

Redland & Cotham Amenities Society



Report from the Chair
Planning
Parks
Student affairs
Housing and Transport



Number 198 - March 2023

Report from the Chair

Planning Report

Pending consideration:

22/05963/F | Garage To Rear Of 3 Clyde Park Bristol BS6 6RR Demolition of garage and erection of dwellinghouse (Use Class C3). RCAS has objected to this proposal.

A previous application was withdrawn but another back garden development (6 Clyde Park) facing onto Clyde Mews was won at appeal and is being quoted as a precedent. This site has a mature tree which makes a significant contribution to the character of the area. We have no confidence that the construction can be carried out without threatening this tree.

22/06034/Z | 71 Arley Hill Bristol BS6 5PJ Enforcement notice appeal for change of use of the building to large HMO with 8 bedrooms. RCAS and local neighbours objected to this retrospective application for the expansion of the existing HMO. Permission was refused and enforcement notice made.

22/05794/F | 30 Waverley Road Cotham Bristol BS6 6EX Reversion of property to a single dwelling, with loft conversion and associated works. This application involves loss of residential units as it is currently broken up into flats. However, there is a shortage of family housing locally, so this helps with the balance of residential type.

22/05934/F | First Floor Flat 7 Clyde Park Bristol BS6 6RR Proposed dormer roof extension on side elevation of main roof between existing chimney stacks. RCAS has objected to this application: this is an overlarge window and is out of place. It is highly visible from Clyde Park and fails to preserve and enhance the conservation area.

22/05778/CE | 177 Redland Road Bristol BS6 6YQ Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for an existing use - Large HMO for up to 13 people (Sui Generis).

There is a current project by BCC to ensure that all houses currently occupied as HMOs apply for retrospective permission. They will then be added to the mapping so can be taken account of when new HMOs applications are made.

Decisions:

22/01529/F | 7 Belvedere Road Bristol BS6 7JG Change of use from 3 no. 2-bed flats (Class C3) to a 12-bed extension to the nursing home at 8-9 Belvedere Road (Class C2). Application refused and appeal dismissed.

Alison Bromilow and Simon Birch

Planning in Bordering Areas

22/01221/F | St Christophers School Westbury Park Bristol BS6 7JE | Proposed development of the site including, internal and external alterations of Listed House building and conversion of lodges fronting Westbury Park; demolition of buildings and the erection of new buildings to provide an integrated Retirement Community (Class C2) for older people; together with landscaping, car parking, refuse and other associated works (major).

Plans were resubmitted to the Council. Over 1200 comments were made, the vast majority negative. The standard consultation period ends on 2nd March 2023.

21/01999/F | Former Car Park College Road Clifton Bristol BS8 3HX | Erection of 62 dwellings with associated parking, new vehicular access, and associated infrastructure and landscaping. Bristol City Council control committee A passed the amended planning proposal in November 2022. Clifton and Hotwells Improvement Society (CHIS) have now commenced formal Judicial Review proceedings alleging flaws in the planning process.

