

## **DANGER DEMOLITION SITE KEEP OUT**

**Goody Demolition  
01304 840126**

Until a few days ago this large and prominent notice covered the bay window of a property on Derby Road, Lenton close to the Savoy cinema. It had been there for at least eighteen months. Was it a comment on the property, or on the area, or on life in general. Perhaps, but ... What did it say about how the owner and the tenants of the property see this neighbourhood ... green, clean, proud & ambitious?

**MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHAT DID IT SAY ABOUT OUR  
NEIGHBOURHOODS TO PEOPLE COMING INTO NOTTINGHAM?**

## **BARONESS KAY ANDREWS**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,  
Department for Communities and Local  
Government

Government Spokesperson for Department for  
Communities and Local Government



## **LATE NEWS**

Last year Baroness Andrews was invited to come to Nottingham and see for herself what is happening in our studentified neighbourhoods. She accepted that invitation and arrangements had been made for her to be in Nottingham on Tuesday, 27 March, 2007. Just as this magazine was about to go to press we heard from her office that she is unable to come because of pressure of Parliamentary work. However we now expect her in Nottingham on

**WEDNESDAY, 27 JUNE 2007**

**EDITOR, TUESDAY, 6 MARCH, 2007**

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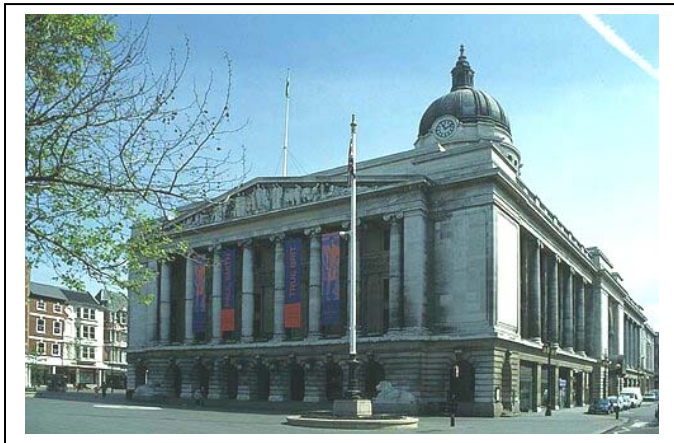
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# UNIVERSITY TOWNS & CITIES COUNCILLORS NETWORK

Last June at the Westminster launch of the Universities UK report on students and communities, the idea was floated that a way was needed for councillors from across the country whose wards are also bedevilled by problems with HMOs to meet, exchange best practice and provide support for one another – a councillors counterpart to the National HMO Lobby.

The challenge was taken up here in Nottingham by Cllr. Dave Trimble and colleagues. On the 1 February, 2007 they got the ball rolling when Nottingham hosted a one-day conference attended by ward councillors from all political parties from a sizeable number of other university towns and cities. As Cllr. Trimble said at the beginning of the day: *'...For a subject not tested on a national scale before – a very creditable turn out.'*



## INTRODUCTION TO INAUGURAL MEETING, 1 FEBRUARY, 2007

By Cllr. Dave Trimble

Welcome everybody. People from all political parties have come from far and wide, making a big effort to attend. For a subject not tested on a national scale before – a very creditable turn out.

In a sense, there is one thing that I do not want to get out of today and that is that we don't spend our time saying "my ward is worse than yours", "no it's not, mine is!" We have all got involved because this is a real issue in the wards that we represent.

We get 'phone calls, letters, e-mails. People come to our surgeries. The issues are raised at community meetings. They dominate our casework. We all know what the issues are: the lack of children to fill the schools, noise, parking problems, street cleansing, household waste, shops turning into hot food takeaways, litter ... and so on.

The students themselves are becoming the victims of burglars. Their multiples of consumer goods and gadgets are an Aladdin's Cave for criminals.

As individuals we are all working away at the issues and, like many residents, we think we're alone. We seem to be the only ones doing this. But we're not!

There are at least thirty cities up and down the country where these issues are being dealt with on a daily basis.

We need to get the message across that this is not a little problem tucked away in a corner – a little problem which, if it's ignored, will go away. It is not!

Whilst the Government's desire to increase university education across the country is laudable, it has created a considerable downside as it has grown and grown without planning for and organisation of the appropriate infrastructure. We need to get that message across to the Government.

I have no doubt that this has been a community led campaign: it has been led from the grass roots.

I tried for at least eight to ten years to get this issue on the Council's agenda, but it wasn't until the frustration of local

residents led to them organise themselves that we managed to raise it up the Council's agenda.

Similarly, it was the residents who first organised nationally, forming the National HMO Lobby. This now has nearly fifty members from thirty major towns and cities, covering every major academic institution in the country.

I hope that this is the beginning of the equivalent at council Member level nationally. I have no doubt that if we achieve that, then the same will happen at Member of Parliament level also.

I have already said what I don't want out of today. There are two things that I do want out of today though. I want this movement to grow, and I want it to be organised enough to share best practice from council to council in order to assist in raising the issue up what is quite clearly a cross party political agenda.

The other outcome I want for us, and the others who couldn't make it here today, is to increase pressure on Members of Parliament and, in particular, to co-ordinate a lobby of Government Ministers.

The ultimate goal must be to change planning legislation on Use Classes Orders. They've got it in Northern Ireland and we need it here.

Quite simply, we need the tools and powers in order to make the difference.

Unfortunately, Housing and Planning Ministers seem to change year on year.

The first Minister who showed any independent thought on this was Keith Hill. I was in a completely different meeting with him when he took me aside and asked my opinion on the matter.

I really do believe that he was interested in doing something. He hosted a lobby in Westminster for us, but two things conspired against us. First, he only lasted a year: he was the only Minister to be completely re-shuffled out that year.

Second, his civil servants took every opportunity to steer him away from the subject altogether. In many ways they are probably the biggest hurdle we have to tackle.

One thing that Keith Hill did do during his year in office, alongside the Minister responsible for Further Education, was to commission a piece of research into what has become known as 'studentification'.

Universities hate that term, but for local residents that is the reality of their day-to-day lives.

As we all know, that piece of research was carried out by Dr. Darren Smith, who has very kindly agreed to facilitate the day for us today, along with his colleague.

It was at the Westminster launch of that piece of research that the present Minister, Baroness Andrews, was, I think, a bit surprised by the level of feeling and emotion that the subject evoked from a wide range of back bench MPs and other attendees, including some of us from Nottingham.

Baroness Andrews has kindly agreed to come to Nottingham in the last week in March. Whether voluntarily or not, I am not sure.

What I am sure about is that we will get our message over when she does come!

I also understand that following a bit of a spat in Parliament, Phil Woolas, the Communities and Local Government Minister, has visited Loughborough, as a result of an ambush initiated by their MP.

One thing I am sure about is that we won't change anything unless we give them hell! We have to make it easier for them to do something than it is to do nothing. We have to remember that it will take a brave Minister to interfere with, or to intervene in, the housing market. It won't be easy.

On the good practice front, in this year's budget we have set aside provision to commission UNIPOL in Nottingham. This is a housing charity with over twenty years experience in managing and co-ordinating student accommodation in Leeds and Bradford. On the Board will be representatives of the City Council, the University, both Student Unions and local residents.

Local residents will have somewhere to raise their issues and air their grievances and both Students Unions are 100% behind making it easier for students to find accommodation and drive up standards too. We still have some work to do on one of the universities and, it goes without saying, private landlords.

Alongside this we have the Student Housing Action Plan, where the Council, the universities, the Students Unions and the local residents sign up to pledges for the future.

I believe that we can honestly say that this is not about student bashing. It's about building balanced communities, creating a sustainable city and improving the quality of housing for students.

Managing the integration of transient populations has never been easy, whether it be students or others. It does take its toll on the fabric of the area, of the town or city, and it is Local Government that has to deal with that.

I am looking forward to hearing your ideas and to having a very productive day.

[Cllr. Trimble is the Executive Member for Housing & Social Services & Labour Member for Dunkirk & Lenton Ward]

#### **NATIONAL HMO LOBBY MEETING, 1 FEBRUARY, 2007**

This, like the councillors' conference, was a new venture. The East Midlands Region of the National HMO Lobby took up the offer of a room and hospitality from Nottingham City Council and held a parallel. However, rather than restrict the meeting to members from the East Midlands, the invitation went out to all of the National HMO Lobby. In the event Lobby members came from as far a field as Southampton and Canterbury as well as friends from Loughborough, Leicester and Leeds. It was a pleasant opportunity for people who usually only communicate by e-mail, telephone or letter, to meet, catch up on national developments, look at the different ways in which the same root problems are affecting our communities and hear about what is and is not working.

