

Redland & Cotham Amenities Society



Report from the Chair
Spring Meeting
Open Gardens Programme
Planning and Parks
Student affairs



Number 199 - May 2023

Report from the Chair

As we move into spring, and possibly even summer, we are focussing in this newsletter particularly on our Gardens and Green Spaces. Thank you to the members and non-members who have opened their gardens in Cotham for this year's Open Garden visits and to the new Open Gardens team members who have taken on the organisation, with the expert guidance of KellyAnn who has been running the Open Gardens event for RCAS for the past 10 years. We are all looking forward to the visit in June. The pull-out section in the middle of the newsletter gives the list of gardens. As with most Bristol gardens, there are a number of changes of level which will need careful navigation. Please remember to take care on your visit.

It is wonderful to hear from both parks' groups of all the activities that the local community is engaged in, and the many people who have been involved in looking after the green spaces on Redland Grove and at the top of Elm Lane. We are also fortunate to have a large group of people who work individually and together to litter pick around our streets and to clear off or paint over graffiti and tagging on our street furniture. We are fortunate to live in a most attractive area in the city and it is great that most of our community value it highly.

It was good to see some of you at the RCAS spring event just before Easter. The speaker, Joe Pitt, gave a very interesting talk about the future of home heating and stayed to chat and enjoy a glass of wine with us all after the meeting. If anyone has any suggestions for future events, please do get in touch and tell us about them. It would be wonderful too, if anyone who has heard a speaker that they think would be available for a RCAS event lets us know for our future programme.

The current cost-of-living increases affect all of us, with both the cost of heating our homes and, for some, with the cost of food. This has impacted particularly on communities which neighbour ours though there are some local residents who struggle too. Many RCAS members support the Family Food Action charity, which was set up in response to Covid lockdowns but has continued to support families and children in North Bristol with donations, both food and toiletries and money. FFA has been running as a charity for a year now and supports an increasing number of families in St Paul's, Southmead, Easton, Lockleaze and Eastville, as the cost-of-living rises impact on more and more people. Thank you to the FFA people who do such a great job – if you want to find out more come up to the Ardagh on Horfield Common on a Tuesday morning and see the team in action.

We are delighted that we continue to receive a number of requests for our Living Here books from members and non-members alike. We are running short of no 4 Estates of Redland and have no more copies of no 2 Cotham – Park Field Arch and Grove, but still have plenty of copies of no 1 Cotham - Trelawney Road, Western College & Springfield House and no 3 Heart of Redland. We are proposing to upload the booklets to the website in due course but if anyone would like a printed copy, or any of our cards, do let us know and we can arrange to deliver to you. Books are £4 and cards are £7 for 10.

Looking forward to seeing you on June 11th for the Open Gardens visits.
Alison



Community support for families and children in food poverty

Food donations arriving at the Ardagh sorting centre on Tuesday mornings



Delivery cars loaded with food donations on their way to FFA partner projects

Fruit and vegetable donations ready to be allocated to families in need at a FFA partner project



Cotham Hill Permanent Pedestrianisation

Works to carry out the delivery of the permanent transportation and pedestrianisation scheme at Cotham Hill will start shortly and will continue to the end of the year. Some temporary road closures and diversions and works to pavements to improve accessibility are being undertaken and planters installed. Traffic management advance warning signs will go up in the next weeks detailing temporary road closures and diversions.

Planning Report

Pending consideration:

Carried forward:

Garage To Rear Of 3 Clyde Park. Demolition of garage and erection of dwellinghouse (Use Class C3).

71 Arley Hill. Enforcement notice appeal for change of use of the building to large HMO with 8 bedrooms.

30 Waverley Road. Reversion of property to a single dwelling, with loft conversion and associated works.

177 Redland Road. Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for an existing use - Large HMO for up to 13 people (Sui Generis).

First Floor Flat 7 Clyde Park. Proposed dormer roof extension on side elevation of main roof between existing chimney stacks.

12/14 Woodstock Road. Unauthorized works over very many years. We maintain a watching brief and keep in close contact with local residents, Councillors and BCC Enforcement team. BCC has recently written to the property owner advising him that planning permission is required for any further works.

