

# Help me find a park home near... Southend-on-Sea



**BUDGET  
£200k**

## Paul Wallace

'I'm planning to retire early and I want a nice, quiet place near the Essex coastline where I can focus on my new life as a writer.'

Paul Wallace was born and bred in Essex, and at the age of 45 has decided to spend the rest of his days there too.

Luckily for him, he's come into a bit of money and is fortunate enough to be able to spite the credit crunch by planning an early retirement, or semi-retirement at the least.

In the last few years Paul, a breakdown recovery man by trade, has been belatedly fulfilling a lifetime ambition of being a scriptwriter, landing commissions with a London television production company. Paul is now in the enviable position of being able to escape to a tranquil retirement park a bit earlier than most.

With friends and family still living around the county and capital, and with Paul himself having to make periodic visits to central London for production meetings, he's looking for an Essex park within commutable distance, and one that

fulfils another lifetime ambition of living near the sea. Coastal town Southend, or its neighbouring villages, top the list.

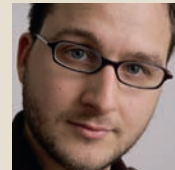
### I want...

'I'm not 100 per cent sure what I want specification-wise as I'm still fairly new to the park home scene, but after checking out a couple of models I know I want two bedrooms, a nice big kitchen and, ideally, a shed or garage. I also have two cats making the move with me so need to find a park where they're welcome.'

### I can afford...

'I never thought I'd say it but money is no object! However, as we're still in precarious financial times, I wouldn't want to be spending much more than £200k, also because I'm thinking about buying a boat as well, being so close to the coast.'

## OUR EXPERT



### KRIS GRIFFITHS

Kris is an established lifestyle journalist who has been regularly contributing to *PH&HC* since last summer.

## HIS SHORTLIST



### 1 HOCKLEY PARK

The first of two Tingdene sites, this is a charming park situated in open countryside a couple of miles north of Southend.

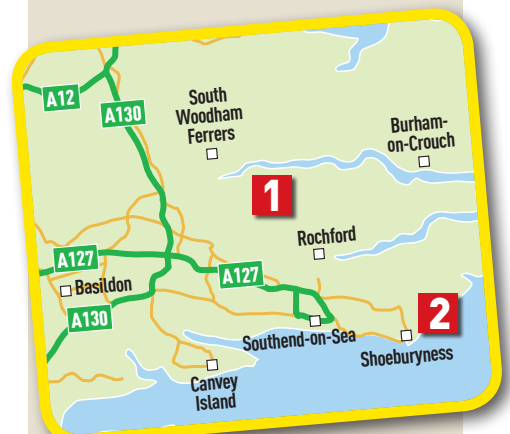


### 2 EAST BEACH PARK

A new coastal development overlooking a stretch of beach in the pleasant Southend borough of Shoeburyness.

## WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT THE AREA?

- ✓ Miles of unspoilt coastline, with several long sandy beaches to enjoy in the warmer months.
- ✓ Within easy commutable distance by rail or road to London and the south east, and served by Stansted International Airport.
- ✓ Southend itself is a thriving seaside resort which really comes alive in the summer season – plenty to see and do.



## LOCATION 1

# Hockley Park

This serene site lies just outside Southend and enjoys rural views across open farmland towards the River Crouch

Hockley Park is an established development of 79 homes situated in a prime countryside location. It offers a sweeping vista across a conservation area and farmland towards the tidal River Crouch, which provides plenty of walking opportunities and natural interest for the ramblers and nature lover. Tingdene's experience of redeveloping established parks has helped lift Hockley to its usual superlative standard, providing a picturesque and tranquil setting for its retired and semi-retired residents.

Being situated just east of the town of Hullbridge it enjoys the best of both worlds, offering a range of shops and supermarkets, and north of the major town of Rayleigh which offers all the facilities one would expect from a large town. The River Crouch provides facilities for both boating and fishing.

The nearby A130 and A127 provide easy access to other major towns including Chelmsford, Braintree and Southend-on-Sea, while London is approximately 40 miles to the west.