Lobby members and conference participants were able to meet for coffee, over lunch, for tea, and for the final two sessions of the day. All of which gave lots of useful opportunities for people to talk to one another and, hopefully, establish new contacts. However, most important of all was the feeling that Lobby members were midwives at the birth of what the Lobby hope is another strong and active partner for us to work with.

A second proposal muted at Westminster last June was the formation of the all party Parliamentary Balanced Communities Working Group. We understand that this too is now beginning to take shape.

## **ABOUT DEGREES OF SEPARATION**

[Opinion, Nottingham Evening Post, 2 February, 2007]

Nottingham has had problems in managing student accommodation, but we know from a conference this week that 30 other cities are also struggling to achieve solutions that are fair both to undergraduates and to local residents.

The problem is planning law which fails to allow councils to arrest the colonisation by students of residential districts near campuses; in Nottingham's case, districts like Lenton and Dunkirk.

Local authorities must be given more freedom to limit the supply of student accommodation in saturated areas, and to encourage it in other districts.

Interaction between students and their host communities should be encouraged, and it has been happening in parts of Nottingham.

But cities should be given the freedom to create planning policies that protect the balance of neighbourhood.

## **CITY'S STUDENT TROUBLES**

[Charles Walker, Nottingham Evening Post, 2 February, 2007]

Ways of tackling bad behaviour in student areas have come under scrutiny in Nottingham.

They were discussed at a conference organised by Nottingham City Council and attended by more than 50 delegates from across the country yesterday.

In Nottingham, 60,000 students attend the two universities and some residents have complained bitterly about rogue landlords and anti-social behaviour.

However, the city council, along with the universities and residents' groups, says it has made progress in tackling problems, including rowdiness and litter.

But local authorities want more power to limit the numbers of students living in certain areas and regulate landlords.

Coun Dave Trimble said: "We want to try to change planning legislation so that when a landlord buys a family home to turn it into student accommodation then they have to apply for change of use."

The city council has drawn up guidelines to allow it to restrict student housing in certain areas, but this is currently the subject of a legal challenge.

Another important measure planned for Nottingham this year is a city-wide student letting organisation to be managed by a board of representatives of communities, universities, students and landlords.

Coun Trimble said Nottingham Trent University was yet to sign up.

More than 30 British cities are believed to struggle with large student populations.

An expert in "studentification", Darren Smith, a reader in geography at the University of Brighton, said: "There are social, economic and cultural changes. Property prices escalate above the means of local people, there can be issues with refuse collection, car-related problems, and noise."

Mr Smith has identified a number of ways to tackle the problems, including better communication between students, communities, councils and universities, and off-campus wardens. "Nottingham and Leeds are the two leaders in this field," he added.

However, residents at the conference spoke of the misery that can be associated with life in a student-dominated community.

Jacqueline Flude, of Sherwin Road, Old Lenton, estimates that more than 90% of the houses on her street are student-occupied.

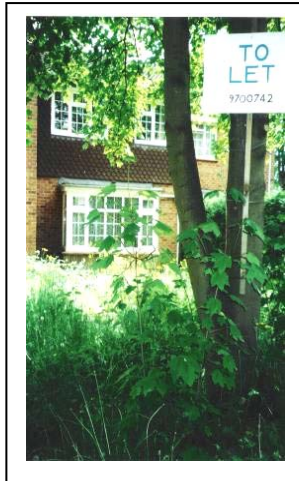
She said: "There is no community. Taxis are a big problem. They come at all times but predominantly midnight and come back at three, four, and five in the morning."

Katherine Garrett, community officer at the University of Nottingham Students Union, accepts some students behave poorly. But she said: "Within any community there will always be people who are not the best neighbours. Students are learning these life experiences for the first time."

She said the union had created the post of community officer to deal with local people and many students volunteered for projects and charities.



# NOTTINGHAM CONFERENCE — NATIONAL NEWS



## STUDENT TAKEOVER IS WRECKING OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS SAY CAMPAIGNERS

[David Sapsted, *Daily Telegraph*, 5 February, 2007]

A campaign group to stop residential areas in university towns being overrun by students is being formed by local authorities. Councillors from university towns and cities across the country met in Nottingham last week "to take positive action to make sure that students and local communities can live together".

The councils fear that growing numbers of students are moving in to former family homes, upsetting the locals with noise, litter and parties.

"It is a big problem across many university towns and cities," said Mike Cole, Nottingham city council's student strategy manager. "You can have some areas where whole streets are taken over by students."

The conference, which attracted representatives from places such as Leeds, Bath, Canterbury, Peterborough and Leicester, agreed to begin lobbying MPs in a bid to get the Government to change the planning laws.

At present, councils are powerless to stop landlords converting family homes into dwellings for students

In Nottingham, the pleasant suburb of Lenton has been transformed over the past two decades. Its Edwardian and Victorian properties no longer accommodate well-to-do families but students crammed into small flats.

Once-prim lawns outside the grand houses have been replaced by discarded furniture, drink cans and fast-food cartons. Local shops have closed, supplanted by take-aways and — more tellingly — agencies letting properties to the students.

Locals complain that they are kept awake by parties. Lenton Boulevard has been unofficially re-named The Strip after an Ibiza nightclub. Worse, with the students have come the burglars preying on their laptops, MP3 players and mobile phones.

It is estimated that, by 2009, there will be 42,000 full-time students in Nottingham.

In Lenton, it is claimed, they make up half the population

Maya Fletcher, 53, has lived in Lenton since 1978.

"Until the late 1970s students lived in halls of residence or lodged with families, which made them part of the community," she said.

"But then the numbers increased and they had to find their own properties — and the speculators were quick to spot their opportunity.

"Most local families have long gone. And no families means no children, which in turn means no schools. That damages the balance of the community and makes it even harder for young families to set up here."

Two years ago, Mrs Fletcher helped form the Nottingham Action Group on Homes of Multi-Occupation, which aims to limit student accommodation. "We're putting together a strategy that allows planning regulations to cap the number of homes that can be converted in an area," she said.

Robert Howard, 62, a retired housing association manager, has seen Lenton change in 18 years.

"I don't blame the students," he said. "They have to live somewhere. But as a consequence, around 56 per cent of people living here are now students

"The area is full of cowboys who squeeze five students into a semi and charge £55 each a week without spending a penny on the property."

However, many students like the idea of having their own areas and living "separately" from the locals

Rachel Codd, 23, a final-year Law and French student at the University of Nottingham, shares a rented Edwardian semi with two other girls

"It's great to be in a street that's full of students," she said. "There are lots of parties and always someone to talk to. There are a few locals around here but I don't really speak to them.

I can imagine them getting very annoyed with us at times, especially with the noise late at night. I try not to annoy them."

"I blame universities for not building enough accommodation for us — that's why we rely on the private sector."



# LOCAL STORM — NATIONAL TEACUP!

David Sapsted's article seems to have stirred up something of a storm. Here's are some of the responses posted on the Telegraph's website. Clearly not a '...little problem tucked away in a corner – a little problem which, if it's ignored, will go away. It is not!'

## THE HOSTS' VIEWS

York is another city being blighted by street after street being taken over by student lets.

I helped my daughter and husband buy and refurbish a small terrace house only for them to suffer late night noise, appalling language and drunkenness. Complaints to the colleges have no effect whatsoever. Hardworking people have to put up with sleepless nights whilst, no doubt, the parents of these 'students' sleep soundly in their own beds oblivious to what their sons/daughters are inflicting.

[Posted by A. Castle, 5 February, 2007]

Loughborough has also been affected by the rapid increase in student numbers which has led to many former family homes now being let to students.

Thanks to the hard work of residents groups both the council and the university are now working with all interested parties to deal with the problems caused. Some students will always prefer to live in town rather than on campus and there are benefits from having students in the town but it seems a shame for relations between students and residents to have to deteriorate significantly before any action is taken. The Government could definitely help by amending the Use Classes Order.

They have done so in Northern Ireland - why not in England?

[Posted by Nicky Morgan, 5 February, 2007]

I live in an area near to a university and the local shopping centre has several letting agencies which have sprung up in the past few years to serve the student market.

Councils should be empowered to introduce policies limiting the number of student occupied houses or bed spaces in individual streets. This could be by percentage of total houses/bed spaces in the street i.e. 10% the maximum number.

[Posted by K Martin Ireland , 5 February, 2007]

I am delighted that this subject is now attracting some serious comment and recognition. I live in the Rusholme/Fallowfield area of Manchester which is suffering the same fate as those already identified.

Fortunately my street in particular and some of those adjoining still manage a good balance of residents including some students - but there are other couples, singles and families renting or buying their homes here. I have been most encouraged in recent years that two more young couples have bought properties in my street and everyone has gone out of their way to make them feel welcome and also to encourage them to participate in our little community.

