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hastings-examiner.uk
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What is Hex?

The Hastings Examiner (Hex) is an attempt at proper community journalism. We define that in four ways. It's:

1. Hyperlocal

Hex focusses on a relatively small geographical area and cultural identity - Hastings Borough - and within that still more localised communities such as Ore, Old Town, Hollington and St Leonards.

2. Community-organised

Community journalism involves newswriters proactively engaging with local issues and local voices, and yes, Hex is all about that - but we're going one step further. We're using community organising (worth reading up about this!) to develop a news source that is genuinely run by the community. While most newspapers gather information, and then consider it their special skill to present that information to the general public, Hex is more of a tool: a means for people to gather their own information and share it among the community.

3. Cross-platform

Hex can operate across any and all platforms, online and in print, adapting content and medium to suit the information we want to communicate and the audience we want to communicate to.

**WHY IS ORBIT
LEAVING
53 HOMES
EMPTY
IN CLIFTON
COURT?**



**REFURBISH
DON'T DEMOLISH
FILL EMPTY HOMES**
**HOUSING REBELLION
07760 234 851**

4. Activist

Information does not exist in a vacuum. Everything we know, we know because it connects to dozens of other things. Legacy media tend to think that printing an article about an important issue of the day is enough, and often dead end the issue as soon as the article has gone to print. Hex will not abandon an issue as soon as we report on it. We keep investigating, we put readers in touch with local groups and activists, we will push endlessly for the town's problems to reach resolution.

Want to get involved?

Hex sees Hastings as a network of interlinked communities which share a large number of fundamental interests. Generally we are encouraged to see each other as working separately, or through the good will of our elected leaders. Hex would have us act collectively, as a community.

If any of this appeals to you, if you'd like to join us, write an article or otherwise contribute, email:
info@hastings-examiner.uk



HASTINGS EXAMINER

THE

New Year Under Threat of Eviction

A 44-year-old mother of two is facing eviction. Hana (real name withheld) is a full time carer for her nine-year-old autistic daughter, and has been a Hastings resident since her teens – but she can no longer afford to live in this town. Why?

To start with, a large number of homes are being taken off the market to become Airbnbs – about 700 since 2018, and now around 1,100 homes total. Combined with the pressure of city-dwellers seeking out a less pressured small-town life, this has dramatically increased rental demand. In turn, letting agents have irresponsibly skyrocketed local rents and their landlords have jumped on the opportunity to make or save money from these inflated new rates.

In short, there's been a manufacturing of scarcity with real world consequences. Tenants are fearful of moving out of homes they don't feel safe in, or reporting repair issues for homes they do want to stay in, because they can't afford to move if the landlord refuses repairs or evicts them.

Hana's current home has been causing both her and her daughter substantial health problems due to damp and mould, which have not been resolved by their landlord. Since she asked for this be fixed, they have been issued an eviction notice: this is what we call a revenge eviction.

Until we have tougher local powers (within the Housing Strategy currently being developed by Hastings Borough Council, for example) to safeguard private tenants who request repairs and upkeep of the properties they pay for, reporting issues to jumpy landlords is a big risk.

Renters already pay rent to cover the costs of the landlord's mortgage, usually so that they have an asset they can sell or rent when they retire. In other words, one household is exploited to provide security for another. But now, landlords are going one step further! Tenants often face rent increases just to cover the plush lifestyles of these so-called lords, just so they don't have to work, which is frankly obscene.

Landlords also raise rents to cover renovation costs they can't

afford, which begs the question – if you can't afford upkeep on an additional property, should you have one? If they can't provide decent housing, they should not be a housing provider.

Tenants are paying up to two thirds of their income in rent every month. But – according to the Campaign to Protect Rural England – affordable housing must be priced at a third of average local key worker wages (not those of high-earning digital nomads). Tenants should be able to live in a warm, safe home for that money, without the threat looming over them of losing their home altogether.

If tenants cannot afford the escalating costs of rents, the state has to step in to subsidise this with Housing Benefit or by providing temporary accommodation to those made homeless. According to the 2024 UK Housing Review, 88% of the UK's housing budget goes into subsidising landlords because of increasingly high rents. The fault here does not lie with the people forced into homelessness – but with the landlords profiting by their own

inability to provide a home, and the state effectively funding them as they do so.

Hana and her daughter are unsure when they will be ordered to leave their home, which is causing great anxiety for them both. Her daughter is scared to leave the flat for fear they won't be able to get back in when they return home. Instead of spending their holiday season celebrating a year of joy, they spent it in terror that they might become homeless, saving money to try and sort out a move, rather than enjoying Christmas.

So Acorn – a national Community Union with a branch in Hastings – is putting out a call to action: if the bailiffs come for this family before they can afford to move, can you help other good folks block the eviction? This would at least give time to organise accommodation with the council, or (if they're really lucky) find an affordable home. If you would like to help and be called on in the event this happens, contact Acorn via hastings@acorntheunion.org.uk or 07726739077.



Section 21 The NO-FAULT Eviction

“The calmness of living in the same home for 3 1/2 years; then the despair at having to wait 5 months for my letting agent and private landlord to do repairs; the gratefulness to have such excellent support from Hastings council housing officers to hold the landlord and letting agent to account; the shock at getting a section 21 (revenge eviction) 14 days after the last repair was fixed; the frazzled and worn-outness from the tenancy deposit scheme process, and lack of empathy over 6 months, after which it was never returned; the feeling of anger & impotence at the whole experience taking over one year of my life”

- A tenant who paid his landlord over £32,000 during his 4 year 4 month tenancy