### Contact details

Hockley Park, Lower Road, Hockley, Essex SS5 5NQ  
Manager: Bill Green  
Tel: 01702 292466  
Email: [developments@tingdene.net](mailto:developments@tingdene.net)

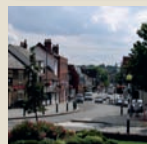


## Less than 15 minutes away



### HOCKLEY WOODS

Hockley is the largest woodland area in Essex and a popular bird-watching site, also offering nature walks and mountain bike rides through the woods.



### RAYLEIGH

Historic market town whose surrounding land was used for centuries as royal deer hunting forests. The town is famous locally for its Grade II-listed windmill.



### LORDS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Set in 300 acres of Essex countryside, this golf and country club underwent a £2 million investment programme during 2007. It now offers two redesigned 18-hole courses and unrivalled facilities.



Being new to the park home lifestyle, there's a lot for Paul to take in



Paul's impressed by the park's high standards

## 1 Facilities

- ☒ Bus service is sparse: two in the morning, returning in the evening.
- ☒ There are three post offices within a short drive.
- ☒ Budgens 1.5 miles away; Asda three miles (served by free weekly bus service).
- ☒ Doctor visits park next door twice a week; main surgery is three miles south in Hawkwell.
- ☒ Southend Hospital is almost eight miles away.

## 2 Community spirit

- ☒ The park has a close-knit community with friendly atmosphere.
- ☒ The local pub is just a short walk away.
- ☒ There is no residents' association at the park.
- ☒ Friendly park manager Bill Green lives on the site close to the main office
- ☒ Park is in good condition and residents take good care of their individual plots
- ☒ There's lots to do locally.

## 3 Park points

- ☒ Minimum age is 50; though negotiable in special cases (handy for Paul).
- ☒ Residents must be retired or semi-retired to live on the park.
- ☒ Pets are allowed, both cats and dogs.
- ☒ Although children are not allowed to reside, visiting children or grandchildren are most welcome.
- ☒ The park is fairly flat with a well spaced out layout making it easy to get around.

## 4 Living costs

- ☒ Ground rent costs £119 per calendar month.
- ☒ All homes fall under Band A for council tax, which works out as £993.95 per year.
- ☒ Gas is Calor and is provided on agreement between the resident and Calor gas.
- ☒ Electricity is metered separately and paid to Tingdene via the park manager.
- ☒ Water is a shared bill and also paid via the manager.





Could a park home be the setting for his next script?



Paul has visions of becoming a master chef

## HOMES FOR SALE



At the time of our visit there were a couple of plots available at a prime spot near the front of the park, overlooking open farmland, including an empty double plot (40ft x 20). A single unit which was on sale at the time has since been taken off the market.



Individual gardens give the park a unique feel



Paul takes in the beautiful uninterrupted country views

## WHAT DID PAUL THINK?

### My concerns...

'This place is lovely and secluded, but with sparse public transport links I wonder if perhaps its a bit too secluded?'

'It's not too far from Southend, but ideally I wanted a place as close to the coast as possible.'

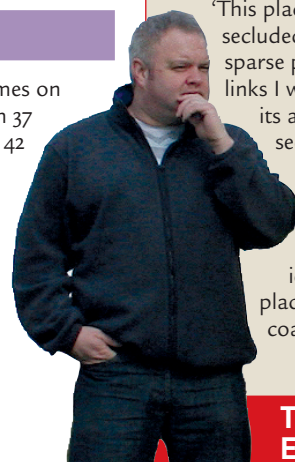
### But I love...

'The site itself is immaculate - everything is clean and tidy. It looks like the cleaners earn every penny!'

'I'm loving the big surrounding green expanse as well, which is something I could definitely get used to.'

'The River Crouch is just a short walk away, meaning I could start to seriously think about buying a boat.'

Turn over for my visit to East Beach Park...



