

# Exmoor Young Voices

Sustainable homes, IT and travel for young residents and workers

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**MAKING EXMOOR WORK**

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## Exmoor Young Voices Self Build Update

### Observations:

As local young residents become aware of EYV and the adjunct Self Build Project through the publicity and awareness work that we're doing, we are receiving more and more enquiries about 'how to become a self builder'. The initial enthusiasm of most enquirers subsides when they become aware of the hurdles which stand between them and the reality of building, but of those who return to the enquiry, there is a real sense of commitment.

The reality of building within a National Park - even one which would like to facilitate self build - and the increased paperwork that National Park status brings (wildlife studies, conservation areas, and environmental protection issues) has, in a few cases, resulted in our applicants abandoning the Park and taking their self build ambitions elsewhere.

The biggest issue remains 'building land': We still have only four plots which offer a realistic prospect of eventually seeing self-build development. For some (families with children who are settled into schools or nurseries, perhaps, or those with family members living near their current home, the plots we offer are in an inconvenient location - without uprooting and starting again. After all, the Park contains an area of 270 square miles - and our plots (with one exception) lie along the ten miles of road between Exford and Luxborough.

Other applicants object to the 'smallness' of the plots citing the difficulty of growing vegetables and space for children to play, for example - a vision shared by many for their new family home.

One couple - childless at the moment but planning a family in the future, wonders how they would manage in 93m<sup>2</sup> of habitable space in the long term, and no possibility of extending what they built 'at first'.

Applicants feel that if they're going to go to all the effort of building themselves a home, they're not going to do it on a plot which is nearly, but isn't quite what they're after - particularly as they expect to have a lifelong commitment to the house they build.

Consequently, many of those families who have viewed our plots decide that they will 'hang on' in the hope of finding a building plot on the moor which offers them room for a home and outdoor life at that home - not an uncommon ambition, I suppose, among people who love the environment.

As for the rest, several applicants do not yet qualify for 'local connection' status. Their applications will take time - perhaps years - as they establish 'tie' criteria through continued employment or just serving their residential time.

This will be a longer-term project than I envisaged - but there are many more applicants than I imagined we would have, and they, at least, are on the slow-moving conveyor belt.

**Justin Tyers, Exmoor Young Voices Self Build Project Leader**

## Key figures / info:

- Justin has spoken to around 50 people over the last 3 years (some enquiries came from outside the Exmoor area)
- We currently have 15 couples or individuals who wish to self build on the moor
- Many of the young people interested in self builds provide key services to the people of Exmoor / work on the moor and are essential to keeping it alive and thriving

## EYV achievements:

- Lendology + EYV partnership offering up to £30,000 grants & matching loans at 4% for local, young self builders
- Justin Tyers has written a 50,000 word manual 'How to Self Build Your Dream Home for £99,000 - or Less' (read by 5 proofreaders & will be published on KDP by June 2023)
- We have received a £5,000 foundation grant towards the publication of the book
- Publicity for our Self Build Project in West Somerset Free Press & across social media

## EYV actions:

- Continuing to promote our Self Build Project & any helpful educational material to our social media network to increase awareness and enquiries
- Supporting self builders with calls for land across social media with plans to take this wider, contacting local & national media outlets
- Young People on Exmoor Survey (ongoing) to build a clear and current picture of young people on the moor, listen to their needs and assess how we can support them better
- Increase awareness of affordable Exmoor self builds with organisations like Wessex Water, South West Water, Highways & electricity companies and ask for more flexibility / waiving of expensive admin fees for self builders
- EYV open meeting with focus on self builds (tba) - we would like to invite an ENPA Planning Officer to attend and answer attendees' questions

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## EXMOOR YOUNG VOICES PARTNERS

