

We have a situation, Coventry!

http://www.wehaveasituation.net/?page_id=1414

We would like to ask Coventry residents:

- What concerns you most as a resident of Coventry?
- What, if anything, concerns you about the relationship between the university and the city?
- What concerns do you think students have about their relationship with Coventry residents?

Please write your answers below... THANK YOU!! :

1..Everything.

2..The university are hell bent on destory parts of Coventry,Its history,it's bulidings and ignoring it's people .When they take over something they destory or make it unavailble to the public.Post grads are finding it hard to find a place to live and familys are being moved out of housing as landlords would rather have students in and are able to charge more

As an artist the university has already taken away the New Lanchester gallery,have stopped the Emerge news letter and have stopped artists using the glass cube unless they are part of the University They really are an arrogant bunch of out of touch money grabbing elitist

3. You should ask them that question.

4. yes , it does concern me the amount of Student accommodation that is being forced on the City. What else is being provided where entertainment can be enjoyed or shopping suitable for all ages to get together to appreciate ea ch other. After they have paid their fees and accommodation what else is there that they can afford.?No decent reasonable Pubs where we as local residents can meet and befriend these newcomers and encourage them to stay in Coventry after their degrees.or where they can meet us Coventry residents who have worked hard in the city since the War and built this amazing citys reputation of innovation.and quality skills.

I understand these Halls of Residents are for First years only ,so where do they go for the rest of their time here. Where do our local residents live? I'm interested in the Disabled younger people in the City, are the developers/ investors providing suitable premises for the Physical and sensory impaired students, our locals don't have anywhere to live, work or play in Coventry.

I worry about employment.

I would like to see the university and the students and staff work together more on community issues. I worry that students do not feel welcome in Coventry - if this is the case we could suffer from a downturn but Coventry would suffer if it lost any more jobs!

I am am not sure how the University interacts with residents at all. Warwick asked the same question some while ago.... something like "What else would you like to see the University do in your community?" My answer was actually a question "Well, what is it you do do?"

Quite simply I do not know. we have the best modern university in the country, so it appears and one that rates itself alongside Oxford and Cambridge yet the city itself suffers from a huge economic disadvantage with unemployment and poverty real problems.

We are witnessing a decline in services; the library service is just one example that along with youth services demonstrate a lack of willingness on the part of the city council to find new solutions. If we want these services to continue, we need to do this as a pbbbbart of a community funded project, mostly likely relying on volunteerism to make it work. There are areas of local government where the universities could help, I am sure. Help that might increase life-long learning and greater participation from areas of the community which traditionally do not access that level of education.

As a part of what the universities could be doing is working in partnership with local people to develop sustainable (in both senses) local business; I have often wondered if the development of the station walk into town would be more interesting if it incorporated workshops, spaces for creation and small, craft / artisan premises rather than large offices. I am not trying to be all arty about this but realistic in terms of what the future requires which has to be localism if it to be sustainable; the ability to provide for ourselves, fix, build, improve within our city. Where could the universities help here? We need jobs, industry and services.

My concern is that the University may be endorsing the use of Houses of multiple occupation. This has a detrimental effect on the community as a whole. Landlords are buying up housing stock to be used by students, thus depleting the availability of Houses for sale to the local community who have a long-term investment in the community for themselves and their families. I am aware that the University Studentship increases annually, so therefore feel that they should build more halls of residence on campus. They clearly have the land and money as they have just built a huge conference building. My community concerns are of a need for clean streets, no graffiti and for our green spaces to be cared for.

Our resident concerns are

- 1, litter and rubbish left in front gardens of rented properties.
- 2, wheely bins not replaced in front gardens on the day of emptying.
- 3, incorrect items put in blue and brown lidded bins, which then are left unemptied.
- 4, electrical appliances, etc left out on pavement when moving out of house (could be given to charity shops)
- 5, although we have invited students to our meetings and events, we have not had any attend.