New:

Garages Cossins Road. Redevelopment of existing garages to provide 6 dwellings with associated parking and landscaping. A pre application design was for a larger number of smaller residential units; RCAS is pleased that the application now comprises family housing. There are concerns shared by many of the commentators about the potential impact on the trees in Redland Green on the slope below the site. RCAS has asked that these trees are protected against future pressure for felling or canopy reduction.

4 Elliston Road. Detached single storey structure to the rear of the property for use as gym/home office. Space was being advertised for commercial office let. RCAS Objected. We understand that there is now an agreement to restrict use to prevent independent commercial letting. Not yet confirmed on Planning Online website.

Garden Flat 52 Hampton Park Basement extension and replacing the existing shed with new garage. This application description is misleading. The development proposal is for a new residential unit over a garage facing onto the back wall of the filling station on Hampton Road. RCAS has objected.

25 Brighton Road: Application for retention of use from residential (Use Class C3) to small House in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4). RCAS objected on grounds of excessive proportion of HMOs in this area.

38 Chandos Road Renovation of 2 existing garages to front of site; demolition of 6 existing garages and construction of a two-storey residential dwelling to rear of site. Smaller development than previous application. RCAS supports the application.

49 Salisbury Road: Replacement and extension of the current single vehicle driveway to provide parking for two vehicles. RCAS has objected on grounds of loss of front gardens leading to adverse impact on conservation area, potential increase in surface water flooding and loss of green infrastructure.

65 Lower Redland Road: Decision that Certificate of Lawfulness for use as HMO be NOT issued. This means that they will have to apply for permission to change use from residential to HMO and the case will be considered against the Supplementary Planning Document which restricts the number of HMOs in an area to 10%.

This case is characteristic of a number of recent applications in our area which have come about as landlords retrospectively apply for permission to change use from family housing to Houses in Multiple Occupation. If the landlord can provide evidence that the property has been in use as a HMO for 10 years a certificate of lawfulness will be granted. The current work by BCC to update their records of HMOs in Bristol is identifying a very large number of properties which are being used as HMOs, in our area particularly by students but in eg Avonmouth by workers on Severnside. Planning and licensing departments are attempting to work together though the legal regimes are not interdependent and do not rely on both permissions and licences being granted.

As always, under planning law, development (which includes change of use) can be carried out without permission at the owner's risk and permission applied for retrospectively. With the current shortage of planning officers in Bristol, the impact of Covid on council working, the amount of speculative work undertaken before seeking permission, and the backlog of planning applications, the situation locally is badly clogged up. Meanwhile, the University of Bristol continues to expand its numbers.

Consultation on short term lets. Open 12 April 2023 – 7 June 2023

The government is proposing changes to the Town and Country Planning Act to introduce a new use class for short term lets in England. This will address concerns about the lack of longer term rented property in areas where there is a significant housing shortage eg tourist areas. Some landlords let properties as short term rents eg Airbnb which can have an impact on neighbours from noise, anti-social or other nuisance behaviour caused by either the tenants or by the issue of churn of people eg arrivals and departures. The government has introduced requirements to set numbers of days properties must be available to qualify for business rates and for income tax regimes. By making this a new Use Class the change of use to a short term let would require a planning application. It could also include cases where eg student HMOs are let out during vacation time as a short time let.

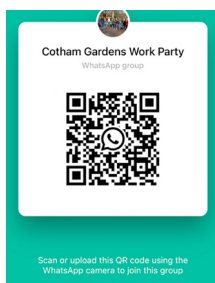
Alison Bromilow and Simon Birch

Parks

Cotham Gardens

Friends of Cotham Gardens continues to thrive. We have a regular turnout of 12 or more volunteers on the first Saturday of each month. We met on Bank Holiday Monday in May as part of the Big Help Out initiative countrywide marking the Coronation.

We clean, plant and weed flowerbeds, remove graffiti, repair and maintain play areas. A big thank you to all volunteers including passers-by who simply join in! This work is essential as the BCC has limited funding and resources to maintain our parks and community spaces. We supplement our work with RCAS small project donations to supplement, repair and replace infrastructure such as play equipment and provide tools to volunteers.



