

CHARACTER ASSESSMENT – PARKEND

Overview

Parkend village is a vibrant community within the forested area of the Forest of Dean district. The village is spread over a large area including extensive open spaces, with the central part of the village set around two sides of the cricket field.



The greater Parkend area includes a significant part of the statutory forest with many of the Forest of Dean's major visitor attractions. Whitemead Forest Park, a large holiday centre is on the edge of the village and there are many other places visitors can stay in the village in a range of accommodation. Tourism has increased in recent years but the village has adapted to the situation.

Dean Forest Cycles bike hire and Dean Forest Railway are popular attractions in the village. Within the greater Parkend area are Nags Head RSPB nature reserve, Cannop Ponds, Speech House and the Arboretum, Mallards Pike, Go Ape, and New Fancy View, all popular attractions. The forest environment with its open access and rich wildlife provide a much valued resource for locals and visitors alike.

Historically Parkend had industries typical of the area and extensive railway sidings, which have left their mark on the landscape.

Geographic Location

Parkend is in a central position in the forest of the Cannop Valley in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire.

The River Lyd passes through the village.

Surroundings

Parkend is surrounded by forest under control by Forestry England. The outlying areas included in Parkend are also surrounded by forest. It is the only village surrounded by forest and includes the Oakenhill Nature Reserve and RSPB Nagshead.

There are a number of significant trees around the village. The avenue of limes and circle of yews, near the sports field, dating from 1902 are impressive and important to the village and Hawfinches are regular visitors in winter. The King Charles II and Forest Giant oak trees are over 300 years old; Redwood Grove was planted in 1938. RSPB Nagshead, with a longstanding Pied Flycatcher monitoring program, is situated behind International Timber and York Lodge.

Forest sheep, wild boar and deer (Muntjac and Fallow) can regularly be seen in or around the village.

Structure

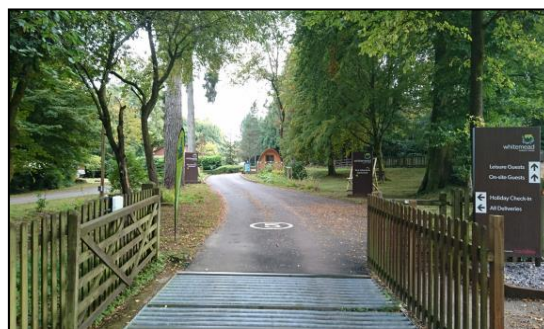
Parkend is a village in the central part of the Forest of Dean. It is unusual as a Forest village for several reasons:

- It occupies a central position in the Forest whereas many villages were created by encroachment around the Forest fringes.
- The central focal point of the village is a triangle of open land serving as a de facto village green. Forest villages are usually linear in shape. However, other housing now extends outwards.
- The village and environs contains a high proportion of open space known as Forest Waste which has had surprisingly little development over recent decades away from the main roads. This is mostly because Forestry England are not allowed to sell the Forest Waste land.
- There is a strong industrial link to the village with remnants of railways, ironwork and collieries which adds to the sense of place and identity. Stone quarrying is still carried on at Cannop. International Timber has a large sawmill on the corner of Hughes Terrace.

The strongest impression made by the village now is of its spacious character, and green spaces. The recreation ground forms a central focus and the present railway is another notable feature along with the former engine house, now a field studies centre.

A separate area of housing above the older part of the village was built around the 1959's to house the residents of The Square when it was demolished. This land is now left to nature, A large residential holiday park is situated near the centre of the village.

Parkend is the main tourist destination in the Forest of Dean and has become increasingly popular, creating vibrancy and employment. However, the downside is that houses have been bought up and converted into holiday lets making it more difficult for local families to afford homes in the area and excessive visitor parking has extended onto Forest Waste ground.



Whitemead Forest Park

Links Parkend is served by several busy minor roads linking the village with Lydney through Whitecroft, Yorkley and onto the A48, Coleford and Blakeney and also Cannop through to Cinderford and Ross-on-Wye

Transport from the village is mainly by private car and a very restrictive daily bus service links Parkend to Lydney, Cinderford and onto Gloucester.

