

Spring 2024

SNEYD PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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

The Chairman's view...

After a long wet winter, it is wonderful to see spring arriving at long last, and to walk around Sneyd Park enjoying the wonderful surroundings and nature waking up.

As explained at the last AGM we are now only producing two printed newsletters per year, so the membership cost can remain at £5 a year. However, we are now emailing members regularly and urge you to please update your contact details (see inside for details).

Your committee has been hard at work protecting and preserving the region

and I trust you will find this newsletter of interest. Its contents includes some sensitive subjects. I would like to welcome two new committee members: Chhaya Hawkins, who takes over from Chris Byrne as Membership Secretary; and Mike Hollyhead, who takes over from Mark Ryder as Treasurer. I'd like to thank Chris and Mark for all their efforts and support. I am delighted that Chris is remaining on the committee in an advisory role. We are always looking for additional committee members, so please get in touch if you are interested.

We were sad to hear of the passing of two former SPRA Chairs, Bill Redmond and Aubrey Matthews. Ian Beattie MBE (SPRA Chairman 1985 to 1994) kindly wrote a tribute to Aubrey which has been circulated by email and is available on the SPRA website.

The gems of Sneyd Park may be something many take for granted – but we should not do so, and like all good gardens the area requires constant care, not just for this generation but for generations to come. SPRA aims to protect the area but can only do so with your support.

I look forward to seeing you



Stephen Small, SPRA Chairman

all at our AGM on Wednesday 15 May at St Mary's. We will have some local speakers and there will be an opportunity to share and exchange views over a glass of wine before and after the meeting.

With best wishes for a wonderful spring and summer,
Steve

Celebrating the life of our late, beloved Queen Elizabeth

Living in Sneyd Park gives us the opportunity to stroll among some of the oldest preserved trees in Bristol and experience nature at its

best. It was with this in mind that I took great pleasure in supporting the planting of a new tree on the Downs near the Stoke Hill war memorial.



The tree is an English oak, which is extremely fitting as it was planted to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The planting was a little late but we got there eventually! We felt it was appropriate for SPRA to celebrate the Queen's life in this way as her 70 years on the throne coincided with our organisation's 55th anniversary.

It was fantastic to have quite a few people come to watch the planting and witness the beginning of a new life that will hopefully endure for many years. The tree we planted was about 13 years old

and 4 metres tall; it has a long way to go to reach the dizzy heights of some other oaks in Sneyd Park, but everything has to start somewhere! The oldest oak in Sneyd Park is about 800 years old and there are many of 400–500 years.

I must mention my gratitude to John Atkinson from Bristol City Council who supported me in getting this tree planted – believe me, with permissions and financing that wasn't easy! In due course I will put up a plaque with suitable wording to celebrate the occasion.

*Alan Jenkinson
Vice Chair*

Are your contact details up to date?

It's been a while since we reminded members about this, so we'd like to ask that all members update their contact details.

Please either scan the QR code below or see our website (www.sp-ra.org.uk) where you will find a short form to complete.

Thank you for your help with this.



Moving forward with DAP

As reported in our last newsletter, Alan now attends all the meetings of the Downs Advisory Panel (DAP) and as a committee we feed back to the panel regularly. DAP covers a wide range of issues and reports directly to The Downs Committee. SPRA is the only residents' association on DAP.

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. Visit their website at www.oldsneedparknaturereserve.org.

A highly sensitive matter

Van dwellers and caravans on The Downs: residents' observations

We continue to hear from members on this matter and are still pursuing the mayor of Bristol and Darren Jones (the MP for Bristol North West) about the situation.

John Goulandris and Henry Michallat – the Stoke Bishop ward's representatives on Bristol City Council – have been successful in securing the removal of 19 or more abandoned caravans at the top of Parrys Lane and Saville Road. If local residents

believe a caravan has been abandoned, they can email details, plus a photo (which helps to identify the van in question) to John or Henry, who 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.

Equally if you want to express your concerns and observations to the mayor in an email, please copy in John, Henry, Darren Jones and SPRA. The relevant email addresses are as follows: 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

A tribute to Bill Redmond

On 29 November we celebrated the life of CWF 'Bill' Redmond, who was the SPRA Chair for about seven years. Bill died on 5 November with his wife and family at his side.

