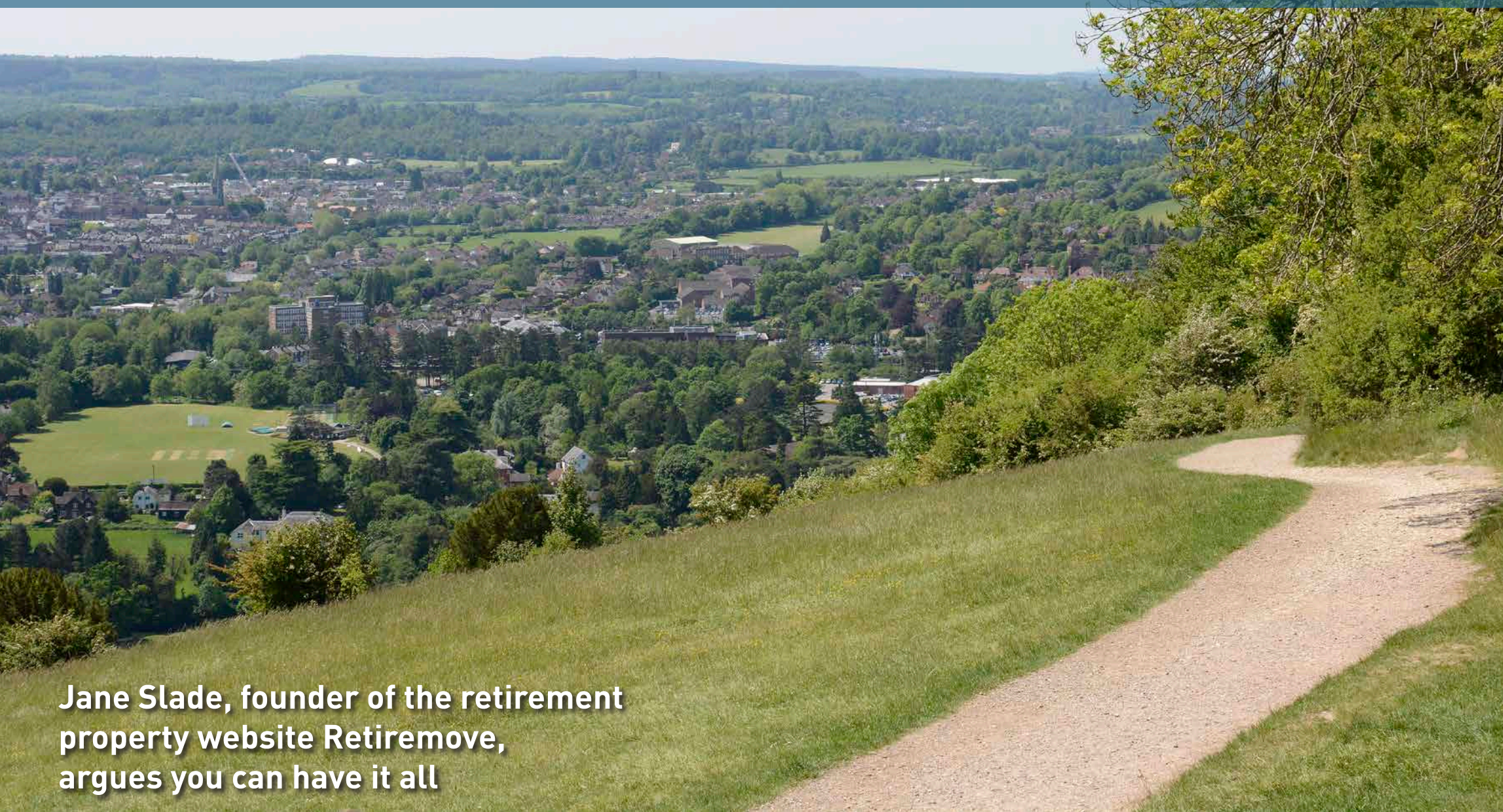


TOWN VERSUS COUNTRY – A RETIREE’S DILEMMA



By Jane Slade, founder and director of the retirement property website Retiremove



Jane Slade, founder of the retirement property website Retiremove, argues you can have it all

Today's retiree is revving up for an action-packed future. Far from putting his feet up and enjoying an occasional round of golf he wants to live within striking distance of a vibrant town with access to theatres, restaurants and shops with the countryside a short distance away.

