

The Campaign for Real Ale reports that an estimated 18 pubs close each week in Britain, many in remote areas; while over the past five years, one countryside school a month has closed its doors and 81 rural post offices have shut up shop for good, according to the National Housing Federation's rural life monitor. The Office for National Statistics, meanwhile, says that of the 9.3m people living in rural areas in 2014 – the latest figures available – fewer than 50% are aged under 45, whereas in urban areas the proportion is almost 60%. Not exactly swinging, then.

Against that torpid background, would people really pay through the nose to live in a village? The answer, it seems, is a resounding yes. Jonathan Cunliffe runs an independent estate agency



CORNWALL

On sale for the first time in 36 years, this four-bedroom home on Restronguet Point, in Feock, needs updating, but the outstanding coastal views make it a project worth

taking on. There's an outdoor pool and a slipway into the Fal estuary. Truro is six miles away and Feock has a shop and post office.

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selling properties in Cornwall to high-end buyers. He insists that purchasers of homes priced between £1m and £3m (including one he's marketing in Feock, pictured bottom left) want privacy, a good-quality property and, if they're looking by the water, an uninterrupted view and possibly a mooring.

"Local facilities like pubs and shops are good to have but not essential for this kind of buyer," Cunliffe says. "They're not necessarily the type who'll need a post office. Besides, many villages attracting premiums are close to towns or cities. Feock is near Truro, so has the best of both worlds."

The lack of a shop isn't a deterrent for affluent buyers, especially those in their thirties or forties doing the school run or commuting, according to Adam Buxton, who represents the buying agency Middleron Advisors in the Cotswolds. "You're never more than five miles from good facilities – there's plenty of opportunity to get milk or the papers en route to school."

The British village houses