**We look forward to welcoming members and their
guests
to our Spring Meeting on**

**Wednesday April 5th 2023 at the
Redland Club, Burlington Road, BS6 6TN
Meeting starts 7.00pm
(doors open 6.45pm)**

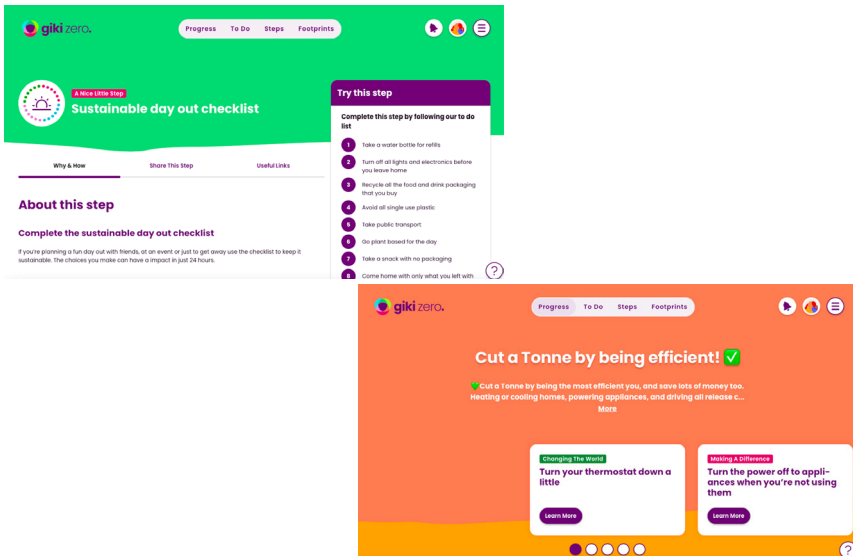
There will be a talk on

**The future of home heating:
the benefits and key considerations for installing
low carbon heating and renewables**

**And a chance to meet the committee
Drinks and snacks will be available**

**Please also save the date for the AGM
on
Wednesday 1st November
at the
Redland Club**

What's your carbon footprint?



Have you ever wondered about your carbon footprint and how you could calculate what it is?

Zero.giki.earth is a simple application that calculates your carbon footprint with the data you input about your lifestyle. It then offers easy non-judgemental steps to reduce it.

The site offers lots of tips and suggestions on easy and achievable ways to lower the carbon output associated with everyday living. It's amazing how small changes can make big differences.

<https://zero.giki.earth>

Giki.earth window at Chandos Window
Wanderland



Parks

Cotham Gardens

RCAS launched the Friends of Cotham Park Monthly Working Party in April 2022 to meet for a couple hours on the first Saturday of each month to sweep the paths, cut back the suckers or shoots around the base of the trees, rake the children's sandpit and remove mud, grass and weeds from the paths and gutters.

We have had some larger - and smaller - turn-outs, but over the past 3 months we have got a stable group of 10 or so regular volunteers supplemented by passers by and dog-walkers!

Thank you for all your support!

We now have a WhatsApp group that notifies everyone when we are meeting and what we plan to do. Scan QR Code or go to link: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/KgyBedVXO2IIfS2bCX64KO>

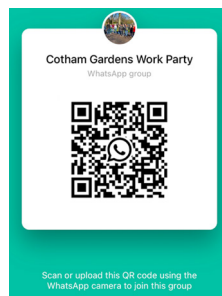
We will have a major park Spring clean on Saturday 1st April, and a big turnout would get Cotham Gardens into great shape for the summer! Lucy of Roam Wild will be there serving free coffee to volunteers when she restarts operating the coffee van again!

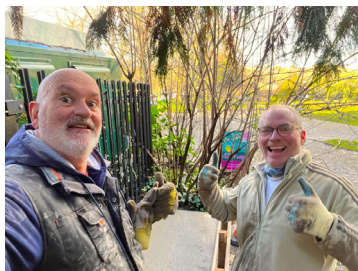
Separately, we have worked with Lucy to get power put on and have built a secure storage unit to house gardening, litter picking equipment and a wheelbarrow.

Finally we are considering holding some small community events in the park, so ideas are welcome.

Alison and I hold the keys if anyone can spend a half hour doing some light clean up work anytime - just email us on info@rcas.org.uk or join the WhatsApp group as above.

Chris Shelley





Lots of hard work clearing Cotham Gardens and a welcome get together afterwards

Redland Green

Redland Green Community Group (RGCG) have been busy!

24 volunteers turned up on Sunday February 12th and managed to cut down all the brambles which had taken over the old meadow area (behind St Oswald's Road houses) and a lot more ground besides!!

We put about 8 bundles of bramble brush in the Dell (to reduce the wear and tear on the bare ground, around the tree roots) and more under the hedge behind the houses on St Oswald's Road.

8 fruit trees (3 pears, 2 cherries, 1 plum and 2 apples) were planted on the following Wednesday with 8 volunteers digging out some bramble roots at the same time. A huge thank you for everyone's effort. The planting is well spaced so the mowers will be able to mow round the trees. Weed resistant mats were placed around the trees, followed by bark chippings and then hurdles made out of dead bramble sticks. This was back filled with dead leaf and bramble litter from scraping the ground. We hope this will be enough to deter the badgers, deer, foxes, dogs, children etc. from damaging or digging up the fruit trees while they grow. We have put a notice inside one of the hurdles describing the planting. See photos of the work below.

We have spent time since cutting down the stumps of the brambles and digging out roots, work which will continue until we can spread grass seed on the ground. Some of the roots are enormous and we hope that by people walking on the area and regular mowing, the brambles will be deterred from thriving. We humans, along with the pollinators and wildlife look forward to enjoying the blossom and fruit from the fruit trees.