We would love to link up with other people motivated to keep public green spaces clean and Green. Please contact us at info@rcas.org.uk or to join our WhatsApp group scan here:

We have asked the council to put in the flowerbed opposite the Cotham Gardens primary school again this year. It was much appreciated last year and bloomed all through the summer. Four new trees have been planted over the spring at the top of the park, one sponsored by RCAS to replace the Elm tree which, despite being from Dutch Elm resistant stock, died. It is a Snake Bark Maple, an Acer Capillipes. Two new rowan trees have kindly been sponsored by the family of Roger Mortimer and planted near the curved oak bench in the tarmac area near the coffee concession, Roam Wild Coffee. Roam Wild is now open again in the park on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays between 8.30 and 4.30.

On the other section of Lovers' Walk/ Redland Grove greenspace, we are delighted to see that the Purple Beech (a replacement for the previous two which failed) has survived the stressful weather last year, and the lime tree which was planted to extend the second row of the avenue has been crown lifted and appears v healthy. Thanks to Ellie who did some work planting some wildflower seeds around the trees here. We will add to this planting opposite the gates of Redland Court to support the other wildflowers, which have self-set in the grass, providing visual amenity and improving the wildlife environment.

RCAS is also in contact with Network Rail about the state of the pedestrian bridge near Redland Station and are in touch with the new Friends of Redland Station group who are tackling tagging and have taken on the maintenance of the flower containers on the platform.

Chris Shelley and Alison Bromilow



Above: The young lime tree at the end of Lovers' Walk



Top right: The copper beech that is thriving on the corner of Redland Road

Bottom right: The two rowan trees sponsored by Roger Mortimer's family



Free online membership for under 40s

We want to increase our membership and are offering under 40 residents in the RCAS area the opportunity to join us as online members for free. If you are lucky enough to qualify, please get in touch with Kathryn at membership@rcas.org.uk who can give you the password to access the newsletter.

Do you know any family or friends who might be interested in this offer? Please get them to email Kathryn at membership@rcas.org.uk

Redland Green

What a spring on Redland Green! So much rain and mud. The Community group volunteers have cleared mud from paths, made channels for water drainage and yet there are still places where more radical attention is needed. Hopefully a meeting with Council officers next week will bring some longer term resolution to these problems.



The excess of rain is not all bad news as it had made the ground very soft and volunteers removed three wheelbarrow loads of bramble roots from the newly created orchard on the old wildflower meadow site last Sunday without too much difficulty. Grass seed has been spread on the ground so hopefully it will soon look green and grassy between the trees which all had blossom on them. Fruit cages will soon be placed round the trees to protect them from deer and other animals while they gain strength. More trees have also been planted round the green according to the tree planting plan agreed with Bristol City Council.

As yet no news on the planning application for the Cossins Road garages development. Thank you to all those who responded to it. RGCG put in a response which concentrated on the developments impact in relation to the trees in it, near to it and on the slopes of Redland Green.



CORONATION PICNIC - Monday 8th May
centred round Redland Church Hall from
3-5.30pm

A huge thank you to volunteers from Redland Church for providing teas, scones, jam and cream to over 300 members of the local community. 500 flyers were hand delivered to homes surrounding the Green.

Of course it rained on the day, but in between the showers bunting and balloons were put up without the volunteers getting soaked. During the event it was a different story - as the rain got heavier the mood got jollier as local bands - Dr Jazz, The Velvetones and the Ukrainian Choir kept spirits uplifted.

There was also a chance for the Redland Green Allotment Association to sell fresh rhubarb and bolster funds for battery strimmers on site. A real community effort - thank you everyone.

Lois Goddard



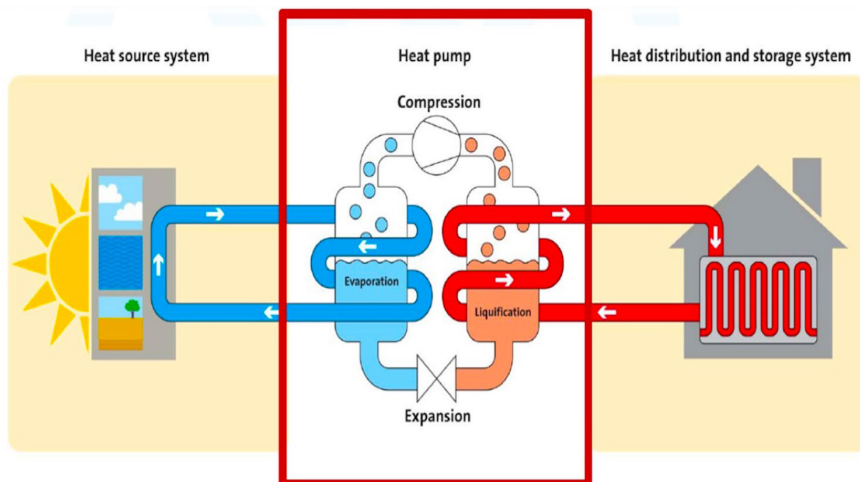
Chandos Neighbourhood Coronation Street Party