Our university concerns are

- 1, we feel that the university is reluctant to take responsibility for problems concerning their students and the rented properties they occupy.
- 2, that the uni should fund full time " community wardens" with powers to take action to remedy the problems as they arise.
- 3, last year the uni funded the production of a "welcome to our community" booklet , which gave students all the information they needed. However , they will not fund a reprint for this year.

Student concerns

They may feel that we are giving them a hard time but we are a friendly bunch really, who only want to help them to fit in with our community.

What is galling to me is the indifference of the University *at the highest levels* - to the negative impact it is having in areas of the City where there has been a massive influx of students. There is a lack of willingness to see what is going on - and a lack of interest in doing anything about it. This needs to change. If the rubbish that many of the students leave strewn out in the front gardens/front of houses, the bins that are overfilled and overspilled and wrongly filled, the piles of clothes and unwanted household goods abandoned outside the houses after they leave, the piles of weeds, were to be brought over to the campus and left there, or dumped outside the offices of the leaders of the Universities, then it would be a problem that is visible to them, it would be a problem of dangerous media coverage, it would be something that couldn't be ignored. It wouldn't be a matter of indifference. Perhaps the "Situation Coventry" could actually do this - move the "situation" to where it is visible to those who make decisions about where money goes. Then call the media in for a photoshoot!

It is simply not good enough leaders of Coventry University. The City deserves some real leadership from the leaders. You need to see this as a priority. And *pay* for the clean up of the neighbourhoods where there is a high student number - and once the areas are spruced up pay to *keep them that way*.

How much money would this take to make a real impact? From your income as a growing

University...you would barely notice it. It is absolutely insufficient to say, "Oh, we have brought in an app for rubbish, we've set up a yearly event "don't be a rubbish neighbour" and we're recruiting volunteer student wardens",.....err.....not good enough.....the issue is still there.

You are reaching a dangerous situation in University-resident relations. It could well

Lack of affordable housing because landlords feel they can hike up prices. Leaving families from Coventry with no options!

- "I

Resident concerns - New land/property developments in the city - Friargate etc. - commercialisation of areas **without proper consultation of people living in the city**

University concerns - Student housing taking over whole buildings - big private landlords and university having a monopoly on buildings in the city centre

Student concerns - **Lack of integration** - students sticking to student places - know Warwick Uni students who have said they are too scared to go out in Coventry. Lack of opportunities after University - short term prospects in the city - only low level work / no career development opportunities

Q1: Overcrowding - too many people and not enough places to live - becoming an overcrowded place. (And the exact opposite problem...) Walked through the city centre today - it's not dying, it's dead. If no one is there and nothing is happening there use the land/buildings/money to house people. Oh I forgot! We need to build more empty office blocks...

Overcrowding due to lots of houses now house students or individuals rather than families - only 2-3 people per house.

1.

Q2: We are becoming a one horse town. It's good that the university brings in jobs and money but there's nothing else. I don't begrudge either university their success, but we are becoming (well we already are, let's face it!) a "university town" and that is not good. There will be (are) people turning against the universities - but it's a local council and central government problem, a lack of foresight on both of their parts.

Q3: No idea... seriously.

Housing and education are the two things locally that concern me: the lack of adequate housing and the mess the education system is in. It's the same problem nationally and locally, there doesn't seem to be any strategy. The academisation of schools means it's every man for themselves, just caring about profit rather than quality of education. And people having a decent roof over their head is the start of anything really.

The only relationship I see is them buying tracts of land to build student accommodation and taking over the city. Like the massive building that's going up opposite the Transport Museum, Unite housing. It's just everywhere. Which means the whole city seems to be based on a very transient population.

I suppose it would be nice to know if students wanted to be part of the community. I sometimes think when they arrive are they okay, do they know how to connect with people. I have wondered about whether there is a way of having a Facebook group or somewhere so that people could share local knowledge and ask questions. Both students and younger people in rented accommodation might find it hard to know how things work and make connections with people. We all talk about community but we all have a responsibility to create community.

Student only areas becoming widespread / no go's for coventry citizens who are becoming marginalised

Increase in Rubbish and household items left on pavements, front gardens without due consideration to community and environment.

