

BRIDPORT GREEN NEWS



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Bridport Town Council



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Bridport Town Council

THE HOUSING CRISIS GREEN SOLUTIONS

Britain is in the midst of a housing crisis. This is not only the conclusion of the recently published report of the Shelter Commission, but the experience of a great many people in Bridport and across the country. And, as usual, it's people at the lower end of the income ladder that are suffering the most.

Loss of Council Housing

The building of social housing / council homes has been cut from an average of 126,000 per year between 1945 – 1980, to just over 6,000 last year, and with **much of the existing stock sold off** to those who could afford to buy there is now little left for those who find the idea of buying beyond their wildest dreams.

Renting Privately

Instead, people with low incomes have been forced into renting from private landlords. Many who do so face the insecurity of short-term tenancies, with the constant threat of eviction hanging over them. And with many private landlords imposing grossly unfair restrictions

regarding children and being on benefits, that's assuming they can find somewhere to rent in the first place.

Key Workers

Many professional workers, like nurses and school teachers, are now finding it very difficult to take jobs in West Dorset because they just cannot find suitable housing. This not only affects them, it affects all of us!

In the 21st century this is a scandal! Having safe, secure, warm and dry housing is an absolutely basic human need, and must be made available for everyone.

Solutions

Nationally we want to see a change in property taxes but there is plenty we could do at the local level.

We should do much more to bring empty homes back into use.

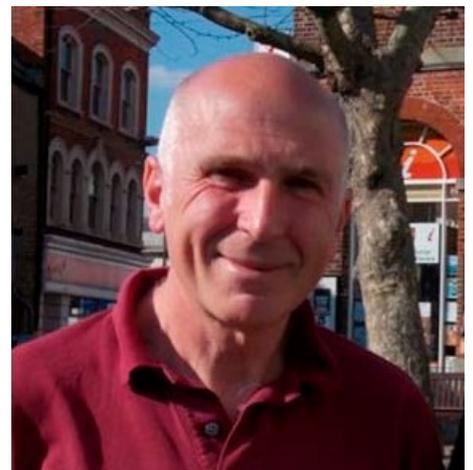
Furthermore, the new Dorset Council should itself start building zero carbon social housing.

Instead of the inadequate and failed approach of seeking affordable housing from commercial developers, Dorset Council should demand the cash

equivalent of the 35% "affordable housing" requirement as a condition of planning consent. **This money can then be used to help fund social housing.**

Saving money

Currently, in West Dorset alone we spend £27 million a year on housing benefit*. Social housing would reduce this bill and keep the money in the public purse.



Local Green Party councillor, **Dr Kelvin Clayton** (pictured above), says "We will be campaigning for Dorset Council to take a lead in reversing this unfair and inhuman situation and assure the availability of housing that is genuinely affordable for all."

*<https://tinyurl.com/brid2019>

CLIMATE CHANGE AND CONSUMPTION

Amid the interminable Brexit fiasco it is easy to lose sight of even more important matters such as climate change. The degree of ice melt, sea level rise and extreme weather is **exceeding forecasts**. Only mankind can deal with the problem and that means every one of us, not just politicians gathering at conferences every year or so.

The richest countries must take the lead in reducing consumption. Fortunately they have the capacity to do so by radically reducing inequality and curtailing the ability of the rich to squander resources in quite obscene fashion. Ending electricity generation from fossil fuels, investment in storing renewable energy, a move away from car dominated societies and large reductions in meat consumption could lead us to a low carbon economy. Tree planting, rewilding of marginal agricultural land and other ways to remove CO2 from the atmosphere are entirely possible if governments have the will to lead on this.

We must do all this in the next 12 years to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5C. **If we don't act now then the impacts of climate change will be much more severe.** This is why we support people such as the "Extinction Rebellion" group who are taking non-violent direct action to sound the alarm.



Greta Thunberg with her "School Strike for The Climate"

Even more promising is the 'School Strikes for Climate Action' initiative. This was sparked off by just one 16 year old Swede called Greta Thunberg who started going on strike every Friday and now 30,000 pupils in Belgium and Germany are doing so. We must all do what we can individually, and vote only for political parties that are willing to do the same on our collective behalf.

COUNCILLORS REQUIRED

COULD YOU BE A TOWN COUNCILLOR?

If you are a supporter of environmental and green causes, how about joining our list of Green Party candidates for Town Council in May? You just have to join the Green Party and then come along to at least one of our meetings so that we can satisfy ourselves that you would be a suitable candidate.

Contact Julian Jones on 428346 if interested.

REGISTER TO VOTE!

This could be a busy year for voting, so make sure you are registered!

You can do this easily online, you just need to provide your National Insurance Number and Date of Birth.

<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

At present, EU citizens can vote in local elections in the UK, and we hope this will still be the case after March 29th.

Your Green Party Town Councillors

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Kelvin holds a councillor surgery at the Bearkat café every Wednesday morning between 10 and 11am to hear your concerns on any issue.