A great crowd attended and it was a lovely convivial event. There were even two hours when it didn't rain! RCAS arranged the insurance to cover the event.



Spring Meeting

The benefits and key considerations for installing low carbon heating and renewables



The speaker, Joe Pitt who is the Retrofit Coordinator at the Centre for Sustainable Energy in Bristol, spoke about the opportunities for installing low-carbon heating options including the newer air and ground-source heat-pumps and solar and photovoltaic panels, which we are used to seeing on roofs in the area already.

Air-source and ground-source heat-pumps work a bit like a refrigerator but in reverse. The heat pump takes in heat from the air or ground outside and transfers the warmth to a refrigerant which turns into a gas which is compressed to make it hotter. This heat is then transferred to water which is circulated to a central heating system. The gas condenses back into liquid and the cycle begins again. The CoP, Co-efficient of Performance, gives the efficiency of a heat pump which needs to be in the region of 3-5 meaning that you should be getting 3-5 times more kWh out of the system than the level of electricity put into it.

Air-source and ground-source heat pumps are not going to be a straight swap for the gas fired boilers which most of us currently use to heat our houses. The temperature that they operate at is lower than the gas-fired boilers and this has an impact on the configuration of radiators in a house. Additional and/or larger radiators or a change to deeper triple panel, instead of the more normal double panel radiators, will probably be needed to achieve the same comfort levels. Warm water underfloor heating which operates at a lower temperature, and which uses the whole floor as a radiator, is more compatible with the lower temperatures that heat pumps achieve, but changing from a wall hung radiator system to underfloor heating is going to be a major construction job.

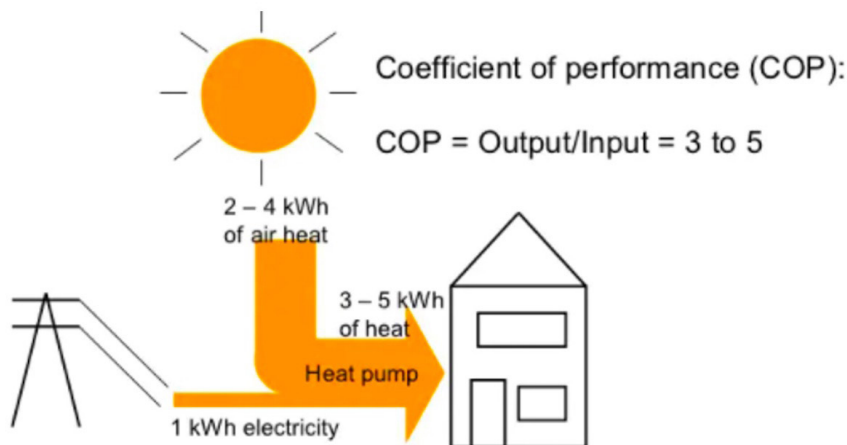
Air and ground-source heat-pumps require a large hot water cylinder to store the heated water. Many of our homes now use gas combination boilers, which heat on demand and do not require a cylinder, so a new storage space is going to be needed.

Air and ground source heat pump systems are not as responsive as gas fired boiler systems and they respond slowly to temperature changes. They work best when they are left on all day rather than turning them on or off for morning and evening heating. Currently, the cost of operating them will not give noticeable savings over up to date gas boilers, though will certainly be cheaper than heating through night storage heaters or LPG (liquified petroleum gas) heaters.

Ground-source heat-pumps need a large area of ground to lay the fluid-filled pipes across the site, or vertical bore holes. Air-source heat-pumps are going to be more likely for retrofitting of houses in densely developed urban areas like ours.

