

NottinghamActionGroup on HMOs

NewsDesk

October 2016

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Notice of NAG Open Meetings Autumn 2016

'DUSK TO DAWN'

Wednesday 26 October

**6.30 pm to 8.30 pm in the Function Room, Rose & Crown
Derby Road, Lenton**

A discussion, led by Nottingham Community Protection, focusing on noise disturbance and other low-level, persistent anti-social behaviour, and dealing with problems of safety, welfare and neighbourliness. What is being done? What else can be done? At a time of increasingly scarce resources, what should a template for future action look like?

Cllr. Nicola Heaton, Portfolio Holder for Community Services has accepted an invitation to be there.

'EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO LIVE IN A SAFE & HEALTHY HOME'

Wednesday 30 November

**6.30 pm to 8.30 pm in the Function Room, Rose & Crown
Derby Road, Lenton**

This follow-up to the October 2015 meeting on the 'Nottingham Standard' will provide a forum where representatives from Nottingham City Council and others organisations will provide up-dated information about HMOs, HMO licensing, enforcement action taken against 'rogue landlords', accreditation of student and other private rented sector housing, as well as developments currently in the pipeline for 2017.

Cllr. Jane Urquhart, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Housing and Cllr. Alex Ball, Executive Assistant for Housing, hope to be at the meeting.

As is customary with NAG open meetings, invitations have been extended to Ward Councillors, Council officers, and representatives from Nottinghamshire Police, Nottingham University, Nottingham Trent University, Students' Unions, Unipol, and other organisations.

Also as usual, time will be given for Question & Answer sessions on the topics of the meetings. In addition to asking questions, it is hoped attendees will share their ideas and give feedback on what they have heard.

Attendees will have opportunities to raise matters of specific interest to themselves after the close of the main meetings.

Everyone with an interest in the topics is invited to come.

NTU & COMMUNITY PROTECTION COLLABORATION REDUCES DISTURBANCE And Anti-Social Behaviour & Promotes Safety and Security

SINCE MID-SEPTEMBER 2014, NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY HAS CONTRIBUTED APPROXIMATELY £10,000 A YEAR TOWARDS A COLLABORATION which has resulted in two officers (normally Community Protection Officers – CPOs – or Police Community Support Officers – PCSOs) patrolling an area around the university's city centre buildings and residences bounded by Goldsmith Street, South/North Sherwood Street and Peel Street.

The patrols primarily operate during university term times, but tend to begin a week or so before the beginning of each term, and continue for a week or so after the end of each term. They are scheduled to take place each Wednesday night/Thursday morning and Saturday night/Sunday morning, these times having been identified by the Police as being the busiest in terms of student-related disturbances. These are also the two busiest nights for student entertainment events in the city centre.

The role and purpose of the officers is to provide early and pre-emptive intervention, as a way of minimising further disturbance that would otherwise have a detrimental impact on the local community, as well as placing extra demands in terms of formal involvement by the Police. By and large, the officers' interactions with students has been through informal words of advice which have not been documented recorded. However, anti-social behaviour for the Victoria Centre beat, which includes the NTU patrol area, has reduced by 23% in comparison to that pre-September 2014. Police and related agencies have confirmed that perceptions of student-related noise and disturbance in the area have shown that issues have been reduced.

The CPOs have also worked closely with late-night catering outlets, more rigorously enforcing littering issues in the areas immediately surrounding their premises, and this has also had a positive impact on the physical environment of the neighbourhood.

The CPOs and PCSOs work closely with NTU's central security, which has overall responsibility for the university's buildings and students, and also with the individual duty staff who are located at each NTU residence in the area. When incidents happen in the vicinity where the patrol is operating, CPOs also provide assistance to UPP and NTU security teams, meaning a quicker and more dedicated response than might otherwise be the case. This response has meant that immediate assistance has been given in emergency situations, such as when students have sustained serious injury, meaning that they have benefitted from the swift first aid intervention from these officers.

