



Dispatched: 20.03.12

ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

27 March 2012 at 5.00 pm

CONFERENCE ROOM, ARGYLE ROAD, SEVENOAKS

AGENDA

Membership:

Chairman: Cllr. Fleming

Cllrs: Mrs. Bayley, Bosley, Brookbank, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Davison, Grint, Mrs. Hunter, Ms. Lowe and Mrs. Sargeant

Apologies for absence

1. Declarations of Interest
2. Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 October 2011 (Pages 1 - 24)
3. Community Governance Review (Pages 25 - 212)
4. Polling Districts and Polling Places Review (Pages 213 - 216)

EXEMPT ITEMS

At the time of preparing this agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public.

To assist in the speedy and efficient despatch of business, Members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the appropriate Director or Contact Officer named on a report prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you require a copy of this agenda or any of the reports listed on it in another format please do not hesitate to contact the Democratic Services Team as set out below.

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The Democratic Services Team (01732 227241)

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ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Electoral Arrangements Committee held on
27 October 2011 commencing at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)
Cllr. Mrs Hunter (Vice-Chairman)
Cllrs. Mrs Bayley, Bosley, Brookbank, Mrs. Davison, Ms Lowe and Mrs Sargeant.

Apologies: Cllr. Mrs. Clark.

1. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING MUNICIPAL YEAR

Resolved: That Cllr. Fleming be appointed Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

2. TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING MUNICIPAL YEAR

Resolved: That Cllr. Mrs. Hunter be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 September 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5. POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW 2011

The Electoral Services Manager presented a report which advised the Committee that the Council was required to carry out a review of polling districts and polling places at least once every four years under the Electoral Administration Act 2006. The last review had been completed in 2007 and a review therefore had to be completed by the end of December 2011. The requirement to divide the district into polling districts for the purposes of elections and to provide a polling place for every district that was easily accessible to all electors, including those with disabilities, was highlighted. The report also explained the Council's practice of avoiding the use of school premises wherever possible to minimise disruption to school activities along with the intention that temporary stations should not be used on grounds of expense and that no more than 1800 electors should be allocated to a polling station. The Polling Districts and Polling Places Review process was outlined along with the timetable for the conclusion of the review. As part of this notice of the review had been given as required in the regulations, the Returning

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Officer had provided comments

on the existing polling station locations and there had been public consultation which had invited comments from a number of organisations including parish councils, District and County Councillors, local political associations and all local government electors. This consultation period had begun on 22 August and ended on 7 October 2011. The responses to the consultation were contained in Appendix A to the report.

The Electoral Services Manager explained that investigations had been carried out in six polling districts in an effort to secure permanent changes to existing venues and the options and recommendations in respect of each polling district and polling place were outlined, along with the reasons for the recommendations, in Appendix B to the report. Very few changes were proposed although it was recognised that not all locations were ideal but some were used due to lack of suitable alternatives or the non-availability of venues. It was proposed that the venues used for the 2011 elections should be retained with the exception of the East Hill and Knatts Valley Polling Districts where it was proposed to locate a double station at Woodlands Manor Golf Club where there were good parking facilities, and West Kingsdown (East) where the function room in The Portobello Inn would replace the Village Hall, which was no longer available. Enquiries had also been made about the possibility of returning to use Knole Academy East (the former Wildernesse School) as a polling place for Hillingdon and Wildernesse Polling Districts, which had not been available in 2011, and it had been confirmed that this venue could be used in future. It was therefore recommended that this should be included in the proposals contained in Appendix B to the report and the recommendations to be approved by the Council on 29 November 2011. The Electoral Services Manager stressed that the Council kept the position under review and that if more appropriate venues emerged in any of the polling districts these could be considered at any time and for this reason the review had not identified a need for many changes. It was accepted that polling arrangements in Birchwood and Kemsing West were not ideal but that these would be kept under review.

Councillor Brookbank expressed his concern at the polling arrangements made for Birchwood Polling District at the General Election but accepted that the arrangements applied at the 2011 Elections, when Birchwood electors polled at the White Oak Bowls Centre, had been better but still wondered whether a temporary polling station might be an option. Members noted that an approach had been made to the manager of the new hotel at Birchwood as a possible polling location but that this had been turned down. Councillor Mrs Hunter offered to contact the owners, Whitbreads, at a more senior level to see whether they might reconsider this position.

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that

- (1) the proposed polling scheme contained in Appendix B to the report, as amended and attached to these minutes, be approved; and
- (2) the timetable in paragraph 9 (in relation to the next phase of the

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review) be adopted.

6. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Electoral Services Manager advised the Committee that Government and Electoral Commission guidance recommended that District Councils should carry out a review of the boundary and electoral arrangements of the parishes within their areas every 10-15 years. With effect from February 2008 District Councils had taken on responsibility for carrying out these community governance reviews (formerly known as parish reviews). The last such review had been carried out in Sevenoaks in 1999 and it was proposed that a review should be carried out now both to meet the recommended timeframe and to take advantage of a small window of opportunity ahead of scheduled elections. The review would have to be completed within 12 months of the review commencing and it was proposed that the review should commence on 30 November and be completed by August 2012 with the publication of the Council's decisions in respect of parish boundaries and electoral arrangements. Any changes would take effect from the date of the next full parish council elections in May 2015. The timetable outlined in the report provided for widespread consultation to allow interested persons or groups the opportunity to input to the review including District and County Councillors, local parishes, known community groups and local MP's. Proposals could relate to the creation, merging, grouping, altering or abolition of parishes, or relate to the name of a parish or to the number of councillors or warding arrangements for parishes. It was noted that any changes to parish boundaries would have knock-on effects for neighbouring parishes and would require negotiation to gain the fullest backing of the local community and the parishes affected. The potential impact of the West Kent Cold Store development was discussed and it was noted that a development of this size could ultimately warrant the creation of a new parish.

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that

- (1) a community governance review be undertaken;
- (2) the terms of reference for the review set out in the Appendix to the report be adopted; and
- (3) the timetable for the review contained in paragraph 5 of the report be adopted.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.15 P.M.

Chairman

Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

Proposals by Sevenoaks District Council (including amendments agreed by the Electoral Arrangements Committee on 27 October 2011)

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as "new")	No. of polling stations	Reason
Ash (AA)	289	Ash Village Hall, The Street, Ash	In use at least since 1974 and well located in the village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Hodsoll Street & Ridley (AB)	452	Hodsoll Street & Ridley Village Hall, Hodsoll Street	In use at least since 1974 and situated in the heart of Hodsoll Street Village (though some distance from other community off the Gravesend Road).	1	Electorate warrants only one station
New Ash Green North West (AC)	2127	New Ash Green Youth Centre, Ash Road, New Ash Green	First used in 1981, replacing a mobile polling station situated elsewhere. Although located at one end of the polling district it is still close to all electors.	2	Electors exceed 1800
New Ash Green South East (AD)	2321	New Ash Green Village Hall, Centre Road, New Ash Green	Replaced school in 1976. Although located to one end of the polling district it is still close to all electors.	2	Electors exceed 1800

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as "new")	No. of polling stations	Reason
Brasted (AE)	763	Brasted Village Hall, High Street, Brasted	Replaced school in 1977. Well located in village but poor parking. Tried pavilion at recreation ground (better parking) at 1997 by-election but, overall, this did not find favour.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Toys Hill (AF)	371	Toys Hill Hall & Chancel Kitchen, Puddledock Lane, Toys Hill	Venue for new polling district since 2003. Previously, part of Brasted polling district which meant a very long journey to the polling station. Poor access only marginally improved by setting up polling station in kitchen (so less steps) and providing hand rail. Not possible to install a ramp. Poll cards to electors state "Difficult access for disabled or infirm".	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)	No. of polling stations	Reason
Chevening (AG)	2350	Chevening Church Hall, Homedeane Road, Chipstead	In use at least since 1974. Located at one end of main body of electors in Chipstead and Bessels Green. Suggestion of separate polling district for Bessels Green did not find favour locally in 2002.	2	Electors exceed 1800
Bough Beech (AH)	251	The Wheatsheaf at Bough Beech, Hever Road, Bough Beech	Venue since 2009 when Village Hall was no longer available. Central to the community and good parking facilities.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Chiddingstone Causeway (AI)	326	Chiddingstone Causeway Village Hall, Chiddingstone Causeway	To one end of polling district but no known alternative in rural area. Ramp provided by owners.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Chiddingstone Hoath (AJ)	168	The Rock Inn Public House, Chiddingstone Hoath	Replaced dilapidated hall in 1981. Access not ideal and site is to one end of polling district but no known alternative in rural area.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Chiddingstone Village (AK)	205	Chiddingstone Primary School, Chiddingstone Village	Well located. School prefers this arrangement to the alternative of adjacent parish hall as latter is used by school for meals.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as "new")	No. of polling stations	Reason
Cowden (AL)	650	Cowden Memorial Hall, Chantlers Mead, Cowden	Replaced school (closed down) in 1983. Well located in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Crockenhill (AM)	1326	Crockenhill Village Hall, Stones Cross Road, Crockenhill	Replaced school in 1981. Quite central to the village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Dunton Green (AN)	1723	Dunton Green Village Hall, London Road, Dunton Green	Replaced school in 1979. A little way away from the main body of electors but no alternatives have been suggested.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Marlpit Hill (AO)	1551	St. Paulinus Church Centre, Hillcrest Road, Edenbridge	Replaced Men's Club in 1979. Well located in main area of electorate.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Marsh Green (AP)	358	St. John's United Reformed Church, Marsh Green	Venue for new polling district since review of Edenbridge polling arrangements in 1997. Located close to main area of electorate.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Pound Green (AQ)	1077	Edenbridge Sports Pavilion, Lingfield Road, Edenbridge	Venue for new polling district since review of Edenbridge polling arrangements in 1997. Located at edge of main body of electors but not aware of any alternative.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)	No. of polling stations	Reason
Spitals Cross (AR)	1194	Fircroft Tenants & Residents Association, Farmstead Drive, Edenbridge	Venue for new polling district since review of Edenbridge polling arrangements in 1997. Located at the heart of the main body of electors.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Stangrove & South End (AS)	1781	Edenbridge Scout HQ, Station Road, Edenbridge	New site in 2003 after changes to District Ward boundaries. Not quite central to elongated polling district. Small step access – purpose built ramp being provided.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Town (Edenbridge) (AT)	880	Edenbridge W.I.Hall, Station Road, Edenbridge	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1981. Quite well located within polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Eynsford (AU)	1461	Eynsford Village Hall, High Street, Eynsford	Replaced school in 1981. Central to village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Farningham (AV)	1088	Farningham Village Hall, High Street, Farningham	In use at least since 1974 and well located in the village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Fawkham (AW)	475	Fawkham Village Hall, Valley Road, Fawkham	Central within Parish. Good parking. Replaced school in 1977.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as "new")	No. of polling stations	Reason
Halstead (AX)	1265	Halstead Pavilion, Station Road, Halstead	Replaced parish hall in 1997. Though not as central in village, it does provide better parking and facilities.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Hartley North (AY)	2219	Longfield & Hartley Scout HQ, Larkwell Lane, Hartley	Well located within polling district. First used in 1987 following boundary changes.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Hartley South (AZ)	2200	All Saints Church Centre, Ash Road, Hartley	Well located within polling district. Good parking. Replaced school in 1976.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Four Elms (BA)	459	Four Elms Village Hall, Ide Hill Road, Four Elms	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1981. Well located in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Hever (BB)	503	Hever Village Hall, Hever Road, Hever	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1981. Ramp provided by owners.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Hextable (BC)	3433	St. Peter's Church Hall, College Road, Hextable	In use at least since 1974. Very well located.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Horton Kirby (BD)	974	Fighting Cocks Public House, The Street, Horton Kirby	Replaced school in 1995. Electors enter via rear of building; disabled access via the bar. Quite central to village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)	No. of polling stations	Reason
South Darenth (BE)	1704	Horton Kirby & South Darenth Village Hall, Horton Road, South Darenth	Replaced fire station (poor facilities) in 1981. Although outside village, no known alternative.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Kemsing East & Kemsing West (BF/BG)	1700/1601	The St. Edith Hall, High Street, Kemsing	Replaced school in 1981. Good facilities but situated at eastern end of village. Second polling district created in 1999 for the western end and polling took place at the Town Church, Dynes Road, but Town Church pulled down in 2000. The Dynes Residential Care Home was used on one occasion but is no longer available. Retain two polling districts and continue to seek polling place for western end.	2	One polling station for each of the two polling districts
Knockholt (BH)	989	Knockholt Village Centre, Main Road, Knockholt	In use at least since 1974. Good parking. At edge of village but close to the main body of electors.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as "new")	No. of polling stations	Reason
Leigh (BI)	1452	Leigh Small Village Hall, High Street, Leigh	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1977. Ramp provided by owners. Located in village; some distance from electors in the communities of Charcott and Powdermills but no known alternatives available in these rural areas.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Otford (BJ)	2673	Otford Village Memorial Hall, High Street, Otford	Replaced school in 1981. Centrally located, good facilities.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Fordcombe (BK)	591	Fordcombe Village Hall, Fordcombe	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1981. Well located in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Penshurst (BL)	764	Penshurst Village Hall, Penshurst	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1981. Good location in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Riverhead (BM)	1890	Riverhead Village Hall, Amherst Hill, Riverhead	Replaced school in 1979. Central site but no parking; not aware of any alternatives.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Seal – St. Lawrence (BN)	377	St. Lawrence Village Hall, Church Road, Stone Street	New site in 1991 after creation of new Parish Ward. Well positioned in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)	No. of polling stations	Reason
Seal (BO)	1323	Seal Village Hall, High Street, Seal	Replaced school (probably in 1979). Quite central to village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Underriver (BP)	271	Underriver Village Hall, Carters Hill, Underriver	Replaced school (probably in 1979). Situated in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Bat & Ball (BQ)	842	Sevenoaks Community Centre, Oxford Road, Sevenoaks	This polling district was most recently altered in 2003 as a result of the Periodic Electoral Review (PER). This polling place has been used since 1984; good parking and access and close to main body of electors.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)	No. of polling stations	Reason
Bradbourne (BR)	1241	Sevenoaks Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks	Minimal change to polling district in 2003 following PER. Previous venue at a mobile classroom in the grounds of the former Bradbourne School (now Knole Academy West) was not suitable for voters with disabilities. In the absence of any alternative in the polling district, the offices of the Sevenoaks Town Council have been used since 2003. Whilst this venue is located outside the polling district, it is not much further for voters to travel than the former venue.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Greatness (BS)	1184	Greatness Club House, Mill Lane, Sevenoaks	Replaced St. John Ambulance Hall in 1993 (which had difficult access). Central to polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
High Street (Sevenoaks) (BT)	1331	The STAG Community Arts Centre (Plaza Suite), London Road, Sevenoaks	Replaced St. Nicholas Parish Hall (demolished) in 1997. Good access and well located within polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)	No. of polling stations	Reason
Hillingdon (BU)	1295	Main Hall, Knole Academy East (formerly Wildernesse School), Seal Hollow Road, Sevenoaks	The former Wildernesse School, in use at least since 1974. Classroom used, so school able to function. Since 2003 PER, situated outside polling district but after extensive consultation, agreed that voters should continue to use this venue. The school, now known as Knole Academy East, was not available in 2011 but has confirmed its availability for future use.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Holly Bush (BV)	1777	St. John’s C.E.P. School, Kennedy Gardens, Sevenoaks	In use at least since 1981. School able to function. After 2003 PER, preferred option over St. John’s Church Hall (St. John’s Hill/Quakers Hall Lane).	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Kippington North (BW)	1094	Christ Church United Reformed Church, Littlecourt Road, Sevenoaks	Revised polling district in 2003 (following PER) to accommodate as many electors as possible. Venue used for the first time in 2003. Access and parking o.k.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as "new")	No. of polling stations	Reason
Kippington South (BX)	1149	Kippington Community Centre, Kippington Road, Sevenoaks	Revised polling district in 2003 (following PER) to accommodate as many electors as possible. Venue in use at least since 1981; newly built in 2004. Good access and parking.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Lower St. John's (BY)	881	British Red Cross Centre, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks	New polling district following 2003 PER. Venue in use since 2003; good access and parking and well located.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Sevenoaks Common (BZ)	1458	Solefield School, Solefields Road, Sevenoaks	In use at least since 1974. Classroom used, so school able to function. There are steps and a narrow entrance which makes access less than ideal.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Tubs Hill (CA)	1254	St. Luke's Church Hall, Eardley Road, Sevenoaks	New polling district following 2003 PER. Venue in use since 2003; good access and well located.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as "new")	No. of polling stations	Reason
Upper St. John's (CB)	1404	United Reformed Church, St. John's Road, Sevenoaks	New polling district following 2003 PER. Venue in use since 2003; good access, only on-street parking. Located slightly to one side of polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Wilderness (CC)	308	Main Hall, Knole Academy East (formerly Wilderness School), Seal Hollow Road, Sevenoaks	The former Wilderness School, now known as Knole Academy East, had been used since 1974. Classroom used, so school able to function. The Academy was not available in 2011 but has now confirmed availability for future use.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Sevenoaks Weald (CD)	974	Weald Memorial Hall, Long Barn Road, Sevenoaks Weald	Venue in use since 1983, replacing school. Centrally located within village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Badgers Mount (CE)	537	Badgers Mount Memorial Hall, Orpington-By-Pass, Badgers Mount	In use at least since 1974. Close to main body of voters.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Shoreham (CF)	894	Shoreham Village Hall, High Street, Shoreham	Replaced school in 1977. Good access and well located.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as "new")	No. of polling stations	Reason
Well Hill (CG)	215	Well Hill Mission Church, Well Hill	New polling district following 2003 PER. Venue in use since 2003; Residents' Association preferred location over public house alternative. Not the best access to the building or into the building but preferable to voters journeying long distances into Shoreham village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Ide Hill (CH)	525	Ide Hill Village Hall (Wheatsheaf Room), Ide Hill	Replaced school in 1985. Quite close to village; good parking.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Sundridge (CI)	1002	Sundridge Village Hall, Main Road, Sundridge	In use at least since 1974. Quite central to village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)	No. of polling stations	Reason
Birchwood (CJ)	1023	White Oak Bowls Centre, Garrols Close, Swanley	Two former venues (Birchwood School and Birchwood Public House) are both closed. White Oak Leisure Centre was used in 2010 but was not popular. New hotel at Birchwood not available/not suitable. In 2011, White Oak Bowls Centre was used; propose to continue this arrangement until a suitable site is found within the polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Christ Church (CK)	2038	Christ Church Centre, Kingswood Avenue, Swanley	Replaced school in 1981. Good location; separate polling booth provided for voters with disabilities so as to avoid steps inside the building. Limited on-street parking opposite with a two hour waiting restriction; blue badge holders can park outside hall.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
High Firs (CL)	2100	High Firs Primary School, Court Crescent, Swanley	In use at least since 1981. Classroom used, so school able to function. Good location.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as "new")	No. of polling stations	Reason
St. Mary's (CM)	3238	Swanley Youth Centre, St. Mary's Road, Swanley	In use since 1985. Located to one end of polling district but no known alternative closer to a central point.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Swanley Lane (CN)	1633	Swanley ACF Hall, Swanley Lane, Swanley	In use at least since 1974. Located at the extremity of the polling district but convenient for voters on their way to the station and shops. Rough ground on approach to hall. No alternative within the polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Swanley Village (CO)	342	The Lamb Inn, Swanley Village Road, Swanley Village	In use since 2005. Located a little to one end of village, quite good access, some parking.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
White Oak (CP)	2062	White Oak Bowls Centre, Garrolds Close, Swanley	In use since 1999. Quite well located, good access, parking available.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Crockham Hill (CQ)	584	Crockham Hill Village Hall, Crockham Hill	In use since 1997, after demolition of WI Hall. Located close to main body of voters with good access and parking.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as "new")	No. of polling stations	Reason
Westerham (CR)	2899	Westerham Hall, Quebec Avenue, Westerham	In use at least since 1974 (excepting for a few years during re-construction and because of prior bookings). Quite central to village, good access and parking.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
East Hill (CS)	266	Woodlands Manor Golf Club, Tinkerpot Lane, West Kingsdown	New - For several years East Hill electors have had to poll at Woodlands Church Hall, Tinkerpot Lane, the same venue as Knatts Valley electors. As most electors will have to travel by car in order to vote, it is important to have car parking facilities and there are none at the current venue. Woodlands Manor Golf Club, also in Tinkerpot Lane, has ample car parking and is willing to accommodate a polling station.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)	No. of polling stations	Reason
Knatts Valley (CT)	216	Woodlands Manor Golf Club, Tinkerpot Lane, West Kingsdown	New – sensible for Knatts Valley electors to also attend these premises as using both the Woodlands Church Hall and the Golf Club would cause elector confusion.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
West Kingsdown East (CU)	1205	The Portobello Inn, London Road, West Kingsdown	New – West Kingsdown Village Hall no longer available. The Portobello Inn, London Road (at the junction with Fawkham Road) are willing to accommodate a polling station in their Function Room. Access will be from the car park and a ramp will be provided to assist electors with disabilities, if appropriate.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as "new")	No. of polling stations	Reason
West Kingsdown – Hever (CV)	2718	The Pavilion, London Road, West Kingsdown	In use since 1999. Not well located, being on the opposite side of the A20 from most voters, but provides a solution after many years of poor provision for this polling district. We provide temporary outside lighting.	1	Although electorate warrants it, there is insufficient space to provide 2 polling stations. Instead, extra polling staff are appointed to share out duties. Due to a potential triple poll in 2011, a second polling station was set up in the adjacent Library for the evening period of polling and this is a solution in similar future circumstances.

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Electoral Arrangements Committee – 27th March 2012

Report of the: Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Corporate Resources

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: Yes.

Parish council boundaries and electoral arrangements are subject to change at the completion of this review.

Executive Summary: The commencement of the community governance review on 30th November 2011 invited submissions from interested persons up to the deadline of 24th February 2012. Members of the Electoral Arrangements Committee are requested to consider all the submissions and to make draft recommendations.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Mrs Bracken

Head of Service Head of Legal – Mrs Christine Nuttall

Recommendation to Electoral Arrangements Committee:

(a) that the recommendations in appendix 1 be approved.

Reason for recommendations: The District Council is responsible for determining submissions made in consequence of a community governance review.

Introduction

- 1 At the meeting of the Electoral Arrangements Committee on 27th October 2011 it was recommended that a community governance review be undertaken in respect of the whole of the Sevenoaks District Council area; Council ratified this Committee's decision. A timetable and terms of reference were agreed. The District Council takes the view that it is for local people or local groups to suggest changes to the existing parish set-up. The District Council does not initiate changes but must, ultimately, decide upon any conflicting proposals. The District Council places great store upon proposals having the fullest backing of the local community and neighbouring parishes that may be affected.
- 2 The review commenced on 30th November 2011 with the publication of notices, a news release, an item on the District Council's website, a letter (and submission form) to parish councils and to known community groups (New Ash Green Village Association, Badgers Mount Residents Association and Well Hill Residents Association), a letter to elected representatives and a letter to Kent County Council. The timetable approved at the previous Electoral Arrangements Committee envisaged the publication of draft recommendations on 11th April

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2012. This timetable had already been altered to take into account the Government's decision to postpone the inaugural elections of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) from May 2012 to November 2012. In addition, the Electoral Services Section (responsible for the conduct of this review) has had to deal with four by-elections, always unforeseen, over the last three months and now the Government has further decided to bring forward the start of the annual canvass for the register of electors from late August to late June so as to publish a revised register just prior to the PCC elections. It is therefore recommended that the timetable be amended to the following (recommendation (a) in appendix 1):

Publication of the District Council's draft proposals	Mid May 2012
Consultation period concludes	End July 2012
Preparation of final proposals followed by meeting of Electoral Arrangements Committee	Late August/early September 2012
Full Council confirms final proposals	September 2012
The District Council publishes its recommendations	Before end November 2012 (i.e. still within one year of commencement of review)
Effective date of any changes to parish boundaries and electoral arrangements (next full parish council elections)	Thursday, 7 th May 2015 (unchanged)

- 3 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (LGPIH) 2007 devolved the power to take decisions relating to the creation, abolition or grouping of parishes, the boundaries of parishes and the electoral arrangements of parish councils from the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission to principal councils. With effect from February 2008, district councils have had the responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews and have been able to decide whether to give effect to recommendations made in those reviews. In making that decision, councils need to take account of the views of local people and are required to have regard to guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England; this guidance was circulated with the notice of the review and extracts are at appendix 2. There is much advice that can be quoted in support or against a particular argument but Members will want to consider each submission on its merits in relation to the particular circumstances in the parish and not attempt to find an apparently consistent approach to all parishes.
- 4 This report can only summarise the submissions received. Members will need to refer to the relevant appendices, as noted in the report, in order to appreciate the full picture. Electorate figures quoted throughout the report are as at 1st March 2012 but these figures can change each month. Mileages quoted in the report are as a result of site visits. Changes in parish boundaries that affect the boundaries

of District Council wards and/or Kent County Council electoral divisions will be referred to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England with a recommendation that the appropriate changes be made to those boundaries at the next relevant full elections (2015 in the case of District Council elections, 2017 for Kent County Council elections).

Actions

5. No submissions have been received affecting the following parishes: Chiddingstone, Cowden, Edenbridge, Farningham, Fawkham, Halstead, Hever, Horton Kirby & South Darenth, Kemsing, and Knockholt. It is **recommended** that no change be made to the boundaries or electoral arrangements of these parishes (recommendation (b) in appendix 1).
6. The following parish councils have responded to the review and have stated that they have no proposals for changes to their existing set-up: Chevening (not at present but may re-visit the matter later this year after the results are known of their Parish Plan Questionnaire), Chiddingstone, Dunton Green, Halstead, Hartley, Horton Kirby & South Darenth, Kemsing, Riverhead and Seal.

Submissions Proposing Changes (in alphabetical order of parish)

7. **Ash-cum-Ridley (appendix 3)**

The Parish Council proposes to include the Milestone School and New Ash Green Sports Centre within its Parish so as to bring their office, situated on the site, into the Parish. Hartley Parish Council supports the proposal. Mr Peter Mayer of Hartley has no objection to the proposal. It is **recommended** that the Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council proposal be adopted (recommendation (c) in appendix 1). The recommendation will affect the boundary between the District wards of Ash & New Ash Green and Hartley & Hodsoll Street (though no electors are affected).

