



## Community Liaison Group Meeting 12 December 2016

### Attendees:

Caroline Court	UoB
Joni Lloyd	UoB
Anthony Negus	Councillor
Liz Radford	Councillor
Clive Stevens	Councillor
Keith Rogerson	Oakfield Road Residents Association
Peter Symes	Richmond Hill Residents Association
Liz Kew	BCR Street Scene
Monica Lougee	BCR Street Scene
Chris Jefferies	Clifton Hotwells Improvement Society
Jill White	Cotham Hill and Hampton Park
Richard Barnes	Oakfield RA
Ian Goodenough	Oakfield RA
David Winter	Bristol Civic Society
Saun Wainright	High Kingsdown RA
Rob Harris	RCAS
Dawn Shorten	Christmas Steps Arts Quarter
David Brown	Stoke Bishop Residents Planning Group
Syafiq	UWE community rep
Rhian	UWE community rep
Emma	UoB community ambassador
Ciara	UoB community ambassador

## **Agenda**

- Welcome and introductions
- Update from UWE
- Update from University of Bristol
- Consultation and group discussion – Private rented accommodation / Landlords and letting agents
- Consultation and group discussion – house parties
- Current issues
- Suggestions for future meetings
- Close

**Update from UWE** – From Nigel England, presented by Syafiq and Rhian

## **UWE Community Liaison Report July 2016 to 24 Nov 2016**

### **Complaints**

We have received 72 complaints from 1 July until 24 Nov 2016; 48 were noise complaints, 6 rubbish, 7 anti-social behaviour, 10 parking and 2 other ( damage)

In terms of areas they were received from BS1- 1, BS2- 1, BS6 – 16 (4 UoB), BS7 - 14, BS8 – 2, BS16- 38.

BS16 (Frenchay) was the where the vast majority of complaints came from and this is due to the fact that we have expanded our accommodation on campus and it is adjacent to the Cheswick and Stoke Park residential estates. We have though, increased our security and targeted key nights such as Tuesday (SU night), Friday and weekends and complaints have drastically reduced over the last month.

I have worked with residents of Cheswick estate and South Gloucestershire Council to put in place another parking restriction scheme to help alleviate parking problems in that area. A few years ago I did the same on Stoke Park which was very successful in preventing parking issues. We have funded both schemes.

Complaint levels from across the rest of Bristol have slightly decreased in terms of numbers from last year; 34 last year 33 this year.

In terms of types of noise complaints these were not just students being excessively noisy but were also the house itself not being fit for purpose with lack of sound proofing and also lack of door dampeners etc. being an issue and or lack of carpets, again sound insulation and having 6 to 8 students in a house with paper thin walls where even just talking normally can clearly be heard by the neighbours and seen as a disturbance. I have referred a couple of the houses to the private housing team at BCC so HMO licence conditions can be checked as I felt students were having to live in sometimes unhealthy and dangerous conditions which is not acceptable.

Noise complaints were however mainly excessive bass levels resonating through thin walls.

We have called one household in for a disciplinary hearing with myself and a BCC noise pollution officer and this has now been passed to our head of student services for level 2 investigation. (Please see our student codes of conduct on UWE website for further information on this) We have put one case forward to be dealt with by way of a restorative justice conference. I am working with our campus police officer and Avon and Somerset Police on this scheme on some relevant cases of anti-social behaviour and/or noise nuisance which fit the restorative justice model.

The rubbish complaints were historically dealt with by myself and Trudy Feeney from BCC waste department but sadly Trudy has now left the Council. I have sent a huge thankyou to Trudy though for all her hard work and commitment over the years.

Bristol Waste Company have though got a community engagement officer, Joanna Dainton, who Joni and I will be working with on various waste projects including The Bristol Big Give.

Briefly on other things we have been doing:

1. I have 6 student community reps in post this year. Rhian, Rhiannon, Syafiq, Dean, Sophie and Ijeoma who are all great. They have helped and will help out on various projects with myself and the Student Union to include, Love Where You Live campaign, The Bristol Big Give campaign, student safety campaigns, student and community health campaigns, information to students about being a good neighbour, about waste and recycling, home and personal safety etc. They will, where they can, attend community meetings and will

work in partnership with community/residents groups to help student/resident relations.

They will also be working on ongoing projects to give information to 1<sup>st</sup> year students about their rights and responsibilities when moving into private rented accommodation. This information will also go out to all students in rented accommodation 3 times a year.