RGCG also liaised with BCC Parks Department for the sponsorship of 5 non-fruiting trees. A Sweet Chestnut, Cut Leaf Alder, Red Oak, Copper Beech and Larch. The Larch is sponsored by RCAS and is located on the slope opposite the old fragment of wall by the Metford Road Allotments entrance.

The meadow area by the steps up to Metford Road has been closely strimmed and raked with more wildflower seed spread around in the hopes that we get a good show of wildflowers this year. The posts and rope are to deter dogs and children tramping all over the area while the plants get established.

The grassy mound (which belongs to Redland Club) between the two tennis courts and opposite the Bowling Green gates received some TLC from volunteers from Redland Club and RGCG last week.

Hawthorn, Hazel, Dog Rose, Cornus (Dogwood), Rowan, Wild Privet, Guelder Rose and Spindle whips have been planted to make a hedge which will benefit pollinators and wildlife and make an attractive natural screen for the courts.

The bird boxes have all been cleaned out ready for the new nesting season and numbered. If you spot a bird entering a box regularly, please inform Julie on the RGCG website with the number of the box and the type of bird.

It is good to see the crocuses and daffodils showing their splendours from previous bulb planting sessions. As always, a huge thank you to the volunteers who give up their time to keep Redland Green a place to enjoy and for wildlife to thrive.

It has come to our notice that an application is about to be made for demolishing all but three of the garages at the Cossins Road end of the Green behind the residential properties on Coldharbour Road and replacing them with 6 houses. As soon as we have more information we will circulate those to people for whom we have email addresses and also put details on the RGCG website.

Lois Goddard RGCG



Student Liaison

University of Bristol (UoB) VC Evelyn Welch

The new Vice Chancellor at UoB is Evelyn Welch. During interviews with local newspapers the VC said "I want to hear from people in Bristol what we can do, not imagine myself what I can do for them...the most important thing I can do in my first six months here is go out and listen to community groups, listen to civic groups...and really hear from people who live in Bristol what they would like the university to do for them. We need to be the university for Bristol as well as being the University of Bristol."

"(For UoB) Temple Quarter is an important part of being down in the heart of what will be an expanding city of Bristol. So that's another opportunity. But I certainly wouldn't want to see a situation where Temple Quarter put us in the heart of Bristol and the Clifton hills remain far and isolated away. I think there are lots of ways in which we can work together. And I mean that not in what the university can do for the city but what the city and the university can do together."

RCAS and other local groups took that offer from the VC and wrote to her expressing our views on UoB and how it fits in Bristol.

RCAS letter to the VC (edited version)

Dear Vice Chancellor,

We were pleased to read about your views on the University of Bristol and your desires for its coexistence within the City of Bristol.

Bristol has a serious housing shortage problem and future loss of housing to student accommodation due to the expansion of the university will add to the problems of under supply of homes for permanent residents and homelessness. This is clearly not what the city needs. It is also in danger of feeding an impression of the university as 'big business' rather than an education facility and so outweighing the other benefits that having a first-class university is seen to bring to the city.

It would be great if the University makes affordable purpose-built provision to house the expanding student numbers and not rely on the expansion of HMOs in the community. We think this is very important for the future of Bristol and the University.

Finally, we are grateful to the University for the improvements in student/ community liaison from the Bristol Student Community Partnership and the great efforts of Stephen Smith, your Community Liaison Officer.

RCAS looks forward to hearing your views on these matters.

BSCP ZOOM Meeting January attended by all local groups and UoB VC

The VC did not respond to any of the Residents Associations (RA) letters that were sent to her prior to the meeting. She regards Temple Gate area development as a positive action with benefits for the city - for example a limited free dental service.

The VC would like to meet local RAs along with CLO Steve Smith.

The VC said that UoB has 800 fewer students than last year. This was a deliberate decision to restrict the numbers to the number of beds available. She said that there has been a reduction in the number of landlords running HMOs.

BBC RADIO 4 PM Visits Bristol

UoB VC and Bristol Mayor Marvin Rees were interviewed by Evan Davis on BBC Radio 4 PM recently.

Marvin Rees said re UoB expansion that the university is of major importance to the economy of Bristol and he agreed that the university has to grow to be able to compete. He also said that Bristol had to pay a price for this growth! It is very important for university expansion to be at a rate that the city can cope with.

The mayor said that more Purpose Built Student Accommodation is required to take the pressure off local communities.