Many of you will remember Bill as the jocular organiser of the annual garden parties. Bill was 'Mr Social' and didn't miss any opportunity to have a chat with people and show an interest in what they did.

For many years Bill worked for the John Lewis Partnership at director level

and this showed in the way he could organise people and get things done. What isn't known so much about Bill, though, is that in his youth he lived literally around the corner from the Beatles – yes, the real ones! He engaged the Fab Four before they became famous to play at an event he was organising for his youth group. Not only that, a little while later – after they had become famous – Bill asked them if they would do another gig for the same youth group. The FF didn't want to upset



Bill so agreed to do the gig! Shortly after, they asked Bill if he wanted to be their roadie. He was tempted, but John Lewis was calling and he had just started on a management trainee programme there. Little did he know then...! Alan Jenkinson
Vice Chair

Remembering Aubrey Matthews

Following Ian Beattie's tribute to Aubrey Matthews, I would like to add my own.

When I became SPRA Chair, Aubrey contacted me to congratulate me and offer support. Over the years his help and guidance proved highly valuable and he was always available to attend meetings or write to the council on various matters. His love of Sneyd Park was

inspiring, as were his efforts as Chair.

As the service sheet at the celebration of his life said, he was "A gentleman of compassion, wisdom and heart". I shall greatly miss our conversations and feel we have lost a true friend of Sneyd Park. Steve Small, Chair



Our AGM

We look forward to seeing you all at our AGM on **Wednesday 15 May at 7.30pm at St Mary's**. Our local councillors and other speakers will be attending. 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.

Why we came back to Sneyd Park

In our younger days, my husband Dennis and I lived in a flat in Hazelwood Road, Sneyd Park, Bristol.

It was what we needed as we were close to our businesses on Whiteladies and Gloucester Roads. We were very busy and didn't have enough time to enjoy the place as much as we wanted – or needed – to, but we obviously took in its appeal.

We left the UK, lived and worked abroad in Canada and Jamaica, spending the last 15 years in the latter, and in 2021 we retired and decided to come back to the UK... and to Sneyd Park! We loved our time in Jamaica and it will always remain a place we absolutely love, but with retirement we decided it was back to Bristol, to family and friends and to a place we had enjoyed.

Why did we come back here? Well, apart from the obvious familiarity and love of family and friends, Sneyd Park is a microcosm of a city that offers enormous variety for an interesting and busy or quiet life! Its wide open spaces, trees, parks and conservation areas offer respite from hectic lives. The 400-odd acres of the Downs gives you a quiet spot on a park bench, on your own or with friends, to sit and look over on to the Clifton Suspension Bridge; somewhere to have a coffee and enjoy the little ones having the freedom to run around without a care in the world. You can walk the quiet streets with their large houses and beautiful small cottages, all with pretty gardens. The nearby Whiteladies Road has thriving shops both large



and small, and the variety of restaurants on this strip caters to the wining-and-dining requirements of the young university population and those of us older ones who live in Sneyd Park!

The Waterfront in Bristol city centre is not far away and buses will take you there if you fancy spending time somewhere busier.

Sneyd Park has great motorway links to London and all parts of the country for those occasions we may want to venture out of this haven of peace and quiet. It's a wonderful place to live.

Chhaya Hawkins
Membership Secretary

Could you be one of our road captains?

Huge thanks to our road captains, who do a wonderful job delivering the newsletter and encouraging new members.

We always need additional road captains, so please consider coming forward to join the team. If you'd like more details, please contact our membership secretary.

Music festival & concert

As explained in previous newsletters, SPRA works closely with Team Love over arrangements for the music events on The Downs. Once again this year we will be checking road closures and working with organisers during the concert on Sunday 25 August and the music festival on Saturday 31 August and Sunday 1 September.

These events are essential for the maintenance of The Downs as they raise considerable funds.

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.

Photography competition

SPRA is developing a brand new annual photography competition for residents of the Sneyd Park Conservation Area, whatever their age. Look out for details coming soon online at www.sp-ra.org.uk and on Facebook.

Hedges... again! Please take note...

As we have written about several times in our newsletters, we are very fortunate in our environment in Sneyd Park.

Even when the ground is saturated and walking in the woods and the nature reserve is not so easy, it is still pleasant to walk around the area on the pavements and paths.

However, as we have mentioned before (more than once) this can be difficult when hedges are allowed to grow over the pavement. It is now the very beginning of the

growing season and the time when hedges can be cut back. If they are cut back now, by the summer they will be green once more.