They are part of the Community Liaison Team and can be contacted via [Community@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Community@uwe.ac.uk)

2. I have had a student community living guide printed and it will go out to students in private rented accommodation. ( pdf and also hand delivered) It covers all aspects of living in private rented accommodation, rights and responsibilities and important things like correct waste and recycling, noise, and being a good neighbour as well as reminding students about the University codes of conduct etc. but will also give help and support to our students. My Keeping the Peace guide has also gone out to UWE students via letting agents across Bristol to students in a welcome pack.
3. We have worked with local schools and community groups around UWE and across Bristol on joint student/community events such as Family Fun Day. Funding for such events can be applied for [www.uwe.ac.uk/communityliaison](http://www.uwe.ac.uk/communityliaison) ( limited to 12 applications per year)
4. I have been in contact with BALMA (Bristol Association of Landlords and Managing Agents) and have attended one of their meetings to give a presentation on what I do, what my job role is, and how we may work together. Joni and I will also be attending a meeting in the New Year with BALMA to build relationships with landlords around student behaviour.
5. Bristol Big Give will be running again this year across Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Our first campaign development meeting is on 15 December at UWE.

Further information on the campaign can be found at [www.lovewhereyoulivebristol.co.uk](http://www.lovewhereyoulivebristol.co.uk)

6. Joni and I are working with both Student Unions on reviewing and updating the Love Where You Live web site.
7. I am working with Wilmott Dixon (Bower Ashton redevelopment) and Grahams (Frenchay development) on various community projects involving local communities, staff and students to the benefit of the local community and to enhance our students C.V.'s and employability.

### **Accommodation**

UWE are building more purpose built student accommodation on Frenchay campus. We have already built 800 rooms and will have a total of 1200 rooms by September 2017. This accommodation will primarily house first year students but we are also offering accommodation to second and third year students as well. This is coupled with more student accommodation in city centre locations.

We haven't expanded our student numbers over the last couple of years. We have held steady on our University student numbers and will be doing so for the next few years. Currently there are 27,500 students with 18,000 undergraduates and the remainder post grad or part time students (mature students).

### **Volunteering**

Last year UWE students contributed some 100,000 volunteering hours in Bristol from helping schoolchildren with reading to tidying up beaches to silver surfers project (helping the older generation with computing and internet).

Contact details:

Nigel England: Community Liaison Manager @ UWE

Email: [Community@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Community@uwe.ac.uk)

Phone: 01173281366.

**Update from University of Bristol – presented by Joni Lloyd**

### **Move In campaign 2016**

In September and October my group of Community Ambassadors and I carried out our Move In campaign, door knocking in areas of high density student population.

We visited approximately 700 houses

We gave out:

- Love where you live leaflets
- A letter from both Vice-Chancellors welcoming students back to Bristol and outlining expectations of behaviour in the community
- Bin stickers
- Flyers from other charities which offer support
  - Bristol drugs project
  - SARI – support for racism and hate crime
  - Well Aware – online database of support for health and wellbeing

We spoke to students about our key messages around noise, waste and recycling, parking and sustainable transport as well as promoting ways that students can stay safe and seek support.

We had an agreement with Bristol Waste Company that we could send them orders for bins and recycling boxes which they would fast track.

We made 76 orders.

We advised students about how to manage waste and recycling, how to clear backlogs and to keep bins and boxes off the pavement apart from collection day.

We signposted students to the relevant support for issues such as council tax, burglary, mould, problems with landlords, poor condition of houses and parking restrictions.

## Complaints

From September to December 2016 I have received 92 complaints.

- 74 noise
- 18 waste and recycling
- 8 anti-social behaviour and miscellaneous

Geographically these have been in:

- Clifton – 22
- Cotham – 15
- Kingsdown – 10 (including High Kingsdown, Highbury Villas and the top of St Michael's Hill)
- Redland – 41

This compares to 2015/16 as

- Noise - 126
- Waste and recycling - 34
- Anti-social behaviour - 2
- Misc – 12
- Parking - 1

In dealing with these complaints I have:

- Emailed 482 students
- Visited 18 households
- Brought 9 households in for further disciplinary action.

Community ambassadors have made 8 peer support visits in response to complaints – 7 targeting individual properties or areas about waste and recycling and one targeting a street with regards to noise.

## **Other work**

### **Community ambassadors**

I have recruited and inducted a team of seven community ambassadors to add capacity to community liaison work. Their role includes activities such as door knocking, attending welcome events, attending neighbourhood meetings, offering peer support around independent and community living, promoting campaigns and facilitating University initiatives.

### **Community fund**

The community fund is in place to support initiatives which promote good community relations and integrate students and local residents.

So far awards have been granted to seven initiatives.

I have designed a feedback report template to be completed by recipients of community funds so that I can demonstrate the variety of activities going on across the city.

I am also keen to encourage students to apply to the fund and take the lead on initiating community engagement.