8. **Brasted (see Westerham)**

9. **Chevening (see Sevenoaks)**

10. **Crockenhill (see Shoreham)**

11. **Dunton Green (see Sevenoaks)**

12. **Eynsford (appendix 4)**

The Parish Council proposes the transfer of the Austin Lodge Golf Course from Shoreham Parish as access is via Eynsford only. Shoreham Parish Council agrees that the Club House should transfer to Eynsford but would like to retain as much of the golf course as is currently in Shoreham Parish and is supported by the Shoreham Society. It would appear more sensible for the whole of the golf course and associated buildings to be in one parish and, as access is from Eynsford Parish only, it is **recommended** that the Eynsford Parish Council proposal be adopted (recommendation (d) in appendix 1). The recommendation will affect the boundary between the district wards of Eynsford and Otford & Shoreham (though no electors are affected).

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13. Hartley (appendix 5)

Two proposals have been received advocating the division of the parish into 4 wards, although the suggested break down is quite different, from Mr Mayer and Dr Roberts. Mrs Ivy Sharp also believes that consideration should be given to the warding of the Parish. The thrust of each submission is that serving parish councillors live, in the main, across the middle of the Parish and therefore do not represent the Parish as a whole. By having smaller areas (wards) for councillors to represent, electors would be better served. The conduct of elections is also highlighted, in particular the size of the ballot paper and the cost of by-elections for the whole parish.

14. Hartley Parish Council, in its response, opposes the warding proposals believing that electors are best served by councillors representing the whole of the parish. Electorally, Hartley is not the only parish of 13 members elected as a whole and whilst it is true that long ballot papers can be difficult to handle it is merely a part of the administrative process that has to be dealt with. The cost of running 4 separate ward elections would be greater than for one whole parish election. It is **recommended** that no change be made to the electoral arrangements of Hartley Parish (recommendation (e) in appendix 1).

15. Hextable (appendix 6)

The Parish Council proposes the transfer of those properties in Lower Road, Hextable currently situated in Swanley Parish. Swanley Town Council has submitted the same proposal. Both are of the view that it is sensible for all the properties in Lower Road to be in Hextable Parish and avoid issues, for example, regarding the completion of road works. It is **recommended** that the proposals of Hextable Parish Council and Swanley Town Council be adopted (recommendation (f) in appendix 1). The recommendation will affect the boundary between the district wards of Hextable and Swanley Christchurch & Swanley Village and the County electoral divisions of Swanley and Darent Valley; 4 electors will transfer.

16. There is support from Mr & Mrs Thomas of Hextable for the continuance of Hextable Parish in its present form.

17. Leigh (appendix 7)

Submissions have been made by Mr & Mrs Cooper and Mr & Mrs Larby for their properties to transfer into Penshurst Parish. They feel they have a greater affinity with Penshurst rather than Leigh. Penshurst Parish Council agreed to the proposal on the grounds of the geography (the properties are closer to the village of Penshurst than they are to the village of Leigh) and the families' involvement in Penshurst activities. Leigh Parish Council do not support the proposal believing the current boundary to be historic.

18. Successive reviews have changed historic boundaries in order to meet present circumstances and those reviews have also considered requests from individuals to transfer properties between parishes. The proposal appears to be made on appropriate grounds so, notwithstanding the opposition of Leigh Parish Council, it is **recommended** that the two properties North Lodge, Redleaf and Woodside Kennels transfer from Leigh Parish to Penshurst Parish (recommendation (g) in

appendix 1). The recommendation will affect the boundary between the district wards of Leigh & Chiddingstone Causeway and Penshurst, Fordcombe & Chiddingstone; 6 electors will transfer.

19. Otford (appendix 8 - see also Sevenoaks)

The Parish Council proposes a re-alignment of the parish boundary with Shoreham Parish in Row Dow Lane to ensure that the curtilages of 3 properties (Stursdon Farm, Mount Farm and Mount Farm Cottage) fall within one parish rather than two. Shoreham Parish Council have submitted the same proposal which is supported by the Shoreham Society. It is **recommended** that the proposals of Otford Parish Council and Shoreham Parish Council be adopted (recommendation (h) in appendix 1).

20. Otford Parish Council has also proposed to include the whole of the hamlet of Twitton in Otford Parish, thereby transferring properties (containing 12 electors) from Shoreham Parish. Shoreham Parish Council is also proposing that Twitton be included in a single parish and that should be Shoreham Parish (transferring 19 electors from Otford Parish). The Shoreham Society supports the Shoreham Parish Council proposal. Otford Parish Council contends that Twitton is nearer to Otford village (0.8 miles by road) than it is to Shoreham village (1.6 miles by road) and that placing the whole of Twitton in one parish would facilitate planning consultations. A survey of the affected residents by Otford Parish Council seems to show more support for the option of placing Twitton wholly within Otford Parish rather than in Shoreham Parish. In a later response, Shoreham Parish Council believes the residents of Twitton should decide the issue. **Recommendation: Members' instructions are sought** (recommendation (i) in appendix 1).

21. Penshurst (appendix 9 - see also Leigh)

In a number of submissions it has been stated or implied that parish councillors for the Fordcombe ward have not been elected because there was no contest in the ward at the last parish council elections in May 2011. The four parish councillors concerned were elected unopposed and the inference that the decisions of these parish councillors is less valid is not admissible as an argument. There have been occasions in the past when the Fordcombe ward has been contested and the Penshurst ward has not. Similar situations regularly occur throughout the Sevenoaks District at both parish and district elections.

The many submissions made may be categorised into three proposals:

- a) the creation of separate parishes for Fordcombe (currently a ward of Penshurst Parish) and Penshurst (currently also a ward of the Parish), submitted by around 20 persons, including some present parish councillors, and opposed by around the same number of persons. A letter has also been received from the Clerk to Penshurst Parish Council in response to the content of some submissions;
- b) retain the present wards but limit parish councillors' decision making on matters relating to the ward they represent unless the matter is material to the Parish as a whole, submitted by Martin Barraud and Robert Rees (and supported separately by Mr Rees), supplemented by a proposal from Deborah Rees for a system of weighted voting in specified circumstances;

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- c) unward the Parish, submitted by Peter Lake, County Councillor for Sevenoaks South Electoral Division.
22. Proposal 18a clearly is a reaction to the continuing debate on the issue of affordable housing in the village of Penshurst. It does not appear to emanate from a long standing difficulty of representation caused by separate warding of the two main communities of Fordcombe and Penshurst. Opposition to the proposal has equal weight and there is no evidence at present of any desire for a separate Fordcombe parish from Fordcombe residents. It must be a concern that, however contentious the issue of affordable housing, the proposal seeks to break a seemingly strong relationship over a single issue.
23. The essence of proposal 18b is that issues solely affecting either the Fordcombe or Penshurst wards of the Parish should be determined only by the parish councillors representing those wards. This proposal also emanates from the affordable housing debate but is to be applied to any future issue specific to one or other village: it is surely a recipe for disharmony. Weighted voting would be difficult to administer and is also likely to create friction. The Kent Association of Local Councils has advised, at our request, the following:
- “The Parish Councillors Guide by Paul Clayden helpfully states ‘where a parish is divided into wards, the Parish Councillors for each ward are elected in the same manner as Councillors are elected for a parish. The rules relating to the election of Councillors apply to each ward as if it were a parish. The parish councillors for all the wards will form only one parish council, and there will still be a parish meeting for the whole parish for the purpose other than the election of councillors.’
- It follows that even in warded areas they are therefore elected to the body corporate: i.e. the Council as a whole. It is also a sensible observation that the members are bound in as individuals but as part of the body corporate by the Code of Conduct and this is also designed to ensure that there are no obvious conflicts of interest because of the issue of warding. In short: they are elected to the Council to serve the entire electorate. Members may well have greater connect (particularly in areas with more distinct or larger electorates); but this is also balanced out in the Code of Conduct. They are ultimately Councillors and not just ward members.”
24. In the difficult circumstances pertaining, proposal 18c to unward the Parish appears to have merit. There are, of course, instances of parishes in the Sevenoaks District that favour non-warding almost regardless of their size so as to avoid the very situation confronting Penshurst Parish. It is **recommended** that the proposal for Penshurst Parish to be unwarded be adopted and to seek views specifically on a change of name from Penshurst Parish to Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish (recommendation (j) in appendix 1).
25. **Riverhead (see Sevenoaks)**
26. **Seal (see Sevenoaks)**
27. **Sevenoaks (appendix 10)**

The Town Council proposes, in effect, a grouping of parishes so that certain amenities already provided by Sevenoaks Town Council to neighbouring parishes could be extended. The proposal, from the map provided, includes in the grouping the following parishes: Chevening, Dunton Green, part of Otford (south of the M26), Riverhead, Seal, Sevenoaks Weald and Sundridge with Ide Hill. (Whilst mention is made of Brasted, Kemsing and Shoreham Parishes in the submission, they do not appear to be part of the proposal.)

28. Representations have been received from the parishes of Chevening, Dunton Green (twice, views endorsed by District Councillors Bayley and Brown), Edenbridge, Kemsing, Otford, Riverhead, Seal (twice) Sevenoaks Weald and Sundridge with Ide Hill (a further response is expected) and all are opposed for a variety of reasons as are the following persons for similar and additional reasons: G W Taylor (Seal), Mrs M Miles (Riverhead), Mr J Brown (Riverhead), Mr T & Mrs D Harrison (Riverhead) and Mr C Ward (Otford). The proposal would clearly have a far reaching effect upon the governance of a large proportion of the Sevenoaks District and it must be expected to have fulsome support from the affected local communities and their representatives; the proposal does not have this support. It is **recommended** that the proposal of Sevenoaks Town Council is not adopted (and therefore the boundaries and electoral arrangements of the Parishes of Chevening, Dunton Green, Riverhead, Seal, Sevenoaks Weald and Sundridge with Ide Hill be unchanged) (recommendation (k) in appendix 1).

29. Sevenoaks Weald (see Sevenoaks)

30. Shoreham (appendix 11)

The Parish Council has submitted a number of proposals whilst a number have been submitted by other Parishes and Residents Associations affecting Shoreham Parish. Proposals put forward by Eynsford and Otford Parish Councils have been considered in paragraphs 12,19 and 20.

31. Shoreham Parish Council, supported by the Shoreham Society, has proposed a change to the parish boundary in the vicinity of Well Hill with Crockenhill Parish who, whilst not averse to the change in principle, did request a more detailed consideration of the issue which has not been taken up. In view of the lack of any formal discussion between the two Parish Councils, it is **recommended** that this proposal of Shoreham Parish Council is not adopted (recommendation (l) in appendix 1).

32. Shoreham Parish Council, again supported by the Shoreham Society, further proposes that the properties in East Hill Road (a cul-de-sac), currently situated in West Kingsdown Parish (272 electors), be transferred into Shoreham Parish to join the properties already situated in Shoreham. Shoreham Parish Council believes that better local services can be provided to all residents if the road is wholly situated in one parish.

33. West Kingsdown Parish Council has proposed the reverse of the Shoreham Parish Council proposal, suggesting the transfer of the East Hill Road properties currently in Shoreham Parish (48 electors) into West Kingsdown Parish. Whilst no reason is given by West Kingsdown Parish Council for the proposal, they do not consider the Shoreham Parish Council proposal to be a practical option as residents are nearer

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to the village of West Kingsdown than they are to the village of Shoreham (though measuring by the most direct road route from East Hill Road's junction with Bower Lane and Goodbury Road, it is 3.3 miles to Shoreham High Street and 3.6 miles to the shops in Hever Road, West Kingsdown).

34. The majority of East Hill Road itself is situated in West Kingsdown Parish and forms the East Hill ward of West Kingsdown Parish Council. Shoreham Parish Council does not say whether the same area or the whole of East Hill Road would form a separate ward of the Shoreham Parish so there is the prospect of those residents who currently have separate representation on a Parish Council ceasing to have this status. East Hill is isolated geographically, a similar position held by its neighbour Knatts Valley (also a ward of West Kingsdown Parish), so is a considerable distance from the centre of any village. At the previous review of parish boundaries in the late 1990s, West Kingsdown Parish Council submitted a similar proposal and then the District Council were of the opinion that the properties at the southern end of East Hill Road (in Shoreham Parish) did not form part of the same community as the northern end of the road (in West Kingsdown Parish) and therefore proposed no change to the parish boundary. In a later response, Shoreham Parish Council believes the residents of East Hill Road should decide the issue. **Recommendation: Members' instructions are sought** (recommendation (m) in appendix 1).
35. The Badgers Mount Residents Association has submitted a proposal for a separate parish of Badgers Mount (526 electors), supported by the Shoreham Society. There has been previous debate regarding the formation of a separate parish for Badgers Mount and the Residents Association has now formulated this specific proposal from amongst three possible options. The geographic position of Badgers Mount means that its residents will be unlikely to look south for amenity provision. The Residents Association gives its reasons why it does not favour merging with its nearest neighbour Halstead. The submission by the Shoreham Society gives a similar picture.
36. At its meeting on 1st February 2012, Shoreham Parish Council debated the motion that the Parish should be split into three separate parishes: Badgers Mount, Shoreham and Well Hill. The motion was defeated. **Recommendation: Members' instructions are sought** (recommendation (n) in appendix 1).
37. The Well Hill Residents Association has submitted a proposal for a separate parish of Well Hill (215 electors), supported by the Shoreham Society. This is the second time the Well Hill Residents Association has made this request and has re-submitted its 2006 document along with the report of the Shoreham Parish Council working group that was convened to discuss community governance. Well Hill is a small community some distance from the village of Shoreham or any other village in the Sevenoaks District. Its residents look more towards the north and communities in London (this review cannot recommend any changes to principal authority boundaries, i.e. Sevenoaks District and the London Borough of Bromley) than to the south and Shoreham. The submission by the Shoreham Society gives a similar picture.
38. There have been three submissions from Well Hill residents: Diane Wisdom, Jill Eldridge, Jessica Reid who support, oppose and are unsure respectively: they do highlight the pros and cons of a separate Well Hill parish. The following is an

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extract from the minutes of the June 2006 meeting of the Electoral Arrangements Committee:

“The Chairman invited Well Hill Residents’ Association to address Member’s concerns and return at a later date if the following issues could be addressed:

1. The degree of support amongst Well Hill electors
2. The numbers of electors subscribing to the WHRA
3. A financial strategy/business plan drawn up to demonstrate viability of a new Parish Council”

The new submission still relies on the 2006 document and doesn’t appear to have addressed the issues raised by the District Council in 2006.

39. At it’s meeting on 1st February 2012, Shoreham Parish Council debated the motion that the Parish should be split into three separate parishes: Badgers Mount, Shoreham and Well Hill. The motion was defeated. **Recommendation: Members’ instructions are sought** (recommendation (o) in appendix 1).
40. The submission from the Shoreham Society proposes the creation of a new parish of Shoreham (887 electors) without the Badgers Mount and Well Hill wards (and including the areas proposed in Shoreham Parish Council’s submission considered in paragraphs 30-34). The Society contends that the three communities of Shoreham, Badgers Mount and Well Hill have a clear sense of their own independent identities and little affinity with one another.
41. At it’s meeting on 1st February 2012, Shoreham Parish Council debated the motion that the Parish should be split into three separate parishes: Badgers Mount, Shoreham and Well Hill. The motion was defeated. **Recommendation: Members’ instructions are sought** (recommendation (p) in appendix 1).
42. Shoreham Parish Council also propose a reduction from 6 to 5 of parish councillors elected for the Shoreham ward, so as to more fairly represent the number of electors in each of the three wards making up the Parish Council. The electorate of Shoreham ward is 887 (6 parish councillors presently, a councillor/elector ratio of 1:148), Badgers Mount is 526 (3 and 1:175) and Well Hill is 215 (1 1:215). 5 councillors for the Shoreham ward gives a ratio of 1:177 for that ward. If Members are minded to retain Shoreham Parish in it’s present warded form then it is **recommended** that the number of parish councillors for Shoreham ward be reduced from 6 to 5 (recommendation (q) in appendix 1).
43. **Sundridge with Ide Hill (appendix 12 - see Sevenoaks)**

The Parish Council has written to the District Council but has no specific proposals for changes to parish boundaries or electoral arrangements.
44. **Swanley**

Swanley Town Council has submitted a proposal that has been considered under paragraph 15 of this report.

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45. Westerham (appendix 13)

The Parish Council proposes the transfer of High View Cottage from Brasted Parish as the only access to the property is from Westerham Parish. There is support from Brasted Parish Council and from Lord Astor of Hever. It is recommended that the Westerham Parish Council proposal be adopted (recommendation (r) in appendix 1). The recommendation will affect the boundary between the district wards of Westerham & Crockham Hill and Brasted, Chevening & Sundridge; 2 electors will transfer.

46. West Kingsdown

West Kingsdown Parish Council has submitted a proposal that has been considered under paragraphs 32-34 of this report.

Key Implications

Financial

There are no cost implications for the District Council in conducting a community governance review apart from staff resources.

Community Impact and Outcomes

The District Council believes that parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at the local level and is keen to ensure that parish governance in the Sevenoaks District continues to be robust, representative and enabled to meet the challenges ahead. Government guidance states that “Ultimately, the recommendations made in a community governance review ought to bring about improved community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.”

Legal, Human Rights etc.

There are no legal or human rights implications in this report.

Resource (non-financial)

Staff input has been required to co-ordinate submissions and present them to Members at this meeting of the Electoral Arrangements Committee.

Conclusions

In accordance with Government guidance, a community governance review is due. There is an opportunity to conduct a review before the next scheduled major election (Police and Crime Commissioners on 15th November 2012) and plenty of time to implement the outcome ahead of the next full parish council elections in 2015.

Risk Assessment Statement

District Councils are expected to carry out community governance reviews every 10-15 years. If the opportunity is not taken now, staff resources may not be available until 2018, the next year of no scheduled elections.

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Background Papers:

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

The Local Government Act 1972

Guidance on community governance reviews (published jointly by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England) - April 2008

Contact Officer(s):

Ian Bigwood – ext. no.7242

Dr. Pav Ramewal
Corporate Resources Director

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Appendix 1

Recommendations:

- (a) that a revised timetable be approved;
- (b) that the boundaries and electoral arrangements of the Parishes of Chiddingstone, Cowden, Edenbridge, Farningham, Fawkham, Halstead, Hever, Horton Kirby & South Darenth, Kemsing and Knockholt be unchanged;
- (c) that the Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council proposal be adopted;
- (d) that the Eynsford Parish Council proposal be adopted;
- (e) that no change be made to the electoral arrangements of Hartley Parish;
- (f) that the proposals of Hextable Parish Council and Swanley Town Council be adopted;
- (g) that the two properties North Lodge, Redleaf and Woodside Kennels transfer from Leigh Parish to Penshurst Parish;
- (h) that the proposals of Otford Parish Council and Shoreham Parish Council in respect of Row Dow Lane be adopted;
- (i) that Members' instructions are sought on the counter proposals of Otford Parish Council and Shoreham Parish Council in the vicinity of Twitton;
- (j) that the proposal for Penshurst Parish to be unwarded be adopted and to seek views specifically on a change of name from Penshurst Parish to Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish;
- (k) that the proposal of Sevenoaks Town Council is not adopted;
- (l) that the proposal of Shoreham Parish Council in the vicinity of Well Hill is not adopted;
- (m) that Members' instructions are sought on the counter proposals of Shoreham Parish Council and West Kingsdown Parish Council in the vicinity of East Hill;
- (n) that Members' instructions are sought on the proposal by the Badgers Mount Residents Association to form a separate parish of Badgers Mount;
- (o) that Members' instructions are sought on the proposal by the Well Hill Residents Association to form a separate parish of Well Hill;
- (p) that Members' instructions are sought on the proposal by the Shoreham Society to form a separate parish of Shoreham (without Badgers Mount and Well Hill);
- (q) that (provided Members recommend the retention of the three wards of Shoreham Parish) the proposal by Shoreham Parish Council to reduce the number of parish councillors representing Shoreham ward from 6 to 5 be adopted; and

- (r) that the Westerham Parish Council proposal be adopted.

Appendix 2

Extracts from the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews

Defining a parish

49. Parish councils continue to have two main roles: community representation and local administration. For both purposes it is desirable that a parish should reflect a distinctive and recognisable community of place, with its own sense of identity. The views of local communities and inhabitants are of central importance.

50. The identification of a community is not a precise or rigid matter. The pattern of daily life in each of the existing communities, the local centres for education and child care, shopping, community activities, worship, leisure pursuits, transport facilities and means of communication generally will have an influence. However, the focus of people's day-to-day activities may not be reflected in their feeling of community identity. For instance, historic loyalty may be to a town but the local community of interest and social focus may lie within a part of the town with its own separate identity.

Criteria for undertaking a community governance review

51. Section 93 of the 2007 Act requires principal councils to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be:

- reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and
- is effective and convenient.

52. When considering the criteria identified in the 2007 Act, principal councils should take into account a number of influential factors, including:

- the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

53. In considering this guidance, the impact on community cohesion is linked specifically to the identities and interests of local communities. Size, population and boundaries are linked to both but perhaps more specifically to community governance being effective and convenient.

The identities and interests of local communities

54. Parish councils have an important role to play in the development of their local communities. Local communities range in size, as well as in a variety of other ways. Communities and Local Government is working to help people and local agencies create cohesive, attractive and economically vibrant local communities. The aim for communities across the country is for them to be capable of fulfilling their own potential and overcoming their own difficulties, including community conflict, extremism, deprivation and disadvantage. Communities need to be empowered to respond to challenging economic, social, and cultural trends, and to demographic change.

55. Parish councils can contribute to the creation of successful communities by influencing the quality of planning and design of public spaces and the built environment, as well as improving the management and maintenance of such amenities. Neighbourhood renewal is an important factor to improve the quality of life for those living in the most disadvantaged

areas. Parish councils can be well placed to judge what is needed to build cohesion. Other factors such as social exclusion and deprivation may be specific issues in certain areas, and respect is fundamental to the functioning of all places and communities. The Government remains committed to civil renewal, and empowering citizens to work with public bodies, including parish councils, to influence public decisions.

56. 'Place' matters in considering community governance and is a factor in deciding whether or not to set up a parish. Communities and Local Government's vision is of prosperous and cohesive communities which offer a safe, healthy and sustainable environment. One aspect of that is strong and accountable local government and leadership. Parish councils can perform a central role in community leadership. Depending on the issue, sometimes they will want to take the lead locally, whilst at other times they may act as an important stakeholder or in partnership with others. In either case, parish councils will want to work effectively with partners to undertake the role of 'place-shaping', and be responsive to the challenges and opportunities of their area in a co-ordinated way.

57. It is clear that how people perceive where they live - their neighbourhoods - is significant in considering the identities and interests of local communities and depends on a range of circumstances, often best defined by local residents. Some of the factors which help define neighbourhoods are: the geography of an area, the make-up of the local community, sense of identity, and whether people live in a rural, suburban, or urban areas.

58. Parishes in many cases may be able to meet the concept of neighbourhoods in an area. Parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity. Like neighbourhoods, the feeling of local community and the wishes of local inhabitants are the primary considerations.

59. Today, there may well be a variety of different communities of interest within a parish; for example, representing age, gender, ethnicity, faith or life-style groups. There are other communities with say specific interests in schools, hospitals or in leisure pursuits. Any number of communities of interest may flourish in a parish but they do not necessarily centre on a specific area or help to define it.

60. Building a sense of local identity may make an important contribution to cohesion where a local area is facing challenges arising from rapid demographic change. In considering the criteria, community governance reviews need to home in on communities as offering a sense of place and of local identity for all residents.

Effective and convenient local government

61. The Government believes that the effectiveness and convenience of local government is best understood in the context of a local authority's ability to deliver quality services economically and efficiently, and give users of services a democratic voice in the decisions that affect them.

62. Local communities should have access to good quality local services, ideally in one place. A parish council may be well placed to do this. With local parish and town councils in mind, effective and convenient local government essentially means that such councils should be viable in terms of providing at least some local services, and if they are to be convenient

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they need to be easy to reach and accessible to local people.

63. In responding to the requirement for effective and convenient local government, some parish councils are keen, and have the capacity to take on more in the provision of services. However, it is recognised that not all are in position to do so. The 2007 Act provides a new power of well-being to those parish councils who want to take on more, giving them additional powers to enable them to promote the social, economic and environmental well being of their areas. Nevertheless, certain conditions must be met by individual parish councils before this power is extended to them.

64. Wider initiatives such as the Quality Parish Scheme and charters agreed between parish councils and principal councils also help to give a greater understanding of securing effective and convenient local government. In such cases, parish and town councils which are well managed and good at representing local views will be in a better position to work closely with partner authorities to take more responsibility for shaping their area's development and running its services.

Factors for consideration

65. When reviewing community governance arrangements, principal councils may wish to take into account a number of factors, to help inform their judgement against the statutory criteria.

The impact on community cohesion of community governance arrangements

66. Setting up parishes and parish councils clearly offers the opportunity to strengthen community engagement and participation, and generate a positive impact on community cohesion. In conducting community governance reviews (whether initiated by itself or triggered by a valid petition), the principal council should consider the impact on community cohesion when deciding whether or not to set up a parish council.

67. Britain is a more diverse society – ethnically, religiously and culturally – than ever before. Today's challenge is how best to draw on the benefits that migration and diversity bring while addressing the potential problems and risks to cohesion. Community cohesion is about recognising the impact of change and responding to it. This is a fundamental part of the place shaping agenda and puts local authorities at the heart of community building.

68. In its response to the recommendations of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion the Government has defined community cohesion as what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another.

69. The Government's vision of an integrated and cohesive community is based on three foundations:

- People from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities
- People knowing their rights and responsibilities
- People trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly

70. And three key ways of living together:

- A shared future vision and sense of belonging
- A focus on what new and existing communities have in common,

alongside a recognition of the value of diversity

- Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

71. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion's report, *Our Shared Future*, is clear that communities have expert knowledge about their own circumstances and that actions at the local level contribute to achieving integration and cohesion, with local authorities well placed to identify any pressures. The Commission reports that policy makers and practitioners see civic participation as a key way of building integration and cohesion – from ensuring people have a stake in the community, to facilitating mixing and engendering a common sense of purpose through shared activities. The Local Government White Paper's proposals for stronger local leadership, greater resident participation in decisions and an enhanced role for community groups contribute to promoting cohesion.