The presence of Community Protection and Police Community officers has helped to produce a significant

reduction in the number of complaints and issues reported to the university by members of the public in the patrol area.

Prior to September 2014, NTU received an average of 17 complaints relating to noise, littering and other anti-social behaviour involving students each year from members of the public in the patrol area. Since the beginning of the scheme and the maintenance of the highly-visible and pro-active presence of the officers, the university has reported receiving 13 complaints in the academic year 2014 to 2015, and 8 complaints in the same period 2015 to 2016.

The work that NTU and Community Protection have been doing has helped to cement a positive partnership between the Police, Community Protection and the university, and has allowed more effective and mutually beneficial sharing of information regarding other issues and intelligence in the area.

Approval has been given for the scheme to continue in its present form for 2016 to 2017. Senior management at NTU and the Police have expressed their support for the investment and partnership that the scheme delivers.

In the context of an extremely challenging landscape in terms of Police and Council resources, it is clear that this has been a notably successful example of close partnership working, and the value of linking collaboratively to identify effective solutions to shared issues.

In addition to this exemplary scheme, it is as well to mention Nottingham Trent's support of the Street Pastors scheme.

In early 2016, NTU led a number of private accommodation providers in donating a financial contribution to the work of the Street Pastors, based at the Malt Cross. This was partly in response to concern about the on-going budgetary viability of the scheme, but also because NTU recognise the Street Pastors' value to the university and its students. Since then, the Street Pastors scheme has continued to grow. This year, for the first time, groups of NTU Residence Assistants will be joining the Street Pastors teams as part of their activity.

Mark Simmonds, NTU's Student Community Liaison Manager, says: 'This is now an explicit, core part of the Residence Assistant role, and I believe it will provide an additional dimension of understanding and awareness to assist them in their support duties in halls. I envisage that NTU's partnership with the Street Pastors will continue to thrive in the months and years to come.'

Editor's Note

Our thanks to Mark Simmonds for providing the information for this article. We would also like to put on record our good wishes to him and his family as they embark on a new adventure. In Part II of the 2010-2012 NAG magazine, Mark wrote about his appointment to the new post of Student Community Liaison Manager. With this in mind, we prefaced the NTU chapter with a quotation, attributed to Aeschylus, which is as appropriate now as it was then: *I'm not afraid of storms, for I'm learning to sail my ship*'.

[Posted on the NAG website,
30 September 2016]

NOTTINGHAM MAGISTRATES FINE NOTTINGHAM HMO LTD. £29,000

INSPECTORS WHO VISITED A RENTED HOUSE IN NOTTINGHAM WERE SO DISGUSTED WITH ITS RAT-INFESTED KITCHEN THEY TOOK THE LANDLORD TO COURT.

Nottingham City Council officers visited the home on Alfreton Road in January after the owner applied for a licence to make it a house of multiple occupation – or HMO.

The licences are given to houses where a number of different tenants share kitchens and toilets.

But the council says during the assessment officers found it in a “filthy and verminous” state with a rat infestation present.

The authority took the parent firm Nottingham HMO Ltd, of Unit C17, Private Road 2, Colwick Industrial Estate, to Nottingham Magistrates’ Court.

The company is directed by Nazaquat Azam and previously by Yusif McCallum until November 30 2015.

The firm was found guilty of breaching HMO management regulations and the business was fined £19,000. It was also fined £10,000 for failure to respond to a council notice requesting information.

Officers also found the house had no fire detection system and damaged doors and refused the HMO licence application for the house.

Councillor Nicola Heaton, the council’s portfolio holder for community services, said: “Nottingham HMO Ltd completely ignored the advice given to them for their own financial gain, placing their tenants at the risk of harm.

“This is simply ‘profit before safety’ and the landlord has been held accountable for their criminal actions. We will continue to rigorously enforce the law, ensuring that privately rented housing in Nottingham is up to the required standards for citizens, who have the right to live in a decent and safe home.

