

OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD: KIBWORTH BEAUCHAMP

People who live in Kibworth Beauchamp enjoy a village character and a built environment which has developed over at least 1200 years.

Kibworth Beauchamp became a settlement independent of Kibworth Harcourt in the late Saxon period when a small number of people came to live near what is now known as 'The Bank' or 'The Square' and which later became a market place where annual *statis* fairs were held when farmers would hire their seasonal workers.

Perhaps a son decided to break away from his family in Kibworth Harcourt and move down Church Hill. Boundary ditches dating to c.800AD have been found behind properties on High Street near Smeeton Road suggesting that this was the location of the first manor house.



Opposite Home Close, leading to the modern housing development of Morrison Court, is the Tudor Cottage, which local historian George Weston has confirmed was once two separate residences, now flanked by later buildings of varying design.

In Leicestershire there are some settlements where one predominant influence has controlled development for much of their history. Nearby Stoughton, for example, was the centre of a wealthy farm estate, and that history is strongly evidenced in the pattern of style of the buildings that remain today. Development in neighbouring Kibworth Harcourt has been controlled by the influence of one landlord, Merton College, over many centuries, giving that village a distinctive sense of antiquity. In both

cases, relatively few land transactions, and centralised management, have tended to protect these villages from some external pressures and influences, excepting wars and pestilence.

By comparison, Kibworth Beauchamp has been buffeted by social, political and economic influences for its entire history. Today, its road patterns and buildings tell that story. The variety of styles and the somewhat illogical placing of some buildings, yards and lanes give the village a character and atmosphere which adds to the reasons why it is a popular location in which to live and work. The result of this long organic change is a village which is hardly picturesque but has a rich character.



The old Grammar School building in School Road, and the Kibworth Grammar School Hall behind it, are solid reminders of one of England's oldest educational establishments.

The first houses in Kibworth Beauchamp were timber-framed thatched cottages. Some have survived along Weir Road, and others are almost unnoticed, such as Stuart Cottage near the village hall and Rose Cottage in White Street. The more impressive dwellings of the gentry are clustered around the area of the Bank and High Street including the sixteenth century Manor House, currently (in 2016) undergoing major refurbishment, and 33 High Street, a dignified eighteenth-century building which has served as a school and as offices for the electricity board. The distinguished Georgian Crossbank House, carefully restored in the mid-twentieth century, was formerly the residence of the village doctor. Nearby, Inkersall House was originally a two-storey

thatched cottage owned by the village hauliers. Over several centuries, the building gained a storey and an extension.

The earliest land charter connected with the school is dated 1359. The lords of the manor of Kibworth Beauchamp in the later Middle Ages were the Beauchamp family who were also the Earls of Warwick. Richard Neville married Anne Beauchamp, daughter of the 13th Earl of Warwick, and assumed that title. It is he—Warwick the Kingmaker—who is regarded as the founding father of the School and his name remains in the locality with Warwick Road and the 11.55 acres of open space known as the Warwick Road Recreation Ground which the Kibworth Parish Councils purchased in 2015 to maintain as a recreational area in perpetuity.



The railway enabled gas to be produced in Kibworth from coal brought from the north-west Leicestershire coalfield. The Kibworth Gas and Coke Company Manager's Office remains. Small industrial units occupy the former gasworks site.

Industry developed in Kibworth Beauchamp in three different stages and in the space of 140 years as three forms of transport connected the settlement with the wider area. In 1721/2 the road from Market Harborough to Leicester, now the A6, was the first route in Leicestershire to be turnpiked. The Grand Union Canal reached the parish boundary between 1790 and 1797 and the Midland Railway cut through the centre of the village in 1857.

Each era left its mark on the built landscape. Although the railway station closed in 1968, the railway still influences the village. Local builder John Littlejohn Ltd has developed the former railway land to provide a campus of small homes, and has retained the station building as offices. The low railway bridge over New Road restricts the movement of high-sided vehicles into the village, and the eventual

electrification of the line will require the replacement of several bridges including the well-used School Road and Meadowbrook Road 'tin bridge'.