72. Community cohesion is about local communities where people should feel they have a stake in the society, and in the local area where they live by having the opportunity to influence decisions affecting their lives. This may include what type of community governance arrangements they want in their local area.

73. The 2007 Act requires principal councils to have regard to the need to secure that community governance reflects the identity and interests of local communities; the impact on community cohesion is linked strongly to it. Cohesion issues are connected to the way people perceive how their local community is composed and what it represents, and the creation of parishes and parish councils may contribute to improving community cohesion. Community governance arrangements should reflect, and be sufficiently representative of, people living across the whole community and not just a discrete cross-section or small part of it. It would be difficult to think of a situation in which a principal council could make a decision to create a parish and a parish council which reflects community identities and interests in the area and at the same time threatens community cohesion. Principal councils should be able to decline to set up such community governance arrangements where they judged that to do so would not be in the interests of either the local community or surrounding communities, and where the effect would be likely to damage community cohesion.

Parish warding

156. Parish warding should be considered as part of a community governance review. Parish warding is the division of a parish into wards for the purpose of electing councillors. This includes the number and boundaries of any wards, the number of councillors to be elected for any ward and the names of wards.

157. In considering whether or not a parish should be divided into wards, the legislation requires that consideration be given to whether:

- a) the number, or distribution of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- b) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented.

158. Accordingly, principal councils should consider not only the size of the

Agenda Item 3

electorate in the area but also the distribution of communities within it. The warding of parishes in largely rural areas that are based predominantly on a single centrally-located village may not be justified. Conversely, warding may be appropriate where the parish encompasses a number of villages with separate identities, a village with a large rural hinterland or where, on the edges of towns, there has been some urban overspill into the parish. However, each case should be considered on its merits, and on the basis of the information and evidence provided during the course of the review.

159. There is likely to be a stronger case for the warding of urban parishes, unless they have particularly low electorates or are based on a particular locality. In urban areas community identity tends to focus on a locality, whether this be a housing estate, a shopping centre or community facilities. Each locality is likely to have its own sense of identity. Again, principal councils should consider each case on its merits having regard to information and evidence generated during the review. (See also under Chapter 3, paragraphs 54 to 60).

The number and boundaries of parish wards

160. In reaching conclusions on the boundaries between parish wards the principal council should take account of community identity and interests in the area, and consider whether any particular ties or linkages might be broken by the drawing of particular ward boundaries. Principal councils should seek views on such matters during the course of a review. They will, however, be mindful that proposals which are intended to reflect community identity and local linkages should be justified in terms of sound and demonstrable evidence of those identities and linkages.

Community Governance Review

Proposal(s) for Change(s) to a Parish Boundary & Parish Electoral Arrangements

(Please return by Friday, 24th February 2012)

Name of Parish: **Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council**

Name, address and telephone no. of Parish/Town Clerk:

**Alison de Jager
Parish Office
Ash Green Sports Centre
New Ash Green
Longfield
Kent
DA3 8JZ**

Telephone: **01474 702760**

Precise description of proposal(s): a map (scale not less than 1:10,000) must also be provided with the proposed boundaries clearly defined:

To include the Milestone School Site in the Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Boundary as per attached maps.

Details of properties affected by the proposal(s) must be given below:

**Milestone School
Ash Green Sports Centre including Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council Office.**


Reasons for proposal(s):

To bring the Parish Council office into the Parish boundary of Ash-cum-Ridley.

Details of consultations you have had with parish councils affected by your proposals and the outcome of those discussions:

A formal request was made to Hartley Parish Council for their views and we attach the positive response from Hartley Parish Council.

Any other comments:



Signed: 

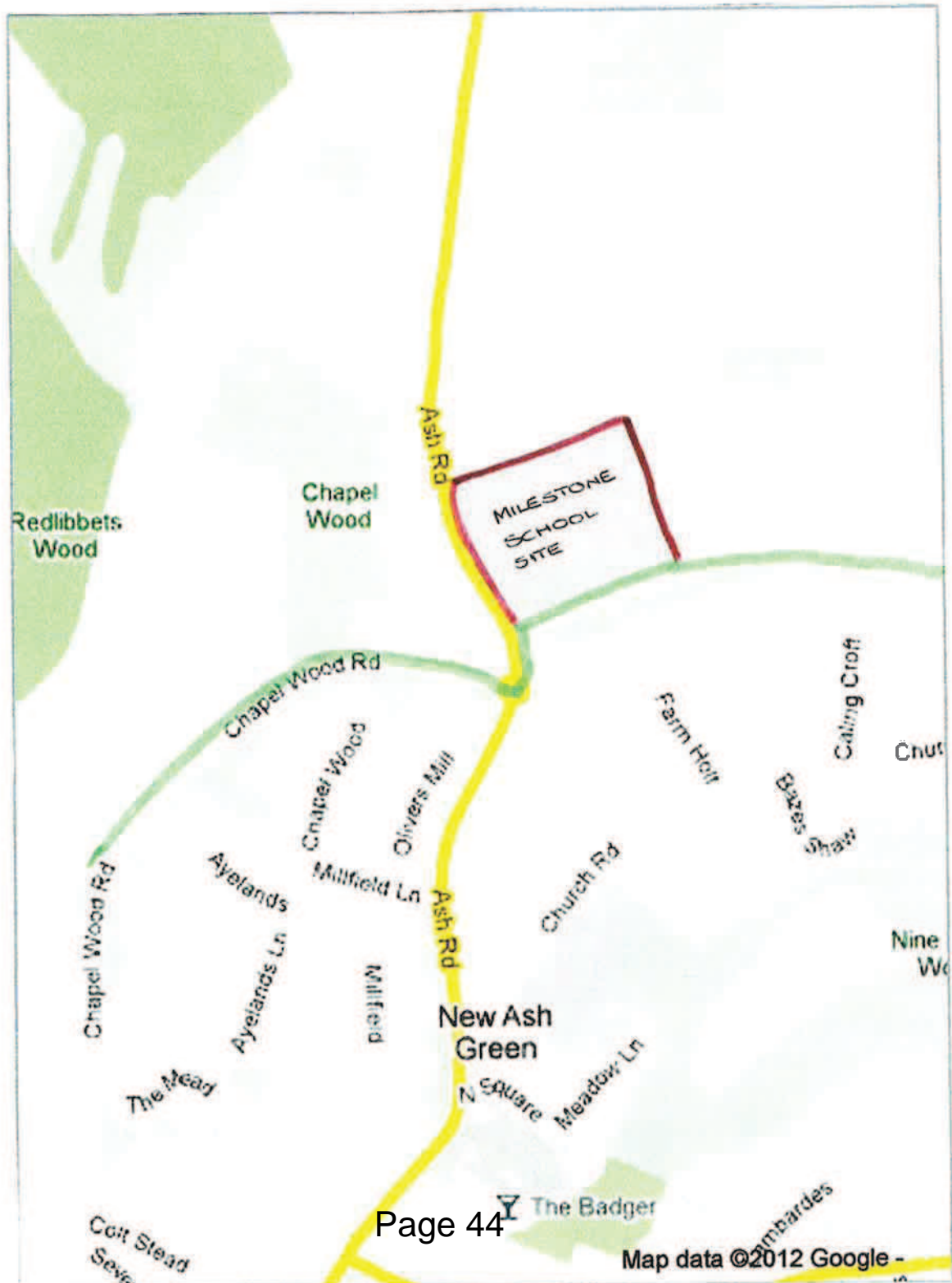
Date: 24/01/12

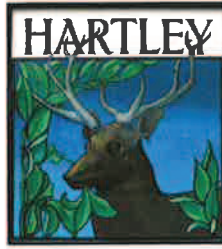
(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS)

ALISON DE JAGER

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW 2012

-  Existing boundary
-  Proposed boundary





HARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL
Clerk to the Council: Mrs J Hoad
The Parish Council Office, Hartley Library, Ash Road
Hartley, Longfield, Kent DA3 8EL Tel/Fax: 01474 709441
E Mail: mail@hartleyparishcouncil.org.uk
Website: www.hartleyparishcouncil.org.uk

13th January 2012

Mrs A De Jager
Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council
Parish Office
Ash Green Sports Centre
Ash Road
New Ash Green
Kent DA3 8JZ

Dear Alison

Community Governance Review

Thank you for your letter dated 19th December 2011 seeking Hartley Parish Council's views on an amendment to the parish boundary. At a meeting of Hartley Parish Council held on 9th January 2012 it was resolved that,

“Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council be informed that Hartley Parish Council has no objection to its proposal that the boundary should be amended to enable the Milestone School to be brought within the parish boundary of Ash-cum-Ridley.”

Yours sincerely

Julie Hoad MILCM
Clerk to the Council

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Community Governance Review

Proposal(s) for Change(s) to a Parish Boundary & Parish Electoral Arrangements

(Please return by Friday, 24th February 2012)

Name of Parish: Eynsford Parish Council

Name, address and telephone no. of Parish/Town Clerk:

Holly Ivaldi, Clerk
Eynsford Parish Council
Parish Office
Priory Lane
Eynsford
DA4 0AY

01322 865320
Eynsford.pc@tiscali.co.uk

Precise description of proposal(s): a map (scale not less than 1:10,000) must also be provided with the proposed boundaries clearly defined:

It is proposed that the whole of Austin Lodge Golf Course be moved from Shoreham parish to Eynsford parish. This proposal has been discussed with Shoreham PC.

A map of the golf course can be found with Planning Application SE/05/03244. The golf course extends south of the current boundary with Eynsford, which slices through the top part, with Lower Wood to the east and with Preston Hill plantation to the West. The bottom tip of the course reaches Magpie Bottom.

Details of properties affected by the proposal(s) must be given below:

Austin Lodge Golf Club House

Agenda Item 3

Reasons for proposal(s):

This change has been proposed as the golf course is only accessible via Eynsford (Upper Austin Lodge Road) and therefore, it is most likely to be affected by any planning applications for the golf club. It does not make any sense for the golf course to be split up, so the proposal is for the whole of the property.

Details of consultations you have had with parish councils affected by your proposals and the outcome of those discussions:

The chairmen of Eynsford and Shoreham parish councils discussed this proposal informally and were both in favour of it.

Any other comments:

Signed: Date: 16th February 2012

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS)

MRS HOLLY IVALDI, CLERK.....



PARISH COUNCIL OF EYNSFORD

Mrs. H. Ivaldi *Clerk to the Council*

Telephone: 01322 865320

Email: eynsford.pc@tiscali.co.uk

The Parish Office
Priory Lane
Eynsford
Kent DA4 0AY

6th March 2012

Mr Ian Bigwood
Electoral Services Manager
Sevenoaks District Council
via email

Dear Mr Bigwood,

Community Governance Review - Eynsford / Shoreham Boundary

Thank you for asking my council's opinion on the proposal from Shoreham Parish Council concerning Austin Lodge Golf Course/Club House.

Members do not accept Shoreham's proposal to include just the small section including the Club House in Eynsford Parish.

Eynsford Parish Council has already submitted its own proposal regarding this boundary.

Yours sincerely

Holly Ivaldi
Clerk

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Community Governance Review

Proposal(s) for Change(s) to a Parish Boundary
& Parish Electoral Arrangements

(Please return by Friday, 24th February 2012)

Name of Parish: **HEXTABLE**

Name, address and telephone no. of Parish/Town Clerk: **MRS TRACY LANE,
HEXTABLE PARISH COUNCIL, HERITAGE CENTRE,
COLLEGE ROAD, HEXTABLE, KENT, BR8 7LT
Tel No:- 01322 668530.**

Precise description of proposal(s): a map (scale not less than 1:10,000) must also be provided with the proposed boundaries clearly defined:

**THAT THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN SWANLEY VILLAGES AND
HEXTABLE BE RETURNED TO THE ORIGINAL POSITION PRIOR TO THE
LAST REVIEW IN 1999. TO MOVE ALL PROPERTIES IN LOWER
ROAD INTO THE HEXTABLE BOUNDARY.**

Details of properties affected by the proposal(s) must be given below:

WIFFENS FARM COTTAGES, LOWER ROAD. [REDACTED]

WESTMORLAND FARM, LOWER ROAD,

VALLEY PARK, LOWER ROAD,

MALT HOUSE FARM, LOWER ROAD,

70 LOWER ROAD,

72 LOWER ROAD.

Agenda Item 3

Reasons for proposal(s):

THESE ARE THE ONLY PROPERTIES ON LOWER ROAD, HEXTABLES THAT ARE NOT WITHIN THE HEXTABLES BOUNDARY. IT WOULD MAKE MORE SENSE FOR ALL PROPERTIES TO BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SAME WARD.

Details of consultations you have had with parish councils affected by your proposals and the outcome of those discussions:

SWANLEY TOWN COUNCIL HAVE ALSO APPLIED FOR THIS KIND OF BOUNDARY CHANGES.

Any other comments:

ALL HEXTABLES PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS ARE IN FAVOUR OF THIS CHANGES.

Signed:

Date:

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS)

..... MRS TRACY LANE

Community Governance Review

Proposal(s) for Change(s) to a Parish Boundary
& Parish Electoral Arrangements

(Please return by Friday, 24th February 2012)

Name of Parish: SWANLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Name, address and telephone no. of Parish/Town Clerk: MR. BRIAN DALEY
CIVIC CENTRE - ST. MARY'S ROAD - SWANLEY - KENT - BR8 7BJ
TEL: 01322 665855

Precise description of proposal(s): a map (scale not less than 1:10,000) must also be provided with the proposed boundaries clearly defined:

THE WALK BOUNDARY BETWEEN SWANLEY VILLAGE + HEXHALL
BE RETURNED TO THE ORIGINAL POSITION PRIOR TO THE LAST
REVIEW.

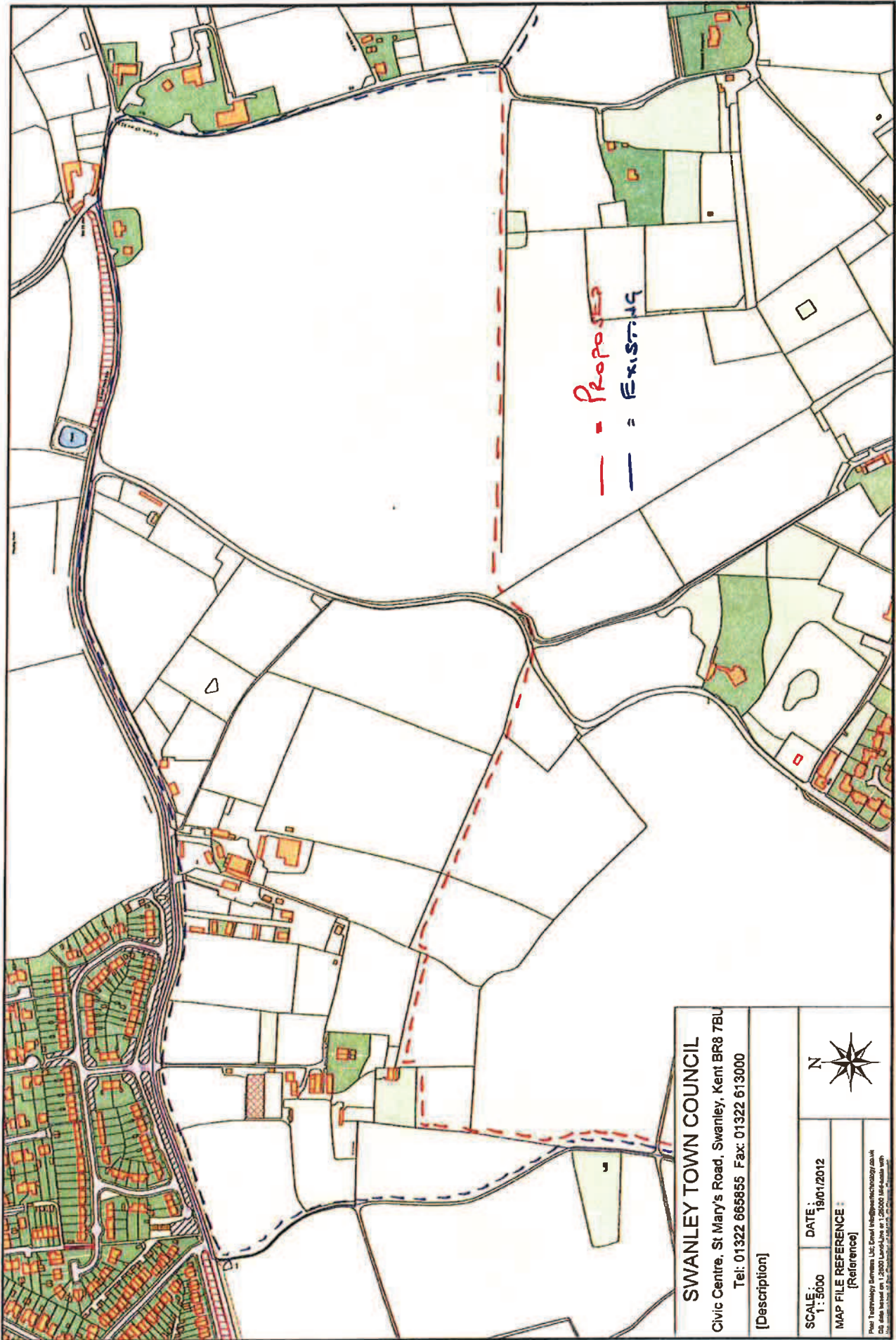
A MAP SHOWING PROPOSED + EXISTING BOUNDARIES IS ATTACHED

Details of properties affected by the proposal(s) must be given below:

WESTMOLLAND FARM

MALT HOUSE FARM

LOWER ROAD TRAVELLERS SITE



Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 04 February 2012 20:42
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Community Governance Review

Since Hextable Parish Council have taken over the running of local management things have greatly improved. Amenities have been upgraded without the necessity to increase our local Council Tax element. Long may H.P.C. continue in it's good work in it's present form. Our thought is, if it isn't broken don't try to fix it.

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas.

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Received 16 FEB 2012



Mr Ian Bigwood,
Electoral Services Manager,
Sevenoaks District Council,
Council Offices,
Argyle Road,
Sevenoaks
TN13 1HG

13th February 2012

Dear Mr Bigwood,

I understand from the In Shape magazine Issue 81 that Sevenoaks District Council is conducting a Community Governance Review. As I would like to see a change in the electoral arrangements in Hartley I have put forward my reasons for consideration by the Electoral Arrangements Committee. These are enclosed with this letter and are entitled "Proposals for Warding of Hartley Parish Council."

I look forward to hearing the outcome of your review.

Yours sincerely,

Dr J E Roberts

Proposal for Warding for Hartley Parish Council

Hartley has always been known as a village but over the years it has grown considerably and would now more aptly be described as a dormitory town made up of 3 distinct communities. These are North Hartley including the Wellfield and Bramblefield estates, Middle Hartley and South Hartley.

Many of the residents of North Hartley use the facilities and services provided for Longfield. Most of the children on the Wellfield estate attend the schools in Longfield and many of the residents of Bramblefield believe that they live in Longfield and have no connection with Hartley. In South Hartley most of the homes are in the Green Belt and are subject to very restrictive planning policies and to the highest rate of crime in the area. Many of these residents use the shops and services provided for New Ash Green. Only the residents in Middle Hartley are dependent on the library, post office and other shops in Hartley itself.

Following the past 3 elections the Parish Council has been dominated by one political grouping known as "Putting Hartley First". This group is based in Middle Hartley. None of their members has lived either in any of the Green Belt areas or on the Wellfield or Bramblefield estates. I believe that unless you live in an area you have no real understanding of the problems those residents face.

I would like to see Hartley divided into 4 wards so that all areas have some form of local representation on the Council. The Parish contains approximately 2,200 houses. This large number makes it very difficult for individuals to stand in elections as it is too large for one person to deliver to and canvass for election. In addition if they live at one end of the village they have no knowledge of the other end of the village. Approximately 500 houses would make this more feasible.

Hartley is already divided into two for polling at elections (All Saints Church Centre and the Scout Hut). The South could be divided further along the boundary of the Green Belt as those in the Green Belt are subject to very different planning rules to those in Middle Hartley. The North could be divided on an East West split so that the Wellfield estate is in one area and Bramblefield in the other. I do not have access to an electoral role and the number of voters in particular areas so I cannot determine how this would fit in with the current number of councillors.

Hartley currently votes for 13 councillors making the ballot paper too unwieldy and complex plus difficult to count. By-elections involve the whole village at great expense whereas warding would reduce the numbers involved and hence the cost.

The guidance on Community Governance Reviews states that electoral arrangements should “Encourage more community engagement reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area.”

The Councillors Commission Report 2007 states, “Councils have a duty to encourage participation. It recommended that they actively attract and encourage potential candidates irrespective of political allegiance, and from as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible”

Warding would help satisfy these two objectives.

In conclusion, reasons for warding in Hartley are as follows.

1. The very large size of Hartley makes fair representation on the Parish Council for all the different parts of the parish very difficult.
2. Residents are unable to identify with which councillors actually represent their part of the village. The councillors do not know the entire village.
3. Legislative guidance suggests that warding should take place so that the wards reflect different parts of a parish within one overall identity.
4. The high costs of casual vacancy by-elections for this large parish.

I hope that these suggestions will be considered carefully by the Electoral Arrangements Committee with a view to enabling a fairer and more equal representation for all residents throughout the Parish of Hartley.

Agenda Item 3

Community Governance Review
Sevenoaks District Council

Dear Sir or Madam

Re: Community Governance Review – Hartley Parish

I am a local resident and I wish to make suggestions which I hope will improve local democracy. In a number of places I have referred to “Guidance on Community Governance Reviews” (2010) by the Department for Communities and Local Government (“DCLG Guidance”).

1. Boundaries

1.1 Boundary between Hartley and Ash parishes

I understand that Ash parish has proposed an alteration of the boundary in Ash Road to incorporate the New Ash Green Sports Centre and Milestone School into the parish of Ash cum Ridley. I have no objection to this as they are part of the built up area of New Ash Green and make for clearly identifiable boundaries.

I would not be in favour of moving any part of Northfield (the land to the north of Milestone School). It forms an important green space between the parishes of Hartley and Ash, and it is important for both communities to have a stake in this land via (1) being in the parish of Hartley and (2) the freehold ownership of the New Ash Green Village Association.

1.2 Boundary between Hartley and Longfield parishes

I understand that as part of this review, the council can request the Boundary Committee for England to look at District Council Boundaries. I think that the council should survey the residents of the Bramblefield Estate in the north of Hartley to see which parish they would prefer to be in. The 2009 Hartley Parish Plan (page 8) found that 73% of those who replied identified more with Longfield than Hartley, and the area remains in the ecclesiastical parish of Longfield. I therefore endorse the recommendation of the parish plan and request that the council seek the views of the residents there.

2. Warding

I believe that there is a very strong case for warding, based on the criteria set out in paragraph 159 of the DCLG Guidance.

2.1 Single Election of Councillors is Impracticable and Inconvenient

Hartley is by far the biggest unwarded parish in the district and this causes a number of practical problems:

- Difficulties in running a poll. The ballot paper has been about 2 feet long on more than one occasion. As well as adding to confusion for electors, it causes problems when they come to

be counted. At one count I attended Hartley's was not completed until long after all the others.

- Cost of having to run by-elections for such a large electorate. A by-election for a ward will require only one polling station and fewer poll cards.

Having wards will, I believe, encourage democratic participation. It should encourage people to stand for council if they know they only have to run a campaign for 500 houses and not 2,000 – saving time and money.

It will also help improve voter identification with their councillors. A smaller ward will help people to more easily identify who to bring their concerns to, and increase the chances of having councillors who live closer to them.

2.2 Strengthening community cohesion

Paragraph 73 of the DCLG Guidance States *“Community cohesion is about local communities where people should feel they have a stake in the society, and in the local area where they live by having the opportunity to influence decisions affecting their lives. This may include what type of community governance arrangements they want in their local area.”*

The Wellfield Estate in the north of the parish is one of relative deprivation compared to the rest of the parish. According to the Sevenoaks Population and Social Profile 2010, it is the most deprived area in the district outside Swanley. In the last 40 years I think that only one parish councillor has come from there, even though numerically they would be entitled to about 2-3 councillors every election.

The Hartley Parish Plan has an action point to encourage greater involvement in community issues by the residents of the Wellfield area. This was endorsed by the Parish Council at their Finance and General Purposes Meeting of 5 May 2010.

The area is believed to have significantly lower turnout in elections. Encouraging participation is vital to a flourishing democracy.

I have used Wellfield as an example, but all areas of Hartley have their own concerns, which may be better met by having ward councillors.

I believe that warding will encourage greater participation. This amply meets the criteria of paragraph 159 of the DCLG Guidance.

2.3 Proposals

Therefore I propose 4 wards for Hartley with a possible layout set out below to achieve the same council size as present. In doing so I have been mindful of the need to balance community identity with the desirability of equal representation set out in paragraph 166 of the DCLG Guidance. Wards of roughly equal size are proposed to avoid the risk of one area dominating the others. I have given them compass point and also more “local” suggested names.

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Ward	Details	Electors	Councillors
North (Hoselands)	Bramblefield Estate, Ash Road north of Wellfield, Wellfield Road, Wellfield Estate, Copse Side, Hottsfeld, Quakers Close, Merton Avenue.	1,294	4
West (Bancks)	Ash Road between Wellfield and Fairby Lane, Round Ash Way, Oast Way, Conifer Avenue, Culvey Close, Broomfields, Castle Hill, Old Downs, Downs Valley Estate, The Warrens, Stack Lane, Green Way, Hoselands View.	1,001	3
East (Woodland)	Church Road between Ash Road and St Johns Lane, Larksfeld, Woodland Avenue, Gresham Avenue, Wickhams Way, Dickens Close, Gorsewood Road, Gorse Way, Briars Way, Beechlands Close, Carmelite Way, Cherry Trees.	1,051	3
South (Manor)	Remainder of Ash Road and Church Road, Fairby Lane, Chantry Avenue, Tates Orchard, St Johns Lane, Billings Hill Shaw, Grange Way, Manor Drive, Manor View, Manor Lane, Manor Road, Springcroft, Grange Lane, Hartley Hill, Hartley Bottom Road, Chapelwood Road	1,047	3

The figures are based on the 2000 Electoral Roll so may need revising slightly (although little in the way of new development to change the numbers significantly since then). This is because members of the public can no longer see the electoral register unless they go in person to Sevenoaks.

