



**Bishopston, Cotham & Redland  
Community Partnership**

## **Minutes of the BCR Community Partnership Public Forum held on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 7.00 pm** (NB Zoom meeting due to the Covid lockdown restrictions)

The meeting was attended by 34 participants.

### **1 Welcome and Introduction**

1.1 The Community Partnership Chairman, Roger Gimson, welcomed everyone to the zoom meeting.

### **2 BCR Community Partnership Annual General Meeting**

2.1 Roger Gimson explained that the AGM planned for March 2020 had to be cancelled because of Covid restrictions which ruled out face to face meetings. This will be the first public forum meeting attempted online.

2.2 Because of Covid we have not held any public forum meetings in the last year but we have continued to hold Committee meetings to discuss Community Infrastructure Levy actions and other issues. We have also kept the website and Facebook site up to date and circulated regular newsletters giving information about Council consultations, etc.

2.3 The Community Partnership now has 21 local community group partners and 23 individual partners. A number of local community groups have wound up or suspended their activities this last year for various reasons.

2.4 There has been little expenditure in the past year – about £100 for public liability insurance and renewing our website fee. Our funds now stand at £1,293 – sufficient to meet the cost of holding public meetings in the next year without the need to ask for further money from councillors. The meeting was reminded that the grant money from councillors can be used by partner organisations for public meetings.

2.5 Mike Broussine and Kevin Molloy are standing down from the Committee and were thanked by Roger Gimson for their time and effort in supporting the Partnership.

2.6 The four remaining Committee members – Roger Gimson, Alison Bromilow, Peter Browne and Kevin Chidgey have agreed to stand for re- election and are automatically elected as the number of nominees is less than the number of Committee places (NB. The elections are valid as the AGM meeting is quorate).

### **3 Updates from Councillors**

3.1 Councillor Eleanor Combley (Bishopston and Ashley Down Ward) reported that :-

- There has been a great community response to Covid with many neighbour and street support groups being set up to help vulnerable people.

- The E- Scooter trial has been extended to Bishopston. There had been an issue about scooters blocking pavements but this had been resolved. Any problems concerning the scheme can be reported to the Council.
- The threatened felling of an oak on Ashley Down Road has generated a lot of feeling. Council officers are still considering possible actions.
- Covid cases in Bishopston are down – there are now just three recorded cases thanks to the testing and vaccination programmes.

3.1 Councillor Combley said that she would be standing down as a ward councillor in May. She thanked Roger and the Committee for their support over the past few years and wished them well for the future.

3.2 Councillor Anthony Negus (Cotham Ward) thanked Councillor Combley for her helpful and gracious support over the last few years before reporting the following :-

- The response of Cotham residents (including students) to Covid has been amazing with many streets setting up Whatsapp support groups.
- There continues to be a lack of enforcement action by the Planning Department against unauthorised houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). They are simply not being checked. The Council say that the issue is “under review” but this has been a stock response for some time.
- A recent trend has been a spate of proposals for infill schemes, many of which are unacceptable in terms of overlooking adjacent properties, etc.
- There are concerns about the impact of the proposed City Centre Clean Air Zone (CAZ) on traffic movements in Cotham. A predicted 5% reduction in traffic in Cotham suggested by Council traffic modelling is being treated with scepticism. There are fears that displacement caused by CAZ will increase traffic levels in Cotham and other inner residential areas.
- There are concerns about people flouting Covid restrictions and mixing in groups, particularly returning students arriving back earlier and having parties. It is important that penalties are applied by the police and the universities to deter this behaviour.

3.3 Councillor Martin Fodor (Redland Ward) also paid tribute to people in Redland for responding to Covid by setting up street Whatsapp groups to provide community support.

