

# **Bristol Student Community Partnership (BSCP) ONLINE**

## **Minutes: Thursday, 23 October 2025.**

### **Attendees**

#### **University of Bristol (UoB)**

Hannah Quinn (HQ), Chief of Staff

Liam O'Shea (LOS), Head of Public Affairs and Deputy Chief of Staff

Mark Aston (MA), Community Liaison Officer

Sam Hosseini, Community Liaison Coordinator

PC Sian Harris (SH), University Police Officer

#### **Bristol SU**

Lucy Pears (LP), Student Living Officer

#### **Bristol Councillors**

Cllr Guy Poultney (GP), Cotham (Chair)

Cotham (Chair) Cllr Izzy Russell (IR), Ashley

#### **Bristol City Council**

Ging Laforteza (GF), Private Landlord Liaison Officer,

Cllr George Calascione (GC), Clifton Down,

Christopher Swinscoe (CS), Neighbourhood Enforcement Team (NET)

#### **Community representatives**

Fiona McVey (FM) – Chandos Road

Derrick Collier (DC) –

Ken Booth (KB) Dr. Jill White (JW) – Cotham Hill,

Anthony Negus (AN) – High Kingsdown

#### **Landlords/Letting Agents**

John Hickey (JH) – Landlord Representative

Pippa Barry (PB) – Penlane

### **Apologies**

Steve Dale (UoB Senior Civic Partnerships Manager), John McWilliams (UoB Civic Engagement), Ben Pilling (Bristol SU), Victoria Hanley (Bristol SU Lettings), 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 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, Sarah Burns (BWC), Nohelia Fernandez (BWC), Alex McKie (BWC), Andrew Waller, Community Representative (Clifton Down), Cllr Ani Stafford-Townsend, Central, John Loughlin, Deputy Team Leader, Security, Diana Swain – Chandos Road, Becky Gale (BCC:Private Housing Service)

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

AN points out that certain action points that were listed in the minutes and not in the action sheet.

3. Community Liaison Update (University of Bristol)

MA refers to monthly update that was sent out to residents at the beginning October and lists statistics for complaints in the last month.

FM asks for key areas of complaints during September (refers to problems on Cotham Vale), and UoB plans for Halloween.

MA explains that we're not seeing a repeat of complaints for the same properties.

AN refers to meeting among residents on Monday, there was discussion of problems on Cotham Vale and the number of complaints about this road exceed UoB figures, unsure how this lines up. Also seen a lot of issues with bins around, so unsure why UoB hasn't had more complaints. Concerns expressed around resident's reluctance to report complaints as they feel as if it won't make any difference/nothing will be done.

MA explains that figure around Cotham Vale complaints only

DC asks about the update to Operation Beech process.

MA explains that the framework for officers has been updated, to give us better understanding of the complaint. Officers now make an assessment considering several different factors to determine whether the noise was excessive.

JW explains that there is always increased noise during the beginning of the term, students getting to know each other.

GP says feedback from residents is that this year has 'felt' worse in terms of noise complaints.

4. Community Liaison Update (University of the West of England)

No one from UWE present

## 5. Operation Beech Update (Avon & Somerset Police)

SH explains that OB has been running since September and that all shifts have been and are covered up until the Christmas break. Will discuss with MA regarding what needs to be done in terms of resources from Jan onwards 19 December, last day of Operation Beech.

**ACTION: SH to discuss with MA what needs to be done in terms of resources from January onwards for Operation Beech**

FM – refers to VC letter given to students when Operation Beech is called: concern around discretion of Operation Beech officers only giving out the VCs letter if the noise is considered excessive. Calling Operation Beech in first place indicates that there has been a disturbance. No clear definition of what is considered excessive, which makes it subjective. Requesting that UoB and OB Officers give letter to every call when OB attend. The excessive noise test doesn't take into account that noise within properties can be far worse than that from the front door. OB officers can't always hear what the noise is like from inside houses/gardens.

SH has had a discussion with MA on this. If a VC letter is handed out upon every visit, the wording will need to be changed.

HQ – UoB can look into this, but the wording will need to be changed.

GP raises the concern that the introduction of a new letter that's handed out for any visit (not just if noise is excessive), could potentially weaken process. All complaints are logged for investigation. Letter is to evidence police have witnessed excessive noise – evidence is in addition to residents' complaint.