3. Council size

Paragraph 154 of the DCLG guidance states that most parishes with a population of 2,501 to 10,000 had 9 to 16 parish councillors. Given that Hartley currently has 13 councillors, I make no recommendations to change to size, unless it would facilitate the other proposals.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

Peter Mayer



Received 16 FEB 2012



Mr Ian Bigwood
Electoral Services Manager
Sevenoaks District Council
Council Offices
Argyle Road
Sevenoaks
TN13 1HG

February 14th 2012.

Dear Mr Bigwood,

I have lived in the Green Belt area of South Hartley for over 40 years. Prior to the last 10 years we have always had a Hartley Parish Councillor living along the road that I could speak to if I had a problem.

We currently have 13 Councillors on our Parish Council but not one of them lives in the Green Belt and therefore they are not aware of the problems caused by the very restrictive planning policies enforced by Sevenoaks or the effect of the crime in the area which particularly upsets the elderly.

The current councillors claim that they represent everyone within the village but 3 weeks ago I did have a request that was never fulfilled. I would like to return to the days when we had Councillors living nearby who you could get to know and who appreciated your problems. This could be achieved by warding Hartley so particular Councillors were responsible for particular areas.

I would therefore ask that the Electoral Arrangements Committee be requested to discuss warding for the election of Hartley Parish Council.

I look forward to your consideration on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Ivy Sharp





Received - 1 MAR 2012

HARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL
Clerk to the Council: Mrs J Hoad
The Parish Council Office, Hartley Library, Ash Road
Hartley, Longfield, Kent DA3 8EL Tel/Fax: 01474 709441
E Mail: mail@hartleyparishcouncil.org.uk
Website: www.hartleyparishcouncil.org.uk

28th February 2012

Ian Bigwood
Electoral Services Manager
Sevenoaks District Council
Council Offices
Argyle Road
Sevenoaks TN13 1HG

Dear Mr Bigwood

Community Governance Review

Hartley Parish Council wishes to make the following representations in respect of the Community Governance Review being undertaken by Sevenoaks District Council.

- (1) Hartley Parish Council does not propose any changes to the parish boundary.
- (2) Hartley Parish Council has no objection to a proposal put forward by Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council for a minor amendment to the parish boundary to include the Milestone School within the parish of Ash-cum-Ridley. This would enable the Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council offices to be brought within the parish boundary of Ash-cum-Ridley rather than Hartley.
- (3) Hartley Parish Council does not seek any changes to its current parish electoral arrangements in terms of number of parish councillors or merger with neighbouring parishes.
- (4) Hartley Parish Council objects to any proposal to Ward the parish for the reasons set out below.
 - (i) Historically Hartley has always been a single village and is not a community which consists of separate hamlets. There are no distinct neighbourhoods or communities with separate identities which would readily enable the division of the parish into Wards. (*Para. 158 of the DCLG guidance*).

- (ii) There would be no benefit to the residents of Hartley for Warding in the parish. (*Para. 157 (b) of the DCLG guidance*).
- (iii) There is no argument to support that the current electoral arrangements, in terms of the number or distribution of local government electors, would make the single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient. (*Para. 157 (a) of the DCLG guidance*).
- (iv) If implemented, Warding would break ties and linkages which have existed in the community for over 100 years, (*para. 162 of the DCLG guidance*), and could result in an imbalance of representation on the Parish Council, (*para. 164 of the DCLG guidance*), and would conflict with DCLG guidelines.
- (v) Guidance issued by the Electoral Commission states that principal councils should consider the desirability of parish Warding in circumstances where the parish falls across two districts or boroughs. This is not the case in Hartley as the parish falls entirely within the Sevenoaks District area. (*Para. 161 of the DCLG guidance*).

The issue of Warding was discussed at recent Parish Council meetings after it was raised by two members of the public and following discussions Members decided that Warding was not necessary, as current electoral arrangements serves the community well with electors having access to 13 Members.

Hartley Parish Council is aware that representations have been made by three members of the public in favour of Warding. The views expressed by Mrs Roberts, Mrs Sharp and Mr Mayer are personal to them and in the Parish Council's views are not held widely in Hartley.

The main basis of their arguments in favour of Warding relate to a mistaken belief that Hartley consists of a number of separately identified Communities which should each be recognised as Wards. This is just not the case. Hartley is a single Community with most of its services such as shops, library, schools, clubs and meeting halls all placed in the centre. To the north it has a very clear boundary along the railway and on the other three sides it has its own section of Green Belt which it protects.

There is no rationale behind Mr Mayer's suggested Wards, but have clearly been devised to give equality of electors.

By having Councillors elected from across the whole of the Parish avoids conflict between Ward interests and allows the Parish Council to deal with issues in the best interests of the whole Parish. This is particularly relevant to planning matters where under Mr Mayer's proposals each Ward would have a section of the Green Belt.

Mrs Roberts suggests that Members can have no understanding of problems faced by residents unless they live in the area. Members consider this assumption to be quite ridiculous, and rejects any claims that they can have no

appreciation or understanding of problems relevant to specific sections of the community.

The problems identified by Mr Mayer on the Wellfield estate will not be resolved by Warding. The Parish Council is of the view that integration and not separation is the right solution and is using the PACT arrangements to this end.

The other suggestion, that the current arrangements are impractical and inconvenient, raising the question as to whom. The Parish Council believes that (the majority of) Hartley's residents would feel insulted if it is suggested that they did not understand the current voting arrangements. The fact that seats on the Parish Council are contested and leads to lengthy ballot papers should be applauded as it shows a healthy interest in local affairs. The Parish Council is more than satisfied that the Returning Officer can deal with the counting arrangements.

The Parish Council wishes to comment on the proposals concerning the future location of the Bramblefield Estate. It is not unusual for some residents living close to a boundary, be it Parish, District, County or Country to feel closer to the adjoining Community. However boundaries have to be drawn somewhere and the Parish Council is convinced that the present boundary is correct, as it is clearly defined along the railway line.

Finally, Hartley Parish Council is satisfied that the current electoral arrangements reflects the identities and interests of the community in Hartley, and is effective and convenient. Furthermore there is no demonstrable evidence that residents are disadvantaged by the current electoral arrangements or that changes would provide any benefits.

Yours sincerely



Julie Hoad MILCM
Clerk to the Council

Received 10 JAN 2012

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

6 January 2012

Ian Bigwood, Electoral Services Manager

Sevenoaks District Council Offices

Dear Mr Bigwood,

Localism Act of November 2011

We are writing to raise two points which would seem to come within the scope of the above Act, The first is personal to us, the latter is a more general point arising out of the current situation caused by the outrageous proposals by the Peshurst parish council for the use of Forge Field in Peshurst.

As long term residents of the above address , 39 years this August, we hadn't previously had cause to consider the anomaly - being as we are the former lodge to Redleaf House which is in the parish of Peshurst - of not ourselves being in the same parish. This is also the case for our neighbour at Woodside Kennels. This really makes no sense at all. The obvious solution would be for the parish boundary to become coterminous with the Edenbridge Road at the adjacent corner with the Peshurst Road, thus incorporating both North Lodge and Woodside Kennels in the parish of Peshurst, which is where we have always had a natural and day by day attachment. We hope it may be possible to make this alteration, which our neighbours also fully support.

Our second point arises out of the anomalous situation referred to above, where the Peshurst parish council, totally against the vociferously expressed wishes of a large majority in the village, have supported a planning application for the development of Forge Field. This flies in the face of the wishes of an the overwhelming majority of villagers. What if anything will the Localism Act do to rectify such a situation in future, which seems to run totally counter to the government's intention for the Act. It is surely the parish council's role to reflect and support the wishes of people living in the locality. The action taken in this instance was entirely undemocratic bordering on the totalitarian and has caused widespread dissatisfaction.

We should be grateful for your comments and any appropriate action that may be called for.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Brian Cooper

[REDACTED]

Mrs. Janet Cooper

Mr I Bigwood
Sevenoaks District Council
Argyle Road
Sevenoaks
Kent
TN13 1HG

23-01-'12

Dear Mr Bigwood

I am writing to confirm our support for the proposed change of parish council boundary as highlighted in Mr B Cooper's letter of the 06-01-'12

We take an active part in the village life of Penshurst and find it strange that when it comes to voting etc. we have to go to Leigh.

We would appreciate it if you could put forward our support for the minor change in the boundary that would allow us to come within the parish of Penshurst.

Yours Sincerely



G J Larby

Mrs A A Larby

Ian Bigwood

Subject: FW: Community Governance Review

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 February 2012 15:44
To: Ian Bigwood; Parish.Council, Leigh
Subject: Re: Community Governance Review

Good Afternoon Everyone

The above issue was discussed at our meeting last night and members agreed that it was logical to include these two properties in Penshurst parish on the assumption there was no opposition elsewhere.

They considered both the geographical aspect of the proposal and the involvement of the families in the activities in Penshurst in making their decision.

I trust this response is of assistance to you

Regards
Evelyn
Penshurst Clerk

Agenda Item 3

Ian Bigwood

From: Louise Kleinschmidt [louise.leighclerk@hotmail.com]
Sent: 22 February 2012 12:38
To: Ian Bigwood
Subject: RE: Community Governance Review
Attachments: ~WRD000.jpg

Hi Ian,

Really because the parish boundary is historic and the members do not think it should be changed just because the residents feel that they have an attachment to the neighbouring parish.

Kind regards,
Louise.

From: ian.bigwood@sevenoaks.gov.uk
To: Louise.leighclerk@hotmail.com
CC: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Community Governance Review
Date: Thu, 9 Feb 2012 13:42:01 +0000

Hi Louise

Thank you for your e-mail. In order for the Members of this Council's Electoral Arrangements Committee to determine this issue, would you please let me know the reasons behind your Members' view that the two properties in question should not transfer from Leigh Parish into Peshurst Parish.

Thanks very much for your help in this matter.

Ian Bigwood
Electoral Services Manager
Sevenoaks District Council
Tel: 01732 227242
Fax: 01732 227176
DX: 30006 Sevenoaks
Email: ian.bigwood@sevenoaks.gov.uk
Web: www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/elections
Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1HG

From: Louise Kleinschmidt [mailto:louise.leighclerk@hotmail.com]
Sent: 07 February 2012 17:18
To: Parish.Council, Peshurst; Ian Bigwood
Subject: RE: Community Governance Review

Dear Ian and Evelyn,

We too discussed this last night, and Leigh Parish Council were not at all supportive of the request for these two properties to be included in the Peshurst parish. Sorry! The Parish Council does not think that the parish boundary should be changed.

We'll await to hear the findings of the review in due course.

Best wishes,

Louise

Leigh Clerk

Date: Tue, 7 Feb 2012 15:44:06 +0000
From: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Community Governance Review
To: ian.bigwood@sevenoaks.gov.uk; Louise.leighclerk@hotmail.com

Good Afternoon Everyone

Community Governance Review

Proposal(s) for Change(s) to a Parish Boundary & Parish Electoral Arrangements

(Please return by Friday, 24th February 2012)

Name of Parish: Otford Parish Council

Name, address and telephone no. of Parish/Town Clerk:

Brenda Hambrook
Otford Parish Council
The School House
21 High Street
Otford
Kent TN14 5PG

Telephone 01959 524808

Precise description of proposal(s): a map (scale not less than 1:10,000) must also be provided with the proposed boundaries clearly defined:

Proposal 1 - Row Dow Lane (See Map 1)

Amend the boundary with Shoreham Parish which borders Stursdon Farm, the Mount and the Croft so that it follows the line of Row Dow Lane. The proposed boundary is shown in blue on Map 1.

Proposal 2 - Twitton (see Map 2)

Amend the boundary with Shoreham Parish so that all properties on both sides of Twitton Lane are included in the Parish of Otford. The proposed boundary is shown in blue on Map 2

Details of properties affected by the proposal(s) must be given below:

Proposal 1 - Stursdon Farm, The Mount and the, The Croft - all in Row Dow Lane.

Proposal 2 - Nos 1 and 2 Stream Cottages, nos 1,2,3 Sun Cottages, Herriots Croft, Chapel (unoccupied) and the Rising Sun Public House - all in Twitton Lane.

Reasons for proposal(s):

Proposal 1 - To ensure that the boundary with Shoreham does not result in the curtilage of properties falling within two parishes.

Proposal 2 - The Parish Boundary with Shoreham Parish currently results in the hamlet of Twitton being partly in Shoreham and partly in Otford. This proposal will facilitate planning consultations and end an anomaly which has resulted in a

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community which is nearer to Otford than Shoreham being partially in Shoreham Parish.

Details of consultations you have had with parish councils affected by your proposals and the outcome of those discussions:

Proposal 1 - There has been no formal consultation with Shoreham Parish Council but we note from their submission to SDC that Shoreham Parish Council support this proposal.

Proposal 2 - There has been no formal consultation but we note from their submission to SDC that Shoreham Parish Council wish to include the whole of the hamlet of Twitton within their boundaries.

Any other comments:

Proposal 2

Otford Parish Council has consulted with the residents of the hamlet of Twitton.

Properties currently within Shoreham Parish - residents from 3 properties would be happy to move to the Parish of Otford and residents from two properties would prefer to stay in Shoreham Parish, one of these residents quoting the cost of changing boundaries. Two residents have yet to respond.


Properties currently within Otford Parish - residents from 8 properties are happy to stay within Otford Parish and residents from one property wish to move to Shoreham Parish. One resident who currently lives within Otford Parish does not want the boundary to change.

Proposals from Sevenoaks Town Council

Otford Parish Council has had sight of the of the resolution of Sevenoaks Town Council in respect of the Community Governance Review and representatives of Otford Parish Council have attended a meeting with Sevenoaks Town Council and other Parishes. However Otford Parish Council has not seen any detailed proposals from Sevenoaks Town Council in this respect.

Otford is a close-knit community with a conservation area and surrounded by Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Metropolitan Green Belt. We are pleased to believe that residents as a whole identify with the village and whether as paid employees, or volunteers, work efficiently for the good of the whole village. Therefore Otford Parish Council wishes to maintain the status quo as regards all Parish boundaries (other than those in Proposals 1 and 2 above) and responsibilities including, for clarity, the existing southern boundary with Sevenoaks Town Council.

Otford Parish Council is happy to collaborate with other Councils concerning local services, shared interests and concerns, as it currently does already.

Signed: 

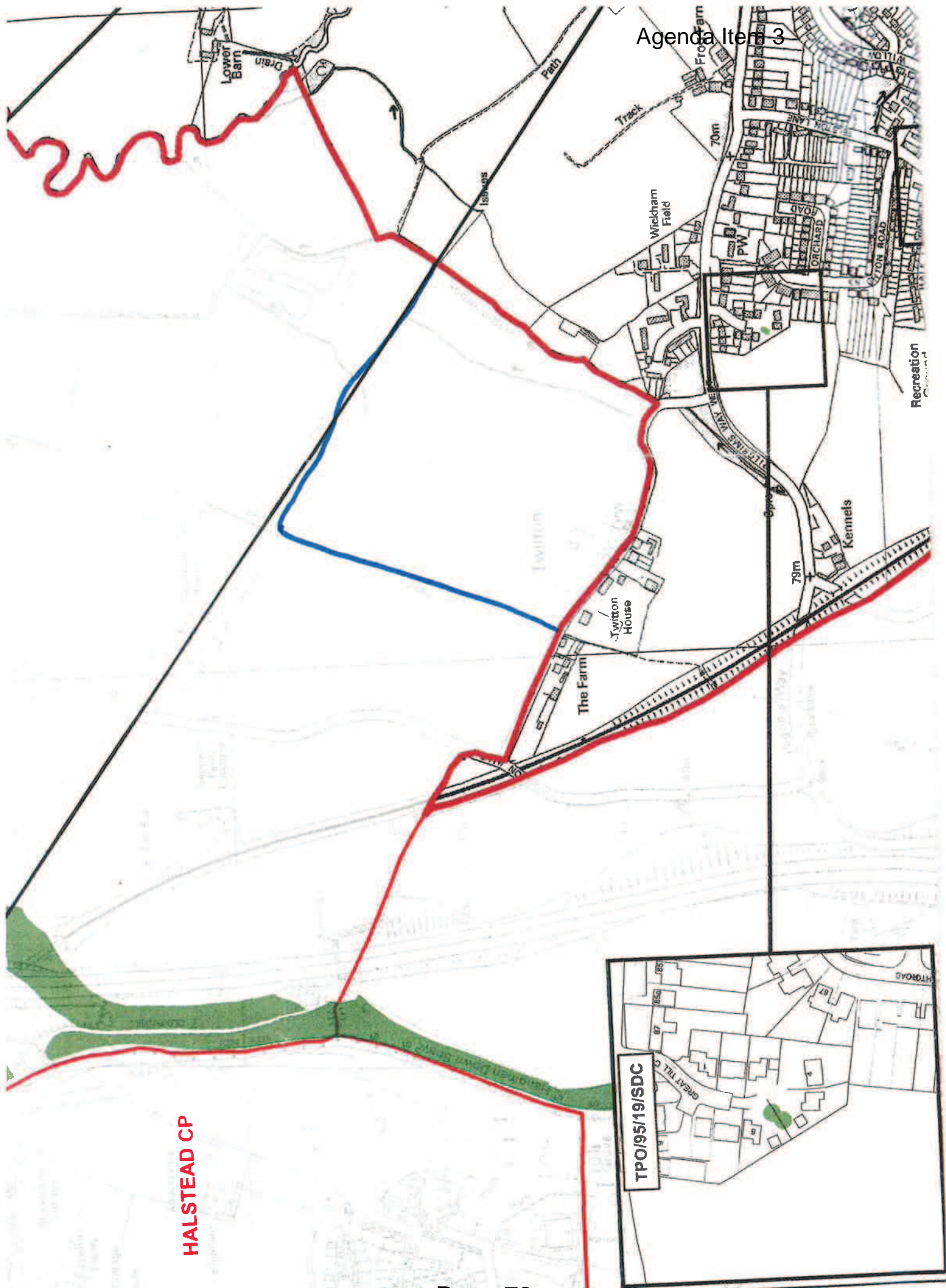
Date: 21/2/2012

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS)

BRENDA HAMBRICK - CLERK TO OTFORD

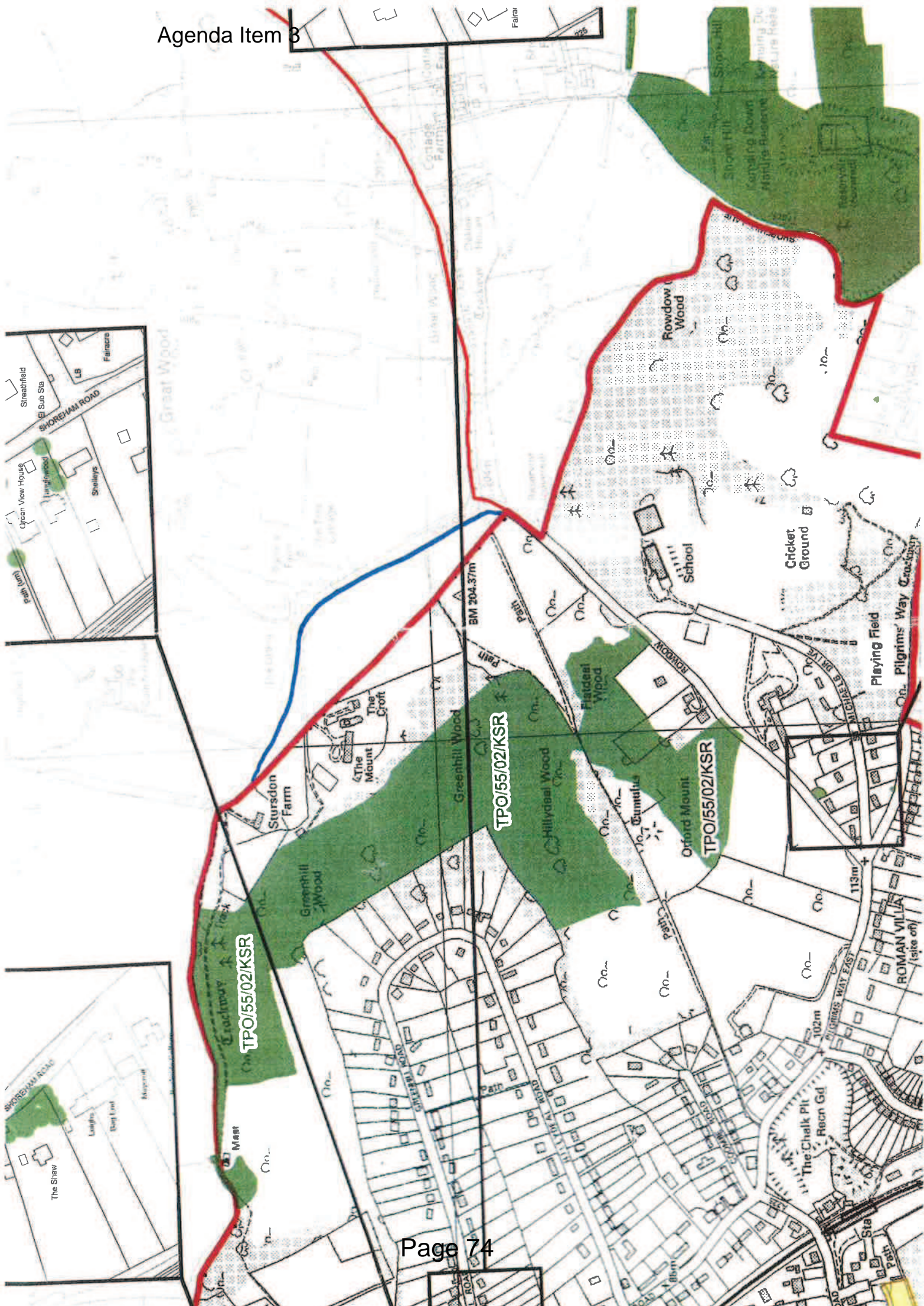
Sevenoaks District Council, Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1HG PARISH

COUNCIL



HALSTEAD CP

TPO195/19/SDC



TPO/55/02/KSR

TPO/55/02/KSR

TPO/55/02/KSR

Received 10 JAN 2012



6 January 2012

Ian Bigwood, Electoral Services Manager

Sevenoaks District Council Offices

Dear Mr Bigwood,

Localism Act of November 2011

We are writing to raise two points which would seem to come within the scope of the above Act, The first is personal to us, the latter is a more general point arising out of the current situation caused by the outrageous proposals by the Penshurst parish council for the use of Forge Field in Penshurst.

As long term residents of the above address , 39 years this August, we hadn't previously had cause to consider the anomaly - being as we are the former lodge to Redleaf House which is in the parish of Penshurst - of not ourselves being in the same parish. This is also the case for our neighbour at Woodside Kennels. This really makes no sense at all. The obvious solution would be for the parish boundary to become coterminous with the Edenbridge Road at the adjacent corner with the Penshurst Road, thus incorporating both North Lodge and Woodside Kennels in the parish of Penshurst, which is where we have always had a natural and day by day attachment. We hope it may be possible to make this alteration, which our neighbours also fully support.

Our second point arises out of the anomalous situation referred to above, where the Penshurst parish council, totally against the vociferously expressed wishes of a large majority in the village, have supported a planning application for the development of Forge Field. This flies in the face of the wishes of an the overwhelming majority of villagers. What if anything will the Localism Act do to rectify such a situation in future, which seems to run totally counter to the government's intention for the Act. It is surely the parish council's role to reflect and support the wishes of people living in the locality. The action taken in this instance was entirely undemocratic bordering on the totalitarian and has caused widespread dissatisfaction.

We should be grateful for your comments and any appropriate action that may be called for.

Yours sincerely,



Brian Cooper

Mrs. Janet Cooper

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Ian Bigwood

Subject: FW: community governance review

From: Jeremy Broadhead [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 February 2012 15:51
To: Ian Bigwood
Subject: community governance review

Dear Mr Bigwood

I am an elected councillor for the parish of Penshurst and would like to add my thoughts to your community governance review.

The villages are currently in great disharmony around one planning application, about which I suspect you are aware. The persistence and strength of feeling on both sides has led to deep division.

There are two reasons for the ire it has caused. One is that it is a sensitive site in the middle of Penshurst village. The second is of great importance, and is the view, held by many, that the local democratic processes have been unfair. Some of this is to do with the two village parish council arrangement.

The five Penshurst councillors have been elected. Two are excluded from voting. Two are against and one is for. That probably represents the Penshurst village view as a whole (see SDC's village survey about this issue).

However, all four of the Fordcombe councillors, none elected by vote, have supported the project, which of course is for a development not in their village. It is their opinion that has prevailed on this planning matter.

For Penshurst residents the parish council has not reflected their views.

In my view parish affairs would work more effectively if Fordcombe and Penshurst dealt with their own affairs. The boundaries would be the same as the two wards. The numbers of councillors per ward could remain unchanged.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Broadhead

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 February 2012 19:21
To: Ian Bigwood
Cc: KCC - Peter Lake
Subject: New Parish Proposal

Dear Peter – I have copied you in because I have mentioned your name.

Dear Mr Bigwood,

In the May 2011 local voting I was elected a Parish Councillor for the ward of Penshurst. The Village turnout was pronounced (I think by yourself) a record at just under 57%. 3 councillors who stood on a 'Pro' ticket for the Forge Field affordable housing proposal, including the then Chairman, were deposed and replaced by 3 candidates who had campaigned against that location for affordable housing.

The Villagers sent message loud and clear about their views on this item and then 72% of central Penshurst voted against the development in the SDC survey becoming 68% when the outlying hamlets were included and 58% against once Fordcombe vote was included. You can imagine Penshurstian infuriation and subsequent despair when the Parish council voted 'FOR' the project. Consider that the voting was tipped by an unelected Fordcombe group and also by one former Penshurst cllr deposed in May for being pro, but then following co-option, voted FOR.

This matter has caused deep upset and divide in both the Penshurst community and between the wards – it has become a 'them and us' situation with a bitter taste. Cllr Lake (copied in) could give you a view as someone often present.

