

PRESS RELEASE

Immediate release

25th June 2007

Hedge lands neighbour in jail



Location picture available

A man who repeatedly harassed his neighbour over the garden hedge has been jailed for four months.

Although Clarke Graham rents a flat in the town from New Charter, his family owns a home at Peel Street in Hyde. A boundary dispute arose when the deeds for Peel Street showed his overgrown hedge was on land forming part of his next door neighbour's garden.

Graham began a campaign of harassment which was not confined to the neighbour. His behaviour spilled over into abuse of the neighbour's friends and relations. One night at the end of last month, windows of several homes occupied by these people were smashed. Police arrested and charged Graham with criminal damage. His bail included a condition that he must not return to Peel Street.

On 7th June 2007, we applied for and were granted an ex-parte (without notice) injunction against Graham. The injunction forbade Graham from harassing his neighbour, her friends and relations, and from entering three streets in Hyde where they lived. The interim injunction was granted until December 2007, but Graham was arrested on 14th June for twice breaching the exclusion. The judge granted unconditional bail and adjourned until New Charter's hearing listed for 19th June so the court could re-consider the application and the breaches and also decide whether the order should continue.

At that hearing, Graham failed to attend. In his absence, District Judge Craig Osborne heard the facts presented by us and granted a final injunction for 12 months.

The judge also considered the breaches of the interim injunction. He said he was entitled to have regard to the whole of the evidence leading up to the injunction, and said Graham's behaviour was 'absolutely disgraceful'.



He was frustrated that Graham had failed to attend, despite assuring the Court he would. District Judge Osborne saw no reason to adjourn again. He considered the evidence and was satisfied that the breaches were proved. Graham was sentenced in his absence to two months imprisonment each for the two breaches, a total of four months. He was arrested on Thursday (June 21st), and is now in prison.

Martin Frost, New Charter's Deputy Chief Executive said: "Graham waged a war of hatred against his neighbour, and then spread this to members of her family and friends. He tried to disregard both the criminal and civil justice systems, and finds himself in jail for his behaviour. The matter does not end there, however. We have already started action to evict him from his flat."

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. New Charter formed in 1999 as the new landlords to own and manage homes transferred from Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council in Greater Manchester. With a turnover of £48million a year and a workforce of 800, New Charter is one of the country's largest Registered Social Landlords, and is regulated by The Housing Corporation, a Government watchdog. By incorporating Aksa Housing Association recently, the Group owns over 15,000 homes.
2. Clarke Winston Graham of 11 Lily Street, Hyde, date of birth 08.04.1954.
3. Graham was subject to an interim ex-parte injunction granted to New Charter on 7th June 2007. The injunction originally ran to 7th December 2007 and Graham was forbidden from:
 1. Engaging in, instructing or encouraging any behaviour that causes or could reasonably be foreseen to cause nuisance or annoyance to Yvonne Carr, June Hodgkinson or Lee Turner.
 2. Engaging in, instructing or encouraging any behaviour that includes the use or threatened use of violence against Yvonne Carr, June Hodgkinson or Lee Turner.
 3. Entering or being present on Peel Street, Hyde; John Shepley Street, Hyde and Grange Road North, Hyde.
 4. Approaching or attempting to approach the principal complainant, Yvonne Carr or her children who live at 33 Peel Street, Hyde, or June Hodgkinson and Lee Turner.

A power of arrest was attached to all four clauses. The case was relisted for 19th June 2007 when the court could re-consider the application and whether the order should continue.

4. **iN business for neighbourhoods** is a long-term project highlighting housing associations' performance. As social businesses, housing associations do not make profit. They offer homes for rent and sale at prices local people can afford. Housing associations provide more than homes - they help create places where people want to live. Wherever you see the **iN business for Neighbourhoods** sign, something great is happening in the area. Housing Associations who display this logo are committed to

their customers, the neighbourhoods they work in and strive for excellence in everything they do.

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