

NEWSLETTER

Issue 5 – January 2019



*** * * * Important Notice – the inaugural AGM of VAPP * * * ***

Announcing our AGM on Friday 26th April to be held in the East Midlands area with further details to be released to members via email. Members will need their membership cards on the day.

Also, they will need to confirm if they are going to attend by emailing communications.officer@ukveteransandpeoplesparty.org.

We will not be able to accommodate persons turning up at the door.

Editorial

Welcome to and a happy and healthy 2019 to one and all, a new year in which VAPP will expand and prosper bringing a new, inspiring voice much needed in the political debate of United Kingdom.

This month's leader article is on homelessness, a concern we at VAPP take seriously and is one of our priority welfare and social cohesion objectives within our manifesto. Successive issues will focus on other Party policies in no particular priority although some like the NHS, Armed Forces, Environment for example will feature frequently.

To take the spotlight from politics we include, with tongue in cheek, a few comments on diets; food for thought - cliché, sorry - after the excesses of the past few weeks.

Meanwhile, disaster for beer drinkers: Fullers brewery in London – London Pride and ESB - have been taken over by a Japanese firm who also own Peroni and Grolsch. They obviously have a yen for good British beer - sacrilege indeed. A more serious point here is the continuing selling-off of strong British brands to foreign buyers. What next, Nelsons Column, Marble Arch?

To our membership at large: are there any cartoonists or crossword compilers who could contribute to the Newsletter from time to time? Also, the *Letters to the Editor* post-box remains empty There must be some issues worth discussion – with the usual party guidelines: no swearing nor libellous comments, etc. The editorial team will review all correspondence and print items that are topical. Ideas and suggestions as to what our readership would like to see in the Newsletter will be welcomed. So, [please drop us a line](#). Many thanks.

Editors:

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Addressing Homelessness and the Housing Shortage

Helen Wemyss

As reported in the Guardian, November 2017: 'More than 300,000 people in Britain – equivalent to one in every 200 – are officially recorded as homeless or living in inadequate homes, according to figures released by the charity Shelter.' Some recent homelessness-related headlines have been truly shocking. Here are just two examples.

'Homeless man froze to death near Parliament'

'Homeless man found dead in church grounds'

Welcome to the United Kingdom in 2018, where people die in our streets through lack of the basic necessities of life: food, shelter and sleep. It is disturbing to put this statement besides one that states that the United Kingdom is rated as one of the top ten economies of the Western world.



Photo: Homeless in Southampton, On The Scene Magazine

Who are the homeless?

Figures from the organisation HOMELESS, a National Membership Charity for Organisations Working Directly with People who Become Homeless in England, compiled the following statistics:

- 86% of homeless people reported some sort of mental health issue, diagnosed or undiagnosed;
- 44% said they take drugs or are recovering from a drug problem;
- 27% Have or are recovering from an alcohol problem;
- 41% said they take drugs or are recovering from an alcohol problem.

217 people were counted sleeping rough in Westminster on a single night in autumn 2017.

On one night, the following statistics on people sleeping rough were recorded:

Brighton and Hove 178

Camden 127

Manchester 94

Luton 87

Bristol 86

Bedford 76

Newham 76

Southend-on-Sea 72

Cornwall 68

Source: [Rough Sleeping Statistics Autumn 2017, England](#)

The above homeless figures are mostly related to England but the same problem exists in all areas of the United Kingdom.

There are a number of reasons why people become homeless: many young people are kicked out of their parental home; relationship break ups; financial reasons; drug and alcohol problems; mental health issues; and a few that just choose to live that way.

7,000 homeless military veterans languish on our streets, according to aggregated figures from Crisis, Shelter and Soldiers Off the Street

There are so many varying figures published but the fact is we can never know the true statistics because many homeless people do not come forward to seek help. Many other homeless people rely on the help of friends to give them shelter: so-called 'sofa-surfers'. They are the invisible homeless.

Walk through any town or city at night and the homeless are very evident, seeking shelter in shop doorways, bus shelters or other places offering some respite from the weather.

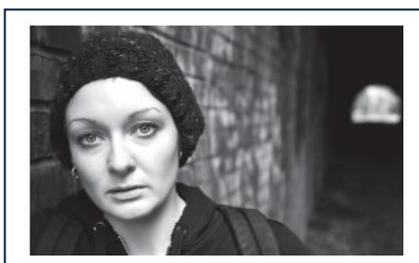


Photo: [British Legion](#)

To quote the BBC news of 21st December 2017:

'This week a committee of MPs called homelessness a "national crisis", highlighting more than 9,000 rough sleepers and 78,000 families in temporary accommodation in England alone.'