### 5 'Green' qualities

- ✓ Recycling bins are provided near the entrance.
- ✓ The park takes part in the local authority's recycling schemes.
- ✓ Set in open countryside, the site is surrounded by farmland and a conservation area, with the River Crouch only a short walk away.
- ✗ Infrequent bus service means it may be difficult to manage on this particular park without a car.

### 6 Homes

- ✓ There are 79 homes on the site, of which 37 are doubles and 42 are singles.
- ✓ Wide range of different styles and ages.
- ✓ Most homes have gardens and parking spaces.
- ✓ Homes are not placed too close together.



## LOCATION 2

### East Beach Park

This up-and-coming waterfront site lies a stone's throw from a long stretch of beach in a sleepy outer borough of Southend

East Beach is an exclusive new development enjoying a prime seaside location in the quiet Southend borough of Shoeburyness. Its pebbly beach, Blue Flag awarded for cleanliness, is a short stroll from the park.

The park's still undergoing development, with several vacant plots lying in wait for new buyers, although many residents have already come on board. One quirky feature is a disused railway line running across one edge of the site's perimeter, which was used to service the neighbouring Ministry of Defence, transporting

weapons for testing. The spanning footbridge offers a panoramic view of the park.

A short walk away is Shoeburyness train station, served well by trains leaving for London every 20 minutes, while a bus stop 200 metres from the front gate has buses running to Southend town centre also every 20 minutes. In the vicinity of the station lies a range of shops, including a baker, newsagent and Post Office.

East Beach looks set to become one of Essex's most sought-after retirement parks.

#### Contact details

East Beach Park, Blackgate Road, Shoeburyness  
Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS3 9SG  
Manager: Robin and Vera Sims  
Tel: 01933 230111  
Email: [developments@tingdene.net](mailto:developments@tingdene.net)

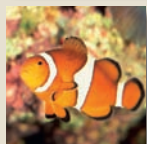


#### Less than 15 minutes away



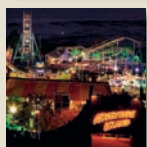
##### SOUTHEND MUSEUM SERVICE

Comprising of four buildings: the Central Museum and Planetarium; Southchurch Hall; Prittlewell Priory; and the Beecroft Art Gallery. These house diverse collections including a fine collection of works of art.



##### SEA-LIFE ADVENTURE

Over 40 unique displays featuring sea life from all over the world. Exhibits allow you see the ocean from the seabed as you walk through the underwater tunnel, giving a fish's point of view.



##### ADVENTURE ISLAND

Admission to Adventure Island is free - you only pay if you play. With over 60 rides and attractions, there's something for the whole family to enjoy making for a fun day out.



Although still under development, several residents have already snapped up homes and moved in



Paul eyes up one of the many homes for sale at East Beach



#### 1 Facilities

- ✓ Local bus route stops near the park and heads straight into Southend town centre every 20 minutes.
- ✓ Close to Shoeburyness train station, offering frequent service to London.
- ✓ Parade of shops at the station including a Post Office.
- ✓ Asda is approximately 10 minutes by car.
- ✓ Health Centre five minutes drive and Southend Hospital 20 minutes.



#### 2 Community spirit

- ✓ Residents organise group events throughout the year, creating a healthy community vibe.
- ✗ The park does not have its own clubhouse.
- ✓ Park managers Robin and Vera Simms live at the park and are always on hand to help with any problems.
- ✓ Regular residents' newsletter distributed to keep you up to date with park life.
- ✓ All homes are new and obviously well looked after.



#### 3 Park points

- ✓ The development is for retired or semi-retired residents.
- ✓ Children are not allowed to live on site but are welcome to visit relatives.
- ✓ The site is fairly flat and compact with everything within easy walking distance.
- ✓ Cats and dogs are allowed on this site, much to moggy-lover Paul's relief.
- ✓ Another big bonus for keen DIYer Paul, garden sheds are permitted.



#### 4 Living costs

- ✓ The current pitch fee is £150 pcm for new homes; those who choose to buy previously owned properties inherit the existing written agreement and pitch fee level.
- ✓ All homes fall under Band A for council tax.
- ✓ Mains gas is supplied by Scottish Power, but residents can choose their own supplier if they wish.
- ✓ Electric and water is supplied via the site owner.





