

Badger Hill Residents Community Group

Newsletter 1 November 2010



Results of Survey of Owner-Occupiers regarding HMOs

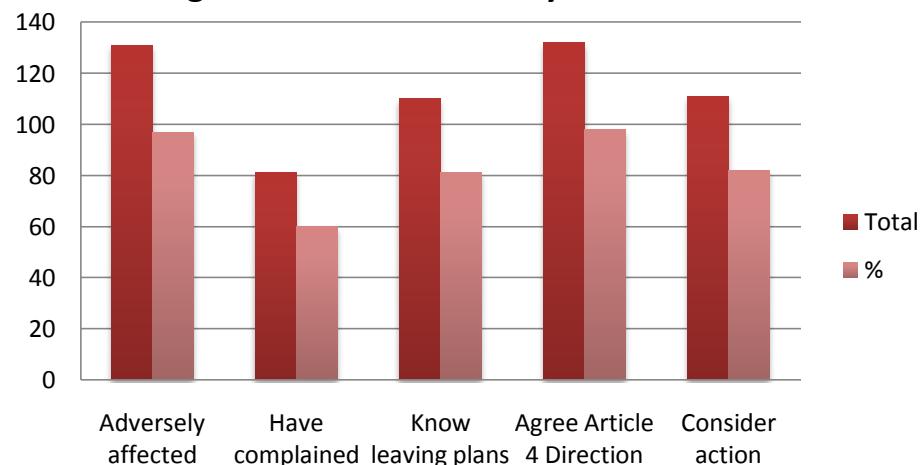
Many residents in Badger Hill are becoming increasingly concerned about the rapid growth of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) on the Estate and the impact it is having on their properties and quality of life. In 2006 a survey indicated a HMO density of 8.5%, but this is now estimated to be 20% with clustering occurring in a number of areas. There are currently **no planning restrictions to further growth**. Residents believe we should offer a welcoming and safe environment to **ALL** who live here, including students, and recognise the many benefits the university brings to the area. However, Badger Hill is being affected by the rapid conversion of family homes into HMOs, caused by the substantial shortfall of university accommodation and the financial incentives HMOs offer for landlords.

To investigate these concerns a number of residents have joined together to form the provisional Badger Hill Residents Community Group (**BHRCG**) to conduct a survey of owner-occupiers regarding their views on the density and impact of HMOs in Badger Hill. Those co-ordinating the survey have been assisted by many willing and helpful volunteers across Badger Hill, to whom we are most grateful. This first newsletter summarises the results and the response of York Council following a meeting with the Principal Development Officer on the 19th November. The key issue centres on the possibility of the Council adopting an **Article 4 Direction** to control HMOs in York.

Survey Results

The survey contained five main questions. **135** individuals completed the form. The main results are shown in **Figure 1**. **Question 1** asked 'Have you been adversely affected by the growth of HMOs in Badger Hill?' **97%** answered 'yes.' **Question 2** asked 'Have you made any complaints to anyone regarding HMOs near you?' **60%** answered 'yes.' **Question 3** asked 'Do you know anyone who has moved or is considering moving out of Badger Hill because of HMO growth (please include your own views)?' **81%** answered 'yes.' **Question 4** asked 'Would you like York Council to license/control **single/2-storey HMOs** in Badger Hill (e.g. Article 4 Direction as adopted by Manchester Council)?' **98%** answered 'yes.' **Question 5** asked 'Would you consider personal or collective action to gain compensation if you suffered a **financial or health loss** as a result of HMOs in Badger Hill?' **82%** answered 'yes.'

Fig 1. BHRCG HMO Survey main results



For those (131 respondents) answering ‘yes’ to Q1 (**Figure 2**), noise was reported by 36%; parking by 67%; litter by 29%; poor maintenance by 59%; anti-social behaviour by 20%.

For those (81 respondents) answering ‘yes’ to Q2 regarding who complaints had been directed to, 37% stated tenants; 35% the University; 32% landlords, 12% letting agents; 46% City of York Council.

These results indicate that residents **are** adversely affected by a high density of HMOs in Badger Hill and strongly **support** the introduction of planning controls. As such, we fully endorse the comments of Nigel Murphy (Manchester City Council) in his statement that ‘**we need to be able to tackle the problems caused by the uncontrolled growth of shared lets, making sure communities retain the identity of their neighbourhoods, and that is why we are now introducing this [Article 4] order.**’

Meeting with York Council – 19th November

The results of the survey and a case for adopting an Article 4 Direction for Badger Hill, and possibly York as a whole, were presented by two BHRCG members (John Nixon and Harry Telfer) to **Martin Grainger (Principal Development Officer), Frances Sadler (Assistant Development Officer)** at the City of York Council’s Strategy’s offices. We are very grateful to **Councillor Ann Reid**, who also attended to give her support for our work.

The survey results were welcomed as a valuable source of information and a copy of the computer file was passed on to the Council (**without names to preserve confidentiality**) as it was thought to be informative in relation to further work. We are happy to receive more returns from residents so we can increase the sample size and therefore strengthen the results, and pass updates to the Council. Our findings will be used to inform the work of Martin Grainger and his team in their current round of information gathering regarding HMOs across York. The ongoing task for the Council includes mapping exercises across York and the use of various sources of information on housing usage, surveys of affected areas and the analysis of information provided by other cities such as Manchester and Portsmouth that have already introduced Article 4 Directions. The additional comments regarding experiences that were added by some residents to their survey forms were read out and thought to be particularly informative. We are therefore in the process of extracting and summarising all comments to be included in an updated report for the Council. If any residents wish to provide this kind of information they can be addressed to Frances Sadler, City Strategy, Assistant Development Officer, City of York Council, 9 St. Leonard’s Place, York, YO1 7ET.

Once current work is at a more advanced stage the findings will be presented to the Local Development Framing Working Group (LDFWG), which is the decision-making body for HMOs within York and chaired by Councillor Steve Galloway. Martin Grainger indicated that it would be reasonable to expect submission to the LDFWG by February or March, 2011. Although pressed for a specific date on the voting of Article 4, which may need full Council approval, we were reassured that the work is being given a high priority and the Council is not against the adoption of an Article 4 Direction should this be borne out by the evidence supporting it.

It was pointed out that all LDFWG meetings are open to the public and that members of the public can provide evidence or offer opinions. We will be ensuring that members of the BHRCG attend, and dates will be provided on our website (see below). They acknowledged that their work involves consulting with residents, students and landlords to take account of all perspectives. The Council will also investigate ways of alleviating parking issues on Badger Hill, increase inspection of properties that are poorly maintained, and review some of its planning application decisions regarding properties that have been extensively increased in size.

Next Steps

Residents can contact us by e-mail (bhrcg@hotmail.com) to request electronic copies of this newsletter (see co-ordinators for hard copies). We also have our own website (<http://www.bhrcg.org.uk>) which will provide more detailed information to residents but with many positive images of Badger Hill – HMOs are a current topic of concern but we hope to be posting many community-building ideas. We are also liaising and sharing information with Osbaldwick Parish Council and other areas.

We aim to set up a meeting in February to formally constitute the BHRCG – nominations for several positions (chairman, secretary, treasurer, area representatives for specific streets or cul de sacs etc.). Details will be published in the **February edition of Outlook**. We extend Season’s greetings to **all** in Badger Hill. **Survey Co-ordinators:** **John Nixon, Harry Telfer, Malcolm Dewhirst and Brian Blanchard.**