof terrace.

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

**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 objected. REFUSED.

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

**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, loss of 'glimpsed views' and to overlarge extension. Objected. WITHDRAWN

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

**55 Trelawney Road.** Roof extension with large dormer window. Objected. Clearly visible from Redland Green/ Chandos

road area. Objected. WITHDRAWN

**20 Rokeby Avenue.** Application for on additional bedroom. AB and planning officer having trouble reconciling property counts. Automated count appears to be much higher than pinpoint records. AB chasing this with DM and policy officers. Objected. WITHDRAWN

**31 Zetland Road.** Roof extension to form 2nd floor flat. RCAS objected. WITHDRAWN.

## Pending:

**Rear of 6 Clyde Park.** 2-storey house on garage site. Loss of views into rear gardens. RCAS objected.

**8 Chandos Road.** 2no 3 storey houses on site facing onto Cowper Road. Overdevelopment, poor quality accommodation, loss of open space and waste/recycling/cycling storage for existing flats. RCAS objected.

**112-114 Whiteladies Road.** Previously Boots. Retail retained at ground floor. Upper levels change to HMOs including extension into roof space. RCAS objected on poor quality accommodation and high concentration of HMO/student residential devt.

## Enforcement:

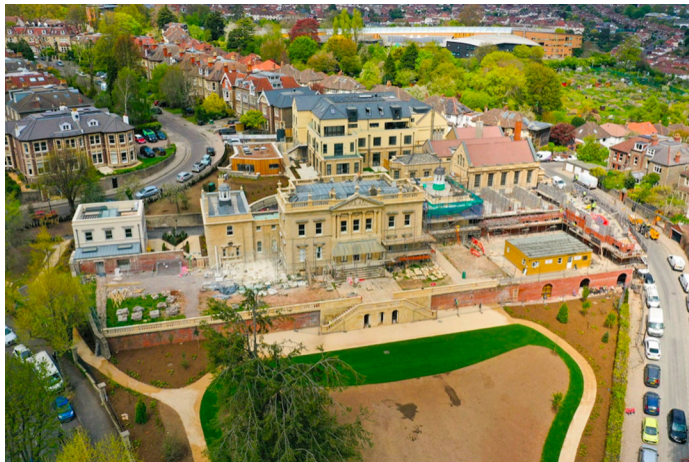
**2 Westfield Park.** Advertisement reported by member. RCAS notified LPA

**86 Redland Road.** Extensive tree works in conservation area without permission. RCAS notified LPA.

**71 Arley Hill.** Works to existing HMO. RCAS notified LPA.

Alison Bromilow and Simon Birch





Redland Court development (above) continues apace as this aerial photo shows. The landscape gardens are now being created and residents have started moving into the Science building (photo courtesy of Juniper Homes)

You may have noticed two large metal plates on the pavement outside Redland Court on Redland Road and wondered why they are there. Below the large flat metal plates and next to the ventilation column lies an underground electricity sub station, over 80 years old! It's as big as a shed. The substation was being taken out, repairs made to the chamber and the new one will be craned in later on. I never knew it was there. Apparently they are underground in "nice" parts of Bristol

Simon Birch



# Parks

## Redland Green

BCC Parks Department supported Redland Green Community Group to "deep clean" Redland Green by supplying an 8 cubic yard skip and Kubota (mini-digger).

On Thursday 29th April a team of volunteers set about clearing up. A huge amount of rubbish had accumulated at the north –west perimeter of the green and next to the green, some of it fly-tipped over two decades ago. Particularly aggravating to Cossins Road residents was the rubbish dump in the woodland in front of the garages at the Coldharbour Rd end. This land is not in fact part of the green, but belongs to the garages. However, given that the owners have done nothing in two decades to get rid of this eyesore (and H&S problem), it was safe to conclude an absence of intention to do so. The rubbish there included a rusting fridge, old bed base, microwave, bathroom hand basin, bags of clothes and building waste and an extraordinary number of very heavy concrete fence post bases. Not a great environment for the local children who play there.