Joe also looked at PV (photo voltaic) arrays or solar heating panels which are usually located on roofs either as panels on top of existing tiles or set on sloping stands on flat roofs. These have been on the market for some years now. PV is most commonly installed (96%) mainly because of the previous levels of government grant support and buy-back arrangements for power generation.

It's all about efficiency



Solar panels are less commonly installed but in the right location can be very efficient (my solar panel on a south facing roof generates all the water heating we need during the summer months ie April to October and reduces the need for water heating by the boiler even during grey days in the winter– AB)

Both of these can be used alongside air-source heat-pumps as supplementary heating to improve the overall efficiency of the new technologies.

The main points that the audience took away from the meeting were:

Exciting as it is, the technology is still new and current government support under the Boiler Upgrade Scheme for changing from gas boilers to air source heat pumps is still insufficient to make the change an economic choice for the majority of cases. There is talk of evening-up the costs of electricity and gas, which will improve the ratio in favour of electric and sustainable heating systems, basically by making gas more expensive!

Air-source heat-pumps are large and quite noisy so consideration of location is going to be very important.

Anyone considering installing new technologies into their house should FIRST TACKLE ANY CURRENT INSULATION ISSUES. We were reminded of the work of The Cold Homes Energy Efficiency Survey Experts (C.H.E.E.S.E.) Project, which is a Bristol-based not-for-profit CIC that aims to reduce domestic energy losses; there was a presentation from C.H.E.E.S.E at our AGM in November 2019. Householders can commission C.H.E.E.S.E. to do a thermal imaging survey of their properties to identify where heat is being lost. Measures, such as increasing the amount of insulation in the roof space, adding insulation to external walls or stopping draughts through gaps in floorboards or around windows and doors, are going to help with reducing the heat load on the house for both your current and future heating systems.

When a new heating installation is being designed, it will be sized to take account of the levels of insulation and heat loss issues, so it is important to carry out any remedial works before installing the new equipment to avoid oversizing. An overlarge heat pump will keep turning off and on again to maintain the target temperature, which will make it inefficient and lead to excess wear and tear.

Find out more here <https://cheeseproject.co.uk/> www.cse.org.uk

Gold Star Awards 2023

Gold Star Awards 2023 Nominations Please!

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.

Unusually we haven't received any nominations yet so your ideas will be very welcome.

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.

To remind you the type of schemes which reach the quality of a Gold Star we gave these four awards in 2022:

42A Archfield Road – the imaginative use of a former garage site to accommodate a two storey house, carefully positioned to avoid any damage to the immediately adjacent mature tree.

18 Clyde Park - surprisingly large wedge-shaped site located in between traditional Victorian villas. Ingenious space planning to provide a single storey two-bedroom house with open space to both front and rear.

Redland Court - very high quality comprehensive development of the former Redland Girls School to provide over 40 residential units, a mixture of newbuild together with the conversion of the historic buildings

Clock House, Meridian Road - development of former garage to provide two elements – a traditional terrace house mirroring the adjacent terrace, and a single storey workshop, both with off street car parking.

Please get in touch – simon.birch7@gmail.com

Tony Wilkes

We are sad to report the death of Tony who was one of the founding members of RCAS. A tribute to Tony's work for RCAS will appear in the next newsletter.

Tree Matters

Applications for work on trees in our area has been steady lately with no applications raising concern for the tree health or the visual impact on our street scenery.

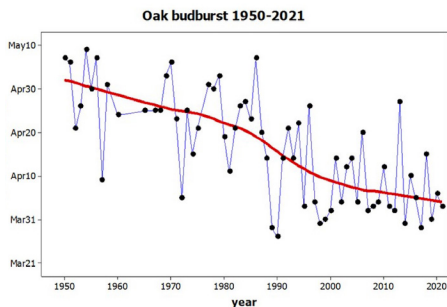
At this time of year it's great to see our trees burst into leaf, and also some come out into blossom. The Hawthorn is also called the 'May tree', because it comes into flower in May, visit the Granny Downs to see the spectacular white and pink trees at this time of year. Our streets are turning green with new leaves are fresh and bright, see picture of Westfield Park on the right. A remarkable feat of nature that trees of the same type manage to burst into leaf at much the same time across a wide area. There is an 'ology' for observing the time of year when plant events occur, and that is 'phenology'. The 'pheno' comes from the Greek word 'phaino' which means 'to appear' or 'to come into view'.

