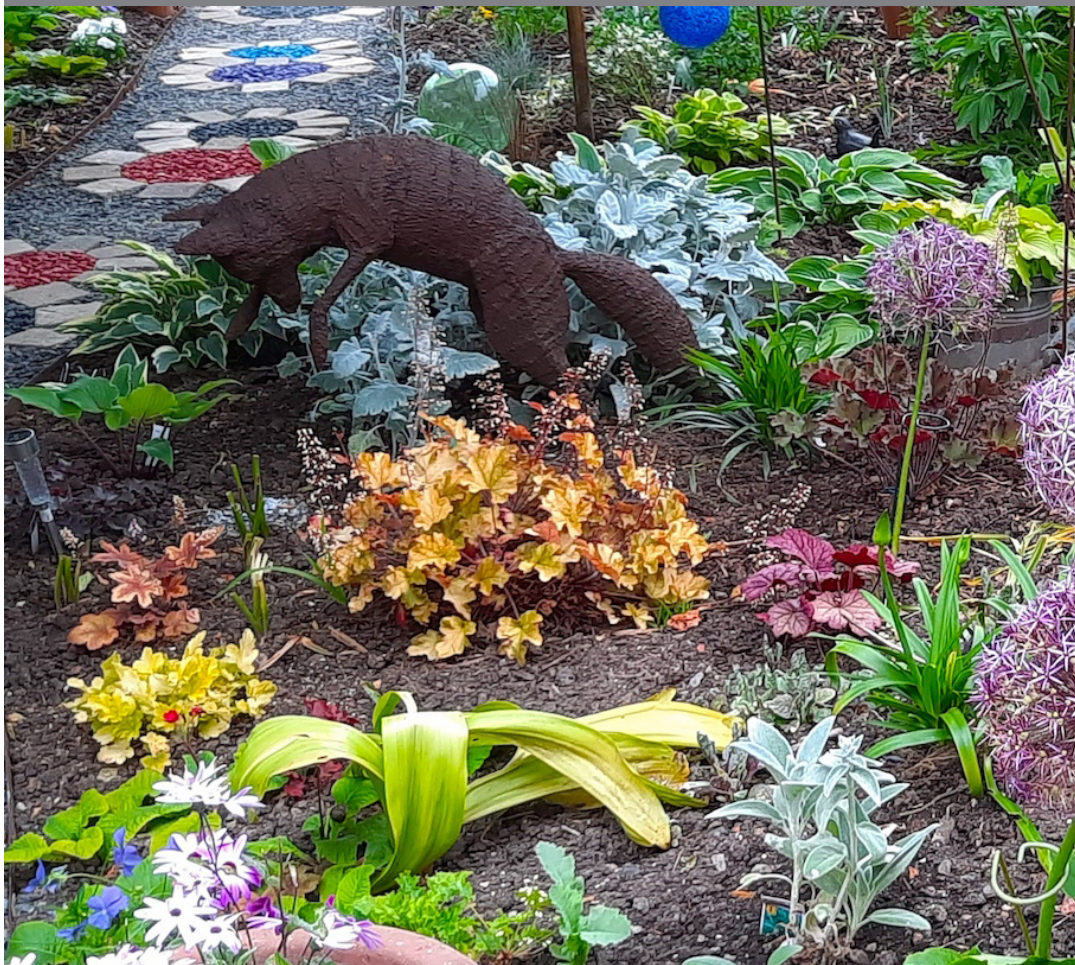


Redland & Cotham Amenities Society



Annual Report
Open Gardens
Student Liaison
Planning, Parks
Trees



Number 200 - September 2023

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to our 200th newsletter!

The society had its inaugural AGM in 1973 so that makes it our 50th anniversary too. Quite a milestone for us and for our loyal members.

One of the things we are doing, to celebrate our half-century, is opening up our archive of newsletters to non-members for a month, to allow them to see what they would gain from signing up to RCAS. We are also offering free membership to under-40-year-olds to encourage more of our younger members of the community to become part of our society. We would be very grateful to all our members if they could help us by sharing this information among any of their friends who are not already members. It is always a surprise that people haven't heard of RCAS, though we do find that people discover us when they are looking for help with planning issues. The more representative the society is, the more weight will be given to our responses.

We would like to extend this to local people through WhatsApp as well, so any of you who are part of street WhatsApp groups, please share this information and direct people to our website.

This is our Annual Report edition, where we include a round up of some of the projects and initiatives we have been involved in this year. As always, I would like to thank the committee members for their hard work over the year and the planning group, newsletter and the Open Gardens teams.

Our newsletter distribution team are an essential part of the RCAS organisation; thank you each and every one of you for ensuring that people receive their newsletters and Open Gardens programmes each year; also for collecting the subscriptions from those people who have not yet signed up to pay by Standing Order. We also thank the volunteers in the groups who we work in partnership with such as Chandos Neighbourhood Association (CNA), the Noise Pages, the BCR community partnership, BCR Streetscene Group (SSG) and Bristol Parks Forum. Our particular thanks go to Kelly-Ann Hocking for supporting the new Open Gardens team this year and to Andrew Waller for ensuring that the voice of our communities have been heard at the Bristol Student Community Partnership meetings.

The monthly workparties in Cotham Gardens and Redland Grove greenspace have continued to grow in support and the members of that group and Redland Green Community Group, the members of the SSG and individuals in streets in our area who tackle tagging and litter have helped keep our area looking well cared for. The impact of economic pressures on council services has encouraged more people to help out by 'doing it for themselves' - which releases resources for the council to

use for other services such as social services. RCAS is pleased to be offering support to other local organisations to carry out projects which support wildlife and mental health, which will be of benefit to our members and our area.

