

Hamilton House
80 Stokes Croft
Bristol
BS1 3QY
19.11.18

Open Letter to Gavin Eddy,

Many of us will not be signing new licence agreements with HaHo (C&C). In writing this letter we wish to make our reasons for this decision clear to you.

Over the past two years we have been witness to a stream of ever changing statements and demands by C&C, which have put Coexist, licensees and building users under enormous and unnecessary pressure. We believe C&C have deliberately and systematically undermined Coexist, bringing what was a thriving organisation to its knees, in order to capitalise on the value of the building and the community.

We are concerned that in signing a new lease with HaHo (C&C) we would signal an acceptance and validation of C&C's conduct over the past two years. Furthermore, we fear signing could be interpreted as an invitation for more of the same mistreatment.

To date we have seen:

Autumn 2016: C&C released asset lock on Hamilton House, subsequently C&C turned down Coexist's £6.5million bid to buy the building, on the grounds that it wasn't visionary enough. C&C offered Coexist no constructive guidance or support adapting the bid and the only alternative vision C&C offered was to replace the artist studios with flats.

Autumn 2017: C&C announced that they would increase the rent on the building by 400% whilst reproaching the community of building users for being disproportionately white.

Autumn 2017: Licensees were assured by C&C that "The occupiers will not have to move out of the building, and will not have changes made to their rents." ([See Vice article.](#))

February 2018: C&C delivers a vacant possession notice to 212 studio holders in Block C.

March 2018: Block C artists agree to cooperate with C&C and vacate their studios, on the understanding that by giving up Block C for re-development, Blocks A and B would be secured for community use on a ten year lease, managed by Coexist.

March 2018: Coexist attempt to mitigate the impact of C&C's 400% rent increase on licensees; Block A and B licensees rent increases by 40%.

June 2018: C&C announce via a press release that studio holders needed to comply with category B1a office use. This was later disputed by the council in a formal statement.

August 2018: In a public community consultation meeting by C&C, it becomes apparent that keeping Block B in community use is no longer a priority for C&C.

September 2018: Public demonstration to show support for Save Hamilton House and to urge C&C to return to the negotiating table with Coexist. 1000 people attend and march to College Green.

November 2018: Coexist are told they will receive one days notice on the 19th November. C&C send out a press release stating Forward Space will be taking over building management from 20th November. Forward Space contacts licensees asking them to sign a 6 month lease (on similar terms) or vacate (with one days notice) on the 19th November. Licensees are told locks will be changed on 20th November.

Our mistrust of C&C has accumulated over the past two years, as we have watched our community slowly, month by month, be dismantled. Repeatedly C&C have given us misinformation about planning, rent and their negotiations with Coexist, seemingly in an attempt to divide us and quell dissent and criticism.

We strongly object to Forward Space's role in facilitating the dissolution of Coexist. We question the ethics of an individual who initially was introduced as an independent consultant on the Hamilton House project, only then to return months later to oust Coexist and take over management of the building.

It needs to be known that the exodus of artists from Hamilton House is due to C&C's misconduct and Forward Space's collusion in this hostile takeover.

Yours sincerely

Hamilton House Tenants