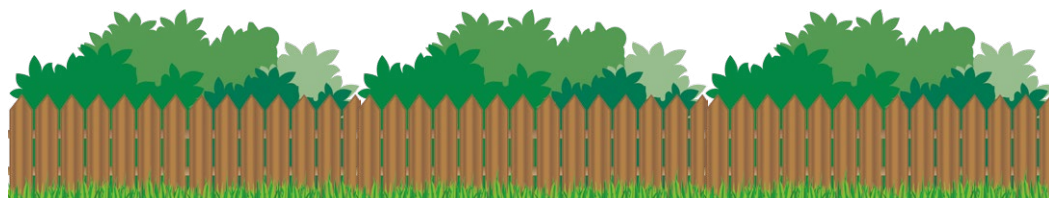
The owner or occupier of a property has a legal responsibility (Highways Act 1980 section 154) to ensure that the public highway adjacent to a property is not obstructed by vegetation from their property. A person pushing a pram or wheelchair should be able to walk unobstructed along the pavement. When parked cars

are added to the equation (sometimes parking with two wheels on the pavement) the situation becomes even more difficult.

Please go and have a look at your hedge, and please encourage your neighbours to do the same. No one wants to see a situation where an owner is reported to the council, which has the powers and duty to see that the hedge is cut.

Please help keep Sneyd Park a pleasant and safe place to walk around.

Chris Byrne



Community SpeedWatch: your local group of volunteers

You may have seen a small group of people in hi-vis jackets standing at the junction of Rockleaze/Circular Road/Ivywell Road with a speed gun and a clipboard. What you were witnessing is the most recent location in our neighbourhood for a group of volunteers to monitor vehicle speeds, in an agreement with the police.

Community SpeedWatch (CSW) is a partnership between the community and the police with the primary aim of making drivers more aware of speed limits, right across the Avon and Somerset Constabulary area. Our local CSW branch of CSW, Stoke Bishop and Westbury, is a group of nine individuals, all approved by Avon & Somerset Constabulary.

CSW has been operating in this part of Bristol since December 2015, and currently has approved sites on Coombe Lane, Stoke Lane, Reedley Road, Stoke Hill, Rockleaze/Circular Road, Parrys Lane, Bell Barn Road, Old Sneed Avenue, Shirehampton Road,

Eastfield Road, Henleaze Road, Passage Road (in Westbury village), Chock Lane and Canford Lane. Some we check more than others, and we endeavour to visit four sites each month.

Avon & Somerset Constabulary is fully committed to supporting CSW. Sometimes we have a PCSO present and sometimes a PC. The latter has the power to stop motorists, check documents and issue warnings and, if need be, fines.

I have lived on Rockleaze for 10 years and every day witness excessive speed, even close to children cycling,

walkers, joggers and other road users.

Yes, we are operating in an area where we know many people, but we have received nothing but support from them.

Should you be interested in joining our local CSW team, please email: CommunitySpeedWatch@avonandsomerset.police.uk. Please mention the Stoke Bishop and Westbury CSW Group, and you will be put in touch with our two coordinators.

Roger Chubb
A fuller article and additional information are published on the SPRA website



Time to move on! Secretary vacancy

After more years than I can remember, it is time for new blood to join the committee and time for me to step aside.

I am very aware I am no longer 'up to scratch' as I am not computer literate or interested in Facebook, Twitter, etc., and it is time for me to put my feet up and hand over the reins of secretary of this very worthy group to a younger person.

The job is not onerous, and it is just a matter of making notes of what is said at the meetings and sending them round. Other secretaries now type them straight onto their laptop during the meeting and fire them off before the members have returned to their homes! Shorthand is a thing of the past, like me!

Please can someone 'step up to the plate' and take over at the AGM?
Gay Huggins, Secretary

SPRA contact details

Chairman

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Vice Chair

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Secretary

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Treasurer

Mark Ryder and Mike Hollyhead

Membership Secretary

Chhaya Hawkins
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Committee member

Chris Byrne

Planning

Steve Small and Alan Jenkinson

Website & social media

Barbara Hollyhead

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Facebook (open to all): www.facebook.com/SneydParkResidentsAssociation
Facebook (members only): www.facebook.com/groups/2530685197239561



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