“We welcome this conviction and hope that it sends a message out to private landlords who may think about cutting corners on the standard of accommodation.”

[Original article by Chris.breese@nottstv.com, 6 September 2016]

EXCUSE THAT BEING TOO BUSY IS NOT ACCEPTABLE: Student Letting Agent Suspended

MEGACLOSE, A LARGE STUDENT LANDLORD HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED FROM THE OFFICIAL STUDENT HOUSING ACCREDITATION SCHEME FOR NOTTINGHAM - THE UNIPOL CODE. Megaclose, who mainly provide accommodation for Nottingham Trent University students, were suspended from the scheme by a Tribunal on the 2nd March 2016 due to non-compliance with the standards required in the Unipol Code.

The Code is operated by the housing charity, Unipol

and forms part of the Nottingham Standard, an accreditation mark unique to Nottingham and supported by Nottingham City Council that guarantees a minimum standard for privately rented accommodation across the city. The Unipol Code is a scheme whereby student landlords and agents can distinguish themselves as responsible landlords by signing up to an agreed set of standards relating to physical and management aspects of student letting, with the aim of improving the standards. More than 380 landlords and agents are currently members and both Universities advise their students to prioritise accredited landlords when looking for accommodation in the private sector.

At the Tribunal, it was noted that Megaclose had signed a declaration confirming that their accommodation complied with standards set out in the Unipol Code. However, after Unipol carried out verification inspections of their portfolio, it was observed that none of the selected properties met the standards, mainly in regard to health and safety elements of the Code and particularly fire safety. This included not having suitable escape routes and missing elements of smoke detection equipment. Unipol contacted Megaclose on numerous occasions after the inspections for confirmation that they would carry out the required works, but no response was received until over six months later when Megaclose stated that they were too busy to deal with the required works. The Tribunal considered that non-compliance with health and safety elements of the Code was a serious matter and that the landlord’s behaviour was not in line with that expected in the Code. The Tribunal also noted that as a large landlord who had been given over six months to respond to the inspection reports, the excuse of being too busy was not acceptable.

Commenting on the decision, Councillor Nicola Heaton, City Council Portfolio Holder for Community Services, said: “Students, and everyone else in the city, have a right to expect a decent standard of rental accommodation. We’re committed to taking action against landlords who fail in their responsibilities to tenants so welcome the move made by Unipol in relation to this particular company.” Whilst Tim Woodman-Clarke, Head of Accommodation Services at Nottingham Trent University said “We are most disappointed to learn that Megaclose will no longer be working with Unipol on the accreditation of its properties. Nottingham Trent University have a clear policy that we will only recommend accredited suppliers of accommodation to our students and therefore we will be unable to recommend that our students access student accommodation through Megaclose.” Although Megaclose have been suspended from the Unipol Code, they also have several large developments for students which are accredited under a different Code - ANUK - and this accreditation remains in place.

Unipol Student Homes is a national not for profit organisation, and as well as accreditation also provides student with the most extensive listing of private sector student accommodation in the city and offers training and exclusive market information to landlords and agents. Over the last letting year the Unipol Nottingham website has listed more than 6,000 private sector bed spaces in Nottingham.

[Unipol Press Release, 1 April 2016]

COUNCIL WARNS LANDLORDS & AGENTS Who Ignore Controls on Letting Boards

IN PART II OF THE 2010-2012 NAG MAGAZINE, A CHAPTER ENTITLED 'THE LETTING BOARD JUNGLE' FOCUSED ON WHAT AT THAT TIME HAD BEEN CALLED 'NOTTINGHAM'S FOREST OF LETTING BOARDS', on the blight they inflicted on our neighbourhoods, and on what was being done to obtain the necessary government permission to so that the City Council could begin to exercise control over the proliferation of these eyesores.

Permission in the form of a 'Regulation 7 Direction' having been obtained, in October 2012 a protocol controlling the use of letting boards came into operation in large parts of Lenton, Dunkirk, Radford and Arboretum, Wollaton East and Lenton Abbey wards.