I would like to move to the SW of England next year and have no wish whatsoever to sell my house to a landlord and leave a legacy of more student tenants to my neighbours. It would be so good to know that I could actually use legislation about quotas etc to deter landlords from even approaching me when I do decide to sell up.

I am confident that in my part of the area at least I would be able to sell to owner-occupiers and would be delighted to actually give a first-time buyer the chance to live in a quality house and a friendly community-minded street.

[Posted by Penny Collins, 8 February, 2007]

## WHAT THE STUDENTS & LANDLORDS HAD TO SAY

As a student, my own experience of neighbours who are 'normal people' has been particularly bad.

I understand that people need to sleep early to attend their 9-5 jobs. However, what I find deeply frustrating is that 'normal people' consider it their right not to hear any noise after 9pm and feel perfectly justified in storming round to a student house to tell them this in no uncertain terms.

But what about student rights? Surely we have every right to enjoy these few years of our lives in any way we please in our own homes? I sympathise with the neighbours in question but students also have a right (to put it very crudely) to party!

Then perhaps the solution is for universities to work with local councils to dedicate whole areas of housing only to students. This would mean that 'normal people' wouldn't have to put up with noise and drunkenness and the police can concentrate security in these areas!

[Posted by Val, 5 February, 2007]

Some landlords don't care who they rent to, they only want the cash. Therefore some houses are 'dives', not really fit for living in. But if the landlords don't rent to students, who will they rent to? Please remember this.

As a current student I try not to make too much noise, however I am the rare kind of student (i.e. I live during the hours of sunlight, dislike alcohol and loud noise). We (the students) don't intend to disrupt your neighbourhoods, but we're excitable. We're adults according to the law, teenagers according to our age (or at the very most in our early twenties), and children by our attitude. We've been let loose. There's no one watching us anymore. We're little children testing the boundaries of how far we can go. Sorry, but it can't be helped.

[Posted by Rachael, 5 February, 2007]

We are private landlords who let to Nottm Trent students. Our houses are well maintained & appreciated by our respectful tenants, who sometimes have to contend with noisy, rubbish tipping, drug dealing, dog fouling residents who are working/non working singles and families. I would like to say to Rachel - " There is an abundance of purpose built, council & uni approved accommodation but you will have to pay top rent, wont always get good service & have to sleep in a single bed with similarly single proportioned facilities and where students generally do not want to live after the first year.

Grow up Rachel (23?) & the like, act responsibly in the neighbourhood & dont be so rude not talking to the locals, then students may be able to continue to live in "proper houses" in the Community ". To Mr Howard - " There are cowboys about - address these people rather than targeting those of us who try to abide by often excessive Council Regs & we sometimes feel victimised for communicating with Environmental Services. I invite you to visit our homes & meet our tenants, all be it in The Arboretum area, Forest Fields or Radford in Nottm. We good, responsible landlords may be in the minority but we do exist so please stop lumping us together with the shoddy landlords and letting agents.

[Posted by Sue Wright, 5 February, 2007]

We would like to acknowledge, with thanks, permission given us by the Daily Telegraph to reprint the article by David Sapsted and the comments from their website. You can find all the comments by following this web link

[www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/02/05/nstudents05.xml](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/02/05/nstudents05.xml)

# BBC RADIO NOTTINGHAM GROUNDSWELL

'... There's no doubt as to the contribution students make to Nottingham's economy and the cultural vibrancy of the area. There are now 60,000 of them who call the city their home for the majority of the year. They spend an estimated £3,000 each every year. There's also no escaping from the tensions that sometimes arise between students and their host communities. It is a topic we first discussed as a Groundswell in 2004. ...'

[Introduction to the Groundswell debate, 1 February, 2007]

## 2004 & 2007 THE DEBATE CONTINUES



Groundswell 2007

In the spring of 2004, a couple of months after the formation of the Nottingham Action Group on HMOs, BBC Radio Nottingham hosted the first Groundswell debate on Students and the Community.

Towards the end of last year the Groundswell team decided to revisit the thorny issue of students and the community, possibly as a result of a series of letters from local residents which appeared in Autumn, 2006 in the *Beeston Express*.

Groundswell 2004 and Groundswell 2007 were different. The venues were different: Beeston rather than Wollaton/Lenton. Many of the voices from Beeston had not been at the original debate in 2004. Some of the topics, such the effects of the Broadgate Park 'student village' (in 2004 in its construction stage), were new. Others gave different angles to the now very familiar conundrum of what do you do about noise, litter, parking, the limitations imposed by planning and other legislation, and the erosion of family neighbourhoods.

Unhappily there seemed to be many more similarities than differences, certainly far more than one would have hoped, especially after three years of dialogue and hard work. '...we're running out of time for our communities.' was a comment made at the 2004 Groundswell. The same comment would not have been out of place at the 2007 debate.

However, the saddest and most notable difference was that at the 2004 Groundswell the University of Nottingham had been represented on the panel by the then-Registrar, Keith Jones. However, the University of Nottingham declined to attend the Groundswell 2007 debate and issued a statement, which was read out at the beginning of the evening.

It's not practicable to print a verbatim account of the debate, but we have taken snippets from the programme as it was broadcast in the hope that they give you a taste of what happened on the night.

BBC Radio Nottingham have kindly given us a copy of the debate so, if you want, it should be possible to play it at a future NAG meeting. You can also listen to it via the BBC's website at [www.bbc.co.uk/nottingham](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nottingham), where you can also read the comments posted on the BBC's Nottingham message board.

## STATEMENT BY THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

'The University of Nottingham regrets the methods adopted by the BBC in preparing its Groundswell project. We believe that some of the actions of the BBC Radio Nottingham production team showed that the programme's overwhelming interest was in airing heated argument for the purpose of entertainment. In terms of its impact within the community, the University already undertakes a high degree of much more constructive consultation. This is most likely to deliver a positive outcome when it is conducted calmly and between the parties concerned without an audience.

'... It contributes hundreds of millions of pounds each year to the regional economy, attracts talented people to Nottingham from over 150 countries, employs 6,000 staff, and has 36,000 students which help to make Nottingham a vibrant and diverse community. ...'

### '...SO LET'S REMIND OURSELVES OF THE ISSUES RAISED BACK THEN ...'

#### Extracts from Groundswell 2004

'We have something like 14 student houses in our street and last year I had to tell off and yell at every single student in every single one of those houses about turning their damn stereo up loud enough to wake me up at three o'clock in the morning and rattle the window. My nerves are shot to bits. I am sick of it. Every single day. All the time at the week end. It's noise, noise, noise, noise.'

[Radford Resident]

'We've got drunkenness, we've got taxis all night, we've got rubbish. Every house, every garage, every loft every basement is full in Lenton. There's waste everywhere. It's a rat hole.'

[Lenton Resident]

'This one chap that I'm talking about has bought three houses. He's made a bungalow that was a beautiful little bungalow into four bedrooms and he comes in every now and again and he buys another house on the estate and he puts that into four bedrooms. No law, no legislation no government intervention, no council coming to see how he's just ruining the neighbourhood.'

[Wollaton Park Resident]

'We have all failed the communities that we live in in quite serious ways. I think the local authorities probably have to take responsibility for being very slow off the mark in terms of maintaining an intrusive policy in terms of noise problems, in terms of litter removal and I think we have made problems about overcrowding and parking on the streets a mountain for ourselves.'

[Constituency MP for Nottingham South]

'There are a very small minority of students who behave in a fashion they shouldn't do. But what we need people to realize is that for that small minority, there is also a very large percentage of the student population that are willing to get involved with local communities, build on the relationships that we have and solve the problems that we're talking about today.'

[Students Union Representative]

'I'm not in the business of war on students. I think the problem is you have here communities which are being squeezed so hard that they are tired, they are emotional and we're running out of time for our communities.'

[NAG Panellist]



## THREE YEARS LATER

### Extracts from Groundswell 2007

'I'm here because I'm a local resident and I'm afraid we're snided out with students. There are just too many.'

[Beeston Resident]

'... Clearly you all hate us quite a lot ...'

[University Student]

'... We have been exceedingly passionate about our cause over the years but that has been interpreted, or misinterpreted, as anti-student and because we have been working away for such a long time resignation and depression have set in for many and our family doctor could endorse that. Our area of Lenton is submerged ... drowning in studentification.'

[Lenton Resident]

'We love the students. Individually they're splendid people, but there are too many of them. There are 2,000 of them and 20 of us. We're outnumbered.'

[Beeston Broadgate Resident]

'I don't think Lenton has a future. It'll become absorbed as part of the campus and the rest of us'll either die out or move away.'

