

# FOCUS

on COTHAM

AUTUMN 2020



serving parts of COTHAM, KINGSDOWN AND REDLAND

We wish you all a very happy and restive festive season and a new year that fulfils your hopes.

WITH CLLR ANTHONY NEGUS

## PLANNING TAKEOVER

The government's White Paper 'Planning for the Future'

Cllr Anthony Negus has condemned plans by the Government to take away the rights of residents to have a say on new housing developments.

The changes mean developers could go ahead with new housing schemes, without providing extra facilities and services - or local people getting the chance to object.

Decisions on new developments and setting planning rules will be taken away from Councils and decided by civil servants. This factional paper wrongly blames the planning system for blocking essential house-building, imposes a national counter-productive solution and prioritises house sales over genuinely affordable housing and the rental market, ignoring the systemic funding problems while preventing local engagement, democracy and scrutiny.

Cllr Negus said: "This is another example of the Conservative Government being out of touch - and failing to listen to the concerns of people across Cotham." Anthony submitted a motion to Council to oppose these flawed proposals.

Lib Dem candidate for Regional Mayor of the West of England, Stephen Williams said 'There is a need for more affordable houses in Bristol, but these decisions should be taken locally, in a way that works for local residents and not developers'

**Residents - not Westminster - should have the final say: Lib Dems**

The Lib Dems are opposing these changes. They believe the proposals will put green space under threat - and mean less of the more affordable housing or facilities that Cotham needs

## CHANDOS ROAD - BETTER FOR EVERYONE?

Anthony believes this is the right time to plan for a better future for our neighbourhood heart. Could it be more a people-friendly place than a road - reducing traffic while increasing well-being?

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

There's more thinking about easier-paced liveable neighbourhoods, local facilities, greener spaces. This fits with responses to the climate emergency, cleaner air, high-carbon living and to Covid, with grants offering opportunities for building back better.

Inspired by sustainable communities and place-making as an architect, continuing as a councillor, Anthony set up virtual open meetings with local residents and traders to assess interest in what isn't working well, benefits for the future and how these might happen. Chandos Neighbourhood Association (CNA -free to join for all local residents) will provide opportunities for cooperative engagement with local residents and the local traders group to develop plans to make Chandos Road safer, more inclusive, accessible and attractive. Surveys are being prepared for everyone to explore views around:

Resident's quality of life/Community benefits/Environmental benefits/Regeneration/Place-making/Active travel/Vehicle easing/Business improvements/Cost & Value for money

Our 'vision/offer/purpose' should emerge from this initiative. Come and join in, particularly if you have relevant skills. Next, alternative sketch proposals will lead to an early bid for funding. Anthony says "**Chandos Road is at the heart of our community, so I want to work with local residents and traders to make this a safer, cleaner and healthier street. This is for our whole community, so please contact me with your suggestions.**"

Anthony made a place-marker for funding to Highways officers in April when he chased Covid funding to widen footways for active travel and social distancing to help all the shops. An application by some traders to occasionally close one end of Chandos Road was given emergency approval by BCC with consultation promised later. Some foreseeable consequences have concerned some local residents, particularly from Elliston, Cowper and Collingwood Roads which Anthony is still trying to ease with BCC officers.



In another piece of good news for local residents, Gull-sacks (strong vermin-proof bags stored indoors and collected weekly) are being trialled for households above shops. In another Cotham-led first for Bristol this will make a huge improvement to accessibility and appearance and hopefully be more convenient for flat-dwellers too. Anthony says "**After years of pressing for good practice elsewhere to be copied in Bristol this is a welcome breakthrough for common sense. This city is getting dirtier because this council does the same things and shouldn't be surprised when it gets the same poor results.**"

## RETHINKING ON CLEAN AIR ZONE WELCOMED

The rethinking on the Clean Air Zone from the Council is the more radical yet realistic approach Anthony has been advocating for over a year. During lockdowns vehicle emissions have fallen considerably, meaning cleaner air across the city. This has made it possible to plan for longer-term changes in work and travel patterns, without a mandated clean air zone.