HQ – There are pros and cons to introducing a new letter. Does not think it would be a good idea to ask OB officers to decide which of two letter would be appropriate upon visit. We will have to look at this.

DC – reinforces FMs point on the subjective nature of the assessment made by OB officers. Gives example of how noise can travel on Waverley Road gardens, and because of set up of houses it can be very difficult to identify which house the noise is coming from. Points out that residents don't contact OB frivolously, it's because they have been disturbed

SH points out that OB officers come from outside Bristol sometimes too, and thus don't always have the best knowledge of area. Sometimes they attend address and there is no noise, because noise occurred then stopped as students were leaving. More info from complainants would be helpful.

PB makes the point that some students feel they're discriminated against, if they weren't students, they wouldn't have OB officers visiting them. They feel residents don't want them there and are against them. Important to take this perspective into account.

AN – The fact is that residents who have lived there for several years and deal with students feel more put upon by students who are only there for 8 months, night after night, from several properties. Had to plead with people to make noise complaints officially. It's not something that people do for fun. A lot of residents would rather just put up with it than have to make an official complaint. Believes disturbances are much worse than figures reflect.

GP asks whether OB is fully staffed for operation during Halloween and bonfire night and surrounding weekends?

SH confirms that OB is fully staffed for the remainder of this year.

GP asks if officers still speak to complainant and students if there's no noise when they get there.

SH – Officers always knock on the door. Sometimes the property is empty as students have left since the disturbance, which is not to suggest that there's no noise. Advice generally given. OB has no official powers in relation to noise, only for ASB. They are often briefed on repeat offenders, but don't always have full knowledge.

MA - Nothing has changed from now to how it was prior to our arrival, in terms of what is considered to be excessive noise by OB officers. Have made some changes to the framework they use to give us clearer information to work with. Made expectations clear. The excessive noise test is inherently subjective. Understands the issue of noise that comes from gardens. If no action is taken by the OB officers, it's because there's a few people there, not a large party. If the noise is not excessive, they take positive action which generally works, based on the evidence we have. Residents are always contacted, and we look at what evidence they can present, and we still proceed with investigation.

FM suggests that the subjective element should be removed from the criteria by which OB Officers judge noise. A resident complaining holds enough weight by itself. Can we ask OB Officers to patrol streets?

SH – yes this can be arranged.

LOS – The purpose of the VCs letter was to stop large parties. We had a situation where police would attend a house party and ask students to stop and then once they would leave, the party starts again. The letter was written to tackle this issue. Every OB report is followed up by CLO the next day.

## 6. Waste and Recycling Update (Bristol Waste)

IR – on waste task and finish group: We are currently assessing creating a new waste collection system. Types of rubbish has changed, different sized boxes and bags. Change coming to HMOs and flats above shops, plans for them to get sacks, instead of boxes, easier to store and less messy.

AN – on waste task and finish group: Do we know anything about how the meeting around waste has been followed up, leading on from the VC working group? Need figures for completion of community induction module.

## 7. Neighbourhood Enforcement Update (Bristol City Council)

GL points out that Becky Gale could not be present at today's meeting, ensured that they will pass on any concerns in this area to BG.

GP points out that information sharing is still sat with chairs of various committees, and pursuing updates on this.

## 8. Resident's Feedback

FM wants to raise concerns on the proposed restructuring of the BSCP. GP explains that this will be addressed in Item 11 on agenda.

## 9. Vice-Chancellor Working Groups – Update and Discussion

HQ – The report from the working parties was sent out in July. Most of the activity identified transitions into business as usual. The CLO now has access to the Community Induction Module software and can build additional modules for the future. **ACTION: HQ to circulate the figures for completion of Community Induction Module**

FM – many residents are disappointed with outcome, particularly the community induction module, residents weren't given opportunity to give feedback on the module before it was published. Residents would have appreciated the chance to discuss this further and give more feedback.

HQ explains that she is happy to look at this again for next year.

AN – On a few of the points made in VC groups. There were some good approaches to issues, to do with greater cooperation. One of the main problems is that nobody has an overview of all this. There is a lack of coordination that means that good intentions fail. Had not realised how underserved many of

student properties were, in terms of bins and boxes, this is landlord responsibility. There are no proper checks on landlords. UoB has a moral responsibility to take greater care of its students, to make certain that landlords accommodate students properly and deliver their responsibilities.