[Lenton Resident]

'It's a bit like being invaded ... the loss of the permanent residents ... I'm feeling very resentful and upset about this. There are no children on the street. These houses attract burglars and the worse thing is that the landlords don't care about the loss of our community. Hey, they don't even pay Council Tax.'

[Beeston Resident]

'... They bring good business to the area. We could do with more.'

[Lenton Pizza Takeaway Proprietor]

'It [the lack of planning powers] is a problem for us. ... We find it immensely frustrating that the law allows people to alter a house ... and escape all legislation and all regulation.'

[Leader, Broxtowe District Council]

'What the University ought to be doing is making sure it has adequate accommodation on its own premises for all its students. ... They could afford to build a few blocks of flats and they would disappear in the landscape.'

[Constituency MP for Broxtowe]

## 200-BED UNIVERSITY HOTEL

Despite strong protests, outline planning permission for a 200-bed hotel with associated facilities and parking on the University Park campus was recently granted by Nottingham City Council's Development Control Committee. The original outline approval for an hotel on the site, granted in 1992, had lapsed.

As alluded to during the debate, the site is within the Open Space Network and safeguarded as part of University Park for education related developments and ancillary facilities. Apparently 'education related developments' include the provision of hotel accommodation associated with the University's East Midlands Conference Centre which is close to the site of the proposed 4-star hotel.

The University provided a statement to the BBC. It said that ... *'if we try to accommodate all of our students on campus there will not be a blade of grass left. ... The University has charitable status and does not have shareholders. It uses the funds it receives or can generate to further its mission of provision of teaching and carrying out world changing research commensurate with its status as UK University of the Year. The site of the proposed hotel is a small but appropriately located corner of the 121 hectares of award-winning public access parkland.'*

'The parking situation around Lenton Boulevard is particularly bad. Unfortunately the area tends to be full of students. ... Students tend to be a little more affluent than they used to be. The problem for the local residents is that obviously any space that hasn't got a permit attached to it is occupied by the students round here.'

[Lenton Resident]

'... What we really need is a 24-hour response line. If you have a problem somewhere, ... Dunkirk, Lenton, Beeston ... you ring up this line and you get university security come out and just damp things down before it gets really bad.'

[NAG Panellist]

'I've got students living either side of me. And both of these houses are owned by private landlords. Now these houses are absolutely disgusting. The gardens are full of shopping trolleys, ... filthy rubbish. The curtains haven't been opened, let alone washed, for I don't know, 15 years that I know. The dustbins are disgusting. ...What are these landlords going to do about looking after their properties and the problems they're dumping on our community?'

[Beeston Lower Road Resident]

'... The landlords have a great duty of care to the areas they operate in, and they should do. Students ... must also be held accountable. There is also legislation available to the local authority to look at the condition of properties and take action that way as well.'

[Landlord Panellist]

'... I've been to house parties. This is what we do as students. We go to house parties. We have fun. But, we have to remain respectful. ... We're living in a society where we don't really know our neighbours any more and if you actually went round and introduced yourself, you'd get a completely different perception of [students]. ...We are the future generation ... we're the people who're heading towards the future. And growth is inevitable. You can't avoid that and you have to make room for it. The best way is by working together, and communication is key.'

[University Student]

**The producers of the Groundswell programme have stated that everything that was said at the debate will be related to UPP (managers of the Broadgate Park student village and the University for their comment, in the hope they will react constructively to this information.**



## MP CALLS FOR UNIVERSITY TO BUILD STUDENT HOUSING ON CAMPUS

Broxtowe MP Nick Palmer has called for more student accommodation on university land, as an alternative to students living in the community.

He spoke during a radio debate attended by angry residents from Lenton, Dunkirk and Chilwell, who have frequently complained about noise, litter and late-night activity.

The University of Nottingham said it did not want to take part in the discussion. The programme was set to be broadcast on BBC Radio Nottingham.

[Report in the Nottingham Evening Post, 3 February, 2007]

## ‘CELL BLOCK H’ BROADGATE PARK STUDENT VILLAGE, BEESTON

**BACKGROUND:** Broadgate Park is described as a ‘... popular, bustling student village next to the West Entrance of University Park on the edge of the lively town of Beeston which offers plenty of shops, pubs and restaurants to keep you occupied. It offers 2,212 bed spaces, has a bar, general store, and coin-operated laundrette.’ It replaces a much smaller and older cluster of student accommodation blocks and came on stream in September 2006. Planning permission was granted by Broxtowe District Council and Nottingham City Council despite considerable opposition local residents. It is managed by UPP, and is subject to a Section 106 order which is meant to guarantee the amenities of residents in nearby streets. It featured strongly in the build up to the recent *Groundswell* debate, reported on elsewhere in this issue of the magazine.

Our thanks to the *Beeston Express* for allowing us to reprint letters which so graphically illustrate the issues.



### WELCOME TO BROADGATE PARK

Gosh, what a Freshers' Week that was! Dances, clubbing every night, parties, late night drinking, organised buses to take two or three hundred of the newcomers into town, organisers with a megaphone to do the 'cheer leading' – what a welcome to the new University student village at Broadgate.

For the students it must have been wonderful. For the local residents, like me, it was a little less so! We've had traffic chaos as 2,200 strangers moved in, mostly on one weekend, without the courtesy of the promised advance warning; we've had over a week of sleepless nights (most of the students were quite well behaved – but 300 kids in a crocodile at 10 o'clock at night can't help make a noise and they make more when they come home at 3 a.m. after a jar or two); we have an almost constant flow of youthful shoppers, with bags and bargains, filling our buses and pavements and roads. Our once quiet corner of Beeston now feels like Central London. Things have quietened down a little this week, as the students get to grips with their courses, but there's still constant noise and traffic – oh I can hardly wait for Bonfire Night, Hallowe'en, end of term parties, mid-term parties, pre- and post-exam events ...

I have always tried to be a reasonably good neighbour, but I'm afraid I feel a bit outnumbered by all of this. I can't really blame the students: certainly they could be a bit more considerate, but they're just kids, studying – and playing – hard, and we locals are probably just landscape to them.

Some of the blame certainly rests with UPP, the Broadgate managers: they knew all about the Freshers' week plans, and promised that they would be taking 'appropriate measures'; as it turned out they seem to have done little, and what they did was mostly too late (they say they confiscated that megaphone – but only after we complained!)

However, I'm afraid most of the blame is shared between the University and our local planners – the University who shoehorned 2,000 students into an area which had been crowded with 400, because they didn't want to clutter up the

site they are reserving for their nice profitable hotel; and the planners, who let them create our new 'Cell Block H' by convincing themselves that the new Gateway to Beeston 'would not create a significant increase in noise and activity levels.'

Thanks, guys – anyone want to swap beds with me next Freshers' Week?

I did notice, with rather sour amusement, that Broxtowe's motto is 'Building Better Communities'.

I'm afraid this particular community feels more demolished than built.

[Name & address supplied, *Beeston Express*, 20 October, 2006]

### A COUNCILLOR'S THOUGHTS

I wish to add my opinion on the 'purpose built' accommodation in my Ward of Beeston North.

Clearly all students need clean and compact accommodation, but 'cramming of densities' is not the answer, and planners and developers must take note of this.

The student population is here to stay, but purpose built accommodation can be far too intensive in terms of volume, height and proximity to neighbouring residential areas.

ALL people need space to breath and live in peace, hassle free. Over-development leads to a reduction in residents' amenities and quality of life, as well as in the local environment.

One of my major complaints is the lack of aesthetic quality of the design of the Broadgate Park 'Student Village'. The entrance to Broadgate Island approaching Beeston has been ruined for ever by over-intensive and obtrusive development.



It seems as if developers are just too greedy, and don't always manage the problems ONCE a development is completed. The result is that local residents are subjected to late night noise nuisance, and high jinx, fireworks and parties without any genuine concern being shown for long-standing neighbours.

What does this matter when you live in temporary student accommodation?!

Well, it should matter, and social education is the key, plus reminders about basic manners. I am sure this is happening with liaison workers, but the message needs to be better heard.

We all have a social responsibility: to our neighbours, to older neighbours, and young families. Beeston will fail to thrive until a real balance is regained.

[Adele Brunton, Ward Councillor, Beeston North]





View from a garden before the recent expansion & redevelopment of Broadgate Park

## NOT SO QUIET A RETIREMENT

Twenty-five years ago in March we purchased a rundown detached house in Beeston. This was supposed to be our project for the next five years so we could enjoy a quite retirement. There were some student flats nearby but not enough to put you off the property.

We started with the foundations: as a result of the ground drying out in the summer of 1976 the house required underpinning. Next was the plumbing. This was nearly all lead pipe and everything had to be ripped out and renewed. The back wall had to be knocked down and rebuilt. This left us looking into the garden whilst having a bath! Over boarding all the ceilings was the messiest. Then came the central heating, new power points, decorating, new windows, pointing and, finally, the garden.