We would love to welcome more people to work with RCAS to bring forward similar projects either as committee members or as coordinators of independent teams so, if you have any ideas, do get in touch.

Next year, the administration of Bristol will revert to the council, when the current Mayor's term comes to an end. We hope that will enable communities to get more involved in local decisions and we look forward to pushing for this and supporting our local councillors in their representation of the Redland, Cotham and Clifton Down wards in 2024.

Many of the traffic schemes which were first discussed when Neighbourhood Partnerships were still in existence are only now coming into being. This year, the Cotham Hill pedestrianisation scheme is finally being built out in its permanent design; shop extensions which blocked the pavement have been removed and the narrow pavement widened. The closure of Redland Road to traffic travelling towards Gloucester Road, which was approved by the BCR Neighbourhood Partnership, seems to have dropped off the BCC traffic works schedule, but we understand that, after many years of waiting, the pedestrian crossing for Cranbrook Road is more likely now! The closure of Chandos Road to traffic, announced by the Cabinet member at the end of last year, is not supported by local residents and businesses, who have been working together for some years to design a scheme that is locally acceptable and addresses issues of rat-running, storage of waste and recycling for flats above shops and improves the street scene. BCC now proposes to carry out more consultation to bring forward a 'timed closure scheme'. RCAS supports the community's aspirations for traffic calming and streetscene improvements and will work with CNA to bring forward an acceptable scheme.

We hope to see you and your guests at the Annual General Meeting at the beginning of November. As usual, this will be a social occasion as well as a (brief) business meeting, so we look forward to having a chat with you there. We have no Gold Star awards this year, but we have invited Simon Birch, who is also the chair of Bristol Civic Society, to talk about some of the important schemes that BCS have been involved with in Bristol, including the proposals for rescuing Ashton Court. Do come along to learn more, and let's hope for better weather on the night than for our last meeting, when the heavens opened!

Alison Bromilow

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

A big 'thank you' to our distributors who have been busy over the summer delivering the May newsletter and collecting subscriptions. They support RCAS through all weather and eventualities, and without their ongoing commitment you would not be able to read this newsletter.

Most of our members now pay by Standing Order which has reduced the challenges that our distributors have faced in collecting subscriptions in person – it can be difficult to find members at home! However, around 20% of members continue to pay by cash or cheque, and if any of these would like to set up a Standing Order mandate in advance of the 2024 subscriptions please contact Kathryn Armitstead, membership secretary, at membership@rcas.org.uk

Overall, our membership stands at 584 households, down from around 600 households last year. We would like to extend our membership to be more representative of our area, for example increasing the number of families with young children or people who may be renting. If any of your neighbours might be interested in joining, please do draw their attention to our website and get in touch with Kathryn (membership@rcas.org.uk) if you'd like to share an old newsletter.

Kathryn Armitstead

WHY IS REDLAND SO GREEN? A WALK AND TALK

On the morning of Sunday October the 22nd, between 10 am and 12, I will be leading a short tree walk starting in Cotham gardens to look at and discuss our magnificent park, garden and street trees.

I hope to share some of my tree knowledge and history in an interactive way, as many people know lots that can be shared. We have a limit numbers so please email me if you are able to come, on rcastreewalk@trenance.net and I will confirm the space.

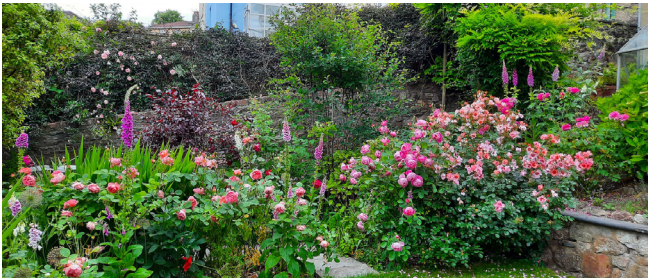
Dave Jones

51st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The RCAS AGM will take place
on Wednesday 1st November 2023
at
The Redland Club Community Centre
Burlington Road
Bristol
BS6 6TN

Doors Open at 6.45pm
Meeting starts at 7pm
Refreshments provided

All members welcome
There will be a talk on Planning Issues and the approach RCAS
takes



ANNUAL PLANNING REPORT

RCAS has continued to monitor planning applications this year, but there have been significantly fewer than previous years. As ever, the bulk of applications are for house extensions and tree works, but there are still a number of applications to create off-street parking places on gardens in our area.

A number of applications, which we commented on at the beginning of the year, have still not been decided and many developments have been carried out without permission, at the owner's risk, which is legal under planning law. The capacity of the planning department has been much reduced due to the council recruitment freeze and salaries not keeping up with private practice levels. There is a significant backlog of cases in both planning and planning enforcement and developers are being advised not to submit pre-application enquiries as there is insufficient capacity to deal with these. Many applications are going to appeal on grounds of non-determination, ie the BCC planners have not made a decision within the statutory period, so developers can go direct to the Planning Inspectorate for a decision. A new head of planning services has now been appointed; the previous one retired at the end of July 2022.

Redland and Cotham- a planning overview

Parking pressures impact many people in our area and we are very aware that it is difficult to accommodate the increasing number of cars in the parts of our area which have narrow streets of houses with narrow street frontages. The majority of these houses are occupied by families that own 2 or more cars, or are subdivided into flats with larger numbers of occupants than a family house would normally accommodate, so the situation is understandable.

