

Bristol Student Community Partnership (BSCP) ONLINE Minutes: Wednesday May 7th, 2025.

Attendees

University of Bristol

Mark Aston (MA), Community Liaison Officer (CLO)
Liam O'Shea, Head of Public Affairs and Deputy Chief of Staff
Hannah Quinn (HQ), Chief of Staff
Steve Dale, Senior Civic Partnerships Manager, Global Engagement
Frank Chung, Community Liaison Assistant

Bristol SU

Lucy Pears, Student Living Officer

University of the West of England

John Loughlin (JL), Deputy Team Leader, Security

Bristol Councillors

Cllr Guy Poultney (GP), Cotham (Chair)
Cllr George Calascione (GC), Clifton Down
Cllr Ani Stafford-Townsend, Central

Bristol City Council

Becky Gale (BG), Private Housing Service (PHS)
Christopher Swinscoe, Neighbourhood Enforcement Team (NET)

Avon and Somerset Police

PC Sian Harris (SH), University Police Officer, UoB

Bristol Waste Company (BWC)

Sarah Burns, Sustainability and Engagement Manager

Community representatives

Fiona McVey (FM) – Chandos Road
Anthony Negus (AN) – High Kingsdown
Diana Swain – Chandos Road
Dr. Jill White (JW) – Cotham Hill

Landlords/Letting Agents

Pippa Barry (PB) – Penlane
John Hickey (JH) – Landlord Representative

In attendance

Caroline Ennion (CE), BCC Parks

Apologies

John McWilliams (UoB Civic Engagement), Ben Pilling (Bristol SU), Victoria Hanley (Bristol SU Lettings), Sharon Evans (UWE Community Liaison), Gerry Rice (UWE Dean for Students), Cllr Mark Fodor, Cllr Fi Hance, Cllr Mohamed Makawi, Cllr Patrick McAllister, Cllr Paula O'Rourke, Cllr Serena Ralston, Cllr Izzy Russell, Cllr Jerome Thomas, Onn Kee Davies (BCC PHS), Megan Davis (BCC NET), Naomi Jones (BCC NET), David Pemble (BCC Contract Management), Insp Jonathan Scott, PC Steven Dexter, PC Simon Topps, Nohelia Fernandez (BWC), Alex McKie (BWC), Andrew Waller (Community representative)

Agenda

1) Welcome – GP (chair)

The chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

2) Approve minutes of last meeting

AGREED: Minutes of the last meeting were approved without amendment.

3) Operation Beech Update

Operation Beech shifts

SH reported there had been Operation Beech resourcing challenges in recent months and some shifts couldn't take place. However, Operation Beech is now resourced to the end of current academic year (19 July). Since the last BSCP meeting, Operation Beech had been relatively quiet. Since resumption of shifts after the Easter break, there had been just 1 report on a Saturday.

FM expressed concerns about the lack of resources to cover the shifts.

FM also raised concerns about the attending officers' tendency not to ask occupants to close down a party, while the VC's letter from UoB did clearly direct students to close down parties. If officers could convey the same information as the VC's letter, it would be more effective at ending noise disturbance and helpful for the University's subsequent investigation.

SH explained that officers on Operation Beech duties are given a briefing pack to maintain consistency of approach, although observations in the field can influence how officers respond. Officers' assessment upon arrival could be different from the level of disturbance residents experienced at the time they made their report, and they would respond differently based on crowd sizes, extent of disruption and their interaction with occupants. However, body worn videos are available for the CLO to review so CLO can form their own opinion. The CLO has also been communicating with the responding officers to obtain a first-person account from them.

FM stated that Operation Beech visits were invariably the result of residents having already been disturbed; therefore, it is important to deliver the VC letter as well as convey a message that is consistent with the letter to ensure noise events are shut down.

MA stated the University relies on the attending officers to assess the noise level and decide whether to deliver the VC letter. MA would arrange to shadow Operation Beech shifts with Insp Jonathan Scott to understand how officers make such assessment in the field.

Role of residents' complaints

FM queries if residents' direct complaints to the University have a role when Operation Beech has attended.

MA responded that a resident report adds context to the Operation Beech report. If the attending officer did not think the noise was excessive, CLO would contact the complainant to get their perspective and ask if they are willing to be named if CLO proceeds with a full investigation.

HMO noise's impact on property consumers

JW opined that noise from student properties is a serious enough issue that there are now people who will not consider purchasing a property if students live next door.

GP agreed that the issue of student noise affecting housing consumers' decisions is significant, and noted that noise complaint figures from UoB, compared year-on-year for the first three months of 2025, appeared to be on an upward trend. It would be important to have a robust programme of information delivery upon students moving out / moving in later in the year.

HQ commented that it is probably not meaningful to compare complaint figures year-on-year as these can be influenced by multiple factors, including the recent change to the structure of the academic year. At the end of this academic year's Operation Beech, it would be useful for UoB and SH to conduct a review to determine when and where the operation can make the most impact.

Sharing of data about noise and nuisance reports

AN raised his concern that Operation Beech is too focused on parties, while the wider problem of nuisance and anti-social behaviour is not adequately addressed. AN was also concerned that it is not clear that information from Operation Beech is being shared with BCC PHS.

SH stated Operation Beech information is not routinely shared with BCC, although in the case of repeated issues from the same address information would be shared with relevant BCC teams such as NET.

MA stated he has a monthly meeting with BCC NET where information about repeated issues with specific addresses would be shared.

GP acknowledged the need to share information about Operation Beech and residents' reports on noise and nuisance with relevant BCC teams who should be considering these reports when assessing HMO licence and planning applications.