2 Councillors underwent a review carried out by the Standards Board and whilst they were exonerated this is one of a number of examples demonstrating the strength of feeling between Parishioners and Councillors.

For reasons which have generated immense and sustained negativity, causing people to stop speaking after years of knowing each other, where 2 cllrs stormed out of public meeting one slurring a resident on the way out, where democracy has not been allowed to prevail, I think the time has come to separate the wards.

On behalf of the Majority View in Penshurst and with thanks for the opportunity to make suggestion
Ivan Carson

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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 February 2012 12:51
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Peshurst

Please take notice that we support a proposal that the parishes of Fordcombe and Peshurst be separate regards, Mr and Mrs D W Davis [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 February 2012 09:56
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Community Governance Review 2011/12

Dear Sirs

We are writing with regard to the above matter. We are residents of Penshurst for over 30 years. We are governed at local level by the Parish of both Fordcombe and Penshurst. We would like to propose the following change to government at this level by the separation into two separate parishes. The current council consists of both members of Penshurst and Fordcombe and is extremely divisive as a result of this. Fordcombe residents can vote on matters purely concerning Penshurst and as such have caused deep divisions among this community.

We would also like to raise a matter of concern to both of us. At the last local elections one of the previous councillors failed to achieve enough votes at the ballot box. As the Fordcombe area was under represented, the Council co-opted this Councillor back onto the Council. He was co-opted back on because he was in favour of a contentious issue.

Yours faithfully

Alan and Janet Massey



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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 February 2012 08:38
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Peshurst Parish Council

Dear Mr Bigwood

We understand you are the Electoral Services Manager at SDC and you are currently undertaking a 'Community Governance Review' reviewing how parishes operate. We live in Peshurst and are concerned that being joined with Fordcombe has adversely affected our Village's autonomous decision making and caused very important issues for Peshurst village to be effectively overruled by Councillors in Fordcombe who do not represent the views of the Peshurst electorate and do not share the sensitivity to issues that affect our village alone. The inclusion of Fordcombe undermines the democratic process within Peshurst and it is our strong opinion that Peshurst and Fordcombe should be separated for voting purposes. Separating the two villages would enhance the democratic process within each village and ensure each 'village' council addressed village issues more democratically and effectively.

Sincerely

Mike Jenkins & Carol Hewson

[REDACTED]

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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 February 2012 07:20
To: Electoral Registration

Dear Mr Bigwood,

I feel it's time that Penshurst and Fordcome wards become two distinct Parishes. I feel this will help both wards to concentrate on their own issues with no crossovers to cause problems between the two villages. I have lived in the village of Penshurst for over 20 years and often attend the Parish meetings, so I have a good idea of how the Parish Council operates.

I feel strongly that the two villages need to have their own Parishes.

Yours sincerely

Karyn Birch

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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 February 2012 11:11
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: RE: Penshurst & Fordcombe parish

Mr. Bigwood,

My apologies for any ambiguity as I am very much of the opinion that structural changes are necessary, specifically through the separation of the two wards into separate parishes in order that the democratic process of elections, representation & accountability can be achieved. This is clearly not the case, even to an impartial observer, under the current arrangements. Quite separately, as I made clear in my earlier email with respect to a current planning issue, there is a lack of transparency in the Parish decision-making process. I would be more than happy to elaborate if necessary but, hopefully, this message will clarify my position.

Yours sincerely

Barry Aling

From: Electoral Registration [mailto:elreg@sevenoaks.gov.uk]
Sent: 21 February 2012 10:28
To: 'B ALING'
Subject: RE: Penshurst & Fordcombe parish

Good morning Mr Aling and thank you for your e-mail.

A meeting of the District Council's Electoral Arrangements Committee will be held in late March and will consider submissions relating to the Community Governance Review. You do not appear to be proposing specific changes to the governance of your Parish. Would you like to elaborate at all?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards.

Ian Bigwood

Electoral Services Manager

Sevenoaks District Council

Tel: 01732 227242

Fax: 01732 227176

DX: 30006 Sevenoaks

Email: ian.bigwood@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Web: www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/elections

Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1HG

From: B ALING [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 February 2012 09:56
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Penshurst & Fordcombe parish

Dear Mr. Bigwood,

I am writing to you to record my deep frustration with the way in which my parish has been administered recently. As I am sure you know, residents of Penshurst are presently engaged in discussions with both the District & Parish councils over the question of construction of new affordable housing in Penshurst. The vast majority of residents are wholly in favour of such units but have deep misgivings not only with respect to the chosen site but, more importantly, with the way in which the assessment and decision-making process

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has been conducted by a parish council which has a majority of councillors from Fordcombe ward. In my attempts to confront the Fordcombe-based chairman of the council with questions as to why, for example, the units need to be built in a single site (creating unnecessarily greater impact) or why at least some units are not being built in Fordcombe ward, my questions have been dismissed out of hand. There is no dialogue, no consultation and no transparency in this process and, as matters stand, even a 100% vote against the Fordcombe based council members would have no effect. In short, the current structure is totally unrepresentative, undemocratic and vaguely tyrannical. If the existing Council prevails in its misguided policy and continues to ignore the wishes of the local majority, the problem will not go away, it will intensify. This subject has mobilised very deep-seated resistance and anxiety and, in my opinion, it is vital that the important principles at stake are addressed by a higher authority, namely yourselves, with a view to a constructive resolution immediately.

Yours sincerely
Barry Aling



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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 February 2012 18:25
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Penshurst/Fordcombe

Dear Sir,

I am a resident of penshurst and am very disheartened by the division in the parish with regards the Forge Field Development and feel it would be appropriate to have separate parishes for Penshurst, Fordcombe etc to view local peoples views whom it ultimately affects, as it would seem that during the FORGE FIELD FIASCO that the so called councillors for fordcombe were in favour and they do not even live in Penshurst, it is about time that people in public service start to listen to the public that they are supposed to represent!!!

Bernie Stamp

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 February 2012 19:52
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Community Governance review

Dear Mr Bigwood

I am an elected parish councillor for Penshurst and write to you to express my views on the Community Governance Review. This process is timely as I believe the combined Penshurst/Fordcombe parish does warrant serious review as to its future structure.

The affordable homes scheme at 'Forge field' in the centre of Penshurst has caused considerable debate across the parish and is a good illustration of the issue relating to the current PC structure. Whilst it was absolutely clear the majority of Penshurst residents would like to find an alternative location for the new homes, which was echoed with Penshurst councillors voting 2:1 *against* the scheme, all Fordcombe councillors voted *for* the scheme and due to 2 Penshurst members being excluded due to personal interests the weight of the Fordcombe vote dictated the outcome. The feeling within Penshurst was a great injustice was done as Parish Council as a whole had not adequately represented the views of Penshurst Parishioners.

It is clear the majority of PC business can be well executed under the current joint Penshurst/Fordcombe team, however it is also clear that on major matters which only impact one Village then changes need to be made. If the only way to achieve an outcome, where either village is adequately represented by the councillors voted for by the respective villages, is to separate the PC into two committees, then I would recommend this change under the Community Governance Review.

Yours Sincerely

John O'Shea
[REDACTED]

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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 February 2012 21:52
To: 'elreg@sevenoaks.gov.uk'
Subject: Community Governance Review 2011/12

Dear Sir,

I am a resident of Penshurst, having lived in the village for 5 years and am writing in relation to the Community Governance Review. Currently we are governed by a joint Penshurst & Fordcome Parish Council. I believe that this is not the most appropriate way to continue. Penshurst & Fordcombe have quite different individual identities & this has been highlighted over the past few years, in many public Parish Council meetings and the Parish Council voting on the Planning Application for Forge Field in Penshurst.

I believe there is a real need to un-group the two Parishes and to move forward with a Parish Council for Penshurst and a separate Parish Council for Fordcombe. In this way, the individual identity of each Parish will be recognised & preserved and most importantly the views of the parishioners will be more effectively represented.

Please do contact me if you would like to discuss this matter further,

Kind Regards,

Liz Woolman
[REDACTED]

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 February 2012 22:17
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Community governance review

Dear Ian

I am writing with regard to the Governance review. I do feel that concerning the Forge Field issue the people of Penshurst were not properly represented . 72% of Penshurst villagers opposed the development whilst the majority of councillors who voted for the development were from Fordcombe. They completely ignored the wishes of the Penshurst people. It appears they don't mind spoiling a beautiful corner of someone else's village, but I wonder what their attitude would be if the development was planned for Fordcombe. Just witnessing all of what has gone on makes it obvious that the two villages of Penshurst and Fordcombe should be separated into two different Parishes and then they can keep themselves to themselves.

I hope this conveys our feelings on this matter.

Kind regards

Andrew Blake and Christiane Beauville

[REDACTED]

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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 February 2012 22:30
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: parish of Peshurst

Dear Mr Bigwood

I am writing to express my opinion that Peshurst should be a separate parish, independent of Fordcombe. I think that decisions about Peshurst should be made by Peshurst people and that it is inappropriate to link the two parishes.

I have no problem about the two parishes continuing to be linked ecclesiastically.

Janie Hill
[REDACTED]

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 February 2012 12:55
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Community Governance Review - Penshurst & Fordcombe

Attn: Mr Bigwood:

Dear Mr Bigwood,

I understand that you are responsible for the management of the local wards as part of the Community Governance Review.

Over the past few months it has become clear that the Penshurst and Fordcombe wards have different priorities although they are part of the same parish.

Therefore it would seem sensible that the two wards be split into separate entities, to become two distinct Parishes whilst retaining common ecclesiastical links.

In the May 2011 elections Penshurst residents were able to vote for Penshurst councillors, but not those in Fordcombe. However, at parish council meetings Fordcombe's elected council members are able to vote on Penshurst matters. This seems somewhat unfair and the issues around Forge Field have clearly demonstrated the need for change.

At the 7th November 2011 Parish Council meeting the Parish Council supported the development of Forge Field despite the fact that 72% of Penshurst's residents objected - one of the 5 councillors for Penshurst ward supported the motion for development and the development was pushed through by the four votes from Fordcombe, who had no interest.

This has been a most unpleasant period for both villages and it is probably time that the council considered separating the two parishes.

I would be pleased to provide further comment should you require it.

Yours sincerely

Robin Wells



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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 February 2012 14:40
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Community Governance review

Dear Mr Ian Bigwood

RE Community Governance review Parish Council We feel it is a great pity that Penshurst does n't have its own Parish Council separate from Fordcombe.

Would giving both Penshurst and Fordcombe their own ward be a possibility ?

Yours sincerely

Lucy and Jonathan Hills



Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 February 2012 18:02
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Community Governance Review

For the attention of Mr. Ian Bigwood

Dear Mr Bigwood

Regarding the above Review, I would strongly support a separation of the Penshurst and Fordcombe wards. I am a resident of Penshurst and in the last months have witnessed an extremely undemocratic situation where Fordcombe councillors have been allowed to vote on a sensitive matter concerning Penshurst, yet in the Parish Council elections, I am only allowed to vote for Penshurst councillors.

I would however support a continuation of the ecclesiastical link between the two villages.

I am unsure of the exact remit of your review, but with sincere intentions, could I make a suggestion that individuals who are in the position of Chairman of Parish Councils, receive some form of training?

I have been present at Parish Council meetings where the current and previous incumbents have sadly lacked a range of skills necessary for such a position.

I hope these comments will assist in your Review.

Yours sincerely
Mrs. Amanda Curran

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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 February 2012 18:57
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Re: Voting in Penshurst/Fordcombe

Weds 22nd Feb

Dear Mr Bigwood

I have lived in the Parish of Penshurst for over 20 years. I am writing to confirm that I wish for the wards of Penshurst and Fordcombe to be separated. Events in the village over the last couple of years have proved to me that the current parish council system is unworkable and not conducive to village life in my own village of Penshurst. We should be fairly represented by members of our own parish.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Carol Taylor



Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 09:20
To: Electoral Registration
Cc: Carol Taylor
Subject: Penshurst a seperate ward?

Dear Ian

I am just writing a quick line to support the growing feeling in our village that Penshurst should become a seperate ward to Fordcombe. Recent debates over the proposed development of Forge Field (at the heart of Penshurst village) which effectively was pushed though by 'Fordcombe' councillors in our parish council has been a key factor in this thinking, although it is something I have thought about for some time. Although our two villages share ecclesiastical links, we are separated by reasonable geographic distance - with a clear boundary of the River Medway at Spring Hill and evidently share few opinions in such important matters as the development of greenbelt land.

Yours sincerely

James Taylor



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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 16:07
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish Councils

For the attention of Mr Ian Bigwood

Dear Mr Bigwood,

I believe you are reviewing the Parish Council arrangements for Penshurst and Fordcombe. I wish to offer my thoughts as part of the process.

I am a resident of Penshurst and have been for sixteen years. During this time I have never considered the combined Parish Council arrangement to be in the interests of anyone but the Parish Councillors.

Until recently they have largely been elected unopposed, and I believe several of them have allowed their egos to influence their work which should be for and on behalf of the residents of Penshurst and Fordcombe.

At recent elections, we have at least gained some Councillors who intend to represent the real views of the electorate in Penshurst, but sadly we still have Councillors from Fordcombe exercising influence over matters affecting Penshurst. These Fordcombe Councillors have not been elected by me or any Penshurst resident, and this is a far cry from any sort of democratic process.

I would suggest that the best solution is to separate the two parts and create a "Penshurst Parish Council" and a "Fordcombe Parish Council". In this way the Councils will have to represent, and act on behalf of, their electorates, or they will be ejected from office by democratic process. Why this has not been the case until now is beyond me, but it seems you have an opportunity to fix the situation. Please do so.

Yours sincerely,
John Curran
Penshurst

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 February 2012 19:19
To: Ian Bigwood
Subject: Re: Community Governance Review

Dear Mr Bigwood

Thank you for providing the information relating to the Governance Review, I have circulated this to my councillors for their information. Please note the following comments regarding inaccurate points in the main theme, ie affordable housing, raised by many of the emails/letters you have received.

One of the parishioners' emails received contains a statement which has absolutely no truth in it. It relates to the co-option of the councillor after the last election. It states the councillor was 'co-opted back on because he was in favour of a contentious issue'. This is totally inaccurate and the following should be taken into account.

- a. Only councillors, the clerk and candidates attended the selection meeting so it is difficult to know how they came to their conclusion.
- b. The co-opted councillor (Cllr Campbell) was ***unanimously*** appointed on 1 June 2011 by ***all*** eight of the other members of the council in view of his experience and knowledge of current legislation having served on the previous council.
- c. The statement as to the reason for his co-option could infer that he was guilty of pre-determination on an issue, this is not the case and I provide an extract of the minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 11 April 2011 to clarify the position:

'In response to a question as to why the PC had voted in favour of the affordable housing in Peshurst when 72% of the village were against it the Chairman (Cllr Sellings) stated he had taken advice from Sevenoaks into account when voting.

Cllr Campbell stated that whilst he appreciated what members of KPG were saying, he could see nothing else on offer, all previous sites put forward by KPG, the PC and others had been inspected and discounted, Forge Field was the only site on the table for consideration. It had been Cllr Campbell who had requested the breakdown of areas in the survey and when he had checked the results it was obvious those that lived closest had provided the most objections which would naturally be the same in relation to any site offered. The actual split was 58/42% across the parish, had it been 80/20% for example it would have been a different story. Cllr Campbell considered on a 58/42% split his decision was fair. The survey result was not a material planning consideration, the application would be checked against all policies and Cllr Campbell supported the formulation of a planning application to see a sensible reasoned argument.'

Cllr Campbell has a very sharp analytical mind and is one of the few councillors I know that takes a great deal of time and trouble to read through the vast array of paperwork we receive from the various government departments each time they alter a policy or come up with a new one. A statement which casts a slur on such a hard working and diligent member of the council cannot go unanswered.

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Taking the above into account I must also point out that, contrary to many of the statements made in the emails/correspondence you have received Penshurst does in fact effectively have six councillors ie Cllrs Mrs Broad, Broadhead, Campbell, Carson, O'Shea and Frederick and Fordcombe has three, Cllrs Cass, Horsford and Townsend. The final co-option completed the team when Cllr Campbell was co-opted to fill the Fordcombe vacancy, although he in fact lives in Penshurst and was previously a Penshurst representative.

With regard to the inclusion of members of the PC on the Steering Committee, it would be unacceptable that such a project would not include representatives of the parish, the initial members consisting of three Penshurst councillors and one Fordcombe member. Members of the Estate and the design team attended and it must also be pointed out that SDCllr Paddy Cooke also served on the committee, as well as members of the school staff and Governing Body, representatives of the Medical Practice, various departments at SDC and WKHA together with a member of the Police to provide information on safety for the site. You will see that the full range of stakeholders were involved at various points.

As well as the original exhibition, Lesley Bowles of SDC held a number of workshops in both Penshurst and Fordcombe to enable as many parishioners as possible to have access at the pre-planning stage, she also attended a PC meeting with Janet Ranson of WKHA to answer questions from those attending. Neil Gunn of the Environment Agency attended two meetings to discuss plans which might have affected the parish and consequently the site in question. The PC's website has also carried a great deal of information. I trust this gives an indication as to the level of information the PC tried to make available in addition to the open sessions at the PC meetings.

It would be appreciated if you would make this communication available with the other papers submitted relating to the Governance Review.

E M Divall (Mrs)
Clerk to Penshurst Parish Council

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 19:54
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Peshurst & Fordcombe Parish Council

FOR THE ATTENTION OF MR.IAN BIGWOOD.

Dear Sir,

I am strongly AGAINST the proposed separation of Peshurst and Fordcombe Parish Council. This union has worked extremely well in the 25 years I lived in Peshurst. They have so much in common, similar number of residents and sharing of Parochial duties.

There is an element of unrest in the Village at the moment started by a few new comers who are inexperienced in Village matters, they moved here because of the delightful village Peshurst was; they are now set on changing something they don't fully understand.

Yours faithfully,
Mrs. A.M. May.

[REDACTED]

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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 19:54
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish Council

Dear Sir,

I am writing to oppose the suggestion that the Parish Council of Penshurst and Forcombe be divided.

The idea to divide would appear to be part of an attempt by those proposing the idea to thwart the contentious planning proposal regarding Forge Field which currently divides the Village of Penshurst.

There appears to be no other reason for the division. Division will only have the effect of increasing costs and bureaucracy and thereby increasing the Parish Rate unnecessarily. This politically motivated proposal should be rejected, to submit to the request would be to capitulate to the highly vocal tactics, aimed not at improving democracy but rather imposing certain individuals views.

Trevor May
[REDACTED]

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 19:57
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: division of penshurst parish

I write to give you my oppinion on the division of Penshurst Parish. I think the whole idea is redicules, the two Parishes work extremely well together and no change is needed, and my family are of the same mind. Mrs J A Freeman.

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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 20:22
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: splitting the parish of penshurst and fordcombe

To Ian Bigwood

I live in the parish of Penshurst and have done so for 9 years and I don't see any benefit of splitting up the parish of Penshurst and Fordcombe. I think that the parish boundary should stay as it is. I feel that there is a good amount of representation from both villages together and if Penshurst and Fordcombe were to split from each other we would lose that sense of being part of a team.

Emma Freeman

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 20:40
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Fordcombe & Penshurst Parish Council

Dear Mr Bigwood,

I have just learnt that it has been suggested that the villages of Fordcombe and Penshurst are split and each should have their own Parish Council. I also understand that tomorrow is the last day to lodge any points of view. I find this most extraordinary as we live in the centre of Fordcombe and have not seen any notices about this at all. Surely we should have been notified of this proposal by yourselves?

We have lived in the village for 38 years and have always been most satisfied with the way the Parish council is run and how wisely the Parish money has been spent.

If the Parishes were to be split, wouldn't this be a bad economic move, especially in the times we are in? We would have to pay two Parish clerks and how would the funds be split? Fordcombe is the smaller of the two villages and presumably would surely suffer for the lesser proportion of funding. Also the two Parishes are ecclesiastically linked and what a shame it would be to separate us in other ways.

I should be grateful if you could let me have some replies to my questions so that I can understand the logic behind this proposal.

Yours sincerely
Yvonne Fry (Mrs)

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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 21:44
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: separation of parish councils

Hello we would like to make our feelings clear that we DO NOT want Penshurst and Fordcombe parishes to be split, they have been together for years and should remain this way.

Thankyou.

Louise and Steve Bull.

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 21:59
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Community Governance Review

For Mr Bigwood,

I have only just heard indirectly of this review. I am sure that the vast majority of parishioners do not know of it, for there have been no notification whatever direct to all voters. I note that comments have to be in by tomorrow, 24th February.

I understand that you have been lobbied by residents of Peshurst, in particular by those living in the village centre who object to the building of six new houses nearby. Largely arising from this, they wish to have the longstanding Civil parish of Peshurst, which has always included Fordcombe, separated into two separate parishes. If this were to be debated and voted on by all the residents of today's total Peshurst Parish (i.e. including ALL eligible to vote on the matter, when properly informed) and the decision were to be for the splitting of the age old relationship - so be it. But such a decision obviously must be taken when all have been fully briefed, which is most certainly not the case. This mirrors exactly the questions now being raised about the separation of Scotland from England.

John Sworder
Fordcombe

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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 09:00
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Division of the parishes of Penshurst and Fordcombe

Dear Mr Bigwood,

I have just heard on the grapevine that the campaign group "Keep Penshurst Green" are pushing to split the parishes of Penshurst and Fordcombe. In my opinion this is a terrible idea as I don't think either village is large enough to warrant having its own parish council. It would also be hard to decide which parish the areas of Walters Green and Poundsbridge would fit into. In this age of austerity can we really justify increasing council costs by running two parish councils?

From what I understand the only reason why Keep Penshurst Green wish this idea to be considered is down to their opposition to the affordable housing project on Forge Field. An important issue such as this shouldn't be pushed forward on a whim over a single issue.

Kind regards,
Simon Broad

[REDACTED]

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 09:34
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Penshurst Parish Council

Dear Mr Bigwood

I have received notice just today of an application to you by some Penshurst village residents who see purpose in splitting the Parish Council administration of Fordcombe and Penshurst villages.

I was privileged to serve two terms on this Council as a Fordcombe member and appreciate that though the two villages have some substantially differing characteristics, most obviously how significant is the role of Penshurst Place Estate is to Penshurst life, there also are strong ties between the two villages, not least by those of the Church. From my experience of the Council I would conclude it is stronger and more effective by its broader representation, not so prone to be hijacked by single issue councillors, also I have no issue with the present Council's behaviour or decisions.

However, irrespective of the rights or wrongs of this argument is the disturbing situation that as a resident I was made aware of this proposal only by chance and am convinced relatively few other residents will have had knowledge of this proposal and hence the opportunity to express their views to you.

If you are to make any decision to change the status quo I would expect that to be on the basis of understanding the representative views of all of the present administrative area, I do not believe that presently this can be the case.

Yours faithfully

Colin Viccars



Agenda Item 3

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 10:06
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Community Governance Review

FAO Ian Bigwood,

RE: COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

I read in my local parish magazine that Sevenoaks District Council is about to conduct a review of the Parishes within the District. I have lived and worked within one of the Parishes, Penshurst and Fordcombe, for over 20 years and it has been brought to my attention that there are suggestions that the two villages should be divided into separate Parishes. I would like to express my opinion that I think the Parish of Penshurst and Fordcombe should remain as it is and that it is my belief that those proposing this change have a vested interest in the division.

The division is being suggested because of the proposed affordable housing development currently with the Sevenoaks District Council Planning department. This development is a contentious issue that has inflamed considerable debate and division within the Parish. It is probably not surprising that the majority of those opposed to the development live in the village of Penshurst whereas those generally in support of the development are from the village of Fordcombe. Those that are opposed to the development can afford to buy and live in Penshurst whereas those in support of the proposed development cannot and see the development as an opportunity to live in suitable housing in the Parish in which they choose to live. The division of the current Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish into separate village Parishes would signal the death knell for Fordcombe. I have lived all of my life in and around the Parish of Penshurst and Fordcombe and in that time I have seen the slow degeneration of both villages - Penshurst has lost 3 shops and Fordcombe one. If Penshurst and Fordcombe were to be split into separate Parishes it is my opinion that Fordcombe would suffer much more than Penshurst. Penshurst has more facilities - shop, post office, garage, pub, a tea room, the village hall, the school, the church and Penshurst Place - which all draw people to the village and help to keep it alive. Fordcombe only has the pub, church, village hall and school, not enough to maintain a strong community spirit which is so important to keep a village or Parish alive. By having both villages of Penshurst and Fordcombe joined in the same Parish there is a larger community which creates a stronger community spirit.

The division of the Parish would also reduce the amount of funding available to each village, again further increasing the danger of losing the community spirit. The Parish of Penshurst and Fordcombe has just constructed a children's playground at Fordcombe which is for the benefit of the whole Parish not just for those living in Fordcombe - a point I think is lost on those villagers living in Penshurst that are suggesting that there should be a division in the Parish.

The Parish of Penshurst and Fordcombe has to stay as it is. I see Penshurst and Fordcombe as big brother and little brother; one and the same family and always there for each other. If the Parish is divided, big brother Penshurst won't be there to look out for little brother Fordcombe, which will be a real shame.

I hope that my comments will be taken into consideration during the forthcoming Community Governance Review.

Kind regards,

Andy Stronghill



23 February 2012

Mr Ian Bigwood
Electoral Services Manager
Sevenoaks District Council

Dear Mr Bigwood,

Re. Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish Council

I write in response to the request for submissions to the Community Governance Review being conducted by Sevenoaks District Council.

Penshurst Place Estate covers 2,500 acres within the historic parish of Penshurst and Fordcombe, and is proud of the close links that have been established between estate and parish over the centuries. It would be true to say that Penshurst Place and the parish thrive on the close relationship, with the Estate being a major employer and landlord across the parish, as well as supporting both parish churches and both primary schools.

The elected parish council acts for the entire parish, and shares the same boundaries as the ecclesiastical parish. It has worked to the benefit of the parish for many years, and there has never been any indication that this has been anything but positive for the whole parish.

It has come to my attention that a number of individuals opposed to a proposed affordable housing development of six houses in Penshurst are attempting to use the current review to split the parish. Penshurst Place Estate would formally object to this proposal in the strongest possible terms. Any such proposal would be deeply damaging to proper governance and due diligence. It is precisely because the parish council is made up of councillors from both Penshurst and Fordcombe that the council can act as a check and balance across the whole parish. Remove this and the door would be open for those with vested interests to seek election to a smaller parish council and dictate policy.