Temperature is the main determinant of the date of the first budburst. One citizen scientist studied their local Oak tree over the period 1950 to 2021 for the first bud burst, graph shown below. This shows there is a huge variation from year to year of nearly a month, but over the 71-year period there is an overall trend to budburst being many weeks earlier.

Does this matter for the tree? The tree may grow quicker and may sequester more carbon due to the longer period in leaf. It may become a sick tree as there is a much shorter dormant period, time will tell.

What else? Nature is of course very interdependent, some trees are pollinated by insects, some birds depend on insects for food, or on the fruits of trees. As the date of budburst changes, the efficiency of these natural interactive processes will change, and these are being closely monitored by phenologists. The behaviours of all the natural elements of our environment interdependence can now be computer modelled to gain a better understanding of the variations with temperature.

Dave Jones



Oak bud burst source – Jean Combes, Royal Meteorological Society, <https://www.rmets.org/metmatters/wildlife-and-weather-changing-climate>



Westfield Park trees coming into leaf together



Hawthorn on Granny Downs
(both photos Dave Jones)

Small Grants

It is fortunate that, this year, the continuing rain has allowed the extension of the tree planting season and local residents have recently helped to fund and plant 2 new fruit trees on the Elm Lane triangle which were sourced by Bristol Tree Forum. This space is much appreciated by the community who have been involved with the maintenance of the greenspace. RCAS has also offered funding for more plants to make the space more attractive for wildlife. Thanks to all involved.



Student Liaison

Civic University Agreement

Many universities have in recent years reconsidered their relationship with their place. To reflect this, they increasingly make ‘civic’ a key part of their institutional strategy.

The four principles

The Civic University Commission's final report identified four principles that should underpin any Civic University Agreement. These were also set out in the statement signed by the leaders of the universities which have pledged to develop Civic University Agreements.

Place

As a place-based institution we are committed to attaching a high-priority to the economic, social, environmental, and cultural life of our local communities

Public

Our civic role will be informed by an evidence-based analysis of the needs of our place, developed collaboratively with local partners and informed by the voice of our local community

Partnerships

We will collaborate with other universities and anchor institutions and form partnerships to overcome the challenges facing our local communities

Measurement and Impact

With our partners, we will be clear about what we do and how we measure it, so we can say with confidence what we have achieved – and how we might do better in the future

University of Bristol (UoB) is currently drafting its own CUA. See above an extract from the CUA. The 4 principles cover the key areas of importance for long term residents in the city.

Local groups submissions to the Civic University Agreement (lead by Andrew Waller of the ‘Noise Pages’)

The local groups, working as partners of the university, acknowledge that while the universities bring substantial economic, social and other benefits to the city, universities must take account of the fact that the size of the student population also creates a variety of pressures on some of our communities. These pressure include:

The noise nuisance from night-time activity and problems such as anti-social behaviour, alcohol and drug use, poor management of household waste, increased car-parking. The impacts of these tend to be greatest where there is a large proportion of students living alongside families and other long-term residents.

The conversion of family homes into student HMOs has created an imbalance that risks changing the character of the area and undermining the viability of local shops and commercial services.

At city level, the demand for student accommodation also contributes to housing shortages, rising rents and a relative weakening of the city council’s finances.

(Student houses are exempt from paying council tax and purpose-built student housing pay no business rates.)

Some of the issues described above can be remedied locally while others are the result of national legislation or policy that can only be addressed at government level.

Goal 1. The Partners will work closely together to mitigate city-level impacts such as those affecting the housing market and the city's finances—including, where appropriate, jointly lobbying for changes in national policy that would alleviate these pressures.

Goal 2. The Partners will identify areas of the city where the impacts of student populations on host communities are greatest and explore ways to mitigate those impacts through targeted joint actions, mutual support and innovative use of pooled resources.