Approaches to Parkend



From Blakeney



From Blakeney



From Whitecroft



From Coleford past The Folly



From Coleford- RSPB Nagshead (L) and Whitemead Park (R)



From Coleford



From Yorkley just before Parkend School



From Yorkley towards the village



From Speech House (Blakeney Rd)



T Junction from Speech House to turnoff for The Barracks

Built environment

Most of the buildings are built along the main roads though the village.



Folly Road and the sports field



The Woodman



Memorial Hall, Old Post Office & Baptist Church



Crossroads

With a heavy reliance on private cars due to poor public transport links the lack of space within a house curtilage means that parking is becoming prevalent on Forest Waste.

Building types:

Parkend has 4 listed buildings



- Grade 1 - Speech House
- Grade 2 - St Paul's Church
- Grade 2 -The Old Vicarage
- Grade 2 - Dean Field Studies Centre



Speech House - home to the Verderer's Court

St Paul's Church

St Paul's Church and The Old Vicarage were both built in an unusual octagonal design around 1900.



Dean Field Studies Centre formally the Engine House and then the Forestry School before being bought by Bristol City Council for residential use by schools.



School viewed from School House

There are a wide range of building styles from old stone cottages to modern houses, older and modern industrial units and everything in between.

Most buildings and grounds have boundary fences to keep forest sheep and wild boar out whereas modern developments e.g. Fairmoor have sheep grids to restrict the movement of these animals onto private and public property.



Fairmoor Close



The Barracks – from road



Fountain Inn – the oldest building in the village



Castlemain Mill formally offices of the Deep Navigation Coal Company



The Foundry – converted stone buildings



Social housing and ex-council houses



Crown Lane showing older house on left and modern build on right



Derelict building previously a shop on the corner of Hughes Terrace – subject to an inheritance dispute



Working Men's Club with camping and caravan ground

Active transport: There is a network of recognised footpaths throughout the forest. The Parkend extension of the Family Cycle Trail continues to Coleford.



Cycle Hire



Walking/cycling trails throughout the forest

Key Features

The open nature of the land is surrounded by forest which gives the village a distinctive character. The cricket pitch and sports field in the centre of the village and large areas of Forest Waste open land promote a green environment which promotes a sense of calm and peacefulness.

The location of the church up the hill towards Yorkley and accessed by a long forest drive all go towards this distinctiveness, which is prized by residents. The reason for the school and church being built up the hill was because the pollution from industry was so bad at that time.

Commercial: There are now a number of businesses in Parkend which serve both the local and wider community and provide employment. These include 3 pubs, Holiday accommodation providers – self-catering cottages, B&Bs, large holiday park; village shop with Post Office and cafe, motor vehicle repairs, cycle hire business with café, a field studies centre, a kick boxing academy and a caravan sales business.

Several businesses have international links, including International Timber (sawmill) and Mary Rose Young pottery.

There are several small businesses run from home.



Mary Rose Pottery

Social: There are 3 places of worship - St Paul's Church, Baptist (with Forest New Life Church), and a Kingdom Hall.

In addition, there is a memorial hall, social club (with camping ground) and an environmental centre.

Parkend Cricket Club (teams from 8 years+) play on the sports field



Kingdom Hall – modern build using traditional materials



Sports field / Folly Rd from New Rd

Buildings and Historic items of note, the evidence of an historic past linked to Forest culture, include:



Parkend Memorial Hall



Dean Field Study Centre



Hughes Terrace – workers cottages, many now converted to holiday lets



Rising Sun at Moseley Green



Mrs Sheward's Shop – now derelict following an inheritance dispute for over 40 years



Parkend Village Shop with Post Office and Postage Stamp cafe



Fountain Inn



The Woodman



Forestry England's 'Giraffe House'

Positives

- The quiet communities set away from passing traffic
- Surrounded by forest views
- The woodland aspects
- Access to woodland for recreation
- Industrial heritage
- Community activities such as cricket, amateur dramatics and a silver band play an important role in village life and there is a well-attended annual carnival.

Negatives:

- Off road parking damaging forest waste through erosion
- Speeding traffic
- Poor bus services
- Patchy internet connections
- No playground or places for families to meet
- No mobile network signal
- Size and frequency of lorries passing through the village