



Ardnave Park, Kewstoke



We visit a Somerset park blessed with both beautiful countryside nearby and the lure of the coastline too...

- 1 A well-fenced park home provides proper privacy
- 2 A corner-plot with a grandiose new home at Ardnave Park
- 3 A new home complete with Mediterranean plants and garage

Ardnave: it sounds foreign, slightly exotic, difficult to pin down geographically, rather mysterious. In fact, Ardnave is Scottish for 'hill by the sea' and there is a tiny village by that name on the island of Islay off the west coast of Scotland. It's isolated and close to the sea, with several small islands nearby. Just the place to get away from it all...

Kewstoke in Somerset, the location of Ardnave Park, is far from isolated, being just three miles from the traditional seaside resort of Weston-super-Mare. It's the same distance from junction 21 on the M5 motorway.

But there is no contradiction because this residential park home estate lies in the shadow of Worlebury Hill and the sea is only a few hundred yards away with small islands, designated as bird sanctuaries, just offshore.

Like its Scottish namesake, Ardnave park also offers those at or near retirement the opportunity to get away from it. Not in some isolated location far from

anywhere but ideally placed to access all necessary amenities and attractions.

Local amenities

There is a general store 200 yards down the road selling, among other things, bread, alcohol and newspapers. That's near the New Inn and the Manor pubs and the Commodore carvery. The nearest supermarkets – The Co-Op and Sainsbury's – are in Worle, just two miles from the park, where you will also find doctors' and dentists' surgeries, banks, a chemist and takeaways.

Everything else needed can be found in Weston-super-Mare including Morrisons, Tesco and Waitrose supermarkets, a hospital with A&E and a railway station. The journey to London Paddington takes at best two hours 16 minutes with one change.

There has been a park of sorts on this four-and-a-half-acre site at Kewstoke for nearly 90 years. Originally a farm, it was used for camping by the Boys Brigade in the period after the First World War,

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All you need to know

Ardnave Park info at your fingertips...

LIVING COSTS



PLOT FEES

£135 per calendar month.

WATER

Billed by the utility

SEWERAGE

Billed by the utility

ELECTRICITY

Billed by the utility

GAS

Bulk tank LPG piped to each plot and billed quarterly by the park

COUNCIL TAX

Band A – £956 for 2012-13

VISIT THE PARK

Ardnave Park, Crookes Lane, Kewstoke, Somerset BS22 9XJ
Tel: 01934 622319 Owners: Vowles Parks Ltd, Coombe Farm, Sandford Rd, Winscombe, Somerset BS25 1JF Tel: 01934 808073
Email: info@vowlesparks.co.uk
Website: www.vowlesparks.co.uk

FOR SALE



AVAILABILITY

Homes sited and available for sale include two 34ft x 20 Stately Tredegars with prices starting at £134,950; a 40ft x 20 Stately Balmoral, £179,950; a 40ft x 20 Homeseeker Affinity, £179,950; and a 40ft x 20 Prestige Concerto, £184,950.

OTHER

PARK RULES

Minimum age: 45.
Pets: welcome but not replaceable.

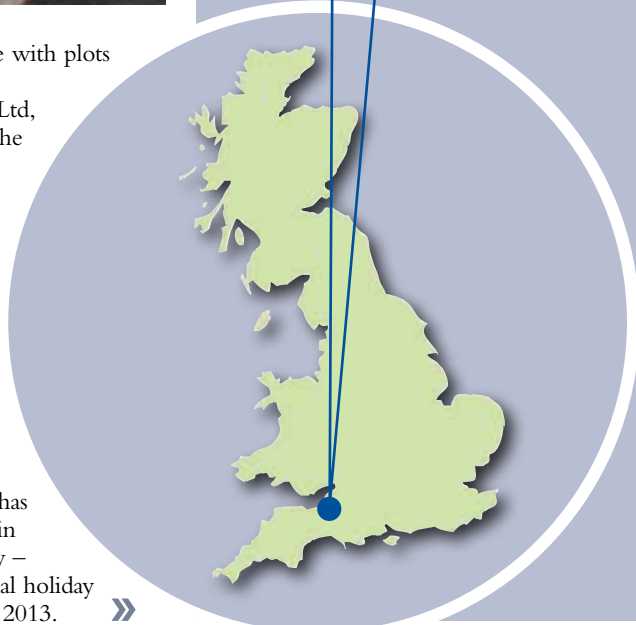


New buyers can bring their dogs, not just ornaments!

developing into a holiday caravan site with plots for 109 statics after World War Two.

The present owners, Vowles Parks Ltd, took over less than 18 months ago. The company is run by father-and-son team John and Michael Vowles, who have long experience of the park-home business. Their involvement, initially focusing on holiday parks of which they used to own ten, dates back to around 1980. But since then the emphasis has changed to residential estates, of which they now have five: one each in North Devon, West Glamorgan and Cornwall and two in Somerset.

Since taking over Ardnave, Vowles has transformed the park. Work was still in progress when we visited in February – some of the caravans from the original holiday park will probably not be gone until 2013. »



All prices correct as of 7/3/12

4 As we went to press there were five homes available for sale at Ardnave Park, with prices starting from around £135,000



Quick chat
over a cuppa



JEAN & BOB TAYLOR lived in Cyprus for several years before buying a park home at Ardnave with Bob's brother, Tommy. They were the first to move on to the park.



ARCHIE & ANITA MCMURDO themselves designed the interior of their park home, at 50ft x 20 the biggest on Ardnave, so as to make sure it had all the amenities they wanted.



ANN GOODISON and her husband John part exchanged their home in Spain for a new park home at Ardnave, having previously had a static caravan on a nearby holiday park.

But Phase One of the redevelopment was already nearing completion and Phase Two well advanced.