The road is a cul-de-sac, very quiet, and the garden is a sanctuary.

One day I returned from work to find something that looked like an oilrig in the garden at the end of ours. I approached the guy who was working on the rig and asked him what he was doing. He told me he was taking soil samples for the University.

Alarm bells started to ring. I had worked in the construction industry so I knew it was not soil samples they were taking, but testing the ground for building purposes. The length of the drill, approximately 5 m, told me the building was going to be tall. I contacted the University who informed me they were just exploring the area for further development. After 'phoning Broxtowe Borough Council and asking the planning department if they knew anything about this further development I was informed the University had been discussing the development for some time.

So much for looking after the local residents' amenities.

Nottingham University put in a planning application to Broxtowe Borough Council and also to Nottingham City Council. Both councils passed the planning applications.

We warned them of what would happen with this amount of students so close to a residential area, but they obviously knew more than the local residents who have lived in the area for years.

During the building of the Broadgate Park flats we had to endure terrible noises outside normal working hours. These were reported to Broxtowe Borough Council, the Considerate Contractors Scheme and Jarvis (the builders), but nothing was done until after Jarvis had left the site.

We then had students moving into the flats. This was only supposed to take place when Jarvis or the management company had put in place all the requirements of a Section 106

Agreement placed upon the planning agreement. History has shown that this never happened. Despite repeatedly asking UPP and Broxtowe Council to explain what has been carried out, we are still none the wiser.

We have had rubbish and bottles thrown over the fence into our garden, students climbing over the fence to retrieve Frisbees and footballs. Some of the students do not appear to live on the same planet as everyone else due to the amount of noise they generate throughout the day and night.

I hope you can see why, after spending all our time, effort and money into making our property a home, and our garden into a place we could enjoy, not to mention the amount of Council Tax we have paid year on year, that we are not just moaning.

We are disgusted with the way the University, UPP, and the local council have failed over the past few years to manage this major problem. University, purpose built, money making student accommodation should be built away from local residents on the University Campus.

[Name and Address Supplied]



A recent picture of the same garden. Note the close proximity of the Broadgate Park student village flats

**Editor's Note: We understand that Jarvis, the builders, were prosecuted by Broxtowe District Council for out-of-hours noise on the site and were subsequently fined £2,000. However, by then the building work had finished and the damage had been done!**

## NOISE AT BROADGATE PARK — UPP REPLY —

University Partnerships Programme (UPP) aims to take a responsible and proactive approach to working with local residents to address any concerns they have regarding Broadgate Park, A number of meetings have taken place with residents to date.

In line with conditions of planning permission for aspects of the Broadgate Park development, UPP is particularly active in working to manage noise levels on the site. We take every effort to make resident students aware of the need for consideration for their neighbours. Equally there are a number of resident wardens appointed and extensive on-site security arrangements in place to monitor any disturbances.

UPP will continue to make every effort to maintain effective management of the Broadgate Park site and work in co-operation with local residents as they raise any concerns.

[Beeston Express, 3 November, 2006]

## UNIVERSITY RESPOND TO BROADGATE ISSUE

Whilst seeking not to overlook the real concern felt by some of your readers in Beeston, The University of Nottingham nevertheless welcomes the comment of one correspondent who acknowledged that 'the majority of students are very pleasant and hard working'. They referred to a 'minority ruining it for the rest.'

Minority or not, even one incident of unacceptable noise or mess is one too many, and for this reason the University has an established 24-hour voicemail hotline (0115-846-8666) where our neighbours can register complaints or raise issues with us, and expect a timely response. In addition, the institution has a full-time Off Campus Student Affairs manager, who also works with the relevant Warden and resident Tutors, both to support our students in the community, but who also enjoys the full authority of the University and can demand higher standards of neighbourliness where there is any evidence of unreasonable conduct.

Our student union recently elected a full-time Community Officer, and is serious about delivering improvement, through initiatives such as the 'Sshh ...' campaign. It also works with us, and Nottinghamshire Police in practical and ongoing crime prevention work.

This, we hope, will benefit and protect neighbours in areas where there are now higher numbers of students in private residence.

We are grateful for the pleasing recognition of our international students, and appreciate any efforts to assist them in settling into the community and feeling welcome. The University's staff and students do lots of excellent work in Beeston, Lenton and Dunkirk, supporting schools and local endeavour – and we would submit that the institution's economic impact is broader than some of your correspondents assert. We entirely agree, nonetheless, that positive aspects will always be overshadowed by instances of inconsiderate behaviour, wherever this originates.

Please be assured that we are not complacent in this regard and – in the specific case of Broadgate Park – will be working closely with UPP to address the issues raised in the 'Beeston Express' in recent weeks. We also remain committed to working with the City of Nottingham and Broxtowe Borough in delivering balanced and harmonious communities, and are not passive in this matter, as some readers have suggested.

[Jonathan Ray, Director of Public Affairs,  
The University of Nottingham,  
Beeston Express, 17 November, 2006]

*'Diverting students from residential housing stock ...and ... encouraging the development of purpose built student accommodation away from established neighbourhoods ...'*

[Extract from Nottingham's  
Student Housing Action Plan, 2006]

**This is one of the approaches adopted to tackle the problems associated with over-concentrations of student-occupied HMOs and the imbalance to local communities which result from this.**

**We understand that The Glass House on Huntingdon Street is a good example of purpose build that is well-designed, well-located, and well-managed. It is also very popular with Nottingham Trent University students.**

**On the other hand, Broadgate Park is a salutary lesson in what happens when insensitive and inappropriate location is coupled with ineffective management, inadequate control and over-intensive development. When that happens**

## NEIGHBOURHOODS & STUDENTS END UP AS LOSERS

## TIPPING THE BALANCE

**By their very nature, concentrations of HMOs/shared houses distort the population balance and introduce a transient population.**

**There is much academic discussion about exactly how many HMOs it needs for any one neighbourhood to tip over the edge and become unbalanced and unsustainable. However, until there is adequate legislation in place to enable local authorities to not only set limits, but also enforce them, the discussions will remain just that – academic.**

**Meanwhile, the immediate neighbours of the Broadgate Park 'student village' are not the only Beeston residents to be experiencing the effects of studentification and landlordism, leaving them to reflect on a ...**

## CHANGING SCENES IN BEESTON

### ALBERT ROAD

Forty years ago, Albert Road, Beeston, was the ideal place to live. It was a happy community with lots of families, all very friendly and willing to help each other out. We used to share plants, fruit and vegetables from our well-stocked gardens. You could always rely on one of the neighbours asking: "I'm going up Beeston, do you want anything?" Baby sitters would eagerly look after children in an emergency.

We had a corner shop that sold everything and many a good laugh was had by all. There was a builder's yard/office at the top of the road where the children would collect sawdust for the pet's cages. During the summer, we all used to picnic at the local paddling pool and lido. Just over the road on Broadgate, there was a field where horses used to graze and the children fed them carrots. Children even enjoyed going shopping along the High Road, where we had a great variety of shops, and a wide pavement to walk safely along Broadgate.

Today, we have a number of students occupying these family homes and our community spirit has gone. Our road has become a fast track to Lower Court student flats and a car parking facility for the university. You can guarantee your parking space won't be free when you return.

The friendly builder's yard is now being replaced by a block of flats and the corner shop, converted to offices several years ago, has been acquired by the University.

'Cell Block H' has replaced our once-lovely grazing field. The paddling pool is derelict and in a disgusting state and the lido disappeared years ago.

Try walking along Broadgate with a shopping trolley without colliding into hordes of students, or the cyclists who still ride along the pavement, ignoring the cycle track that was put there specially for them.

Finally, we have a university hotel to be erected on the last bit of green space. Albert Road and the surrounding streets will truly feel like they are on a campus.

But never mind. We are all used to loud music, fireworks, overflowing dustbins, taxis tooting after midnight and the droves of drunken students making their way home.

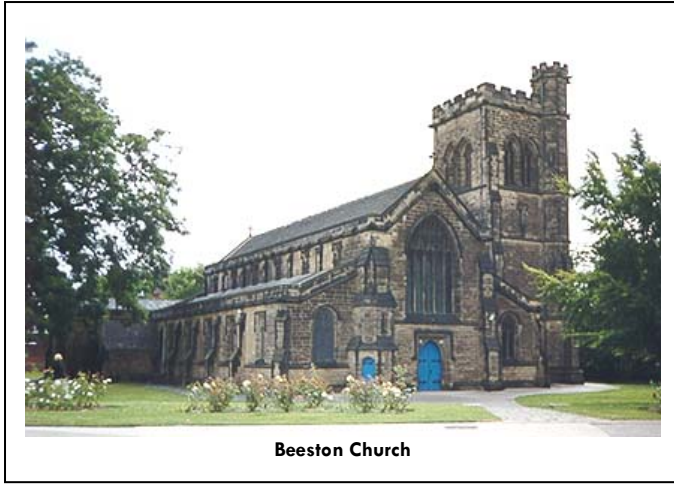
The University and Broxtowe Borough Council have a lot to answer for.