Fast forward to October 2016, and the positive impact of that protocol on the visual environment in neighbourhoods in areas where it applies is unquestionable: by and large the letting board blight has gone

However, a timely reminder, Development Management at Nottingham City Council is sending this letter to all landlords and agents ...

RESTRICTIONS ON RESIDENTIAL LETTING BOARDS 'REGULATION 7 DIRECTION' INNER NORTH WEST AND WEST PARTS OF NOTTINGHAM

As a landlord or agent I am writing to remind you of the protocol controlling the use of letting boards which came into operation in large parts of Lenton, Dunkirk, Radford and Arboretum, Wollaton East and Lenton Abbey wards of the city in October 2012.

I particularly want to remind you that from **1 October to 31 December** this year there must be no boards displayed within the Direction area. Full details of the Direction, Area map and Landlord Guidance Note are available on the City Council's website at:

www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/lettingboards.

To avoid unnecessary problems and potential enforcement action I would ask that all existing boards are removed.

The Regulation 7 Direction has been a big success and the absence of unauthorised letting boards in the area has greatly improved the environment of the main student areas of the city, and for local people living there. Compliance with the Direction and Letting Board Guidance has largely been universal and your support, as landlords and letting agents, is greatly appreciated in achieving the transformation of the Area.

In previous years, it is regrettable that a small number of boards have been displayed in contravention of the Direction, and we have written to offenders and/or taken direct steps to remove boards. However, it is an offence to display a letting board in contravention of the Direction, and we take the view that it should not be necessary for limited council resources to be used to take action more than once against the same offenders.

I must therefore advise that it is our intention to prosecute repeat offenders this year. This includes offenders we have written to in previous years to request that unauthorised boards be removed.

I trust that this more serious action will not be necessary, and thank you for your cooperation in ensuring that the protocol is complied with.

The following is a summary of the rules for letting boards in the Direction area:

- **Letting boards will be permitted from 1 January to 30 September only, and must not be displayed from 1 October to 31 December.**
- **Only one board per building will be permitted.**
- **Boards to be mounted flush to the wall above the from door, but if not possible, mounted flush to the wall on the street frontage elevation. No part of the board shall be higher than first-floor window cill level.**
- **Boards must have a white background and be no more than 34cm x 48cm or 48cm x 34cm in size.**
- **One company logo per board which should not exceed one third of the overall size of the board. Logos and text will be permitted in black and any one single uniform colour. No fluorescent colours should be used.**
- **Boards marked by "Let By", "Let", "More Wanted" or similar wording are to be prohibited.**
- **One board shall be permitted per landlord/agent per street. However, if a landlord/agent wishes to advertise properties having different numbers of bedrooms, one board shall be permitted for each property with a different number of bedrooms, up to a maximum of three per street, as long as the number of bedrooms is specified on the board.**
- **Boards shall be removed no later than 14 days after the granting of a tenancy for the room, house or flat in question. Letting boards shall not be displayed other than in the calendar year in which the tenancy is available.**

No enforcement action will be taken if the letting board complies with the above guidance within the area of control. I look forward to your continued support of this policy initiative. If you have any general questions or would like further information on the guidance please contact:

**development.management@nottinghamcity.gov.uk,
call 0115 876 4447**

or Jo Briggs on 0115 876 4041

[Reproduced from the NAG website, 30 September 2016]

'DUSK TO DAWN' and 'EVERYONE HAS A RIGHT TO LIVE IN A SAFE & HEALTHY HOME'

will be followed in 2017 by, amongst others, an open meeting with Nottingham City Council primarily looking at planning and planning enforcement with particular reference to HMOs.

As they become available, details of all NAG open meetings, along with reports, notices and other information are posted on the NAG website:

www.nottinghamaction.org.uk

THE LETTING BOARDS PROTOCOL

And Who to Contact if You See It Being Ignored

Nine areas in the city have been designated in a Regulation 7 Direction, which means that 'To Let' boards cannot be displayed on residential properties without obtaining planning permission unless they follow strict criteria. A copy of the Direction, maps of the areas to which it applies and a copy of the design guidance can be found at: www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/lettingboards.

