

Talk and Box Ticking ... or Action?

It is well over ten years since issues around students and their accommodation were first raised ... and ignored. It is two years since the launch of the Area 4 Student Study. It is a year since the University of Nottingham's senior officers were our guests on a tour of some of our neighbourhoods. It is almost a year since the first draft of the Integrated Student Housing Strategy document, and six months since the public consultation on the Student Housing Restraint Area. Committees have been set up and groups talk and talk about what to do. But the only actions we see are:

- More family homes in more neighbourhoods becoming student HMOs,
- More garages, lofts, cellars changing into 'study-bedrooms',
- More noise, more parties, more degradation of our environment
- More expansion by both of Nottingham's Universities
- More Council Tax demanded from us
- Fewer community facilities and amenities



We Ask:

The Universities in Nottingham

- Do you endorse the City Council's Student Housing Strategy? If so ...
- Are you prepared to stand with the Council and residents, if necessary at Planning Inspectorate Hearings, and support the principles of that strategy?
- Are you prepared to join with the Council and residents and explain to Government why changes in legislation are needed to control the quantity, quality and spread of student HMOs?
- Are you prepared to take responsibility for your students and their accommodation? If so ...
- Will you build substantial amounts of accommodation for your students on your campus sites?
- Are you prepared to follow the example of other universities, accept responsibility for the behaviour of your students and, when necessary, discipline them?
- You claim to want to be 'good neighbours'. We ask you to ... act like good neighbours!

The Students in Nottingham

- Do you endorse the City Council's Student Housing Strategy? If so ...
- Are you prepared to stand with the Council and residents, if necessary at Planning Inspectorate Hearings, and support the principles of that strategy?
- Are you prepared to join with the Council and residents and explain to Government why changes in legislation are needed to control the quantity, quality and spread of student HMOs?
- You claim the right to live where you want 'in' our communities. Do you accept the responsibilities that living 'in' our communities entails?

Nottingham City Council

- How much do the Universities and their students actually cost Nottingham?
- Do you really value us, our neighbourhoods and our contributions to Nottingham?
- Or are the universities, their students and the money and prestige we are told they bring more important?
- In many of our neighbourhoods we are an endangered species
- It is for you to decide whether we are worth saving
- And for you to tell us what you decide

Central Government

- You want balanced and sustainable communities
- You finally accept that concentrations of students living in HMOs gives rise to problems in the host communities resulting in imbalance and unsustainability
- When are you going to act and produce the legislation and the funding needed to solve these problems?

And Return to Us

— *Neighbourhoods where families want to live ... not leave!* —

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'Studentification' is the Buzz Word ... so what is it?

studentification: noun
the social and environmental changes caused by very large numbers of students living in particular areas of a town or city

"The massive expansion of higher education in Britain over the last decade has given rise to a new piece of terminology. **Studentification** refers to the process of social, environmental and economic change effected by large numbers of students invading particular areas of the cities and towns in which popular universities are located. **Studentification** is consistently viewed as a negative concept, used in the same context as phrases such as 'student ghetto'. It describes the rapid conversion of shopping and residential areas to suit the student market, such as the proliferation of take-away food outlets and cheap alcohol retailers, and the conversion of larger residential properties into so-called 'HMOs' (houses in multiple occupancy). **Studentification** has social and economic consequences also, illustrated by the rapid decrease in school class sizes as families move out of such areas, and the sharp increase in house prices as landlords create a property boom."

Macmillan English Dictionary Website - Word of the Week

Dan Lucas says ... 'My role on the Steering Group will help to ensure the project focuses on the key issues, and provides recommendations that really will be useful for people attempting to address aspects of studentification in different parts of the country.

It falls to local government to represent the interest of local communities and I am keen to ensure that both the Steering Group and the researchers are fully aware that this is a very real issue in certain neighbourhoods.'

'Students in the Community' ...

Is the title of the research project being undertaken by Dr. Smith. The problem is not students in the community, but rather what happens when the HMOs they live in replace family homes and the students themselves replace the community. For example students have probably been a part of Lenton since the University of Nottingham first began to develop its University Park campus. The problem is that whereas once they were just a part of a neighbourhood, now in many neighbourhoods they have virtually displaced the rest of the community.

The NAG Plays its Part

As part of his research Dr. Smith visited Nottingham at the beginning of March. He met with Council and University officers and with member of the NAG and its community partners. We took the opportunity to present our case to him and explain why we use '**Neighbourhoods where families want to live ... not leave**' as our motto.

Dr. Smith has said he wants to revisit Nottingham later this year when the results of his research are published, and we have indicated that we will be happy to see him and host a meeting.

Students in Local Communities Nottingham Plays its Part in Government Sponsored Research ...

... By Dan Lucas, Nottingham City Council

...In the late Autumn of 2004 work commenced to look at the impact of large concentrations of students living in particular localities. The work was commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills (the Ministry with responsibility for Higher Education), with input from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the ODPM, (The Ministry with responsibility for Housing, Planning and Local Government.), the Local Government Association, or LGA (the organisation that represents the interests of local councils at a national level) and Universities UK, UUK, (the Higher Education Sector's representative body).

Background

The story of this work, however, dates back to before last autumn, and Nottingham has had a key role in ensuring that the work came about.

As you may know, the Government has recently passed a wide ranging Housing Act which includes sections that specifically relate to HMOs. As the legislation passed through Parliament various interested organisations lobbied for changes to it. Amongst others, Nottingham City Council and the Nottingham Action Group on Houses in Multiple Occupation pressed the case for a definition of HMOs that would bring more properties within the scope of regulation. As part of this lobbying Nottingham South Member of Parliament Alan Simpson organised a meeting with the Minister of Housing and Planning, the Rt Hon Keith Hill MP, at the Houses of Parliament.

The deputation from Nottingham was led by Dave Trimble (Councillor for Dunkirk and Lenton Ward) and included staff from relevant sections of the City Council, representatives of the Nottingham Action Group on HMOs and a representative from the National HMO Lobby.

Whilst the Minister was reluctant to concede the need for changes to the legislation, he did accept that there were very real issues affecting neighbourhoods with high numbers of students living in privately rented homes. He recognised this because of the strength of representations he had received from MPs from different parts of the country, many of whom were present at the meeting. So, although he could not be persuaded to make changes to the legislation, he did promise the deputation he would raise these concerns with his colleague, the Minister for Higher Education. This research flows from that commitment to the Nottingham deputation.