HQ agrees that coordination is problem. Explains that there have been conversations with SU around landlord's accreditation.

LP – There has been a lot of consideration on this at SU. Part of the problem is that there's no regulation on this. More and more students are moving into the area, but without a conversation with landlords taking place. Council makes the decision on HMO licences. Landlords are the missing piece. There are occasions where adequate provision from landlords is not provided. SU working on a campaign around understanding more about who landlords are and what their responsibilities are as a landlord. Chance for students to give their landlords a rating. More onus should be on the landlord.

AN explains that students used to complain to him, when he was councillor, that UoB were not supporting them. Students should be able to complain through the University on this issue. UoB has the clout and weight behind it to deal with this.

DC in reference to HQs update on VC working groups: the student agreement is a contract that the student signs with the University. Raised question on whether office for students acknowledges these kinds of problems with students in residential areas, every University city has similar problems. Can this be written into the student agreement?

HQ is unsure if the office has ever been asked this and that it's likely to not be a priority but can make an enquiry.

**ACTION: HQ to enquire about other University contracts featuring behavioural standards.**

DC refers to the proposed change to the BSCP structure. Points out that landlords are missing from this process, and this has been not addressed in the restructure proposal.

PB agrees completely with LP in referring to student issues with landlords. HMO inspection is tick box exercise; there is nothing on this inspection that covers waste to check correct provisions are provided. A lot of tenants don't inform council that bins have gone missing.

**ACTION: GP to look at what checks are in place to ensure that students have the correct waste management provisions when moving into a HMO**

**ACTION: GL will also raise this action with BG**

GP – Issue raised on outputs of VC working groups on reporting and complaints: The wording in the VC working group report suggests that complainant's identity must be disclosed at the outset – this would be off-putting to potential complainants.

HQ clarified that the document that has been circulated seeks to add context to the standardised complaint form.

GP Confirms that residents are able to inform and complain confidentially, with the understanding that their complaint can only be used as evidence in formal disciplinary action if they consent to their identity being disclosed to the subject of the complaint.

HQ – This can be discussed again.

DC – It's not clear what is meant by disclosure and exactly what information is disclosed. Unclear at what stage of the process personal details are disclosed to students.

HQ – Happy to review the form to address this.

FM agrees that it would be good to review the complaint form. Points out that it can be intimidating for some residents to give over name/address for it to go to disciplinary. Residents have been told that name address had to be disclosed in complaints which does discourage some people from making complaints. OIA talks about transparency of investigation which residents are not privy to.

HQ – Where possible we will rely on third party evidence which does not require names. If wording on the form is not clear, we can change this.

MA points out that the complaint form does ask for a name to be provided but that it won't be disclosed without consent of complainant.

GP – The notes in the VC working group does not suggest this. The suggestion is that complainants name had to be given upfront.

HQ – Nothing has changed in this process.

LOS points out that there is nothing to stop the CLO from attending property that the complaint was made against and giving advice.

FM understand that name needs to be given if goes to a full investigation. Nothing happens if Operation Beech officers decide noise not excessive, and complainants don't want to give name then nothing happens.

MA points out that regardless of whether OB officers deemed noise excessive or not, students are still contacted the following morning.

**ACTION: HQ to review wording on website to ensure comms reflects agreed process RE confidential complaints:**

Residents can complain confidentially – if process requires confidentiality to be waived to progress complaint, consent sought at appropriate juncture. Consent to waive confidentiality should not be sought at initial stage.

## 10. Dates of Future Meetings

TBD

## 11. Governance Changes (Chair)

GP – Partnership issues that can be dealt with through operational changes are largely dealt with effectively. Longstanding concerns that require strategic realignment are still a concern.

The proposal is that there should be:

- A residents' forum meeting to enable any residents to attend and raise issues, and partner organisations to report back actions.
- A regular (monthly / quarterly) meeting for operational staff to collaborate in addressing operational issues (as needed, depending on issues raised).
- An annual meeting to review the previous year, set partnership priorities for the forthcoming year, and to address strategic concerns raised by residents.

This change in approach would free up operational staff to focus on action, rather than engagement, and identify (recurring) issues that require a strategic approach for referral to strategic decision-makers.

Residents' issues and concerns could be focused to the most appropriate partner organisation at the most appropriate decision-making level.

