

Spring 2023

SNEYD PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

A newsletter for members of the SPRA, published in spring and winter each year

The Chairman's view...

Spring is arriving and nature is waking up again. How wonderful it is to walk around Sneyd Park admiring the trees and bulbs coming into flower!

Those of us who have lived here for many years love our favourite views and enjoying seeing nature all around us. However, more interesting are the thoughts of those who have moved into Sneyd Park recently. We have some new neighbours who moved here to be near The Downs, and

after a conversation with us they explored the Woodland Trust and Avon Wildlife Trust land and the Sneyd Park Nature Reserve, and told us they felt the region was a hidden gem – even more so than they'd realised. The beauty of this area is something many of us take for granted, but we should try not to do so, and it's really good to see Sneyd Park through newcomers' eyes like this from time to time.

Like all good gardens, the

area we love needs constant care, and your committee has been hard at work protecting and preserving the things we hold dear. I trust you'll find some interesting items in this newsletter, which does include coverage of some sensitive subjects.

We were sad to hear of the passing of Alan Coleman. His son Mark has kindly written a tribute to his father for us.

I look forward to seeing you all at our AGM on Wednesday 17 May at St Mary's. We will



Stephen Small, SPRA Chairman

have some local speakers and a chance to share views beforehand and afterwards with a glass of wine.

With best wishes for a wonderful spring and summer,
Steve

Driving on The Downs

Members have been contacting us about cars, motor bikes and quad bikes driving across the grass on The Downs.

Since our last newsletter, the matter has been taken up with Mark Shelford, the police and crime commissioner for Avon and Somerset Police. John Goulandris and Henry Michallat have also brought it to the Downs Committee.

Please do the following if you see or hear illegal driving:

- 1. Take a photo if safe to do so, or provide dashcam footage.*
- 2. Tell the police and ask for an incident number or the name of the person assisting.*
- 3. Keep a log.*
- 4. Tell John, Henry and SPRA about the incident.*

It is essential to keep a record so there is supporting evidence for any future decisions.



Mariners Drive, Sneyd Park

Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve

Many of us enjoy walking through this wonderful area of Sneyd Park. Like SPRA, the reserve is self-funded and run and maintained by volunteers.

You can support their efforts by becoming a member (or even volunteering for a working party) at www.oldsneedparknaturereserve.org.

Friends of The Downs & Avon Gorge

We recently attended a meeting with the Friends of The Downs and Avon Gorge (FODAG) and members of the Downs Committee. The aim of the meeting was to set up a small sub-committee, run by FODAG, of residents' associations surrounding The Downs that would feed residents' views back to the Downs Committee. SPRA wants to be involved and we will keep you updated.

Hedges again!

Residents are still contacting us about hedges overhanging the pavements. In fact, hedges have now grown so far across the path in some places that two people – even an adult with a child – cannot walk side by side, and it's also hard for a pushchair or wheelchair user to make their way along the pavement. The worst are in Hazelwood, Ivywell and Julian Roads and The Avenue. We suggest residents speak to their neighbours about trimming hedges back for the safety of all pedestrians.

A highly sensitive matter

Van dwellers and caravans on The Downs: residents' observations

We are now receiving a constant flow of communications on the subject of van dwellers and caravans on The Downs. The concern is about the ever-increasing numbers.

SPRA wrote to the mayor of Bristol on 21 February, but at the time of this newsletter going to press we have not received a reply. However, John Goulandris, Henry Michallat and other councillors are having meetings with the mayor on the subject.

John and Henry have been successful in securing the removal of at least 12 abandoned caravans at the top of Parrys Lane and Saville Road. If local residents believe a caravan to be abandoned, they can email details (with a photo to aid identification) to John or Henry, and they will send it on to Neighbourhood Enforcement

(NE). Alternatively residents can contact NE directly.

NE usually sends someone out within seven days to check the caravan in question. If they believe it to be abandoned, they will place an 'enforcement to remove' order on it, and this tends to lead to removal within 14 days.

If you want to express your concerns and observations to the mayor in an email, please

copy in John, Henry, Darren Jones (the MP for Bristol North West) and SPRA.

The relevant email addresses are below:

The mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees: mayor@bristol.gov.uk

John Goulandris: cldr.john.goulandris@bristol.gov.uk

Henry Michallat: cldr.henry.michallat@bristol.gov.uk

Darren Jones: darren.jones.mp@parliament.uk

Don't miss our AGM

Wednesday 17 May at 7.30pm at St Mary's

We're looking forward to seeing you all at our AGM. Our local councillors and other speakers will be in attendance.

