# NIMBYism disrupts community hubs from Kent basketball courts to Soho nightlife



In a troubling trend across Britain, the spirit of community engagement and the vibrancy of local youth activities are being undermined by a rising tide of opposition from some residents and local councils, a phenomenon popularly referred to as “NIMBYism” (Not In My Back Yard). This sentiment is epitomised by the recent closure of a public basketball court in Walmer, Kent, a facility that had served as a crucial social space for teenagers. Neighbours' complaints about noise from youths playing near their homes led the town council to shut down the court, citing both cost and disruption as key justifications for this decision.

The closure of the multi-use games area — which reportedly incurred an annual cost of £1,200 for unlocking and locking — has sparked outrage among some locals who lament the loss of a safe, recreational outlet for young people. While there were complaints from residents about noise, many contend that the council's response was excessively punitive and disproportionate. Martyn O'Connor, a local plumber, expressed his disbelief and frustration at the council's actions, stating, “Don’t move into a house opposite a sports field if you don’t want to hear noise. What do people expect?” This sentiment highlights a deep division in community priorities — between the needs for vibrant youth opportunities and the desire for peaceful living conditions.

This incident is part of a broader narrative where vibrant community venues and activities face increasing scrutiny and opposition from residents concerned about noise and disruptions. In Wiltshire, for example, objections from neighbours led to the refusal of event applications at Euridge Manor, which some locals claimed would be akin to “having a disco in the back garden.” Such sentiments have emerged across the UK, where both public and private entertainment venues are increasingly feeling the strain from complaints about noise and disruptions, limiting their operational potential.

London's nightlife landscape, particularly in historically significant LGBTQ+ areas like Soho, illustrates this trend starkly. Jeremy Joseph, the owner of the iconic G-A-Y Bar, recently put the venue up for sale amid concerns that local residents and authorities have stifled the vibrancy of Old Compton Street, a place once celebrated for its lively atmosphere. Joseph lamented that the area has “lost its queer identity,” highlighting the precarious balance between community enjoyment and residential peace in urban planning and local governance.

The closure of G-A-Y’s sister venue, Heaven, following a serious incident, added to the financial and mental strain on Joseph and his businesses. The rising challenges faced by LGBTQ+ establishments reflect a broader gentrification narrative, where venues integral to the cultural fabric of communities are at risk due to changing residential attitudes and local opposition. In a poignant commentary, Joseph criticised local authorities, stating, “The Soho Society is the most damaging organisation to the hospitality industry,” capturing the frustrations echoed by many in vibrant communities feeling the effects of restrictive local policies.

Even care homes have found themselves at the mercy of local NIMBYism, with plans for a children’s home in Bury being rejected by over a hundred residents who feared it would disrupt their peaceful neighbourhood. Similarly, King Charles intervened to block the establishment of a wedding venue near Queen Camilla’s Wiltshire residence, emphasising the intricate relationship between local interests and planning decisions.

These scenarios underscore a vital conversation around community values — the dual need to protect individual residential peace while fostering inclusive social spaces for the youth and vibrant cultural venues. As councils continue to balance these often conflicting interests, the question remains: how can local governments maintain community harmony without suffocating the very activities that foster joy and connection among residents?

In navigating this landscape, voices from both sides will need to engage in constructive dialogue to identify more collaborative solutions, ensuring that local governance reflects both the need for quiet enjoyment of private residences and the essential role of community spaces in enriching local culture and youth engagement.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760721/DEATH-fun-NIMBY-neighbours-council-close-basketball-court.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.camdennewjournal.co.uk/article/queer-identity-of-soho-lost-as-g-a-y-to-be-sold)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760721/DEATH-fun-NIMBY-neighbours-council-close-basketball-court.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/soho-gay-bar-for-sale-heaven-nightclub-b1207035.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4gwkpk20qyo), [[6]](https://www.theegalitarian.co.uk/post/the-changing-landscape-of-soho-gentrification-and-the-shift-to-heteronormativity)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/soho-gay-bar-for-sale-heaven-nightclub-b1207035.html), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/going-out/bars/gay-late-soho-closing-why-b1123042.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760721/DEATH-fun-NIMBY-neighbours-council-close-basketball-court.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://mixmag.net/read/g-a-y-up-for-sale-soho-owner-lgbtqia-nimbys-london-news)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760721/DEATH-fun-NIMBY-neighbours-council-close-basketball-court.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4gwkpk20qyo> - G-A-Y Bar, a prominent LGBTQ+ venue in Soho, London, has been put up for sale. Owner Jeremy Joseph cited the temporary closure of its sister venue, Heaven nightclub, due to a serious incident, which he stated caused irreparable financial and mental damage. He expressed concerns that Soho has 'lost its vibrancy' and that Old Compton Street has 'lost its queer identity'. Joseph also mentioned challenges in extending the bar's operating hours due to objections from local residents and authorities. The venue has been a significant part of London's LGBTQ+ scene for over 15 years.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/soho-gay-bar-for-sale-heaven-nightclub-b1207035.html> - Jeremy Joseph, owner of G-A-Y Bar in Soho, has announced the sale of the venue, stating that Soho has 'lost its vibrancy'. This decision follows the temporary closure of Heaven nightclub, another of his establishments, after a serious incident. Joseph highlighted the financial and mental toll of reopening Heaven and noted the challenges in extending G-A-Y Bar's operating hours due to objections from local residents and authorities. He expressed concerns about the changing identity of Old Compton Street, once known as a hub for the LGBTQ+ community.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/going-out/bars/gay-late-soho-closing-why-b1123042.html> - G-A-Y Late, a well-known Soho nightclub, is set to close indefinitely on December 10, 2023. Owner Jeremy Joseph cited a rise in attacks on customers and staff, as well as increased building and development works in the area, leading to safety concerns. The venue, which has been operating since the early 1990s, holds a license until 4am. Joseph expressed sadness over the closure and acknowledged the shock it would cause to many patrons.
5. <https://www.camdennewjournal.co.uk/article/queer-identity-of-soho-lost-as-g-a-y-to-be-sold> - The owner of G-A-Y Bar in Soho, Jeremy Joseph, has announced the sale of the venue, expressing concerns that Soho has 'lost its queer identity'. He cited challenges in extending the bar's operating hours due to objections from local residents and authorities. Joseph also mentioned the impact of the temporary closure of Heaven nightclub, another of his establishments, on G-A-Y Bar's financial and mental well-being. The Soho Society responded, stating that Soho is both less gay and more dangerous than ever, attributing the decline to factors like soaring rents and overdevelopment.
6. <https://www.theegalitarian.co.uk/post/the-changing-landscape-of-soho-gentrification-and-the-shift-to-heteronormativity> - The article discusses the gentrification of Soho and its impact on the LGBTQ+ community. It highlights the closure of venues like Madame Jojo's, Molly Moggs, and the Astoria, which were significant to London's queer history. The piece also touches upon the closure of G-A-Y Late due to safety concerns and the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ venues in the current climate. The author reflects on the changing landscape of Soho and the shift towards heteronormativity.
7. <https://mixmag.net/read/g-a-y-up-for-sale-soho-owner-lgbtqia-nimbys-london-news> - G-A-Y Bar in Soho has been put up for sale, with owner Jeremy Joseph citing the loss of Soho's vibrancy and challenges in extending the bar's operating hours due to objections from local residents and authorities. The decision follows the temporary closure of Heaven nightclub, another of Joseph's venues, after a serious incident. Joseph expressed concerns that Old Compton Street has 'lost its queer identity' and mentioned the impact of the cost of living crisis on the hospitality sector.