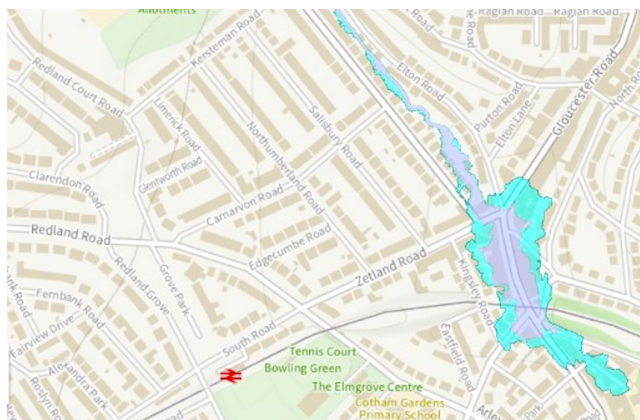
When the residents' parking scheme was introduced in our area, there was an immediate benefit for local residents, as it was evident that a large amount of commuter parking had been displaced to areas without the benefit of a RPS. However, the increase in numbers of multiple vehicle-owning occupants and the way in which cars have got larger and larger has put more and more pressure on on-street parking.

The pressure on on-street parking has led to a continuing high demand for the creation of off-street parking where there is a possibility of changing the use of front gardens. This is changing the look of our area and has been identified as a 'threat' to the conservation area character.

The council are now taking into account the loss of on-street parking in their responses to applications because of concerns about the viability of the RPS, given the effective privatisation of the space in front of properties, and they are now imposing a significant charge on householders who wish to make a pavement crossover to access their off street parking bay, where it brings about a reduction in available on-street parking bays.

The **loss of green front gardens** to hardstanding is also having knock-on effects on other aspects of our area. Redland and Cotham are very verdant areas with large numbers of trees in both streets and in front gardens. As a society we know that our members value this and it is an essential part of the character of the area. In the Conservation Area Character Appraisal, which RCAS helped BCC to draft in 2011, we included a section on Trees which emphasised the value of those trees and green spaces including privately owned front gardens in our densely developed part of Bristol. So the society planning group does submit objections to any proposals which involve loss of trees and green infrastructure partly because of the aesthetic value and partly because of the other values of green spaces.

The area covered by our private gardens is an essential part of the cities overall greenspace which is essential to support the wildlife in our city. Trees, shrubs, flowers and grass all provide habitat for wildlife, and also help to mitigate the effect of surface water flooding in the lower lying areas of our area. We refer to the surface water flooding maps when assessing proposals to put in hard surfaces to guide our comments. A large part of east Redland and Cotham slopes down to Zetland and Gloucester Road where there have been regular serious flooding events, causing much damage to the shops near the Cheltenham Road railway bridge. The Cran Brook which runs along the back of the houses on Cranbrook Road rises near the top of the ridge by Coldharbour Road/ Cairns Road and is culverted in some places but open to the air for the stretch between Cranbrook Road and Elton Road and also drains down to this low point. The green infrastructure also counteracts the 'heat island effect' and helps to keep our area cool in the summer and we value our mature privately-owned and street trees and our public parks and green spaces, which are a haven in our increasingly hot summers.



Surface Flooding Water Map - The Cran Brook

The **materials** chosen as paving also affect the impact of the change from green front garden to parking bay. Permeable materials can help with reducing rainwater run-off but permeable paving is not very effective when laid on a slope, especially if the slope is towards the road. Gravel does allow rainwater to drain into the ground but can cause issues when it is tracked onto the pavement where it can cause a trip hazard and can be a problem for mobility scooters. Plastic grass is not a suitable habitat for wildlife and restricts access to the soil for burrowing insects and worms. It gets hotter than grass so contributes to global warming, breaks down in 10 – 20 year and is not recyclable so is not a sustainable choice. French drains across the opening at back of pavement do help stop run-off but only if they are large enough and are taken to sumps below ground. Stopping the rain draining into the ground also cuts off the supply of water for the street trees which can cause them to extend their roots towards the houses, potentially causing damage.

In our area of high density and dramatic **local topography**, particular care is taken to protect our important views across, into and out of our area and to try to identify distant views of development sites to assess their impact on the existing views and character of the area.

We also look at the impact of creating **roof extensions** and terraces on the surrounding neighbourhood from both a visual and privacy aspect. Overlarge dormer windows, roof terraces and railings can make a significant visual impact on an area and require careful consideration. They can also be an unacceptable source of noise for the neighbourhood as sounds are not dispersed by surrounding buildings and greenery in the way that noise at ground level is.

With the pressure to create more residential units to accommodate the growing population, it is not surprising that more and more of our houses are being converted into flats. This raises concerns about lack of **outdoor amenity space** for the occupants. During Covid, it was evident that people in small living spaces, without an outdoor space to go to, were affected far more by the lockdown than those of us who are fortunate enough to have gardens. It is concerning to see the number of new units that are being created without such outdoor spaces across the city.