Initially, the Harborough Turnpike followed a route along Main Street in Kibworth Harcourt until the 'bypass' was cut through in 1810. A deliberate curve in the road where it dropped down to ford a brook was engineered to enable coaches to manage the gradient. Later, the brook was channelled into a conduit and the road straightened. The original curve remains as the layby next to the Kibworth Antiques Centre. Smeeton Road was also straightened when the present Health Centre and school were built. Ironically, straight roads encourage speeding traffic whereas

today's traffic management strategy is to control traffic speed by using chicanes and speed humps.



Johnson and Barnes, Fleckney Road. The original factory was constructed in 1901. The company began with two knitting frames in a shed. At its height, it employed 400 people.

A later phase of industrial expansion was located west of the village along the Fleckney Road. Here, small factories such as Johnson and Barnes brought together the local skills of the framework knitters and those who worked the 'Griswolds' in cottage kitchens. Much of this area, including the rows of small and medium-sized houses in Dover Street, Gladstone Street, White Street, Harcourt Road and Imperial Road were constructed by local builder John Loveday who brought more than a touch of arts and crafts influences to his larger houses. Some of the houses in Halford Road were built for the managers of Johnson and Barnes, their differing sizes reflecting the status within the company of the occupants.

Mixed developments, where industry, manufacturing, warehousing and social amenities are incorporated into residential developments is considered a relatively modern concept, but this is how Kibworth Beauchamp has developed for centuries. It means

that families still live in our High Street next to takeaways, hairdressers and off- licences. Independent small businesses occupy first floor premises above an attractive variety of independent shops. Services such as Meadowbrook Garage and the Ash Tree Veterinary Practice, the three village pubs, schools, Parish and Methodist

churches, Post Office, dental practice and opticians are all within a few minutes' walk of each other and are not separated from where people live.

Today, the heart of the village remains around and close to the Square, along the High Street towards its junction with the road to Smeeton Westerby, and in the other direction to Weir Road. Within this small area are buildings representing five hundred years of architectural styles including the Tudor Manor House, seventeenth century farmworkers cottages, Victorian schools and twentieth century sheltered accommodation.



The gardens of Stuart Court, sheltered accommodation for retired Anglian clergy, located close to village amenities. The clock tower adds interest and historic connectivity to what would otherwise be a plain vista.

This happy confusion of styles continues along the Weir Road which, like Smeeton Road, connected the village with the land and was therefore where small cottages housing a variety of industries were built between the farmsteads, and where later, high status town houses appeared. Behind the Victorian village hall is Stuart House, a small cottage of great character and charm which has carved beams dating to 1627 and a fireplace of the same period, now imaginatively incorporated into the Stuart Court complex.

Of vital importance to the cohesion of the settlement is the network of footpaths which criss-cross the settlement and connect the two Kibworth villages. Several of these routes

are ancient, such as the path from Main Street, Kibworth Harcourt through the Home Close (past the Munt) which then follows the parish boundary and turns south to cross the Warwick Road recreation ground and the High Street before skirting the Smeeton Road recreation ground and heading out of the parish into Smeeton Westerby. These paths, with more recent additions, encourage walking, as they link to both schools.



Stuart House, a small cottage of great character and charm with carved beams dating to 1627 and now imaginatively incorporated into the Stuart Court care home.

Kibworth Beauchamp has coped with almost continuous expansion through new developments for the past fifty years. These developments include the Brookfield Way estate leading to Larkwood and Rookery Close, Braymish Close, St Wilfrid's Close/The Tithings, Meadowbrook Road, Links Road/Springfield Crescent, Newtown Close and the extensions to Dover Street and Gladstone Street.

