

Kirkland Parish Council

Village Design Statement

Introduction taken from a Village Design Statement produced in 2001 by Kirkland Parish Council and the Churchtown Society

The Village of Churchtown was established on the banks of the River Wyre in the 12th century, although there may have been a settlement on the site as early as the 6th century. Dwellings were initially grouped around on each side of Church Street leading to St. Helen's Church, additions in the 18th and 19th centuries established the character of the Village as it is today. During this period, Kirkland Hall and the farm buildings of the Parish were built, and the present pattern of fields, hedgerows and woodlands was created.

In the last century the Village has expanded with houses of varied architectural character and detail, but the overall effect remains one of a closely knit grouping of some eighty individual properties which form a separate identity, set in rural farmland and woodland.

Within the Village there are three main streets, each with its own particular visual characteristics. Church Street is a narrow cul-de-sac with houses rising directly from cobbled footpaths. The Green and Ainspool Lane, which are part of the original through road, are more open in character. Houses in The Green were built in the 19th century, with two short cul-de-sacs built in the 1960's and 1970's. Ainspool Lane contains a mixture of houses built in the 1930's and in the post-war years. Linking the three streets in a central space which includes the Cross and the oldest cottages in the Village. The Parish Church closes the view at the end of Church Street, which terminates in a Square which has a multi-purpose use for Church and Community.

Vicarage Lane on the eastern perimeter of the Village and in private ownership leads to the old and new vicarages and to two other domestic properties. The Lane retains a village character, with hedgerows and open farmland to one side.

The social structure of the community in the Parish has changed dramatically in the post-war period of the 20th century. Farms have reduced in number and the majority of the people of the Parish are no longer directly linked with the farming industry.

In the Village shops have closed and the two Public Houses are now the main commercial enterprises, attracting both local and visitor business, and contribute to liveliness and interest in the community without adversely affecting the overall quiet and tranquil atmosphere. The Village Primary School is an important element of the life of the Parish. Social activity also centres around the School, the Church, the Memorial Hall and the Public Houses, with contributions from a number of voluntary groups and organisations.



There are many visitors to the Village particularly during the summer months, when the Church and river frontage are main attractions. There are defined country walks through the Parish including the Wyre Way which passes through the Village.

Churchtown Village

A quiet and tranquil atmosphere

The Village benefits from the fact that through traffic is taken on the A586 by-pass which was constructed in 1935. The absence of through traffic contributes to the attractiveness of the Village.

Relationship of buildings



Buildings are predominantly residential and two storey in height. The majority are placed in close association, with small front garden areas or with frontages rising direct from the pavement. The two Public Houses reflect this compactness with rear car parks which do not form part of the street scene.

The Church which is the largest single building stands separately with in its own Churchyard wall. The Village School stands on its own site on the periphery of the Village. The varied architectural styles and spaces created by the layout in each of the three streets reflect the history of the growth of the Village and as such are a significant feature. Vicarage Lane in contrast is a rural lane with hedgerows and grass verge which have established its own character.

The clear definition between Village and surrounding countryside

Churchtown Village is characterised by its compactness and by the quality of its immediate setting. The River Wyre lies to the South separated from the Village by farmland which is part of the flood plain. Woodland and farmland surround the Village to the North and West. This clear definition avoids the half open /half urban character of many areas in the North West.



Traditional hedgerows form a field pattern with woodlands adjoining the Church and the by-pass road, which at its eastern end is flanked by a distinctive avenue of mature trees.

Buildings and features of historic importance



Many of the historic buildings are officially listed e. g. St. Helen's Church(grade1), the Parish Room, Manor Cottage, Kirkland Hall, the Old Vicarage, and a number of individual residences. The Cross an 18th century stone pillar carrying a sundial the Parish Notice Board and the pre-war telephone kiosk together form a focal

point in the centre of Churchtown. In Church Street buildings are tightly grouped without enclosed front gardens, giving an attractive village character. The stone animal pound in Nook Lane recalls the historic farming practices.

Church Square, cobbled pavements and designed public gardens are other examples of village features which are valued by the community. Church Square acts as an area for village and Parish outdoor activities such as barbeques, assembly for processions as well as its day-to-day functions of car parking and access to the Church and as a route through for river walks.