Community Fund 2016/17

‘Meet Your Neighbours’ event,
‘Beerd’, St Michael’s Hill, Sunday 23\textsuperscript{rd} October 2016

Organised by: Highbury Residents Association

Welcome to new residents:
Free Beer/Pizza

Come and meet your neighbours
All new students and residents welcome
FREE Beer/pizza slice

AT Beerd (St Michael’s Hill)
6 – 8pm
Sunday 23\textsuperscript{rd} October 2016

First come, first served.

Please drop in!
INTRODUCTION

How did the project come about? The Highbury Residents Association (HRA) has been in existence for over 10 years and represents permanent residents in Tyndall’s Park Mews, Highbury Villas, St Michael’s Hill and Osborne Villas. The area covered by the HRA is in very close proximity to the university and is an area of high density of UoB student accommodation: an estimated 40 residents and 120 students live in the area. While issues such as rubbish, recycling, street parking and noise can cause friction between students and residents, personal contact and individual acquaintance can ease such tensions. The HRA therefore sought an opportunity early in the term to meet with students in a relaxed atmosphere, and this serves the dual purpose of also allowing students who live in the same vicinity to meet each other, increasing the sense of community.

The ‘Beerd’ pizza and specialty beer café on St Michaels’ Hill is popular with students and adjacent to the residents. It has a large open area for people to interact and mingle. The HRA therefore proposed to hold an early evening informal ‘beer and pizza’ event on a Sunday early in the first term, to allow students and residents to meet and talk.

Who was involved? members of the HRA contacted students via the University, the Highbury Villas Residents facebook page and door-to-door notification. Student residences in Highbury Villas, Tyndall Park Mews and the adjacent parts of St Michael’s Hill were involved.

What was the aim of the project in terms of encouraging good community relations? The aim of the project was to create an opportunity for students and residents to talk in an informal environment and get to know and respect each other early in the academic cycle.

How much funding did you receive from the Community Fund? £200.

The bill for the event came to £300.22. The balance was paid by the HRA.
THE EVENT

Describe planning and preparations. A booking was made for five table areas at Beerd for Sunday 23rd October. An invitation was placed on the HRA Facebook page, and information/links passed to the Community Liaison Office, offering ‘free beer/pizza and meet your neighbours’ between 6 and 8pm. Paper invitations were printed and hand delivered, where possible with a doorstep conversation, to all student houses in Highbury Villas, Tyndall's Park Mews and the adjacent part of St Michael’s Hill, one week before the event.

How did the project work out? Very well. Here are some quotes from the residents:

“A good time was had by all! Lots of the students expressed appreciation and we had lively, friendly discussions between students and residents, including issues about living here in a residential area”

“...very good event. Many [students] commented that they now feel they live as part of a real community...something they sort of hope for, but not experienced at UNI before (even the ones that lived out last year). We need to set the date for the summer party!”

“Yes we enjoyed it as well so thanks to all as a good turnout. Lots of the students I spoke to were also interested in hearing more about the Street Eat in the summer so we may have more interest for that event as well.”

How many students were involved from UoB and UWE? 46 students attended - most, if not all from UoB.

How were local residents included? All local residents were invited by email. 10 local residents attended.

Overall, we estimate that this represents around 25-30% of the local population. Lots of conversations occurred and the students emails were recorded for future circulation of local information by the HRA secretary.
OUTCOME

What positives came out of the project? Students expressed an increased feeling of living in a community and awareness of residents. Residents enjoyed talking to the students as ‘interesting people’, not just as ‘noisy neighbours’. Since the event, some students and residents have recognised each other in the street and exchanged conversation, increasing the sense of community. Several of the residents went to university themselves, or have children at university and two HRA members also work as academic staff at the university, so there is much in common that is interesting to see from a different perspective.

Were there any difficulties to overcome? No. The student turnout was good. It would have been nice to have more residents.

LOOKING FORWARD

What will be taken forward from this project to continue maintaining good community relations? We hope the street conversations will continue. We are planning a ‘Street Eat’ on 28th May and hope that many of the students will join us. Possibly in future years we may consider a second event early in the spring term to continue and extend the contacts made in October. We would certainly like to continue the ‘Beerd Event’ in future years.

THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are most grateful to Joni Lloyd from the UoB Community Liaison Office, Ryan (General Manager, Beerd), Linda Ewles (HRA secretary), Jim Pimpernell (HRA treasurer), Judith Clark (HRA Chairperson) and Colin Dayan (Beerd event coordinator) as well as all the residents and students who made time to attend.