



# EMPTY HOMES



NEWSLETTER 2020 : ISSUE 9



Councillor Jo Barker  
Portfolio Holder for People

## Welcome to the 2020 edition

The Empty Homes Newsletter is published annually and sent out to all empty home owners. We recognise that this year has been like no other, but we want to take this opportunity to help you consider what you could do with your property. The Newsletter gives advice, information and useful tips to help owners bring their properties back into use.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council continues to address the current housing shortage across the District and bringing empty properties back into use remains very important. There are many benefits to bringing an empty property back into use and the Council is eager to discuss them with owners.

Don't miss out!

Contact the Empty Property Officer, Sheree Johansen today for an informal chat about Empty Property Assistance Grants, Council Tax discounts and reduced VAT rates. Telephone: 01789 260866 or email [sheree.johansen@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:sheree.johansen@stratford-dc.gov.uk)



## A decade of frustration for neighbours

**A decade of frustration for neighbours was turned into elation when a scruffy, long-term empty property was returned back into use by the new owners earlier this year.**

The 3 bed-roomed, semi-detached house, situated in a quiet, residential cul-de-sac on the outskirts of Stratford town had been left empty for over 10 years and over time the gardens had become wildly overgrown, strewn with rubbish and several of the windows had been boarded up.

Apart from the obvious concern about its unsightliness and fear of anti-social behaviour, neighbours had been worried about the negative impact the house was having on their own properties. It is safe to say that first impressions count and many of the residents had voiced concerns about how such factors could potentially force them to lower their asking price should they decide to sell.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Empty Property Officer had worked with the owner for many years, trying to encourage him to bring the property back into use but, even with the offer of financial assistance towards the cost of the repairs, the owner still refused to make any improvements to the house.

Years passed with the owner making occasional, half-hearted attempts to maintain the garden but no progress was made in persuading him to do the necessary works, despite the mention of possible enforcement action.

Neighbours were disheartened at the lack of progress and there was a growing annoyance toward the homeowner for his lack of consideration of the other residents and their properties.

The Empty Property Officer continued to offer support and advice and discuss different solutions with the owner but he remained non-compliant and eventually, as a last resort, the Council decided that enforcement was the only option.

An Interim Empty Dwelling Management Order was initially placed on the property in the hope that this would finally persuade the owner into taking action but unfortunately he dis-engaged with the Empty Property Officer and vehemently refused to comply with the Order.

A Final Order was placed on the property, which prompted the owner into finally making the decision to sell the house. The Council revoked the Order when a sale was secured and on exchange of contracts with the new owners.

The new owners have done extensive work both internally and externally to the house and gardens and have transformed an abandoned empty property into an attractive family home, much to the delight of their new neighbours.



Rescheduled National Empty Homes Week 15 to 21 February 2021



## Working in harmony

The Council will shortly be entering into a valuable partnership with a local landlord and a third sector organisation. The current national housing crisis has seen increasing use of bed and breakfast accommodation, but this exciting project will enable people to have their own room and be provided with a level of on-going support.

The Council has provided the landlord with financial assistance through the Empty Property Assistance Grant scheme. The grant will help towards the cost of renovating a former, empty property and bring it back into residential use, providing 4 units of accommodation for people who would otherwise have to be housed in bed and breakfast.

The landlord will receive a regular income for the use of the property for a period of 5 years and the day to day management will be undertaken by our third sector partners.

The Council currently has similar arrangements in place with 2 other local landlords who have handed over their properties to be managed on their behalf. Both properties are now being successfully managed by the Council in conjunction with a third sector partner.

If you own an empty property and would be interested in working with the Council, please contact the Empty Property Officer, Sheree Johansen on 07974 653048 or email: [sheree.johansen@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:sheree.johansen@stratford-dc.gov.uk) or email the Private Sector Housing Team [PSHT@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:PSHT@stratford-dc.gov.uk)

## Empty Dwelling Management Order

An Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) is a legal tool used by local authorities to take over the management of residential properties that have been empty for 2 years or more, with the aim of bringing the property back into use. The First Tier Residential Property Tribunals gained the power to issue these orders in 2006.

It was hoped that the EDMO would persuade owners to bring their empty properties back into use and to encourage them to engage with empty property officers to explore the range of options available.

The EDMOs are used when the council has been unable to persuade the owner to bring the property back into use and considers this course of action is necessary as a last resort.

## Empty Property Assistance Grants

### Is lack of funding preventing you from bringing your empty property back into use?

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has grants of up to £20,000 available to help towards the cost of renovating empty properties to bring them back into residential use.

The grants are awarded at the discretion of the Council, subject to availability and meeting the required criteria, including the Terms and Conditions of the Grant Agreement.

For further information or an informal chat, please contact the Empty Property Officer on 07974 653048 or email: [sheree.johansen@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:sheree.johansen@stratford-dc.gov.uk)

## Useful contacts in Stratford-on-Avon District Council

**Web:** [www.stratford.gov.uk](http://www.stratford.gov.uk)

### Empty Property Officer

Sheree Johansen

Tel: 07974 653048

Email: [psht@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:psht@stratford-dc.gov.uk)

### Housing Standards Officer

Peter Chatfield

Tel: 07990 040351

Email: [pete.chatfield@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:pete.chatfield@stratford-dc.gov.uk)

### Council Tax Enquiries

Tel: 01789 260990

Email: [revenues@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:revenues@stratford-dc.gov.uk)

### Building Control Enquiries

Tel: 01789 260626

Email: [buildingcontrol@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:buildingcontrol@stratford-dc.gov.uk)

### Planning Enquiries

Tel: 01789 260304

Email: [planning.applications@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:planning.applications@stratford-dc.gov.uk)

## Other useful contacts

### Action On Empty Homes

Will McMahon (Director)

Tel: 0207 8325822

Email: [info@actiononemptyhomes.org](mailto:info@actiononemptyhomes.org)

Web: [www.actiononemptyhomes.org](http://www.actiononemptyhomes.org)

### Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme

Tel: 0121 2882008

Mob: 07999 961 171

Email: [talk@mlas.org.uk](mailto:talk@mlas.org.uk)

Web: [www.mlas.org.uk](http://www.mlas.org.uk)

### HM Revenues & Customs: VAT

Tel: 0300 2003700

Web: [www.hmrc.gov.uk/VAT](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/VAT)

### Valuation Office

Tel: 03000 501501

Email: [ctwest@voa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ctwest@voa.gsi.gov.uk)

Web: [www.voa.gov.uk](http://www.voa.gov.uk)



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