The VC said that UoB try very hard to match the number of students to beds available in the city but they have to grow the student base because costs are going up but fees are not keeping. Evan Davis said that surely just relying on growth cannot solve this problem and that the student experience is damaged if you only go for growth. The VC said that £2 billion is generated by UoB in the west of England economy.

Bristol Student Community Partnership (BSCP)

BCC Private Housing department is producing an Anti Social Behaviour guide for Landlords. Within BSCP there is a specific HMO Group working on this. The guide provides specific guidance needed for student tenants.

UoB recently declined a request from a Private Landlord for character references for some UoB students wanting to become tenants after leaving halls. This was a puzzling response assuming that UoB really want to help landlords to select good tenants! This might also encourage a more sociable attitude from students moving into the community and shows a landlord making an attempt to have good tenants, which should be encouraged.

UoB Guide to community living for students. Well worded and if read by all students could encourage an easy life for them and the community. How do you encourage students to read the guide? It is essential that the importance of the guide is broadcast and that all students have face to face education of living in the community whilst in University halls of residence.

Planning - HMO Licence linkage

This is the situation where a property can be granted an HMO licence when the required planning permission has not been obtained. The Government must make it a legal obligation for Local Authorities to ensure that if planning is required that an HMO licence cannot be given until planning is obtained. This could easily be remedied if the Planning and HMO Licensing Departments sent each other weekly lists of relevant applications. There would be a benefit to BCC when considering the possible work BCC may have to do when a house with an HMO Licence is flagged as not having relevant planning?

Bus transport

Students are encouraged to use buses due to free travel on U1 &U2 and limited free travel on First Bus 3,4 &72.

UoB Student Agreement

This is an important document for students, it is the contract between them and the university. A guide to "Living in the Community is not clearly referred to in this document. It lacks an executive summary where important sections of the document such as "Living in the Community" can be highlighted. At 15 pages long it's not easy to take in so most students probably only scan it before signing.

Landlords and bins

We are pleased to see BCC has a 'Rogue Landlord Unit'. They confirm that 'Landlords are responsible for ensuring adequate provision of bin storage and disposal facilities in accordance with the HMO licence'

Liveable Neighbourhoods

Chandos Road (Pedestrianisation)

Following the success of Chandos Road Festival and the permanent pedestrianisation of Cotham Hill a proposal was made to pedestrianise Chandos Road, closing it to motorised vehicles.

In the September 2021 Newsletter 192 Di Swain wrote an article discussing how the residents and traders around the Chandos Neighbourhood had been consulted on ideas to make Chandos Road a great place to live, work and shop. The main ideas were for people-friendly features such as planters and road art to help slow traffic and for the installation of bike racks to encourage active travel. Residents and traders did not ask for the road to be shut to traffic.

In light of this the proposals for the road which are expected to be announced soon probably won't include closing the road to motorised traffic but hopefully will include many of the people-friendly features that the Chandos Futures Group had presented to the Mayor back in June 2021. There will be a consultation on the proposals this Spring. All local residents are encouraged to take part.

Redland Station

Some years ago, RCAS was told that the footbridge next to Redland Station was on the programme for refurbishment in 2019/20. Since then, we have been pressing for action to deal with the structural repairs, including getting Bristol City Council to press for responses to our communications.

Finally, we have heard that work is now to be carried out to repair the cast iron structure and Network Rail has agreed that volunteers can then repaint the bridge. The bridge was repainted in the current livery when the rail line celebrated its 100th year anniversary 25 years ago and is certainly looking worse for wear. The BCR StreetScene group regularly remove tagging from the bridge but it has not been completely repainted since then.

A new friends of Redland Station group has been set up and on February 10th the group met to remove tagging on the artwork created with Cotham Gardens Primary School pupils by Dave Bain and Zoe Power and part funded by RCAS. The group is supported by the Severnside Rail officer Faye.

If you are interested in helping with the painting or in getting in touch with the Friends group, do get in touch.

Housing

There is a housing crisis in Bristol as in many other parts of the country. For many of us living in our family homes in leafy Redland and Cotham this is an issue we're only aware of through our children or grandchildren who are being charged exorbitant rents or can't get onto the property ladder.

We are living longer and remaining in our family homes long after the children have left. There are many more retirement developments, assisted living residences and care homes. There are many more students studying in Bristol than ever before, and the numbers are going to be increasing further.