Research Specification

The research is focused on students living within communities (as opposed to on campuses), and is designed to concentrate on 'good practice'. It attempts to address the disadvantages to local communities of high densities of rented accommodation and lots of short term residents.

The aim of the research is not to identify areas where new legislation is required, but to identify the positive use of existing legislation, and indeed voluntary activity, and to make an assessment of how successful it can be in addressing the problems that can be seen in certain neighbourhoods. These aims have been set out by the Ministries that have commissioned the research.

The researchers have been asked to assess the extent of the problem in different parts of the country, to look at different approaches to addressing it, and to examine the extent to which these approaches have been successful

Gentrification — Yuppification — Studentification ...

The contract to carry out this piece of work has been awarded to Dr Darren Smith, an Urban Geographer at the University of Brighton. Dr Smith has previously carried out work on this subject in Leeds and Brighton, and indeed claims to be amongst the first to have used the term 'studentification' to describe the trends going on in certain neighbourhoods.

Nottingham Gives Its Steer

The research is being monitored by a Steering Group. In acknowledgment of the work done in Nottingham the Local Government Association asked Dan Lucas from Nottingham City Council's Housing Strategy Section to be the LGA representative on this Steering Group. The research is due to be completed by late Spring/early Summer, 2005.'

[Dan Lucas is a Policy & Research Officer, Housing Direct,. You can contact him by 'phone on Nottingham 915-7359, or by e-mail on: daniel.lucas@nottinghamcity.gov.uk]

The National HMO Lobby

... **Richard Tyler, Co-ordinator, National HMO Lobby**

The National HMO Lobby had its beginnings in early 2000 when nine community associations in Leeds came together to form the Leeds HMO Lobby. From an initial contact with the Tiverton Residents Association in Birmingham a network of connections has spread across the country. Now, groups in Bath, Belfast, Bristol, Cardiff, Coleraine, Coventry, Durham, , Glasgow, Lincoln, Liverpool, Loughborough, Manchester, Nottingham, Plymouth, St. Andrews, St. Anne's (Lancashire), Sheffield, Southampton and York are also involved.

Through these years, the Lobby has played a vital role in exchanging information and providing moral support. However, in 2004 it took on a more proactive campaigning role. In January, it participated in Northern Ireland's consultation on its Use Classes Order - apparently to good effect, as this Order has now been revised. In February, the Lobby joined a delegation from Nottingham to meet Keith Hill, the Minister for Housing & Planning. In October members from Nottingham, Loughborough and Leeds gave papers at the national conference in Leeds on Students, Housing & Community. In December, the Lobby lobbied Communities Scotland regarding accreditation in the private rented sector.

Meanwhile, an informal network has become a formally constituted organisation. The Lobby had already agreed its aims for the meeting with the Minister. In November, it adopted a simple constitution. It now has a Committee, comprising one representative from each of twelve regions (with one or two vacancies), and it has nominated a Co-ordinator. Already, members have taken advantage of this new structure. The Bristol representative has lobbied his MP in his capacity as South West Co-ordinator. The Yorkshire & Humber Region has responded to the consultation on their Regional Housing Strategy. And the East Midlands plans a regional get-together.

The Lobby has joined the ranks of national groups like Shelter, the National HMO Network and NORA (the Network Of Residents Associations). It is also worth noting that it is in touch with similar organisations in the USA and Canada.

Challenges

This year the Lobby has two immediate challenges facing it – responding to the Students in the Community DfES project [See page 2], and also responding to the ODPM (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) consultation on the implementation of HMO licensing.

The National HMO Lobby's future looks as encouraging as its past ... and as busy!

The Housing Act and Nottingham

... **Barrie James, Nottingham City Council**

An Assessment

'After much 'consultation', but very little change, the Housing Act 2004 finally received Royal Assent at the end of last year. However, due to the content of the Act it is likely to be many months yet before it fully comes into force. Dates when the various elements become law are yet to be disclosed.

There are perhaps three key areas in the new legislation that will affect properties in the City, particularly those in areas like Dunkirk and Lenton with large numbers of HMOs. First, the definition of an HMO has been extended. It now definitely includes the majority of student houses. As such, these properties will have to comply with relevant standards. Second, mandatory licensing of 'some' HMOs will be introduced. Consultation on details of the scheme is on-going. But we do know that all HMOs of three or more storeys **AND** five or more residents will require a licence: this means that many HMOs will fall outside the licensing regime. Finally, a health and safety rating system has been introduced that changes the manner in which Council officers will assess the suitability of premises for occupation

... and a Plea?

This piece of legislation will have a major impact and, due to the increase in the number of properties coming within the definition of an HMO, it will involve local authorities such as Nottingham in a considerable amount of extra work. Therefore, we are waiting, somewhat anxiously, to see what additional resources, if any, are given to Nottingham for this important area of work.

[Barrie James is Service Manager for Public Health]

Do try and visit the new National HMO Lobby website on www.hmobby.org.uk and the Leeds HMO Lobby/Headingley Against Landlordism site on www.HealHeadingley.org.uk
Our own website will follow later this year

Almost the first thing the Nottingham Action Group became involved in was last Spring's meeting with Keith Hill, Minister for Housing and Planning.

On that day we had along with us Richard Tyler of the Leeds HMO Lobby. It is Richard (now the Co-ordinator of the National HMO Lobby) and the work he, the Leeds HMO Lobby and others have done to raise the profile of the effects of HMOs on communities in Leeds and elsewhere that has given us support and strength and has become a template for our own activities.



Come to think about it ... it was Richard who pointed out that NAG might not be such a bad name for a group like ours. After all, a 'nag' can also be a faithful, but tired, old horse in need of care and a good feed – just like our neighbourhoods!