Parking - especially where houses are multiple occupancy and they each own cars. Instead of 1-2 cars, we have 5+.

noise / late night music and partying - no consideration for work people and families with children.

City centre is becoming exclusively Student ground - on the plus side there is growth in different eateries and grocery shops serving variety of foods - we need more high quality retail outlets not just pawn shops, gambling shops, £ shops or 99p stores and primark.

coventry needs to decide what kind of city it wants to be - is it a friendly high class cultural, historical, clean retail city with beautiful green spaces and environment and good housing and schools and law and order that everyone will want to live in or just a hostel town which is nothing more than temporary residence for students and workers. Workers who would prefer to make their home outside the city and commute to work in / around it .

students are good news but they are not the only story in the city and nor should they be.

University needs to take greater responsibility on inducting their students in acceptable behaviour, value and norms - e.g. Not Spitting in the public, not littering, respecting the queues, please and thank you, being responsible citizens of the city etc etc for all students but especially those who may come from very different cultural background and won't know any different unless they are educated about it.

It has almost all been said very eloquently - especially by the first response.

I would like to say that, in my opinion, it is not the students themselves who cause the various issues mentioned. It is the result of the situation they find themselves in - compounded by the fact that they are in a new, unknown city among new, unknown people - in fact their whole world has changed. So we the residents need to understand that.

In my view, the key issues are the attitudes of the University and Council authorities. The University (and I think the key one in this respect is Coventry University) are in a very competitive environment and probably encourage as many students to come as they can - whether there is accommodation for them or not. The Council are in awe of the University because of its huge financial input to the city - thus I imagine they play the issues very gently with the University. The students and the residents are effectively pawns in all this with little real say. The students are not going to challenge their degree awarding authority and the residents tend to be apathetic at election time. We end up accepting the status quo and complaining about something there appears little appetite to really address.

I would challenge one thing a fellow responder has said above - "a "university town" and that is not good" - in my view a university town should be good - just take a look at many of the established such towns/cities around the UK. Lots of young educated people spending money should help boost a dull place like Coventry - just imagine what would be left if they were not here!

1. One things concerns me Coventry University and that is the induction that you give students when they first come to Coventry and how they should be made aware that they are guests in OUR city and regardless of fees they have paid to Coventry University and to Landlords They are guests on our city and as such should have a respect for Coventrians. Sadly I find this not to be the case. With my work I am regularly in McDonalds in The Burges between 3am-7am most Saturday and Sunday mornings. Obviously the local drinking establishments have done well out of the influx of students but I have been observing student/citizen interactions between the two parties for over a year now and something needs

to be done. I welcome the students coming here to study but would like to see them get more than an education. I would like to see them learn respect, patience, compassion, caring for fellow humans. I was engaging in conversation with one group of 3 lads and 3 girls recently when one lad thought it funny to whip out his phone and start recording saying I'm going to put this on YouTube. I'll make you famous. Firstly I am already very well known in my own town young man and secondly the arrogance and him thinking that he was brighter than me and showing off among his friends was alarming. I have already studied and self-funded myself through Oxford young man having sold a business that I started and I have already achieved more in my working career than you have so show some respect. As a local employer I look to try and identify talent

Alan's interviews:

- What concerns you most as a resident of Coventry?
 - nothing; not many students
 - students don't pay council tax
- What, if anything, concerns you about the relationship between the university and the city?
 - the university doesn't seem to cooperate much with the city
 - no concerns, good money into the city
 - likes purpose-built student housing, as this means more houses revert to residents
 - severe damage from wok and chip pan fires in student accommodation
- What concerns do you think students have about their relationship with Coventry residents?
 - lack of money
 - settling in the first time away from home
 - fees, money, loans

Monday lunchtime, 21st November,

In our conversations today we have thoughts about the following questions to open up more scope for sharing our ideas about 'the situation', so we invite responses from everyone, students, staff and residents, to all, or any of the questions below:

- Do students want to be part of the community?
- What role do you think students could play in the community and do you think they want to be part of it?
- Do you consider yourself a resident of Coventry, and why?
- How could the university better support the local community?
- What do you see is a key role of the university in lifelong learning for all in the community?
- How could the university better support the local community?
- What could the university do to make communications better with local communities?
- What do residents think of students?
- In what ways are citizens and students infantilised?
- What could the university do to improve the affordability of furthering the skills base and education to local residents?