'A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members.'

These words are often mistakenly attributed to Mahatma Gandhi. Regardless of who did compose them, or many of the variations used, they certainly offer a good method by which to measure the greatness of any civilised nation.

Much of the current housing crisis can be firmly placed at the door of successive governments and their obvious myopia to the genuine housing needs of the country.

No matter what party is to blame, we have to find urgently solutions for the legacy of those historical decisions that are now impacting us in the 21st century.

So, what can be done to address the issue of the major shortage of affordable housing in the UK?

First and foremost, it is unrealistic to expect any government to afford to provide houses for every needy person or family. Perhaps it's time to reassess what is classed as a home and what is acceptable accommodation

Many single people in the Armed Forces, including our very own veterans, will be very familiar with living in shared accommodation blocks. Individuals now have their own room and bathroom but share laundry facilities and kitchens. They also share a large communal lounge area. This type of communal living should be considered as an alternative solution for many of our community, who struggle to afford the running cost of having their own home or renting in the private sector.

The same type of modern shared living arrangement could be offered to single parents, the elderly and the disabled.

These mixed complexes could be supported, where necessary, by on-site wardens, with various help agencies on site. Potential residents would be screened for suitability. Where required, residents could have their own individual support plan based on their particular needs. Many of the complexes would be a place where various support agencies can be on hand, working together to offer support for those who need it.

The cost of building such accommodation complexes would be so much cheaper than building individual homes or flats, would serve as a support system for many vulnerable people and would be less expensive than paying the cost of housing benefits to those that are increasingly becoming victims of slum landlords.

As an added bonus, the problem of loneliness could be eradicated as residents come together in mutual support and friendship. There would also be the advantage of freeing up more family type homes.

We need to develop a firm policy of directing all Council's to have a realistic building plan in place that will ensure that there are enough homes available for their residents now and in the future. The type of homes built can vary, from family homes to complexes for single people and supported complexes for vulnerable people.

In order to make certain that Council housing plans are achievable, we need to ensure that all Councils have adequate government financial support in order for their individual housing plan to succeed. The financial cost could be met from the £13.4 billion spent annually on foreign aid. We must stop putting foreign aid as a priority above our own homeless and our crumbling NHS. It is morally wrong and reprehensible to do so.

A Housing Policy should also include the investigation and the viability of using existing, but decommissioned, Ministry of Defence land to house homeless veterans.

There should also be the direction that no resident of the UK should be able to access public housing until they have lived and worked in the United Kingdom for at least 10 years. We need to halt the immigration of thousands of people who come here in the mistaken belief that they will be homed by the government. Our own vulnerable residents must always be our first priority.

It is one of any government's main duties to take responsibility for the protection and welfare of its citizens! Homeless people dying in the streets is just not acceptable..... now or ever!

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Vegan and State Diets

by 'Epicurean'

Am I the only person to be fed up with the over-exposure of a vegan diet and lifestyle?

Today we eat more healthily than in previous years but now the State in the form of Public Health England (PHE) appear to be involved in 'mission creep'. I for one do not want rules on our individual diets unless it is a medical necessity. Recent PHE plans revealed by a Sunday newspaper is to decree an exact calorie content, with caps for individual food portions including restaurant menus. Even a tasty onion bhaji comes under the gimlet eye of PHE These numbers are so specific to almost give credence to 'scientific proof'.

No other country to my knowledge has prescribed such tolerances. The absurd justification for this attack on personal liberty is to combat the 'obesity epidemic'. What, epidemic? Fellow epicureans are angered at this description; obesity is by and large a consequence of personal choices, although there are genuine medical exceptions.

The word 'epidemic' seems to be chosen to frighten people; after all, epidemic is used to describe a contagious disease.



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However, VAPP readers and foodies fear not, the British Heart Foundation - an acknowledged and respected health body - state that the overall intake of calories, fats and saturated fats has decreased since the 1970s, together with lower intakes of sugar and salt, plus increases in the consumption of fibre/fruits.

It is now obvious that PHE is pushing their State influence on popular trends already happening, but that is no consequence to our overblown Quango bureaucracy, who want to widen their influence and

budgets – paradoxically 'fat cats'.

According to The Taxpayers Alliance, some 24 employees in PHE earn six-figure salaries and those earning more than our PM has doubled in the past two years. Why? May I remind PHE to keep their noses out of my eating habits and stick to epidemiology, planning for civil disaster responses and the like.

Vegan diet? Not for me thanks; keep those menus to yourself and pass me the chocolate eclairs please.

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