[Taken from a letter in The Beeston Express, 15 December, 2006]

## WRITE TO US ...

**And tell us your story. The NAG magazine is always happy to get letters and articles for publication from you. The length should be around 300-400 words. Write to us c/o the Hillside Club, 357a Derby Road, Lenton, Nottingham NG7 2DZ, or give us a call on 07762-525-625**





Beeston Church

## LIVING IN A 'STUDENT VILLAGE' BEESTON STYLE

What has happened to Lower Road in Beeston is very sad really. It feels a bit like mourning the loss of an old friend, and you know you won't ever see them again.

Lower Road was a friendly street – nothing special, but quiet, lots of families, children playing hide and seek on the corner, a baby sitting circle, recipes and plants to be swapped, a good place to bring your kids up in, with good transport links to the city centre.

We had a great street party in 1976 to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. We had a long trestle table, loaded with party food – the kids wore fancy dress, we made bunting to string up across the street, played music – it was a great community event.

In those days our neighbours were getting on in years, but fiercely proud of the homes that they had worked a lifetime to pay for, and meticulous with their neat and tidy gardens.

The landlords started their invasion about ten years ago, picking off the odd house as the old folks passed away. I suppose alarm bells should have started ringing then, but they didn't. By the time it dawned on us what was happening, it was already too late.

These days, Lower Road is about 70% student houses. All sense of community has gone – the residents and students don't really mix – how could they, they are different animals? A lot of the families have moved out, but there is a hardcore of long term residents left clinging on, wondering if life will ever be the same again.

Our environment has definitely gone badly downhill since the landlords swooped in. The houses aren't maintained, curtains never get washed (or even opened in most cases), gardens get the once a year 'scythe treatment' if you complain often enough, and overflowing dustbins live permanently on the pavement.

It's really frustrating that no-one seems able to help us – the University don't really want to know, and the council seemingly can't help either.

The landlords are mystery people who come, perhaps once a year to do a token tidy up when they're trying to attract the occupants for the following university year. The rest of the year they're nowhere to be seen. We don't know how to contact them, and, really annoying this, we know they don't even pay Council Tax. Easy money for very little effort!

The worst bit for me is the anxiety of wondering who's going to be living on the other side of my bedroom wall for the next ten months. Living next to students is stressful and upsetting, and can't be really understood to anyone who hasn't experienced it.

[By Lower Roader, February, 2007]

## THE VIEW FROM LOWER ROAD

Living in Lower Road we're also close to the University and are surrounded by students, although our problems are different from those of folk living in The Cloisters. This was a nice peaceful road and used to be predominantly families and couples but sadly, being so close to the University, we are now a minority and the bulk of the houses are occupied by students renting or are empty with 'To Let' signs in the front gardens.

Luckily for us the majority are overseas students who seem somewhat quieter than the British ones.

The downside of being surrounded by students is that there is no sense of community, burglary is rife as student houses are rich pickings, and bins are constantly left out on the pavement.

Little is done by the University, Broxtowe, or City councils to engage residents and students about living in harmony. I presume the next time we see our local councillors talking about these issues, it will be election time.

We are always been told that students are good for the local economy and I don't doubt this, but it's resulted in a whole host of takeaways and charity shops and little else for the folk of Beeston. As the University and Castle College increase their numbers, we have more students living in rented houses. This surely makes it more difficult for the council to balance their books in terms of council tax paid. Rented houses seem to generate more rubbish, but of course they don't pay for its collection.

Beeston's community feel as a whole is being eroded and no one seems to be bothered. Councillors should take note and try to make longstanding residents feel they're actually listening and want to help – or face the consequences in the next election. I would love an independent to stand and promise to help those of us who are fed up! They'd get my vote.

Maybe The Cloisters, Lower Road and all the other roads close to the University should join forces and have a united discussion with the councils? I very much doubt if the councils would organise such a thing. I'm happy to be proved wrong, though.

Extract from a letter to The Beeston Express, 17 November, 2006]

## JOINING FORCES

*'... it wasn't until the frustration of local residents led to them organise themselves that we managed to raise it [studentification] up the Council's agenda.*

*Similarly, it was the residents who first organised nationally, forming the National HMO Lobby. This now has nearly fifty members from thirty major towns and cities, covering every major academic institution in the country.'*

[University Towns & Cities Conference, Nottingham, 1 February, 2007]

**A meeting at the Hillside Club, Derby Road in February 2004 brought together residents from what you could call a miscellaneous assortment of neighbourhoods from across Nottingham. They shared worries about increasing numbers of houses, largely owned by absentee landlords and rented out to groups of short-term (mostly student) tenants. In other words – Houses in Multiple Occupancy.**

**The result of that meeting was the formation of the Nottingham Action Group on HMOs. Since then the problems arising from HMOs, landlordism and studentification have made their impact on Nottingham City Councillors and Council officers. Even the two universities have accepted that things have to change. Some are, though not as quickly as we would like.**

**Frustratingly slowly, Government is also beginning to react to the 'Rose Hip Syndrome': the irritation caused by having residents (and now councillors also) nagging away about HMOs, studentification, the lack of legislation and accountability.**

**We fully support what the resident of Lower Road has suggested. Join forces, work together, support each other.**

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE**



## 'EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION' SOME THOUGHTS FROM LENTON

I have lived in Lenton for over thirty years, and in that time it is inevitable that I have seen many changes.

Even so, I often find myself wondering how this last one has happened and why, and who is responsible for letting it happen. I mean, of course, the transformation of a pleasant residential district into what seems now like an extension to the University of Nottingham's campus.

The students themselves cannot properly be blamed. They need somewhere to live, and they take what is offered so conveniently close to the University. Sometimes their behaviour leaves a lot to be desired. Sometimes they make congenial neighbours. But either way, there are simply too many of them.

Can we blame the University? Yes, partly, for keeping their eyes closed to the consequences on neighbouring districts of their rapid expansion. Only after much urging have they begun to take this on board.

What about local government? Surely the local authorities are the ones we should look to for protection. But local government is hampered by the restraints placed upon it by central government.

So, it is central government in Westminster we have to look to for answers. They came to power in 1997 with the slogan 'Education, Education, Education'. However, they failed, as usual, to give any thought to the logical consequences of what is a laudable aim. They did not give thought as to where the additional students were going to live, or the effects on the areas they would end up living in.

The consequences have been brought to central government attention by many different action groups, such as ours, in many different university towns and cities across this country. Government's response has been to steadfastly refuse to admit there are any problems that cannot be solved by, for example, the Housing Act 2004.

However, there are some signs that a wind of change is blowing. No doubt it will conjure up its own storms, but if residents remain strong and determined, we may yet see our district come to life again.

I would say to people looking for homes, whether first time buyers or last time buyers – you might do worse than give Lenton a glance. There is still a great deal of charm in our tree-lined roads and, despite the worst efforts of the student landlords, some pleasant examples of domestic architecture remain.

Don't write us off. We, the residents, refuse to be written off.

[By 'Not to be Written Off' of Lenton]

## AS IF ANYONE WOULD DARE!

Our Lenton correspondent has made some important observations about the responsibility of Westminster for what has happened and the continuing prevarication by Central Government and Civil Servants alike in order to avoid not just accepting responsibility, but also doing something about it.

The front page of the magazine's Summer 2005 issue carried an open letter from Cllr. Trimble to Central Government, highlighting the need for legislation. Alan Simpson, MP for Nottingham South, passed on the letter to David Miliband (then Minister of Communities and Local Government). He, in turn, passed it on to Baroness Kay Andrews.

A little late, but since Baroness Andrews is due to visit Nottingham shortly, we thought it timely to publish her reply to Alan Simpson alongside some of our own observations.

## THE COUNCILLOR ASKED

*'... Please, please Minister give local communities and their local representatives the tools to do the job to, as the Prime Minister said in the Queen's Speech debate, "reclaim our streets".*

*'Including those in our University Cities ...!'*

[Nottingham Action Group magazine, Summer 2005]

## & THE MINISTER REPLIED

### STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

Thank you for your letter of 29 June to David Miliband, enclosing a copy of an article from Councillor David Trimble of Nottingham City Council regarding the impact of student accommodation on university towns. I am replying as this falls within my ministerial responsibilities.

