

- **A recent Government publication included the following statement.**

*2013 saw the biggest ever annual decrease in the numbers of empty homes (a drop of 75,000). The decrease saw the numbers of both empty homes and long term empty homes drop to the lowest ever recorded levels. This is clearly to be welcomed. We believe there are a number of factors that have caused the drop.*

*The improving housing market has made it more viable to renovate derelict properties. The government introduced an empty homes programme, providing grants and incentives for councils, housing associations, community groups and owners to bring empty homes into affordable use. This program is now delivering results.*

*In our view the major factor is the changes to council tax charging on empty homes introduced by the government in 2013. This has created strong incentives for owners to get their empty properties back into use quickly to avoid incurring additional council tax.*