



Nottingham Trent  
University

# Embedding participatory journalism in a regional newsroom using student journalists - #AskNottsLive

31/08/2022

# This presentation will...

The problems

The idea

The project

The findings

The next steps



# The problems...



“

Will the audience of a UK regional news publication engage with a participatory journalism project?

Research question 1

”

“

...An argument can be made that large-scale traditional news organizations may not be the best locations for meaningful citizen participation in the news. (Wall, 2017, p.141).

”

“

How can a participatory journalism project support student learning?

Research question 2

”



“

“Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis (Wenger, McDermott, Richard and Snyder, 2002, p.11).”

”

# The idea





# The idea...



# HEARKEN

Your public's interest



# The idea...



# The project





## 'My allotment is my therapy' - Nottingham gardeners describe how green space is their escape

In the latest article as part of our #AskNottLive project with journalism students from Nottingham Trent University, Jack O'Connor meets the gardeners who turned to their allotments for sanctuary during the pandemic.

SHARE    2 COMMENTS By Jack O'Connor 13:45, 12 JUL 2021

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 We Need You

## When will someone help us? Businesses in Bingham plead yet again for help in the face of teenage yobs

'People don't want to go out at night'

SHARE    87 COMMENTS By Jack O'Connor 04:00, 20 JUL 2021 UPDATED 06:28, 20 JUL 2021

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## Husband left looking like a 'homeless man' after poor treatment at Nottingham hospital

His wife of 56 years was left distressed after visiting him

SHARE    33 COMMENTS By Ellie Danemann 04:00, 18 JUL 2021

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DWP increases State Pension age by two years for men and women due to 'growing population'
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Faces of five men

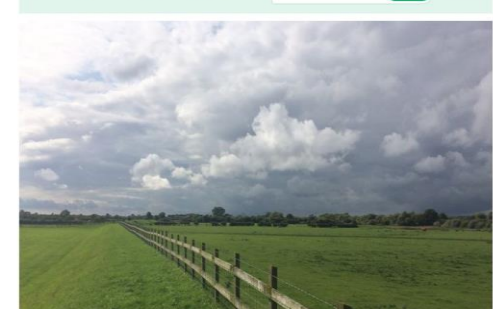
Made a splash

## Fresh plans submitted for quarry near Attenborough Nature Reserve

SHARE    4 COMMENTS By Katie Green 21:55, 15 JUL 2021 UPDATED 22:02, 15 JUL 2021

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 We Need You

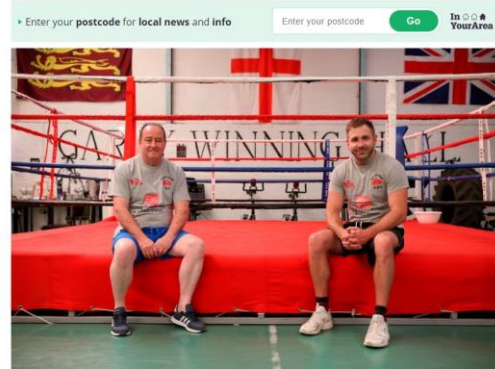
## Meet some of the most community-minded people from Clifton

Here's some of the great work they do

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By Katie Green  
04/01, 2 JUL 2021 | UPDATED 11:25, 9 JUL 2021

NEWS



## Meet the heroes keeping Nottingham's parks clean as lockdown eases

Our city's green spaces have been crucial during the pandemic but for some they are nothing more than a late night party venue - and dumping ground. Katie Green meets the community heroes battling to keep one of our best loved parks clean.

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By Katie Green & Ellie Danemann  
12:36, 16 JUL 2021

NEWS



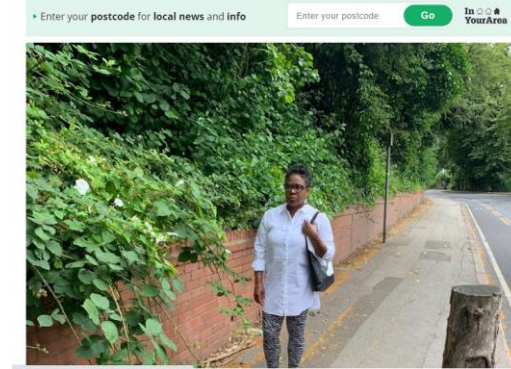
## Shop owners on Sneinton road blighted by dog mess and graffiti say 'enough is enough'

It's been claimed that the last time it was cleaned properly was when Prince Harry visited in 2016

SHARE    COMMENTS

By Jack O'Connor  
04/01, 20 JUL 2021 | UPDATED 07:18, 20 JUL 2021

NEWS







**What is the process of developing a story?**

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## Daily takes on journalism students to write stories pitched by readers

by David Sharman Published 26 May 2021

Comment 0 [f](#) [t](#) [+](#) [e](#) [r](#)

A regional daily has taken on four journalism students to write stories suggested by their readers.

## NottinghamshireLive experiments with people-powered journalism

This summer, the local news outlet invited its readers to set the news agenda, then teamed up with four journalism students to tell community stories

Posted: 28 July 2021 By: [Marcela Kunova](#)



Nottingham Trent University BA Journalism second year students Katie Green, 20, and Jack O'Connor who worked on the #AskNottsLive project



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# Findings





**It worked!**



“

How will the audience of a UK regional news publication engage with a participatory journalism project?

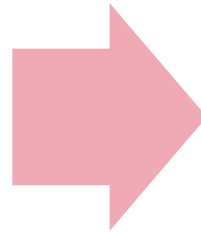
**Research question 1**

”

# The stats...

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More than 100 suggestions  
on the submissions form



Average page views for  
#AskNottsLive stories similar  
to equivalent stories  
produced through traditional  
commissioning process –  
some overperformed, some  
underperformed.

# What did senior NottsLive staff say?

- "Gave us the chance to do stories that take more time."
- "Flagged up stories we'd done before but that had now developed further."
- "Encouraging the sorts of stories suggested were the types we already do, so told us we are doing the right things as a newsroom."
- "We should try to use this approach in our other newsrooms."

“

How can a participatory journalism project support student learning?

Research question 2

”

# What did the students say?

- "It helped me get my job as they commented on my experience at my interview."
- "It was great to work with professional journalists to get my stories up to the right standard."
- "It was good to work on stories you knew people cared about and that would be published."

# What did senior NottsLive staff say?

- "When can we do it again?"
- "The stories the students produced were brilliant. The project was brilliant."
- "It would be good to integrate our newsdesk into the process more next time."

# What do I say?



Helped students get closer to understanding professional publishing standards – thinking of Wenger's Communities of Practice



Developed relationship with local publisher making non-funded follow-up projects possible



Hard to get away from the need for me to act as a news editor to make the projects viable... but then I really enjoyed doing that :-)





Nottingham Trent  
University

## **Next steps?**

- Build it into a course/module**
- Please feel free to steal this idea**

# References

- Wall, Melissa (2017) Mapping Citizen and Participatory Journalism, Journalism Practice, 11:2-3, 134-141, DOI: [10.1080/17512786.2016.1245890](https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2016.1245890)
- Wenger, Etienne, McDermott, Richard, and Snyder, William (2002) Cultivating Communities of Practice : A Guide to Managing Knowledge, Harvard Business Review Press, Boston.