Last year, following concerns from various lobby groups about the 'studentification' of local communities, the DfES provided Universities UK with funding to jointly commission, with the LGA, an independent study to assess the impact of student housing on local communities. The project is close to completion and Universities UK plan to release its results in the autumn, a little later than originally planned.

After the first stage of this project, when the researchers surveyed universities in the UK, they used the responses as the basis for further inquiries, in the form of interviews, which will involve a wide selection of stakeholders including the National Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) lobby and MPs. A key output of this work will be a good practice guide to advise local authorities and universities how they may jointly address this issue.

This is to some extent a planning issue for local authorities. PPG3 stresses the importance of positive planning for mixed and inclusive communities in relation to new development, whether new houses or conversions. But town planning cannot regulate the number of students or where they may seek to live. It has been suggested that changes to the Use Classes Order could be made. However, this is intended to be a deregulatory mechanism that provides that a move between activities within the same class is not development and therefore does not require planning permission.

... Contd. Overleaf

## BUT THE ACTIVITIES OF HMOs ARE DIFFERENT

**OCCUPANCY** is intensive, higher than for an ordinary dwelling house and equal to high-season hotel — resulting in high levels of noise, traffic and waste.

**OCCUPANTS** are typically from one narrow age range (young adults) rather than the wider mix in most other residential uses — resulting in lifestyle implications with higher than usual levels of noise, traffic and waste

**OCCUPIERS** lack the internal (social) structure of a single household (or the management of a residential institution) — which makes it harder to manage noise, traffic, waste and safety.

**OCCUPATION** is short term, often no more than 9 months — which entails a lower level of engagement with the neighbourhood

[Richard Tyler, National HMO Lobby]

In any case it would be difficult to differentiate, in planning and amenity terms, between a family of six (with four teenagers) or six young professionals living in one property, with that of six students living in an equivalent property next door.

## ESTATE AGENTS & HOME SEEKERS HAVE NO SUCH PROBLEMS

As reported in the *Evening Post* only last year, a survey from the website [www.propertyfinder.co](http://www.propertyfinder.co) warns prospective buyers to take a close look at who lives next door before they make an offer on a new home.

If the neighbours are a childless couple, the average house price rises 4.1%, while old age pensioners lift the price by 3.3%, and singles add 2.5%.

However, after squatters, who knock just over 16% off, student neighbours are the most likely to devalue a home (10.1% or £16,078).

In contrast, families with teenage children cut the value by a mere 4.8%

## NEITHER DO THE MINISTER'S COLLEAGUES IN NORTHERN IRELAND WHERE HMOs HAVE HAD A SEPARATE USE CLASSES ORDER CLASSIFICATION SINCE 2004

This is not an easy issue to tackle, but the provisions on HMO licensing in the Housing Act 2004 will have some impact.

The Act provides for the mandatory licensing of the highest risk HMO including shared student houses. Indeed the new definition of HMO (one occupied by people of more than one family sharing facilities) will bring a lot of shared student accommodation within the scope of licensing.

Councils will be required to licence HMOs of three or more storeys and occupied by five or more persons who form more than one household.

In addition they will also have discretionary powers to license categories of smaller HMOs that are problematic, providing that alternative measures to tackle the problems are, or would be, less effective. This could be used in areas where concentrations of student HMOs cause particular problems. However licensing is not intended to limit the number of HMOs or control where they are located.

Licensing identifies the properties that pose the highest risk for targeting under the health and safety provisions of the Act. Fundamentally it is about fit and proper landlords managing their properties and their tenancies well – and, the Act provides, that includes dealing with anti-social tenants.

I hope this goes some way to addressing the concerns of Councillor David Trimble.

Baroness Andrew  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,  
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

## ANOTHER BOX TICKING EXERCISE?

The National Union of Students held a Round Table Think Tank in London last week. Baroness Andrews' visit to Nottingham was mentioned as [an example of?] the 'importance of listening to the community'.

Although we are all supposed to speak the same language, there are times when it does seem as if Government and the Civil Service use different dictionary definitions from the rest of us.

We can but hope that when Baroness Andrews does finally come, the visit will not be yet another box ticking/consultation exercise where the Minister listens, but doesn't hear.



## £213m FUNDING WILL CREATE 50,000 MORE PLACES AT UNIVERSITY

It has been reported [*Times*, 1 March, 2007] that 'student numbers will grow by the equivalent of three new universities in the next two years ... after government funding chiefs announced grants worth £7 billion.

'Another 50,000 student places will be made available as the Government tries to move to its target of getting half of young people into university.

'The Higher Education Funding Council for England (Hefce) said this represented a 5 per cent rise in student numbers with £213 million of financial backing.'

David Eastwood, Chief Executive of the Hefce, is quoted as saying: 'We are making available £213 million to support almost 50,000 extra student places over the two years ...'

As our Lenton correspondent observes: 'They [government] did not give thought as to where the additional students were going to live ...'

The author (Jess Buttress) of an article that appeared in *The Sanctuary Newspaper*, the University of Nottingham's independent student paper, [14 February, 2007] seems to be following the same train of thought:

'...the accommodation provided for many students by the private sector would turn many to booze! High rents and low standard accommodation mean many students have to deal with rats, sewage, water leaks and mould – not to mention 1000 year old sofas and a kitchen that was in its prime in 1957.

'A lack of university accommodation for second and third years forces the move towards the private housing sector. ...'

Is it too much to hope that funding will be made available to create an extra 50,000 bed spaces for students in university/purpose built accommodation, or is the private housing sector yet again going to take up the slack?

# UNIPOL NOTTINGHAM

## A UNITED FRONT ON A VITAL ISSUE

*This is one parent's experience of student accommodation in Lenton ... 'As a parent of a daughter living in Lenton, we were horrified at the standard of accommodation offered for £65 a week: collapsed foul drains, removed back garden walls with a 20' drop, fire doors that were painted over (I suppose at least there were fire doors) and the list was endless. We were unlucky with the agent, but if at first you don't succeed, you 'phone, write, try and try again and then you ring the council, for whom I have great admiration in solving several problems so efficiently!'*

[Posted by Jane Gallie, Daily Telegraph website, 7 February, 2007]

## WHY NOTTINGHAM TRENT STUDENTS UNION & THE NOTTINGHAM ACTION GROUP WANT UNIPOL NOTTINGHAM TO BECOME A REALITY

By Scott Blakeway

Even though 25% of students at Nottingham Trent come from within the NG postcode catchment area, the issues surrounding student accommodation remain a constant problem.

Nottingham Trent Students Union has continually looked for ways to increase the standard of the accommodation in which students are forced to live. If you add to this our continuing efforts to improve the relationship students have with the local community, you will appreciate how fantastic it is that we are able to adopt a similar viewpoint to that of the NAG in relation to bringing UNIPOL to Nottingham.



The idea of UNIPOL has become both NTSU and NAG's preferred accommodation strategy for students.

We too are sick of the numerous TO LET signs left up permanently, preventing the student residents from ever feeling at 'home'. And we are just as frustrated as the NAG when we see landlords and letting agents using the sort of sale techniques where students are simply sent knocking on doors.

NTSU accepts that students sometimes struggle to integrate in the community, but we hope that with UNIPOL here to drive up standards of accommodation and provide information to both landlords and students on their social responsibilities to the neighbourhoods in which they find themselves, our community relationships will continue to develop.

UNIPOL is committed to raising standards in student accommodation, by working closely with landlords, tenants and the community in order to implement a workable accreditation scheme. It is this which we hope will encourage students to respect their homes and community more.

Gone are the days when students accept sub-standard accommodation, which they treat with a lack of respect. The modern student expects more, possibly as a result of fee increases and what not, but this is reflected in their housing choice.

Of course, students demands have gone up and so too has their commitment to filling their CV with exciting activities. NTSU continue to offer volunteering and fundraising opportunities which help benefit the local community. Examples are 'litter picks' and helping disadvantaged children.

Of course, students' demands have gone up and so too has their commitment to filling their CV with exciting activities. NTSU continue to offer volunteering and fundraising opportunities which help benefit the local community, for example taking part in 'litter pick's' and helping disadvantaged children

It is apparent that the majority of our members want high quality accommodation which they can treat with respect. NTSU firmly believes that if a student can respect their home, they are more likely to respect the surrounding area and thus the local community.

By continuing to support the UNIPOL scheme, Nottingham Trent students and the local community can hopefully live together as exactly that: a fully integrated community.

[Scott is Welfare and Equal Opportunities Officer,  
Nottingham Trent University Students Union

Thank you Scott.

Like you and your colleagues, the Nottingham Action Group believes that the poor standards of maintenance and management exhibited by so many HMO landlords in our neighbourhoods are not only detrimental to our well-being and our future, but also to the welfare of the students who live in these properties.