Our area too has the added pressure of the number of houses which have been converted into **Houses in Multiple Occupation** for the ever-increasing student population, reducing the number of family properties in the area. Bristol has brought in the Supplementary Planning Document, which has set a limit of 10% of the dwelling stock as the limit for HMOs, with additional guidance on stopping 'sandwiching' of non-HMOs. The SPD also sets standards for HMOs, which should be further enhanced by the proposed Licensing requirements for privately rented

properties currently being consulted on. Across Bristol, HMOs account for 24% of privately rented properties, with 26.2% of all housing stock in Bristol being privately rented. They are in the poorest condition of all housing stock and suffer from issues related to poor management, which the new licensing process is framed to address. The consultation is live until 7th November 2023.

Bristol City Council is currently reviewing and updating the **Local Plan** which will set the planning policy for development in Bristol. The consultation will start in November 2023 and will bring in new policies to address net zero, embodied carbon and climate change aspects which currently are not covered by the Local Plan. RCAS has been responding to engagement opportunities during the drafting process and will be making a response when the consultation is live.

RCAS area planning cases 2023

Rear of 3 Clyde Park. Development of garage site as a 2-storey residential unit. The appeal against refusal of this case has been dismissed. The inspector found that the proposed development adversely impacted on the character of the area, would threaten the important street tree and would cause harm through overlooking of neighbouring properties. The inspector decided that the permitted development at the rear of 6 Clyde Park was not a precedent because the southern end of Clyde Lane has a mews character which is different from the open, verdant character of the northern end with views into the rear gardens.

Home office/gym rear of 4 Elliston Road. Retrospective application for larger building than permitted scheme. Approved with condition that it cannot be used for commercial space.

Land at Home Gardens, Blackboy Hill. 60 residential units + office accommodation. Appeal against refusal dismissed.

No/ awaiting Decision:

71 Arley Hill. Appeal against enforcement notice still in progress. Dec 2022.

30 Waverley Road. Reversion of property to single dwelling. Dec 2022.

7 Clyde Park. Roof extension with dormer window. RCAS objected. Dec 2022.

Rear of 52 Hampton Park. Replacement of garage with garage + dwelling unit at first floor level. Dec 2022 RCAS objected.

Garages SW of Cossins Road. 6 dwellings. RCAS commented. Feb 2022.

25 Brighton Road. Application for retention of change of use from residential to HMO. Feb 2023.

38 Chandos Road. Demolition of 6 garages and construction of 2-storey residential unit. March 2023.

49 Salisbury Road. Creation of off-street parking space. April 2023. RCAS objected.

1 Eastfield Road. Appeal against refusal of first application in progress. New application May 2022. RCAS supports both applications.

65 Lower Redland Road. Appeal against refusal of certificate of existing use as large HMO in progress.

63 Salisbury Road. Retrospective application for creation of off-street parking space. April 2023. RCAS objected.

Greendale Road (rear of 116 Coldharbour Road). 2-bedroom, 4-person dwelling. June 2023. RCAS objected.

Muller House and the Lodge. Cotham Park. 5 no new houses, 4 on potting shed site and 1 next to the existing Lodge. Conversion of Muller House into 6 no apartments. July 2023. We welcome the retention of the important greenspace and trees and consider the location of the new houses is appropriate. We have some concerns about the materials proposed. We hope that, if this application is approved, there will not be subsequent attempts to increase the height of the new development. New family housing is particularly welcome in our area.

Alison Bromilow and Simon Birch

Tony Wilks 1931-2023

As we reported in our previous newsletter, we are very sad to record the death of Tony Wilks, who did so much for the society, from its very early days. He was a member of the first committee, set up 50 years ago in 1973, who comprised representatives from the Redland Green area, who were concerned about proposed development on the tennis courts, and expanded to include Tony and another interested resident from the Cotham area. After 6 years, in line with the constitution, he retired from the committee but was invited back onto it again in 1991 and served until 2013 when he finally stepped down for good. It was not the end of his hard work on the street scene of our area, and he continued to carry out work for many years after his retirement from the committee.



He was a part of the first ever RCAS May Fair and helped to organise the first Open Gardens event too. He became the RCAS transport and streets representative and campaigned vigorously to get our area better served by the First Bus network; he would be horrified by the current lack of local bus services in our area and would be bombarding First Bus with well-argued letters in his immaculate copperplate handwriting.

Tony was pivotal in bringing about the Victorian light renewal programme in many of our streets. Some of these schemes were paid for by RCAS such as Lovers' Walk, and many others such as Woodfield Road, Napier Road and Lower Redland Road, were part funded by local residents with RCAS offering 50% towards the overall costs. Tony worked with the various street members and negotiated with the relevant Bristol City Council officers to bring the project forward and carried out an incredible amount of work preparing the cast iron lighting poles by chipping down the old spalling paintwork and undercoating them, before they were painted by the council workers, who usually just painted over the old paint. He was also very active in refurbishing our historic post boxes, many of which were disfigured by graffiti and were peeling and in poor condition. He carried out a great deal of research into the boxes and used to supply details of boxes he had refurbished which were printed in the RCAS newsletters. In recognition of his excellent work in this regard, RCAS awarded him his very own Gold Star award in recognition of the way he had 'preserved and enhanced' our area.

When he stepped down, he continued as a newsletter distributor and also was regularly to be seen up a ladder, preparing lampposts for painting, or painting out graffiti tags on post boxes. Many passers-by got to know him from his activities, and it is a great loss to our community that he is no longer out and about putting in all his efforts at improving our area.

We send our very best wishes to his daughter and her family who have supplied us with this photograph of Anthony Wilks born in Madrid in 1931 and died in Bristol in 2023.

