ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 5th November 2025

Apologies have been received from Cllr Martin Fodor, Nell Dand and Anthony Richards, Julie and George Hart, Mon Lougee, Ant Draper, Graham Rogers, Chris Shelley, Paul Jagroop, Janet Dixon, Di and Geoff Swain

There were 48 people present at the meeting 46 of whom were RCAS members.

Welcome to the 53rd Redland & Cotham Amenities Society AGM.

This address combined with the individual reports in our September newsletter is the RCAS Annual Report for 2025

This year, the committee has continued to

- monitor planning applications, including applications for works to trees,
- to work with others to make improvements to our parks and greenspaces, and our streets
- to work with others to address issues such as the impact of the large student HMO population in part of our area and of antisocial behaviour
- support a number of small grant projects including sponsoring some tree planting in our streets and parks and supporting the parks groups.

One of the highlights of the RCAS year is the Open Gardens Day.
We had a wonderful selection of gardens to visit this year again thanks to the efforts of the new Open Gardens team, Dave, Serena and Meg. We really appreciate the hard work that goes into making this event such a highlight of the RCAS calendar and thank the volunteers who make this happen. The team would welcome an additional member so if you are interested do volunteer.
As always, my thanks go to the core group of committee members who have worked hard as ever this year to administer the society, Peter, Melanie and Kathryn. And to Melanie for her work on the quarterly newsletter which is much enjoyed by members.
Thanks too to the other people who work on behalf of the members in our task groups but don't attend committee meetings, that includes the planning group, the Open Gardens team and the parks workparty members.
A particular thanks to the newsletter distribution leader Kate Reading, and to all the members who have helped with the newsletter deliveries and with collecting the subscriptions from those members who do not pay by standing order. The society relies on their help to get the newsletter and the Open Gardens programme out to members and is always very grateful to the team for their invaluable input.
We also are very grateful to the local residents who are part of the Street Scene group and who litter pick and clean up tagging in our area and across into St Andrews and up the

Gloucester Road. Their quick response to clean off or paint over graffiti is the most effective way of tackling this blight; they are on the lookout for new members- do let me know if you are interested in taking on a part of your neighbourhood.
People who spot fly-tipping and tagging and report it are also making a big contribution to our community and it is easy to take this action even if you are not able to deal with it yourself- do let the council and Bristol Waste know about any issues so they can send people out to clear it up- they are very responsive. The report forms are on the Bristol City Council website under Report a Street Issue.
We would also like to thank the members of the guerilla painting party who prepared and repainted the pedestrian bridge at Redland Station. RCAS had been pressing for remedial work for this listed structure and were initially told that it would be done in 2019/20. This would include replacing the concrete deck and mending the ironwork. As we know, this did not happen and the project date that we have now been given is 2034. Network Rail were not able to give permission for volunteers to do the work needed on the exterior of the bridge because of health and safety considerations but the painting party were able to deal with the spalling paint and rust on the pavement side during the school holidays and the bridge looks much better able to resist further degradation.
The Friends of Cotham Gardens have met each month to look after the park and to plant and tend the flower bed at the south end of the park. Recently, they have also repainted two of the lampposts on Lovers' Walk and plan to do the rest. Local residents have also cut back the epicormic growth on the Redland Grove greenspace and another group have maintained the greenspace at the top of Elm Lane.

Now to the main item on the agenda for tonight.
Last year, the committee brought a proposal to the members that RCAS should suspend the membership fee as the society was finding it difficult to identify projects to support and was uncomfortable with continuing to accrue funds which it could not spend. After a debate last year, it was agreed that the fee would be suspended for 2 years for new members to enable existing members to encourage their neighbours to join the society without the embarrassment of asking for payment. A number of other suggestions were made for widening the membership including a marketing exercise but unfortunately the current committee of 5 was not able to take this on without additional help. Following requests in newsletters for some input to help with this work, which did not result in any volunteers, the committee was unable to take on the task.

We are therefore bringing a set of proposals to the AGM for discussion which will reduce the administrative burden on the core committee of maintaining a membership list and pursuing annual subscriptions, and, we hope, making committee work less off-putting for people who might like to take the society's work forwards.
The proposals as circulated and printed in the newsletter are

- RCAS will move away from being a membership fee organisation. However, members will still be invited to donate an annual sum to support RCAS projects; so the current £10 fee will be treated as a donation in future.

- RCAS will continue to be a charitable body that can fundraise for specific projects as they arise.
- RCAS will move towards being a mailing list/ social media follower membership organisation without a fee.
- RCAS will move towards using more electronic communications including an online only newsletter.

We propose that the meeting discuss these proposals and then a vote will be taken on whether they should be adopted.

Please can we have a show of hands for approval of the proposals- And those against.
Votes were 44 for and 1 against
Postal comments received were 5 for and 1 against.

Business-

1. **Approval of Minutes.** The 2024 Minutes were circulated in the email alert on Monday 3rd November and previously in the December 2024 Newsletter.
   Approved by a show of hands
2. **Annual Report and Accounts**

   The Treasurer, Peter Dunscombe, introduced the accounts and answered questions

- Adoption of the accounts
  proposed by Richard Jarrett
  seconded by Russell Boyes **Approved by a show of hands.**

3. **Election of officers and committee members**
   Each year we have to elect the secretary and treasurer to the society at the AGM.

- Secretary Melanie Gallop
  proposed by Judith Headley
  seconded by Russell Boyes **Approved by a show of hands.**
- Treasurer Peter Dunscombe
  proposed by Rosemary Russell
  seconded by Julie Hart **Approved by a show of hands.**

Other committee members stand for re-election this year as they were all elected in 2022 and serve for a 3-year term.
Kathryn Armitstead and Alison Bromilow stand for re-election to the committee.
Election approved by a show of hands.

Chris Shelley has decided to stand down as a committee member because of work pressures but will continue to lead the Friends of Cotham Gardens group which is supported by RCAS. We thank him for his input over the last 3 years and for his ongoing work with the group. The friends group is v well supported by the local community and

there are nearly 60 members of the group, many of whom actively support the monthly workparties and social gatherings in the park.

Andrew Waller has joined the RCAS team as a task group member to work with the other community groups in discussions with the Universities. We have been without a representative since Rob Harris stood down but have continued to be kept updated by **Fiona McVey and Derrick Collier**, both RCAS members also members of the Chandos Neighbourhood Association.
We thank **Fiona** for all her hard work in coordinating the group communications and to **Derrick** for his updates in the newsletters. He will be handing that over to **Andrew** who has been instrumental in raising the profile of the impact of student residents in our community because of the very high concentration of HMOs in our area, through his work on drawing attention to the impact of student anti social behaviour in The Noise Pages. It has long been of concern that RCAS has not had a seat at the table in the Bristol Student Community Partnership meetings (partly due to the fact that the number of representatives that the community were allowed was restricted to 2 despite the fact that there are 12 residents groups across Redland Cotham and Clifton represented) – we are very pleased that RCAS will be able to have more of a role in future discussions. Thanks to Andrew.

Any Other Business
Planting plan for Cotham Gardens. A consultation about the proposed tree planting in Cotham Gardens closes shortly. If you have comments to make about the proposed trees, do respond to the consultation. Some people have contacted us expressing their concern about tree planting within the fenced area because of the impact on play and leisure greenspace in a park which is already full of trees. A comment has also been made about the location of the trees which do not respect the line of the existing avenue- a tree has already been planted inside the line of limes and another is proposed.

Members were invited to make comments on the proposal at the meeting.