

Character Assessment – Pillowell



June 2021

Overview

The specifics Pillowell's origins are unknown, its boundaries are a little hazy and therefore any population figure an estimate, somewhere between 250 – 300. There are no shops, pubs, social housing, private housing estates and little in the way of 'modern' buildings.



View From Main Road Towards School



The Nature Area Looking from Main Road

There is however, a well attended primary school and a small industrial area. Most of the settlement area is a designated conservation area established in 1999. The majority older buildings are laid out in a haphazard manner often in large plots. There are a number of small open areas, mostly 'forest waste' in between or around various properties. There is also a small nature reserve.

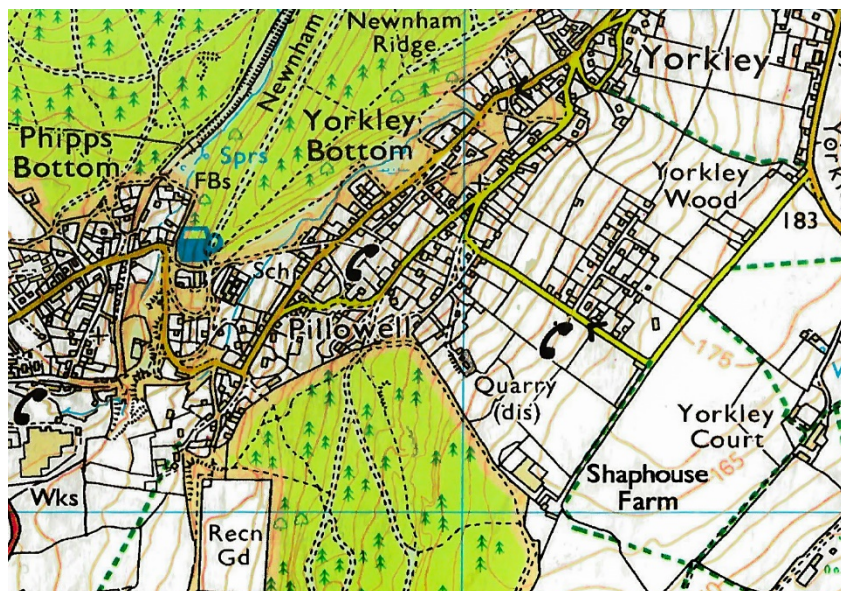
In terms of amenities there is a village hall, a large recreation ground that has now been enclosed, and the Methodist chapel.



Geographic Location

Pillowell is effectively strung out between Lower Yorkley and Whitecroft, the main road (Main Road), running down the hill in a south westerly direction.

The postcode for the approximate centre of Pillowell is GL15 4RD, latitude 51.756210, longitude -2.540870.



Surroundings

To the northwest is the Royal Forest and to the southeast the ground rises sharply into agricultural land and woodland.

From most locations there are views across to Bream and beyond. In many parts of the village the forest edge dominates the skyline.

Local residents value the Forest, and the benefits of being close by. There are numerous well trodden paths, some following the disused Mineral Loop railway lines.



Lane Looping Behind the Bends on Main Road

Structure

The settlement is open in form with most buildings being laid out in a haphazard manner often in large plots. However, there are some linear developments along Main Road and Upper Road. These are the most dense housing areas, although there is nothing that could be identified as infill.

As well as Main Road there are a number of other narrower roads and tracks, some poorly maintained and difficult due to steep gradients.



Upper Road near Junction of Link Road

Links

Most travel is by private, although there is an infrequent bus service to Lydney and other villages on a circuit route.



Entering Pillowwell - Blimeshire from Yorkley Wood

There is a narrow steep road from Yorkley Wood that joins Upper Road opposite the Methodist chapel.

There are a number of footpaths and tracks that can be used to walk or cycle to adjoining areas.



Lane from old Levels Site Towards Whitecroft

Approaches

Pillowell is entered either from Yorkley on Main Road, or from Whitecroft on Pillowell Road.



Entering Pillowell from Yorkley on Main Road



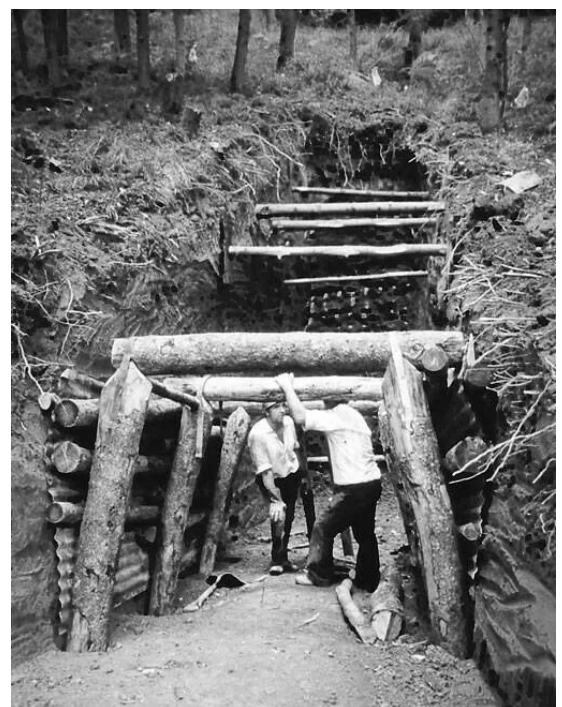
Entering Pillowell from Whitecroft on Pillowell Road

Built Environment

Pillowell's Upper Road marks the limits of the statutory Forest of Dean and the St Briavels Hundred. The first record of a settlement known as Pellowe well dates to 1669. There are acknowledgements of encroachments on Crown Land in the 18th century.