Student numbers at the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England have increased by almost 30% since 2001/2 with numbers in 2019/20 totalling some 58,000. The University of Bristol has projected further growth in student numbers until 2027/28. There has been a move to provide more Purpose-Built Student Accommodation and Shared Living accommodation (purpose-built communal housing) that does relieve the pressure on Bristol housing stock but these types of accommodation can't be provided for a substantial number of students.

The big issue is that there isn't enough house building happening. In Redland and Cotham there are few sites suitable for medium or large developments (fortunately?) and our green spaces are safe but there is always planning pressure to build on smaller plots of land including areas of private gardens. This inevitably leads to a change in the character of the area.

There are many differing needs now evident in Bristol and they are illustrated by the different priorities of private renters, social housing tenants and homeowners within a city where there are several thousands of students.

The BBC Radio 4 program PM broadcast on Thursday 19th January, which Rob Harris also refers to in his Student Matters Report on p13, illustrated the differing viewpoints and opposing pressures on Bristol City Council (BCC). Homeowners want leafy suburbs with low density housing, renters want affordable rents, and family tenants want security of tenure. Many see high density development in city centres as a solution whereas others want restrictions on building heights or developments with green spaces. There are no cost-free solutions.

In 2019 the Government set a target to build 300,000 new homes in England each year. To meet this target, the Government decided that the 20 largest cities would be given an extra housing target calculated by the projected population growth plus an extra 35%. Bristol's target is 4,467 homes a year for the next 15 years. The Centre for Cities think tank has recently reported that the Government target needs to be increased to 442,000 homes a year and in 10 years to 654,000 (<https://www.centreforcities.org/publication/the-housebuilding-crisis/>). The report suggests that this housing deficit has been growing since the introduction of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947. It is unlikely there will be any simple or fast solutions.

BCC already grants permission to housing developers for many more houses than are built. Last year more than 13,500 homes with planning permission were not built. Developers often cite labour and material shortages as reasons for this shortfall, but a major effect is that profitable housing and not affordable housing gets prioritised as a result.

BCC has also made some disused council land and buildings available to community-led groups for self-build provision, but these are only small developments and will make little difference to the overall social housing availability. This is one of the reasons that there are about 18,000 households on the social housing waiting list for Bristol.

The regional West of England Combined Authority (WECA) Spatial Development Strategy plan collapsed when there was a disagreement over the number of homes to be built in South Gloucestershire. BCC have strongly argued against the number of homes they were expected to build and unanimously voted to scrap the “unrealistic” government target. BCC stated that “Bristol does not have the delivery capacity nor land capacity to deliver 67,000 homes in the next 15 years”.

BCC instituted a local plan review in order to protect green spaces and identify places for development based on “evidence based targets”. The consultation with local stakeholders ran until 20th January and the draft plan should be published in the summer before it goes to the planning inspectorate in early 2024. The plan will include policies on the environment and energy efficiency. We wait to see what the plan provides in the way of solutions for Bristol.

Transport

Bristol is listed as the 2nd worst city in the UK for traffic congestion although the time that motorists were idle in their cars is less than it was in 2019 (INRIX Global Traffic Scorecard). What can be done to improve transport in Bristol?

Buses

FirstBus continue to have issues providing services due to driver shortages that the company say are particularly acute in the Southwest. More services are due to be scrapped this April which will mean that certain areas of Bristol are faced with severe transport issues particularly affecting those who are completely reliant on bus services. Passenger numbers are still 25% lower than pre-Covid but unless there is a reliable service it seems unlikely that more people will be encouraged to use the service. The ongoing problems with bus services cannot help with Bristol City Council's (BCC) Clean Air Plan as unreliable bus services will inevitably lead to more people using cars.

There are growing calls for a franchised bus service as in London and underway in Manchester. Such a scheme could integrate trains, e-bikes and e-scooters. This is a decision for Dan Norris the Metro Mayor.

E-Scooters

BCC has agreed to make marked parking spaces on roads for Voi e-scooters. At the moment e-scooters are left in virtual parking spots on pavements often obstructing the path for pedestrians. Virtual pavement parking will still be used where it doesn't obstruct pedestrians and it is not possible to park safely on the road.

The Voi e-scooter scheme may be replaced by another provider as the West Of England Combined Authority (WECA) have asked for bids for a long term contract across the whole region. This new scheme will also include e-bikes as it is felt that these are used more by older users and those on longer journeys.

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.

