

Community groups

Desford is served by many active and buoyant community groups as listed below

Beaufort Entertainers

The Entertainers are a group of people from the local community who enjoy singing. Founded in **2006** the choir hold two concerts a year; one in the summer and one as part of the Christmas Tree Festival. Rehearsals are held in St Martin's Church on Monday evenings.

Desford in Bloom (DiB)

DiB was founded in 2016 with the objective of encouraging the community to improve the appearance of the village and generate a feeling of pride and community cohesion. DiB's first entry in the 2016 East-Midlands in Bloom competition saw them winning a Silver Gilt Award and a Judges Special Award for the Watering Team. In 2017 they achieved a Gold Award and repeated this in 2018 with a Judges Special Award for the Desford Plane.

Other community activities organised by DiB include:

- ◆ Welly Workshop
- ◆ Quiz Night
- ◆ Scarecrow Festival
- ◆ Wreath Making Workshop

Desford Allotment Garden Association (DAGA)

DAGA was founded in 2009. Its objectives are to encourage plot holders to have pride in their allotments; to make the site an attraction to the local community and a sought-after place for families to meet, to enjoy fresh air, home grown produce and a healthy lifestyle.

DAGA has successfully applied for funding for projects from various sources to improve the infrastructure of the allotment site. These include improved access to the allotments, a car park, security fencing, compostable toilet, a shipping container used as a storage facility and another container for use as a meeting room; all of which have led to an increased uptake of allotment plots.

The Desford Produce Show organised by DAGA is recognised by the Horticultural Guild of Show Judges to have the largest section of entries for young persons in Leicestershire and Warwickshire.

For the future DAGA's aim is to continue to improve the site facilities, raise funds and help to sustain the future of the site.

Desford Community Action Group [DCAG]

Desford Community Action Group grew out of the 2001 Desford Parish Appraisal. The idea was to work alongside the Parish Council in order to make Desford Parish a great place to live.

Since then DCAG have raised money for and designed the play areas at Pickard Recreation Ground and Kirby Road Recreation Ground and initiated the bi annual Open Gardens Weekend, the first of which was in 2007. It then took the lead in many other projects, including some environmental ones in conjunction with the Open Gardeners. Projects have included: quizzes, erection of a village sign, litter picks, welcome packs, Sunday walking group, bulb planting, renovation of Pickard Jitty Garden, Christmas Lights for the Library and local businesses, helping organise Desford Together at SiD and setting up Desford Good Neighbours Scheme.

Other village groups have evolved over time and have taken over some of DCAG's activities. Consequently the group is currently concentrating on providing Community Grants and giving financial support to Desford Good Neighbours Scheme, using the profits from the quizzes. It will continue to organise the Open Gardens Weekends and, in conjunction with the Open Gardeners, look after the Pickard Jitty Garden. This year they paid for the replacement of 3 stiles with gates and hope to continue this project in future. The current project is the renovation of the Strict Baptist Cemetery on High Street (subject to approval by the Parish Council) which will be funded by the profits from Open Gardens 2017.

DCAG is open to new ventures and supportive of any projects which make Desford "A great place to Live."

Desford Local History Society

Formed in the 1980s to promote the study and research of local history and archaeology, the Society are members of the Leicestershire and Rutland Heritage Forum (lrhf.co.uk). Meetings are held at 7.30pm on the third Tuesday of alternate months in Desford Free Church.

The Society has amassed large archives of local materials, consisting of documents, photographs, books, oral recordings and other artefacts which are used to produce exhibitions and booklets on the history of Desford.

The archives are stored at Sport In Desford (SiD) where archivists are currently creating a digital database. Local history enquiries are welcome and visitors are welcome by prior arrangement.

Loving Hands

Loving Hands is a monthly meeting for people who enjoy handicrafts such as sewing, knitting or crochet. Items made by the group, including clothes, blankets, quilts, baby items and teddies are donated to many charities both home and abroad.

The annual collaboration with Bosworth Academy, known as the Sewathon, has been running for 7 years. Other community activities instigated by the group include making white roses and flags for the re interment of Richard III on 22nd March 2015 and poppy workshops for the Centenary of WWI.