The Housing Act How it Helps Us

- ❖ It provides a new definition of HMO covering all shared houses.
- ❖ It requires Councils to licence larger HMOs
- ❖ And it also enables Councils to licence all HMOs, should they wish to do so. Though they will need to apply to Government for permission.
- ❖ It will make landlords responsible for their tenants behaviour
- ❖ It will identify who is responsible for every licensed HMO
- ❖ It may well discourage new investors (including student parents) from buying more family homes for conversion into HMOs

And How it Doesn't

- ❖ Mandatory licensing only covers a relatively small number of HMOs, i.e. those of three storeys and more and with five or more tenants
- ❖ It does not help to control concentrations of HMOs
- ❖ It will not solve the social and environmental problems caused by concentrations of HMOs – but it may well help
- ❖ It has manpower and financial implications for the Council

We echo Barrie's concerns about resources for this huge project. Will Government provide, or will Council Tax payers be expected to pick up another tab?

Planning and HMOs The 'Mad Hatter's Tea Party'

The Housing Act may well be about to sort out some HMO problems. What is nowhere in sight is legislation that will address the nonsense that is Planning and HMOs.

Why nonsense? Because, as far as the Town and Country Planning Act (1987) is concerned HMOs and family homes are one and the same thing. What we are talking about is something called 'Use Classes Order'. This groups together in 'use classes' certain uses of buildings or other land. Changes of use between one class and another need planning permission. Changes within a class do not.

Since an HMO and a family home are both in Class C3(a), whenever a family home becomes an HMO, no planning permission is needed. However, if the house is then occupied by more than six people that is a change of use and does need planning permission!

Confused? No more than Keith Hill and his Civil Servant advisers. First they say it is impossible to tell the difference between a house occupied by a family (two adults and four teen-age children) and one owned by an absentee landlord, with six young occupants with short-term tenancies living in it. Then they change tack and say that there is a difference, but '*... It is for the local planning authority to determine whether a change of use has occurred on a fact and degree basis.*

Still confused? So are we.

However, in Northern Ireland ...

Things have been different since the end of last November. There, a review of the use Classes order has resulted in new legislation designed to tighten planning controls on HMOs. In a press release Northern Ireland Environment Minister, Angela Smith, was quoted as saying:

'By tightening planning control over houses in multiple occupancy, this legislation will help address public concerns about the growth in the number of HMOs in certain areas ... and the impact this is having on local communities.'

Two consequences of this are: anyone proposing to change the use of a dwelling house occupied by a single family or a single person to an HMO will need to get planning permission; and the legislation will enable the Planning Service to consider policies for control over the density of HMOs in certain areas.

Down a Rabbit Hole?

Well, we did say it was a Mad Hatter's Tea Party! In Northern Ireland the need for new use Classes Order legislation governing HMOs has been recognised. It has been possible to define an HMO in planning terms. A change of use to an HMO now requires planning permission — a straightforward statement of fact! Therefore, why is Government in Westminster refusing to do the same for us here in England?

And the Time has Come, the Walrus said ...

Without the same, simple, but fundamental, change in planning legislation that has just taken place in Northern Ireland, Councils like ours are gambling every time they try to restrict the concentration and spread of HMOs in neighbourhoods like ours. They are working at the very limits of their powers and always at risk of losing the lottery that is a Planning Inspectorate Appeal Hearing. If they lose, Planning officers and residents alike are left to pick up the pieces.

However, this does not mean that action is not take place.

Planning Enforcement Action

... by Phil Shaw, Principal Planning Officer,
Nottingham City Council

'Over the past year the Council's planning householder and enforcement teams have been at the forefront of implementing the City Council's policies regarding balanced communities, particularly where they impact on unauthorised student accommodation and extensions to shared properties.

One of the enforcement section's main duties is to respond to complaints about houses in shared occupation which do not have planning permission. (This is most often where there are more than six occupants.)

Initially the team investigates the complaint to find out if a breach of planning control has actually occurred. These complaints form part of the workload of over 400 complaints investigated each year by two planning enforcement officers. If necessary, a report is prepared for the Council's Development Control Committee, as all formal enforcement action has to be agreed by the elected Councillors. A formal enforcement notice then has to be prepared by the Legal Section before it is served.

This may seem a very lengthy process, but an enforcement notice needs to be accurate and legally correct for both the Council and the alleged offender, particularly as the fine for not complying with the notice can be up to £20,000.

In many instances people comply with legislation without the need for formal action. However, several cases have been presented to the Council's Development Control Committee over the past year.

The Committee has agreed formal action in the following cases, all concerning the unauthorised occupation of a Class C3 dwelling house by more than 6 persons: 417 Derby Road (occupants reduced to six*); 12 Oundle Drive (occupants reduced to six*); 3 Rolleston Drive (property has changed ownership; new owner aware of enforcement issue; unauthorised occupation to cease June, 2005*); 27 Wollaton Hall Drive (enforcement notice being prepared*).

(*Understood to be the current situation.)

If you have any enquiries regarding enforcement or householder planning matters, please phone Phil Shaw on **9155433** or e-mail him at phil.shaw@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Environmental Enforcement Action Is This the End of the 24x7x52 Wheelie Bin?

It is a blight on our neighbourhoods. It obstructs pavements. It encourages vandalism. It makes streets look run-down. It attracts all sorts of vermin, including 'bin dippers'. It is not necessary. So it is very welcome news indeed to hear that it's days may finally be numbered.

At long last the City Council has been given the green light to serve enforcement notices on occupants who persistently leave their bins out.

If you have a '24x7x52' wheelie bin hot spot in your street, let your Neighbourhood Wardens know [Their contact details are in our Directory.] or Neighbourhood Services on **915-2000**, e-mail address waste.management@nottinghamcity.gov.uk.

They are anxious to get going, and we are anxious to know how things develop, so keep us informed.

Student Housing Action

The Council is in the final stages of preparing a plan designed to tackle issues surrounding the over-concentration of student accommodation in parts of the City. The key aims are:

- ❖ *in areas with concentrations of HMOs to divert students away from the general housing market and into purpose build accommodation;*
 - ❖ *to improve the environmental conditions in these areas.*
- The Plan is due to be finalized in the next week or so. The Nottingham Action Group is very much involved in the preparation of the strategy. More details of what promises to be a significant development will be in the next issue of the magazine, together with ways in which residents can help to make the Action Plan work.

New Deal for Communities

'New Deal for Communities (NDC) is a Government funded ten-year programme in Radford and Hyson Green aimed at addressing deprivation in the area. The key areas where Government wants to see improvement in standards includes: health, education, crime, jobs and businesses.