A glass of wine will be served afterwards. Accounts and last year's minutes will be available on our website.

Nominations for the committee are welcome.



Alan Coleman 22.04.1933–16.01.2023

Alan, his wife, Fay, and their two young children moved to Mariners Drive in 1969 when he took over a uniform production unit in Newport. In those days there were more than 1,500 sewing machinists in the factory, turning out military and police uniforms for the UK and the world.

Alan – who was born in the East End of London, a few streets away from the old West Ham ground – quickly fell in love with this area. He soon joined SPRA and became the vice-chair before taking over from Dr Aubrey Matthews as chair in May 2002. Aubrey, who still lives in Sneyd Park, and Alan worked hard to

keep the area's unique status as a conservation area alive. He loved the greenery and promoted the wildlife in the area. He and Fay often saw woodpeckers, herons, jays, treecreepers, sparrowhawks and other bird life in their garden, not to mention the foxes and badgers.

Alan was one of the longest-serving chairs of SPRA, and believed that development in Sneyd Park should respect and complement the unique area he lived in. The newsletter became a full-time pursuit for both him and Fay as they reported and commented on planning and other matters of interest to local residents.

Alan opposed the develop-

ment of the old Bristol & West playing fields on the Portway by Goal Soccer, believing that the light and noise pollution would adversely affect local residents and wildlife. He was delighted to see the planning rejected and, thanks to some generous donations, the land become an Avon Wildlife Trust nature reserve. This reserve links seamlessly with the Sneed Park Nature Reserve and many people enjoy both of them every week.

Alan died in January after a short illness. His wish was for the community to preserve and enhance this unique area for generations to come.

Mark Coleman, Alan's son



Graham Churchill / used under Creative Commons licence

Trees in Old Sneyd Park Nature Reserve

How much do you love living in Sneyd Park?

Hi to all! Have you thought about what it's like to work with the SPRA committee on everything to do with managing the Sneyd Park area?

Sneyd Park is a large residential area with borders on The Downs, Stoke Hill, Old Sneyd Avenue and the Portway itself. It has about 1,000 households, which represents a significant number of people.

There is a nature reserve with many acres of wildlife and open space. Sneyd Park also supports two garage businesses and there are many other employers, including the shops at the bottom of Stoke Hill, as well as people working from home.

The Downs are busy throughout the year and because this affects Sneyd Park residents, the SPRA committee gets involved in activities here. Just recently we have become involved in a new way forward with the Downs Committee that will give us more say in how the area is managed. The reserve itself is key to the area's

biodiversity, and I brought you news of the revamp of the whales in Bennett's Patch in the last newsletter.

All of this and more has a major impact on Sneyd Park and its residents, so have a think about whether you could join our committee and get involved. If you wish, you can come along to a committee meeting any time to see what goes on. SPRA is only as good as its committee, so if you want to add to that and make a difference, please contact me today.

*Alan Jenkinson
Vice Chair, SPRA
07920 560048*

What could YOU do?

The main problem with an organisation like ours is finding the manpower (or person power!) to do the jobs.

For some time now we have been looking for some more road captains. Specifically, we need people to cover The Avenue, Ivywell Road, Knoll Hill and Glenavon Park.

If you are looking for something to do to help the community or to fill your

time – maybe you've recently retired or seen the children or grandchildren off to school – this could be the perfect job for you!

The task isn't onerous: at the moment it involves delivering just two issues of this newsletter each year, following up members who haven't paid their subscriptions, and providing a link between the organisation and the community. It also gives you an excuse to talk to people!

Without some extra help it means there's more and more work to be done by fewer people, and that isn't sustainable. If you think you could just deliver to your block of flats or your cul-de-sac, that would be a help. If you think you could share the task with someone, that would also be great.

If you think you can help, or just want more information, please give me a ring or drop me an email. My contact details are on the back page.

*Chris Byrne
Membership Secretary*

Stoke Lodge Playing Fields

Progress on the application to make Stoke Lodge a 'Town or Village Green' continues, and Helen Powell and Emma Burgess – who run We Love Stoke Lodge (WLSL) – will update us at the SPRA AGM.