A list of the areas covered by the Direction is printed overleaf.

SUMMARY OF THE RULES

- ◆ Letting boards will be permitted in the period from 1 January to 30 September only.
- ◆ Letting boards must not be displayed from 1 October to 31 December.
- ◆ Only one board per building will be permitted.
- ◆ Boards to be mounted flush to the wall above the front door, but if not possible, mounted flush to the wall on the street frontage elevation. No part of the board shall be higher than first-floor window cill level.
- ◆ Boards must have a white background and be no more than 34cm x 48cm or 48cm x 34cm in size.
- ◆ One company logo per board which should not exceed one third of the overall size of the board.
- ◆ Logos and text will be permitted in black and any one single uniform colour. No fluorescent colours should be used.
- ◆ Boards marked by 'Let By', 'Let', 'More wanted' or similar wording are to be prohibited.
- ◆ One board shall be permitted per landlord/agent per street. However, if a landlord/agent wishes to advertise properties having different numbers of bedrooms, one board shall be permitted for each property with a different number of bedrooms, up to a maximum of three per street, as long as the number of bedrooms is specified on the board.
- ◆ Boards shall be removed not later than 14 days after the granting of a tenancy for the room, house or flat in question. Letting boards shall not be displayed other than in the calendar year for which the tenancy is available.

HOW TO REPORT BOARDS WHICH DO NOT CONFORM WITH THE PROTOCOL

During the period from 1 October to 31 December no letting boards whatsoever are permitted in the areas covered by the Direction. Please report any infringements you see as follows:

Tel: Nottingham (0115) 876 4447

E-Mail: development.management@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Write to:

Planning and Building Control
LH Box 5
Loxley House
Station Street
Nottingham NG2 3NG

◆ See Overleaf for the List of Neighbourhoods Covered by the Direction ◆

AREAS COVERED BY THE REGULATION 7 DIRECTION

Area 1 Middleton Boulevard (Zone 1A, 1B):

Averton Square, Broughton Drive, Calver Close, Charnock Avenue, Dalby Square, Derby Road (530 - 564 evens), Dorket Drive, Fairham Drive, Farndon Green, Harby Drive, Hawton Crescent, Hawton Spinney, Kilverton Close, Longore Square, Middleton Boulevard (2 – 136 evens, 5-101 odds), Orston Drive, Orston Green, Scaford Drive, Selston Drive, Sutton Passeys Crescent, Toston Drive, Wemyss Gardens, Wollaton Hall Drive.

Triumph Road:

Bedarra Grove, Braddock Close, Cycle Road, Derby Road, (312– 396 evens), Dunlop Avenue (131 - 155 odds), Elmsthorpe Avenue, Falcon Close, Faraday Road (4-118 evens) Grinsbrook, Hazelmere Grove, Heron Drive, Hinchin Brook, Johnson Road, Kittiwake Mews, Lenton Boulevard, (131 - 155 odds), Peregrine Close, Sandpiper Way, Shelby Close, Wicket Grove.

Area 3 Lenton Triangle:

Albert Grove, Arundel Street, Ashbourne Street, Ashburnham Avenue, Balfour Road, Bute Avenue, Cottesmore Road, Derby Grove, Derby Road (158 - 298 evens and Park West), Douglas Road, Hermon Street, Ilkeston Road (57-201 odds, Raynor Court), Kimbolton Avenue, Lenton Boulevard (110 - 164 evens), Rothesay Avenue, Seely Road, Teversal Avenue, Wellington Square, Wellington Villas.