NDC works with a number of partners to address crime and anti-social behaviour in the area. Some of NDC's major initiatives are: the Neighbourhood Wardens project, Police Beat Teams, improved street lighting, the 'Litter Busters' project and the 'Safe As Houses' project. They aim to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the area, reduce the fear of crime, and give communities a sense of ownership within their neighbourhoods.

A number of concerns have been raised within the NDC area about the high incidence of anti-social behaviour among students. Their behaviour includes loud noise and drunkenness, with shouting, swearing and slamming of doors during the night and into the early hours of the morning, especially when returning home from pubs and clubs. Polite requests from other residents are often ignored. A substantial amount of litter is generated in the area and this further contributes to the general unattractiveness of neighbourhoods.

One of the recurring issues that the Police continue to face is the increase in burglaries when students live in the area. Derwent Housing, the Police, the Burglary Reduction Team and the Neighbourhood Wardens have done a lot of work to among students to raise their awareness of security and the importance of taking precautionary measures such as locking their doors and windows when they are going out, and not using their mobile phones in areas they are unfamiliar with. Crime statistics continue to show an increase in burglaries when students move into the area, as a result of failing to take advice and not being more careful.

The Police, Neighbourhood Wardens and other support Services are here to give help and support to everyone who is resident in the NDC area. Please work with us in the fight to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour, and all the other problems in our area.'

... Thank you Carmen from NDC for starting the ball rolling

The Nottingham Action Group is developing working partnerships with community organizations like the Partnership Council, the Dunkirk and Lenton Partnership Forum, and New Deal for Communities, all of which are based in areas with student/University related issues. We hope that by sharing information and experiences with each other we will all benefit our neighbourhoods and communities. This is the first of what we hope are many more contributions from them to our magazine.

Nottingham to be 'Action Area' Against Anti-Social Behaviour

... Thanks to Emma Julian of 'Respect for Nottingham' for this
'Nottingham has been chosen by the Government to become one of 50 Action Areas being set up across the country as part of its TOGETHER campaign against anti-social behaviour such as graffiti, vandalism, nuisance neighbours and fly-tipping.

Being designated an Action Area will support and reinforce efforts already being made by Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire Police and other local agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour in the city through initiatives such as *Respect for Nottingham*.

Work is under way to identify 50 examples of anti-social behaviour, either specific to local neighbourhoods or citywide, which the Council and other agencies will make a commitment to address as part of the TOGETHER campaign. A helpline

will also be set up to make it easier for people to report problems.

In addition to becoming a national Action Area, the City Council is planning to set up a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour Service to co-ordinate its work with the Police.

Nottingham's Action Area status was announced by Louise Casey, National Director of the Home Office's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit at the Respect for Nottingham Event on the 26 January. She said: '*... what we're looking for is areas that take action and make sure the public know that action is being taken. This city is getting results. Other cities can learn from what is happening in Nottingham.*'

Councillor Jon Collins, Leader of Nottingham City Council, said: '*... being chosen as an Action Area is recognition of the stand we have been making against anti-social behaviour for some time now, particularly since the launch of Respect for Nottingham. We now have four Anti-Social Behaviour Task Forces working to tackle problems across the city.*

Through Respect for Nottingham and being a TOGETHER Action Area, we are sending a clear message to those who behave in an anti-social way that we will take the toughest possible action against them to protect the vast majority of decent, law abiding people who live in Nottingham.' ...'

Anti-Social Behaviour ...

Is a pretty general term covering a variety of activities. Usually, that relating to student HMOs is low-level, but persistent: loud stereos, uncontrolled late-night/early morning parties, rubbish left lying around. Most of it should be easy to deal with if landlords and students alike show respect for our neighbourhoods and accept that they have responsibilities to their residents. In too many cases it is not happening. The experiences of our Lenton Triangle resident on Page 6 are by no means unique.

The legislation is there to be used. The snag seems to be that the 'authorities' appear to have difficulty in adapting their enforcement attitudes and systems to deal with the peculiar nature of the problems our neighbourhoods have. Our anti-social behaviour issues tend to be nomadic in nature. The problems are mostly the same, but they move quickly from one property to another. So flexibility is what is needed from the Council and the Police. There is also a feeling amongst residents in some neighbourhoods that the problems are not being taken seriously.

Even if anti-social behaviour is low-level, that should not mean that it can be ignored and put down to 'high spirits'. If an all night party takes place at different addresses all week-end it should be possible to do something about it. Neither is it un-reasonable to ask for services that operate out-of-hours. After all, most of the anti-social behaviour takes place then!

We welcome TOGETHER and trust that some of its efforts will go into solving the anti-social behaviour that makes family living in some of our neighbourhoods almost impossible

Council Tax

Properties rented out to full-time students are Council Tax exempt. The landlords don't pay and neither do the students. But they use up more Council and Police services than the average family home.

There are around 6,000 such properties in the City of Nottingham and it is probable that the total amount of Council Tax exemption is over £6 million. How much the landlords make in rent is open to speculation!

We are told that Central Government, via a complex formula, reimburses the Council for these losses. We have asked whether this is true or not, but no-one seems able to give an accurate answer.

Whether the shortfall is made up by extra Council Tax on other properties, or whether it comes from the Chancellor and Income Tax doesn't affect the result. The Universities, the landlords and the students are being subsidized by the rest of us

We believe one solution to this blatantly unfair situation is for landlords to pay Business Rates



Your Neighbourhood

... in Pictures

Last Autumn the NAG began a collection of photographs as part of a talk we had been asked to give at the Leeds conference on *Students, Housing & Community*. We wanted to let everyone see that our problems were as bad as theirs! We nearly forgot that we also need to show everyone the good things about our homes so they understand what makes them worth hanging on to; why they deserve respect and should not be allowed to deteriorate into tomorrow's slums. Some of the photographs are printed in this issue. We think the contrast between them begins to say a lot about what is right and what is wrong with where we live.

We would very much like to carry on this idea by putting together a record of what you see as the best and the worst of your own neighbourhood, and printing a selection of them.

... and in Words

We also want to run a 'letters and comments' page to reflect your opinions, ideas and experiences about anything and everything that relates to what the Nottingham Action Group is doing. And to let you give us any feedback you have on actions by the Council, the Universities, the Student Unions, the Police and the landlords, and how they affect you and your families.

