

Pet Ownership and Retirement Living



John Lavin of retirement specialists Cognatum on the benefits of a pet-friendly place to live for older homeowners...

John Lavin of Cognatum said: "Owning a dog encourages health and wellbeing, brings joy, companionship and laughter, it reduces stress, and can often help owners of properties on our estates find a regular routine. We understand what an important part of life a dog can be."

"A dog can help the retired settle into a new environment, and they provide an excellent talking point. For a dog owner looking for a later life home, make sure you choose wisely – you don't have to compromise. Suitable space is obviously vital, as is plenty of immediately adjacent space for comfort breaks, and walking areas that can be reached without getting into a car."

"For those helping an elderly dog owner find a suitable home, a pet-friendly environment should be a priority. Taking a pet brings a familiar comfort when moving an elderly relative to a new environment, but often proves a stumbling block. The estate or property itself should be well set up for pet ownership, and welcome pets rather than tolerate them."

"When viewing new homes, go and check out the locale with your dog and an OS map or app. Walk the local area, and talk to dog owners when you're out and about. Dogs are a great asset when it comes to socialising and forming new friendships – dog walkers are a friendly bunch!"



Demand for dogs increased dramatically during lockdown, with many previously non-dog owners discovering the joy and friendship that a canine companion has to offer, as well as bringing something of a purpose to a strange time.

"On average, our estates sit in over two acres of beautiful grounds. Many of our estates have areas of woodland or pasture, and some have access to rivers and streams. So a Cognatum property is a superb location for dogs and responsible dog owners alike."

"The main concern that pet owners have in later life is that health or mobility issues may mean they encounter difficulties caring for their pet."

"Often, residents' neighbours will be the ones to provide back-up care – taking a dog for a walk, or popping in for feeding and companionship if an owner is temporarily unavailable. In fact, there can be quite fierce offers and counteroffers of help; good neighbourliness is a strong feature of life in most retirement communities."

"We are also registered members of The Cinnamon Trust, a national charity that works in partnership with elderly pet owners. The Trust has volunteers who will step in if residents are unable to care for their pet, either temporarily, or permanently. They provide a fostering service for pets whose owners face a spell in hospital, or long-term care for owners who are no longer able to keep their pet."

"As part of this membership, as soon as a new pet arrives on one of our estates we encourage the owner to make contact with the Trust – a representative will come to meet the owner and their pet, and to register them. If one of our pet-owning residents has a problem, our estate manager will get in touch with the Trust and within a few hours a volunteer will arrive and provide the necessary care. It's a wonderful service."



Bluecoat Pond

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The Cinnamon Trust has a register of pet friendly care homes on their website, and hold pet-friendly care home awards annually. Cognatum's Bluecoat Pond near Horsham was a finalist of these awards in 2019.

There are currently two properties on the market at Bluecoat Pond that have been updated and include open-plan living spaces and conservatories with doors opening onto the private gardens. Prices from £525,000 to £550,000.

Find out more at www.cognatum.co.uk

Perfect for dog owners is Cognatum's new development near Salisbury, Petersfinger Farm. Four immaculately renovated 18th- and 19th-century barns sit peacefully in 37 acres of bucolic surroundings of water and wildflower meadows and orchards leading down to the River Avon. Every dog's retirement dream! Prices for the barns start at £699,950.

More information: www.petersfingerfarm.co.uk



Petersfinger Farm

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