INTRODUCTION

Clifton Down Community Association have run a student welcome event for the past 5 years, with the aim to introduce students to the local community. Students are invited from our area which is bounded by Alma Rd, Apsley Rd, Whiteladies Rd and Pembroke Rd.

The event was organised by the CDCA committee, including myself, Sally Paynter, Merche Clark, Nugmais Powlesland and Eli Whitaker. The event was held at the Alma Tavern.

The aim was to introduce students to the local community, to have an informal opportunity to meet them, to familiarise them with some of the challenges of living in the area (such as rubbish and recycling, problems with rented housing etc. We also offer free membership for students living locally and encourage participation in our other events.

We received a total of £250 from the community fund, the total cost was just over £400 with the remainder of the cost being contributed from CDCA own funds.
THE EVENT

The event was a regular item on our six weekly committee meeting agenda. Specific committee members took responsibility for liaising with the venue in the context of the available budget and agreeing the date, food and drink etc. Leaflets were printed free by Richard Harding estate agent. University of Bristol student ambassadors and CDCA street reps delivered the leaflets to student household.

The event went well, with in excess of the planned number attending (although there were also a number of “no shows” from the original list. There were approximately 55 University of Bristol students and no students from UWE - UWE having withdrawn from funding the event due to previous low participation.

Seven CDCA members were at the event in an official role together with local councillors and officials.

OUTCOME

The event was well attended and there was generally a very positive response from students and from our members (including many who did not attend but see this as a very positive step). The outcome should be that student are more aware of the diversity of the community that they are now living in and some of the local issues and problems that might arise should be mitigated.

There was an initial problem that UWE decided not to co- fund the event (having done so on previous years) because very few UWE students took part. As the University of Bristol has a ceiling of £250 and previous costs were around £500 there was a need to revisit the financial basis of the event. In the end we agreed that CDCA would directly subsidize the event from our own funds, we negotiated a slightly reduced cost meal / drink package and we limited the participation to 50 students on a first come first serve basis. Although in fact we allowed all those who turned up to take part. There was also a problem of “no shows” as a significant number who accept the invitation do not come and others who have not registered take part.
Also, public service cuts have reduced the availability of local officials to take part, so although the local PCSO was present, the local police officer was not and the city council were not able to send someone in relation to recycling and rubbish.

Our members thought it was a very successful event. “I agree the evening was lovely and, I think, enjoyed by all (well I certainly did)” and “I think it went very well overall and the students seemed to really appreciate that we organised it” Students also welcomed it too, on leaving a group said “we really appreciate that you took the trouble to organise this” and another “it is nice to get to know some of our neighbours”

LOOKING FORWARD

We will invite students to our committee meetings, we will also ensure that they take part in our Summer event (usually held in June) and am sure we will aim to organise another event next year. We will also liaise with the University community office.

THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the CDCA Committee, especially Sally Paynter, Nugmais Powesland, Eli Whitaker

Thanks to University of Bristol Joni Lloyd, Community Liaison Officer and also student ambassadors.

Councillors Carla Denyer and Clive Stephens

PCSO Nadine Lunn

Richard Harding estate agents.