

# FOCUS

on COTHAM

SUMMER 2020



serving parts of COTHAM, KINGSDOWN AND REDLAND

WITH CLLR ANTHONY NEGUS AND CAMPAIGNER MILES TAYLOR

## SPACE FOR SAFER WALKING & CYCLING

Sign the petition: [www.bristolibdems.org/spaces\\_for\\_people](http://www.bristolibdems.org/spaces_for_people)

Welcome to our latest Cotham Focus. We stopped the delivery of our March FOCUS due to Covid so this may be the first that some Cotham residents have seen us since January. Our apologies for that.

We pride ourselves on keeping everyone in our community up-to-date on our local campaigns, so if you could please share this with other household members, and keep an eye out on our social media for frequent updates.

*Anthony & Miles*

### Support local businesses!

If you've been shopping locally during lockdown, keep it up! If you've not been shopping locally or using businesses run and staffed by local people and spending your money locally, then please think of the benefits.

Local pubs are an easy walk with no risks of drink-driving. Local shops on Cotham Road South, Chandos Road and elsewhere, provide a personal service often supplying locally sourced sustainable or organic produce.

As local businesses reopen after a devastating closure, the regeneration of small businesses will be a sure way to pick up our economy and stop more gaps forming in our local streets.

Inevitably more people will be working from their homes and this will help but if we want to sustain our communities we should think and buy local.

The Bristol Liberal Democrats recently launched a petition to encourage Bristol City Council (BCC) to create temporary cycle lanes and pedestrianised areas to make us all safer. In Cotham, Anthony has pressed BCC Highways Department to put Chandos Road in the next tranche for temporary distancing measures for cyclists and walkers around the reopened shops.

Ideas are emerging for a permanent redesign to make this heart of our community more attractive and safer. We think it's important that all residents have a chance to express their views locally on this over the next few months. You can start that process on an inter-active map for your ideas here:

<https://bristol.citizenspace.com/management-of-place/bristol-covid-19-transport-request-form/>

Miles and Anthony are generally pleased about the city proposals for permanent improvements to the balance between space used by pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Within the Old City this completes the pedestrianisation plans on which Anthony was working as the responsible Cabinet member in the Lib Dem administration up to 2012! It's amazing that two Mayors did not finish the job before the pressure from the present crisis.

We support facilitating social distancing as soon as possible and want to see sustainable long-term improvements adopted. Near us, the Triangle is included in the early projects (though it's unlikely that a lasting solution can be found without major works) as is Cheltenham Road while Gloucester Road is thought to be too difficult at present. This local shopping street is also the main A38 route facing increasing congestion with the completion of the Filton-Patchway housing and the out-of-town Arena.

**Anthony, Miles, Mary and the Bristol Lib Dems are committed to delivering lasting improvements - the Healthy Streets model - as we emerge from the pandemic rather than seeing government money used to just get us through the crisis.**



Lib Dem Mayoral Candidate Mary Page investigating Labour waste on the £11million 'Bridge to Nowhere'

## STAY SAFE AS LOCKDOWN IS EASED!

**It's not over yet. The virus is still all around us and we must be careful. Please think of yourself - and others - as we seek to go back to where we were four months ago.** We've shown ourselves to be a caring society, with many ordinary people carrying on doing quite extraordinary things. We are more patient and forbearing and realise that we are citizens sharing the same precious world. Hopefully we can carry this 'new normal' forward beyond the pressures of a pandemic?

Will things be different? They might be if enough people believe they could. We experienced fear and loss and are moving into a time of great uncertainty for many and real anguish for some. We all need to respond to newly vulnerable people as we did when the threat was to health rather than finances. While humans are resilient and resourceful, it takes time to recover from a bad blow, particularly when it's so unfair. So please let us all continue to be considerate of others so that the previously widening gap between 'haves' and 'have-nots' can shrink along with the virus.

We've had the chance to see how things could be different - perhaps a wake-up call - and it would be tragic if we were not to conceive and start to deliver a better way forward for everyone. But, you've got to be in it to win it so please continue to look after yourself, thank your lucky stars and consider the previously unthinkable.