Goal 3. The University Partners will seek to 'manage down' inappropriate student behaviour using a results-orientated approach that targets measurable declines in specified timeframes. This is likely to require a mix of enforcement and education, with growing emphasis on the latter. These efforts will seek to ensure that every student understands their place in the community and how to respect neighbours, creating a "Bristol Standard" that other universities and cities will want to emulate.

Goal 4. The University Partners will: maintain a regular dialogue with long-term residents and community groups in areas that host large student populations; and ensure university community-liaison teams have the capacity to respond in a timely and effective manner to complaints of inappropriate student behaviour; They will continue to participate in a forum such as the current Bristol Student Community Partnership that brings together the universities, city council, community groups and others (police, landlords & property agents, etc).

Goal 5. The Partners will seek cooperation with landlords and property managers, including their active support for messaging to students about positive behaviour, while also encouraging managers to ensure accommodation meets the standards students have a right to expect.

Goal 6. The Partners will support projects aimed at improving the integration of students in their communities, including through student volunteering, outreach by local community groups, and initiatives to connect students with the city's pools of talent.

Bristol University relaunches cash boost for community relations.

The cash boost comes in the form of a Community Fund set up by the UoB which will offer grants of up to £250 for residents' projects to promote community harmony between students and their neighbours.

"Experience has shown that this sort of grass roots activity is the most successful way to promote community harmony. I am delighted that the University has been able to re-introduce this fund and I look forward to working with residents and students on many interesting projects." - UoB Community Liaison Officer (CLO) - Stephen Smith (SS).

Criteria

These events could be focussing on the environment, community events, or simply improving communications.

This could be anything from a residents' associations wanting to organise a guest speaker night, a collaborative street party, a gardening project, a street waste clearing project or even gathering a group of people to clear-up a derelict piece of land.

Ongoing projects can also apply, and we are especially keen to see collaboration between students and residents.

It will fund up to eight community events per year.

One community group at a time may apply for up to £250.

The grant can be used for the purpose intended up to the end of that year. The application process closes end of June 2023.

University taking on some responsibility.

UoB VC has said at a recent residents association (RA) meeting that she has vested personal authority in CLO SS to nip student community issues in the bud.

The VC views the CLO as quick intervention to student emerging issues for noise/ waste and antisocial behaviour, and that the reporting of misbehaviour and student sanctions need to be publicised to educate the students on the consequences of their actions.

The VC also believed there was trust in resident reporting, by the number of reports made to the CLO office, and that issues were being resolved.

Discussions with students have revealed that some are attracted to, but also "afraid" of, the party culture. They don't really want to do big parties but are also desperate

to fit in. This is where the education of students whilst in University Hall in the first year needs to make clear what is acceptable behaviour when living in the community.

SS has said that he is notifying BCC when he comes across HMOs without a current licence. This highlights the problem that not all landlords are applying for the compulsory HMO licenses! It is important that we know which houses are HMOs.

The VC has said that she is aware of the density of accommodation when students move from hall into the community. She agrees that students are often not aware of their new surroundings, but everyone needs to do their bit to help the moving in process for students and to help them grow into mature adults.

Bristol Hub charity

Bristol Hub is a charity that bridges the gap between university students and their communities. They run a variety of projects, as well as support one off volunteering events throughout the city, covering a range of causes.

They say - If you are looking for support with a one-off event, such as litter picking, community garden support or a community event, please reach out to us at info@bristolhub.org to have a chat about what support you need from our volunteers! Please reach out to them

Press coverage

Bristol Live ran an article relating to the rising student numbers and the effect on Bristol's existing communities. The article refers to the UoB development at Temple Meads.

There is a growing concern from local residents on the impact of UoBs purpose-built student accommodation and also the effect of students moving into HMOs in the area, putting more pressure on general housing availability.

HMO Lobby article

The Government is consulting on introducing a new Use Class for short-term lets in England. This would refer to holiday lets and other short term letting.

The proposal is to add a new Use Class C5 for short term lets, which would mean that planning permission would become necessary for change of use from C3 Dwellinghouse to C5 Short term let (and presumably also from any other Use Class).

What is also of interest is that the government is also consulting on a registration scheme for short term lets, similar to HMO license.

The consultation also proposes that change of use from one to the other would be permitted development. Therefore, any local planning authority wishing to take advantage of the new legislation would have to adopt an Article 4 Direction, removing permitted development rights. This reflects the situation we already have with HMOs in certain areas of Bristol.