We too are tired of seeing dumped mattresses, gardens turned into derelict waste ground, peeling window frames, blocked drains and trees growing out of chimneys.

We do care about the safety of students.

We find it disgusting that, as is recommended by at least one agent, a way of finding somewhere to live is by knocking on doors.

We even know of an instance last autumn when students were stopped on a Lenton street by a taxi driver who rolled down his window, asked them if they were looking for somewhere to live – and then pointed them to one of his properties.

Isn't this really rather like soliciting, and just as unsavoury?

UNIPOL is a charity with many years of experience of working nationally to improve training, standards and professionalism in student housing. It helps students to find and live securely in private rented sector accommodation. It also provides help and advice to landlords. It is a first port of call for students, landlords – and residents. For more information take a look at:

[www.unipol.leeds.ac.uk](http://www.unipol.leeds.ac.uk)

We have joined with the City Council and the Students Unions of both our universities in a very active campaign to bring UNIPOL to Nottingham in the belief that this will be a step towards returning respect for all of us back to our neighbourhoods

## SUCCESS

We have just heard that, after nearly two years of hard work and nagging on the part of our Councillors, Council officers, the officers of the two Students Unions, and the NAG, UNIPOL NOTTINGHAM will be in place by September, 2007 – in time for the next university session and round of house hunting.

It will not be the solution to the problem but, with resident as well as council, student and university representation on the board of UNIPOL NOTTINGHAM, the NAG share the hope that it will be a giant step forward.

[Editor, 13 February, 2007]



## A GOOD SIGN

Scott said in his article: 'We too are sick of the numerous TO LET signs left up permanently...'. We echo those sentiments. It was therefore uplifting to get an update from Richard Tyler and the Leeds HMO Lobby about the situation in Headingley, Leeds. We've tracked down the report by Sophie Hazan which appeared recently in the *Yorkshire Evening Post*.

## ROGUE LANDLORDS ARE FINED £12,000

Rogue landlords breaching restrictions on the use of To Let boards have been hit by fines totalling nearly £12,000.

Since the clampdown was introduced in Headingley on March 1, rental bosses advertising rooms have been dealt with on 99 occasions.

Traditional To Let signs are banned after they were deemed unsightly and bad for the community by homeowners. Property in Headingley is dominated by a migratory student population which tends to fly the nest at the beginning of the summer.

The scholars then return several months later, this time searching for new digs in preparation for the forthcoming year. Such patterns of movement left many streets awash with rental boards as landlords advertised spare rooms and multiple occupancy houses. Now rental boards are strictly limited in size and must be mounted to walls. An agent is allowed no more than three boards in a street.

Those that breach the code of conduct, created by the Planning Inspector and backed by Leeds City Council, will see boards removed and face a fine.

Coun Martin Hamilton (Lib Dem, Headingley) hailed the initiative and said: "The council has been quick to jump on those landlords that have flouted the rules.

I am delighted the council is taking such firm action and that it has been backed up by the courts." Coun James Monaghan (Lib Dem, Headingley) said: "The old-style To Let signs are not only offensive to the eye but they highlight shared properties with expensive items to steal.

"The new boards flush to the side of properties, make Headingley look smarter and less like a community permanently in transition."

The subject of letting boards came up again at a recent meeting of the City Council's Student Co-ordination and Delivery Group. We understand that Planning officers have been tasked with gathering information about proliferation of these boards in our neighbourhoods as a first step towards working up appropriate control measures.

We also have some good news about candidates' advertising during this year's Students Union elections. In recent times there have been more and more old sheets and other banners hanging out of windows and draped across walls and fences. Last year we had so many complaints from residents that we took the problem to the University of Nottingham's Students Union.

At that time we couldn't find any mutually satisfactory solution. However, at the same Co-ordination and Delivery Group meeting Katherine Garrett, the SU's Community Officer, gave the NAG the welcome news that both SU Executives (University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent) had told this year's candidates not to use these unsightly banners. We have been asked to give details to the two Students Unions if we come across one of these banners.

**IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO THE COUNCIL & THE STUDENT UNIONS AS WELL AS TO US ALL IF YOU COULD CHECK AROUND YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD. IF YOU SEE A LOT OF 'TO LET', 'LET BY' BOARDS OR SU ELECTION BANNERS OUTSIDE PROPERTIES, GIVE US A CALL ON 07762-525-625 & WE'LL FORWARD THE INFORMATION TO THE RELEVANT OFFICERS.**

## STUDENT ACCOMMODATION COMPETITION



Two years ago one of UNIPOL's staff had what was generally regarded by his colleagues as a 'daft idea' – to run a competition to find the best student garden in Leeds. However, they tried it out and it wasn't a failure. So last year they tried it again, and succeeded in attracting many more entries.

Nottingham is trying out the idea this year as part of the Nottingham in Bloom competition. 'The judges ... will be looking for a student property whose frontage makes a positive impact on its neighbourhood by being clean, neat and tidy, with a good level of maintenance and preferably brightened up with flowers and plants.' Judging will take place in June.

My first reaction to this was to spill coffee all over my keyboard. But that's being churlish and if it encourages landlords (and tenants) to put a little effort into the appearance of the properties, let's give it a go.

There's also the small fact that as I've been asked to be one of the judges, I need to keep an open mind on this one!

Editor

## Sshh CAMPAIGN

Over the past few years, the issue of students living in local communities has received both local and national press. The 'student' areas in Nottingham are home to permanent residents too and these are people who have to get up every morning for work, may be elderly, or have small children. These people see more and more students each year moving into their communities and feel some anguish about the problems arising:

- High rates of crime (often through student windows and doors left unlocked)
- Low-level anti-social behaviour (noise pollution). You may have only one party in a year, but for a family living in a street dominated by students, it can seem like there is a party every evening, especially with students walking home at night and shouting in the streets.
- Serious problems of litter and waste (dumped mattresses, bins always on the pavement, etc.)
- More fast food outlets – fewer post offices, schools closing down, etc.

Last year your Students Union joined forces with the University of Nottingham's SU to launch the **Sshh! Campaign**. This campaign is targeted at student residents and asks for consideration and respect for the communities in which you live. ...'

[Extract from Nottingham Trent Students Union Housing Guide 2007]



# AND FINALLY ...

## The Editor's Ramblings

### 17 FEBRUARY, 2004

... Was the day the Nottingham Action Group was formed. Shortly afterwards, the *Nottingham Evening Post* carried a series of features over eight days on what was then beginning to be known as 'studentification'. The publication of the first of those features coincided with a BBC Radio Nottingham *Groundswell* debate on students and the community.

At the time it was mentioned that this would be looked on as a 'seminal moment' in the way towards a solution to our difficulties.

### 1 FEBRUARY, 2007

Oddly enough, three years on there is a degree of déjà vu about things.

As has been reported, BBC Radio Nottingham held a second *Groundswell* debate on studentification on 1 February.

That they had the debate on the same day as the university towns and cities conference and the regional meeting of the National HMO Lobby went a long way towards providing a national arena in which our neighbourhoods and all the issues surrounding them were well and truly aired with features on Radio Nottingham, Radio Four's *Today* programme, Radio Two's *Jeremy Vine Show*, Radio Five Live, as well as in local and national newspapers.

We can only hope that the media exposure has resulted in a heightened awareness of the issues where it is most needed – in Westminster, and that, coupled with the continuing work the National HMO Lobby, this will result in the changes we and our councillors so desperately need.

I don't know whether we will be able to look back on the beginning of 2007 as another decisive time. But I know that the final few days in January and the first few days of February were most certainly not dull.

What all of this has meant is that this edition of the magazine is largely, though not entirely, structured around the events and the issues as reported in the local and national press. It was felt this was an ideal way of taking advantage of a broader coverage than is perhaps usual and means that you can 'real all about it' without having to jump from one source to another

Of course, you could also say that it's made my job a lot easier!

Editor  
1 March, 2007

## 1 FEBRUARY 2007 IS ALSO WHEN OUR WEBSITE WENT LIVE

We're still working on it, developing the layout and content, etc. Please log on, let us know what you think and, most of all, tell us how it can be improved, contribute to it and use it. It's the only way in which it will stay live

[www.nottinghamaction.org.uk](http://www.nottinghamaction.org.uk)

## WANTED

- ◆Editor for the magazine, Webmaster for [www.nottinghamaction.org.uk](http://www.nottinghamaction.org.uk)◆
- ◆People to contribute to or help with publishing and distributing this magazine◆
- ◆People who know about websites, desk top publishing and databases ... or want to learn◆
- ◆Anyone who wants to help in whatever way they can with the work of the Nottingham Action Group on HMOs◆

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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 following address.



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