

# Bristol Student Community Partnership

## Meeting Minutes



<b>Date/time</b>	Monday the 24 <sup>th</sup> of January 2022 12.30pm -14.00pm	<b>Venue</b>	Zoom call
<b>Chair</b>	Councillor Paula O'Rourke (PO'R)		
<b>Attendees</b>	Lucinda Parr (UoB), Ruth Day (UoB), Raija Hallman (Bristol Waste Company), Dr Jill White (Resident Group Representative), Andrew Waller (Community Representative), Liam O'Shea (UoB), Gerry Rice (UWE), Fiona McVey (Community Representative), Emma Williams (Bristol Waste) Steve Ayres (BCC Neighbourhood Enforcement, Tam Milner (UoB), PC Sian Harris, Lorna Dallimore, Christian Cull (UoB), Jonathan Mallinson (BCC)		
<b>Actions</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) BCC, UoB and UWE to renew protocol for responding to noise and environmental complaints involving students</li> <li>2) Complaints and outcomes data for partners to be shared in due course</li> <li>3) Universities to review information on complaints webpages and consider how any further clarity on processes could be added.</li> <li>4) Setup a sub-group with AW leading with LOS, GR and JM. Meeting to further discuss end goal. Initial meeting to frame and draft potential actions into a list.</li> </ol>			
<b>Agenda</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Chair's welcome and introductions</li> <li>2. Approve minutes of last meeting (attached)</li> <li>3. Action Register progress questions or comments</li> <li>4. Enforcement - briefings, questions, or comments (associated papers to follow on 20 Jan)</li> <li>5. Improving landlord engagement – working group proposal (see PHT-Landlords briefing paper)</li> <li>6. AOB</li> </ol>			
1)	<b><u>Welcome &amp; Partnership Background</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PO'R Rotating Chair</li> <li>• PO'R welcomed all to the meeting and individuals introduced themselves and their role to the group.</li> </ul>		
2)	<b><u>Previous Actions</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous minutes were approved as an accurate record.</li> </ul>		
3)	<b><u>Group Summary Updates</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group went through the actions register.</li> <li>• AW: Proposed asked when the noise protocol agreement between the universities and the BCC enforcement team will be reviewed. LOS confirmed engagement with relevant parties to agree protocol moving forward underway. This is expected to be complete in the coming weeks.</li> </ul>		
4)	<b><u>Enforcement</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of Discussion</li> <li>• Papers submitted. Q&amp;A proposed during the meeting. Position papers submitted by stakeholders including UoB, UWE, and A&amp;S Police. BCC Neighbourhood Enforcement team paper forthcoming.</li> </ul>		

- Clarity on what kind of evidence would be required sought by community representatives. FM asked if there had been a change in process.
- LOS: No All complaints go to the CLO and takes a course of action based on their assessment. No change in process – disciplinary investigations progress in accordance with the [Student Disciplinary Regulations and Procedure 2021-2022](#)
- TM: Evidence required to support allegation of misconduct dictated by the nature of an allegation, but it should be detailed, specific and contemporaneous.
- Concept of evidence tricky but was explained in as much detail as possible.
- Example given of a student damaging a car. Require dates/photo or description of student/facial details etc. Solid evidence is hard for students to negate those claims.
- Can sometimes be hard for residents to know exactly where noise is coming from. Residents need to be careful for their own wellbeing and safety, need to be careful filming people.
- But more detail and evidence enables investigation team to ask more targeted and specific questions of students. Requires students to give a very specific response. The more specific the team can be with students, the more likely there will be a successful disciplinary outcome.
- Complaint's procedure - FM noted that they couldn't find a 'clear procedure' highlighted. The steps that would be taken, and the level of intervention the CLO could undertake also seemed unclear. Only a list of potential sanctions, and fines.
- Residents are concerned they do not get provided enough feedback to their complaints, and it is hard getting feedback to date. It's still not clear what the processes in place are.
- Steps/stages approach proposed by Residents, and referred to in the position papers, but Residents still felt it was not clear and they couldn't pinpoint it clearly in any of the position papers.
- LOS elaborated on the reasons UoB do not talk about steps. They are not deemed helpful as every complaint needs to be individually assessed by the CLO. Clear evidence when it is non disputable is escalated, to disciplinary procedure. Assessment looks at the nature of the allegation, and the balance with previous complaints, and all the other evidence available. Procedure is to look at each incident on a case-by-case basis.
- Local level there is an investigation irrespective if there is sufficient evidence to escalate or not. Involves understanding complaints and again looking at any evidence. CLO would go and liaise with the students and make them aware of the allegations. Students are referred again to the rules and regulations, and the expectations. CLO would also seek assurances that the kind of unsocial behaviours wouldn't happen again.
- By clear procedure for responding to complaints, this means each complaint is dealt with in the same way, on a case-by-case basis. Like a lot of things that happen at a University, there are internal procedures that are used to discharge the obligations under policies and formal procedures, in this case those underpinned by Student Disciplinary Regulations and Procedure 2021-2022. And all disciplinary procedures are available on the public website
- Local level complaints are dealt with by the CLO. Each complaint logged and assessed. Level at which a complaint can be progressed will depend on detail and evidence.
- The CLO would always go and speak to students with each case. If it's not possible to identify students, or house they came from, it proves more difficult.

