

# PRESS RELEASE

9<sup>th</sup> June 2004

## Banged to rights

Bongo drums, guitar playing and loud music till 3am means one Ashton tenant has a new record – a prison one.

Oldham County Court was told on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> June that Robert Rhodes breached an injunction designed to restrict his anti social ways several times since the Court Order in March this year. Rhodes of Higher Green in Ashton-under-Lyne was immediately committed to prison for 21 days for his contempt of court.

Rhodes had been granted an adjournment to obtain legal representation, but again turned up at Court without any. He told Judge Armitage QC that he was prepared to represent himself, and cross-examined a witness produced by New Charter. The witness was a former resident of the estate who has since moved home because of Rhodes' anti social behaviour.



The judge was satisfied that several breaches had occurred by Rhodes' selfish and careless behaviour although he believed these were not deliberate acts to cause nuisance.

Earlier court hearings had been told Rhodes was involved in a campaign of nuisance involving playing loud dance music, shouting and swearing. His associates had also been involved in harassment and intimidation.

After the verdict, Steve Hodson, Head of Neighbourhood at New Charter said 'Perhaps this prison sentence will drum into nuisance neighbours that we will seek all remedies available to us in the Courts. We listen to the vast majority of our decent residents who want firm action on the minority who can't behave with consideration for those who live around them'.

## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

1. New Charter formed in 1999 as the new landlords to own and manage nearly 16,400 properties transferred from Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council in Greater Manchester. With a turnover of £50million a year and a workforce of 800, New Charter is one of the twenty largest Registered Social Landlords (RSL's), and is regulated by The Housing Corporation, a Government watchdog.
2. Robert Rhodes (dob 15.10.73), 14 Higher Green, Ashton-under-Lyne.
3. On Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> February, Tameside County Court ordered that Rhodes must not engage in, encourage or permit any behaviour at the property or in the locality that causes or could be reasonably foreseen to cause nuisance, annoyance, alarm, harassment and/or distress to anyone residing in, visiting or having lawful excuse to be in the locality of Higher Green, Ashton-under-Lyne. He must also not use abusive, insulting or threatening behaviour against any such person. He must not vandalise or damage the property or any other property in the locality. He and his guests and visitors must behave in a tenant-like manner in accordance with section 6 of the Tenancy Agreement.

4. On Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March, Rhodes was found guilty of three separate breaches of the injunction and sentenced in his absence at Oldham County Court. His Honour Judge Knopf sentenced Rhodes to 21 days in custody, suspended for two years on the basis there were no further breaches of the Order. He also ordered Rhodes to pay New Charter's costs of £500.
5. This action is also a success for the Tameside Strategic Partnership, a board made up of near 30 members from local business, the voluntary and community sector and key public bodies. Through consultation with local people, it creates and then implements the Tameside Community Strategy – a three-year plan to improve the quality of life for local people. It was set up in 2000 and meets three times a year. It ensures actions are taken within six key areas, including: *A safe environment – cutting crime and disorder.*

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**ENDS**