ANNUAL TREE REPORT

ASH DIE BACK

Ash Die Back (ADB), is caused by a fungus called *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, and this has been in our area for 5 or 6 years now. ADB can lead to the death of Ash trees which have been infected from the spores that are blowing in the wind from other infected trees.

This year the effects on our Ash trees do not seem any worse and there may even be an improvement in some trees. This isn't just in Redland and Cotham, in the countryside the expected deterioration hasn't happened either, and in some cases trees appear to have improved. The improvement could be due to the dry weather last year, however many will die but it maybe not as bad as some early fears.

HORSE CHESTNUT

There was a lot of tree planting on the Granny Downs (just inside the RCAS area) this spring, this wasn't just to replace the Horse Chestnut trees (conker trees) that are now fairly frequently being removed, but also in gaps in the avenues that have been overlooked for too long.

The mature Horse Chestnuts in North Bristol have long been affected by an insect called a 'leaf miner' and which literally 'mines' the green chlorophyll from inside the leaf, causing the brown early autumn effect. A few years ago the Horse Chestnuts, (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), which were introduced to the UK in the 16th century from Turkey, began to be superseded with 'Indian Horse Chestnut' (*Aesculus indica*) which isn't susceptible to the same leaf miner problem. These trees come into leaf later and flower a whole month later than traditional Horse Chestnut.

This spring a lot of the trees planted were slightly different again, although very similar leaf to the Horse Chestnut we know, and appear to be a species called 'yellow buck eye', (*Aesculus flava*) and as the name suggests comes from North America. When the trees grow to be big enough to flower, we should see a yellow flower rather than the usual mostly white flower.

TREES FOR STREETS

Trees for streets is a charity working with Bristol City Council to find sponsors for tree planting in the City. There have been relatively few sponsorship opportunities available in our area this year. The trees for streets website allows you to nominate on a map, a potential site for planting, which if the assessment is successful will allow you sponsor a tree for planting.

SHADE

There have been a few times this summer where many people have found the shade from trees very welcome, whether walking many of our lovely streets or in parks or our own gardens. If anyone wants ideas for trees to plant in their gardens there are still some RCAS guidance booklets on suitable trees to plant available. Just contact info@rcas.org.uk

PLANNING

As most will be aware, Cotham and Redland is a conservation area and the town and country planning act 1990 in brief states that planning consent is required before work is done on any tree that has a stem diameter of greater than 75cm (3 inches) at a height of 1.5m from ground level.

The RCAS planning group review all applications and consider the impact on our area and whether the works are likely to affect the health of the tree. The council tree officer does the same assessment and takes into account the local input and knowledge that RCAS can offer. Its very valuable to have public comments to planning applications and these are reported in the council tree officer's determinations.

Most applications in the last year have been for reasonable and necessary work to maintain trees in proportion to their garden and it has only been necessary to put in comments from RCAS on a few occasions, which were all heeded.

Dave Jones

Could you be the new treasurer for RCAS?

Carew Reynell is retiring from his role as treasurer and we are looking for someone to step into his capable shoes.

The tasks include managing and making payments from the bank accounts, managing Standing Order mandates and payments, filing and submitting Gift Aid declarations and claims, preparing Final Accounts for RCAS AGM and Annual Reports for the Charity Commission. We also complete these tasks for Chandos Road Neighbourhood Association.

Carew will be happy to talk through the role and responsibilities with you.

Please contact us at info@rcas.org.uk

PARKS REPORT

COTHAM GARDENS

We are delighted to share with you the Annual Report for Cotham Gardens, celebrating another year of positive community engagement, volunteer dedication, and exciting developments in our beloved park.

1. Community Volunteer Efforts:

Throughout the past year, our community has continued to shine with the incredible dedication of our local volunteers. Every first Saturday of the month, come rain or shine, our community members gather to transform Cotham Gardens into a cleaner, more welcoming space. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to both the regular volunteers and the ad-hoc helpers, including dog walkers, passers-by, parents / siblings of Cotham Park Primary students and local residents who have all contributed to making our park a better place for everyone.

2. Focus on the Children's Playground and Park Space:

The heart of our efforts remains centred around the children's playground and the immediate park area. Our tasks have been diverse and essential. From clearing leaves in drainage channels and paths to maintaining the play sandpit, managing flower beds, and trimming the lime trees, our volunteers have worked tirelessly to ensure that these spaces are clean, safe, and enjoyable for all. However, it is with concern that we note the deteriorating state of the paths. We are exploring the possibility of working with the Bristol City Council to address this issue, although we understand the budget constraints they face.

3. Exciting Projects on the Horizon:

We are excited to announce some new projects that have been discussed within our community:

- **Inclusive Swing:** We are exploring the installation of a swing suitable for disabled children to promote inclusivity in our park. We are considering setting up a funding scheme that RCAS would match public donations or BCC funds up to an agreed cap.
- **Victorian Lampposts on Lovers Walk and Redland Grove:** These need repainting, which is a project for the coming months, weather permitting.
- **Toilet Facilities:** The addition of toilet facilities is being considered to enhance the overall park experience for visitors. This is a difficult and expensive project, but options are being explored to locate and fund this.

•Roam Wild Coffee Proposal: Roam Wild Coffee, which has been serving our community for the past 18 months, is considering proposing the installation of a small café unit with covered space. This would provide more diverse food and beverage options and offer shelter from the elements during the winter months. The RCAS committee supports this proposal in principle and will share further details via the RCAS website.

4. Looking Ahead:

As we reflect on the past year, we are grateful for the dedication of our community members and their commitment to Cotham Gardens. We look forward to continuing our efforts to maintain and improve this cherished space in the coming year.