- FM feels that there was a lack of feedback to those that make the complaints. Inappropriate action has been taken, with not enough action taken towards students. Parties continue and Operation Beech has been deemed as having any positive effect or resolution. It's been quiet this term but it will flare up again.
- FM said there is evidence parties have resumed once Beech has visited and left a property. What would the university response to that be?
- If OB had been to an address and a party resumes, if there is evidence of that e.g. time-stamped photos, noise recordings etc, then it makes a robust case. On repeated warnings – not given when there is an ability to take a case forward.
- Sanctions can only be used at the end of an investigation. Fines are not recommended. More impactful sanctions that can be used is a more feasible option. Fines are not considered equitable, and risk that students can pay, and start to build the fines into the cost of a night out. Warning and complaint listed on student's record are more effective.
- GR: TM painted a solid picture. Confirmed that all UWE complaints are examined. Agreed that similar disciplinary processes in place at UWE. Occasionally/rare that students would not be aware of any antisocial behaviour complaints. Fines are rarely used at UWE. Legal advice is that they are unenforceable fines – not a lot the university can do if student ignores them. Complaints processed in appropriate timescales. Confident both universities take same approach to disciplinary actions. Would always endeavour to get back to complainant.
- POR – would be useful to see scale of challenge, with numbers behind the issues. Compared situation to a new teacher following behaviour processes and kids continuing to do what they want.
- FM: level of evidence – advised by police not to go out and record people. Increase the chance of something more serious happening. Can certainly identify houses, but taking photos and recordings is an unreasonable request.
- TM: Not saying residents need to be out there taking photos and personal safety always comes first. Attempting to give examples of what constitutes robust evidence. As it would do in a legal sense, evidence needs to be robust – without evidence it is one person's word against another. That's not to say the university doesn't believe allegations, but without evidence, if students deny it, an investigation falls down.
- SA – NET wouldn't advise people going out to the street to take photos. Noise cases are very hard to deal with. On receiving a complaint, a resident is asked to keep a 2 week diary, and then NET officers attend to witness and record issues to secure evidence – a long drawn out process. For parties, probably more likely a Police matter due to their anti-social nature.
- A&S Police also provided brief updates. There are various powers under ASB act. Issue can come against is process starts with warning, then community protection warning, then a notice, then a criminal behaviour order. Beech officers can make determination if appropriate and proportionate to close down a location and displace people from property for 48 hrs. If lots of people at a party, need resources to remove them. Key elements are dealing with repeat offenders. Call 101 if complaints resume following an OB visit and after 2am, to go through normal reporting procedure. There is a Police escalation process.
- PO'R – Group clear on the problems – the key is to find solutions and a list of forward actions.
- Numbers of incidents would be useful to see, and scale of repeat offences – grateful for partners to share their relevant data.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TM: Student Resolution Service is very new, only went live in September. There will be a report on an annual basis – not week on week data. It takes time to complete investigations. The more detail we have, the more successful outcomes we will have.</li> <li>• Universities could look again at public complaints webpages to tighten up language and make clear approach to community complaints.</li> <li>• FM: it's not just one-off parties, it is parties moving from property to property.</li> <li>• UoB has committed to Operation Beech every Wed, Fri and Sat until at least June.</li> </ul>
5)	<p><b><u>Improving Landlord Engagement</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation provided and discussed by JM.</li> <li>• JM: Sympathy for Residents, and understand frustration</li> <li>• Licenced conditions have some power, and duties for Landlords. Pick up any issues not been addressed. Look at landlords' responsibilities, and agents, and what they need to be doing to address any problems. Specific evidence helpful, agree personal safety paramount.</li> <li>• Evidence beyond reasonable doubt required that a landlord hasn't done what they should be doing. Landlords and licence holders have legal defences when actions cannot be taken against them, called reasonable excuse. Also, must get past, and take into account the public interest.</li> <li>• Looking to take more action going forward. Action also taken against unlicenced holders.</li> <li>• License enforcement unit also comes into play. Team pick up issues when it gets to enforcement. Focus is around Health &amp; Safety. Numbers in document gives a bit of context.</li> <li>• Licenced conditions discussed. I.E Licence holders to deal with anti-social behaviour. New conditions coming in on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2022. Licence Holders have broader expectations. However, evidence is still required. Landlords also have conditions including ensuring that tenancy agreements highlights antisocial behaviour, and how it would be addressed.</li> <li>• Andrew circulated requests in paper for task and finish group. JM, GR, LOS agreed to join group in principle. Group to report back on progress against objectives noted in proposal in a future meeting.</li> </ul>
6)	<p><b><u>Future Meeting Timetable</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 May 2022</li> </ul>
7)	<p><b><u>AOB</u></b></p> <p>New UoB Community Liaison Office in post in March 2022</p>