

University of Bristol - Good Neighbour Policy

1. Introduction

The University of Bristol is a large organisation occupying several sites and is aware of the impact its presence has on adjacent neighbourhoods. In addition, the many students who live in the city also have an impact on local communities. The University believes that overall, these impacts are positive. However, it also recognises that there will always be planning, transport and other issues to be addressed and that problems can occur over student behaviour. It is committed to being a good neighbour by listening to and informing local residents, seeking to avoid or tackle difficulties and encouraging high standards of conduct by all members of the University community.

The University has a large estate based upon four main sites in Bristol:

1. *The main precinct*

This is where the vast majority of University activity occurs. There are several hundred buildings containing a variety of activities and this is where students spend much of their time during the day. The precinct is large and borders both commercial areas on Park Row and Queen's Road and the residential and mixed-use area of Highbury Villas and St Michael's Hill.

2. *Clifton Hill*

There are three main halls of residence in the Clifton Hill area clustered around Constitution Hill and Lower Clifton Hill. The Students' Union is also located nearby.

3. *Stoke Bishop*

This contains a large grouping of University halls of residence along with some sports facilities and parkland bordered by Parry's Lane and Stoke Park Road. The University's Botanic Garden is also located there.

4. *Coombe Dingle*

This site, off Coombe Lane, contains the University's main outdoor sports fields and an indoor tennis facility.

2. Noise, Nuisance and Disturbance

The very nature of a University's activities means that a certain amount of noise generation is unavoidable, whether this is associated with buildings and plant or with the movement of large numbers of people.

Where noise is predictable and persistent (such as that caused by plant and machinery), the University commits to managing the problem proactively in order to minimise any disturbance that may be caused. Activities, such as construction, that cause noise which cannot be reduced to a reasonable level will be constrained to daytime hours only.

Noise created by people and planned events will be managed to limit any nuisance and disturbance caused. This will be achieved partly by design, locating noise-creating activities mainly within the precinct, so that people disperse in several directions, before leaving the precinct. Where this is not possible, at sites such as the Students' Union or residences, consideration will be shown to neighbours in determining the timing of events. Disturbance caused by students living out in the community is addressed under Section 4 below.

Physical disruption can be caused by construction work. The University will endeavour to keep all roads and pathways open to the public, so far as it is safe to do so, and will provide alternative signed routes where this is not possible.

The City Council's Environmental Health Department can offer guidance on acceptable noise levels and intervene where these are exceeded. In addition to this, the University can provide appropriate contacts through which the public can report a problem.

3. Environmental Impact

The University has an established Environmental Policy that governs the way in which its impact on the environment is managed. Any gaseous or liquid effluent will be strictly controlled and buildings will always be designed to be within the limits determined by the Environmental Protection Act.

One of the University's key impacts is associated with cars used by people travelling to its various sites. The University is committed to reducing the impact of car usage and operates a Travel Plan and Policy which aim to provide members of staff with alternatives to single user car journeys to/from work. In addition, to discourage students from bringing cars to Bristol and provide improved arrangements for student movement in the city, a Student Travel Plan is being developed. It is hoped this can be developed in partnership with other interested parties. See also Section 4 below with reference to student cars.

In rare circumstances there are emergencies within University buildings. When these occur, the University instigates a pre-planned crisis response process, led by the Vice-Chancellor or his nominee. This process considers the impact of an incident on neighbours and aims to keep them informed of any action they need to take. In most circumstances, the best course of action for neighbours in the event of any concern, is to remain indoors and close all windows and doors. Liaison and co-operation with the emergency services is an integral part of the University's emergency procedures.

4. Students and Residential Impact

The University's current plan for the future specifies that there should be no substantial growth in undergraduate numbers. The University does not want student numbers to exceed the city's capacity to accommodate them with reasonable ease.