### **Web updates**

I am working on updating the Community pages on the UoB website to make them more accessible and relevant to the target audience. I have added so much more information that the web page needs to be reconfigured so in due course you will be able to find the following on the website:

- Update [Good Neighbour policy](#) – now up
- Updated [Local Rules](#) – now up
- Flow chart of disciplinary procedure
- Introduction templates – say hello
- New application form for the Community Fund and examples of previous funded initiatives
- Q&A briefing on parking in Stoke Bishop – already available
- Document on the University's commitment to community cohesion and student behaviour in the community

- Support for students such as the checklist

We are also in the process of updating the Love Where You Live website in collaboration with UWE and both Student Unions.

### **Don't Rent Yet**

Our current big initiative is the Don't Rent Yet campaign. This aims to raise awareness amongst students about their rights as tenants, expectations and standards, checking contracts and inventories etc.

We encourage students to take time to fully understand all the information provided to them and not rush into signing contracts to take on properties next year with people they have not known very long.

Community ambassadors had a stall at the UoB Housing Fair to raise awareness about community living in mixed residential areas, how to manage waste and recycling and the various things that students need to take responsibility for once they are living independently in the community.

We had a hands on, interactive recycling exercise which gave students some experience of what goes where. This was well received due to the opportunity to enter a draw for a £20 voucher kindly donated by Friska, a local café with an emphasis on ethical choices and sustainability.

We had visual displays that reinforced the message that, no matter what housing options they choose, students will be living in a mixed community.

We recommended:

- Introducing yourselves to your neighbours – template
- Being aware of noise created by large numbers of people in a house
- Ways to minimise noise disturbance
- Considering that other people have different lifestyles and timescales

Promoting Marks out of Tenancy – a rate your landlord online website. This will develop, over time, a good resource of information for students to distinguish quality landlords and letting agencies.

## **Comments and questions arising from updates**

**Update from UWE:** Prompted questions about how Nigel reduced his complaints over the past month (community rep mentioned security on Tuesdays and weekends for SU nights) **Action NE** – provide further information.

**Waste:** Gloucester/Cheltenham Rd - main roads with accommodation above shops – currently not included on Move In door knocking schedule. **Action JL and NE** – ongoing discussions with Joanna Dainton at Bristol Waste Company (BWC) to clarify messages around waste and recycling collections. Planned joint door knocking campaign in the New Year to target these roads (UoB, UWE and BWC).

Suggestion that when reprint bin stickers they should be UV resistant. Or Use UV resistant white markers. **Action JL and NE**

Extra waste at start of term. Landlord are sometimes to blame for leaving waste from previous tenants. This should be classed as trade waste, for which there is a charge.

In previous years there have been extra waste and recycling collections in key areas at the start of term. **Action JL** – ask Joanna Dainton if this is possible again.

There is very little BCC enforcement due to lack of resources. Liz Kew shared BCC Enforcement Facebook link:

<https://www.facebook.com/NETBristol/>

Cllr Clive Stevens reminded of the BCC Corporate Strategy 2017-2022 consultation, open until 5 January:

<http://bit.ly/2e6XQfp>

Question if there is anyone at BCC who has responsibility for waste now Trudy Feeney has left, or is it all handled by BWC? **Action CllrCS** – find out.

**Fly-tipping:** Big issue on Cotham Hill/ back of Perry Rd/ Lower Park Row.

Acknowledged that students are sometimes the victims of fly-tipping and get the blame. **Action all:** Include the word 'student' when reporting fly tipping of student waste or outside student properties. BCC will record this. **Action JL and NE** – record and monitor incidences when student houses have experienced undue blame for fly-tipping.

**Theft:** Are students advised to take out contents insurance? – Yes in various ways and times. No included in the Love Where You Live leaflet, which does include advice about registering and/or tracking bikes and valuables. **Action JL and NE** – include in reprint of LWYL leaflet.

**Languages and translation:** Is there a translate function on UoB, UWE or LWYL websites? UoB website is compatible with Google translate. **Action JL and NE** – find out about UWE and LWYL websites.

Are there materials for students, such as the LWYL leaflet, in other languages e.g. Chinese/Mandarin? No – overseas students need to demonstrate a level of English in order to be able to access the curriculum so will be able to access written leaflets.

**Other points:**

Students benefit the city with money/wealth and volunteering: an example is High Kingsdown gardening group which local students got involved in.

There is a great deal of pressure on students, financially and education related stress. Caroline Court gave an overview of the mental health and wellbeing support initiatives provided by UoB including the Big White Wall online support tool.

[www.bigwhitewall.com](http://www.bigwhitewall.com)

Do we refer students to [Off the Record](#)? Yes

There should be more understanding and additional support for people with learning difficulties and/or autism when door knocking. The messages around getting involved and introducing yourself to your neighbours may be challenging for those with communication difficulties.

Perhaps need to extend door-knocking campaign into Hotwells and Bedminster

**Discussion and consultation: Landlords and letting agents**

This year's focus will be on challenging issues related to students and the privately rented accommodation market.

