



*Bishopston, Cotham & Redland
Community Partnership*

Minutes of the BCR Community Partnership Public Forum meeting held on Monday, 28th June 2021 at 7.30 pm (NB. Zoom meeting due to the Covid lockdown restrictions)

The meeting was attended by more than 30 participants including the new ward councillors elected in May 2021.

1 Welcome and Introduction

1.1 The Community Partnership Chairman, Roger Gimson, welcomed everyone to the zoom meeting. The meeting had been called now to introduce our newly elected ward councillors and to consider Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) projects before a decision deadline.

2 Our Newly Elected Councillors

2.1 Councillor Emma Edwards (Bishopston and Ashley Down) reported that the Holm Oak tree in Ashley Down Road has been saved and that the City Council have agreed to fund improvements to Downend Road flats and the playground. Priorities include maintaining the economic well – being of Gloucester Road, replacing trees and supporting local groups such as Ardagh Community Trust.

2.2 Councillor Lily Fitzgibbon (Bishopston and Ashley Down) reported that she is striving to build a better community relationship with Gloucestershire Cricket Club on issues such as match day parking and making more use of the Ground facilities for community activities, including youth activities. Parking is a key issue for many residents with resident parking being a possible answer: this issue is likely to intensify, particularly in roads close to Ashley Down Station which is due to be built in the next few years.

2.3 In response to a question about the care and maintenance of trees Councillor Edwards referred to the Bristol Tree Forum which recognises the need to budget for on-going costs involved in looking after trees.

2.4 Councillor Guy Poultney (Cotham) reported that the main issue of concern in Cotham is the sub - division of properties which inevitably led to parties, more noise, etc. Councillor Poultney also referred to the worrying increase in covid cases in Cotham and that he was working with the universities and other bodies to boost the vaccination rate through initiatives such as a drop in vaccination centre. Chandos Neighbourhood Association are among the local groups he is supporting.

2.5 Councillor Mohamed Makawi (Cotham) also spoke about covid and the importance of mass testing and increasing vaccination take up rates. On a more local issue he regretted the withdrawal of the number 9 bus service which had left Cotham poorly served by public transport.

2.6 Councillor Martin Fodor (Redland) welcomed the recent election which reminded people that they had local councillors to act and lobby on their behalf. Councillor Fodor reported that he had been involved in a number of planning issues including the care home extension proposal in Belvedere Road and the HIMO application for a house in Melbourne Road. Other issues on which he has been working included the mysterious water leak on Gloucester Road, complaints about the resurfacing of roads and the delay in replacing road markings, and how to deal with the muddy area next to the playground on Redland Green. Councillor Fodor reported that his appointment as the Chair of the Council's Communities Scrutiny Commission would give him a greater opportunity to raise concerns raised by people – tree issues had already been agreed as a subject for enquiry.

3 Updates from Partner Community Groups

BCR Street Scene Group – Barney Dean

3.1 Covid restrictions have curtailed group activities but individuals have continued to be active tackling street litter, fly tipping, graffiti and overgrowth, etc. The Big Tidy initiative resulted in 23 sites being tidied in Ashley Down, Bishopston and Cotham and graffiti has been removed from a wall near the Royal Mail Depot on Station Road, Montpelier.

3.2 A new mailing list using Mail Chimp will help to improve communication with volunteers and a survey is to be conducted to identify priorities and raise awareness of how people can support the Group.

3.3 Being nominated as a cause by the Co-op will help finances.

3.4 A new “non standard” refuse collection initiative will help reduce the number of refuse boxes left on the pavement on collection days – initially the non standard collection covers the Cheltenham Road area stretching from The Arches to Zetland Road.

Chandos Neighbourhood Association – report from Diana Swain

<https://chandosna.wordpress.com/>

3.5 The Neighbourhood Association are working with Chandos Road traders to make Chandos Road more pedestrian friendly. Following a meeting with the City Mayor, Marvin Rees, a highways officer has been nominated to help move things forward.

3.6 Applications to build houses in gardens are being opposed by the Association.

3.7 A new group “Bristol Student Community Partnership” has been set up to facilitate a dialogue with residents on student related matters.

3.8 The Association continues to support street food collection groups.

3.9 Funding has been raised to pay for hanging flower baskets.

3.10 The Association's AGM has been postponed until 14th July – details of the meeting can be found on the CNA website.

Family Food Action – Alison Bromilow <https://bcrcp.org.uk/ffa/>

3.11 There is a continuing need for this initiative which was set up to address increasing food poverty and to augment the support provided by regulated food banks. Collections are organised on a street by street basis and a central food collection point has recently set up at the Ardagh Community Centre in Horfield. More people are now tending to give money to buy food than to donate food. A list of streets supporting the initiative can be found on the BCR Community Partnership website.

3.12 Families needing support are identified in a number of ways - through partner groups, schools, nurseries, etc. - and a number of food clubs serve communities in Lockleaze, Easton and St. Paul's.

