

What a hero!

This wouldn't be the same Mayor Dave Cull that on 31/5/11 was invited to a meeting of concerned citizens gathered to try and deal to exactly the same issues as we see the admirable and long overdue 'City Rise Up' attempting to deal with today?

Mayor Dave couldn't make it to the meeting way back then, despite plenty of notice.

Those 16 people gathered were owners, landlords and residents neighbouring a new high-density student flat, which was causing an alarming amount of disruption in the area. The concerned group were being given the run-around by Council services, University and Police when calling for help.

Following that meeting, which included the University Proctor and Community Police:

- Two owners of heritage properties saw 'the writing on the wall' for their properties and promptly sold up to developers
- Another owner (prominent local businessmen) ruthlessly divided up large character rooms and illegally converted a garage to cram as many people as possible into their 100-year-old property and, after playing the valuation game, promptly sold up.

In the four years since, despite many pleas and submissions to the same authorities to address the constant problems recurring every year from the party flat:

- The landlords of surrounding flats and apartments have lost all of their long term tenants, now largely replaced by *the temporary party crowd* attracted to the proliferation of bars that have been permitted to open in the area
- The first call for a liquor ban extension was rejected in 2013, thanks to being outnumbered by *
- Lawlessness increased in the street and much went unreported because of fear of retaliation and harassment. Home invasion, theft, property damage, smashed cars and windows, racist taunts and bottles thrown – no arrests, no consequences.
- Terrorised families and many young professionals simply moved away
- One neighbour driven to distraction at the lack of Police support ended up taking the law into his own hands
- All visits by affected residents to the Police Station for explanations on lack of action, came to nothing
- After being permitted to operate and cause such disruption – at the expense of everyone in the street – the problem flat sold in 2014 at more than double its GV, after the original developer played the valuation game
- Disruption continued under new ownership, new abatement notices were issued and the usual fines imposed again in 2015
- Two properties immediately across from the party flat have failed to rent or sell since 2013

- 2014 The last remaining original garden in the area saw the new owner attempt to shoehorn in several poorly designed units and when unsuccessful...
- ...DCC then granted permission for the developer to convert that amenity space into car parks – non-notified. Neighbours had fought to prevent that very situation on two occasions prior and won; these rulings were subsequently overturned.
- 18/2/15 After yet another new intake, a large-scale party got dangerously out of control, further evidence supplied to DCC and a liquor ban extension again requested
- Second call for a liquor ban extension rejected in 2015, thanks once again to being outnumbered by *
- Following this decision the only owner occupier left in the street made the decision to take the story of their years of struggle and lack of help to TVNZ
- Two targeted complainants forced to set up surveillance cameras
- Resident who talked on TV has since suffered threats, drive-by harassment, cyber bullying and ridicule. Police have stopped responding to requests for information regarding an apparent investigation. Complaints to Proctor have been ignored.
- Two targeted neighbours once again approach the Council with evidence of further harassment and large-scale parties planned
- One neighbour requests information from the Police on the planned party – only to be roughed-up by officers escorting him off the premises, breaking his glasses. Video footage requested and a formal complaint laid. Awaiting response from Dunedin Police.
- DCC finally limits occupancy numbers to 50 for future parties at the problem flat, due to fire safety restrictions
- New local Liquor Law changes make no difference in the area
- Two neighbouring businesses to date have lost thousands of dollars and are now treated as the 'problem', for complaining.
- Ignoring the known troubles in the area, DCC Planning is now proposing it as permissible for Legal High sales, with residents and established businesses completely disregarded as 'Sensitive Sites' !

Mr Cull – thanks for all that you could have done, but didn't. You might at long last be 'hearing' us, but for this area it comes too late!

Considering it's been ear-marked for Historic Precinct status for years, the area might be afforded some protection under the 2GP - but we're not holding our breath on that.

Well done Meg Davidson and Co. I sincerely hope 'City Rise Up' is capable of tackling the real issues behind the degradation of Dunedin's heritage values and seriously tarnished image. CRU are up against some mighty powerful business interests in this city after all. If not, then sadly it won't be long before this well-intentioned initiative is reduced to cleaning up after the night before.

Dunedin's best bet, is if those TV cameras come back to focus on O-Week here again next year.