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It is telling that there has never, in the history of the parish council, been any previous indication of unhappiness with the make up of the council, until the current debate over affordable housing. The Estate believes that any attempt to split the parish is a cynical, invidious attempt to subvert local democracy and should be resisted at all costs.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Thomas
General Manager

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 10:27
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Community Governance Review

[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Bigwood

Although I had been aware of the move by some disaffected Penshurst village residents to try and split our Parish into two I was startled to discover yesterday that you could only accept views on their proposal until the end of today. I am sure a great number of people living in both our villages are unaware of this 'deadline' and would have welcomed the chance to support the status quo.

I have lived in the Parish for forty four years and in this time, and I am sure since its inception, the Parish Council has worked for the mutual benefit of both villages. The current brouhaha is not typical and the Parish Council should be retained in its current form.

Yours sincerely

Mavis Cass

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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 10:44
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Fao Ian Bigwood

Dear Mr Bigwood,

I am writing in response to the Community Governance Review. I live in Penshurst and want to register my support for the current parish council made up of councillors from both Penshurst and Fordcombe villages. This arrangement serves the parish well as it fosters a sense of community between the two villages, as well ensuring that all aspects of parish life can be looked at both closely and also dispassionately. Any suggestion that the parish should be split would undermine local democracy and be hugely divisive to the community.

Kind regards

Oenone Thomas

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 10:57
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Penshurst Parish Council - Proposal to split the ward of Forcombe from the council.

For The attention Mr Alan Bigwood.

Dear Mr Bigwood it is with some surprise, that by word of mouth, I have become aware this morning of a proposal apparently being floated by the pressure group "Keep Penshurst Green" that the ward of Fordcombe should be split from Penshurst Parish Council and that today is the last day to make any observations. If all this is true I would be grateful if you could advise me how this issue has been or should be communicated to parishioners, I certainly was not aware of the issue. More importantly on the proposal I would like to make the following observations.

1. 100 plus years ago Fordcombe was within the Ecclesiastic parish of Penshurst and today Forcombe, though a separate parish, is within the joint benefice of Penshurst and shares the Rector and has a combined pattern of Church services. There is therefore much combined community interest (it is only 3 miles apart)
2. I have resided in the parish for 45 years and was a parish councillor in the previous term of office which concluded last year. The Penshurst parish council has functioned without problem to the mutual benefit of both Penshurst and Fordcombe villages over many years. ' IF IT IS NOT BROKEN DO NOT FIX IT '
3. I believe this proposal by the pressure group is motivated only by the fact that they think that the Parish Council might not have supported the affordable housing project if Fordcombe had not been represented on the Council. It has nothing to do with improving or benefiting the services to the parishioners in both villages. Indeed, if the split were to come about it would be to the detriment of both.

As a result of the above I strongly believe the proposal should be rejected.

Yours sincerely
Mike Gilbert

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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 11:11
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish Council

Dear Mr. Bigwood,

I have heard that there are plans afoot to split the Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish Council into separate councils.

As a former Chairman of the Council, I cannot understand why this is advantageous to either village, particularly Penshurst who, I understand, is requesting the change.

Penshurst, rightly, has a majority on the Council and all that the good people of Penshurst have to do is to elect Councillors who share their interests.

Yours sincerely,

D. J Rose

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 11:21
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: att: Ian Bigwood

RE: Community Governance review

Dear Mr Bigwood,

I am writing to share my views on our local parish council. I feel that having our Parish of Penshurst tied in with Fordcombe works well in helping to keep a broad spectrum view on how our communities are looked after. Both communities are of a similar size but there tends to be a greater level of wealth in the Penshurst Parish, with a lightly lower economic level in Fordcombe and by combining the two gives a well balanced view for both communities.

I do think that there needs to be an improvement to how community related issues and information is passed onto all its residents, as at the moment information like the council news, including information on this review, is entrusted to a 'Parish Magazine' which is not viewed by all members of the community as it is a subscription or purchase only newsletter managed by residents of the village, and a community notice board.

The numbers of councillors works well, although when reading the parish meeting minutes there that there is a bias towards some people doing all the actual work and wonder whether the councillors should be more readily available for council duties during a working week and not just at the social community events. I also have personal concern for members of the council holding a strong bias against any proposed developments in the village and the fact that their views are regularly published in the parish magazine. This does not lend towards a feeling of balance or reliability for any current or future decision made by them on any planning application. Being a member of a group labelled as 'keep penshurst green' gives the impression that they will not support any development that may impact any green space at all within Penshurst is less than ideal as a councillor.

At least by having two parishes together there is a greater opportunity for a fair and democratic view on village life, the community and how it is managed.

Sincerely

Cory Furness
Penshurst Resident

Agenda Item 3

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 19:24
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Peshurst Parish Council

For the attention of Ian Bigwood

I noted, with some distaste, news in the local magazine suggesting a split of villages which form the Peshurst Parish Council. As a former member of this Council for some twenty years or more and at one time Chairman I strongly oppose this motion.

Helen Mackenzie,
[REDACTED]



22 February 2002

Dear Mr. Bigwood

I have only just heard about the proposal to split
the Pensthorpe Parish Council into two ^{separate} entities Pensthorpe and
Fordescombe.

As a former Chairman of the Council I cannot
see any merit in the proposal. The present Council has
always in the past worked harmoniously together and
I see no reason why this should not continue

Yours sincerely





23. 2. 2012

Dear Sir,

I am writing as a Parishioner of over seventy years and a former Parish Council Chairman regarding the division of Penshurst & Fordcombe into separate parishes. The two villages have shared many community activities through out my life time and I see no reason why it should change on a whim of a few nymbys.

I feel very strong that if its not broken don't mend it.

I think my opinion is one that is shared by many of the elderly parishioners in this parish.

Yours sincerely



(MR. R. SELLINGS)

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 February 2012 21:27
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Penshurst and Fordcombe parish councils

Attention of Mr Ian Bigwood.

Dear Mr Bigwood,

As a past parish council member and past chairman of Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish Council I wish to express my disapproval of the suggested scheme to separate the two parishes .

The present well proven structure has worked for many years with elected members representing the combined parishes over many local issues.

I feel that any proposed change will only incur considerable expense at a time when funding in this respect is difficult to say the least.

I cannot visualise any advantage to either parish, so why change a system which has worked well for years to the advantage of the villages and the satisfaction of the majority.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Bastable.

[REDACTED]

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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 12:10
To: Ian Bigwood
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: CGR/proposal/Penshurst
Attachments: Governance Penshurst.doc; Governance Penshurst.doc

Dear Mr Bigwood

Please find attached our formal proposal for the Community Governance Review. We have of course listened to your advice and framed it as you suggested, albeit with additional information included.

Although there is a very strong desire from many in the village to create 2 distinct parishes from the existing wards (which would, I have to say, be the most 'effective' thing this parish could do by about a million miles) we do feel this may be a step too far in these economic times and we (the CGR Committee) have opted for the lesser change that will have no financial impact whilst allowing for maximum effectiveness in those issues that affect each ward alone.

I am sending you this now to ensure we meet the deadline but with changes happening throughout the day I may send a later version!

Have a great weekend - the Sun is here!

All the best and thank you again for your guidance. Perhaps you could advise safe receipt?

Yours

Martin Barraud & Robert Rees

Community Governance Review Committee, Penshurst.

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Community Governance Review, Penshurst

Proposal:

To allow for the split of the voting rights (along existing Ward lines) of the joint existing Penshurst Parish Council according to whether the issue under consideration is local to one or other Ward or is general to the Parish as a whole. Structurally the council would remain unaltered, however a fairly limited change in Standing Orders should accomplish this, hence we would not expect any financial impact.

Reasons:

The Localism Act was created to 'shift power from central government into the hands of individuals, communities and councils'...'we want to see a radical shift in the balance of power and to decentralise power as far as possible...This Government trusts people to take charge of their lives and we will push power downwards and outwards to the lowest possible level, including individuals, neighbourhoods, professionals and communities...'

Penshurst (the Village, as defined by the Ward, rather than the entire parish) has a very clear identity going back over 1000 years. In 1974 the joint benefice of Penshurst with Fordcombe was created for ecclesiastical reasons.

We believe that this identity merits its own greater governance, as would be entirely consistent with the principle of localism.

This has become particularly apparent concerning planning matters, where it has become clear that one Ward has little or no interest in matters affecting the other. In some cases there is evidence of a perverse incentive for cllr's from one Ward to support development proposals in the other (in order to protect their own Ward) ignoring the views of the parishioners in the other Ward.

The Localism Act clearly intends that local decisions are made at the level that they need to be ie. matters of general importance are dealt with at a higher level of government than specific local issues. So in Penshurst's case, for instance with traffic, which affects both Fordcombe & Penshurst - this would be a matter for the combined council whereas planning applications are demonstrably specific to the relevant Ward.

www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/localismbill/

Support for this proposal

In our capacity as the organisers of Keep Penshurst Green, a local group formed to focus debate within the Village of Penshurst on its future, we have had numerous and significant feedback from residents both suggesting & supporting this proposal.

Indeed many have asked us to go further & to propose a complete separation of the Wards into two distinct parishes (but not affecting the united benefice).

Whilst this would be ideal we appreciate that the cost implications may be too great & have therefore sought a more pragmatic solution that will satisfy the majority at this time of austerity.

We are aware that a number of these parishioners have contacted Mr Bigwood directly expressing their views.

There are in addition a significant number who have expressed support for these views verbally to us.

If evidence is needed of this support we would suggest a simple 1 question survey would provide the relevant justification.

**At this time (24th February, deadline day) we have heard from 3 of Penshurst's 5 Cllr's who all support the proposal (Namely Cllr's O'Shea, Carson & Broadhead – their names presented here with permission)
Hence a majority of Penshurst's Village's cllr's are in favour of the change.**

Definition of the proposed areas affected by a change in Standing orders

Penshurst Parish to remain as it is with the proposed changes as outlined above being along existing Ward lines (the Wards of Fordcombe & Penshurst).

Electoral arrangements, i.e. the number of councillors for each Ward.

The two Wards to maintain the same number of councillors for each parish (Penshurst: 5 & Fordcombe: 4).

Martin Barraud & Robert Rees



Community Governance Review Committee, Penshurst Village

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Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 February 2012 11:50
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Parish Council Review - Peshurst and Fordcombe

Ian Bigwood, Electoral Services Manager, Sevenoaks District Council

Dear Mr Bigwood,

The current furore over the development of Forge Field in Peshurst has highlighted several problems with the way our parish and district councils operate if they are to fulfil their function of democratic representation at a local level.

At the PC meeting to vote on the planning application, the proposal was approved by a single re-elected Peshurst councillor and four Fordcombe councillors, all of them unelected as they had stood unopposed at the May election. The lack of interest in parish council matters in Fordcombe was in marked contrast to Peshurst where the opposition to the development was so strong that all but one of the previous councillors had been voted off the council, including the chairman, precisely because those councillors were not objective about the Forge Field application as they had been members of a steering committee formed to achieve it.

The iniquity of this vote has led many to ask whether this dual-village parish should be split. Even if this is not possible or desirable, then some thought should certainly be given to creating a mechanism to allow the opinions in each village to be accurately represented. Where there is a high level of opposition to a proposal in one village and this is reflected in – say - two official surveys, then perhaps there should be a weighting arrangement in favour of that village. This could be on a percentage-to-vote basis so, for example, if 70% of Village A were opposed to a proposal, then only two Village B councillors might vote, if 85% in Village A were opposed, only one Village B councillor might vote. This may sound complicated but in all practicality it would only very rarely be used as this kind of division is rare. But in this case, it would have been there as a safeguard and avoided the extraordinary anger in Peshurst that ensued.

Following on from this, the question of Conflict of Interest needs to be re-examined. A Peshurst councillor was not allowed to vote on the proposal because his house overlooks the site. While I understand the principle of personal and material gain or loss involved, in this case a central argument made by the applicants was that the development would make little difference to the beauty of the village or outlook. Therefore, if that assertion is true there would have been no material loss or gain for the homeowner/ councillor and he should have been allowed to vote. We need to be able to apply the Conflict of Interest principle in direct relation to an application and the claims made in support of it.

This brings us to another Conflict of Interest question that should be reviewed urgently. If a group of parish councillors and a district councillor are members of a steering committee dedicated to achieving a development how can they possibly be allowed to vote on the planning consent? Surely they have a vested interest in voting for the proposal! Yet we have a situation where our district councillor Paddy Cooke is claiming that he can rubber stamp the application (if he feels there is not quite enough controversy) without it ever being discussed in at a public meeting of district councillors – and apparently it is up to him to decide. Very neat, as he is a member of the steering committee, and a clever move by the applicants who are playing the system as it is.

This sorry saga has also brought into question the way that parish council meetings have been recorded in the minutes. Because the parish councillors were biased in the first place, the records of the meetings reflected this bias in several ways - from ignoring points made from the floor to the language used to describe villagers who spoke: those in favour were invariably "Parishioners" while those who objected were "others" or "some" or simply referred to in the passive. Although various surveys showed 70-80% of Peshurst parishioners were anti-development on that site, there was no reflection of that in the minutes which always gave one "pro" speech equal weight with far greater numbers of "anti" speeches. Therefore I would like to see some mechanism by which the council minutes could be challenged if enough people who were at the meeting feel they do not provide an accurate record.

I very much hope you will be able to examine the quality of the current service for your review with these points in mind.

Yours sincerely,

Deborah Rees
[REDACTED]



February 21st 2012

Dear Mr Bigwood,

I am writing over concerns which have arisen about the operation of the Penshurst /Fordcombe parish council. In summary, a sensitive issue of planning (Forge field development – you may have heard about it on BBC or in the Courier) has highlighted a profoundly undemocratic consequence of the combining of the two parishes. There is a simple solution to this problem which I should like to suggest.

At the PC meeting to vote on the above planning application, the proposal was approved by a single re-elected Penshurst councillor and four Fordcombe councillors, all of them unelected (as they had stood unopposed at the May election). It was opposed by two Penshurst councillors, with two other Penshurst councillors abstaining. Hence a sensitive planning issue opposed by two thirds of voting Penshurst councillors (and also in an SDC survey by two thirds of the residents of the ward of Penshurst) was voted through by councillors from the neighbouring ward.

In effect, a proposal overwhelmingly rejected by one village was passed by the other. Indeed, one of the unelected Fordcombe councillors had actually been voted out of his Penshurst seat due in the main to his support for the scheme, only to be coopted back on to the council as a Fordcombe member! This cannot be right or representative.

The unfairness of this vote has led many to ask whether this parish should be split. I do not think that such a dramatic step is needed, but it should be relatively simple to change the rules of procedure such that matters local to Penshurst can only be decided by those councillors elected in the Penshurst ward (and vice versa for Fordcombe).

Second, and again on the issue of Forge Field, it has become apparent that the recording of Parish council meetings has, wilfully or unconsciously, been biased and unrepresentative of the actuality. It should be obligatory to record these meetings electronically to resolve disputes rather than to rely on the sometimes faulty memory of those involved. We have consistently asked for this to be done, only to be ignored in this as in many other areas.

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Third, the question of predetermination of PC members needs to be re-examined. Can it be right for members of the PC who are on an (initially secret) steering group proposing and guiding the development to then be allowed to vote on it as councillors? Furthermore, should the chairman of the PC also be a member of the steering group? Even if there were no sign of partiality, the co-mingling of responsibility for representing local views, with the responsibility for pushing through a development proposal does not sit easy and has severely damaged the reputations of those involved in the eyes of their parishioners.

In summary, there are some simple means to attempt to restore some of the reputational damage done by the Parish council, which should be uncontentious to anyone who actually has the interests of the villagers at heart. I hope you will be able to advance these plans quickly if you feel, as I do, that Parish Councils should actually represent the views of their constituency.

Yours

Robert Rees

Ian Bigwood

From: Peter.Lake@kent.gov.uk
Sent: 24 February 2012 16:23
To: Ian Bigwood
Subject: FW: Governance Review

Ian I am reminded that I should have addressed this letter to you in your capacity as Returning Officer Peter L

From: Lake, Peter - MEM
Sent: 24 February 2012 15:12
To: doug.williamson@sevenoaks.gov.uk
Subject: Governance Review

Doug Williamson
Democratic Services
Sevenoaks District Council

Dear Mr Williamson, Electoral and Governance Review

I understand that today , 24th February, is the last day for any submissions

I would like to suggest combining the two wards of Penshurst and Fordcombe into one ward, but obviously keep the District Ward of Penshurst, Fordcombe and Chiddingstone. At the present time some electors have a Penshurst , Tonbridge address and postcode TN11 and yet they have to vote in Fordcombe for a Fordcombe candidate. This is clearly a nonsense. We are one Parish Council and to create a proper working relationship between the two villages , all those entitled to vote should be able to choose from one list of candidates. There is no reason to retain 5 for Penshurst and 4 for Fordcombe as this adds to the divide.

Yours sincerely

Peter Lake - County Councillor for Sevenoaks South

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Community Governance Review

Proposal(s) for Change(s) to a Parish Boundary & Parish Electoral Arrangements

(Please return by Friday, 24th February 2012)

Name of Parish: Sevenoaks Town Council

Name, address and telephone no. of Parish/Town Clerk:

Linda Larter MBE
Sevenoaks Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks TN13 3QG
Tel: 01732 459953 email: council@sevenoakstown.gov.uk

Precise description of proposal(s): a map (scale not less than 1:10,000) must also be provided with the proposed boundaries clearly defined:

Sevenoaks Town Council's proposal is for the creation of an authority which encompasses the urban areas surrounding the town and has been termed 'Greater Sevenoaks' in the spirit of co-operation.

It is envisaged that the enlarged 'Sevenoaks organisation' would work on the 'West Lothian' principle addressing matters of common interest, with Parishes remaining with their own unique identities and responsibilities. This would provide a synergy with recent Localism Proposals.

Sevenoaks District Council recently produced a Residential Character Assessment which it considers indicates a natural boundary for the 'Greater Sevenoaks'.

The Greater Sevenoaks proposal should encompass the entire urban area surrounding Sevenoaks parish extending to the Green Belt.

Details of properties affected by the proposal(s) must be given below:

Properties within the boundaries indicated in the map attached. Suggested parishes for inclusion are Sundridge, Chevening, Riverhead, Dunton Green, Sevenoaks Weald, Seal and Otford up to the M26 motorway. There is also an argument for the inclusion of Brasted.

An indicative map has been attached which STC would be willing to discuss

Agenda Item 3

Reasons for proposal(s):

Sevenoaks currently acts as a hub and provides facilities for neighbouring parishes – cemetery, sports, culture and leisure facilities. Joint ventures could enable this provision to be extended.

Decisions taken for Sevenoaks and neighbouring parishes are often by elected members who are some distance away i.e. Swanley or Hextable. The Greater Sevenoaks organisation could have more devolved powers enabling parishes to make decisions which affect their locality.

It is considered that the proposal is recognition of the reality of the growth of the urban area over the past 50 years.

Details of consultations you have had with parish councils affected by your proposals and the outcome of those discussions:

i) Email correspondence has taken place with the following parishes:-

Brasted, Chevening, Dunton Green, Kemsing, Otford, Riverhead, Seal, Shoreham Sundridge and Weald

ii) The following parishes have stated that they do not want to enter into any discussion regarding the matter:-

- Chevening
- Dunton Green
- Riverhead
- Seal

iii) All of the parishes mentioned in i) were invited to attend a meeting hosted by Sevenoaks Town Council on 17th February 2012. Representatives from the following parishes attended – Otford, Shoreham and Sundridge and Ide Hill.

The conclusion of the meeting was “that the meeting had generated a good feeling, providing more sense and understanding of the Sevenoaks Town Council proposal, and was constructive.”

The spirit of the meeting was to encourage considerable co-operation in the future and it was agreed to have further meetings a couple of times per year.

iv) See also – other comments section

v) We readily agreed to circulate the STC submission prior to forwarding to SDC

Any other comments:

- i) It emerged that there might be some confusion in some parishes, they thought the consultation was just about boundary changes and had not understood proposals relating to review of parishes.
- ii) It appeared that some parishes were completely unaware of the Community Governance Review prior to the unfortunate press coverage of Sevenoaks Town Council's proposals. At the meeting on the 17th February 2012 a view was expressed that Sevenoaks District Council should have had a meeting with parishes prior to circulating the consultation.
- iii) The Community Governance Review covered many topics, however the press release distributed by Sevenoaks District Council with parishes copied in was, considered inflammatory by its concentration of the parishes review including

"Local people are being asked to comment on the effectiveness of their town or parish council as part of a District – wide review...Sevenoaks District Council is keen to ensure they (town and parish councils) continue to be robust, representative and able to meet the challenges ahead. The review gives local people the opportunity to say how they should be run in the future. Proposals could include creating new parishes, merging or grouping parishes together or altering parish boundaries..."
- iv) It is not clear why Sevenoaks District Council initiated the Community Governance Review other than to invite proposals as indicated in iii). Whilst considered 'good practice' every 10 – 15 years it is not mandatory and is usually undertaken by urban authorities who are looking to create and, or change parish councils.
- v) General concern has been expressed as to how Sevenoaks District Council will 'review' parish and town councils. Number 21 of the Community Governance Review states that Terms of Reference should be provided. Please can these be provided to Sevenoaks Town Council.

Signed

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS)

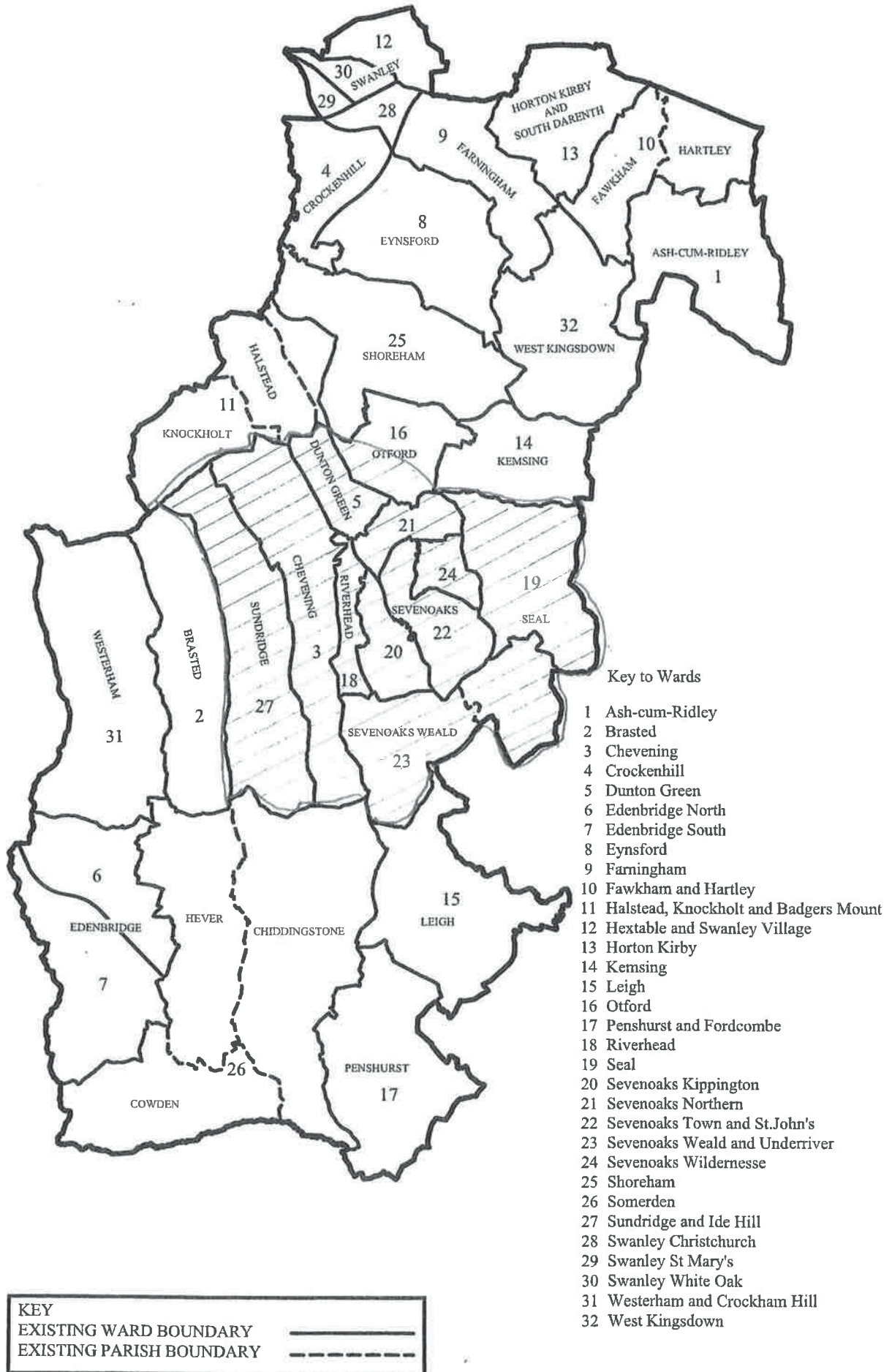


Ann White

ANN WHITE SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL

Date: 23/2/2012

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Ian Bigwood

From: Derek Johnson [derek.johnson49@tiscali.co.uk]
Sent: 14 February 2012 12:41
To: Ian Bigwood
Cc: Howard Dilley
Subject: RE: Community Governance Review - further comment
Attachments: Chevening Parish Council Press Release13-2-12.doc

Ian

Further to my e-mail below, sent this morning, I should also like to clarify that Chevening Parish Council does not support the Greater Sevenoaks proposal mooted by Sevenoaks Town Council.

For your information, I attach a copy of the agreed Press Statement which was issued last night following the PC's meeting.

Regards

Derek Johnson
BSc CEng MICE

Clerk to Chevening Parish Council

Cherry Croft, Packhorse Road, Sevenoaks, Kent. TN13 2QP
Tel: 07540 269181
Email: clerk@cheveningparishcouncil.gov.uk

Ian

Thank you for your e-mail below, which were discussed at the PC's meeting last night.

It was resolved that the PC did not wish to propose any amendment to its boundary, at this time, but wished to inform you that the Parish Plan Questionnaire, which is due to be circulated later this year, will contain questions addressed to parishioners who live at the extreme south and north of the Parish regarding whether or not they would prefer to be included within their neighbouring parishes, which have nearer population centres.

I will advise further on the outcome of these consultations, especially if it transpires that a change of boundary might be preferred by these parishioners.

I understand from our conversation a few weeks ago that SDC would be able to address these amendments as stand-alone requests, at that time.

Regards

Derek Johnson
BSc CEng MICE

Clerk to Chevening Parish Council

Cherry Croft, Packhorse Road, Sevenoaks, Kent. TN13 2QP

Chevening Parish Council Press Release

Suggested Merger with Sevenoaks Town Council

The Parish Council discussed the suggestion from Sevenoaks Town Council (STC) that our Council merges with it to achieve possible savings. Our view is that it would not be in the best interest of parishioners for this to happen and shall be formally saying so to Sevenoaks District Council who instigated the consultation on possible boundary changes. Our reasons are as follows.

A year ago we attended a meeting set up by Sevenoaks Town Council to see if it was possible for local parish councils to get together to save money by joint purchasing. We did not get any savings out of it and therefore think it will be unlikely that any future investigations will find anything substantial. We have asked Richard Parry, the STC councillor leader who proposed this idea, and Sevenoaks Town Council itself for any papers or reports they have done that might substantiate possible savings. We have received no reply to our e-mail sent three weeks ago leading us to wonder whether any work of this nature has actually been done by them.

The current element of Council Tax our parishioners pay for parish costs is £41 per year for a Band D house. Sevenoaks Town Council charge £77 per year; so any merger, even if savings were made, would produce a charge for our parishioners much nearer to £77 than £41. This means Chevening Parishioners' taxes would go up by about £50,000 in total per year. Therefore merging makes no financial sense for us at all.

We understand that the grant of £100,000 per year that Sevenoaks Town Council receives from Sevenoaks District Council for the Stag Theatre and Cinema will end in December 2013. It will therefore be under additional financial pressure and it is possible its Council Tax will go up at that stage; a further disincentive for a merger.

Most importantly of all we think that Chevening's affairs are more successfully run by those who live in and understand the Parish best and being merged into some Greater Sevenoaks would work against that.

Ian Bigwood

Subject: FW: Community Governance Review

From: Dunton Green PC [mailto:clerk@dgpc.org.uk]

Sent: 05 March 2012 12:52

To: Ian Bigwood

Subject: Re: Community Governance Review

Hi Ian,

A copy of the Sevenoaks Town Council Reply to the CGR has been passed to me (I hasten to add, not by STC). There are some points which I believe need to be clarified:

Under the 'Details of consultation...' section:

Item (i) suggests that there has been email correspondence with various parish councils, Dunton Green being one of them.

This email correspondence has consisted of an email with a copy of the STC resolution in it (sent after the initial media coverage of STC's plans) and two further emails from STC regarding a suggested meeting of parishes, the second of which indicated the meeting was to 'clear up misunderstandings' & requesting reconsideration of the Parish Council's decision to decline the first invitation. Given that STC was still unwilling or unable to provide an agenda or a copy of their proposals the invitation was declined again, reasons being stated, and we have not received any details following that meeting. It should also be noted that STC has, at no time, taken any steps to provide us with any information regarding its proposals and this situation has not changed. There are surely no circumstances under which this correspondence could ever be described as 'consultation'?!

Item (v) indicates that STC 'readily agreed to circulate the STC submission prior to forwarding to SDC' but to whom? Presumably to the very small number of parishes who did attend their meeting (the majority of which do not appear to be directly affected by the creation of a 'Greater Sevenoaks' area)? Dunton Green Parish Council has certainly not been provided with a copy of the submission. Dunton Green Parish Council has no wish to be part of 'Greater Sevenoaks' and is extremely dismayed, given that it has indicated that it does not wish to see any of its boundaries changed or merged, to find that it is still being included in a proposal from STC which they have not had the good manners to even forward to the Parish Council.

I reiterate, once again, that Dunton Green Parish Council has no wish to be merged into a 'Greater Sevenoaks' authority and STC has been advised of DGPC's position. It is extremely disconcerting that, despite having received this response, STC continues to push forward its proposals, inclusive of Dunton Green, irrespective of Dunton Green's stated objections.

I would be grateful if you could include these comments in addition to those already submitted by DGPC when submitting information for consideration by Members of the Electoral Arrangements Committee for the meeting in late March.

Kind regards

Tracy

Tracy Godden
Clerk to Dunton Green Parish Council
71 Hastings Road

Agenda Item 3

Ian Bigwood

From: Dunton Green PC [clerk@dgpc.org.uk]
Sent: 20 February 2012 14:14
To: Ian Bigwood
Subject: Re: Community Governance Review

Importance: High

Dear Ian

RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Dunton Green Parish Council has no proposals with regard to either its parish boundaries or parish electoral arrangements.

Dunton Green Parish Council is aware that Sevenoaks Town Council is planning to submit proposals which allegedly affect neighbouring parishes, following media stories run in the Chronicle. Sevenoaks Town Council invited (10/2/12) DGPC to attend a meeting last Friday, 17th February but DGPC declined this invitation. A press release was issued 15/02/12 (as below).

Dunton Green Parish Council Press Release

Sevenoaks Town Council - 'Greater Sevenoaks' Proposal

Dunton Green Parish Council was shocked, given the sensitivity of such a proposal, that the first information that it received about Sevenoaks Town Council's suggestion of a merger with neighbouring parishes was through the local press. The Town Council has demonstrated an utter disregard of the parishes in its handling of this situation.

Sevenoaks Town Council has not availed the parishes with details of its proposal nor has it been able or willing to provide any evidence to back up its claims that a merger would be financially beneficial to all parties, a claim which Dunton Green Parish Council refutes. Sevenoaks Town Council has far more significant financial pressures than any of the other parishes and Dunton Green Parish Council is of the opinion that this suggested merger of local parishes is borne out of the Town Council's need to obtain more funding. The formation of a 'Greater Sevenoaks' would undoubtedly have an impact on the way in which the parish element of Council Tax is spent. Currently the money levied by precept by each of the individual Parish Councils is specifically for spending in and by those parishes. Money going into a 'Greater Sevenoaks' pot would be to the benefit of Sevenoaks Town but to the detriment of the outlying parishes who would lose control over the level of taxation and spending in their parishes.

Dunton Green is quite distinct from Sevenoaks Town, it is categorically not part of northern Sevenoaks (an idea which Sevenoaks District Council also attempts to propagate but to which Dunton Green Parish Council continues to object). The unique character of villages in the Sevenoaks area is fundamental to the District and should be preserved.

Dunton Green Parish Council does not believe that a merger would be in the best interests of its parishioners. Dunton Green is served by people who give of their time freely and who, as residents themselves, have a keen and genuine interest in the village. Its councillors are not tied to party political groups, they work together solely for the benefit of the village, not to achieve any political aims.

Dunton Green Parish Council is strongly opposed to any suggestion of a merger on the grounds that any merger to create a 'Greater Sevenoaks' would not be of any benefit to Dunton Green's parishioners.

Dunton Green Parish Council

15/02/2012

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Sevenoaks Town Council asked DGPC to reconsider its position and requested on 16/02 that DGPC attend the meeting. Again, this was declined, STC having been sent the following:

The Community Governance Review is concerned with proposals for changes to parish boundaries and parish electoral arrangements. Dunton Green Parish Council has no wish to amend any of its boundaries or parish electoral arrangements and is of the opinion that the CGR is not concerned with whatever general arrangements parishes may have or be suggesting for combining of resources (unless they impact parish boundaries and electoral arrangements).

Sevenoaks Town Council has already hosted an informal meeting in the last twelve months (which DGPC did not attend) to discuss possibilities for combining of resources for cost savings purposes. It is my understanding that there were no proposals out of that meeting, the conclusion from those councils that did attend being that there were no benefits for their parishes.

Sevenoaks Town Council might have been somewhat more proactive in acting to explain what it describes as 'misunderstandings'. This story broke in the press on January 26th. DGPC was contacted by the media one week prior to this to advise that a resolution had been made, STC having made its resolution on 16th January. STC made no attempt to contact DGPC until February 10th with an invitation to a meeting but providing no agenda and no information about the proposal or suggestions to be discussed.

DGPC can see no benefits to its parishioners in making changes to its parish boundaries and parish electoral arrangements and it will not, therefore, be sending any representatives to attend this evening's meeting.

Dunton Green Parish Council wishes to formally notify Sevenoaks District Council that it has not been properly consulted by Sevenoaks Town Council with regard to its proposals and objects in no uncertain terms to any suggestions of changes to any Dunton Green parish boundaries or parish electoral arrangements.

Kind regards

Tracy

Tracy Godden
Clerk to Dunton Green Parish Council
71 Hastings Road
Pembury
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN2 4JS

01732 462966
clerk@dgpc.org.uk
www.dgpc.org.uk

From: Ian Bigwood
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2012 11:22 AM
To: Parish and Town Councils
Subject: Community Governance Review

Good morning

Agenda Item 3

Ian Bigwood

Subject: FW: Community Governance Review

From: Kim Bayley [REDACTED]
Sent: 05 March 2012 17:18
To: Cameron Brown
Cc: Ian Bigwood; Cllr Bayley, Kim; Parish.Council, Riverhead; <duntongreenpc@tiscali.co.uk>
Subject: Re: Community Governance Review

I do indeed share this view

Kim Bayley
Director General
Entertainment Retailers Association

[REDACTED]

On 5 Mar 2012, at 17:03, Cameron Brown <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Ian

Just to say I endorse what has been said by DG PC.

While I do think the Parishes could co-operate together on certain issues I am opposed to the proposed merger, which has been handled extremely badly.

There are a number of issues on which the various parishes would conflict and I cannot see the justification for a merger on costs grounds.

Kind Regards

Cllr Brown

PS I am confident this view will be shared by Cllr Bayley but she may reply under separate cover.

Ian Bigwood

From: Town Clerk [townclerk@edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk]
Sent: 09 February 2012 13:42
To: Ian Bigwood
Cc: 'Michele MacDonald'
Subject: Community Governance Survey

Dear Ian,

Just to ensure that there is no confusion. Edenbridge Town Council does not wish to be merged into a 'Greater Sevenoaks ' Council.

Kind regards
Christine Lane
Town Clerk

01732 865368
Edenbridge Town Council, Doggetts Barn,
72a High Street, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 5AR

townclerk@edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk

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Mr. I. Bigwood
Electoral Services Manager
Sevenoaks District Council
Council Offices
Argyle Road
Sevenoaks
Kent
TN13 1HG

20 February 2012

Dear Mr. Bigwood

Community Governance Review

Thank you for giving the Parish Council an opportunity to make representations to the District Council as part of the Community Governance Review, currently being undertaken by Sevenoaks District Council.

The Parish Council considered the contents of your email dated 30 November 2011 and the Department for Communities and Local Government's Electoral Commission's Guidance on community governance reviews, which were discussed and considered at a recent Parish Council meeting. I was subsequently asked to write to you with the Parish Council's views.

Kemsing Parish Council does not propose any changes to the existing boundaries between Kemsing and the parishes of Shoreham and Seal. The Parish Council also does not propose the village to be divided into wards.

With regard to the proposal from Sevenoaks Town Council for a 'Greater Sevenoaks Town', which had recently been published in the local press, Kemsing Parish Council would like to inform Sevenoaks District Council that it opposes, in the strongest possible terms, any proposal from Sevenoaks Town Council to include Kemsing as part of the 'Greater Sevenoaks Town.'

I would like to point out that there had been no consultation with Kemsing Parish Council by Sevenoaks Town Council in relation to any boundary changes and I understand that evidence of details of such consultations should accompany the 'Proposal for Changes to a Parish Boundary & Parish Electoral Arrangements' application form.

Yours sincerely,



Yolanda Tredoux (Mrs.)
Clerk to the Council

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community which is nearer to Otford than Shoreham being partially in Shoreham Parish.

Details of consultations you have had with parish councils affected by your proposals and the outcome of those discussions:

Proposal 1 - There has been no formal consultation with Shoreham Parish Council but we note from their submission to SDC that Shoreham Parish Council support this proposal.

Proposal 2 - There has been no formal consultation but we note from their submission to SDC that Shoreham Parish Council wish to include the whole of the hamlet of Twitton within their boundaries.

Any other comments:

Proposal 2

Otford Parish Council has consulted with the residents of the hamlet of Twitton.

Properties currently within Shoreham Parish - residents from 3 properties would be happy to move to the Parish of Otford and residents from two properties would prefer to stay in Shoreham Parish, one of these residents quoting the cost of changing boundaries. Two residents have yet to respond.

Properties currently within Otford Parish - residents from 8 properties are happy to stay within Otford Parish and residents from one property wish to move to Shoreham Parish. One resident who currently lives within Otford Parish does not want the boundary to change.

Proposals from Sevenoaks Town Council.

Otford Parish Council has had sight of the of the resolution of Sevenoaks Town Council in respect of the Community Governance Review and representatives of Otford Parish Council have attended a meeting with Sevenoaks Town Council and other Parishes. However Otford Parish Council has not seen any detailed proposals from Sevenoaks Town Council in this respect.

Otford is a close-knit community with a conservation area and surrounded by Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Metropolitan Green Belt. We are pleased to believe that residents as a whole identify with the village and whether as paid employees, or volunteers, work efficiently for the good of the whole village. Therefore Otford Parish Council wishes to maintain the status quo as regards all Parish boundaries (other than those in Proposals 1 and 2 above) and responsibilities including, for clarity, the existing southern boundary with Sevenoaks Town Council.

Otford Parish Council is happy to collaborate with other Councils concerning local services, shared interests and concerns, as it currently does already.

Signed:

Date:

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS)

Sevenoaks District Council, Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1HG

Riverhead Parish Council

Parish Clerk, Riverhead Village Hall,
Amherst Hill, Riverhead, Sevenoaks,
Kent. TN13 2EL

☎: 01732 461278

Fax: 01732 461271

e-mail: riverheadparish@tiscali.co.uk

www.riverheadpc.kentparishes.gov.uk

20th February 2012

Mr Ian Bigwood
Electoral Services Manager
Sevenoaks District Council
Argyle Road
Sevenoaks
Kent TN13 1HG

Dear Mr Bigwood,

Riverhead Parish Council does not recommend the extension or reduction of its boundaries. However, we feel obliged to respond to the consultation as we are strongly opposed to Sevenoaks Town Council's proposal to include Riverhead and other parishes in a "greater Sevenoaks".

The SDC proposal is apparently based on a cost efficiency argument although no figure have been presented. We consider that the cost of such a proposal will outweigh any savings. For example STC appears to acknowledge that they will have to increase their staff.

STC has not taken into account the amount of voluntary work carried on by the Riverhead Parish Councillors and other volunteers. Every other month, a working party, comprising between 7 and 10 people takes place in the centre of the village for least two hours in order to clean pavements, redecorate posts, plant bulbs or look after planters and borders. A similar working party of volunteers is also takes place in the parkland each month. This voluntary work could end if Riverhead was to be absorbed into Sevenoaks Town.

Besides this very practical work, Riverhead Parish councillors give a lot of their time freely to run the village: they look after the Village Hall which always needs some maintenance jobs; they attend and advise at the planning meetings; they look after two allotment sites; they also look after the streets through the Highway Committee. Unlike Sevenoaks councillors, Riverhead Parish councillors do not receive any allowance for the work they do.

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-2-

We receive many letters from members of the public in Riverhead and also Sevenoaks congratulating the councillors and clerk about the beautiful appearance of the village. In this respect, Sevenoaks town could receive some lessons as quite a few areas of Sevenoaks - look very untidy.


Most improvements we have carried out have been done at little or no cost through voluntary work and grants. For this reason, the precept of our village has not increase for the last couple of years and will continue at the same level next year despite a few new projects. The financial situation of Riverhead is very good indeed. The financial Committee has always paid a lot of attention to find the best utility providers, insurance and tradesmen. We do liaise with other surrounding villages if better deals can be achieved by working together.

Furthermore, the attraction of living in a village like ours would disappear in a greater Sevenoaks. Because of size of Riverhead, the residents have an easy access to their councillors. Residents are all invited to the Annual Parish Meeting (the invitations are distributed at no cost in every letter box by the councillors) but less formal invitations and gatherings also take place like the Village picnic in 2010 and the singing around the Christmas tree in 2011. The councillors and clerk deal promptly and with great care with any complaints or suggestions from the public. We doubt that this personal attention will be possible in a greater Sevenoaks when the village atmosphere is likely to be replaced by a suburban one.

Similarly, the interests of Riverhead are not the same and sometimes are even opposed to those of Sevenoaks. An easy example is the traffic management. Sevenoaks Town have indicated in the past that they would like to see HGV traffic banned from the upper High Street and diverted along the A21 and they via the A25 through Riverhead. These proposals have been vehemently opposed by Riverhead in the past but we feel that they are likely to be promoted again if we became part of the larger town. It is under these type of circumstances that Riverhead will loose its voice in protecting the interests of its residents. Similarly we fear that any monies allocated to a greater Sevenoaks will primarily benefit Sevenoaks Town to the detriment of the villages involved.

For all of the above reasons Riverhead Parish Council is strongly opposed to any alteration to its boundaries and status as a separatc parish.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Alison Tilbury

Parish Clerk

Ian Bigwood

Subject: FW: Community Governance Review

From: Lorna Talbot - Seal Parish Council [mailto:sealparishc@btconnect.com]

Sent: 05 March 2012 10:51

To: Ian Bigwood

Cc: Cllr Thornton, Julia

Subject: RE: Community Governance Review

Ian,

I have been forwarded a copy of the Sevenoaks Reply and would like to make the following comment.

Point 1.

It implies that STC has had email correspondence on their proposals with us. I can confirm that apart from the original email with the copy of the STC resolution, the only other correspondence has been two emails from them regarding a suggested meeting of parishes, the second stating it was to clear up misunderstandings. There was no agenda for that meeting or a copy of their proposals and we have not received any details from that meeting. We did decline to attend that meeting and informed them we did not want to be part of their Greater Sevenoaks.

Point 5

States they readily agreed to circulate STC submission prior to sending it to SDC this has not happened.

In view that we had already told them we want to take no part in their Greater Sevenoaks as have other parishes, I am rather surprised they have still included us all in the map attached to their reply.

In my opinion that could be very misleading!

Regards,

Lorna

Lorna Talbot

Clerk to Seal Parish Council

Telephone 01732 763488

Office hours weekdays 9.00-1.00pm (except Wednesday)

Website www.sealparishcouncil.org.uk

Email: sealparishc@btconnect.com

Proposal(s) for Change(s) to a Parish Boundary
& Parish Electoral Arrangements

(Please return by Friday, 24th February 2012)

Name of Parish: Seal

Name, address and telephone no. of Parish Clerk:

Mrs L Talbot,
Weald Height, Fawke Common, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 0SP
01732 763488

Precise description of proposal(s): a map (scale not less than 1:10,000) must also be provided with the proposed boundaries clearly defined: N/A

Details of properties affected by the proposal(s) must be given below:

Reasons for proposal(s):

Details of consultations you have had with parish councils affected by your proposals and the outcome of those discussions:

Any other comments:

“We do not wish for any boundary changes to our Parish and reject any submission that may be made by Sevenoaks Town Council that includes Seal Parish in a Greater Sevenoaks.”

Signed: 

Date: 21/2/12

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS)

Page 144
L. TALBOT

Ian Bigwood

From: JOHN CAIRD [wealdparishclerk@btinternet.com]
Sent: 06 March 2012 09:49
To: Ian Bigwood
Cc: RosieWood
Subject: Re: Community Governance Review - STC Proposals

Ian, Weald Parish Council joins Chevening, Dunton Green, Riverhead and Seal Parish Councils in indicating that they do not want to enter into any discussions with regards to STC proposals for a Greater Sevenoaks authority.

Best Regards, John

John Caird
Clerk
Weald Parish Council

From: Ian Bigwood <ian.bigwood@sevenoaks.gov.uk>
To: "Parish.Council, Weald" <wealdparishclerk@btinternet.com>
Sent: Friday, 24 February 2012, 14:30
Subject: Community Governance Review

Good afternoon

I attach a copy of the Sevenoaks Town Council submission received today in connection with the Community Governance Review and would be pleased to receive the views of your Members. The District Council's Electoral Arrangements Committee meets on 27th March to consider submissions and I do need to have responses from interested parties by Monday 12th March in order to include them in the agenda; any later and documents will have to be circulated separately or at the meeting. I am sorry for the short timescale involved and am grateful for your prompt attention.

Thanks very much.

Ian Bigwood
Electoral Services Manager
Sevenoaks District Council
Tel: 01732 227242
Fax: 01732 227176
DX: 30006 Sevenoaks
Email: ian.bigwood@sevenoaks.gov.uk
Web: www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/elections
Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1HG



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Agenda Item 3

Ian Bigwood

From: Barbara Cornell [sundridgewithidehillclerk@yahoo.co.uk]
Sent: 06 March 2012 11:45
To: Ian Bigwood
Subject: Re: Community Governance Review

Hello Ian

This email was received just after the Parish Council meeting held on 20th February. One of our councillors did attend a meeting held by Sevenoaks Town Council on this but it had not been explained at that meeting that Sundridge was to be included as a potential partner in the Greater Sevenoaks Council proposed by the Sevenoaks Town Council. It came as a surprise therefore to Councillors that Sundridge with Ide Hill had been included in the list of parish councils to be considered. This was the first communication received which alerted us to that fact and it has proven impossible to have a proper discussion about this at such short notice. The next Parish Council meeting will be held on 19th March and I am sure that the Parish Council will wish to comment. I must ask you, therefore, to send in a late report which may result from the Parish Council meeting. You will be kept informed of the Parish Council comments on this.

Barbara Cornell
Retiring clerk to the Parish

Please note new contact details from 1st March 2012. Mrs Kathryn McKerlie, Clerk to the Parish, Sundridge with Ide Hill Parish Council, 4 The Pantyles, Nightingale Lane, Ide Hill TN14 6BX. Tel: 01732 750107

Email: sundridgewithidehillclerk@aol.com

From: Ian Bigwood <ian.bigwood@sevenoaks.gov.uk>
To: "Parish.Council, Sundridge" <sundridgewithidehillclerk@yahoo.co.uk>
Sent: Friday, 24 February 2012, 14:26
Subject: Community Governance Review

Hello Barbara

I attach a copy of the Sevenoaks Town Council submission received today and would be pleased to receive the views of your Members. The Electoral Arrangements Committee meets on 27th March to consider submissions and I do need to have responses by Monday 12th March in order to include them in the agenda; any later and documents will have to be circulated separately or at the meeting. I am sorry for the short timescale involved and am grateful for your prompt attention.

Thanks very much.

Ian Bigwood
Electoral Services Manager
Sevenoaks District Council
Tel: 01732 227242
Fax: 01732 227176
DX: 30006 Sevenoaks
Email: ian.bigwood@sevenoaks.gov.uk
Web: www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/elections
Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1HG



OBJECTION to Reorganisation of Parish Councils

I wish to object most strongly to the proposal outlined in the Sevenoaks Chronicle of January 26th, for the parishes of Dunton Green, Riverhead, Seal, Otford, Chevening and possibly more parishes, to be absorbed by Sevenoaks Town Council. To form a very large parish, because this is all Sevenoaks Town is, a Parish Council. I was a member of Chevening Parish Council for over fourteen years, being Chairman for nine years, so I have considerable experience of Parish Councils.

The idea of “big being beautiful” was disproved and discarded some years ago, and I see no advantage to be gained by having a very large Parish Council covering a large area. In my opinion it is an attempt by Sevenoaks Town Council to take over their neighbours for their own aggrandisement, without any consideration being given to the services offered to the residents involved nor to the cost to them of the reduced services provided. There would certainly be no saving of cost to the residents; some nine months ago we moved from the parish of Chevening to a house in the North ward of Sevenoaks Town, a house in the same Council Tax Band, and the cost of the Council Tax went up by over £1 per week, entirely due to the fact that the Sevenoaks Town charge is over double the charge levied by Chevening Parish Council. Chevening Parish Council’s annual charge is not unusually low, being in fact being very much in line with other parishes in the district. The cost of operating this proposed very large parish would certainly be much more than the cost of the present small parishes, as a good deal of work in the smaller parishes is done by the unpaid Councillors, who live in the parish and know the parish and its residents.

Councillors in the smaller parishes manage the open spaces in the parish, have close relations with the local sports teams, manage the footpaths, and by “manage” I mean physically walk the footpaths and open spaces, have fences repaired, and are in close touch with the life in the parish. Under the large parish scheme all this personal contact would be lost. Councillors at Parish Council level have an input into the Planning process, where their local knowledge becomes very important; they also on occasion are involved with Kent Highways in discussions on highway matters in the parish, again where their local knowledge is important. Under the large parish scheme all this would be lost. In my opinion under this “Large Parish “ scheme there would be no gains for the residents, but large losses in the quality and quantity of the management and support given to their communities, coupled with an increase in cost to them.

The only people to gain from this scheme are the Sevenoaks Town Council Councillors who would end up with a larger “Train Set” to play with. To use the American expression; “If it ain’t broke don’t fix it.



G.W. Taylor
Seal

Agenda Item 3

Ian Bigwood

Subject: FW: Proposal for " Greater Sevenoaks" Council

From: Maggie Miles [mailto:]
Sent: 07 February 2012 13:59
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Proposal for " Greater Sevenoaks" Council

Dear Mr Bigwood

I see that under the Community Governance Review there has been a suggestion from Sevenoaks Town Council that the Parishes of Riverhead, Seal, Dunton Green, Otford, Chevening and possibly Weald and Kemsing should be subsumed with Sevenoaks Town in to a "Greater Sevenoaks" Council (as being more economic?).

I gather that Riverhead Parish Council, at least, had certainly not been informed by STC about this proposal until it appeared in the local press and that there has been no discussion about it (and certainly no agreement!) as required by the terms of the Community Governance Review.

As a former Riverhead Parish Councillor I think this move would be counter productive.

There is a strong sense of local community in each of these villages which is very well served and nurtured by their parish councils, the members of which are all extremely well acquainted with their local areas. (This can be particularly important when it comes to considering planning applications.)

To subsume these Parish Councils into a 'Greater Sevenoaks' Council would go directly against the spirit of 'localism' which is being encouraged by the current Government.