Send your photographs and letters for publication, marked '**Letters and Photos**' to us, The Nottingham Action Group, c/o The Western Club, 357a Derby Road, Lenton, Nottingham NG7 2DZ.

You must include your name, address, a contact telephone number and, in the case of photographs, a note of where, when and why the pictures were taken. For return of your photographs, please enclose a stamped and addressed envelope. Your letters should be clear and to the point.

If your letters are for our information rather than for publication in the magazine, please make this clear. We will treat whatever you write in strict confidence and will not reveal detailed information to a third party unless you specifically ask us to.

'Please don't bother us!'

... a resident of Lenton writes

'Any resident living next to groups of students could not have failed to miss the irony on reading signs that were posted up during the peace and quiet that was 'exam week'. "*Do not bother us...*" was met by a wry smile by those few remaining long-suffering residents who still live on my street in the Lenton Triangle.

Aside from the noise from even more building, renovating and house alarms, I have been allowed my first solid week of calm since moving in seventeen months ago.

Last night, however, it was back to business as usual. My family was woken up at two o'clock by drunken singing, shouting, arguing, slamming doors and stomping footsteps.

I am beginning to feel a bit like a guest who has overstayed their welcome. Firstly I had one year of banging. You presume it will be short-term. On coming home from the hospital exhausted with my first born, I had to listen to horrendous noise and put up with shouting and dust until almost ten at night. Christmas Day was no exception. When this renovation was over, six students immediately moved in and partied all week without caring about the fact that they had a family who lived next door. Finally I elicited the help of the University who went around to speak to them. They came around to apologise.

What we then had were parties ... but with a polite warning fifteen minutes beforehand.

I am told that Lenton was once an area full of residents who looked out for each other. The ones that remain or who have recently moved out have given me a taste of that.

What a shame that this sense of community is fast becoming just a memory. ...'

Resident or Guest?

And what a shame that any of us should be made to feel '*a bit like a guest who has overstayed their welcome!*'

'Shop a Shed' A Local MP Speaks

... by Alan Simpson MP for Nottingham South

'Most people will know of the Government's *'Rat on a Rat'* campaign. My feeling is that we need something similar, in community improvement, to halt the downward spiral of property exploitation by landlords trying to make a fast buck out of student lettings.

One of the most depressing aspects of the 'studentification' of areas is the extent to which people seem eager to convert even the wheelie bin into five-bedroom student accommodation. It is a grotesque money-grab. Worse still, it drags areas into a downward spiral that exploits students and permanent residents alike.

The process is driven by rogue landlords using rogue builders. If we are to stop it then communities may need to develop their own 'shop a shed' type campaigns that report every illicit space conversion and object to every application that is simply exploitative. This idea came home to me at one of the public meetings in the area, when residents were reporting people attempting to turn garages, and even sheds, into student living space.

The Council have tried to challenge some of the larger property conversions taking place. They need to be supported by a stream of objections/complaints that bring the worst landlords into line. Such a campaign needs to extend to the 'same day' removal of dumped rubbish and furniture outside rented properties.

All landlords should be notified by the Council that this is an offence. The council should also give details of the rubbish removal scheme available **and** warn of what will happen in future. Any reported rubbish should be removed that day by the Council **and the landlord sent a bill for it**.

The Council needs to make it clear to landlords that a license to rent is not a license to dump. No one has the right to turn decent areas into down-market dives that ooze their waste onto the streets.

Of course Councils should have the power to limit the percentage of properties in a given area that can be turned into student accommodation. Of course they should have the power to levy rates on them as businesses rather than family homes. Until we get such power, the least we can do is to challenge property exploitation wherever we get a whiff of it.'

Shop-a-Shed Campaign

Alan Simpson has highlighted many of the issues associated with 'landlordism' and 'studentification'. Some of them can only be successfully tackled by changes to housing and planning legislation which will give Councils like ours some real teeth and the power to act effectively. Some of it, like the Housing Act 2004, is beginning to happen. Some of it, planning legislation and changes to Council Tax and Business Rates, is not.

To get these changes is the job of politicians. Of course we can, and do, help by supporting our MPs and our Councillors, by testing them when necessary, and by as Alan says, challenging situations when we become aware of them. We have already started doing this and not without a little success along the way as some of the articles in this magazine show.

However, we can involve ourselves much more directly simply by being aware of what is happening around us and being prepared to make sure that other people know. We can take the idea of 'Shop a Shed' and expand on it so that it covers rubbish, litter, noise, anti-social behaviour, and exploitation of people as well as properties. So ... You know of a situation where landlords are behaving like this. You have seen a garage that's got a little confused and thinks it's a bed/study. You are the student living in the shed. You think the cellar next door is being used as a bed-sit. You have found dumped rubbish. Perhaps there is building work going on next door and you are not sure it has planning permission. Possibly you are a decent landlord tired of being tarred with the same brush as the rest ...

Join Action Cat and help shop a few Rats!.



Landlordism ...?

We don't have a dictionary definition for this one, but what Alan Simpson has highlighted is one of the worst aspects of 'landlordism' — exploitation of residents, tenants and, in so many cases, the parents who end up footing the bill.



If there's a Shed Rat Around ...

Tell the Council's Public Health and Planning teams. Tell your Student Union Welfare Officer. Tell your MP. Tell your Ward Councillors. Tell the Nottingham Action Group. ... Just don't keep it to yourself. You can find contact numbers in the Directory



... and Whistle for Action Cat

International College at Nottingham Trent

On the 28 December, 2004, the *Nottingham Evening Post* reported that in September 2005 Nottingham Trent University will welcome about 150 students to its newly-established international college.

The college is designed to assist overseas students to get the academic qualifications necessary to meet the University's entrance conditions. It will also run English Language courses and provide social and cultural support.

The University says that the college will create jobs, though no figures have been given. Neither has the University made any comments about where these students will be accommodated.

This is particularly relevant since the University aims to have more than 1,000 students attending the college by the end of five years.

We wish these students well and hope they take home good memories of Nottingham and its residents.

However, residents within Nottingham Trent's traditional fall-out areas have one or two questions to ask. Have the extra 1,000 bed-spaces have been included in the University's forward planning. Or will these be an extra 1,000 students looking for somewhere to live in their neighbourhoods?