As mentioned Nigel and I have sought an invite to the next BALMA meeting [Bristol Association of Letting & Management Agents](#).

We aim to strengthen relationships as a source of mutual support.

We have very good working relationships with some, tackling complaints about student behaviour, and would like to develop this further.

Points to address include:

- An agreement to hand out University literature at key hand over –LWYL leaflets, letter from Vice-Chancellors, introduction template, checklist etc
- Support for Don't Rent Yet campaign– many problems occur in tenancies because students feel pressured to secure a contract for next year when they have only been in Bristol, and only known the people they are signing with, for a couple of months. Agreement to hold back until at least New Year would minimise the panic and resulting problems.
- All HMO's having bin storage

### **Suggestions and comments from the group:**

#### **Key handover**

- Also include other relevant literature eg bin collection timetables. **Action** – Joanna Dainton has agreed to provide in the summer
- How to reach everyone e.g. small private landlords? Could all the documents be on the LWYL website for landlords to access?
- Have all this ready for July (before term starts, helps people staying in summer)

#### **Don't Rent Yet**

- Encourage property release and students to rent in Feb/March
- Work with landlords/letting agents – promote how this benefits them

#### **Bin storage**

- Need for clarity for houses above shops (can they have a permanent bin?)

#### **Accommodation quality**

- Need a student complaint process to create ranking system. This will likely be solved by [Marks out of Tenancy](#) (in development)

- Have university-approved accommodation
- Council Charter being developed as an ethical letting standard to replace Acorn and West of England standards.

### **Discussion and consultation: House parties**

From looking at the statistics so far it is apparent that very early on in the year complaints come in about noise. Due to good weather in September and October there was lots about noise in the garden and on front door steps etc. This I am confident to tackle through the usual complaints procedure, as the majority of these type of complaint were resolved with an awareness raising email.

But from the statistics I have gathered:

Of the 74 noise complaints 38 were about a party rather than general noise.

75% of the students I contacted about complaints were second years.

This indicates that increased education and awareness in the first year is needed. I am working on some form of training and/or roadshows to the Halls to give key messages to first years. I need this to be mandatory and recordable so that I can hold students to account as aware that their actions are unacceptable. Our presence at this year's housing fair was the first step in this process.

There is also a rising issue around epic parties on a wholly unacceptable scale for residential settings.

We state in our literature that it is advisable to let neighbours know if you are planning to have a few friends over but this is sometime misconstrued as – if you give people warning and maybe a bottle of wine you can do what you want and hold huge, loud parties until whatever time of the morning.

There also seems to be an awareness that if you only have one party you can't get into so much trouble that you get kicked out. But even if households only have one party a year, for residents in high density areas this means several parties within earshot throughout the year, each year.

I would like to close this loophole and am looking at ways to promote a campaign that makes students aware that loud, late, over attended house parties are not acceptable and there are severe consequences.

The difficulty comes in enforcing this. Students are people and as such they are entitled to socialise and have friends over.

Also, when raising awareness and holding people to account we need to be transparent and consistent. It is a big shock for students to find themselves jumping straight up the disciplinary procedure on their first offence.

I would like us to look at what constitutes an acceptable and unacceptable party.

Where are the lines when we get to the grey areas?

What time? How loud? How many people?

How do we prove it?

Who are the party organising outfits or door staff suppliers?

How can we put pressure on them to not target students?

## **Comments and suggestions from the group**

### **Unacceptable**

- People talking/smoking outside after 10pm (applicable every day of the week)
- Door staff
- Selling tickets
- Large sound equipment
- Licences
- Organised via apps (e.g. Freshfixers or Tilt)
- Noise of people coming/going to houses and parties
- Promoted on social media (huge numbers)
- Guests above the domestic loading capacity of the floor
- Health and safety and fire safety risks
- In breach of tenancy agreements

## **Acceptable**

- Party is inside the house after 10pm
- Promoting parties in town/other venues. There is a [list](#) of venues on the LWYL website of venues that offer free or subsidised party hire which we promote.
- Ending before 10pm on a week night and 11/12 at weekends. Promote that for later, louder parties – take it down town
- Clauses in tenancy agreements restricting parties (forfeit deposits?)
- Parties with a maximum amount of guests per tenant (e.g. 2-3)

Universities should look into some alternative offer of affordable venue.

Universities should fund 24 hour security call out, with powers to close down unacceptable parties.

Could students register their party with University? Specify time and numbers and evidence of approval by neighbours. Any other parties are unacceptable.

**Action JL and NE** – consider all suggestions and create proposals

**Action all** – report noise disturbance so that students are held to account

- let JL know of any other professional party organisers

## **Suggestions for future meetings**

- Move Out campaign: organising students and landlords
- Mental health of students
- Supporting students with learning disabilities etc. in accommodation issues
- Landlord licencing
- Two hours
- Two discussion and consultation topics.