3.4 Redland Ward updates were as follows :-

- A proposed care home extension in Belvedere Road has caused much controversy with the planning application being robustly opposed by many local residents and supported by ward councillors. People going online to make representations at Committee has broadened participation but people not able to use on - line technology have lost out.
- As with Cotham there has been an increase in HMO applications, some in new areas.
- Work has still to start on the new rain garden near the playground on Redland Green.
- During lockdown there has been great pressure on open spaces which has demonstrated a need for measures to improve pedestrian circulation.
- Road safety and parking issues remain unresolved in many areas. The Council’s lack of support for new resident parking schemes has been frustrating. As soon as public meetings are possible an area wide traffic and parking meeting should be arranged to raise the profile of this issue.
- A number of fly-tipping problems have been sorted thanks to Street Scene.
- The “Liveable Neighbourhoods” initiatives is supported and being promoted by the Mayor.

- To help facilitate social distancing the Council were given Government money to spend on pavement widening and other initiatives in district centres. Regrettably no money was allocated to Gloucester Road or to any part of Redland.

#### **4 Updates from Community Groups**

##### Redland and Cotham Amenities Society – Alison Bromilow

- The Society held a virtual AGM in November 2021.
- Newsletters are still being circulated (four a year) with just one missed in 2020.
- Covid restrictions have prevented maintenance / improvement work on open spaces by groups but individuals have been active.
- It is hoped to involve local schools in wildlife initiatives.
- With regard to students the Society are trying to restore regular community wide meetings with the universities to discuss student issues.

##### Bishopston Society – Kevin Molloy

- The Society was set up in 2002, primarily to monitor and comment on planning applications but by the end of 2019 the Society had become unsustainable as volunteers stepped down.
- The Society has not been wound up and communication channels, including the website, are still in place. Activities have been suspended in the hope that new volunteers will come forward once we are out of lockdown. It is particularly important for someone to keep an eye on planning applications.

##### BCR Street Scene Group – Barney Dean

- Group work on activities are on hold because of lockdown but individual activities have continued.
- Street Scene issues ((eg. graffiti, fly-tipping, litter) can be reported online or by phone to the City Council.
- Expenditure on items such as paint and brushes is supported by grants (eg. CIL money was used to pay for anti graffiti coating and private / business donations).
- New volunteers are welcomed – contact Street Scene at [streetscene@bcrcp.org.uk](mailto:streetscene@bcrcp.org.uk)

##### Redland Green Community Group – Ally Ng

- The Group is well supported by local volunteers with its activities which include planting new hedges and litter picks: sponsorship has paid for new bird boxes.
- In 2020 the Group produced a Redland Green Tree Trail app which many have downloaded.
- Ally thanked local councillors Martin Fodor and Fi Hance for their support.

##### Family Food Action - Alison Bromilow

- Over 30 street groups in the BCR area have organised food collection and distribution networks to support less well off families in Bristol.
- Houses are currently used as collection hubs while a search continues for a larger hub.
- Contact details for setting up a new street group can be found on the BCP Partnership webpage- [www.bcrcp.org.uk/ffa](http://www.bcrcp.org.uk/ffa)
- While the groups have formed primarily in response to Covid there is likely to be a need to provide longer term support as the economic effects of the pandemic are felt over the coming years.

Redland Club – Michelle Tedder (reported by Roger Gimson) [www.redlandclub.co.uk](http://www.redlandclub.co.uk)

- The Redland Club building in Burlington Road is owned by the Council and managed by a community interest company. The building is the only community managed centre in Redland.
- The building is currently used for a number of community activities including dance classes. Renovations to the building are being carried out (eg. energy efficient improvements) and its greater use for community activities is being promoted.

Friends of Bishopston Library – Jenny Hoadley

- It has not been possible to run events at the library this last year because of Covid.
- The library is operating restricted opening hours, and a book order and collect service. Details are on the library's website.