Coventry chose me.

unbelievably tangled webs of city ownership. Coventry is less tangled than other cities.

Jane:

- What concerns you most as a resident of Coventry?

I am 66 years old and have been a resident for 27 years. I love the city and the refreshing vibe that the students bring.

I love the fact that Coventry's strapline is 'City of Peace and Reconciliation' and I value the work that the

Cathedral and other Coventry citizens do to demonstrate this. But I do wish Coventry could shed the image it has of itself, and the image that other people outside of Coventry have of it (believe me they still do!) : - that of a 'bombed city/ victimised by the blitz/ "sent to Coventry". I really do believe that these insidious and harmful notions have become subconsciously pervasive amongst Coventry citizens notions of themselves and who they are, and its high time they were expelled / shed and replaced by a more positive self-image.

Q1. Concerns as a resident of Coventry

My starting point is that students and the University are potentially of considerable benefit to the city. I live in an area with a high number of students from Coventry and Warwick and think that they help support local businesses. I don't think that they make any more mess than other residents - there are good and bad neighbours in all localities. Whilst a number of students come from other areas and countries, bringing diversity to an already diverse city with a history of peace and reconciliation, it is also the case that many of the students at both local Universities are now Cov kids themselves with roots and family networks in the area.

Coventry has high levels of both unemployment and poverty, and I can appreciate that some students live a life quite disconnected from this, appearing quite elitist. Perhaps more work could be undertaken between students and other residents to facilitate integration.

Q2 What, if anything, concerns you about the relationship between the university and the city?

The development of the University has transformed areas of the city centre. On the plus side this makes for visual improvement and enhances the area around the cathedral and towards Far Gosford St. The downside is that it can seem to be taking over, and may make other parts of the city appear worn. The issue of housing also has relevance for strategic planning with the city council and emphasises the need for a possibly more collaborative approach.

Coventry University is also a major employer and again, this recommends a collaborative approach to longer term strategy and more, since some already exist, joint initiatives that forge links between the University and local communities (life long learning; learning for the disaffected; community research; art installations in local communities and so on).

3. What concerns do you think students have about their relationship with Coventry residents?

Many first year students are young and away from home for the first time. Some feel lonely and isolated. Some may need encouragement to be respectful and tolerant towards each other and Coventry neighbours and residents. Building more supportive networks between the University, students and local residents could be challenging, but good induction, reaching out to students by local groups, and use of peer support and mentoring may help assist in this regard.

Maybe we can mix the elderly and the young, to the financial and social advantage of both, and save the Council some money at the same time! See:

A nursing home in the Netherlands allows university students to live rent-free alongside the elderly residents, as part of a project aimed at warding off the negative effects of aging.

In exchange for small, rent-free apartments, the Humanitas retirement home in Deventer, Netherlands, requires students to spend at least 30 hours per month acting as "good neighbors," Humanitas head Gea Sijpkens said in an email to PBS NewsHour.

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/dutch-retirement-home-offers-rent-free-housing-students-one-condition/>

1 - As I am a professor too (and media-artist first), even not resident in Coventry, I can understand "the situation" and I am with students, of course!

2 - Well, even if I've analyzed "the situation", my relationship between the university and the city is

located in Rome, and we've also many problems. One example, is the public transport that is very lacking and obsolete, so my students are often late for the lesson.

3 - And also this question for me is related to Rome, where the University have two different locations. One in the middle of the center city where the residents are well far apart from students. And the second location - where i work - is really a particular one. In fact, it is into an area of industrial-archeology, where the resident are kurds living into a sort of travellers' camp. They have saved the life of a student who was being attacked by several stray-dogs. But on the other side, some kurds sell drugs etc... Then, students have many issues in various field: from the secretariat, to the few students-houses.