Future Aspirations are to:

- Continue to make items for charities
- Work with the local community/community groups
- To reach out to the more isolated and younger groups
- To run skill sharing workshops

Desford Tapestry

The objective is to embroider a tapestry depicting the history and life of Desford. The planning and manufacture will be carried out by members of the local community. The design was launched in September 2018 and stitching is now underway.

In addition, an Educational resources group will be set up to work with schools and children's groups, producing paper and practical curriculum-influenced activities related to the Tapestry.

Once complete, a management team will be required to oversee the use and protection of The Tapestry.

Desford Free Church

In 1790 the little chapel of the Strict Baptists was built in High Street, but only the graveyard with a few stones remains. In 1854, the Wesleyans and the Independents had chapels in the village. The Free Church, affiliated to the Baptist Union, was built in Chapel Lane in the mid 1880s.

The Free Church hosts a variety of clubs and activities, including: Chapel Lane Playgroup, Men's Club, Friends and Neighbours, Chattabox Club and Torch Club

Friends & Neighbours Group

The objective is for 'Friends & Neighbours' to get together and to enjoy one another's company. The group meet every 3rd Thursday in the month. Activities include speakers on many different subjects, listening to music or just talking. Light refreshments are provided.

Torch Fellowship Group

The Group is part of the Torch Fellowship organisation based at Market Harborough and is open to all who are blind and partially sighted. It is held every 2nd Tuesday in the month and alternates between Desford Free Church & Newbold Baptist Chapel. Activities include local speakers from different walks of life and musical afternoons. Light refreshments are provided.

The main desire would be that more people from the local communities would join the group.

Wednesday Club

The Wednesday Club is part of DFC's outreach and service to the community. It meets at the Free Church every Wednesday from 2-4 pm. Activities include dominoes and bingo. Light refreshments are provided.

Men's Group

The group started in the 1980s to foster friendship and fellowship amongst the men folk of the village. The group meet on the 2nd Thursday of each month from September to June. Each meeting is planned by a different member. The format of the meetings includes:-

- 5 meetings with guest speakers
- 2 social meetings involving kurling and bowling
- A visit to a place of interest
- A charity concert
- Annual AGM and meal

Chattabox

Chattabox is a weekly term time club for children in Foundation through to Year 5 and is part of DFC's children and young people's work.

It meets on a Tuesday evening from 5.15-6.15 pm. Activities include cooking, games and a Bible story. The cost is £1 per child each week. It is a very happy group and we have lots of fun. New members will be very welcome.

Lunch Club

The Lunch Club is part of DFC's outreach and service to the community for older folk. It meets every 3rd Tuesday of the month at 12.15 pm at the Free Church. The meal is 2 courses with tea or coffee. Diners make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of their meals.

St Martin's Parish Church

The Parish Church of St. Martin's is a late 13th century Grade II listed building with a Norman font. The west tower and spire are Perpendicular Gothic (14th to 16th century). The church clock is one of the oldest in the county; it has a cable and weights mechanism and dates back to the 1630s-1640s. The architect Stockdale Harrison of Leicester restored St. Martin's in 1884. In 2015 major remedial work was carried out to the structure of the building, during which a kitchen and toilets were installed and the main altar was moved to the north wall of the church. The tower has a ring of six bells, all cast by John Taylor & Co of Loughborough in 1912.

St. Martin's is a very active church with many groups such as Messy Church; Youth Group; Church Choir, Beaufort Entertainers; Tuesday Lunches; Charity Lunches; Rainbows toddlers group.

Choir

The choir has about 20 members and practices in church on Thursday evenings and before the morning service on Sundays.

Church Bell ringers

The bell ringers practice on Monday evenings and ring the bells for Sunday services and other special occasions as required. There is also a hand-bell section.

Church Lunches

Lunches are served in the Church on the 1st Saturday in the month to raise money for a variety of charities. All food and drinks are provided and served by volunteers.

Lunches are served in the Church Centre on the 2nd Tuesday in the month, following Coffee & Chat.

Coffee and Chat

On Tuesday mornings a community drop-in cafe, staffed by local volunteers, is open in the Church Centre. Books, bric-a-brac and clothes are available to purchase.