## BRISTOL ENERGY

Bristol Energy was a noble civic idea designed to counter fuel poverty, upgrade domestic insulation and develop sustainable energy, conceived by the Lib Dem Administration in 2011. However, after 9 years and two mayors meddling, the company changed beyond recognition. Mayor Marvin Rees is now selling it off, leaving Bristol citizens with losses of up to £55million. Bristol Lib Dems have been investigating. Anthony and our Mayoral Candidate, Mary Page uncovered millions of taxpayers' money has been given to the private company.

Mary Page says, "It appears that some of the money the Mayor gave Bristol Energy was used to hide the huge losses and lack of commercial competence, until after the scheduled May 2020 local elections. Now they have been set back a year exposing the Mayor's financial failings."

An emergency council meeting and a special scrutiny meeting were held to expose the facts before the decision at Cabinet, which was made in secret. Anthony and Mary have asked questions, but Mayor Rees refused to answer. The Mayor has too much control and is the sole decision maker which means it's challenging for councillors and the public to find out how this costly vanity project went so wrong - or what's the best way out.



# CORONAVIRUS LATEST & SUPPORT

## COVID-19 LATEST

Despite substantial easing, social distancing is still in force to tackle the pandemic. Now special care is needed to stay safe.

The latest government advice can be found here: [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

Local coronavirus info on all subjects from the Council can be found here: [www.bristol.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/coronavirus)

## WE ARE BRISTOL HELPLINE

Bristol City Council have launched their own city-wide helpline, 'We Are Bristol' alongside a volunteer network 'Can Do Bristol' to help people with shopping, collecting prescriptions, and befriending support. **We Are Bristol free phone helpline: 0800 694 0184**

## Sign up for our eFocus or Contact us

Cllr. Anthony Negus and Miles Taylor regularly keep residents abreast of local and city-wide news via our e-newsletter. Sign up here: [www.bristolldems.org/efocus](http://www.bristolldems.org/efocus)

[www.bristolldems.org/cotham](http://www.bristolldems.org/cotham)  
[cllr.anthony.negus@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.anthony.negus@bristol.gov.uk)  
07833 484344

[www.facebook.com/cothamLDs](https://www.facebook.com/cothamLDs)  
[www.twitter.com/cothamLDs](https://www.twitter.com/cothamLDs)

The Liberal Democrats will use your contact details to send you information on the topics you have requested. Any data we gather will be used in accordance with our privacy policy at [libdems.org.uk/privacy](http://libdems.org.uk/privacy). To exercise your legal data rights, email: [data.protection@libdems.org.uk](mailto:data.protection@libdems.org.uk).

## BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Contact Number 0117 922 2000  
We are Bristol 0800 694 0184

## UTILITY EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Gas 0800 111 999  
Bristol Water 0345 600 1019  
Electricity Power Emergency 105

## HELPLINE NUMBERS

Childline 0800 11 11  
Samaritans 116 123  
Mind (Mental Health Charity) 0208 215 2243  
Refuge (24h Domestic Abuse Hotline) 0808 2000 247

## WASTE AND RECYCLING

Bristol Waste [hello@bristolwastecompany.co.uk](mailto:hello@bristolwastecompany.co.uk)

## STUDENT ISSUES

University of Bristol [community-living@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:community-living@bristol.ac.uk)  
UWE [community@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:community@uwe.ac.uk)

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Cotham Gardens Climbing Equipment.** The ageing climbing equipment at Cotham Gardens is to go, but we are pleased that whenever it does it will be replaced!

**Meadow grass cutting.** The first grass-cut this year took on board our requests to save areas of meadow species so they could spread their seeds. BCC Parks had understood and acted for which Anthony sent his thanks.

Alas the next cut two weeks later scalped areas at the base of trees and banks in Cotham Gardens, Lovers Walk and Redland Green. When we complained, council officers cited 'pilot error'. We need large mowed areas but these margins are so important for bio-diversity. They can and should be left to regenerate. RCAS have helped with a marked map, but this is a management issue.

**No.9 Bus Consultation.** We highlighted in our last Focus that there was to be a consultation into the No.9 Bus route, with the route currently state-aided. This review was postponed due to the pandemic.

James Freeman, MD of First Great Western, responded positively to Anthony's recommended options and thanked residents for their input. Anthony said "We're seeing a new ethos to improve 'public' transport and we need to support our local buses while that develops," Miles added "We need this change of control so experts operate the service, but as agreed to best serve all of us."

The Lib Dems want greater control of timetables, fares and emissions from our buses through franchising the service, which will allow cross-subsidies, not possible with private companies. We will just have to keep waiting for the No.9 Bus Consultation - 3 consultations may show up at once when lockdown is lifted!

