

Applications for Council Tax discretionary discount

1. XX, West Mills Road, Dorchester

An application for Council Tax discretionary discount has been received from a Council Taxpayer in respect of her former property at XX West Mills Road, Dorchester.

The Council Taxpayer had let the property in the past but, on the property becoming vacant on 2 May 2016, she decided to make it available for sale rather than look to re-let it. She received an offer the asking price on 10 June 2016 and, as the purchaser was a “first time buyer” and there was no “chain”, she anticipated completion taking 5-7 weeks.

The purchaser’s solicitors submitted a local search application on 30 June 2016 but this was not processed until September 2016.

The purchaser was keen to move into the property as quickly as possible and occupied it, as a tenant, from 20 August 2016. Completion took place subsequently.

As the property was empty following the former tenant moving out on 2 May 2016, a three month Council Tax discount has been awarded. However, the applicant has been charged Council Tax for the period 2 August 2016 to 20 August 2016, totalling £60.44.

The applicant feels that the Council’s failure to administer local searches promptly has resulted in her being charged Council Tax and has requested that a discount be awarded to offset her liability.

2. XX, Harmshay, Marshwood

An application for Council Tax discretionary discount has been received from the Council Taxpayer respect of his property at XX, Harmshay, Marshwood.

The applicant was left the property in 2009, following the death of his mother. He lives elsewhere and has let the property since that time. The most recent tenant vacated the property on 31 May 2016 and, as the property has been empty since then, a three month Council Tax discount has been awarded. The applicant has been subject to a Council Tax charge since 31 August 2016.

Following the property becoming empty the applicant arranged for it to be refurbished before a new tenant moved in. Refurbishment was completed

in September 2016. However, although the property has been marketed since June 2016 there has been limited interest.

The property is subject to an Agricultural Occupancy Condition (AOC) which limits the people who could rent it. The AOC was applied in the 1970's at which time it was linked to the neighbouring farm. However, the farm (including the main farmhouse) was split off a number of years ago.

The applicant applied for the AOC to be lifted so that he could rent it to local people on the housing register. However, the application was refused and Housing have been unable to identify anyone suitable on the register who would meet the AOC.

The applicant has considered moving into the property himself. However, he and his partner are foster parents and the size of the property would limit the number of children they could look after. In addition, his partner's employment requires her to live close to her place of work. The applicant would also prefer not to sell the property as it was left to him by his parents and was the family home.

The Council Tax charge from 31 August 2016 totals £941.54 and a new charge will become due from 1 April 2017. The applicant is struggling to pay the Council Tax and has asked that a Council Tax discount be awarded from 31 August 2016.