Area 4 Forest Road West:

Alfreton Road (11 - 131 odds, 18 - 168 evens), All Saints Street, All Saints Terrace, Althorpe Street, Arthur Street, Burns Avenue, Burns Street, Cromwell Street, Forest Road West (4 - 56 evens, 75 – 181 odds), Francis Street, Gamble Street, Gedling Grove, Greek Street, Highurst Street, Holden Street, Ilkeston Road (2 - 72 evens), Ireton Street, Kanman Court, Larkdale Street, Montfort Street, Montgomery Street, Moorgate Street, Newdigate Street, Newdigate Villas, Oliver Close, Oliver Street, Portland Road, Raleigh Street, Russell Street, Tennyson Street, Thoroton Street, Walter Street, Wansbeck Close, Waverley Street (1-35 odds Bronte Court) Wildman Street.

Area 5 Mansfield Road:

Addison Street, Alma Close, Alpha Terrace, Annesley Grove, Birkland Avenue, Bluecoat Close, Bluecoat Street, Century Court, Clinton Court, Clipstone Avenue, Colville Street, Colville Terrace, Colville Villas, Dryden Street, Dundas Close, Forest Grove, Forest Road East (east of Addison Street), Gill Street, Hampden Street, Mansfield Road (11-261 odds, 140-184 evens), Matlock Court, Mount Hooton, Newstead Grove, North Sherwood, Street, Ossington Close, Peachey Street, Peel Street, Shakespeare Street,(north side), Tudor Grove, Waverley Mount, Waverley Street (east side).

Area 6 The Drives:

Allington Avenue, Derby Road (197-215 odds), Harlaxton Drive, Harrington Drive, Harrowby Mews, Harrowby Road, Park Road (17a – 35 odds), Park Street (Victoria Court, Nos. 31-57 odds), Rolleston Drive, Welby Avenue.

Area 7 Dunkirk and Lenton:

Abbey Bridge, Abbey Street, Albert Road, Alderney Street, Arthur Avenue, Broadholme Street, Castle Boulevard (204-243), Castle Gardens, Cecil Street, Chilwell Street, Chippendale Street, Church Avenue, Church Grove, Church Square, Church Street (17-35 odds 24-34 evens), Claytons Drive, Cloister Street, Coleby Avenue, Derby Road (235 - 289 odds), Devonshire Promenade, Dunkirk Road, Forsythia Gardens, Frederick Grove, Friar Street, Friary Close, Gloucester Avenue, Gregory Avenue, Gregory Street, Grove Road, Harley Street, Hart Street, Henry Road, Hoyland Avenue, Hungerton Street, Lenton Boulevard (1-109 all, 111-115 odds) Lois Avenue, Lombard Close, Maxwell Close, Mettham Street, Nazareth Road, Old Church Street, Osmaston Street, Park Road (1-20 all 22 – 74 evens), Park Street (Digby Court, Abbey Court, Newgate Court, Lenton Court, Willoughby Court), Petersham Mews, Priory Mews, Priory Street, Rob Roy Avenue, Sherwin Road (297-235 odds), The Friary, Trinity Avenue, Warwick Street, Waterside Gardens, Willoughby Avenue, Willoughby Street, Wishford Avenue.

Area 8 Derby Road:

Arnesby Road, Church Street (37-57 odds Albert Square), Derby Road (east of Hill Side), Gregory Court, Gregory Street, Ingham Grove, Leen Gate (2 and Leengate Court), Lenton Manor, Martinmass Close, Midland Avenue, Penn Avenue, Rathmines Close, Saxon Green, Sherwin Grove (60-84 evens 29-83 odds, Mirberry Mews and Albert Ball Homes) Sherwin Road, Swenson Avenue.

Area 8 (Zone 8B):

Derby Road (west of Hill Side), Hill Side

Area 9 University Boulevard:

Barrique Road, Beeston Road, Bunting Street, Brailsford Road, City Road, Claude Street, Clifton Boulevard (21-45 odds), Dunkirk Road (80-106 evens) Ednaston Road, Greenfield Street, Highfield Road, Lace Street, Marlborough Street, Montpelier Road, Tonnelier Road.