These developments have placed a steadily increasing pressure on the village's amenities, particularly the through roads (New Road, Church Road, Station Street, High Street, Smeeton Road and Fleckney Road). This pressure has increased logarithmically as car ownership per residence/household has more than doubled over the past two decades. The result is that many of the roads on these estates are now congested to the point of causing major access issues for service and emergency vehicles. A quick assessment of the two residences either side of my own home, and including the two vehicles we own reveals a total ownership of sixteen vehicles by five houses in an estate where each plot was designed with a drive to accommodate one car and one garage.

This is the present situation – before the completion of the Kibworth Pastures estate and before the Manor Oaks development at Wistow Road has even commenced; yet

developers are proposing further residential and commercial expansion, the cumulative effect of which would place many more on Kibworth Beauchamp's roads. The capacity of the A6 and its disconnection from the motorway network is of secondary importance. The insoluble problem is that the village's roads, designed for horse drawn coaches, cannot cope with the existing traffic levels, let alone those that would result from current and future developments.



1980s residential development off Rectory Way on the former rectory fields.

The residents of Kibworth Beauchamp still regard their settlement as a village despite the significant increase in population over recent decades. The regular presence of agricultural vehicles in the High Street indicates that it is still closely connected with the farming community and a time when there were farmhouses in the centre of the village.

Kibworth Beauchamp developed organically, following an unplanned path through history influenced by political events, wars and the industrial revolution. Its 'weather-beaten' character reflects all these influences and more. The variety of style and scale is what gives the village a real personality and makes it more than simply a dormitory for Leicester, Kettering and Corby.

Shoe-horning ever more houses, each with its own pre-built imitation chimney stack and a small strip of grass termed a 'public open space' onto the remaining agricultural land in the parish will not create a comparative future heritage nor will it produce a vibrant and healthy community as described by the National Planning Policy Framework.

KIBWORTH HARCOURT IN PICTURES

DrJohnMalpass

This is not a history of Kibworth Harcourt but simply a collection of photographs taken to show what makes the village such an attractive and special place. Like Kibworth Beauchamp, Kibworth Harcourt has grown slowly over many centuries and this evolution is evident in the photographs. Development during the twentieth century has been gradual and the village has been able to assimilate the modest changes. However, any sudden large-scale development, and the inevitable consequences of this, would destroy all that makes Kibworth Harcourt the historic and attractive village that it still is.



All the views are from places that are familiar to anyone walking around the village. Photographs were all taken from the road (A6, Main Street, Albert Street, Church Road, Carlton Road, Langton Road, Marsh Drive) or from within a few yards of the road. They are presented in groups following simple themes to illustrate typical and attractive aspects of the village. A brief commentary indicates some interesting and ancient features within the village.

The later photographs show views of the green belt surrounding most of Harcourt. They give an indication of the extent of the unspoilt attractive areas that have been under pressure by developers for new housing developments.



'The Old House', Main Street, Kibworth Harcourt

Trees – the number and variety of mature trees in Harcourt is stunning. The photos below show that there is hardly a view that doesn't include trees.

The variety of buildings – size, style, materials, juxtaposition. The village still has the old centre (in front of 'The Old House') with mature trees and open spaces across the road.

The village is small but fairly densely packed in parts, largely because of the high proportion of terraced houses. Many small houses are directly connected to larger ones – an attractive evolution over time. There are simple terraced labourers' cottages cheek by jowl with elegant houses, former farmhouses, former pubs and shops. This would be seen as unusual these days when so many developments are of largely similar houses that appeal to similar social groups.

There is plenty of evidence that many current residential properties have been adapted from former forges, builder's yards, pubs, shops, and hotels in order to meet the needs of the community.



Views west and east from the Old House

It is often clear how the village has evolved with the life of the village – nobody would have designed the village as it is now if they were starting from scratch!

This makes for an attractive 'quirkiness', for example in Main Street with narrow sections and sharp corners which would probably not be acceptable in any current development:





Village houses vary greatly in style, size, and height. In many cases, these variations probably reflect the wealth and social standing of villagers who built them.



The direct 'new' A6 diversion through the village (1810) contrasts with the former winding A6 turnpike (the 'London to Inverness Trunk Road') which made its way through old Main Street. This bypass road was gradually integrated by infill building and softened by trees.



