

Party Houses and AirBNB Ian Plain Federation of Small Business.

The issue of party houses and airbnb in bath is a complicated issue, it is obvious that they are catering to a need, but as a business organisation our concerns are for our members and the wider hospitality industry and retail industry in Bath

It is clear that these are 2 separate but linked topics.

Party houses first, It is clear to us and the courts that these are Businesses and should be treated as such, That is they should be subject to the correct planning laws, Inspections and Business rates that "official" Establishments have to adhere to. The loss to the city in business rates income is in the region of £2000 to £3000 per house.

Inspections are important and should be part of the initial planning process and then there after, As far as we know there has been no fires at any of these houses but time will tell. Health and safety at these properties is in some ways more important than a normal hotel or Guesthouse as guests are invariably intoxicated so what would normally be a difficult but safe exit may not be so for a group of intoxicated guests. It may be that the houses are inspected in the same manner as a small event venue.

We as a business group do not want to stifle entrepreneurs, and a whole business has grown up round this market but it cannot be on the backs of at the detriment of other Bath Businesses

AirBnB is a "disruptive" business and sometimes that is good, I myself run a business that was once called "disruptive" now it is the norm,

But the same as mentioned before about Party Houses there need to be some control. This has already happened in London with a limit of 90 days for full houses and overseas in Barcelona for example.

It is clear that Flats and Houses are being bought and used solely as AirBNB in Bath and this is as with Party houses causing issues for neighbours and people looking for homes. Again the properties need to be inspected and Taxed appropriately, The lost revenue to the city is unknown But for example on the night of the 13 Oct there are 116 listings in total of which 28 were whole houses.

We will ignore rooms to let at this point and look at the houses, the rate for a whole 2 bed house in Bath seems to be £170 to £250 per night, based on 3 nights a week and 38 lettings a year that's approximately £22000 a year. and in the majority of cases no business rates being paid. We have also noted especially over this summer both large and small student accommodation being used for AirBNB, This has a direct effect on our members. I will ignore Green park as that is of a higher enough profile already.

Smaller private student accommodation buildings being used as Hostel/B&B accommodation, It is not hard to find them on AirBnB a quick search found for example a 7 bed HMO being used as a "Hostel"/B&B over the summer. One reviewer even complained that a student was still in occupation. These need to be inspected. Also this use needs to be taken into account at the planning application stage for new HMOs as at the moment application always assume students don't have cars which is a fallacy but people coming to visit over the summer do and do cause issues for neighbours. It is not clear if these are paying council tax as they would have been exempt if still student accommodation, The loss of revenue to the city is hard to calculate as is the loss to hoteliers in the city.

Bath needs to be vigilant and get a sensible and legal policy in place before it gets totally out of hand and small hoteliers start to struggle