The Lenton Triangle

Once, the 'Lenton Triangle' referred to the streets inside the triangle formed by Derby Road, Lenton Boulevard and Ilkeston Road. Now that the University of Nottingham's £10 million purchase of the Central TV site on Lenton Lane has been confirmed, it has a whole new meaning — 'The triangle formed by the University's three local campuses: University Park, Jubilee Campus, Central TV.'

The University says that '... The acquisition of the site ... will present opportunities for the further relocation of a range of staff and functions.' [CAMPUS, Winter 2004].

We understand that it will not be possible to put student accommodation on the site. But what about hotels? That would free up land in University Park earmarked for development as two hotels. That land could then be used to build a substantial number of student apartments

What is the difference between building an hotel for paying guests and a student residence, also for paying guests? We can't see any.

Perhaps the University could explain!

Sauce for the Goose ...

Universities and students claim that the 'tradition' of living in HMOs is so well embedded in the student psyche that it cannot be changed.

... Sauce for the Gander

Residents are being told that they must be prepared to accept changes to their 'tradition' of living in family neighbourhoods!

University of Nottingham Student Union Tells its Members to 'Keep in Down'

... By Anne Griffiths, Welfare Officer 2004/2005

... 'This spring will see the launch of the Student Union's 'Shh! Campaign'. This initiative, which has already been adopted by several other student unions around the country, targets students who live out in the community.

One phrase that local permanent residents may be accustomed to hearing is 'it's only a few students who create a bad impression of all students'. Whilst it may be the case that a tiny proportion of students are unbearable neighbours, the Students' Union recognises that many more students could take simple measures which would prove them to be more responsible members of the community.

The first strategy of the campaign (after having designed a striking and memorable logo) is a poster campaign which will alert students to various anti-social behavioural issues, e.g. noise pollution and waste disposal. It is hoped that high quality, graphically designed posters can be displayed in retail outlets in areas with high concentrations of students so they will be frequently seen by students when they are out in the community and not just on campus.

It is envisaged that the campaign will develop to such an extent that eventually all students who move into the community are aware of the reasons for its existence and its aims for the present and the future.'

[Anne Griffiths can be contacted at the University of Nottingham Student Union, Phone: 846-8772, E-mail: suwelfare@nottingham.ac.uk



Since writing her article, we have had from Anne and Jo Hetreed, her counterpart at Nottingham Trent, the proposals for their SSHH Campaign. We are very pleased to see that the Student Unions from both Universities are following the route already taken by many other UK Student Unions. Naturally, we wish them well with the venture. In particular, we hope they will be successful in raising the money they need to fund their campaign. We trust that the two Universities will open their purses and provide most, if not all, of it.

We understand from the proposals that the aim of the campaign 'is not simply to reduce anti-social behaviour, but to encourage a different type of attitude and mindset from students.'

Those of us who have been told on many occasions that we live in 'student areas' and that 'if we don't like it we can always sell up and move away' (thus realizing the increased equity in our properties) will be delighted if the campaign manages to achieve that aim. From what is happening around us now, we fear there is a long way to go.

We very much hope Anne and Jo will stay in touch with us and continue to provide us with news for the magazine on how things develop.

A New Challenge

Melanie Futer began work as the Manager Off Campus Student Affairs for University of Nottingham in November last year. Her's is a familiar face to many of us. She worked in Dunkirk and Lenton in the late 1990s as a Crime Reduction Manager for Nottinghamshire Police, and then as an Area Co-Coordinator for Nottingham City Council, looking at the delivery of main stream services for Area 4, which then covered Berridge, Radford, Forest Fields and Hyson Green Wards. So she has a wide experience of community liaison, particularly in areas with large student populations

Melanie says that local residents have an important part to play in supporting her work by informing her about the impact that the University and its students are having within the community. She welcomes a dialogue with local people about the daily events, both positive and negative, that are witnessed by people living close to the campuses.

She is also working in partnership with the Police and Local Authorities in implementing strategies to achieve well-balanced communities.

Melanie believes good community relations rely on positive dialogue in all directions. Her hopes for the future of our neighbourhoods lies in improving harmony between residents and students, so that all are, as she says, 'able to benefit from each other, living and working together'. She also says: 'My main objective will be to keep all lines of communication open. ...'

[Melanie Futer can be contacted on Phone: 951-4649, or E-mail: melanie.futer@nottingham.ac.uk

Our Way Forward National

It is becoming increasingly clear that if there is to be any significant progress towards resolving the problems being caused in our neighbourhoods by HMOs, action by Central Government is imperative. The National HMO Lobby, of which we are part, continues to be the best tool we have to put pressure on Ministers to get changes in legislation and we will continue to support its activities.

Locally, we will try and make sure that Nottingham MPs whose constituencies are affected by HMO issues are kept briefed on what is happening. We will also urge them to take the initiative in Westminster and join with other MPs whose constituencies are similarly affected by HMOs to form a Parliamentary pressure group.

As constituents, we can all help with this by writing to our MPs and telling them how we feel and what our is happening in our own neighbourhoods.

We also plan to invite East Midland National HMO Lobby members and their Councillors, Council officers and MPs to a one-day, informal meeting in late Summer/early Autumn. The main aim of the meeting will be to get to know each other a little better and, through that, to give us a way in which we can all share ideas, experiences and 'best practice'

This is a major undertaking for us, but we think that it is something useful that we (with the support of our Councillors and Council officers) can do.

Nottingham

We are working with the City Council, the Universities, the Student Unions and the Police to make sure that residents' views and needs are central to the policies and action plans being developed now and that the agreed actions are delivered and tackle the issues that are important to our neighbourhoods.

To broaden our understanding and ability to represent so many different and diverse neighbourhoods, we have gone out to community organizations based in Radford, Hyson Green, Lenton and Dunkirk and have begun to establish working relationships with them.

Through this magazine and through a number of meetings we will be hosting over the following months, we will try to keep residents up-to-date on how the policies and action plans are progressing. We are also developing, with our community partners, systems by which residents will be able to monitor the effectiveness and suitability of the policies and plans as they are out into action.