We also encourage all community members to stay engaged, share their ideas, and join us in our monthly gatherings to make a difference in Cotham Gardens.

Thank you for being a part of our vibrant community. Together, we can continue to make Cotham Gardens a place of beauty, inclusivity, and enjoyment for all.

To join our WhatsApp group to know what is going on with monthly clean up sessions, please use the following link or WhatsApp QR code:
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/KgyBedVXO2IIfS2bCX64KO>

Chris Shelley



REDLAND GREEN

For those of you who stayed in the UK over the summer school holidays it was pretty wet but as usually happens as soon as school starts the weather picks up and we have had a very pleasant September so far.

The big old ash tree in the Dell developed a huge crack in one of its side branches (see photo) and was in danger of falling onto the embankment where children and dogs often frequent. Thankfully Bristol City Council quickly responded and the branch was removed last week (see photo). If the branch had fallen it could have been a catastrophe. People should look up before venturing under the large trees in the Green to check that all is well and if they see anything untoward please report it to the Council on their website under streets or parks 'Report a problem'.

The Council's grass cutting team have kindly included cutting the grass round the new orchard trees and we are pleased to report that this is helping keep the brambles and thistles under control.

A huge thank you to the Bristol 77th Scouts troop who valiantly helped dig out bramble roots one evening and sand the graffiti off the teen seating bench. Volunteers from the Community Group have been working their way round the lampposts in the Green and giving them a lick of black paint provided by the Council. Several lampposts on Redland Green Road have had their lanterns replaced and the columns refurbished by Highways. The new lights are LED's and should be cheaper to run.

Will of Common Lemon, with his wee coffee van has been providing very welcome coffee and cakes a few days a week by the play area. Do support him.

So, what hails for the winter months, apple pressing at Redland Green Farm on Sunday 1st and 15th October 1.30-4.30pm, bulb planting and a litter pick on dates to be arranged.

Lois Goddard
Chair of Redland Green Community Group



Top left: Bristol 77th Scout troop clearing brambles

Top right: Will of Common Lemon serving coffee from his van

Middle left: the branch that needed immediate work

Middle right: Prompt work from BCC

Bottom right: Painting the lamp posts



OPEN GARDENS

This year the Open Gardens was in Cotham, the most southerly of the 4 areas, which was last visited in 2018. The weather was kind to us with a cool and mostly sunny day with occasional hints of rain which kept the humidity pleasant. Like much of Redland and Cotham, there is a mix of large and small gardens, flat and sloping areas, some with access via back lanes or through cellars. In all cases, pleasant and tranquil garden spaces have been created which seem to take you into a different world.

Redland and Cotham gardeners have created some amazing gardens, and some of the pictures on these pages show how creative they can be in terms of using every available space. There were nearly 20 gardens to visit this year, which provided many ideas to stimulate gardening in small, large and formal or natural styles.

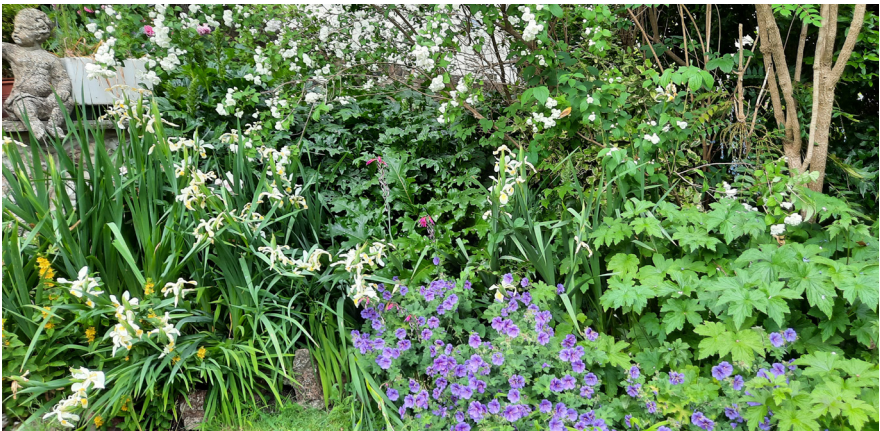
Open Gardens is a great way of sharing tips, ranging from ideas for supporting tall plants in windy weather to how to control pests or diseases. Seeing what other people have created in their garden spaces and being able to discuss how it was achieved is inspiring. A few of the garden hosts provided cakes and refreshments on the day and raised over £300 for their chosen charities.

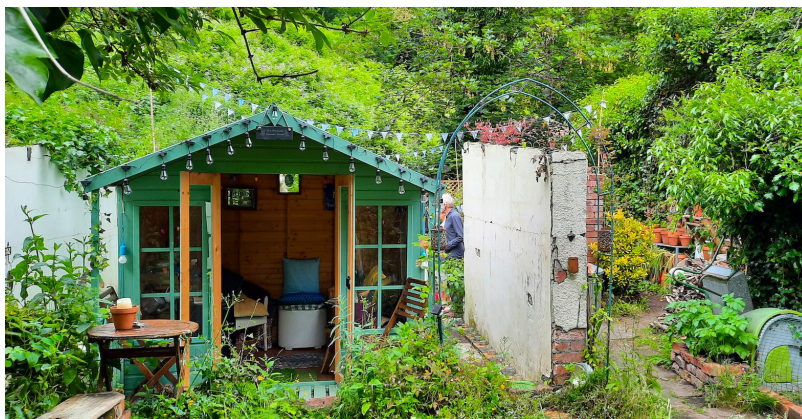
As per RCAS open garden scheme standard practise, the gardeners who opened their gardens this year had a preview day on the Saturday. Meg Thomas, one of the organising team this year, hosted the meeting point for the start of the walk, and with help from Anne, provided fantastic refreshments to set us on our way.