Bristol students are independent adults and the University is not and cannot be *in loco parentis*. Nonetheless, students are made fully aware of their responsibilities as citizens to their neighbours, whether they are living in University owned and managed accommodation or in privately owned accommodation. As part of their induction they will be told about these responsibilities before they arrive and reminded of them thereafter, both in writing and in talks from Wardens and others. Students are subject to the same controls and laws as any other citizens and the University cannot usurp the responsibilities of the Police or other agencies. However, given its desire to be a good neighbour and to safeguard its reputation, the University will formally communicate with students who are known to have behaved in an unacceptable manner. The objective is to end such behaviour and to avoid any repetition of it. The University can, in extreme cases, take a range of disciplinary actions against a student if necessary, seeking to secure a change in behaviour. All complaints will be treated very seriously and there is a process in place to monitor reported problems, particularly if persistent.

The University through its accommodation office works closely with the City Council, Residents Associations and Landlords to minimise any negative impact students may have.

The Wardens and staff of the University's halls of residence and student houses work very hard to ensure that disturbance and annoyance to neighbours is kept to a minimum. In particular, transport issues are kept under review to try and balance student safety and mobility with low-impact travel options. Car parking can be a particular problem. Students will continue to be told only to bring a car to University if they have arranged parking within the grounds of their hall of residence. However, ultimately students have the same rights as other citizens and the University cannot prevent them from ignoring advice not to bring a car to University. There can be problems associated with cars parked in streets near to halls of residence and in streets where students live. Possible solutions, including a review of parking at residences and discussions with the City Council about parking management schemes, will be examined and this policy will be updated to reflect any initiatives that can help the situation.

5. Security and Crime

The University grounds are open to the public and are generally safe and buildings are secure. Nevertheless, members of the public are advised to take sensible precautions for their own safety when walking the streets, particularly late at night. In response to the fact that University buildings offer a target for burglars, and that people offer a similar target, there is a 24-hour security patrol of all of the University's estate. The patrol adopts a highly visible presence in order to act as a deterrent. If University security officers observe criminal activity affecting neighbouring buildings or members of the public in or near the University, they will offer assistance, calling the Avon and Somerset Constabulary for back-up if required.

6. Commercial Impact

The large staff and student population has a positive impact on the local economy. There is increased trading activity in areas such as Queen's Road, Park Row and St Michael's Hill and local residents benefit from the range of businesses supported. On the less positive side, some businesses find that sustaining themselves out of the main term times is difficult and this affects, to a degree, the type of businesses that can survive.

Whereas the University cannot do a great deal to influence commercial activity in the vicinity, the growth in the postgraduate student population will support trade over a larger proportion of the year. International postgraduate students are offered living accommodation within University owned or managed properties. The University will try to ensure a reasonable mix of postgraduate and undergraduate residences near to the main precinct.

The University's main purposes are to educate and research and it does not regard retail trading as part of its core business. In general terms, apart from the necessary provision of internal catering for its own staff and students, the University will avoid competing for trade with any local businesses.

7. Community Action by members of the University

Students at Bristol University are encouraged to take a broad interest in the city and to engage with their local community at many levels. Co-ordinated by the Students' Union, they undertake an enormous range of voluntary activities, contributing about 100,000 hours' work a year to local charities and projects and raising large sums for good causes. Many members of staff also contribute voluntary effort – the University's policy is to allow all staff one extra day's leave a year to be used for volunteering in the local area. Students and staff are also involved in many other academic and sporting activities for schools. The University welcomes local residents to such events as Doors Open Day and inaugural and other free public lectures, and provides a range of organised tours of University buildings and gardens.

8. Communication and Partnerships

The University will listen to and communicate with the general public, including its immediate neighbours, so that problems and issues can be highlighted. Any complaints from the public will be acknowledged within five working days, and an indication will be given of the steps that are likely to be taken.

University senior management will monitor the range of issues raised in this way and will take account of this in setting future policies.

Neighbours of the University will be briefed from time to time about any significant developments that might affect them. Such briefings may be given by agents appointed by the University through mail shots or in person by University staff. The briefings will be in addition to any formal consultations required under planning legislation and will not affect people's right to represent themselves through other formal channels.

Where the University and its neighbours have joint concerns, the University will offer its support to local residents and representative groups and, if appropriate, will organise meetings with appropriate bodies including the local authorities.

The University is keen to work in partnership with all interested parties. We would welcome continuation of the initiative taken by Bristol City Council to bring together the University of Bristol, the University of the West of England and others to work together on the issues of "Studentification".

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