

Vanbrugh students angry after secret laundry closure

By Heidi Blake
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

THE VANBRUGH laundry facility was demolished over Easter to make way for the conversion of C Block into offices, leaving students with no laundry facilities on their return to York.

The Chair of Vanbrugh JCRC, Mickey Masefield, has spoken out against this action by the University, claiming "they have not thought about students' needs again".

The intention to close the laundry was first announced in the summer term of 2005. The laundry, which was originally set to close in January 2006, was to be replaced by a service in Market Square which the University promised would be operational by December 2005.

At the beginning of last

term, the University announced that, despite its failure to obtain planning permission for the new facility in Market Square, it still intended to close the laundry.

Residents of Vanbrugh reacted with a large protest outside the laundry and a petition of 1125 signatures. As a result of this, Campus Services Manager Sue Johnston met with students and agreed not to close the facility until further notice.

However, Masefield claims that he was "not consulted at all" about the sudden closure of the laundry over Easter, and only found out about it through a forwarded email.

Of the University's promise last term to keep the laundry open until further notice, he said "they just say it to keep students quiet. They're very clever in what

they do. They'll tell you one thing and do another."

David Efird, Vanbrugh's Resident Dean, said last week: "While the closing of the Vanbrugh laundry facility without the Market Square laundry opening...was a bit inconvenient, it was absolutely necessary for the important renovation work happening in C Block."

One source, who cannot be named, claims that the University has received a grant of £600,000 for the work. Jane Whyman, Zone 6 Facilities Manager, refused to comment on the matter.

A Vanbrugh student, who did not wish to be named, said last week "I don't know why they do this to us. They treat students like we don't matter. Why can't they show us some respect? We need to keep clean like everyone else."

Efird said "This situation has been handled with as much sensitivity as possible to the residents of Vanbrugh".

However, Masefield was not satisfied, claiming the University "are letting down the students" and adding "I'm disappointed, but I half expected it."

Nat Thwaites McGowan voiced his support for the University on Tuesday, saying "It's a shame the Market Square facility didn't open, but I don't think we've been screwed at all. We all knew the laundry was going to close, including Masefield. I don't know what he's up to."

Plans for a replacement facility in Market Square have been scrapped and a temporary replacement facility is to open in week 2.

Until then, residents are to use the facilities of Langwith and Derwent.



JCRC Chair Mickey Masefield stands by the site of the recently demolished laundry. Photo: Ally Carmichael

Entwistle trial 'unfair' in US

By Toby Green
EDITOR

THE LAWYER representing Neil Entwistle, the York graduate who is currently awaiting trial charged with murdering his wife and nine-month old child, has claimed that his client "cannot get a fair trial" in the US due to the massive media interest.

Elliott Weinstein was speaking earlier this month after Entwistle, 27, appeared before the American Superior Court to enter a plea of not guilty to two accounts of first-degree murder and various firearm charges. The proceedings

lasted for five minutes and Neil Entwistle remained handcuffed throughout.

Entwistle was the subject of a manhunt after fleeing the US for his native England a day after the murders were believed to have taken place. US Officials later arrested him after questioning and he is currently being held in Cambridge Prison, Massachusetts.

Middlesex County Sheriff, James DiPaola, said: "I find it extremely interesting how calm he is - sort of matter of fact about what he's going through. He's very even-keeled."

Two year degrees trial starts

By Charlotta Salmi
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

A NEW DEGREE format, which offers a qualification of the same standard as a three year course but taken over two years, may be initiated as an option nationwide after being piloted in five 'trial' universities around the country.

The scheme will allow students to complete three year courses in the time of two by studying in two semesters of twenty weeks and substituting the summer vacation for a third term. To avoid the demands of this system placing a strain on teaching resources, this arrangement is to be carried

out through distance learning, workshops and independent study.

The five universities piloting the scheme, the University of Northampton, the Medway partnership in Kent, Derby University, Staffordshire University and York neighbour, Leeds Metropolitan University, will be providing their students with the option of a "compressed degree" from September onwards before it is to be decided if the scheme will be expanded and applied nationwide.

This "intensive fast track degree" is geared to provide what Bill Rammell, Minister for Higher Education, described as

"flexibility" in the university experience and it is hoped that it will tempt more students into higher education. By allowing students not only to begin work sooner but to leave university with less debt, the scheme seems to be geared towards attracting young people of different backgrounds or less favourable financial standing. Links have been drawn to the government's target of increasing young people with higher education to fifty per cent, and the scheme may be an initiative to aid government progress in reaching its aims.

However the proposals have been met with criticism. Roger Kline, the head of

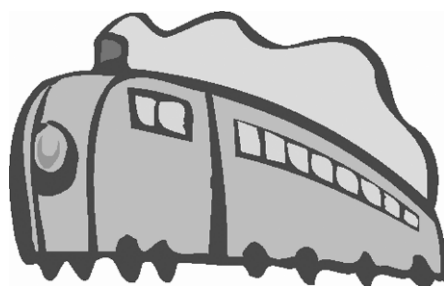
Higher Education for the union fears the new format will encourage "cramming" instead of careful and considered study and result in graduates not developing the necessary skills employers expect graduates to have gained from university.

The National Union of Students has expressed its scepticism and the Union's National Secretary, Gemma Tumelty, has already publicly stated her beliefs that an intensive two year degree will leave less time for part-time work and may cause financial problems for precisely the lower income students which the government is hoping to attract through the scheme.

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