Old building rubble buried in the woodland running between St Oswald's and Cossins Rds, an historical legacy dating probably from WWII, and exposed through erosion, was also removed.



A substantial amount of rubbish also came from behind 40 and 44-46 Coldharbour Road – including old chain link fences, blankets, bricks, cables, many more heavy concrete lumps – all fly-tipped over the years. The area behind the (now closed) launderette on Coldharbour Road has been an eyesore for a very long time: the owner's failure to maintain the boundary fence had led to the Council erecting heras (harris) fence panels quite a few years ago: these had since fallen down, contributing to the general unsightliness.

While the area behind the fencing has been cleared of rubbish, they have been erected once again as a H&S measure until the tumbledown fence panels have been removed by the current owners.



All of this mess has been a carbuncle on the face of a much-loved green for far too long and RGCG was thrilled to be able to sort the problem out, thanks to support from Bristol City Council.

About twenty local residents along with RGCG members turned out to help, and work continued solidly from 10am until 3pm. Ben Brown, from BCC's Parks Department, working with the Kubota made a huge difference to what we were able to achieve: we simply wouldn't have been able to cleanse all of these areas and get everything into the skip (only ours for the day) without his invaluable contribution.

The green feels -and looks - a better place!

Julie Parker



## Cotham Gardens

If you have visited the park recently, you will have seen that the sundial bench has been replaced, very much like for like. This is a wonderful feature of the park and people have been using it since the day the carpenter finished. When it has been sealed against the elements it should last another 25 years.

As society opens up again, the park has been well-used by small groups including fitness classes and – a highlight – the bellringing practice on Sunday morning. Of course, many visitors just want to sit and chat or have a picnic. Luckily the socialising has not resulted in a wave of rubbish, unlike in many parks across the city.

Many thanks to all those who pick up litter regularly to keep our green space looking so neat.

Spring is always a wonderful season for enjoying the trees and smaller plants. Steiner School children have sown wildflower seeds in a cut-out bed at the top of the park and Cotham Gardens School may be planting on the green stretch by the zebra crossing. In the corner of the park, under the yew by the boundary with Bannatyne Health Centre, we hope to develop a wildlife habitat, and to 'wild' the perimeter parallel to Elmgrove Road.

An RCAS member has proposed that we plant a tree as a memorial to all those lost to and affected by the pandemic. A tree serves well as a memorial because of its longevity and its contribution to the environment. Tree-planting happens later in the year; if anyone has any suggestions of a suitable or preferred tree, please do get in touch. Likewise, if you have any comments, anything to report, or would like to get involved with planting or cleaning, let us know

Sarah Cuthill



The new sundial bench



# Gold Star Awards 2021

## Nominations Please!

In 2020 we gave a wide range of awards – including a renovated house in Clarendon Road, The Vincent and a new building at Cotham School.

We now need your nominations for this year's awards – ideally by the end of June so we can assess them in good time for the Committee site visits in September.

Nominations can be made for a wide range of schemes – but they must be visible from a public place so rear extensions are not normally considered.

## Nominations so far

To date I've received the following nominations:

- An unusual new house – work stopped for a while last year but it's now nearing completion – the address is rear of 22 Elliston Road (above right)
- The complete refurbishment of the existing house at 3 Idlesleigh Road, also just nearing completion (middle right)
- And a completely new house at 81 Redland Road, next to the railway line (lower right)

Have you spotted anything else that you would like to nominate? I'm sure that your lockdown walks will have unearthed some hidden gems.

If so, please get in touch and tell me about them – [simon.birch7@gmail.com](mailto:simon.birch7@gmail.com)

Simon Birch





# Student Liaison

## Operation Beech (Information from UoB and the 'noisepages')

Operation Beech police responded to 55 incidents between 13 January and 17 March.

The majority related to noise at private addresses whose occupants were UoB students.

Some of the reports made by the police also mentioned possible Covid breaches, according to PC Sian Harris. She said: "In the majority of cases, no Covid breaches were found. Where Covid breaches were discovered, officers dealt with these with a combination of words of advice, Covid warnings or Covid fixed penalty notices."