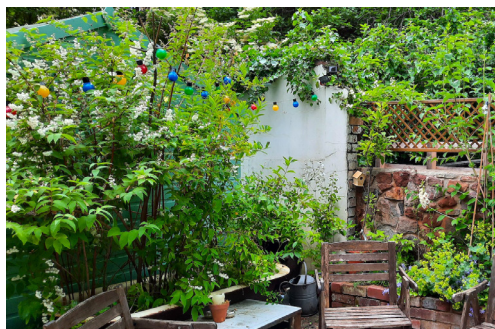
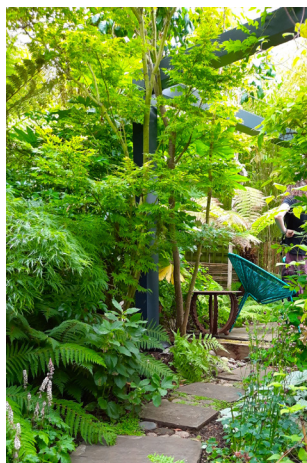
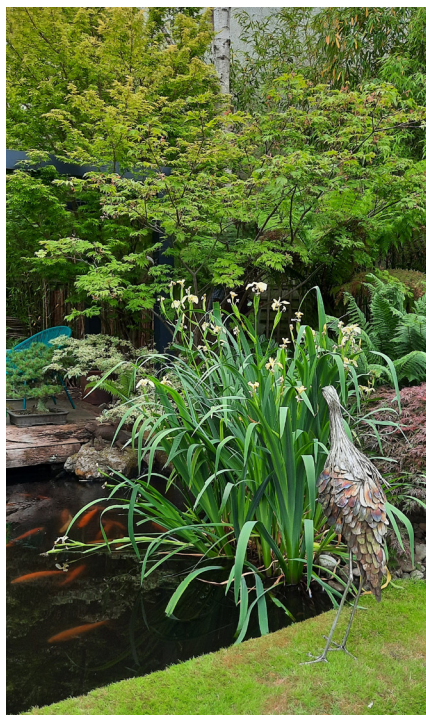
Next Year Redland East is the area for Open Gardens (the whole Redland and Cotham area is too big for a single event). If you think you would like to be part of the 2024 Open Gardens day, you can let us know now, whilst gardens are still in all our minds, just email rcasopengardens@gmail.com. When we start organising in March next year, gardens are for a while at the back of our minds. If you like your garden then it's worthy of inclusion in the Open Gardens, as the aim is to share our enthusiasm for our gardens and not aspire to Chelsea flower show standard.

The open garden organising team was in transition during 2023 and was organised this year by Meg, Anne, Kelly Ann and Dave with support and advice from Abi and Judith. Next year Kelly Ann really is stepping down after many years of very thorough open garden organisation. A big thanks to Kelly-Ann, Judith and Abi who organised Open Gardens so well for many years and gave us such a good handover for organising future Open Gardens. If there is anyone who loves gardens and is good at organising, we would be pleased to have you on the team to help organise the 2024 Open Gardens.

Meg, Anne and Dave







STUDENT LIAISON REPORT

THIS NEW ACADEMIC YEAR

Here we are at the start of a new academic year and we welcome new and returning students and wish them well as they move into our community.

RCAS recommends a 'meet and greet' approach with new student neighbours to help them to feel at home in the area. This has been found to pay great dividends and encourages investment in the community by short term residents.

If you do have an issue with a student house in your area (eg noise or rubbish bins) again try a face to face conversation so that the students, who are possibly new to living out of the parental home, can understand the effects of their behaviour. If this does not work and further problems occur then register the problem with the various bodies including Bristol City Council (BCC), University of Bristol (UoB) and the relevant Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) landlord and/or letting agent. Contact details for these agencies can be found on the RCAS website.

The Bristol Student Community Partnership (BSCP) meetings have provided us with much hope for the future of the student community relationship. UoB has appointed a new student community liaison officer, Steve Smith, who also is providing an active approach to resolving student community issues.

STUDENT HOUSING

A lot of effort over many years has gone into ensuring that the Universities both inform students living in the community of their responsibilities to their neighbours and the local community, and take action when students offend.

What has changed?

- The Universities have set up student community liaison departments.
- Residents are now better informed and more likely to take determined action over problems. BCC online 'Pinpoint' map now allows access to Landlord and Letting Agent contact details.
- Registration / Licensing of HMOs, set up by the Housing Act, administered by BCC Housing Department. This has almost certainly improved the quality of accommodation and eliminated some very poor landlords.
- Creation of a separate Planning Class for 'small' HMOs allows for better management of the licensed rental housing stock.

What has not changed?

- The attitudes of many student landlords and their agents, who distance themselves from the problems created by their tenants.
- Currently, all owners of Licensed HMOs sign up to a Code of Practice issued by the Private Housing section of BCC Housing Department.
- The licence holder should provide the immediately neighbouring properties with a contact telephone number, address or e-mail address to report any problems.
- Persistent breaches of the Code could result in the landlord being found to be 'not a fit and proper person' to hold an HMO licence.

