

Lockdown living makes people yearn for The Good Life

Those of you with long enough memories will remember the 1970s sitcom, The Good Life, which made stars out of Felicity Kendal, Richard Briers, Penelope Keith and Paul Eddington. Kendal and Briers fought hard to escape the rat race by becoming totally self-sufficient in their Surbiton home.

It seems that lockdown has encouraged a revival of interest in the idea of self-sufficiency among families, with a rise in demand for homes with gardens where they can grow their own produce.

Being confined indoors for several months has led many people to re-evaluate what their homes mean for them, according to estate agents who have reported a change in many homebuyers' priorities since restrictions were eased.

According to Edinburgh-based solicitors and estate agency, [Purdie & Co](#), there has been a shift in demand for family homes away from Edinburgh city centre, towards the suburbs as well as in commuter belt and coastal towns in East Lothian.



Struan Douglas

Managing Director Struan Douglas said: “Since the property market reopened, we have been inundated with people looking for homes with, or close to, green spaces. Luckily there are many green spaces to choose from in Edinburgh.

“Many are seeking to escape the city altogether but among those looking remain, a decent sized garden is a big priority with many saying they want to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

“While we’ve yet to see any who want to rear pigs, like Tom and Barbara Good, one or two have expressed an interest in keeping chickens in their gardens.”

In the BBC sitcom – which ran from 1975 to 1978 – Tom Good, quit his mundane office job to live a self-sufficient existence with his wife who, between them, transformed their garden into an allotment where they reared chickens, pigs and a goat, generated their own electricity and made wine from peapods.

The popularity of the show reflected a perceived reaction to uncertainty caused by the 1973 Miners’ Strike and OPEC oil crisis which, many observers felt, created a crisis of confidence in modern industrial society.

The experience of working from home during the coronavirus pandemic has influenced many prospective family home buyers, according to Purdie & Co, with fewer seeking properties close to their places of work.

Being separated from family members over a long period has also had an impact with more looking to move closer to where they parents live. Demand for larger properties with granny flats has also increased, with some couples seeking to have elderly parents live with them.

Mr Douglas said: "People in homes without a garden realised during lockdown how much they suffered from not being able to enjoy fresh air and sunshine.

"Many young city dwellers moved back with parents in the suburbs or the countryside where they had access to green space.

"The effects of food shortages in supermarkets appears also to have left a legacy with more people recognising the value of growing their own fresh produce."

Research by YouGov shows growing support across Europe for reducing air pollution by reallocating public spaces for walking, cycling and public transport.

The UK is one of the continent's poorest served countries with more than 2.5million people living outside of easy walking distance from a park or green space.

The UK Government has responded by rolling out a £250million fund to allocate more space to cyclists by widening pavements, creating more cycle lanes and growing the existing cycle network to ease pressure on public transport and improve public health. The City of Edinburgh Council has announced a new Low Traffic Neighbourhood for East Craigs today, using some of the £5 million awarded by The Scottish Government to Edinburgh for these temporary measures.