As you can imagine, the legal work carried out by WLSL is very costly. If you can give a donation, however small, please send a cheque to Emma Burgess, 196 Stoke Lane, BS9 3RU, or a bank transfer to HSBC a/c Ms E Burgess, sort code 40-10-00, a/c number 82559501. Thank you on their behalf.

Music festival

As previously explained, SPRA works closely with Team Love over arrangements for the music festival on The Downs. Once again this year we will be checking road closures and working with organisers during the festival on 1 and 2 September.

Fix My Street

Some members have told us about problems with blocked road drains, etc. Fix My Street is a useful website where you can register a problem: www.fixmystreet.bristol.gov.uk.

Tales of Sneyd

Do you have positive stories about noteworthy characters of Sneyd Park? This might include past and present entrepreneurs, environmentalists, philanthropists, celebrities and more. Email us and we'll look to publish the most interesting stories on our website and Facebook members' group.

Scientists study the underwater sounds of Old Sneed Park pond

A pond at Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve (pictured) is one of five studied by researchers at the University of Bristol as they investigated the diverse acoustic world of underwater environments.

Ponds are magnets for life and a lot of that life is very noisy. Water beetles, bugs, fish, frogs, and even aquatic plants all produce sound, creating an underwater orchestra that scientists are only just starting to understand. Freshwater environments have remained largely unexplored despite their diverse soundscapes.

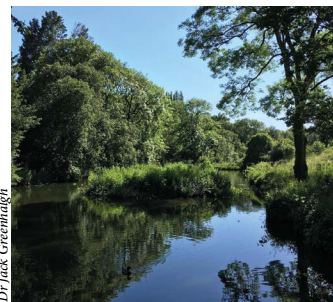
“Ponds are packed full of bizarre and mysterious sounds made by scratching aquatic insects, booming fish, and popping plants. It’s like an underwater disco!” says lead author Dr Jack Greenhalgh from Bristol’s School of Biological Sciences.

The team collected 840 hours of underwater sound recordings from five

ponds in the southwest of England using a hydrophone (underwater microphone). The findings, published in the journal *Freshwater Biology*, revealed clear daily acoustic activity cycles in each pond.

Typically, a nocturnal chorus is made by aquatic insects that compete to attract mates by producing strange scratching sounds as they rub their genitals against their abdomens.

During the daytime, however, aquatic plants dominate the underwater orchestra with rhythmic whining and ticking, with plants producing tiny oxygen bubbles as they respire in the hot sun.



Dr Jack Greenhalgh

Keeping in touch with SPRA and its activities

After consulting with members, SPRA launched a new website last year. You can find us at the same web address as before: www.sp-ra.org.uk.

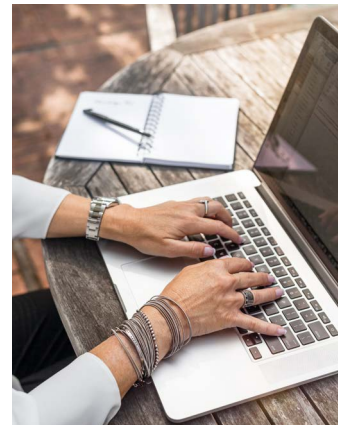
We also launched a new Facebook page that’s open to all, as well as a second one exclusively for members.

Our website and Facebook pages allow us to share news and information with you much more quickly, easily and comprehensively than before.

You can also contact us more easily via the website and/or Facebook and someone from SPRA will be in touch as soon as possible.

The web addresses for the two Facebook pages are in the contact box below.

The SPRA members’ page is a place for us to discuss matters and share detailed information in private more easily; for example concerning planning applications and other issues affecting us in Sneyd Park and our immediate surroundings. Having access to this facility is a major benefit of becoming a member of SPRA. What’s



more, membership costs just £5 per year.

If you are already an SPRA member and haven’t yet joined this private group, just visit the page and click on ‘join group’. You will then have access to all the content and be able to start your own SPRA-related discussions, too.

Please note that all these initiatives are run by SPRA member volunteers, coordinated by a small SPRA committee that’s also made up of volunteers. If you would like to become an SPRA volunteer, do get in touch today. There are many ways in which you can get involved and help.

SPRA contact details

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Facebook (open to all): www.facebook.com/SneydParkResidentsAssociation

Facebook (members only): www.facebook.com/groups/2530685197239561



SPRA
SNEYD PARK RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATION