

# Wick 2020

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## Shaping the future

### Introduction

Wick is a village of about 430 residents situated 2 miles southeast of the market town of Pershore. It has a history that dates back to Pre-Roman times and there are still buildings that date from Elizabethan times, many are Grade 1&2 listed.

The parish is lozenge shaped and bordered to the north and west by the river Avon. It is bisected by the B4084 (formerly A44). The “core” of the village lies on separate roads to the north but there are a number of houses that front directly onto the B4084. An OS map and an old depiction are included in the plan. To the southwest of the parish lies the Pershore Horticultural College, which has little impact on the village, other than providing employment and advice for some of the residents.

The farming is mixed agriculture with a large part to the north of the village flood plain and river terrace land. Apart from farming and a few small businesses run from home, the village is purely residential with a typical mix of owned and rented accommodation (80:20) for the county but not necessarily for a village like Wick.

Because of the close proximity to Pershore the village does not have a school, shop or village pub. It does have a

thriving club and many other societies that are described more fully in the plan. The population has an older profile than many villages with nearly half the residents being over 60 and 70% over 45.

It is against this background that the parish council decided in mid 2008 to create a parish plan and this was launched with an awareness campaign at the annual Village Fete in September 2008.



Photo: Wick Fete

## The benefits of a plan

The benefits of a plan include

- The views of the community will be recorded and acted upon.
- Local services and facilities should be improved.
- Housing will meet local needs and be of an appropriate scale and character.
- Public authorities, plan-

ners and agencies will be more likely to take note and accept our wishes.

- Everyone will have an opportunity to express their views.
- Pride in the parish environment will be enhanced.
- Widespread unsympathetic development will be discouraged.

- The parish will retain its essential rural character
- To secure the plan as a local information source for the local strategic partnership.

A survey of the views of the residents about a wide range of issues was conducted in the spring of 2009 and the results presented at an open

meeting held in Wick club in the late spring. This survey provides the background to this plan and represents a wide representation of the views and wishes of the people of the parish. About 70% of households replied to the survey but the response from the “core” of the village was far higher as the response from the outlying homes was very low.

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## Introduction continued

Maps of the parish and photographs show changes that have taken place over the last century. Respondents were asked to provide comments and where appropriate many of these are included together with the detailed thoughts of a young but lifelong member of the village.

Overall the plan is not a blueprint for the next ten years but a statement of where the village is and how it would like to improve and evolve over the coming years.



Photo: Post box in Main Street

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## Acknowledgements

*“Thanks to everyone who has helped in making the Wick Parish Plan possible.”*

One of the requirements of village plans is that they are inclusive of the whole community and for this reason a survey was carried out in spring 2009. Another measure of the inclusiveness has been the very large number of people who have been involved in some way in the production of the document.

This is not only the members of the Steering Committee, who have put in an enormous amount of work, but the volunteers who have helped deliver and coordinate the questionnaire. Mention should also be made of the photographers of the village who have contributed their works and several people who have written

for the final document.

It is obviously not possible to thank everyone by name but please accept my thanks on behalf of the Village for all the work you have done.

David Scott

*“This is not just where I live, it is my home.”  
A young life-time resident*

## Wick Village History

Archaeologists tell us that men lived here as long ago as the Stone Age, but today the most obvious indications of earlier habitation are the crop marks and broken pottery of two or more Romano-British settlements in fields near the village. These, like many others, would have been small farming communities established on the fertile flood plain of the Avon in the days when wolves would still have prowled the forest which stretched down the lower slopes of Bredon Hill.

For documentary evidence of Wick's history we have to wait until AD709, when several farms given to support the new Benedictine Abbey of Evesham were known as Wikewane. Two and a half centuries later, when it was regranted to Pershore Abbey instead, the hamlet still com-

prised only ten farms, each probably representing no more than one family.

Soon after King William's arrival in 1066, his Domesday survey shows the village having passed into the hands of new Norman lords, and supporting perhaps 100 inhabitants on something like 600 acres. It is interesting to reflect that, after further centuries of land clearance from the ancient forest and scrub, modern Wick covers about three times this area, and has a population of over 500, very few of whom are these days involved in agriculture, which was the very reason for the village being founded here in the first place.

The Domesday Book also confirms that by 1086 most of Wick formed part of the Abbot of Westminster's

manor of Pershore. Thereafter the two original Norman manors, known later as Wike Burnell and Wyke Warwyn, although adjacent continued in separate ownership of descent, forfeiture, purchase or gift for a full five hundred years, and their two manor houses still existed in modernised form until recent times.

With the exception of the church, parts of which are believed to be 800 years old, nothing now remains of the other buildings of those days. Houses then were impermanent structures and have not survived, as it was not until 500 years ago that construction methods became sufficiently advanced to produce homes capable of lasting until the present day. The availability of timber, and local tradition, meant that here as in other areas of the country houses were built almost exclusively of wood rather than of stone, and Wick now still has a number of timbered houses from late medieval times. Five of the oldest among them are cruck-built, and if we can ignore their modern surroundings the old cottages give us just some little idea of what the village must have looked like before Christopher Columbus discovered America.



Photo: Historic cottage in Main Street

## Wick Village History Continued

*“It is imperative that we look forward to the next hundred years.”*

Eventually, as the two manors passed from hand to hand, Wyke Warwyn was bought by Edward Hazlewood, a landowner from Offenham, and at much the same time Wike Burnell, which had once been the property of Katherine Parr, was given by Elizabeth I to her favourite, Sir Walter Raleigh who promptly sold it to Edward Hazlewood’s son.

Thus the two manors were at last combined, and remained under the ownership of one family for two centuries, just as they have done under the Hudsons in more recent times.

Throughout all this time, with life becoming more settled and secure, Wick was gradually changing and growing into something like the village we know today.

Then, stimulated by the need to improve agriculture, from the mid 1700s onwards Parliament began to sweep away the old haphazard and time wasting distribution of thousands of individual strip holdings by reallocating land more sensibly, redefining boundaries and above all enclosing former common land, often to the detriment of the peasantry. In the case of Wick the Enclosure Award of 1807 cleared away once and for all the ancient pattern of land holdings, and at the same time designated which of the old paths and track ways criss-crossing the village would become official Carriageways, and thus remain as today’s roads.

Eighty years earlier, as a prelude to these great upheavals, the Evesham to Wick (and later Pershore) Turnpike –

today’s B4104 – was authorised by an Act of Parliament in 1728, bisecting many of the fields on the south side of the village street. At first such new roads were little better than the potholed and frequently impassable tracks they replaced, but experience was slowly gained and the gradually improving turnpikes came in the end to represent the nucleus of a modern transport system. When we rush through Wick on the main road today we should remember that we are driving over the primitive foundations laid down by the turnpike trustees workmen nearly 300 years ago, and that these were usually constructed from stones picked from the adjacent fields by village women and children labouring for a pittance.

Now, in the early years of a new millennium, as we look back over so very many centuries and lifetimes, it is natural to wonder what the future holds for communities such as ours. In common with all society, Wick has undergone the greatest changes of its whole existence in just the last hundred years. In these rapidly changing times it is imperative that we look forward and plan for the next hundred.

Laurie Clifton-Crick



Photo: View towards the old school from the village photo archive.

## What makes Wick special

*“Wick can offer a future for its children who want to stay here”*

“I think what makes Wick such a lovely place to live is how the village has developed, evolved and grown slowly with time, and retains as a key element of its character its history and people and families.

I have lived in the village for 25 years, and most of the faces have been the same ones throughout this time. There are lots of families in this village that have been here for many years and many generations, and I believe that they are the key to the community and character of Wick. The community is

bound by stability, familiarity, a shared past and it is vital to remember that when looking to the future. It’s important to ensure that Wick can offer a future for its children who want to stay here; that they are not priced out of the village, but it has never been a village with a big turnover of people, and if that were to change with too much new housing, I think the village would suffer.

The architecture and environment of the village illustrates its character- the village has developed slowly and gradually and the build-

ings show that- thatched cottages sit next to barn conversions, next to Victorian semis and mid 20<sup>th</sup> century ex-council housing. And between them are fields and cattle and ponds and working farmland. Its evolution has been natural and easy, and at some point it will reach a natural conclusion.

It is important that Wick continues to move and grow with the times, but it is essential for the village that its history and people and character are remembered, so its heart is preserved.” A life-long, young resident of the village.

*“ It is important that Wick continues to move and grow with the times...but its heart is preserved.”*

Photo: Wyke Manor in the snow