The 'new' route of the A6, replacing the original route through Main Street



A footpath from the 'new' A6 to Main Street via 'The Munt' (former burial mound)

Village spaces

Everyone is within easy reach of play areas and open spaces with mature trees always in sight.



The children's play area, Albert Street, (opposite 'The Old House')

A memory of Kibworth 'Tommies' who died in WW1



Varied house frontages

Many houses have front doors opening directly onto the road. The private spaces associated with houses in the village vary greatly – houses opening straight on to footpaths, houses with modest front gardens overlapping the footpath and larger, fenced, hedged, or walled gardens.

Front doors opening directly on to the footpath....



A variety of approaches and front gardens





A mix of construction materials and styles – mainly attractive brick, but many houses have painted brickwork and there is stucco in parts

There are stone bases to some houses and stone quoins. Roofs are mainly slate in the older parts but re-roofing and later building developments have often involved the use of tiles and they can add to the pleasant variation of textures. Creepers cover and soften many walls. There is still one thatched cottage.

There is a wide variety of window styles and, thankfully, many are still painted or stained timber, rather than plastic. There are still plenty of casements, windows with small panes, and the simple vernacular sliding window construction that was always chosen for simple cottages in this area.

Chimneys are varied, often interesting features, and many are still in use.

Quite grand houses, large farmhouses and Yeoman's Houses sit side by side with 2-up-2-down terraced houses:



Main Street has changed decade by decade as has the Albert Street/Carlton Road corner where three houses (left) have been built on the former 'Pinecote' site at the far end of the village (historically 'the swamp' because of flooding) where they sit together with Edwardian houses, bungalows, simple terraced labourers' cottages and semi-detached houses.

Main Street, changing decade by decade



Changes over recent decades

The many pubs in Harcourt have gradually been converted into private houses but the 'Three Horseshoes' pub is now a Restaurant (Boboli) – a welcome feature for a small village.

The Coach and Horses pub is still in full use; the original Rose and Crown is not but the building has been retained as part of a new development of 18 dwellings: Rose Yard and Crown House.



Boboli Restaurant



The Coach and Horses



The original Rose and Crown



The modified Crown House building

Most fairly recent development has been modest and gradual and the small numbers of new houses has meant that most have been assimilated into the street scene.



Many enterprises such as butchers, grocers, shoe repairers etc. were still active until the 1980s - until the rise of the supermarkets. The builder's yards closed 25 years ago although the village forges went much earlier.

The former village theatre was in the garden to the rear of the house shown on the left.

Larger new developments within the 'old' part of Kibworth Harcourt have largely been gradual and of limited scale. There have never been any large developments in Harcourt to the east of the A6. Developments such as Beech Tree Close have been done sympathetically and on a reasonable scale. The replacement of the key original Beech Tree (below right) was a major success for the Kibworth Harcourt Conservation Society (together with protection of 'The Manse' which was threatened with demolition decades ago as part of a road straightening proposal).



Marsh Drive is a typical pre-war development which has matured and has been softened by the mix of styles and by the very attractive cherry trees planted in the verge on both sides:

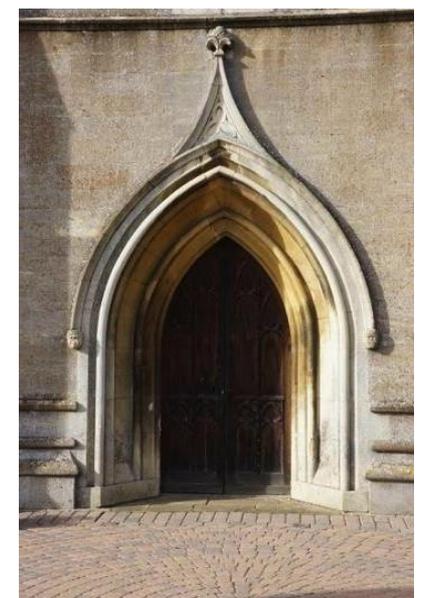


Historical development is visible in the layout of the village, the range of styles, and materials, interesting brickwork and doors. It is easy to see how the village has evolved over the centuries. Parts are attractively 'quirky', not least seldom-seen areas like 'The City', hidden away at the bottom end of Albert Street.