Third wave

When the third phase has finished, this park, which is flat and all on the level, will comprise just 55 plots, all twins and each fitted with a telephone point. They are laid out in a series of 10 small culs-de-sac on either side of a central spine road.

The plan includes a block-paved drive providing at least one parking space for each home, with all but eight having flat-roof garages alongside.

Gardens, open plan at the front with fencing to the side and rear, are laid to grass. The electricity supply at 65 amps is the same as on a modern bricks'n'mortar estate.

Refuse collection takes place weekly for recyclable rubbish (three categories) and fortnightly for other items.

Three park homes had been sited and occupied when I called, with four show homes ready for inspection. Two plots were reserved for purchasers and another six ready to receive their homes. Eight were due to be sited over the following weeks, a mixture of models from Homeseeker, Stately-Albion, Prestige and Lissett. If those don't suit, it's customer choice that counts.

The first couple to take up residence at Ardnave were Bob and Jean Taylor together with his brother, Tommy. They moved into their 44ft x 20 Prestige Anthem, bought for £195,000, last September. Prior to moving in, the Taylors lived in a villa in Cyprus.

Bob, a former butcher, and Jean, who used to be a telephonist, are no strangers to the park-home

lifestyle. Before moving to Cyprus they lived for seven years in an Omar park home on a residential estate at Roydon Mill, Essex.

'We enjoyed our time in Cyprus but it was just too hot and we wanted to be closer to our family. We have five children and 11 grandchildren,' said Jean, in explanation.

'We like the park-home lifestyle. It's so friendly and there is such a good community spirit.'

"Some Shetland ponies and a few sheep were clearly visible through the window in a field alongside the park."

Homes for a song

The Anthem was already sited when Bob and Jean first visited Ardnave. But some of the furniture was not quite to their taste so a sofa-bed replaced the original settee and a different, all-glass dining table was installed.

'The Vowles sorted it all out for us, said Jean.

'They were most helpful.'

The Taylors looked at several parks before making their choice. What decided them?

'It was the outlook, the closeness to the sea and the easy access to Weston which clinched it for us,' said Bob.

'The alpacas were a bonus...' he added

Those, together with some Shetland ponies and a few sheep were clearly visible through the window in a field alongside the park. They are tended by Jayne Vowles, Michael's sister, who also runs a stud farm and does dressage.

The surrounding land is a mixture of open space and residential housing. A small stream, known locally as a rhyme, separates Ardnave from the field containing the livestock. Just beyond the field is a holiday park where Ann and John Goodison used

5 Ardnave's countryside setting is not only a home to retirees but many different animals!

Days out

4 easy-to-reach attractions close to Ardnave Park

SAND BAY Part of the Severn Estuary, Sand Bay is of international importance because of the wading birds it attracts.



WESTON-SUPER-MARE

Seaside resort with pier, sandy beach, donkey rides, cockle stalls, candy floss, you name it.



STEEP HOLM This little island and nature reserve, just offshore from Weston-super-Mare, is uninhabited.



KING JOHN'S HUNTING LODGE Early Tudor wool-merchant's house from circa 1500. Also a fascinating museum.



to have a static caravan.

Now they live on Ardnave in a 40ft x 20 Prestige Sonata II which they bought for £170,000 last November. Like the Taylors, they too used to live abroad – on the Costa Blanca in Spain. They did a part-exchange deal on their three-bedroom detached house in Spain with the Vowles when they bought their park home.

'We used to spend three months in our caravan in the summer and five weeks around Christmas, with the rest of the time spent in Spain,' Ann told us.

'But after seven years, it was time to come back home.'

Another reason for moving back to Somerset was their family, who live here: four children, 12 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren with two more due shortly.

'Before going to Spain we lived in a bungalow in Worle, a couple of miles down the road, so we knew the area well. We love the village life here, with the sea and the countryside so near.'

Like the Goodisons, Archie and Anita McMurdo used to own a static caravan. Theirs, a 28ft x 10 which they had for ten years, was sited on a former Vowles holiday park called Swallow Point.

'We had been looking for a park home in the West Country for several years,' said Archie, who was born in Sutherland, not that far from the Scottish island of Islay. (Anita is a Devonian.)

'Then one day we spotted an item on an internet website about Ardnave Park. It was like a building site when we visited in March 2011 but we could see its potential.

'We spent three days visiting the Prestige factory, designing the interior of our chosen 50ft x 20 Sonata II. It was sited in July and we moved in on October 1.'

What decided them to go for a park home?

'We were living in Birmingham in a three-bedroom detached house but the garden was simply too big – four lawns and two rockeries,' said Anita, in explanation.

'We decided after 29 years that we needed to downsize. And it's lovely here. We have no regrets – it's absolutely superb. Much more manageable. We love it.'

The cost of their Sonata, which is the biggest park home on Ardnave and has a study, utility room and boot room as well as two bedrooms and two reception rooms, was £230,000.

Retirement beckons

Now Archie, a prison officer for 30 years still working (nights) part time, is looking forward to retirement. That will enable him and Anita to indulge their hobbies – and there are plenty

of opportunities in this area.

They include two golf courses, the nearest just a mile away; a sports centre with swimming pool, badminton courts and a gym; and fishing – as well as the sea there are some freshwater lakes six miles away. A big attraction is the opportunities for rambling and bird watching, not least just down the lane in Sand Bay.

Mustn't forget, either, the delights of Weston-super-Mare – the bus stop is just outside the park gates with a service seven days a week. Here you have all the attractions of a traditional seaside resort: sandy beaches, newly-refurbished Grand Pier, cinema and theatre, donkey rides, cockle stalls, candy floss.

It almost makes you want to break into song. Altogether now: Oh, I do like to be beside the seaside...'

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