Central government action

The government has announced measures as part of its antisocial behaviour (ASB) action plan to reform the private rented sector - including an outline of tougher enforcement on tenants causing ASB.

The measures include making the notice period two weeks for ASB evictions and ensuring that private tenancy agreements include clauses specifically banning ASB.

Rob Harris



Bees

It was in the late eighties that I was at a school fundraising event and found myself talking to a friend. For some reason we started discussing bees and I said “I would like to have bees one day” to which he replied “Good – I will bring over a hive with bees to your house next Tuesday” and that is how it all started. For the next ten years we had these wonderful animals in our garden producing delicious honey often in large quantities. Harvesting the honey became a special family event.

Sadly, one winter, the bees did not survive and this coincided with a job move to London so I packed up the hive and put it in storage in our basement.

About six years ago, I was delighted when my son Ben (who lives in Redland) announced that he would like to keep bees and make use of my hive. He joined the Bristol Bee Keepers Association (www.bristolbeekeepers.org.uk) – they have an apiary near Cribbs Causeway. They run a range of short introductory courses but also offer formal training courses. They also provide third party liability insurance – an absolute must for bee keepers. Ben now very kindly gives me a few pots his honey each year.



Left: Ben dressed up to take the hive to pieces with a smoker on top of the hive. This is to check on the health of the hive and to see whether the are Queen cells being nurtured in the hive.

Right: Lots of bees on a section from the brood chamber.



Left: Reassembling the hive with an additional section on top which the queen bee cannot access and the worker bees use for storing honey.

Although I do not now have my own bees, I have become a supporter of a charity, based in Monmouth, that promotes beekeeping in the third world. Honey production and other by-products from a beehive offers a valuable source of income. Below is some information about the activities of the charity.

Peter Dunscombe



Possibly the most natural honey you can buy from Donkorkrom, Ghana

Bees for Development is a specialist beekeeping charity based in Monmouth, Wales with a global reach. We have a unique purpose to 'make life better with bees'. All our work is aimed at unlocking the benefits of beekeeping to help people out of poverty, while supporting biodiversity. Currently we work with international partner organisations in Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Uganda and Zimbabwe – although since our inception in 1993 we have worked in over 40 countries. Our focus is on reaching the poorest people and helping them improve their lives through beekeeping. We ensure that people who face inequality, especially women and girls, people with disabilities and minority groups are included.

We do not hand out equipment – as this is not a sustainable option. Instead, we give knowledge. Through our partner organisations, we teach locally-appropriate beekeeping methods and show people how to make their own beehives using natural materials. Beekeeping is a uniquely sustainable and low-cost solution and means people in the poorest communities can earn reliable, income for life which creates economic independence and results in rural communities thriving. Bees' value to the ecosystem is beyond measure and it is beekeeping's ability to provide a worthwhile income, without incurring huge start-up costs, which makes it so useful. Bees depend on good natural habitat which means beekeepers have an incentive to protect and restore the earth's precious biodiversity.



We help people like Hawa Ibrahim. She and her family live in Kojorbator on the edge of Digya National Park in Ghana. Making ends meet for Hawa is a constant struggle. One of her major ambitions is securing a good education for her children. Yet with no secondary schools in the rural area, this means she has to find a lot of money to send her kids to school in town.

Hawa joined our beekeeping training programme in 2019 and learned how to make simple beehives, how to manage bees and how to harvest and sell honey and beeswax. Hawa already understood the value of honey and within a short time she began harvesting and selling honey. Now she has 37 bee colonies and last year she harvested 175 kg of honey, filling five jerry cans. Beekeeping is changing Hawa's life! She now has the cash she needs to cover her children's school expenses. Not only that – but she also earned an award as the Best New Beekeeper in Kwahu Afram Plains.

Looking ahead we are now working with beekeepers to help them in the fight against deforestation. In 2023 we are providing skills, training and resources for them to protect forest, prevent fires and plant trees. Bees and trees really go together!

Bees for Development, 1 Agincourt Street, Monmouth, NP25 5RT.
www.beesfordevelopment.org

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.

Front Cover: Bee on apple blossom at Redland Green in the childrens' play area
Back Cover: Blossom at Redland Green