Friends of St. Andrews Park – Jo Corke <https://friendsofstandrewspark.ning.com/>

3.13 Plans are in hand to renovate the play equipment in the popular playground and to extend the wildlife area. Graffiti on the public toilets is an ongoing issue.

3.14 Bristol Waste have argued that Council Estates rather than they are responsibility for emptying waste bins in the park but this dispute is in the process of being resolved.

3.15 A St. Andrews Heritage Group meeting is scheduled for 30th August.

High Kingsdown Community Association – Briony Waite <http://www.highkingsdown.co.uk/>

3.16 Briony reported that plans for improving the muddy area close to the sports centre are being considered. Other issues occupying the Association include the increasing number of HIMOS, student parties and noise, and tackling weeds without recourse to using glyphosate.

3.16 The Association have also been helped financially by being a Co-op nominated charity.

Redland & Cotham Amenities Society – Alison Bromilow <https://rcas.org.uk/>

3.17 The Society were recently able to hold an open gardens event.

3.18 Dialogue with the two universities on student issues has, until recently, been conducted through the UoB Community Liaison group but this body has been wound up and replaced by the Bristol Student Community Partnership on which there are places for only two community representatives. This was challenged at the inaugural meeting of the new partnership.

3.19 A decision has still to be made about whether to hold a live AGM.

3.20 The Society continues to monitor and comment on planning applications and to support local initiatives including the proposals for Chandos Road.

Redland Green Community Group – Lois Goddard

<https://sites.google.com/site/redlandgreencommunity/>

3.21 Lois reported that rubbish pick ups have recommenced and that wooden stakes have been put in place to protect plants and flowers in the meadow area. The Group are working with the Council to dissuade local residents from installing back garden gates to gain direct access to the Green. Graffiti painted on seats is also an issue as is the damaging effect on plants caused by the widespread use of glyphosate spray to control weeds.

3.22 Efforts are being made to keep the many ash trees affected by ash dieback.

3.23 With regard to the problem of the muddy area close to the playground the Group believe that they have a solution.

Sustainable Redland – Roger Gimson <http://sustainableredland.org.uk/>

3.24 Roger reported that Whiteladies Road Farmers Market celebrated its 15th birthday last week and continues to thrive.

3.25 The future of Sustainable Redland is in doubt with the Chair recently stepping down.

Many of the sustainability issues that have engaged the group over the years are now being picked up by dedicated groups (eg. climate change).

Westbury Park Community Association – Kevin Chidgey

<https://westburyparkcommunityassociation.weebly.com/>

3.26 Covid restrictions have meant that the Association has not been able to run community events including the annual festival but a number of major planning issues have kept the Association ticking over.

3.27 A three years battle to prevent a care home extension at 7 Belvedere Road is hopefully nearing an end with the City Council refusing a second application in June on highway safety grounds. The Association supported local residents opposing the proposal on a number of grounds including parking impacts and an overconcentration of care home provision in the road.

3.28 Simon described the facilities available at Cotham Parish Church which is located near the top of St. Michael's Hill. The Church is looking for people to contribute views on key community needs and making its facilities available for meeting these needs and more generally supporting community activities.

4 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

4.1 Roger Gimson summarised the long and convoluted CIL process and updated the meeting on outline proposals that had been put forward in the CIL Area 2 which included the Bishopston, Cotham and Redland wards. Six projects were being considered – none from our three wards as there was no “frontrunner” that councillors felt that they could support. Proposals put forward include a multi wheel sports area bid for £100,000 and road junction improvements in Brentry / Henbury, and a £25,000 bid for sports equipment at Maskelyne Road in Horfield. In total the bids exceed £200,000 – far more than the £50,600 currently available.

4.2 Discussion ensued about the merits of community groups putting forward projects that required little or no City Council officer time as this often acted as a brake on implementing projects. At present only Council implemented projects are being put forward.

4.3 A number of project ideas in our area were suggested as possible candidates for future funding – improvements to the equipment in the play area at Cotham Gardens and adapting Freemantle Lane in Cotham into a space that could be used for communal activities.

5 Open Forum

5.1 Councillor Poultney expressed concern about the student community partnership with only one councillor being invited to join this new body. The university hierarchies do not seem to be aware of the widespread negative impact of student behaviour on local communities – much better communication and liaison is required.

5.2 The switch from the paper based residential parking permit system to the electronic management system was criticised by one attendee as this had several drawbacks – it was no longer possible for residents to check the status of cars parked outside their houses and it was now necessary to apply ahead for visitor permits on line rather than being simply able to give visitors a paper permit on the day as had previously been the case.

5.3 The issue of the surface dressing of roads and temporary loss of road markings was also raised again – do the Council carry out a risk assessments before giving the go ahead for works?

5.4 Councillor Fodor reported that he had spoken to Council officers about the Elton Road contra flow system but had been advised that it could not be changed.

6 One Other item

6.1 At the beginning of the meeting it was agreed that we should invite a police liaison officer to the next Forum meeting.

Roger Gimson thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Roger also indicated that the next Forum would be in the Autumn and we would review closer to the time whether we can have a normal face to face meeting