Bishopston and St. Andrew's Traffic and Parking Group (BOSA) – Mike Broussine

- It has been a frustrating year with little being achieved as the Council are refusing to act on the results of an extensive residents parking survey which supported resident parking. The Mayor's lack of enthusiasm for new resident parking schemes has not been helpful.
- Parking issues are worsening – blocked pavements, dangerous parking on corners, etc. with the Council giving little priority to enforcing parking regulations.
- The May elections offer an opportunity to lobby candidates and push for parking solutions. BOSA will be monitoring responses with interest.

Friends of Ashley Down Green – Julia Jones (reported by Roger Gimson)

- As with other parks and open spaces there has been a lot of pressure on Ashley Down Green during lockdown. Open spaces will hopefully be given greater support in future.
- Communication with the Council's Parks Department has not been easy. Alison Bromilow said that the North Area Parks Manager had met up with both RCAS and Redland Green Community group members to discuss Cotham Gardens and Redland Green issues and projects and that FoADG could approach her (Mary O'Connell) to ask for a meeting.

Westbury Park Community Association – Kevin Chidgey

- Planning issues have been much to the fore over the last year including the controversial proposal to extend a care home in Belvedere Road. The proposal has been recently refused on appeal but is unlikely to go away any time soon.
- As in other areas many street groups are providing support to vulnerable people affected by lockdown. For its part the Community Association has been supporting local food outlets by circulating information to members on takeaway and delivery services.
- Some parts of Westbury Park are pushing for resident parking but as with BOSA the lack of support from the Mayor and City Council has proved frustrating.

Chandos Neighbourhood Association – Diana Swain

- There has been a good response from the local community on local initiatives including a weekly Family Food Action collection and the Winter Wonderland window displays which featured 70 decorated windows.
- Unsocial behaviour by students last Summer was a major problem in an area where students comprise 25% of the population. The police eventually took action and their presence will continue – the Operation Beech initiative is proving a success.
- Chandos Futures. A group of residents and traders are looking at how make Chandos Road a more liveable community – more people friendly, less traffic, temporary closure with tables on the street, etc. An online survey has been conducted of over 1,000 households.

## 5 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 5.1 CIL is a scheme whereby developers make a financial contribution to pay for improvements to the public realm in the local area (15% of monies) and the city as a whole. The money has to be spent on capital projects such as traffic schemes and open spaces – it cannot be used for revenue purposes (eg employing people).
- 5.2 Local money is allocated by area - Bishopston, Cotham and Redland wards are in Area 2 along with three other wards in north Bristol. The CIL allocation for Area 2 so far in 2021 is £35,813, a modest total reflecting the low level of major development in Area 2.
- 5.3 In recent years there have been a number of CIL awards in our area including improvements to Horfield Common children's play area (£13,925), Cranbrook Road pedestrian crossing (£40,000) and Horfield Common improvements (£36,500).
- 5.4 Initial applications (outline proposals) for CIL funding in 2021/22 have to be made by 5<sup>th</sup> April. Thereafter there are a number of stages involving community and councillor input leading to final decisions being made in December. The Community Partnership will provide an opportunity for people to give their views on outline proposals in June.
- 5.5 The modest amount of funding available over a relatively wide area means that only bids for small amounts of money might be entertained.

## 6 Open Forum

### Funding for Tree Planting

- 6.1 How can someone support the planting of a tree in their street? The Bristol Tree Forum ([www.bristoltreeforum.org](http://www.bristoltreeforum.org)) promotes the planting of park and street trees. The Forum liaises with Bristol City Council when there is money available for tree planting.

### Street Lighting

- 6.2 What can be done about inadequately lit streets? The Council's website can be used to question the adequacy of street lighting, report faults, light pollution, etc. Councillors can pursue specific issues.

### Zoom v Face to Face Meetings

- 6.3 Roger Gimson asked people what people thought about zoom meetings. There was agreement that they were okay to a point but no substitute for face to face meetings which allowed opportunities for networking. Hopefully it will not be long before we can return to normal meetings.

Roger thanked everyone for attending the meeting which ended at 8.30 pm.