AN - analysis of process should work (3 subdivisions) is good, assessment of plans is also good. Positives are a little overplayed. 3 negatives outweigh positive results of this. GP has wrongly characterised operational aspect as individual jobs to be done, this is about inter agency failures to solve issues, the operational aspect is very important. Seeing increases in student numbers, and increases in approved HMOs, proves that we don't have control over this. We

have asked for GP to speak to the decision makers on this and we are still unsure on outcome. The only reason we have gotten this far is because residents groups have been very active throughout the process. The restructure proposal effectively cuts off resident groups from front and back end, and nothing will get done. This means that resident groups will be less involved.

JW in agreement with AN, we mustn't be divided. Should stay as we are.

PB – the current structure has the advantage of getting a very diverse range of information and gives a full picture of what is going on across the board.

DC – strategic thinking means that residents must rely on the council having a strategy and we've seen that this is not the case. Residents have had to force strategy. The proposed new structure would dilute this, relying on council and University working together. The voice of residents will be lost.

JH – understands from PB that we've been waiting for UWE to give behavioural references for their students who are coming out of halls of residence, and acknowledges that UWE aren't present at the meeting so will still wait on this.

GP confirms that he sent email after the last BSCP meeting to meet with HQ on delivering this action (UWE providing behavioural references).

JH points out that in the previous BSCP meeting, the UWE representative wanted clarity on what exactly was required for this. An email was sent to them on this the next day and HQ offered to help.

GP – Can MA ask for a formal in person meeting with UWE on this action? We all acknowledge that we need this action from UWE and can't understand why they seem to be refusing to engage. ACTION GP to request meeting with John Loughlin (new UWE CLO)

AN – Would like an administrative change, to make clear on action points for ongoing actions exactly what has been done. Many of the questions that have come up in this meeting are because people don't know what actions have been delivered exactly.

FM expresses concern on the complexity of restructure. There is some confusion on where residents sit. Also points out that minutes from the previous meeting should come out earlier. Residents have had to fight for their seat at table and are reluctant to give it up, which is what it seems like the restructure would result in.

GP agrees that problem will get worse in terms of increased student enrolment and more purpose-built student accommodation being built. Can't see what can

be done in BSCP meetings to address this problem under the current structure. Welcome to other suggestions.

AN believes that resident groups are the reason for getting this far in the first place.

FM also raises point on admin around BSCP; the minutes from the last meeting come out quite late and action points could be collated and laid out better. Better documentation and better legacy of the meetings is needed. Residents would need more details on how the proposed restructure can actually be achieved. More admin support would be a good way forward for BSCP.

DC reiterates point made earlier on need for joint strategy from BCC and UoB. Attending BSCP allows for visibility on the issues and how they're being dealt with.

GP – strategic decision maker does not sit on BSCP, wants to organise a meeting where this does happen. Access to person who can make decision so collectively as a partnership we can say this is what we need.

PB – Some people misunderstand the idea behind a restructure. I like the suggestion of getting people involved in this meeting in same room as the decision maker. Before BSCP there was much less understanding of the problems, and the fear is that progress on this would be lost if the restructure were to occur.

GP – The current structure of the BSCP meeting is too varied as are the concerns raised and what can be done about them. Restructuring and setting up forums will be far better for more accountability on the actions.

FM asks for further information on the proposed community forums.

GP – MA and I are looking for venue for either monthly or quarterly forums. This will depend on the venue.

FM – We would need this in writing, that the residents would be present in the strategic group, as currently this is not clear. It would be helpful to have a full list of who the partners are.

AN – I can't see how the proposal will improve things. It will be more time consuming, and the process will become more disjointed.

FM – Multiple residents associations oppose this.

DC – RCAS should be on the BSCP as well.

