# George Laing rejuvenates Sicilian homes through one-euro scheme



George Laing, a 32-year-old antiques trader who splits his time between Mussomeli, Sicily, and Eastbourne, England, has embarked on an ambitious project to restore abandoned properties in the Sicilian town, under a local council scheme that sells derelict homes for nominal amounts to encourage renovation.

In December 2022, Laing purchased a three-storey, derelict home in Mussomeli for just 85p as part of this scheme. Including administration fees, agency costs, and energy certificates, his total expenditure reached 5,000 euros (£4,300). Since then, he has kept the total cost of renovations under £10,000, tackling essential repairs such as fixing a leaking roof, reconnecting electricity and water supplies, and addressing other infrastructural problems. Laing has undertaken most of the work himself, describing the experience as the best decision he has made.

He has documented his journey on social media, primarily through his Instagram page @george\_laing\_, where he has amassed 164,000 followers and 70,000 followers on Facebook. This online presence has fostered a growing community of supporters, with over 500 followers signing up via his website to rent the renovated property.

Buoyed by this support and the success of his first project, Laing purchased a second one-euro home in the Mussomeli area in April 2025. He described it as a structurally sound and spacious property, which he believes will require less work than the first. The total cost for this new property was similarly around four thousand euros. He plans to commence renovations within the next two to three months.

Laing outlined his long-term ambition to potentially acquire multiple properties, aiming to revitalise whole rows of one-euro homes and create a community through these purchases. The scheme stipulates that within three years, the facade and roof of these properties must be renovated. Failure to meet these requirements can lead to fines of up to 5,000 euros. Laing sees this as a protective measure against speculative buying without renovation intentions, particularly by foreign buyers.

Alongside renovating homes, Laing intends to open an antiques shop, capitalising on his trade and the local market. He noted the absence of antique shops in Mussomeli and the presence of older residents interested in selling valuables. During his restoration work, he discovered valuable items including an 18-carat gold chain and an 18th-century 14-carat gold ring, which he has kept. He has also sold some antiques, including a clock and 1920s gold earrings, generating around £2,500 from these finds.

Despite various challenges, including weather setbacks, lack of electricity, and water supply issues, Laing describes his lifestyle as rewarding rather than glamorous. He contrasts life in Sicily with conditions in the UK, expressing frustration with the high cost of living there. He criticised rising taxes, expensive everyday costs like coffee and public transport, and the difficulty for average people to afford housing and essential expenses. According to Laing, the slower pace and lifestyle in Sicily offer a more pleasant daily experience.

"The UK has a lot to offer, but right now life there is unbearable for many," he explained to The Argus.

Laing’s experiences highlight the intersection of innovative housing schemes aimed at rejuvenating neglected areas and the broader economic pressures faced by people in high-cost countries.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.huffingtonpost.es/economia/los-pueblos-casas-1-euros-sube-apuesta-reforma-casas-gratis.html> - This article discusses the expansion of the 'Case a 1 euro' initiative in Mussomeli, where the local council now allows free renovations of these properties to encourage revitalization.
2. <https://www.huffingtonpost.es/sociedad/compra-casa-precio-cafe-islas-idilicas-mediterraneo-provoca-avalancha-peticiones.html> - This piece highlights the international interest in Sicily's 'Case a 1 euro' program, with towns like Mussomeli offering homes for a symbolic price to attract new residents and preserve cultural heritage.
3. <https://www.businessinsider.com/one-euro-home-promotion-tourism-mussomeli-sicily-town-deputy-mayor-2024-2> - This article reports on Mussomeli's successful 'one-euro home' program, which sold nearly 95% of available properties within five years, leading to a significant increase in tourism and investment.
4. <https://www.case1euro.it/> - The official website of Mussomeli's 'Case a 1 euro' project, providing details on available properties and the process for purchasing and renovating homes in the town.
5. <https://www.wetheitalians.com/single_post/mussomelis-transformation-nearly-all-1-euro-homes-sold-boosting-tourism-and-economy> - This article discusses Mussomeli's transformation due to the '1-Euro Homes' initiative, with nearly all properties sold, boosting tourism and the local economy.
6. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-03-28/one-euro-homes-italy-sicily-foreign-correspondent/103415744> - This report provides insights into the '1-Euro Homes' program in Mussomeli, detailing the conditions and requirements for buyers, including renovation obligations and associated costs.
7. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25124274.eastbourne-man-buys-first-home-sicily-85p/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data