Waking up without the sound of passing traffic would be blissful



With more free time Paul can start honing his cooking skills



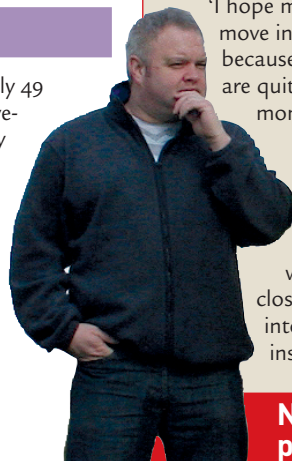
Every home on this park is brand new, further adding to the park's 'up market' vibe

## 5 'Green' qualities

- ✓ Refuse and recycling bags are collected every Friday.
- ✓ The park's proximity to the local train station and bus stop means you can get by without your car.
- ✓ The clean waterfront location is very refreshing.
- ✓ The beach itself has been awarded a Blue Flag award for cleanliness.
- ✓ There's a lot of bird life, with migrant birds attracted to the mud flats.

## 6 Homes

- ✓ There are currently 49 homes on the five-acre park, mostly double units.
- ✓ All of the homes are brand new.
- ✓ Plots are nicely spread out.
- ✓ No traffic noise but there is the occasional passing train to contend with.



## HOMES FOR SALE



There are numerous plots covering most sizes available for purchase at East Beach, which is still in the early stages of development. The show home on sale is a 40ft x 20 Dolben Lodge, fully furnished with fitted kitchen and en suite, on the market for approximately £189,000.



A stroll along the beach would allow for Paul to ponder over his next script



On the right track - but which park will Paul choose?

## WHAT DID PAUL THINK?

### My concerns...

'I hope more residents move in at a quicker rate because parts of the site are quite barren at the moment'

'The nearest pub is a bit of a trek - I was hoping for a waterhole a bit closer by to duck into for creative inspiration...'

### But I love...

'The location is superb. I would definitely be making a habit of beach strolls and dips in the summertime.'

'The barely-used railway track running through the park is an intriguing quirk, as is the small MoD base next door - could become the setting for my next script!'

'A regular train into central London is a big plus point.'

**Now found out which park is my favourite...**





And now for  
my favourite...

## East Beach Park

'Hockley Park was a lovely but it's a bit too out of the way. East Beach trumps it with its superior local amenities and transport links, and of course its plum location right on the coast.'



### MY FAVOURITE BITS



✓ The little railway line and footbridge adds real character to the park.



✓ The bracing coastal location, complete with clean pebble beach.



✓ Nearby Shoeburyness station, with its regular London train and handy shops.

### OTHER PARKS WE CONSIDERED...

#### Kings Park Village

Britain's biggest residential park home estate boasts more than 800 plots. There are quiet areas to this Canvey Island site but it probably lacks the peace and quiet a scriptwriter craves.

#### Castlehill Park

Nestled along the Clacton coastline, this Tingdene site ticks many boxes but Paul's heart was set on a Southend location.

#### The Dome Village

Small site with own residents' association and touring caravan storage space. Well worth a visit but, unfortunately, we ran out of time.

### KRIS'S VERDICT



'I have to say I agree with Paul's decision, but that's not to malign Hockley Park in any way. On the contrary, that site is pretty immaculate and boasts impressive countryside views. OK, it's not as well served transport-wise as its counterpart but for many retirees that's not necessarily a big issue. However, for someone who's relying on a commutable link to the capital, the up-and-coming East Beach certainly fulfils that requirement, while providing an attractive beachfront setting that should see its vacant plots filling up in no time.'

#### WANT TO BE OUR GUINEA PIG?

Looking for your perfect park and want our help? Write to us at: 'Help Me Find A Park Home', *Park Home and Holiday Caravan*, IPC Media, Leon House, 233 High Street, Croydon CR9 1HZ.

