



# DESFORD VILLAGE

Note: map indicative scale only

1 St. Martin's Church <a href="http://www.stmartinsdesford.org.uk">www.stmartinsdesford.org.uk</a>	GREEN SQUARE	PARKS & RECREATIONAL AREAS	
2 War Memorial	GREY SHADING	CONSERVATION AREA	
3 St. Martin's Church Centre 46 Main Street	P	CAR PARKING	
4 Desford Free Church Chapel Lane	SHOPPING BAG	LOCAL SHOPPING	
5 Village Pump	ENVELOPE	POST OFFICE	
6 Colliery Winding Wheel	DOCTOR	DESFORD MEDICAL CENTRE 54 Main St	
7 Desford Village Hall 10 Lindridge Lane	PLUS	DESFORD PHARMACY	
DOTTED LINE			FOOTPATHS

## LEICESTERSHIRE



### Brief History of Desford

- A Neolithic hand axe was found on farmland in the south of the parish and the remains of two Romano-British kilns were found in Main Street
- The earliest written record of Deresford or Diresford is in Domesday Book (1086) but the name is older and means Deor's ford, suggesting an Anglo Saxon origin
- The parish church of St. Martin is largely 13th century, although the font is Norman
- In 1866 a non-conformist chapel was built: now Desford Free Church
- The old part of the village was designated as a Conservation Area by Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council in 1981
- In the medieval period the Manor of Desford belonged to the Earls of Leicester, who became Dukes of Lancaster and in 1399 were united with the Crown. As a result, the present King is the Patron of St. Martin's Church
- The other great influence on the village during these times was the proximity of Leicester Forest, a Royal Hunting Forest, in which villagers had important rights of common until it was disafforested in 1628

### Work

- Most villagers would have originally been involved in farming, cultivating strips in the four Open Fields and pasturing their animals on the meadows by the streams. In 1760, by Act of Parliament, the Open Fields were enclosed and the new fields were hedged and farmed separately; an enormous change
- A cottage industry of framework knitting developed in the village, the first reference being in 1704. This continued well in to the 19th century, with over 100 framework knitters recorded in the 1851 census
- The railway came to Desford in 1832, part of the Leicester to Swannington Railway built by Robert Stephenson; the third oldest line in the world. Originally constructed to take coal to Leicester, it was also a passenger line until 1964 and Desford had its own station. The larger houses in Station Road were built for middle-class commuters to Leicester
- Towards the end of the 19th century, coal mining spread in west Leicestershire. In 1875 an unsuccessful attempt was made to sink a mine in the parish, at Lindridge. This failed due to constant flooding. In the 20th century Desford pit employed many local people until it closed in 1984
- During the Second World War, the airfield (on Peckleton Lane) was used as an RAF Training Centre and for the repair of aircraft

- After the war the village grew, with both council houses and private estates being built
- Local industry provided employment both at Tubes at Newtown Unthank (now Poundstretcher), and Caterpillar (now also Neovia & Griffen)
- There were ale houses in the village from early times. Records show that the Bull's Head was serving ale in 1665. In the 20th century there were 8 pubs at the height of their popularity, now there are just 2 remaining
- Desford has become largely a commuter village and the number of farms has decreased
- Evidence of 20th century shops, now closed, can still be seen by the large windows of certain buildings

### Education

- A Board School was built in Main Street in 1876, followed by expansion into a second building in 1908. These are now occupied by the Medical Centre and Church Centre respectively. The Primary School in Kirkby Road was opened in 1961, with subsequent extensions
- In 1969 Bosworth Community College (now Bosworth Academy) was built on the edge of the village and, from 2015, students have been able to attend here from age 11