Operation Beech is on duty through May and June from 8pm to 2am on the nights shown below. Residents disturbed by a house party or street noise believed to be caused by UoB students can contact the patrol by texting 07773 816248

May - 5/7/8/12/14/15/19/21/22/26/28/29

June - 2/4/5/9/11/12/16/18/19

## NPPF - Article 4 & HMOs

The government is currently consulting on amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); this includes several proposals for changes to Article 4 Directives which could have a damaging impact on the controls currently available for planning applications on HMOs in England.

In order for the Planning process to work properly the legal framework relies on an enormous amount of case law to be tested and function smoothly. The new version

of the NPPF could open up lots of clauses to be challenged by lawyers before it is clear and functions well again. This could take years to run through if significant changes are made - more work for planners!

RCAS, following requests from the HMO Lobby, responded to the consultation and opposed certain options considered to be harmful.

## University Community Liaison Group meetings

The CLG meetings were suddenly stopped by UoB about a year ago, to the great disappointment of all local groups. RCAS has lobbied UoB to reconsider this decision due to the importance of the meetings.

A joint letter drawn up by a majority of the local residents' groups was sent to UoB Registrar Lucinda Parr requesting a meeting with the University to discuss a variety of shared concerns and that the Community Liaison Group (CLG) should be restarted.

Here is an extract from the letter:

'Community Liaison Meetings' groups have long met individually with the University, or invited its representatives to their meetings, and will continue to do so. This can be a good way to deal with issues in particular streets or districts. However, we believe that in addition to these one-to-one meetings there is a need for a general forum in which we can raise topics of broader concern.

There is value for the groups in being able to understand what has or hasn't worked in other areas, and in hearing different viewpoints. We also think the University is likely to get a more accurate reading of community views on these broader topics in the context of a general forum.

We therefore ask you to reactivate the Community Liaison Group, suspended over a year ago.

We would like to hold this meeting soon so that we can discuss not just the future of the CLG, including how it might be made more productive, but also other possible developments during the remainder of this academic year.'

Unfortunately UoB has turned down this request but instead they are planning to reinstate the Bristol Student Community Partnership (BSCP) and offering, across all the local groups, just 2 seats at the meetings.

So only a small step in the right direction and at the moment there is some uncertainty if and when the BSCP will be up and running.

BSCP was a multi-agency group that met several times a year, with representatives from: University of Bristol, University of the West of England, Student Unions, Bristol City Council, Avon and Somerset Police, Bristol Waste and NHS Bristol-support services.

Landlords have not been invited to attend these meetings. This would be an opportunity for landlords to hear what it is like living at the 'coal face'. One could argue that landlords are part of the problem here and they should know exactly what the issues really are by being able to attend the BSCP meetings. We think that many landlords are not fully aware of what goes on in their letting houses!

Greater awareness and involvement by landlords and 'ground rules' conversations at the beginning of term would help for better

student/University community relations. RCAS is pressing UoB to consider inviting the landlords.

It is to the benefit of all to make every effort to manage and maintain the relationship between students/university and the community to allow us all to be able to enjoy living together.

### **Cloning of the 'noise pages'!**

The 'noisepages' website has achieved a lot in a short time in our understanding of student/community relations in our local area. A series of similar functioning websites throughout Bristol with all student areas represented would give a useful city wide picture of what is going on and give the group of local groups more influence with the Universities.

Would 'Operation Beech' have happened without the 'noisepages'?

Any suggestions on how to achieve this would be gratefully received.

Rob Harris

# Why do we garden?

As a youngster I can remember my father growing, amongst other things, leeks and potatoes in our London back garden, while my mother made bread. Even now a good leek and potato soup with fresh homemade bread is a favourite, with echoes of the past. At university, we had a scruffy back garden in our student house. I cleared a patch and brought some strawberry runners from home, and within a few months we were eating (and fighting over) our own strawberries.

But as life grew busier with work, and then with raising children, gardening seemed to be a chore, too far down my list of priorities. I used to hack things back several times a year when it became too embarrassing, and it never looked good. I didn't get it. I couldn't understand why people gardened.



