

Empty Property Report as at 3 October 2012

As at 3 October 2012

There were 1,579 long term empty properties as at 3 October 2012. The total number of long term empty properties includes 29 empty properties that have been identified from complaints received, which are not showing up on the council tax list.

Community Area	Number of long term empty properties	As % of total number of empty properties	Total number of households in community area	As % of total number of households in community area
Amesbury	70	4.43%	12960	0.54%
Bradford on Avon	57	3.61%	8090	0.70%
Calne	77	4.97%	9440	0.82%
Chippenham	110	6.97%	18790	0.58%
Corsham	68	4.31%	8430	0.81%
Devizes	116	7.35%	13340	0.87%
Malmesbury	106	6.71%	8060	1.31%
Marlborough	80	5.07%	7420	1.08%
Melksham	89	5.64%	12270	0.72%
Pewsey	52	3.29%	6020	0.86%
Royal Wootton Bassett	102	6.46%	11870	0.86%
Salisbury	136	7.37%	18530	0.73%
South West Wiltshire	109	5.91%	10060	1.08%
Southern Wiltshire	53	3.36%	7390	0.72%
Tidworth	30	1.90%	5950	0.50%
Trowbridge	143	9.06%	18050	0.79%
Warminster	127	8.04%	11010	1.15%
Westbury	54	3.42%	8320	0.65%
TOTAL	1,579		196000	
TOTAL including exemptions*	1,845			

* Total number of long term empty properties that have been deemed by Council Tax as exempt due to the property being uninhabitable (council tax class A Exempt List) - 266

681 properties moved from the long term empty property list that was produced 30 March 2012 to the occupied list. 31 properties were moved from the long term empty property list to the Class A exemption list between the same period.

Trends

	As at 30/03/2012	As at 3/10/2012	% change for 6 month period
Long term empty properties	1706	1579	- 7.44%
Total number including exemptions	1964	1845	- 6.05%

What types of property are empty?

Type of property	Number across Wilts	SW area only
Annex	21	2
Bungalow	71*	9
Flat	306*	9
House	656	49
Park / mobile home	21	

This information has been obtained from a range of sources including: returned vacant property questionnaires, officer knowledge and internet searches using various property information sites.

* Note that some of the property information websites do not distinguish between bungalows and houses. This could result in some of the properties being recorded as a house when they are a bungalow.

How many bedrooms do they have?

Size of property	Number across Wilts	SW area only
1 bed	85	5
2 bed	215	15
3 bed	256	19
4 bed	99	9
5 bed	33	1
6 bed	4	
More than 6 bed	4	

Property description

This provides further information on the types of property that are empty.

Property description	Number across Wilts	SW area only
Flat above shop	26	
Property associated with commercial premises	4	
Property associated with farm	10	2
Farm	6	1
Pub	10	
Retirement property	135	3
Shared ownership property	5	
Staff accommodation	33	5
HMO	2	
Holiday let	3	
New Build	6	
Barn conversion	3	1

Further information on empty retirement homes

There are 1845 long term empty properties recorded as at 3 October 2012. 135 have been identified as empty retirement properties. This represents 7.31% of the total number of empty properties.

The table below provides a breakdown of retirement properties by community areas.

Community Area	Number of long term empty retirement properties in Wiltshire
Amesbury	7
Bradford on Avon	10
Calne	3
Chippenham	9
Corsham	2
Devizes	39
Marlborough	10
Melksham	12
Pewsey	1
Salisbury	5
South West Wilts	3
Southern Wilts	
Trowbridge	9
Warminster	24
TOTAL	135

The number of empty retirement properties has increased by 2 in the 6 month reporting period. As at 30 March 2012 the number of empty retirement properties as a percentage of the total number of long term empty properties was 6.8%.

Reasons identified for retirement properties remaining empty

Many owners have said that they have been trying to sell their property, with some having been on the market for a number of years. A number of owners have advised the Empty Homes Officer that they inherited the property and they would be interested in renting the property because they have been unable to sell it. The owners are responsible for paying the service charge on the property and council tax.

This situation can put an owner under considerable financial strain and the ability to be able to rent the property may be a way of alleviating this pressure. However, the lease prevents most of these properties from being able to be sub-let. Many owners have tried to negotiate with the freeholder, however, they have not found them to be sympathetic to their situation. Owners have stated that they feel that the freeholders are not interested in taking action to resolve this situation because they are still being paid the service charge on the property. The freeholder also benefits more from the sale of a property as they are paid a percentage of the sale price, where as if the property is sub-let the freeholder would not benefit.

Why do properties remain empty?

Reason for being vacant	Number across Wilts	SW area only
Awaiting planning	10	
Planning dispute	10	
Planning / lease restrictions	6	
Planning to demolish	5	1
Undergoing repairs	70	5
Planning to repair	27	2
Can't afford to repair	17	1
Site to be sold for redevelopment	24	
For sale	83	5
Sale going through	6	2
To let	7	
Owner away	6	
Awaiting probate	2	
Holiday or second home	12	
Part of main property	9	1
Keeping Options open	14	1
Used by employees for part of year	4	
Other	12	
Total	324	

What does the owner intend to do with the property?

What does the owner intend to do with the property?	Number across Wilts	SW area only
A family member / friend will live in it	11	3
Demolish / conversion	2	
Don't know	31	5
Live in it	46	1
Rent it	48	3
Sell it	93	4
Use as second home	1	
Use as storage	1	
TOTAL	233	

When does the owner envisage returning the property to use?

How soon will the property be returned to use	Number across Wilts	SW area only
Less than 6 months	62	6
6 - 12 months	40	4
12 months – 2 years	17	1
Don't know	63	6
Never	4	
Total	186	

What support / services would encourage owners to make their property available for WiltsLet?

Service	High priority	Medium priority	Low Priority	No Priority
A tenant matching service	11	3		43
Professional help to manage repairs	9	3	1	47
A council run letting / property management service	4	3	2	42
Access to a council officer to help resolve any tenancy issues that may arise	13	1	1	45
A rent and damage deposit guarantee	12	5	1	41
A tenant reference service	12	3	3	42
A regular property inspection service	12	2	3	40
Guaranteed payment of 50% of the rent during void periods for up to 2 months	10	4	2	41
Access to landlord forums and regular newsletters	5	2	4	47
Grant for repairs	15	4	3	43
Low interest rate loans for repairs	7	3	3	43

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