

GREEN

(9)

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3 September 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

Ref - article in Ballymena Guardian asking for ideas on Rating

I read in the above article about rates for Pensioners, and Green living. I am 18 months away from 65, but have been living on a works pension since taking early retirement in 1999. I saved all my working life to buy a plot and build a house that I designed, and I am now living in it, but it would appear that I am going to have to pay around £2,000 per year rates to have my Septic Tank emptied once a year and my bin emptied weekly. I live on a road that is only able to take one vehicle, and the surface of that is dreadful with the Planning Office still passing new sites on the road.

My new house is built of red brick, walls and roof are insulated to a high standard, in addition to Oil Heating I have a solid fuel stove which runs ten single radiators downstairs and heats the water, all paper is shredded and used in composting, kitchen waste is also used in composting, cardboard of all sorts with grass cuttings used to suppress weeds in my vegetable garden, and. I have red boxes for Aluminium/Metal, Clear Glass, Coloured Glass and Plastic. I had the trees surrounding the house topped to encourage centre growth and all the timber will be cut into logs for my stove, with the chipped wood being used to suppress weeds in flower beds, and around certain vegetables.

I have planted Apple, Plum, Pear and Cherry trees, and in the Vegetable garden I have all my own herbs, Scallions, Chives, Garlic, Onions, Salad leaves (Cut & come again types), Radishes, Salsify, Broad Beans, Peas, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Sprouts, Potatoes, Carrots, Parsnips,

Courgettes, Pumpkins, Strawberries, Raspberries, Gooseberries, Red Currants, Blackcurrants, all of which are picked processed and most frozen or dry stored for the winter months.

During the winter and in Spring I intend to cut some of the trees and Hawthorn/Blackthorn hedge along the lane, to thicken it at the bottom and encourage more wildlife.

I have four compost bins and a midden (well rotted manure supplied by a neighbouring farmer) operating, and over the winter I have four Water Butts to install, to supplement the water barrels already present to preserve water. I also have a standby Generator, which can supply up to 6 Kilowatts to my house and to my daughter next door (in case of Power failures).

My Septic Tank is a Bio Tank (four times the cost of an ordinary one).

I cannot think of any other green things I could have done, except a Windmill and Solar heating, both of which I cannot afford at present.

Surely people in my position should be due a reduction in rates, where my rates bill will run away with about one fifth of my pension.

Yours Sincerely

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