Craft Group

The Craft Group meets in St Martin's Church on Thursday mornings. It is a social meeting for people who enjoy handicrafts such as sewing and knitting. Projects have included making new altar cloths for the Church, items for the summer fete and Christmas Tree Festival and poppies for the centenary celebrations for WW1.

St Martin's Messy Church

Messy Church is a global Christian initiative to encourage families to attend church by making the church a fun place to be. Values are Christ-centred, for all ages, based on creativity, hospitality and celebration.

Messy Church meets on the 4th Sunday in the month in the Church Centre: an opportunity for families with young children to share fun activities based on a Bible Story. For those over 11, Awesome Youuff takes place in St Martin's Church at the same time. Both sessions end with a meal.

St Martin's Church Centre

The Centre is available to the community for regular or one-off group hire, at modest charges. Facilities include disabled access, reception, kitchen, main hall, small meeting room and toilets. The main hall seats 80 and the meeting room seats 4 - 6. The Centre has a performing rights licence and a digital projector and screen.

Regular users of the hall include community groups such as Coffee & Chat, lunches, Mums & Toddlers (Rainbows), AA and also a polling station as well as hosting table tennis club, dance classes and a Diabetic Clinic. It is used for community events such as Open Gardens, the Produce Show, Scarecrow Festival and Martinmas Fair.

The Forget me Not Café

The Forget me Not Café meets at the Church Centre on the 3rd Thursday in the month (and at Newbold Verdon Library on the 1st Thursday). It provides social activities for people with memory loss and dementia and help and support for carers. Activities include board games, cards, dominoes, jigsaws, colouring, exercise and reminiscing therapies.

The aim is to prevent isolation and provide a relaxed atmosphere where members and carers can find help, encouragement and friendship. Refreshments are provided.

Desford Village Hall

Desford Village Hall was previously the Miners' Institute and is located in Lindridge Lane. It has a fully equipped kitchen and toilets; accommodates up to 100 people and has a performing rights licence. There is a hearing loop and limited, on-road parking. The hall is a registered charity (No.: 226627) in the custody of Desford Parish Council and managed by the trustees. There are regular users, including Baby Massage, Yoga and Upholstery, as well as community events such as quizzes, concerts and Craft Fairs.

Botcheston Village Hall

This is an attractive village hall with a newly refurbished kitchen, fully equipped bar, central heating, seating for approximately 70 and a spacious car park. The building is owned by the Parish Council and managed by Botcheston Village Hall Committee. As well as regular users, there is a programme of community events throughout the year.

Kirby Grange Retirement Village



The Retirement Home is located in the grounds of the former Desford Industrial School, Markfield Lane, Botcheston.

The village consists of 88 two bedroom bungalows built in 1990.

The old school building was sold to a private owner and now lies derelict and unused.

Girlguiding in Desford



Current situation

After many years without any Girlguiding provision in the village at all, we now have three thriving units and the number of girls involved in each is steadily increasing; Rainbows (5 – 7 years), Brownies (7 – 10 years) and Guides (10 – 14 years). Girls of all ages now have the opportunity to have fun, make life-long friends, learn new skills, explore new places, take part in trips and holidays through being a member of one of the 1st Desford Girlguiding units. All of the units meet on a Tuesday in St Martin's Church Centre and are led by a qualified leader who is supported by additional volunteers. The girls take part in a range of age appropriate activities such as songs, games, crafts, visits to places of local interest, local events (Scarecrow Festival, Remembrance Sunday service, Christmas Tree Festival) sleepovers, camps, a night hike and much more.

Future plans

- Increase opportunities for young people through working with Desford Scouts to introduce a joint Senior Section, for older children
- Recruit more adult volunteer helpers to work with current leaders
- Continue to encourage local residents/organisations to work with the girls – eg Desford Dental Care, Barns Charity etc
- Have a designated storage area within the Church Centre for resources and equipment
- Get Girlguiding approval to hold sleepovers in SiD

Desford Scout Group

Beavers

For girls and boys aged 6-8. Beavers are encouraged to try a wide range of new activities. They learn about important cultural events and awareness of their community, how to help others and to look after their village and the countryside. Beavers often spend their first ever night away from their

parents at a Beaver sleepover or camp. Activities may include celebrating Burns Night, walks in the countryside and making a finger puppet for the creative badge.

Cubs

For girls and boys aged 8 to 10½. Respect for others, the local community, nature and the countryside are important themes for the Cubs. There are organised camps and sleepovers each year which include activities such as karting, climbing, archery, shooting, mountain biking and canoeing as well as traditional Scouting skills such as camp fire cooking and shelter building, map reading and orienteering and participation in national Cub Scout activities. Cubs are encouraged to celebrate key cultural events and become thoughtful participants in community activities.

Scouts

For girls and boys aged 10½ to 14 years old. There is a big emphasis on physical activity and personal challenge, with regular opportunities to pursue activities such as kayaking, climbing/abseiling, tobogganing, swimming, shooting/archery, pot holing, mountain biking, outdoor cooking, pioneering, hiking, orienteering and first aid. Scouts are also encouraged to become considerate and helpful members of the community by helping at village events, fundraising for charity and caring for their surroundings by carrying out litter picks and planting flower beds. Scouts spend many nights away on camps, night hikes and expeditions where they are able to practice their skills with increasing independence. Being a Scout gives young people the perfect platform from which to launch themselves into adult life with confidence in their own worth and capabilities.

Explorers

The group has recently started an Explorer Section for girls & boys over 14 years old.

Group aspirations

Each section strives to keep their members engaged, learning and growing into well rounded individuals, but the main theme of Scouting is to HAVE FUN!

Three Villages Walking Group

The three villages of Desford, Newbold Verdon & Barlestone offer two concurrent walks every Wednesday morning; each village organising the walks every three months in rotation. The routes utilise all of the public footpaths around each village thus helping to keep the pathways clear as the group informs the local authority of any problems they may encounter such as broken stiles or maintenance issues.

Footpaths:

Desford is extremely well served by footpaths extending in every direction. They are well maintained by the County Council.

Although good pedestrian access exists along two of the main entrance routes into Desford (Station Road and Hunts Lane), problems exist along the other three routes:

1. Lindridge Lane where currently no room exists on the verges along the route from the village boundary outwards for pedestrianisation
2. On Leicester Lane, where the grass verges are wide enough to accommodate a footpath on at least one side of the road, no footpath has been provided between the entrance of Bosworth Academy and 200 metres before the entrance to Park House Farm
3. On Peckleton Lane, a good footpath exists between the A47 and Caterpillar Entrance No 1, and from the village to Sport in Desford; however between Sport in Desford and Caterpillar entrance

No 1, no footpath has been provided, although the grass verge is wide enough to accommodate one.

The lack of footpaths on these three routes creates a hazard in wet or muddy conditions where pedestrians have to choose to walk on muddy verges or on the carriageways.

Close liaison is needed with County Council Highways department and any future developers to take full advantage of any opportunity to provide the missing sections of the footpaths along these routes.

The above comments are equally applicable to cycle paths along these routes. With a large population of students at Bosworth Academy, it is very desirable to separate cyclists from pedestrians and vehicular traffic and every opportunity needs to be fully utilised to achieve this as much as possible.

Good Neighbours Scheme

The Desford Good Neighbours Scheme is in its 5th year of operation. It is a scheme available to residents in Desford, Botcheston and Newtown Unthank who may need the help and assistance of a Good Neighbour to perform a task or provide transport to an appointment. There is a team of coordinators and volunteers who respond to residents' requests. The group's ambition is to continue to be available to residents into the future and remain a source of help within the community.

Botcheston Women's Institute

The local branch of the Women's Institute meets on the 4th Thursday in the month at Botcheston Village Hall. As well as a monthly speaker, there is a craft group, theatre trips and the opportunity to take part in lots of county-wide activities.

Desford Wine Circle – hold monthly meetings at Sport in Desford.

Rainbows Baby & Toddler Group

The Rainbows Club meet in the Church Centre on Wednesday mornings in term time. It is a loosely structured play group. Activities include an art table and singing.

Desford Ladies Group

Desford Ladies Group meets at the Church Centre in the afternoon on the 2nd Wednesday in the month, apart from January; with an outing in July.

Sport in Desford (SiD)

Sport in Desford (SiD) was set up as an independent organisation by Desford Parish Council (DPC) in 1988 and it became a Registered Charity (No. 1100319) in 2003. DPC acquired the 5-acre plot on Peckleton Lane from Caterpillar UK in 1988 and SiD has developed what was a derelict site ever since; including the building of the double storey clubhouse, the Scout Hall (funded by DPC) and the extra tennis court.

The site now comprises a full size football pitch, a bowls green and 3 floodlit tennis courts, all facilitated by the clubhouse with over 80 parking spaces. The site is owned by Desford Parish Council and rented to Sport in Desford (on a peppercorn rent of £1 p.a. for 99 years from January 2009). The site is also protected by a Fields in Trust Deed (No. 377QE), which protects it from development into perpetuity.

SiD provides for the following sports and activities, mainly focused on the site at Peckleton Lane, but with some on a 2.5 acre site at Kirkby Road Recreation Ground:

1. Football
 - o Desford FC: 20 junior teams and 5 senior teams including ladies and girls teams (many of the junior teams play at Bosworth Academy); total members over 300
 - o Desford Cobras FC
 - o Leicester Forest East FC
Playing on 1 pitch at Peckleton Lane and 2 pitches at Kirkby Road
2. Tennis
 - o Desford Lawn Tennis Club with 130 members
Playing on 3 outdoor floodlit courts
3. Squash
 - o Squash Club with around 60 members runs 2 ladies teams and 1 men's team
Playing on 2 indoor courts
4. Bowls
 - o Desford Bowls Club with 33 members
Playing on a full size well maintained green
5. Running
 - o Desford Striders Running Club with 220 members
6. Athletics
 - o Desford Flyers Athletics Club with 80 members; junior members only
7. Table Tennis
 - o Adult Club plays twice weekly
 - o Junior Club plays twice weekly
 - o U3A and a private club each play once a week
Using up to 6 tables in the Scout Hall
8. Recreational Fitness
 - o Desford Gym with 150 members
 - o Leading provider for GP Referral and Heart Smart patients
Using well equipped gym

Sport in Desford also offers:

Pilates, Tai Chi, Yoga, Circuit class, Mature Movers, Karate, all forms of Dance, the Inclusive Club, MacMillan Cancer Activity Club, Over 50s Fun and Fitness Club, Tiny Tots Music and Movement

SiD Inclusive Club

The Inclusive Club is devised for people with physical and learning disabilities and takes place on the 4th Tuesday each month 10am to 12 noon. Activities include a choice of table tennis, indoor curling, tennis, gym and dance with a social refreshment break in the middle.

SiD Over 50s Club

The over 50s Fun and Fitness Club takes place on the 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of each month. Activities include tennis, dance, gym, table tennis and indoor curling. Light refreshments are provided. All activities are run by qualified instructors and people get involved as much or as little as they want, and at their own pace.

SiD MacMillan Cancer Activity Club

The Macmillan Cancer Activity Club takes place on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. The club is open to anybody associated with cancer including carers and family members. Activities include tennis, dance, gym, table tennis and indoor curling. Light refreshments are provided. All activities are run by qualified instructors and people get involved as much or as little as they want, and at their own pace.

Given the extensive increase in housing over in the last few years, the Parish may see a need to purchase extra land in order to extend these facilities further at some point in the future.

AMENITIES

Desford Library

Desford has a small community run library, entirely manned by volunteers. It provides a range of services for the Parish. The library is designed to be accessible for the disabled with an entrance ramp, automatic doors and wide aisles. There is a car park at the rear of the building. It is open for about 15 hours a week. A Storytime for pre-school children and carers takes place on the 2nd & 4th Thursday mornings during term time. A Knit, Stitch & Natter group meets on Thursday mornings. A Book Club meets on the 4th Wednesday evening in the month. Book Sales are held every other month to raise funds for the library.

Desford Parish Council office is located in the library.

SCHOOLS & NURSERIES

Bosworth Academy

Bosworth Academy is a large 11-19 school with approximately 1350 pupils situated on the edge of Desford village. Inspected by Ofsted in October 2017, the Academy was judged Outstanding in all areas. Bosworth Academy is part of the LiFE Multi-Academy Trust. It has a small nursery on site, Bosworth Academy Day Nursery, catering for 20 children.

Bosworth Academy has a full range of facilities including a Library, Sports Hall, Assembly Hall, Gym, Drama Studio, Music Studio, Sports Dome, Swimming Pool (open to the local community at specific times throughout the year), Science Laboratories, Design Workshop and ICT Suite and a purpose built Maths Block.

Desford Community Primary School

Desford Community Primary School is a vibrant and flourishing Local Authority maintained school. It has approaching 400 pupils aged 5 to 11 in twelve classes and is in the midst of significant growth, due to both the popularity of the school and large-scale house building in the village.

The school's Ofsted Report in July 2017 rated the school as continuing to be 'Good'. The report highlighted the many strengths of the school, the improvements that have been made and the positive outcomes for its growing number of pupils.

The expansion of the school's teaching facilities in recent years has been funded from Section 106 funding, provided by housing developers, and Basic Need capital funding from the Local Authority. The school has worked successfully with the Local Authority to deliver carefully managed solutions that support effective Teaching and Learning. The school will have the ability to accommodate 420 pupils when current expansion plans are completed.

The school's site has the capacity to accommodate further expansion if the need for further housing development is required within the school's catchment area. However, like all schools, there has been an increase in traffic congestion and parking issues around the school at the start and end of the day. Further expansion of the school would need to address these issues. These can be resolved with careful planning and appropriate levels of funding.

Topsham House Day Nursery

Topsham House Day Nursery is dedicated to providing the highest standard of childcare and facilities for young children of the Parish and beyond. The Nursery was inspected by Ofsted (223281) in

September 2018 and was rated as "Good" with children's emotional security, communication, language and thinking skills being highlighted.

Bosworth Academy Day Nursery

The Nursery is situated on the Academy premises in Leicester Lane, Desford. It was inspected by Ofsted (EY455967) and was rated "Good" in March 2017.

Chapel Lane Playgroup

The Playgroup provides pre-school care for the Under 5s and is based at Desford Free Church in Chapel Lane, Desford. It is open 5 mornings per week. It was inspected by Ofsted(226377) and rated "Good" in March 2017.

CONVENIENCE STORES

There are 3 convenience stores in Desford: the Co-operative have two stores at 1 High Street and 23 Newbold Road. The other store is Desford Express at 47 St Martin's Drive which also contains the Post Office.

Food Outlets

There are 3 Food Outlets in Desford: the Food Room by the central roundabout, Desford Fish Bar at 41 - 43 St Martin's Drive and Village Balti & Pizza at 45 St Martin's Drive.

PUBLIC HOUSES

There are three public houses and one restaurant in the parish of Desford.

The Blue Bell Inn, 39 High Street, provides lunches and evening meals and Bed & Breakfast. There is also a garden and play area, a family friendly Beer Garden and live sport.

The Lancaster Arms, Station Road, provides restaurant & bar meals, is family friendly and runs a beer garden and a Sunday carvery.

The Greyhound Inn, Main Street, Botcheston, has recently been refurbished and serves evening meals and Sunday lunches.

Pesto at the White Horse, Leicester Lane, is an Italian restaurant.

RECREATION GROUNDS

Kirkby Road Playing Field

The playing field is owned and maintained by Desford Parish Council and consists of a 2 hectare site, complete with a well equipped playground for older children and a car park for approximately 20 cars. There is a Changing Room and 2 football pitches on site.

Pickard Park

The park is owned and maintained by Desford Parish Council and consists of a quarter hectare site, complete with an extensive trim trail and a fenced playground for younger children.

Botcheston Recreation Ground

The recreation ground is owned and maintained by Desford Parish Council and has children's play equipment.

OPEN SPACES

Open spaces have been provided in Desford as an integral part of housing developments, including:

- Informal open space at Forest Rise
- Open space for ball games and children's play equipment at Bluebell Green

LEISURE

Tropical Birdland

Tropical Birdland is situated on the northern outskirts of Desford village in a 2.5 hectare sanctuary for over 250 parrots and other exotic birds from around the world. It is owned by Richard Hopper, who moved to the site in Lindridge Lane in 1982. Over time, what started as a hobby became his business and it is now a thriving facility with a regional reputation, which provides local employment not only in looking after the birds but also in the attached cafe. It is rated No. 2 "Things to do in Leicester" and recommended on Trip Advisor.