As time went on, work came under control, and children grew older, it slowly became a source of pleasure, an intriguing challenge, and I began to see it as a creative opportunity. I started to see the plants individually for what they were, and how they could interact with each other. I appreciated the opportunity to learn about the soil, the plants, the seasons and the pests too. Each season had its excitement and anticipation, with the rewards of seeing new plants emerge and the regrowth of old friends.



There is the love of mucking in and getting your hands dirty, whether it is digging up weeds or planting seeds. The "work" can be totally absorbing, and as such very relaxing. There are few worries that cannot be put into perspective by an hour or two of gardening. There are always surprises, and nature has a way of showing you things, not with a fanfare, but simply by you spending time in the garden, looking, smelling, feeling and reflecting. And it doesn't have to be a solitary experience. Gardeners are very generous with their time and advice. Gardening with a companion is a joy. Our front garden is very exposed to the street, and we are often out there. We have lost count of the numbers of passersby who give us encouragement, ask questions, and generally show their appreciation of the garden, so we feel very connected to our neighbours and the community at large.



These commentators assume we have great knowledge and expertise - I wish that were true. In reality I have made many mistakes over the years and have learnt from them. I was blundering about and realised I needed some guidance. Hilary Barber joined me for an hour or two a month over one spring and summer. She showed me I could be much bolder with managing plants, moving them around, growing from seeds, cuttings and bulbs. With push from her I learnt to extend the growing season and broaden the range of plants I had.

Every story has its ups and downs. As the children grew older and left home, my wife grew more ill. Bereavement followed, and was hard to endure, and the rhythms and routines of the garden kept me occupied. I did begin to lose faith in gardening and realised that for me it was important to be gardening with someone and for someone - it a sharing experience.



In a local choir I found myself falling in with a fellow gardener. We soon hit it off, and before long we were reinventing the garden. We have become garden obsessives, addicted to our flowers, fruit and vegetable. The front and back garden are not enough. In the last year we have spent a lot of time and effort renovating the gardens at Westbury Park School, a huge, virtually blank canvas for

us. The wildlife pond we built has been a hit with the children. This year at the school we plan to have raised vegetable beds in production and will be opening a cut flower garden and a meadow garden, generally supporting the children's gardening club.



Throughout this we have come to appreciate that we are guardians of our little bit of the environment. We all have some space to cultivate something, even if it is only a balcony or a window box. It is a tragedy that so many gardens have been paved over, in submission to the needs of the car. Well, increasingly people are realising that they can do without the car, and that sad paved area can be brought to life with some greenery. It can become a haven for all manner of insects, frogs, butterflies and birds. With a garden full of life, with blooming flowers or fresh vegetables, we can restore a little balance to our lives.

So for us, gardening enriches our lives, links us to friends and neighbours, allows us to support the environment, and gives us great pleasure. Now I get it.

Mark O'Mahony

## Small Grants

### Update on the bird boxes in Redland Green

This is the second season for the 16 bird boxes which were installed with help from a small grant RCAS made in 2019 to Redland Green Community Group.

In late February, RGCG cleaned the boxes out, in readiness for the new breeding season. This included removing last year's nests. This is important as the birds make new nests, and would otherwise have to clean out the next boxes themselves. It also is important to remove any other inhabitants, such as insects, to give the birds a clean start.

7 of the boxes contained complete nests, and 3 had partial nests. The nests were all occupied by blue tits and great tits. We'll continue to monitor the boxes and may perhaps relocate or modify any which birds don't seem to like.

A Bird Box App is currently in progress and will be available soon. This app will complement the free Redland Green Tree Trail app. (Details of the app from <https://sites.google.com/site/redlandgreencommunity/>)

### Hanging Baskets for Chandos Road

RCAS gave a grant to Chandos Road Neighbourhood Association to cover 2/3 of the cost of 7 flowering hanging baskets which will decorate the road during this summer. The CRNA and traders on the road funded the rest of the costs.



