

Numbers of second homes in Dartmouth

There are various sources which can give an indication of these numbers. In analysing the available data, it has been assumed that residents of Dartmouth and Townstal will overwhelmingly have completed census returns and registered to vote.

1 Identification of relevant postcodes

The postcodes making up the Dartmouth and Townstal 2011 census returns were identified. Dartmouth & Kingswear were grouped together in the ONS reports but it has been possible to separate the two areas by checking the underlying grouping of postcodes. The ones in the Dartmouth ward/parish cover all postcodes beginning with 'TQ6 9' plus a limited number which start with 'TQ6 0'. A definitive list of relevant postcodes was necessary to research further sources of data.

The 2011 census identified 768 households with no usual residents out of a total of 3401 households (22.6%). This percentage was very different in Townstal which only had 34 household units with no usual residents out of 1016 units (3.3%). By contrast, the rest of Dartmouth had 734 out of 2387 household units (30.1%). The main reason for a return showing that a property has no usual residents is that it is no one's permanent home. This is clearly the case with second homes. In order to check whether this position has changed the following investigations have been carried out.

2 Business rated self-catering holiday units

The Valuation Office website makes it possible to identify premises which are business rated in category 131G which covers self-catering holiday units. These are of course second homes by definition with no usual residents. Sadly, the data cannot be sorted online to distinguish between premises which are currently business rated and premises which were business rated at some time between 2010 and 2020.

In August 2019 SHDC was able to confirm that Dartmouth had 357 properties in this category. A further check of each individual property on the VOA list was carried out in July 2020.

In July 2020 the VOA site listed 420 such properties in Dartmouth. The lower part of the town of Dartmouth included 241 of these properties. Norton Park had the other 179 properties. Norton Park is a chalet complex where properties are not intended for permanent residence. The number in Norton Park was similar in both 2010 and 2020.

Only 3 of the properties on the VOA list have Rateable Values which means they not would pay any business rates but where an individual owns more than one property business rates are payable on all, even though individually the Small Business Rate Relief would make the properties exempt.

Of the 240 properties in the main town of Dartmouth which are business rated in 2020, only 137 were listed both in 2010 and 2020.

In checking the data, it became clear that there have been significant changes in streets in the Lower Town which historically were occupied by permanent residents working in the town enjoying limited income. Lake Street now has 12 business rated self-catering units compared to 3 in 2010. Newport Street had none of these properties in 2010. It now has 5. The section of Victoria Road closest to the town centre now has 16 compared with 3 in 2010.

The fact that a property does not appear on the VOA lists does not mean that it is not let out. The number of properties advertised as furnished holiday accommodation on the Airbnb website is 50% greater than the number of business rated self-catering holiday units on the VOA website. Some will fulfil the HMRC criteria for treatment as Airbnb. In other instances, properties which could be categorised as 131G have chosen not to register for Business rating. They pay Council Tax which can still be offset against income in the owner's HMRC tax returns if the premises are let as self-catering holiday accommodation on a commercial business. Some may choose to pay Council Tax because they cannot fulfil the minimum letting requirements to justify business rating but still wish to generate income to offset costs. Others may be operating under the banner of Airbnb.

3 Identification of the properties for which Council Tax is paid

The Valuation Office website can provide current data on the number of households paying Council Tax which are either entirely residential or mixed use. On 13 October 2020 there were 3192 properties in this category in the area of 'TQ6 9'. For the postcodes beginning 'TQ6 0' within the NDP area there were only 165. The total of 3357 for mixed use and purely residential properties suggests the vast majority of those households completing the 2011 census were Council Tax payers. In the South Hams District Council area second homes which are not business rated pay the same level of Council Tax as those with permanent residents so this data in itself is not able to identify second homes. A better set of data is provided by reference to the electoral roll.

4 Electoral roll

By analysing the electoral roll it has been possible to establish the number of properties in Dartmouth which have residents eligible to vote in national and local elections. This information represents an excellent basis for identifying properties with 'no usual residents' so that comparisons can be made with the Council Tax information and the 2011 Census data.

By physically examining the 2020 roll in the Dartmouth Council Offices it has been possible to identify properties with electors. The total for Dartmouth (1441) and Townstal (907) is 2348.

Comparing the combined total of 2348 with the 3357 properties which pay Council Tax indicates that just over 30% of properties have no usual residents. It is possible that in some

cases a permanent resident chose not to register to vote or forgot to do so but this is unlikely to be a significant number.

Conclusions from the data related to Dartmouth

1

Comparison of the current numbers paying Council Tax in the Dartmouth Neighbourhood Plan area with the 2011 census data on households suggests that the number of households has not radically changed over the past 10 years.

2

The difference between the number of households with no usual residents in the 2011 census (768) and the number of households with no registered voters in 2020 (1008) shows that 31% more properties have no usual residents. Many of these are likely to be second homes including those let out but not registered for business rates.

3

The Council Tax data does not include business rated premises. Adding the 420 self-catering premises on the VOA list to the 3357 properties paying Council Tax in 2020, combining those in the census areas covering Townstal and Dartmouth, gives a total of 3777 housing units. Of these 1428 will have no permanent residents. That represents 37.8% of the housing stock.

4

There is a higher proportion of properties in Dartmouth (ex Townstal) without usual residents than in Townstal which houses more of the working population of the town. Lower Town of Dartmouth (ex Townstal) is the area which attracts most second home buyers. This area has 42.2% of households paying Council Tax with no electors.

Within the Lower Town in Dartmouth the percentage of properties with 'no usual residents' homes is higher yet. Of 1345 properties paying Council Tax only 736 had electors. The Lower Town locations with river/sea views and/or level walks to the Lower Town where most tourist related facilities are located. In this area 45.3% (609) had 'no usual residents' which is almost certainly an indication of the second homes in this area. If the 163 properties which are business rated in this area are added to the 609 with 'no usual residents' the percentage is 51.2%

5

Dartmouth clearly has a significantly higher number of second homes than in 2010 and well above the 20% threshold considered acceptable as a housing mix.

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