Anthony says "Rules and red-lines have variable effect but unless there is a shift in transport, aided by realistic alternatives, problems move and morph into new issues. The Bristol Lib Dems welcome this developing approach; to deliver sustainable assurance of Clean Air instead of a physical 'zone' that seeks to control the problem - rather than solving it. This offers more sustainable solutions for lasting change to improve the well-being of all our citizens. Let's draw a line under heavy-handed restrictions and start applying the necessary smart treatments".

- We are enthusiastic about the use of innovative, smart technology ...monitoring needs to be transparent and publicly accessible to assure confidence
- We believe that this approach will address unfair pressures on people with older polluting vehicles
- It is crucial that the city builds on this to make such temporary relief permanent
- We should seek the transfer of the government grant for the CAZ to a more sustainable action plan, strengthening the grants already received recently for social distancing and active travel.

**Fundamental to this forward thinking should be the franchising our bus service, using government funds for clean, reliable, safe and easily-accessed travel as local residents need it, not as profit dictates.**

Anthony says "**Covid for all its sad consequences has offered us a brief opportunity to put this right. But we must also move up the agenda the movement of goods that no previous strategy has meaningfully addressed.**"

Please participate in the new Clean Air Zone consultation before 13 Dec (though its only in case air quality has not improved sufficiently) at: <https://bristol.citizenspace.com/growth-regeneration/caz2020>."



Find out more: [www.bristollibdems.org](http://www.bristollibdems.org)



**Parking Permits update** Check your renewal date – reminders have ceased! Let Anthony know, with details, if you have been fined because not reminded recently or if you feel you have been unreasonably refused to continue with proper permits. The bar is set high but, after complaints, some flexibility has been accepted.

**Redland Library** (the nearest for most of us) is closed again during lockdown 2. It will re-open asap for Call & Collect Service + for Returns only. You can phone or email ahead for specific books from Central and Henleaze libraries, or ask for a bag(max 5per adult/8per child) suiting your tastes.



**Citizens Awake!** Please help me to report street problems e.g. blocked road gullies, potholes, street lamps, waste/fly tipping, overgrown hedges and Neighbourhood enforcement issues such as planning, noise and ASB. It's quick and easy on [www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com) and it helps me and Council teams to fix problems that affect everyone. Thanks. P.S. Fact: there are 610 road gullies in Cotham ward and 45,525 in Bristol - monitored by a team of one!

#### Redland Road and Archfield Road Safety Improvements

Anthony has convinced officers to make part of the narrow Redland Road one-way (away from Arley Hill) as part of works to Zetland Road. This will divert through-traffic, decreasing pollution and noise and increasing safety for residents and schoolchildren. In a separate project he is working with local schools to relocate a wrongly-designed pedestrian crossing over Archfield Road to the unsafe Cotham Park North.

**Local businesses** It's difficult for so many but we can help by backing our local businesses, real shops and tradespeople - and online too. Where we can and in our own way let's try to regenerate a normality.

**Cotham Gardens needs friends!** Our only local multi-purpose open space is now even more important. Council maintenance is basic; just a little more support from a larger friends' group would benefit everyone. Would you enjoy meeting new people, usefully exercising and glowing as you see your efforts growing? Contact me and I'll put you in touch.

**Cumulative Impact Areas (CIAs)** identify and moderate the greater effect of concentrations of licensed premises. All local CIAs (nearby Whiteladies Road, Clifton village and Cheltenham Road/Stokes Croft) have been withdrawn under new rules. Anthony led the Lib Dem amendment to the Labour Administration's agreement to this, not to change policy or the one remaining CIA but seeking better consultation. It was voted down by every Labour councillor most of whom have not spent many hours fighting for the well-being of their residents against regular attempts to stretch licenses. But officers took the point and have agreed to a further Consultation.



**Kingsdown Parade narrowed** Parking bays have been wrongly set out so that cars have been damaged as the road width is reduced to 2.15 m between parking bays. BCC have admitted the mistake but have advised Anthony that they cannot afford to correct it. This complaint has been escalated but so far without satisfactory outcome.