We were successful last year in raising the profile of 'studentification' in Nottingham in the local media through the Evening Post's excellent series of articles and the programmes broadcast by Radio Nottingham and Central TV. To maintain that profile, we need people to continue to send their views to the Evening Post and national newspapers, the BBC in Nottingham and Central TV

Neighbourhood

It is becoming increasingly obvious that, in the light of the housing and planning enforcement action, we will need to be able to gather evidence about our problems so that we can prove that what is happening is real and not perceived.

One sort of evidence we have in mind is related to Planning regulations and to the conditions imposed on HMOs by the new Housing Act. For example, where development has taken place (like skylights in the roof) which may not necessarily have needed planning permission, but which has increased the number of tenants or the number of habitable floors. Another group of evidence relates to noise, behaviour, litter – information about parties, rowdy and drunken behaviour, litter left on or dumped in gardens.

It is going to be vital for the success of what is now taking shape for residents to become actively involved in evidence gathering. We are exploring ways in which this can happen and what sort of evidence is needed with those officers involved in day-to-day monitoring and enforcement in a range of Council departments.

We Look Forward to Your Contributions to the Magazine ...

In this, our first issue, we have relied heavily on contributions we have asked for. However, we also want the magazine to reflect what you want to talk about. So, please get writing and sending.

Ideally, articles should be no more than 300 words long, preferably typewritten hard copy, or submitted on floppy disc. Our next deadline for copy will be Friday, 27 May, 2005.

Meantime, my thanks to everyone who has contributed to the magazine. My special thanks also to all the people whose continuing support has made it easier for me to cope with what has been a very difficult year.

... Co-ordinator
NottinghamAction Group on HMOs
March, 2005

Government is proposing ... *'Consultation on reducing planning controls and red tape on home improvements, like back extensions.*

'Planning applications from householders have almost doubled over the last ten years to around 330,000 a year. Many of these applications are for modest improvements such as extensions and dormer windows.

'The "Householder Development Consents Review" aims to cut red tape and planning rules for householders and local councils, while protecting neighbours' interests and the local environment. It will:

- *Review the current limits on the sort of improvements that householders can make without planning permission.*
- *Consider ways to consult neighbours at an earlier stage so that, where possible, disagreements can be resolved without involving local authorities.*
- *Simplify and speed up applications and approvals.'*

They may seem to be sensible proposals, but we've a pretty good idea what they mean for our friendly 'next-door' landlord – more tenants with even less planning control and neighbour 'interference'.

The 'Numbers Game' Drawing a Line in the Sand

... 'Student numbers are projected to grow over the next few years but at a slower rate than in recent years. The total population of full-time student number is expected to increase by about 1,400 by 2007-08.'

[Taken from 'The University (of Nottingham) and the Community', March 2005]

If these projections are accurate, we can expect to see the University of Nottingham's student population topping the 25,000 mark in 2008.

We do not have figures for Nottingham Trent's projected student population expansion, but we do know they are expanding.

Neither have we any information about the increasing student populations of our Further Education Colleges. In fact, to date, their rapid expansion has not figured in anyone's calculations. Yet, their students (UK and overseas) are one of the major contributors to Beeston's increasingly large student population and other local FE Colleges are advertising for students in national publications.

Has anyone ever tried to set a 'maximum number of students Nottingham can cope with' figure?

We'd like to know

Future Issues of the Magazine will include reports on:

The 'Student Village' concept
Progress of the Council's Student Strategy
News about the Council's new 'Spring Clean' campaign

The East Midlands National HMO Lobby meeting

Details of this year's programme of meetings hosted by the Nottingham Action Group

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

City and Broxtowe Members of Parliament

Nottingham East	Nottingham South	Broxtowe
John Heppel MP House of Commons London SW1A 0AA Telephone: Nottingham 947-4132	Alan Simpson MP Vernon House 18 Friar Lane Nottingham NG1 6DQ Telephone: Nottingham 956-0460	Nick Palmer MP Harold Wilson House 23 Barrat Lane Attenborough Nottingham NG9 6AD Telephone: Nottingham 943-0721

City and Broxtowe Ward Councillors

Arboretum Ward		Berridge Ward		Radford & Park Ward	
Tony Marshall	948-2073	Mohammed Ibrahim	910-3745	Mohammad Aslam	928-4591
Tom Stephenson	915-5609	Howard Morris	915-5834	Katrina Bull	846-0507
		John Taylor	960-9660	Afzal Khan	928-2220
Wollaton East and Lenton Abbey Ward			Wollaton West Ward		
Kevin Mulloy		9770-883	Margaret Cobb		916-5730
Bill Smith		915-0239	Michael Cowan		950-2653
			Georgina Culley		916-3278
Bridge Ward			Dunkirk and Lenton Ward		
Saghir Akhtar		952-8591	Zahoor Mir		915-1398
Maxine Shaw		952-4683	David Trimble		912-1393
Beeston North Ward Councillors					
Adele Brunton		07870-698-994	Steve Carr		07946-411901

Police Beat Managers and Crime Prevention Managers

Note: For emergencies dial **999**. To report crimes call **948-2999** and ask to be transferred to your area station. Crime Prevention Managers can be contacted by calling **967 09990** and asking for the CPM for your area.

Canning Area			
PS317 Ian Cresswell, Tel: 07792-437-362 Crime Prevention Manager: Michael Powis			
University & Lenton Abbey PC1711 Michael Barrett	07792-437-363	Radford West PC1141 Ian Newman	07792-437-371
Leen Valley (LH side Radford Boulevard) PC1460 Gregory Wilson	07792-437-372	QMC PC454 Paul Moore	07792-437-367
Lenton Triangle PC1798 Terry Draycott	07792-437-365	Arboretum/Forest Rec. PC2456 Chris McKay	07792-437-366
Forest East/Radford East PC2564 Anthony Ward	07792-437-369	New Lenton PC1689 Dave Silverwood	07812-215-919
The Park PC1831 Edward Nicholson	07792-437-368	Hillside (Wollaton Park, Old Lenton) PC1115 Jez Shaw	07792-437-344
Meadows Area			
PS852 Garry Cooke, Tel: 07792-437-318 Crime Prevention Manager: John Stirland			
Meadows PC2378 Mike Stevenson	07792-437-320	Dunkirk PC122 Kevin Wakerley	07792-437-324
Radford/Hyson Green Area Officers			
PS1202 Les Rawson, Tel: 07792 437333 Crime Prevention Managers: Radford Road - Helen Mincher, Central - Melissa Pickance			
Sherwood Rise PC2316 Justin Harris	07792-437-338	Forest Fields PC2327 Mark Tindall	07792-437-336
Hyson Green Bobbersmill PC2423 Philip Harrison	07792-437-335	Leen Valley PC1326 Amanda Hudson	07792-437-343
Beeston Crime Prevention Manager: Jeanette Shipman		City Division Neighbourhood Watch Administrator: Mick Gough, Tel: 9680999, Ext: 4560/4561	