The box above was also used last year, but we didn't identify whether it was a blue or great tit. The official word is that boxes with these sort of holes are preferred by house sparrows, nuthatches and pied flycatchers, but this pair seem not to know that!

Entries and exits were extremely frequent - the pair are clearly feeding their young.

Photo by Steve Pill



## BCR Street Scene Group

RCAS made a grant of £600 to the BCR Street Scene voluntary group for cleaning materials, including the chemical removal of flyposting residue, and paint for street furniture.

The group relies on volunteers to help keep our areas graffiti free and clean. Further details can be found at <https://bcrcp.org.uk/street-scene/>



Beautiful blossom on a cherry tree on the corner of Elliston Road



# Liveable Neighbourhoods

## Temporary Pedestrianisation of Cotham Hill

You may be aware that the temporary pedestrianisation of Cotham Hill has been put into action and will remain until the end of July. This scheme has enabled many cafes, restaurants and bars to reopen in a way that allows sufficient customer numbers to be financially viable. The scheme also allows pedestrians to walk in a socially distanced way on what is a very busy road whilst still allowing cyclists to use the road. The scheme does make Cotham Hill more compatible with the Liveable Neighbourhood objectives described in NL188 by Roger Gimson. Obviously this scheme was controversial and not all residents and road users were in agreement with the scheme being implemented. There have been some teething problems, notably signage for drivers, but Carla Denyer (Councillor Clifton Down) has informed us that the following are all either on the to-do list (waiting on council staff/contractors) or already underway:

- 'SLOW' road markings to remind cyclists to slow down in the shared areas
- Corresponding with businesses about the importance of keeping the pavements clear. Some of the businesses currently occupying the pavements do not have permission to do so and the Council's enforcement team is in touch with them about this this week
- Better signage to notify drivers earlier on about the closure, so that they can take a better alternative route
- Traffic and air quality measurements on surrounding roads to monitor impact

- Replacing the red and white water-filled barriers with planters, which will look more attractive and prevent drivers who are intent on breaking the law from moving them out of the way

- Regular visits by council staff and the Police Community Support Officer

Do you have any views on the pedestrianisation of Cotham Hill? Please let us know.

On other roads restaurants and bars have built platforms on adjacent parking spaces to allow larger numbers of customers. We hope that after such a prolonged period of closure these businesses can quickly recover and continue to provide the lively atmosphere in our area. Below Chandos Road and Kensington Road.



# Tree Report

There have been 4 recent objections on behalf of RCAS in the last few months to tree felling applications.

In all cases there was no reason stated for removal and the trees were in healthy condition.

A Norwegian Spruce had in total 15 objections largely on the contribution toward biodiversity of the area, however felling was permitted as the interpretation by the BCC tree officer of the relevant law was to protect only trees that provide 'visual' amenity.

An Ash tree in a rear garden space on Chandos road was allowed to be felled on a similar basis.

A very visible Ash tree in Durdham park and a Sycamore at the rear of Oakland road both were both given the protection of a Tree preservation order, due to visual amenity and the support of 6 objections in each case.

A tree preservation order is the only measure that the council tree officer can apply if they determine that tree works are not acceptable, it doesn't necessarily mean that the tree is exceptional itself, it is the overall contribution to the character of the area.

Our Ash and Oak trees have been quite late coming into leaf this year, and Oak started first, so as the old saying goes, we are in for a splash, ie not much rain. The cold nights during April were the cause of the lateness.

Dave Jones



Please remember that applications for tree works need to be made to the council. We don't want our beautiful trees to suffer the botched pruning that this poor copper beech has.

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/planning-and-building-regulations/make-an-application-for-works-to-trees>

## 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](mailto: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](http://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.**





The vegetable and herb patch outside Alderman's Park is growing vigorously. This raised bed was created by Ruth and Arnold Mayes. They have now planted some shrubs on the area next to bed and the whole garden provides a welcome sight for everyone passing by



This chalk game was drawn on the pavement outside Wild Oats in Lower Redland Road to be enjoyed by children of all ages after school at St John's Primary

Overleaf: One of the magnificent horse chestnuts coming into bloom on the Granny Downs