## AT LEAST £21 MILLION DOWN THE DRAIN

Secrecy surrounds details – full scale of loss unknown

**Labour's Mayor has ordered the Council to sell its struggling energy company, Bristol Energy, for just £15million. details of the deal remain secret – the loss is expected to grow.**

The Council has sunk about £40million into the company, which had grown significantly to be a major part of the Mayor's strategy for transforming the city. This represents a financial loss to the Council of at least £21million – a simply mind-blowing hole in the budget! This figure is expected to grow even more as the full scale of the loss is exposed.

In May, a call by all the opposition parties on the Council for an independent inquiry into why so much money was funnelled into this scheme, was defeated by just 2 votes after the Labour group opposed it.

Lib Dem candidate for regional Mayor, Stephen Williams, says, "Mayor Marvin Rees is clearly hoping that the worldwide Covid problems will keep his homemade financial disaster out of sight of the news and out of the public mind."

"But the huge financial impact of this loss on the city means it cannot be forgotten, and I and the Lib Dems will hold him accountable for this"



A BUMPY LANDING FOR BRISTOL FINANCES

## Sign up for our eFocus or Contact us

Cllr. Anthony Negus regularly keeps residents abreast of local and city-wide news via his e-newsletter. Sign up here: [www.bristollibdems.org/efocus](http://www.bristollibdems.org/efocus)

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## COVID IN COTHAM

### An update on Covid in Cotham and the universities

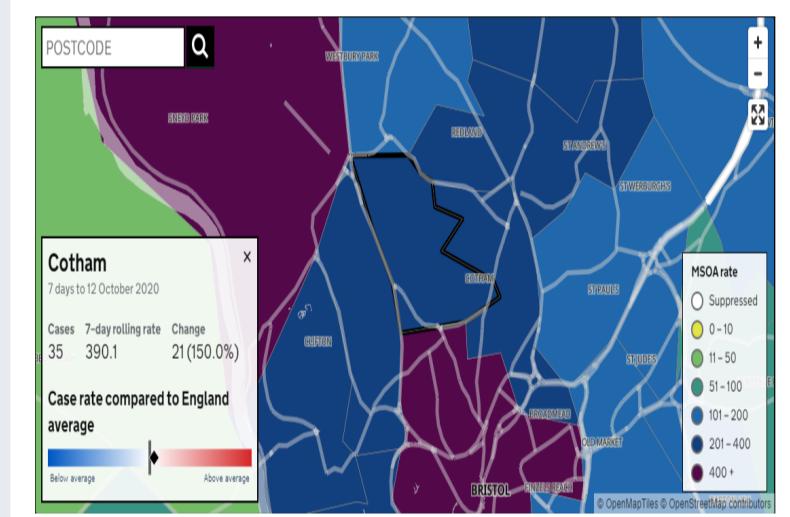
Anthony has been attending regular briefings for councillors on the Covid situation in Bristol, and here is what he can report, "I am afraid the rate of positive cases has increased markedly in Bristol. Bristol's rate is now 486 new cases per 100,000 population in the last 7 days (up to the 13th November). Cotham itself is above the average for England. For the latest advice go to: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/coronavirus/what-you-need-to-know>

Bristol was a Tier 1 area in the new system before national lockdown, before which Mayor Rees decided unilaterally to put us in Tier1+, adding to the confusion. Current high rates in Bristol, particularly in local clusters, will mean it is likely that restrictions will continue at some level. This newsletter will not reach you on a set date so we must all watch out for, and stick to, the most recent national and local instructions and guidelines.