Nottingham City Council Neighbourhood Wardens

Dunkirk, Lenton and the Meadows Area			
Alan Maltby, Tel: 07903-822-618			
Wayne Smith	07903-759-495	Ian Beresford	07903-759-510
James Douglas	07903-759-511	Peter Mills	07903-759-493
Radford Area			
Neil Hopgood, Tel: 07958-472-877			
Ryan Atkin	07958-472-869	John Ife	07958-472-875
Trevor Anderson	07958-472-871	Simon Morris	07903-759-517
Miltos Lefkelis	07958-472-878	Carley Bush	07903-822-028
Wollaton and Lenton Abbey Area			
Andrew Quick, Tel: 07958-472-866			
Laurence Burns	07949-733-351	Peter O'Doherty	07903-759-477
NDC Neighbourhood Wardens			
Radford/Hyson Green			
NDC Neighbourhood Wardens for Radford and Hyson Green, Tel: 978-6863			

Nottingham City Council Services

Service	Contact Details	
	Telephone	E-Mail
Public Health	915-6798	public.health@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
Waste Management	915-2000	waste.management@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
Highways (reporting faulty street lighting, manhole covers, drains, etc.)	915-2222	highways@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
Noise Pollution	915-6410	pollution.control@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
Trading Standards	950-7910	ts.advice@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
Parking Services	915-6655	
Planning Policy Team	915 5197	www.plan4nottingham.com
Area Focus Teams:		For all teams
Area 4	915-4428	
Area 7	915-4691	area.focus@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
Area 8	915-4753	

Other Useful Contacts

Service	Contact Details	
	Telephone	Internet
Broxtowe Borough Council	917-7777	
Fire Prevention Officers:		
Nottingham	948-1166	
Dunkirk	942-1600	
Beeston	943-0666	
NHS Direct	0845-4647	http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
Transport		
Nottingham City Transport Buses	950-6070	www.nctx.co.uk
Trent and Barton Buses	01173-712265	www.trentbuses.co.uk
NET		www.nottinghamexpresstransit.com
National Rail Enquiries	0845-484950	
Severn Trent Water Ltd.	985-7687	
Gas Emergency	0800-111-999	
Crimestoppers	0800-555-111	
Melanie Futer, University of Nottingham Off Campus Student Officer	951-4649	melanie.futer@nottingham.ac.uk

This information was correct at the time of going to press.

If you discover that any of these numbers are wrong or have changed recently, please let us know

Also, if you can add useful contacts of your own to the directory, please tell us about them so that this section of the magazine can grow and reflect our shared knowledge.

THE NOTTINGHAM ACTION GROUP

Who, What, Why and How?

We are residents living in neighbourhoods from across a large part of Nottingham (Sherwood, The Arboretum, Hyson Green, Radford, The Park, Lenton, Dunkirk, The Meadows, Wollaton Park, Wollaton, Lenton Abbey, Beeston).

Although our neighbourhoods are as different from one another as we are, what they have in common are the problems caused by increasing concentrations of so-called Houses in Multiple Occupancy' (HMOs), shared houses with absentee landlords and short-term (mostly student) tenants.

What we shared was the feeling that as individual Council Tax paying, family residents we had no say in what the 'movers and shakers' – primarily the Universities and the Council – were planning and doing, even though their decisions directly affected us and the future of the neighbourhoods in which we live. Alone we had no voice. However, we believed that, as a group, we could have a voice. Whilst we could not change what had happened, we could influence what was going to happen.

A year ago we got together and formed the Nottingham Action Group on HMOs – the **NAG** – not a nice name, but appropriate. What is happening to our neighbourhoods is not nice for those who live in them and we are ready to nag and keep on nagging to get things done.

Our aim is simple – to have *Neighbourhoods where families want to live ... not leave!*

We Have Acted ... We Will Continue to Act!

National

As part of the National HMO Lobby we continue to campaign for:

Licensing for all HMOs

Planning Legislation to control change of use from family home to HMO

HMO owners to pay Business Rates

Nottingham

We continue to push the Council, the Universities and the Student Unions to produce policies that:

Divert students into well-sited, well-managed purpose-built accommodation

Control the concentration and further spread of HMOs

Set high standards for landlords and management of HMOs

Make life in our neighbourhoods easier for residents

Retain neighbourhood amenities

Neighbourhood

We have and will continue to:

Focus attention on our neighbourhoods and their needs

Provide information, advice and support for our neighbours

We are:

Building links with other active community groups

We will:

Monitor the success of local strategies

Make sure that actions are delivered properly and effectively

To Do Our Job We Need...

Your information, your ideas, your opinions.

They are important to us

They govern what we do

We can use them to ensure that if what is being done is not working ...

The universities, the students, the Council, the Police respond by formulating

Better policies and delivering better actions

... and do it quickly!

We Also Need Your Help and Support

If you are interested in becoming a member of our committee

If you think you'd like to become involved in what we are doing

If you would want to help produce and distribute this magazine

If you know about websites, desk top publishing and databases ... or might like to learn

If you just want to be kept informed about what we are doing, please get in touch with us at:

The Nottingham Action Group on HMOs

c/o The Western Club

357a Derby Road

Lenton

Nottingham NG7 2DZ

Telephone: 07762-525-625

The Committee of the Nottingham Action Group on HMOs is happy to acknowledge support from:

Nottingham City Council's Area 4 and Area 8 Committees

Nottinghamshire Community Foundation, and many individual residents

The views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Committee of the Nottingham Action Group on HMOs

We endeavour to ensure that our reports are accurate, but from time to time mistakes may occur. If you feel we have made such an error, please write to us at the above address.



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