So, if you do have issues with a student house do ensure that the Landlord provides contact details to immediate neighbours (if you aren't one) and log and report all nuisance incidents to the landlord, BCC Housing Department and UoB community liaison department. See 'noisepages' website for more information. This would ensure that certainly where a property is a repeat offender the Housing Department has good cause to take action.

MEETING OF LOCAL RESIDENT ASSOCIATIONS

There was a gathering of local Residents Associations in October 22. This was the first meeting of local residents' associations since the former Community Liaison Group (CLG) meetings were terminated by UoB over 2 years ago.

The CLG was superseded by the Bristol Student Community Partnership (BSCP). These BSCP meetings seem to have improved the response from UoB and BCC in terms of them taking more action. UoB now routinely contacts landlords and agents when dealing with complaints about students. BCC Private Housing Service (PHS), have joined the BSCP. They issue the HMO licences to landlords. They are now offering guidance as to how Landlords might meet their HMO licence obligations to manage tenant behaviour better. This is a positive action which hopefully will encourage landlords to get more involved.

The Vice Chancellor of UoB (VC) Evelyn Welch has said at a recent meeting that she has vested personal authority in Community Liaison Officer (CLO) Steve Smith 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 needs to be publicised to educate the students on the consequences of their actions. The figures just released from UoB show a reduction in complaints made that were attributable to UoB students from 12 in 2022 to 5 in 2023.

OPERATION BEECH

The University of Bristol works with Avon & Somerset Police to put on extra police patrols in some student areas. This is in response to concerns from local residents about the increase in late-night parties.

The designated area includes all roads within the border of Chandos Road, Hampton Road, Redland Grove and Trelawney Road, with the addition of: Ashgrove Road, Manor Park, Highbury Villas, Eaton Crescent, Arlington Villas.

TEXT 07773 816 248 between 8pm and 2am on Operation Beech dates if there is a house party or street noise disturbance you believe to be caused by UoB students. Include street name and house number and the extra Police patrols will respond on a priority basis.

Operation Beech normally runs between 8pm and 2am every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday however the dates that Operation Beech will be active this coming academic year is not posted on UoB's website. Please check the UoB website for updates.

UoB VC EVELYN WELCH and UoB EXPANSION

UoB is expanding, both with the Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus and increases in student numbers at the Clifton Campus. 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 and really hear from people who live in Bristol what they would like the university to do for them...". This expansion of student numbers inevitably leads to increased pressures on areas where students live, both in HMOs, student halls and purpose- built student accommodation. There isn't enough accommodation in Bristol now so further expansion of numbers will lead to more pressures.

VC said that they try very hard to match the number of students to beds available in the city, but UoB have to grow the student base because costs go up and fees are not keeping pace. Evan Davis (BBC Radio 4) said that surely just relying on growth cannot solve this problem. VC said that £2 billion is generated by UoB in the west of England economy. Sadly, managing the balance of student housing and the needs of other residents is not an easy task as the Mayor Marvin Rees has pointed out.

However, the following is locally achievable.

- To mitigate city-level impacts such as those affecting the housing market and the city's finances.
- To 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.
- UoB to manage inappropriate student behaviour. 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.
- UoB to 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.
- To 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.
- To 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.

CONSULTATION ON INCREASING THE NUMBER OF LICENSED PROPERTIES IN BRISTOL

"BCC is seeking your views on proposals to introduce two new property licensing schemes for privately rented housing".

Scheme 1. A citywide additional licensing scheme where most Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) not already subject to mandatory licensing will need a licence.

Scheme 2. A selective licensing scheme in Bishopston and Ashley Down, Cotham and Easton wards where most other types of privately rented accommodation in these areas will need a licence.

To access the online consultation..

<https://www.ask.bristol.gov.uk/property-licensing-2023>.

Closes 17th November

THE NOISE PAGES

Andrew Waller of the 'Noisepages' is standing down after many years from his role of coordinator of the BSCP and generally from his involvement in the student arena.

I'm sure you will be aware that he has been very active and worked very hard with local groups trying to improve the student/community relationship. His efforts have certainly made a big difference in activating our local agencies, BCC and UoB, to be more proactive when dealing with student issues.

Rob Harris



Colourful front garden from Open Gardens event

ESC Kingsdown Sport Centre are offering RCAS members and residents the corporate rate of £17.99 per month for classes and gym.

If you would like to take up this offer please email Pearl Maynard esckingsdown@elitesportsuk.com quoting code 5432

Downs Advisory Panel

{DAP}

For over 160 years the Downs has been managed by the Downs committee but now a new group has been created to assist the Downs committee in the management of this special place.

The new group will be known as the Downs Advisory Panel and boast specialists and volunteers from a wide range of disciplines who will assist the committee in the good governance of the Downs in the future.

If you or your organisation have or receive any concerns about the Downs or a Downs related question you can contact DAP by email or phone. We can deal directly with your query or forward information onto the Downs committee.

Downs Advisory Panel {DAP} email: downspanel@gmail.com

Tel: 0117 9634755

FRIENDS and NEIGHBOURS may want to join RCAS

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

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

Those wishing to join should contact the Membership Secretary

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

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

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

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

RCAS are opening our newsletter archive to the public until November 1st (the date of RCAS AGM - details inside).

Please show your neighbours the QR code below or use it yourself to access the archive



RCAS are also offering FREE online membership for residents in our area who are lucky to be under 40. Please contact membership@rcas.org.uk to sign up.