**Lib Dem candidate for Regional Mayor of the West of England, Stephen Williams said 'With Covid rates rising across the West of England, now is the time for our local leaders, such as the invisible Tory incumbent Mayor, to call for better local control of data and track and trace. We know a lot more about the residents of Cotham than Whitehall does'.**

Anthony wrote to the universities before social distancing rules were tightened to ask what they were doing to inform new and returning students for their protection and to safeguard other residents. Messages have been sent out but need regular

updating as the pandemic evolves. Operation Beech will continue-batedly. Police will patrol and respond to ASB (text 07773 816248 with brief details) on r emailing Wed, Fri + Sat nights this term: Dec 2, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 16, 18, 19. Follow-up to complaints procedure still applies: [community-living@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:community-living@bristol.ac.uk) ; UoB PC Harris 07889 657279 [Community@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Community@uwe.ac.uk)



Unsurprisingly, infections and isolations rose in Halls and remain high though flattening and falling in city areas with high numbers of students outside halls. We must all be good citizens and keep our distance. Members of our community are at special risk but Anthony has also been reaching out to students for many of whom this is a miserable time.



BRING BACK THE NO. 9 BUS

## BRING BACK THE NO.9

**Anthony has been fighting hard for this vital local transport link**

Our No.9 bus was withdrawn completely earlier in the year and recently an implanted 72A has started running along Redland Road but doesn't go where it's needed. Anthony Negus has once again pressed James Freeman, the MD of First West of England on the future of the bus (you can read their full exchange at [www.bristollibdems.cotham](http://www.bristollibdems.cotham)). Anthony said,

*"I would like your assurance that you will stick to your assertion that the interrupted consultation process on these routes will be restarted and the outcome used to inform the future service. In the meantime, the situation should be reversed."*

*Be aware that many people who rely on the No.9 are being inconvenienced and barred from getting to previously accessible family, friends and important places such as doctors, dentists, vets, hairdressers and favoured shops. All this is vital to climbing out of Covid".*

James Freeman responded to say that although the consultation was paused due to Covid, they had received 600 comments prior to lockdown, and had held one public meeting. He also confirmed that the consultation will be re-run at an appropriate time in the future. He also said,

*"You have been an indefatigable fighter for bus users in the Cotham area and have focused relentlessly on the No 9"*

Some of the future options are smaller busses, feed-in links, and integration with a more profitable route. Anthony will fight hard through the next consultation process, with residents' support, to save this transport link, and for change to a regional sustainable franchising system, which as WECA Mayor, our candidate Stephen Williams has promised to deliver.

**Parking Permits update** Check your renewal date – reminders have ceased! Let Anthony know, with details, if you have been fined because not reminded recently or if you feel you have been unreasonably refused to continue with proper permits. The bar is set high but, after complaints, some flexibility has been accepted.

**Redland Library** (the nearest for most of us) will re-open for Call & Collect Service + for Returns only from 12 October Tues-Sat 11.00-16.00. You can phone or email ahead for specific books or ask for a bag(max 5per adult/8per child) suiting your tastes.

**Citizens Awake!** Please help me to report street problems e.g. blocked road gullies, potholes, street lamps, waste/fly tipping, overgrown hedges and Neighbourhood enforcement issues such as planning, noise and ASB. It's quick and easy on [www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com) and it helps me and Council teams to fix problems that affect everyone. Thanks. P.S. Fact: there are 610 road gullies in Cotham ward and 45,525 in Bristol - monitored by a team of one!

**Volunteers Survey** Anthony is leading a cross-party group of Councillors tapping the experience of all sorts of people who helped out during and since lockdown. While memories are still fresh, we want to learn how we might all do even better for any future emergencies and to strengthen our communities for all time. So, if this appears in your inbox, please share your thoughts with us.

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## COVID IN COTHAM

### An update on Covid in Cotham and the universities

Anthony has been attending weekly briefings for councillors on the Covid situation in Bristol, and here is what he can report, "I am afraid the rate of positive cases has increased in Bristol. Bristol's rate of 120 new cases per 100,000 population in the last 7 days (up to the 10th October) is considerably higher than for the previous 7 days (59.1 per 100,000)." Cotham itself is slightly above the average for England with 35 new cases in the 7 days up to the 12th October.