However, it was in the 19th Century that the settlement grew as one of a string of not very pretty villages along the south edge of the Forest of Dean, these purely on account of the existence of coal. Many of the old cottages were built by families engaged in working in the pits or coal briquette manufacturing.

There is now very little evidence of the mining heritage, although some of the landscaping is a result of covering it up. Generally this has led to a more pleasing appearance.



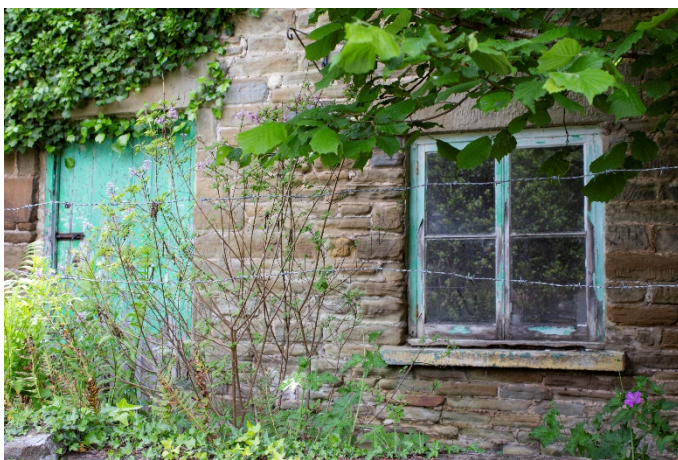
Building Types

The settlement was formed largely in a haphazard way, exceptions being on Main and Upper Road. Predominantly stone cottages sitting in large plots with slate roofs and stone outbuildings. Boundaries are a mixture of drystone walls hedgerow and post/wire fencing. Wooden fencing is less common.

Some properties have been recently extended, however there has been little new build activity in recent times.



School Tump



There are still examples of some properties that have had little or no modernisation, whilst some have been extensively improved.



There are a few business properties on Main and Corner Road.



Industrial Units at the top of Corner Road



The Old Coach Garage

Open Areas

As previously described there are a number of small open areas some of which are designated as forest waste. These are predominantly used for dog walking and sheep grazing.



Key Features



The forest woodlands are dominant features along with the sloping landscape. In many parts of the village the forest edge dominates the skyline and provides a restful background sound when there is a breeze

Whilst there are no shops, pubs, healthcare facilities or other amenities, there is the village hall, recreation ground and Methodist church, they at least offer some scope for local community activities.

There is a pump, that some believe is over the original Pillowe well, however it is somewhat hidden and neglected.

For many the the value is in the Forest itself and the benefits of being close by. As well as many walkable paths there is the disused Mineral Loop railway line for easy walking and/or cycling.



Pillowell Village Hall

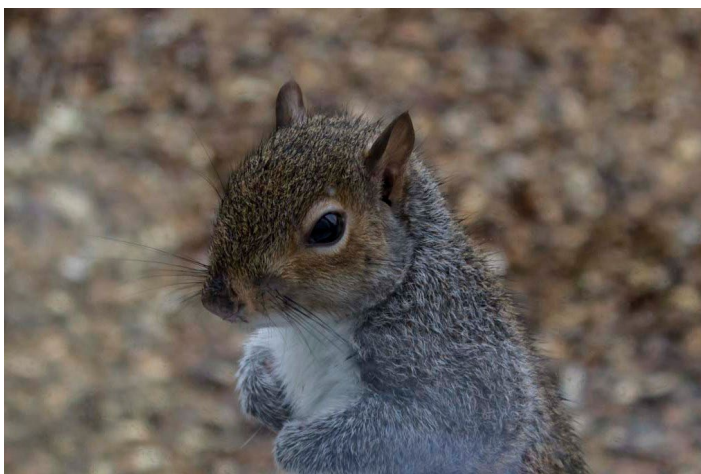


The recreation field was donated to the people of Pillowell by Lord Bledisloe and levelled by miners during the 1921 miner's strike. It has now been fenced off to prevent boar incursions.

The school is a major contributor to the sense of community in Pillowell:



Pillowell School



The richness and ecological diversity of our area includes for example: wild boar, deer, badgers, foxes, and a wide variety of birds.

The prevalence of large, expansive gardens host diverse of garden plants, hedges and trees. A number of residents are bee keepers.

Whilst their practice hall is just in Lower Yorkley, there is still a Pillowell Silver Band that has a history of competition triumphs.



Pillowell Silver Band playing at the fete.

Positives

A healthy environment.

Immediate access to forest walks.

Most properties are spaced in a way that gives an uncrowded community feel.

Surprising diversity in a small area.

Superfast fibre broadband.



View from Rear of Village Hall to Forest Edge



Negatives

Poor public transport.

Parking difficulties.

Poor maintenance of side roads.

Patchy, poor mobile and radio coverage.

Lack of traffic calming.