**ACTION** FM to provide a list of all the residents groups she represents.



	<b>Resolve issue of UWE not providing references for 2nd year students to landlords</b>	
	<b>ACTION 1:</b> GP to request a formal in person meeting with UWE to discuss the fact that behavioural references are still not being provided.	<b>COMPLETE – Meeting scheduled.</b>
	<b>Organise community forums and councillor-student surgeries</b>	
	<b>ACTION 2:</b> GP and MA to have ongoing discussions to identify dates and venues.	<b>IN PROGRESS</b> MA and SH currently seeking a venue.  <b>COMPLETE</b> Surgery booked for: First Tuesday every month 1pm - 3pm (Confirm: same room every time?)
3	<b>Reduce problem of bins left on streets / waste issues</b>	
	<b>ACTION 3:</b> GP to raise missed waste collections with relevant BCC policy committee chair	<b>COMPLETE:</b> Changes made to operational scheduling to avoid further missed collections. Situation under monitoring.
	<b>ACTION 4:</b> GP to circulate draft BCC warning letter for use by partners regarding bins left on streets	<b>COMPLETE:</b> Circulated on 23 <sup>rd</sup> October
	<b>ACTION 5:</b> BCC NET to review and feedback on draft warning letter	<b>IN PROGRESS:</b> Shared with BCC who are also reviewing a BCC version. See notes from Action 6.
	<b>ACTION 6:</b> GP to arrange a meeting with Cllr Martin Fodor (Environment and Sustainability Committee Chair), a BCC representative on waste and enforcement, MA and a residents' representative to discuss information sharing and collaborative ways of working.	<b>COMPLETE:</b> Took place on 1 <sup>st</sup> December. Briefing notes and actions to be circulated in agenda pack.
	<b>ACTION 7:</b> GP to look at what checks are in place to ensure that students have the correct waste management provisions when moving into a HMO	<b>COMPLETE:</b> See email from BCC Private Housing and notes from Action 6
	<b>ACTION 8:</b> GL will also raise this action with BG	<b>IN PROGRESS</b>
4	<b>Improve information sharing between BCC, A&amp;S Police and Universities in relation to impact of HMOs</b>	

	<b>ACTION 9:</b> GP to form a small group to develop information sharing protocols.	<b>IN PROGRESS:</b> For further details see notes from Action 6 - Awaiting response from BCC
	<b>ACTION 10:</b> Draft an agreement which considers process needs and legal obligations of participating partners.	<b>IN PROGRESS:</b> For further details see notes from Action 6 – Awaiting response from BCC
	<b>ACTION 11:</b> GP to discuss initial information-sharing with Housing Committee Chair and relevant officers.	<b>COMPLETE:</b>  Agreed that University CLOs (or equivalent) or a named representative from any partner residents' group can request and receive specific information from the BCC HMO database as often as needed.  A further meeting is being organised following initial discussion see notes from Action 6
	<b>ACTION 12:</b> MA to follow up with PHS on sharing of public register of HMOs (i.e. Is it happening?)	<b>IN PROGRESS –</b> Awaiting response from BCC
5	<b>Improve Operation Beech</b>	
	<b>ACTION 13:</b> MA along with SH to review start date for Operation Beech. FM suggests earlier date as start date as it stands is post Welcome Week	<b>COMPLETE –</b> Start date amended to include welcome week
	<b>ACTION 14:</b> MA to meet w/SH to go over clarity of process for Police upon arrival and to ensure it's consistent with messaging.	<b>COMPLETE –</b> Process amended to ensure greater consistency
	<b>ACTION 15:</b> SH to discuss with MA what needs to be done in terms of resources from January onwards for Operation Beech	<b>COMPLETE (Until Easter)</b>
6	<b>Improve Student Welcome Process</b>	
	<b>ACTION 16:</b> MA to determine whether letter from VC is sent to all students.	<b>COMPLETE:</b> Yes, it is.
	<b>ACTION 17:</b> MA to circulate the updated community induction module once ready and residents to give their feedback which will be passed on to decision makers.	<b>COMPLETE</b>

	<b>ACTION 18:</b> HQ to circulate the figures for completion of Community Induction Module once available	<b>IN PROGRESS</b> Figures will be available for February in advance of BSCP Meeting – shared with Chair and FM in 01/26
	<b>ACTION 19:</b> HQ to enquire about other University contracts featuring behavioural standards.	<b>IN PROGRESS</b>
7	<b>Actions from VC Working Groups</b>	
	<b>ACTION 20:</b> HQ to review wording on website to ensure comms reflects agreed process RE confidential complaints:	<b>COMPLETE – Wording reflects agreed BSCP position</b>
8	<b>Improve Residents' Engagement</b>	
	<b>ACTION 21:</b> FM to provide a list of all the residents groups she represents	<b>COMPLETE – Included in Agenda Pack</b>