Bristol is a Tier 1 area in the new national assessment system. This means we must continue to adhere to national instructions and guidelines. New government guidance that came in to effect on Monday 14th September limits the numbers of people who can meet up to no more than 6 people in most circumstances.

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WITH CLLR ANTHONY NEGUS

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A BUMPY LANDING FOR BRISTOL FINANCES

## A MORE PEOPLE FRIENDLY CHANDOS ROAD

**Anthony wants to make Chandos Road a more people friendly space, and following the 'Healthy Streets' approach, he wants to work with the local community to deliver a future proof vision for this essential shopping street.**

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

A more people friendly Chandos Road will need to recognise competing ambitions and seek to overcome or mitigate problems that arise. Anthony hopes that Chandos Neighbourhood Association (CNA) – *free to join for all local residents* – and the local traders group who have worked with CNA on the annual Street Festival will provide opportunities for cooperative engagement with local residents to develop a plan to make Chandos Road safer, more accessible and more attractive.

Anthony had already passed on to Highways officers local residents' emerging aspirations to improve Chandos Road as a place-marker for funding. Then an application by some traders to temporarily close one end of Chandos Road on some evenings was approved by BCC without notice with local consultation promised in the next 18 months. Unsurprisingly some of the entirely foreseeable consequences have raised concerns with some local residents particularly those in Elliston, Cowper and Collingwood Roads. Anthony is still trying to smooth down some of these issues with BCC officers which might have been better dealt with before the road closure (TTRO) was issued.

In one piece of good news for local residents 'Gul-sacks' (strong vermin-proof bags stored indoors and collected weekly) are to be trialled for households above shops starting on 30 October. In another 'Cotham-led first' for Bristol, a residents' survey has supported a trial to rid our busy narrow shopping street of bins permanently needing to be left outside. This will make a huge improvement to accessibility and appearance and hopefully be more convenient for flat-dwellers too. Anthony says "After years of pressing for good practice to be copied in Bristol this is a welcome breakthrough for common sense. This city is getting dirtier because this council does the same things and shouldn't be surprised when it gets the same poor results."



With Covid setting the pace for changes in the heart of our communities across Bristol, Anthony chased elusive funding for temporary barriers to widen footways to improve social distancing to help all the shops and allow more space for cycling and active travel.

Anthony says "Chandos Road is at the heart of our community, so I want to work with local residents and traders to make this a safer, cleaner and healthier street. I am open to ideas, so please get in touch with your suggestions"

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"You have been an indefatigable fighter for bus users in the Cotham area and have focussed unrelentingly on the No 9"

Some of the future options floated include smaller buses, feed-in links, and integration with a more profitable route. Anthony will fight hard through the next consultation process to save this public transport link.



SUMMER 2020



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 please share this with other household members, and keep an eye 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.

serving parts of COTHAM, KINGSDOWN AND REDLAND

WITH CLLR ANTHONY NEGUS AND CAMPAIGNER MILES TAYLOR

# SPACE FOR SAFER WALKING & CYCLING

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

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.

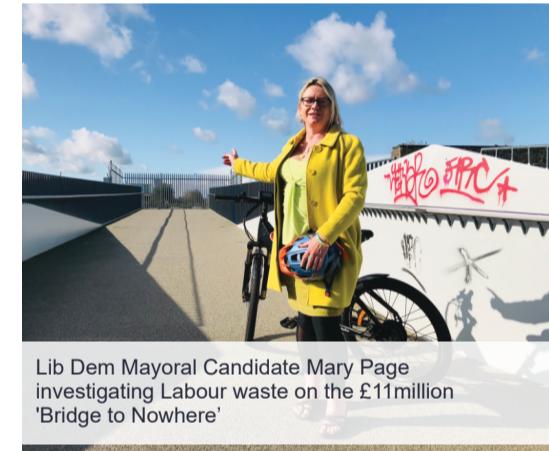
Ideas are emerging for a permanent redesign to make this heart of our community more attractive and safer. We think it's important that all residents have a chance to express their views locally on this over the next few months. You can start that process on an interactive map for your ideas here:

<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.