**HMO licensing and retrospective planning applications.** As predicted there are a lot of applications coming through the system. Please look out for them (also called Certificates of Lawful Development) and object to any catch-up applications here: [www.bristol.gov.uk/planning-and-building-regulations](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/planning-and-building-regulations)

## Rave at Ninetree Hill/Sydenham Road

As many of you will have seen via social media, many hundreds of people packed together recently for an unauthorised public rave on Nine Tree Hill. Anthony contacted the Chief Constable and received a detailed account of events from the officer in charge with assurances that the police would take action next time. This would have been a public order issue at any time and there were reports of drug dealing and rave attendees using residents' gardens and doorsteps as a toilet, with the local mosque suffering as well.



While we understand younger people will want to socialise, anti-social behaviour like this, is not fair on local residents. The police responsibility broke down and many people were inconvenienced.

Anthony has followed up with senior officers after the reply to his complaint. He says "We've seen the explanation and had an apology, and been told that lessons have been learned. I hope so, and shall watch out that this failure in policing does not re-occur. Please let us know if you have any concerns on this issue."

Drug use (particularly NO2 or Nos) and the casual disposal of the small silver containers continue in Cotham, though Anthony has made regular entreaties to the police. The local police team remain under strength - Cotham has not had a constable for two years and now Redland, Cotham and Bishopston have only one out of three. After much lobbying Anthony has been promised action from the Chief Constable.

The Bristol Lib Dems want to make sure that the police have the necessary resources to properly police our city, but also want to make sure that younger people have the services, social activities and facilities to encourage positive not negative social gathering.

## MAKING COTHAM'S ROADS SAFER

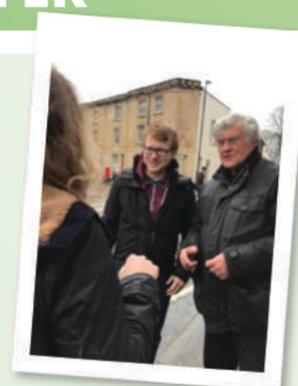
The Cotham Lib Dems are committed to improving road safety in Cotham, and are looking for ideas about how we can consult locally in the present lockdown. There are two areas that are of immediate interest:

**Redland Road**, between **Zetland Road** and **Cotham Brow**, has for too long been the turbulent 'narrows' in the flow of traffic between the M5 and the city centre.

The Cotham Brow junction has been improved and discussions about making the Zetland Road end safer, particularly for cyclists and walkers, gave Anthony a chance to make a radical improvement to Redland Road to support local campaigners.

With the Cotham Brow end kept two-way as now, he proposed that the rest, from Elmgrove Road to Zetland Road, which the BCC Highways team recommended as one way going south should instead go northward. This would divert the heavy traffic onto wider roads and improve safety. We are pleased to announce that a scheme has been drawn up on this basis, which we will keep you informed about.

BCC Highways have finally applied for planning permission for a new crossing at the junction of **Cotham Grove** and **Archfield Rd**, part of the long delayed approval granted for the new classroom at Cotham School. However, they are going against the original application by the Neighbourhood Partnership which was designed to improve road safety for students at Cotham School - *with whom they have not consulted*. Crucially it is along the route that the students have been advised not to use. The route they actually take needs a crossing. We're paying for a crossing which we've all said is in the wrong place. Anthony, Miles and the local Lib Dems, alongside others, are objecting to this misguided proposal but there is a systemic mismatch here, and on other occasions, which, if left unfixed will fail again.



## COTHAM'S COMMUNITY SPIRIT



Anthony has been telephoning hundreds of possibly vulnerable residents to check in that they are managing during lockdown. He is so impressed at the speed at which residents of all ages checked on their neighbours, set up smart support networks and have helped out

in all sorts of ways. Individual initiatives have been brilliant but the generality is really heart-warming.

**So please join us in a heartfelt Thank-you to all our community helpers!**

Anthony, Miles and the Cotham Lib Dem Team want to thank all the volunteers in our community who have been helping neighbours and elderly relatives unable to get out, with shopping and other jobs like collecting prescriptions. It has often been said that the area, with many student HMOs, has lost its community feel; but this coronavirus crisis has seen pretty much every street come together to help each other and it has been very heartening.