

The quiet life in a child-free village

Adapted from BBC News 05/07.2010 © BBC MMX
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10476754> by Craig Anderson

Residents of Firhall, built in the early Noughties on the outskirts of Nairn in the Highlands, must abide by certain rules

The deeds for their properties prohibit the keeping of ducks, rabbits, pigeons and bees. Households are allowed to have one dog - but controversially no resident children.

To own a house in Firhall you must be over 45 years old.



Media 'hype'

Grandchildren and the children of friends can visit and stay, but there are even limits on how often this happens.

For BBC Radio 4's *Far From the Madding Child*, presenter Kati Whitaker looked at how things have turned out since Firhall opened in 2003. She **asks** if it is desirable, or even practical, to encourage the **sort** of settlements where older people are **segregated** from the rest of society.

Residents say Firhall offers peace and quiet. Estate agent Lesley-Ann Fraser **told** the programme-makers of the media's initial reaction to the development. She said: "The media hyped it up to such an extent you would really think anybody who wanted to live in a village like this was an ogre and they **hated** children. It was a bit like *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*."

David Eccles, chairman of Firhall Trust, said in reality nothing could be further from the truth. He said many of those who **chose** to live in the village have grandchildren and the youngsters were always welcome to visit. Mr Eccles added: "Living here gives a certain measure of peace and quiet which is what many of us look forward to as we are getting older."

However, people have sold up and left after their sons or daughters have had children and they preferred to live somewhere without Firhall's constraints.

Retired BT engineer Jimmy Greig told BBC Scotland that the child-free element was not what **attracted** him and his wife to the 93-home development. He said: "It was the house, the price of the house, the area and the access to Inverness Airport. Nairn is a beautiful place and there is golf, bowls and any other **kinds** of sport available. That is what sold it for us."

Another resident Edwina Ellis said the beauty and ambience of Firhall drew her and her husband to move there. She said: "There is a lot of bird song and **lovely** wildlife. You see squirrels every day. It's just a lovely place to live."

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1. Read the text and answer the questions

- a) Are the inhabitants allowed to keep pets?
- b) Why did Jimmy Greig move to Firhall?
- c) Why does Lesley Ann Fraser think the press gave the wrong message?
- d) How many types of animals are mentioned in the article?
- e) In what country is Firhall?
- f) Who are allowed to visit and stay on a limited basis?

2. The following are anagrams of various single words found in the text. Please find the word in the text. The words below are in the order they are in the text. There is a clue as to the type of word.

ill conservatory (adverb)	
rich lend (noun)	
rep enters (noun)	
blade rise (adjective)	
orange cue (verb)	
stem nettles (noun)	
venom pelted (noun)	
red tier (adjective)	

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3. Look at the words in the text that are in bold. They are listed on the left below. Now match them with a word on the right that can replace them in the text.

For example **looked at** can be replaced by investigated

looked at



investigated

asks

decided

sort

questions

segregated

drew

told

separated

hated

kind

chose

types

attracted

informed

kinds

beautiful

lovely

loathed

Name _____ Date _____



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- 4. What are your views? If you were over 45 would you like to live in a village with no children? Is this discrimination against children? Write several paragraphs in the space below, giving your views on the article.**

ANSWERS

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1.

- a) Yes one dog
- b) The house and its price, the nearness of the airport and the sport
- c) They blew the situation out of all proportion – made the residents look like child-haters
- d) 6 - dog, rabbit, pigeon, bees, ducks and squirrels
- e) Scotland
- f) Grandchildren and children of friends

2.

ill conservatory (adverb)	controversially
rich lend (noun)	children
rep enters (noun)	presenter
blade rise (adjective)	desirable
orange cue (verb)	encourage
stem nettles (noun)	settlements
venom pelted (noun)	development
red tier (adjective)	retired

3.

looked at	investigated
asks	questions
sort	kind
segregated	separated
told	informed
hated	loathed
chose	decided
attracted	drew
kinds	types
lovely	beautiful