A new survey by Profile Pensions interestingly reveals that the seaside towns of Plymouth and Southampton top the list of the ten cities people most want to retire to, followed by Nottingham, Cardiff, Derby, Liverpool, Leicester, Bristol, Wolverhampton and Manchester.

Commenting on the survey, Jamie Turnbull, Business Director at Girlings Retirement Rentals says, "Cities on the coast hold a lot of appeal as many people have a long-held dream of retiring by the sea. Plymouth, Southampton,

Cardiff and Liverpool therefore offer the best of both worlds."

Retirement operators are responding to the demands of this new breed of retiree. They are building compact developments closer to major towns and larger village-style communities in rural areas with good transport links to market towns and city centres.

Since the decline of the traditional English village, and closure of post offices and village shops, retirement villages are becoming attractive new local hubs offering restaurants, health and fitness facilities and even small shops to all.

The Chocolate Quarter, a retirement village built on the site of the former Cadbury's chocolate factory in the historic market town of Keynsham, between Bristol and Bath, opened last year.



AUDLEY REDWOOD, BRISTOL FROM £399,950

Audley Redwood is set within 15 acres of landscaped parkland near the city of Bristol. The village comprises 106 apartments and 20 cottages with one-two-and-three-bedroom homes available to view in phase two. www.audleyvillages.co.uk



BROOKE DENE COURT, CLECKHEATON FROM £199,999

Cleckheaton, in the borough of Kirklees, offers homeowners a range of amenities including doctors surgeries, shops, supermarkets, restaurants, pubs and cafes – against a backdrop of the Pennine Moors and Peak District parkland. www.mccarthyandstone.co.uk

Its facilities which include a restaurant, cinema, pottery studios, gym, swimming pool and spa, are open to locals to ensure the development becomes a vibrant hub for the surrounding area.

There are 136 one and two-bed apartments with 13 remaining priced from £239,000 as well as a care home. www.stmonicastrust.org.uk

David Williams, chief executive of the village operators St Monica Trust said: "We have purposely designed the Chocolate Quarter to ensure it is used by all, to create a hub of

social activity that negates the need for older people to feel like they're being isolated and instead allows them to feel part of a buzzing intergenerational community."

When research agency Boomer and Beyond, which is dedicated to the over 55s, asked participants in a recent survey where they would like to live in later life, 17 per cent cited the city; 41 per cent the town and 42 per cent the countryside.

The advantage of rural communities is that they have space for a wide range of amenities on site.



BEARWATER, HUNGERFORD FROM £310,000

Bearwater has a lake and is walking distance to Hungerford High Street. www.cognatum.co.uk

Anchor Hanover's Bishopstoke Park is set within beautiful woodland on the banks of the river Itchen near to the town of Eastleigh in Hampshire. The village comprises 91 one-and-two-bedroom apartments and a care home.

The village hub is a restored 19th century Mount, which houses a restaurant, swimming pool and wellness centre, all within walking distance of the homes.

The landscaped grounds include lush parkland, riverside walks and green spaces for grandchildren to explore and play.

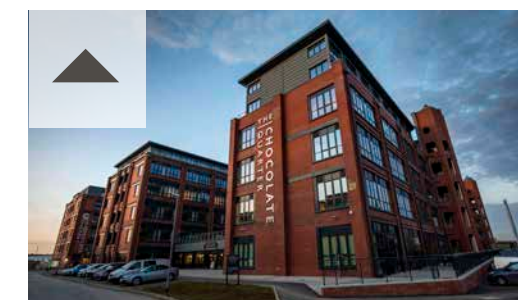
A third phase of 53 independent-living apartments is underway, with one beds priced from £345,000. www.anchorhanover.org.uk

Most of Retirement Villages' 16 developments are in a rural setting. As CEO Will Bax explains:

"They are places to unwind, be surrounded by nature and enjoy beautiful landscaped gardens. Most importantly they are communities with space for the amenities that make life easy and

THE CHOCOLATE QUARTER, KEYNSHAM FROM £239,000

The Chocolate Quarter's show home and marketing suite is open on weekdays from 10.00am to 4.00pm and 11.00am to 2.00pm at the weekend. Only 13 one and two bedroom apartments remain. www.thechocolatequarter.org.uk



sociable – including restaurants, cafes, shops, allotments and a programme of events that bring people together."

Its portfolio includes award-winning Charters Village on the Surrey/West Sussex border and Elmbridge Village, which has a multi-million pound clubhouse and range of apartments for sale near the village of Cranleigh in Surrey.