There are many 'quirky' features.

A few are shown:



Kibworth Harcourt Village setting

The village setting is attractive, surrounded as it is by open fields and rolling green views.

Most houses are only yards from a village green space and none is more than a couple of minutes' walk from open fields.

Even on the main A6 road, every entrance to, and exit from, the village shows open countryside and mature trees.

All the roads into and out of Kibworth Harcourt are included in the following photographs.

North-west approaching from Wistow showing the historic Manse



South towards Market Harborough



Northern views, arriving and leaving:



Northeast towards Carlton Curlieu:



East, to and from Tur Langton:



KIBWORTH HARCOURT TODAY

Dr Kevin Feltham

The name *Harcourt* is in recognition of the Norman family of "de Harcourt" who held the manor in the 12th and 13th centuries. In 1271 most of the manor was obtained by Walter of Merton from the de Harcourt family for the endowment of his new college in Oxford. To this day much of the village land and some property is still owned by Merton College. This has maintained the "closed" nature and stabilised the agricultural character unlike the adjacent "open" settlement of Kibworth Beauchamp which suffered poverty during the 18th century because of the lack of a single lordship.

Archaeological excavations in and around Harcourt have provided indications that a farming and trading community was in existence here right back to the time of the Roman occupation. It is believed a pre-Roman road, the Jurassic Way, ran to the north of the settlement from Husbands Bosworth towards the Gartree Road beyond Three Gates some four miles to the north-east of the village.

To the present day, farming is still very much in evidence. For a fascinating historical book about Kibworth Harcourt between 1280 and 1700 see Dr Cicely Howell's "*Land, Family & Inheritance in Transition*" published by Cambridge University Press in 1983.

As befits an ancient agricultural village on a busy coaching route, the village had many inns or ale houses in the 18th century. Today only two remain of the seven that

once existed – currently the Boboli restaurant on Main Street and the former Rose and Crown Inn on the A6. The older central part of Harcourt village has around twenty listed buildings and enjoys Conservation Area status.



Contrary to popular opinion, the A6 is not the principal boundary between the villages of Kibworth Harcourt and Kibworth Beauchamp. The only part that is shared is the part of the A6 between Kibworth Cemetery and 74 Leicester Road. The rest of the length of the A6 through the villages lies entirely within Kibworth Harcourt. A half-playful antagonism exists between the two villages, as told by a former Rector, Revd. Edmund Knox, in his memoirs. He presided over a Vestry meeting at the end of the 19th century and had to intercede over the plans for a new main sewer, which was to run along the A6. It had been suggested, with a fine disregard of costs, that two parallel sewers should be constructed, that the sewage of one village should not be "*contaminated*" by the waste of the other.

The last century saw a number of small-scale housing and business developments in Kibworth Harcourt, mainly to the east of the village and stretching along the A6. Unlike the

Conservation Area, the houses are a modern style with many bungalows to retain the low rooflines in this part of the village.



Marsh Avenue, off Langton Road, has many bungalows



Windmill Gardens and Gainsborough Road, which runs off it, both have a range of bungalows

In the 1960s and 1970s, Hall Close, Merton Way and Lodge Close to the west of the A6 were constructed in the grounds of the former Kibworth House. In the 1990s another housing estate of some 50 homes was constructed off New Road with many houses backing onto the A6. Because this estate lies to the west of the A6, many visitors think it is in Kibworth Beauchamp.



Marriott Drive, built in the 1990s.



Bungalows along New Road near the A6 junction

The Kibworth Business Park on the A6 provides office units of varying sizes. The Priors Business Park off Wistow Road currently provides 240sqm of industrial units, and a proposal to increase this by a further 8,000 sqm was approved by the District Council in 2016.