4) University of Bristol update

MA stated that monthly statistics on noise and waste incidents have been sent to residents by e-mail. From July 2024 to March 2025 there has been 195 complaints, down from 204 in the same period of the previous year.

MA reported that UoB had conducted interviews for the post of Community Liaison Coordinator and would soon select the successful candidate. The University had also received a number of applications for upcoming vacant student ambassador posts.

HQ reported that 3 VC working group meetings were held since the last BSCP meeting. In the first meeting around the student agreement, amendments were agreed upon the section on behaviour. In the second meeting around waste, the University had made the commitment to strengthen communication on waste management, e.g. using the UoB student app to convey information on bin days. In the third meeting on student induction modules, insight was collected from residents and students on making the material on behaviour in the community more impactful. These changes would be incorporated in the new academic year. HQ thanked FM and all residents who were engaged in the process.

ACTION: GP requested for a concise summary on the changes to be provided.

5) UWE update

JL stated UWE had been going through restructuring, resulting with Sharon Evans heading up community liaison and JL's main role in campus support. JL would continue to bring feedback to UWE if needed.

6) Actions Update

1	UWE to explore providing references for 2nd year students to landlords	IN PROGRESS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTION: JL would consult with HQ on the technicalities of providing such reference. • JH emphasised that university references are now essential for landlords to comply with their HMO licensing terms. • PB stated Penlane is currently unable to take on UWE students as tenants due to the lack of university references. 	
2	UWE to provide 2023–2024 annual report in time for the next BSCP meeting	INCOMPLETE
	ACTION: JL to bring back to UWE for follow-up.	
3	GP to follow up on community forums and student surgeries with MA	IN PROGRESS
	ACTION: GP and MA to have ongoing discussions to identify dates and venues.	
4	GP to circulate draft Council approved warning letter to residents regarding bins on streets	IN PROGRESS
	ACTION: GP and MA to follow up on the letter.	
5	GP to formally raise ongoing issues regarding BCC Housing (attendance, reporting, Pinpoint issue) with Chair of Housing Policy Committee	COMPLETE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP had discussed with Cllr Barry Parsons (Homes and Housing Delivery Committee Chair) and Tom Gilchrist (BCC PHS), and had been able to agree: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ UoB should have access to the full HMO register. ○ Residents' groups should not have their number of requests for landlord information limited. • AN stated local residents are entitled to know who the landlords are in their vicinity; therefore lifting the limit on the number of queries is essential. 	
6	GP to formally raise missed waste collections with relevant BCC policy committee	IN PROGRESS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTION: GP would arrange a meeting with Cllr Martin Fodor (Environment and Sustainability Committee Chair), a BCC representative on waste and enforcement, MA and a residents' representative. • JW nominated Penny Dobson as residents' representative. • AN proposed to include student representatives. MA agreed to get student ambassadors involved. 	
7	GP to form a small group to talk about information sharing among the universities, the Police and BCC with regards to impact of HMO issues to residents	IN PROGRESS
	ACTION: GP to follow up.	
8	MA to follow up with PHS on sharing of public register of HMOs	IN PROGRESS
	ACTION: MA would consult internally on data protection and follow up with BG.	

7) A.O.B

7.1. Review of BSCP terms of reference

AN and FM proposed to discuss the efficacy and future of BSCP.

FM drew from her experience coordinating meetings between residents' groups that some groups are well-organised while others are individuals who would like to discuss issues but not be involved in formal structures.

FM observed that the terms of reference of BSCP was loosely defined and unable to drive the agenda forward, so there was a tendency to repeat the same work every year (e.g. moving out information delivery) that should have been made into a checklist. There was also a tendency to revert to older practice after agreeing on a coordinated approach, e.g. on whether student parties should be dealt with by sanctions or engage/explain.

JW opined that change of staff without well-defined terms of reference to provide continuity means each incumbent had to pick things up all over again.

HQ stated the role of UoB and UWE is to take part and address questions, but not to drive the agenda, although UoB is happy to provide secretarial support.

GP suggested that any alternate structure to promote driving the agenda needs to come from members, e.g. split into meetings for engagement vs. meetings for organising action. However GP warned against the tendency to add different structures to review decisions that were already made.

PB stated it is invaluable to have a disparate group of people from different departments together in one meeting to form connections and share perspectives.

7.2. Communication on appropriate behaviour in parks

CE asked for advice on channels to communicate acceptable behaviours in public parks, e.g. not to have barbecues and taking litter home.

HQ asked CE to provide the information that needs to be conveyed and would share it through the appropriate channels within UoB. JL would do the same for UWE.

GC and GP requested that ward councillors serve as the first point of contact for sharing of such information. GP opined that ASB prevention campaigns should not focus on students unless there was evidence to suggest students were disproportionately the cause.

APPENDIX 1: NEW ACTION SHEET

1	JL	UWE to pick up with UoB counterparts on approach to providing references for 2nd year students' to landlords.
2	JL	UWE to provide 2023–2024 annual report in time for the next BSCP meeting
3	GP	Follow up on community forums and student surgeries with MA
4	GP	Circulate draft Council-approved warning letter to residents regarding bins on streets after discussion with MA
5	GP	Formally raise missed waste collections with relevant BCC policy committee
6	GP	Form a small group to talk about information sharing among the universities, the Police and BCC with regards to impact of HMO issues to residents
7	MA	Follow up with PHS on sharing of public register of HMOs
8	HQ	Provide concise summaries of changes resulting from the VC working group meetings

Next BSCP meetings:

31st July 2025, 2pm (online)

31st October 2025, 2pm