Currently under construction are Debden Grange in Newport near Saffron Walden where seven cottages are available, and Gradwell Park in South Chailey, East Sussex where a show home will open early 2020.

Small market towns are key locations for Cognatum's customers.

"One of the most frequently asked for situations in our experience is an estate on the edge of a large village or market town," says John Lavin of Cognatum Property which has 60 retirement estates in 21 counties across central and southern England. "The holy grail is when this is combined with an estate that has its own grounds with adjacent countryside."



BUTTERWORTH GRANGE, BAMFORD FROM £164,999

Bamford is a suburb of Greater Manchester near Rochdale and Bury with good public transport connections. The village which is within walking distance of the development is not far from the stunning Peak District National park, a haven for those who love the great outdoors. www.mccarthyandstone.co.uk

The Playing Close at Charlbury in Oxfordshire is a good example of having it all with the Evenlode Valley on the doorstep as well as a station with trains to Oxford and London. And the Bearwater estate in Berkshire has its own lake, and five acres of grounds on the banks of the River Dun. Yet a short walk along a riverside path brings you into the market town of Hungerford. www.cognatum.co.uk

Research from Henley Business School found that 80 per cent of people living in retirement developments shop every day, and 40 per cent regularly use libraries and post offices. This would explain why some are selling their rural homes and moving into town.

Housebuilders like Churchill Retirement Living and McCarthy & Stone which don't include

many facilities, prefer urban hotspots for their developments.

"At Churchill we're putting more focus than ever on finding sites that are right in the heart of thriving town centres where our customers want to be," says Spencer McCarthy, CEO, Churchill.

"While many of our developments do also benefit from being close to beautiful countryside, the most important thing for our owners is to be in the centre of town so they won't feel isolated or lonely." www.churchillretirement.co.uk

Geoff Bates of McCarthy & Stone agrees, "The attraction of being close to shops, amenities, restaurants, health facilities is what our customers tell us is most important to them when considering where to buy."

CASE STUDIES



Valerie and Michael Elms

Semi-retired Valerie and Michael Elms, both in their early sixties, have recently downsized from a large Edwardian seven-bedroom home with four acres in Cobham, Kent, to a new five-bedroom home, three miles from Canterbury.

"Having lived in a very rural area before we were quite isolated, so moving onto a development has been lovely," says Michael. "We still have a little space around us that we're used to but for the first time in decades we actually have close neighbours."

The Polo Field is a collection of 18 three, four and five-bedroom properties, priced from £450,000 built by Kent-based Millwood Designer Homes.

"We also wanted to be a bit more connected," adds Michael. "Within five minutes' drive we can be in the centre of Canterbury, our church, the train station and Waitrose."



THE POLO FIELD, CANTERBURY FROM £450,000

www.millwooddesignerhomes.co.uk



Marie Broom

Marie Broom's new home at Castle View retirement village is just a mile from the centre of Windsor which she has been exploring on her mobility scooter.

"I go out every morning to collect a paper," the 79 year old enthuses, "and whizz into Windsor at least three times a week. I'm often gone for most of the morning as I like to go down to the river, get a coffee and watch the boats go by."

"When I get home, I park my scooter in the dedicated covered space right by the front door, and always get the warmest of welcomes from the girls on reception as I come in."

Castle View Windsor has 64 one, two-and-three-bedroom apartments available from £375,000, and was recently nominated 'The Most Outstanding Retirement Living Development in the UK for 2018'.



CASTLE VIEW WINDSOR FROM £375,000

www.castleviewwindsor.co.uk

"Being able to integrate within an existing community and have the opportunity not to rely on a car can be very invigorating for people at retirement age." www.mccarthyandstone.co.uk

Nick Sanderson, CEO of Audley Villages, which has 16 luxury villages mostly in rural areas argues that retirees can have it all.

"They don't have to pick one or the other," he says. "You can have the best of both worlds."

"Most of our villages are in beautiful countryside locations but within an hour of bustling cities and towns, such as Audley Redwood in the beautiful village of Failand in Somerset but under half an hour from the cultural hub of Bristol."

On the other hand developers have seen a growth in demand from retirees wanting to live close to the hustle and bustle of the city.



SHELDON LODGE, BERKHAMSTED FROM £363,950

Sheldon Lodge is made up of 48 one-and-two-bedroom properties in the historic market town of Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire. The apartments are ideally located just minutes from the shops, the Grand Union Canal park and walks along the river Bulbourne. www.churchillretirement.co.uk