By far the greatest change to Kibworth Harcourt has been in the last decade, with the addition of some 550 houses in the Kibworth Meadows development to the west of the A6 off Wistow Road. The southern part of the estate off Barnard's Way crosses the parish boundary and lies within Kibworth Beauchamp. This development meant constructing a roundabout at the junction of the A6 with Wistow Road adjacent to the listed Manse and close to the former Congregational Chapel.



The new A6 roundabout at junction with Wistow Road Footway through Kibworth Meadows maintaining original public footpaths



Open area off Dairy Way on Kibworth Meadows estate Children's Play Area on Polwell Road in new estate

PROFILES OF THE PLAN AREA FROM 2011 CENSUS DATA KIBWORTH

HARCOURT

This is the smaller parish but has seen the largest percentage growth in population in 10 years of 38% to 1368 residents. Households have grown to 582 due to a large housing development in the Parish.

The parish has a higher than average percentage of residents aged 0-15 at 22.5%, compared with 19.1% (Harborough), 18.5% (East Midlands) and 18.9% (England), although there is a smaller proportion aged 16-64.

There is also an above average percentage of lone parent households (8.2%) compared with Harborough (4.7%). In 2001 the figure was 4%.

Ill health is lower than average.

There are more detached and terraced houses than average, but fewer semi-detached houses than in the wider district.

More people travel to work by car than nationally and this has increased by a higher % than in the district, region or England.

At 36.9% there is a higher proportion of residents with Level 4 Qualifications, this is above the level in the district, region or England.

Kibworth Harcourt has a higher proportion of residents in lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations than in the district, region or England. However, there are fewer small employers and people in routine or semi routine professions.

The density of residents per hectare has increased from 1.7 to 2.3; this is lower than the national average, but higher than the 2011 district level of 1.4.

There is a higher % of people renting social housing (10.5%) compared with across Harborough (8.4%) but this figure is well below the regional and national figures. Homeownership is less than across Harborough but still higher than regionally and nationally.

Kibworth Beauchamp

Between 2001 and 2011 the population grew by 7%, to 4065 residents and 1702 households. This is below the average growth for Harborough of 11.5% but not too different from the growth in the East Midlands and England.

The proportion of residents aged over 65 (20.7%) and aged 90 and over (1.6%) is higher than the average in the district, region and England. The percentage increase in people over 90 is 113%. However, there is a smaller proportion than average of residents aged 25-44 (21.9%) than in the district, region and England.

The percentage of people who class themselves as long term sick or disabled has fallen by 42.4% and percentage of people looking after home or family and not working has fallen by 47.3%.

Using the car to get to work (33.3%) is higher than the average in the district, region or England, but it is lower than in Kibworth Harcourt.

The density of residents has increased from 7.2 to 7.7 people per hectare. This is far higher than the levels in Harborough District overall (1.4), regionally (2.9) or in England (4.1).

Like Kibworth Harcourt there is a higher proportion of residents in lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations (28%) than in the district, region or England.

Household tenure has a higher proportion of residents in social and private rented accommodation than in the district. With a 169.6% increase in the private rented sector,

this is a far larger increase than in the District (157.3%), Region (123.7%) and England (106.6%).

There is very little shared ownership, and the numbers haven't changed in 10 years.

Recent developments in the Kibworth villages

Like many rural villages, The Kibworth villages has seen further development since 2011 which has impacted on the scale of the two parishes.

In 2011 the total dwellings in the Kibworth villages was as follows:

Kibworth Harcourt	582
Kibworth Beauchamp	1702

TOTAL - 2284

Since 2011 the level of further development has been as follows (dwellings completed 2011–March 2016):

Kibworth Harcourt	492
Kibworth Beauchamp	74

TOTAL - 566

Thus, the total dwellings in the Kibworth villages as at April 2016 is 2850 (Kibworth Harcourt 1074 and Kibworth Beauchamp 1776).

This represents an increase of 25% in dwellings within the Kibworth villages between 2011 and 2016.