Whether it would prove an economy is also questionable - Riverhead's Parish Councillors, for example, are very "hands on", carrying out many tasks like maintenance of the Parkland, running the allotments, weeding and sweeping pavements and cleaning up graffiti themselves, attracting the help of volunteers and providing very good value for money for a very small precept.

There is the question of who would then organise the day-to-day running of the many village halls, allotments, playgrounds, recreation grounds and other (sometimes large) areas of land owned and run by these Parish Councils - with the loss of local representation it is almost inevitable that more paid employees would be needed to do this and that it would not be done so well (and with such enthusiasm) as the local connection would be lost.

Conflict could also arise in larger matters such as, for instance, the perennial question of the proposed east-facing slip roads at the M25/M26/A21 interchange - these would be to the advantage of Seal, for example, but could well mean more traffic through Riverhead and might also adversely affect Chevening.

Yes there may well be scope for parishes to co-operate and make economies in well-defined areas such as grass-cutting (or street-light maintenance) but these can surely be achieved without wholesale abolition of their parish councils.

These parish councils have served their residents very well for over 100 years - if it ain't broke, don't fix it!

Mrs M J Miles



Subject: Community Governance Review

With reference to the subject review; I understand that there have been suggestions that the local Parish Councils should merge with Sevenoaks Town Council with a view to centralising resources and services.

While amalgamation is always promoted as a method of reducing cost by providing resources and services centrally, this is seldom the case, as has been demonstrated over a great number of years by various councils. Indeed, it often results in higher costs by increasing bureaucracy and the attendant requirement for more staff.

Having taken part in many cost reduction exercises in the private sector over a number of years, I would be very interested to understand the factual evidence, of where cost savings can be made in this particular case.

As a long term resident of Riverhead, I can only commend the work and very positive results that the Riverhead Parish Council achieve. Further, it is self evident when you walk or drive through Riverhead, that the village is very well maintained and a very agreeable place to be part of.

Jack Brown
22nd February 2012

Received 23 FEB 2012

February 22, 2012

Mr Ian Bigwood
Electoral Services Manager
Severochs District Council
Council Offices, Argyle Road
Severochs Kent TN13 1HG

Dear Mr Bigwood,

Community Governance Review

As long standing residents of Riverhead we would like to register with you our very strong preference for Riverhead Parish Council to remain a separate and distinct entity.

The portion of our local taxes which goes towards the activities of our Parish Council is in our opinion very good value for the money spent.

The local councillors have worked hard and effectively to promote a distinct local community spirit which is evidenced in the attractive and well cared for appearance of our village.

We are fortunate to have a herdsman chairman who has worked as leader and team member on many of the local work groups which have been key to the regeneration of Riverhead. He gives generously of his time and unlike some other council leaders receives only a few hundred pounds by way of expenses.

Any gains which might be achieved by pooling purchasing power can easily be achieved without any change to the existing legal structures and in any case would not be of such significance to be worth giving up all the positive benefits of our current

situation.

Hopefully you and any others involved in formulating any future proposals will understand from the above why we very much wish to maintain the distinctive features of our Parish Council and would be very upset to lose our separate and distinct identity which would certainly happen following any merger.

Yours sincerely,



T.S. HARRISON

&



MRS D D HARRISON

01959 52 2384

Received 23 FEB 2012



23 February 2012

Mr I. Bigwood,
Electoral Services Manager,
Sevenoaks District Council,
Argyle Road,
Sevenoaks, Kent.

Dear Mr Bigwood,
Community Governance Review 2012

As an Otford resident having connections with the village since 1955 I feel qualified to comment on the current Review, and straightaway must declare that I am wholly opposed to the motion proposed by Sevenoaks Town Council to create a "Greater Sevenoaks Council". The defence of the motion by its proposers at a meeting at the Town Council Office on 17th February, to which I was invited, did nothing to ease my concerns – or those of the other 'peasants' who attended.

Nobody in the surrounding villages to whom I have spoken is supportive of the scheme, which appears to amount to an attempt at collectivisation of democratically-run rural communities with a (doubtless highly-paid) gauleiter at the head of career functionaries having little or no local knowledge or concern, surely the antithesis of localism.

I could expound at length on the many disadvantages of the proposal to the historic local village communities in the district, of which I dare to place Otford at the head, it having a proven provenance of at least 4,000 years, millennia before Sevenoaks became even a junction of two trans-Wealden trackways, let alone a settlement. Being closely involved with the Otford Heritage Centre, the Otford Society, and Historical Society, all of which are concerned with the past, present & future of this historic independent village, I am well aware of and liaise with the Parish Council on varied matters of concern to Otford.

In order not to burden you with a mass of verbiage on the subject I set out below, in no particular order, my main concerns should the 'Greater Sevenoaks' administration be introduced. I should be happy to elaborate on them if you require further information. Other matters, such as minor boundary changes, can be negotiated between the Parish Councils, taking into due account the wishes of affected residents.

Positive:

Economies of scale in purchase – but this can be achieved informally. There is already regular liaison between local villages through KALC, and the Darent Valley Consortium - the latter apparently unknown to STC

Negative:

Elimination of the proactive and non-political (hence potentially irritating to officialdom), Otford Parish Council, which comprises a well-balanced unpaid body of hard-working, public-spirited, local residents – an important forum for highlighting, discussing and resolving the majority of local problems, or referring them to the appropriate SDC or KCC departments
Unwelcome politicisation of the village community (as with the present STC)
Loss of Parish Office: central venue for CAB & police clinics, plus local meeting rooms for committee meetings of OPC and village organisations, storage of equipment, etc.

Loss of base for the Community Warden – invaluable in keeping youth 'on-side'
 Loss of village Heritage Centre
 Destruction of individual village character through neglect by 'government'
 Abandonment of village ideals
 Loss of inspirational local community spirit
 Local provision & control of football & cricket facilities (both youth & adult)
 Loss of public toilets – a very worthy, self-inflicted, financial burden on the village
 Withdrawal of local anti-dog fouling measures
 Further local disenchantment with both SDC & KCC – already strong
 Loss of ability to express local community concerns on planning applications
 Local initiatives would be lost e.g. village working parties
 Local concerns would be largely ignored (SDC Planning already illustrates this all too well)
 Parish Clerk – an important contact based on the village focal point
 Immeasurable voluntary work by Parish Councillors would be lost to the community
 Loss of local control of village finances
 Loss of control of village open spaces
 Loss of control of recreation grounds and off-street car parking
 Loss of close liaison with parish residents
 Administration of local charities
 Reporting of potholes, hedges, footpaths, tree damage, etc., at present leading to prompt OPC-led action
 Village emergency arrangements – of current renewed significance
 Village Halls management
 Parish Plan & VDS management
 Roadside planting of bulbs, etc., under OPC supervision.
 Abandonment of village planters, etc.
 Autonomy over street lighting, open spaces, allotments and burial grounds
 Loss of close relationship with village organisations, businesses & local churches
 Loss of monthly Parish Newsletter containing invaluable advice & local information delivered free by volunteers to all households in the parish
 Loss of information on (& repair of) Parish Noticeboards
 Loss of personal contact via OPC for residents with particular concerns
 Greater resentment of 'big brother Sevenoaks', with further diminution of ability to negotiate on behalf of the village
 Loss of local facility for obtaining refuse, recycling & garden sacks, etc. & advice
 Destruction of village identity after 4,000 years of independent history
 Collectivisation of a hitherto democratically-run rural community

I could go on!

Yours sincerely,



(C.P.Ward)

c.c. Otford Parish Council

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Shoreham Parish Council



Badgers Mount Shoreham Well Hill

Mr I Bigwood
Electoral Services Manager
Sevenoaks District Council
Council Offices
Argyle Road
Sevenoaks
TN13 1HG

2 February 2012

By post and email elreg@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Dear Mr Bigwood,

In response to your notice of 30 November 2011 in relation to the Sevenoaks District Council Community Governance Review, Shoreham Parish Council has the following representations and views:

1. The number of parish councillors for each ward should more fairly represent the number of electors in each ward by changing the number of members elected from each ward to 5 for Shoreham, 3 for Badgers Mount and 1 for Well Hill wards.
2. The boundary of the parish should be changed to exclude Austin Lodge Golf Clubhouse from Shoreham ward (to Eynsford Parish).
3. Include in the Shoreham ward the area between the red and yellow lines, in the Well Hill Hundreds Ward (from Crockenhill Parish): See attached map 1.
4. Include in the Shoreham ward all properties on both sides of Twitton Lane (from Offord Parish). See attached map 2.
5. Include in the Shoreham ward all of East Hill Road (from West Kingsdown Parish).
6. Amend the boundary with Offord at Paines Farm (Rowdown Lane) to remove the garden of the farm from Shoreham ward and include it in the Offord ward. See attached map 3.

I trust these are clear and look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

J Godfrey
Clerk



Parish Clerk: J Godfrey 19 The Dene Sevenoaks Kent TN13 1PB
Tel: 07912 611048 email: clerk2012@shorehamparishcouncil.gov.uk
www.ShorehamParishCouncil.gov.uk

Ian Bigwood

From: Jenny Godfrey [lerik2012@shorehamparishcouncil.gov.uk]
Sent: 13 February 2012 08:55
To: Ian Bigwood
Subject: RE: Community Governance Review
Attachments: ATT00134.gif; East-Hill.gif

Dear Ian,

Thank you for your email. In response (using your numbering) I can advise that:

1. yes
2. Shoreham Parish Council did not have any specific new boundaries regarding these changes. For Austin Lodge Golf Clubhouse, Shoreham Parish Council would like to retain as much as the actual golf course that is already within our parish but to move the Austin Lodge Golf Clubhouse and associated outbuilding to Eynsford Parish. This is to aid consultation on planning where, due to the access to the Golf Club, Eynsford Parish are more likely to be more affected by planning applications for the Golf Club than Shoreham Parish. Perhaps, with your knowledge of the requirements of boundaries, you could suggest a few options to our council. I have attached a map with a possible suggestion. The existing boundary is shown as a red line and the orange line is a possible new boundary. The orange line follows the line of a PROW, an existing hedge, and a PROW and the boundary of Lower Wood.

While reference to East Hill Road, Shoreham Parish Council believes that better local services can be provided to all residents of East Hill Road (a cul-de-sac) if all properties were within Shoreham Parish. Perhaps, with your knowledge of the requirements of boundaries, you could suggest a few options to our council. I have attached a map with a possible suggestion. The existing boundary is shown as a red line and the orange line is a possible new boundary. The orange line starts at the triple point of Shoreham, Eynsford and West Kingsdown Parishes and follows the line of the existing Eynsford - West Kingsdown boundary then follows field boundaries around Hog Wood before entering High Castle Wood - where it follows a track. It then follows field boundaries and the boundary of Pecken Wood until it reaches the existing Shoreham - West Kingsdown parish boundary.

3. The proposal would include all properties in East Hill Road that are currently in West Kingsdown Parish.
4. Our Chairman (Clir Hobson) has had informal talks with the Chairman of Eynsford, Crockenhill and Otford. As these were informal talks there was no outcome except to formulate some ideas that were related to members of Shoreham Parish Council. As the Chairman's talks were informal, neither I nor the Chairman can say if Eynsford, Crockenhill and Otford Parishes would be supportive or against our suggestions.

Our Chairman had contact with the Chairman of West Kingsdown after the Shoreham Parish Council meeting that decided on our suggestions. Therefore there was no input from West Kingsdown regarding Shoreham Parish Council suggestion for East Hill Road. Our Chairman did inform the West Kingsdown Chairman of the changes to East Hill Road that we would be suggesting to yourself.

I trust this clarifies the points you raised.

Regards

Jenny Godfrey

Clerk to Shoreham Parish Council - Awarded Quality Parish Status 2006, re accredited 2010

07912 611048

email: clerk2012@ShorehamParishCouncil.gov.uk

website: www.ShorehamParishCouncil.gov.uk

Mrs J Godfrey 19 The Dene Sevenoaks Kent TN13 1PB

From: Ian Bigwood [mailto:ian.bigwood@sevenoaks.gov.uk]

Sent: 08 February 2012 14:55

To: Parish.Council, Shoreham

Subject: RE: Community Governance Review

Good afternoon Jenny

I confirm receipt of Shoreham Parish Council's submission in respect of the Community Governance Review. I have a few matters I should like to clarify:

Page 61

1. Our Members are proposing, in effect, a reduction of parish councillors from 10 to 9.
2. Would you please provide plans of the proposed changes involving Austin Lodge Golf Club house and East Hill Road.
3. Would you please list the properties affected by each of the proposals.
4. Have you consulted with affected parishes (namely Eynsford, Crockenhill, Otford and West Kingsdown) and, if so, what is the outcome of the discussions?

I do need to be clear as to the precise boundary proposals that are to be presented to the Electoral Arrangements Committee in late March.

Thanks very much for your help.

Ian Bigwood

Electoral Services Manager

Sevenoaks District Council

Tel: 01732 227242

Fax: 01732 227176

DX: 30006 Sevenoaks

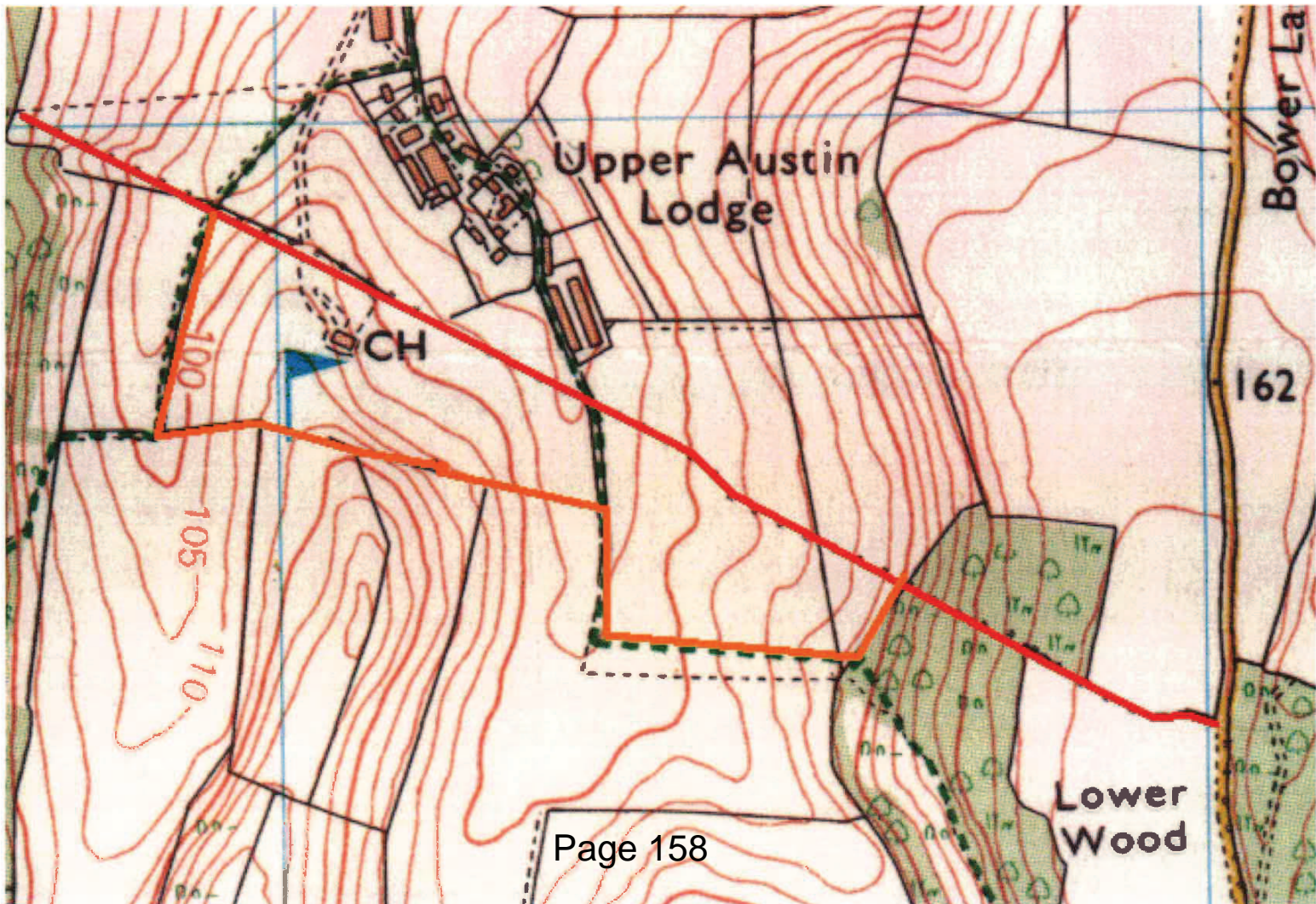
Email: ian.bigwood@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Web: www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/elections

Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1HG

From: Jenny Godfrey [mailto:clerk2012@shorehamparishcouncil.gov.uk]

Sent: 06 February 2012 10:03

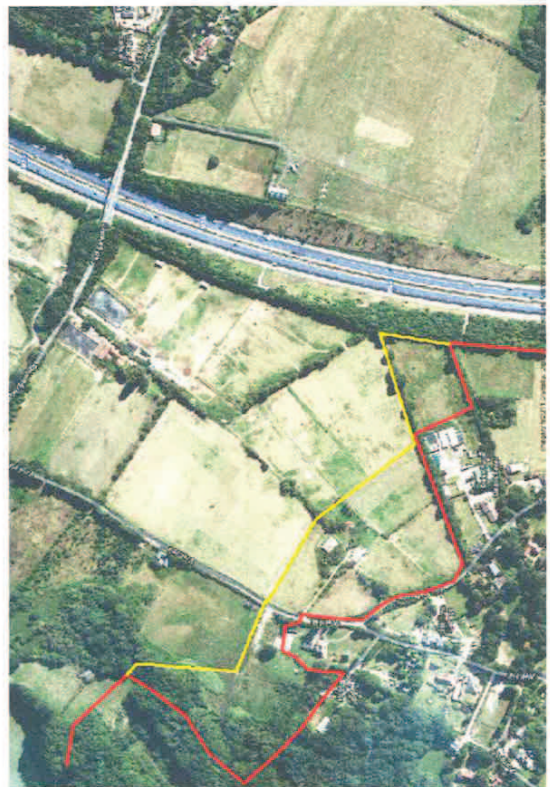


Map 1

The red line shows the existing boundary and the yellow line the suggested boundary.

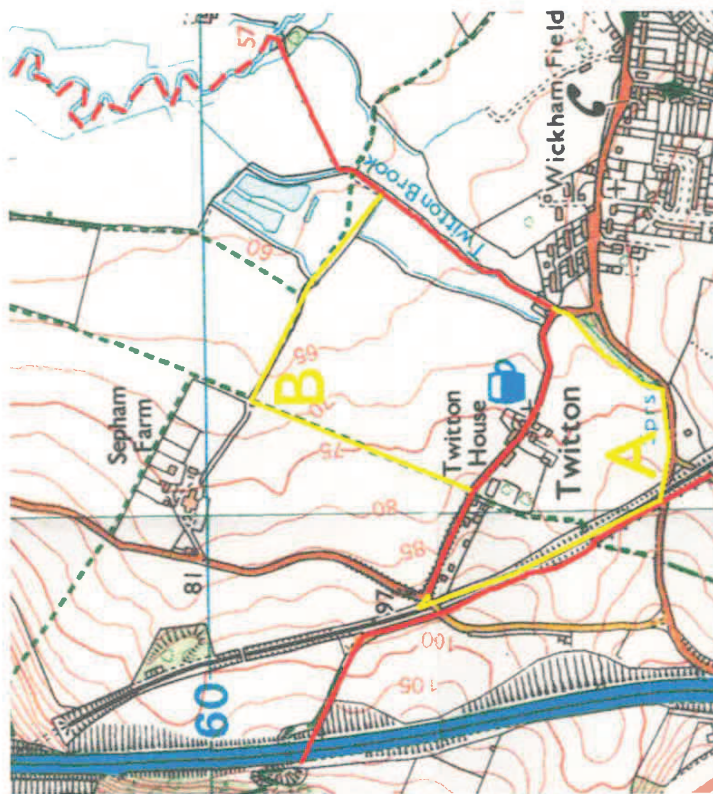
The red line goes through a building on Well Hill. This building was erected without planning permission and has been removed since the aerial photograph was taken. However, it does highlight the fact that the current boundary does not follow existing field/property boundaries. The main objective of the suggested boundary amendment relates to planning. The Council believes it would be best for residents of Well Hill if planning matters (e.g. breach of planning control), that affect Well Hill more than Park Gate (in Crockenhill Parish), should be in Shoreham Parish so that Shoreham Parish is the statutory consultee. Specifics to note:

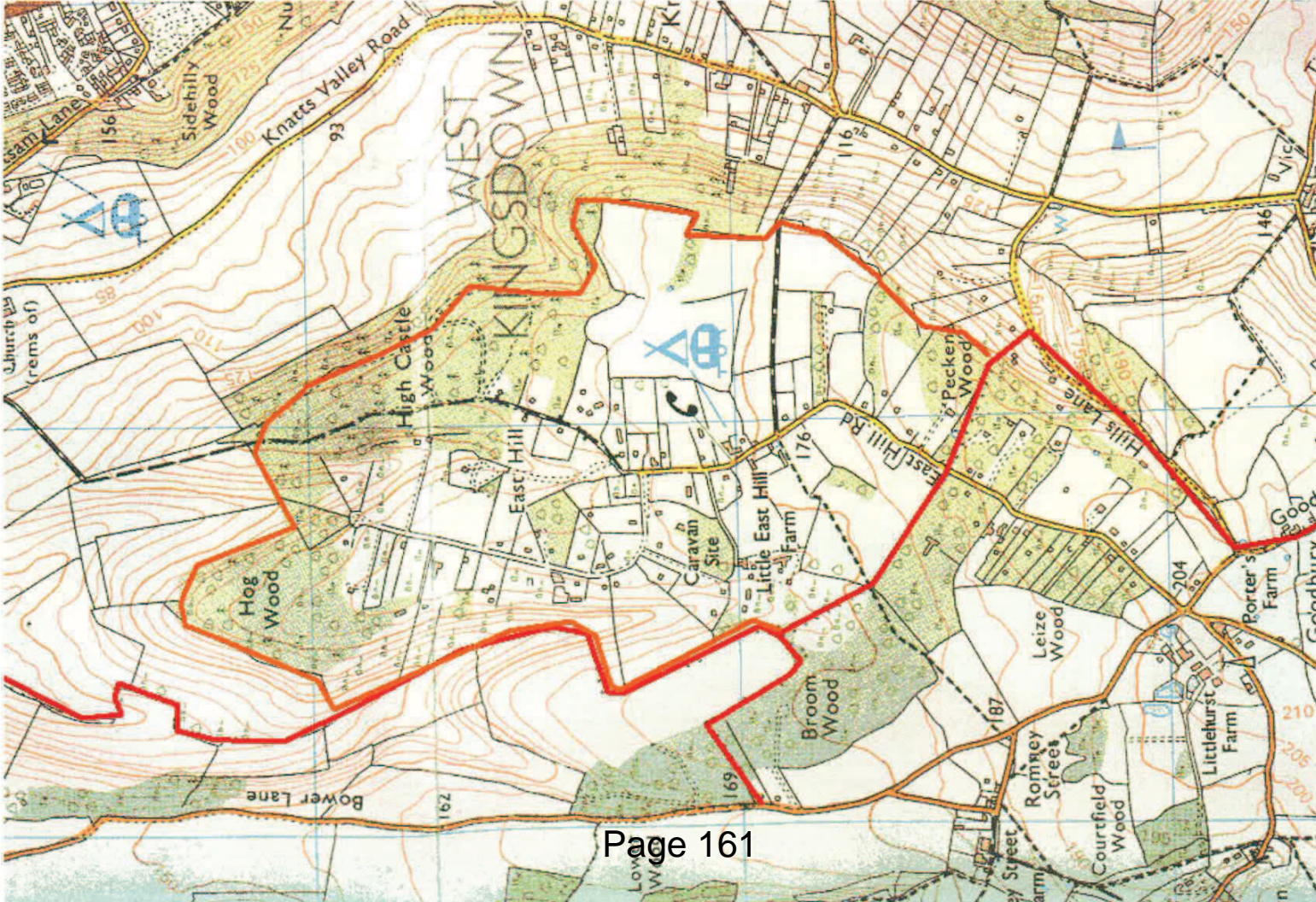
1. The field to the east of Daisy Farm has been included in Shoreham ward in the suggested amendment. There are industrial units there and there is always the possibility that unauthorised development from these units could extend into that field.
2. From Daisy Farm the proposed new boundary follows field boundaries to a road called Well Hill. This takes in two agricultural buildings. Should other development occur with these buildings, Well Hill residents will probably be affected a great deal more than Park Gate residents. This would also mean that the east side of Firmingers Road would no longer be in Crockenhill Parish and as Shoreham parish are aware of the drainage problems that affect that side of Firmingers Road this would make sense.
3. From Well Hill (the road), the yellow line head west and follows the boundary of the property called Greenhill Farm. It then heads north following a public right of way until it meets the existing boundary. The advantage of including the land around Greenhill Farm in Shoreham Parish is that it stops confusion of which parish council should be consulted on planning matters and also it brings land that has planning permission for land-fill into Shoreham Parish.



Map 2

The red line shows the existing boundary and yellow line "A" is the suggested boundary to bring all of Twitton Lane into Shoreham Parish. For the purposes of this representation, please ignore the yellow line "B".





Map 3



WEST KINGSDOWN PARISH COUNCIL

Mrs Lynda Harrison
Clerk to the Council
Tel/Fax: West Kingsdown (01474) 853286
email: wkpc@btconnect.com

The Pavilion
London Road
West Kingsdown
Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 6BZ

Mr I Bigwood
Electoral Services Manager
Sevenoaks District Council
Council Offices
Argyle Road
Sevenoaks
TN13 1HG

Received 16 FEB 2012

15th February 2012

Dear Mr Bigwood,

In response to your notice of 30 November 2011 in relation to the Sevenoaks District Council Community Governance Review, West Kingsdown Parish Council have met and discussed various options with our neighbouring parish of Shoreham. Members of West Kingsdown would like to suggest the following movement of the boundary for your consideration:

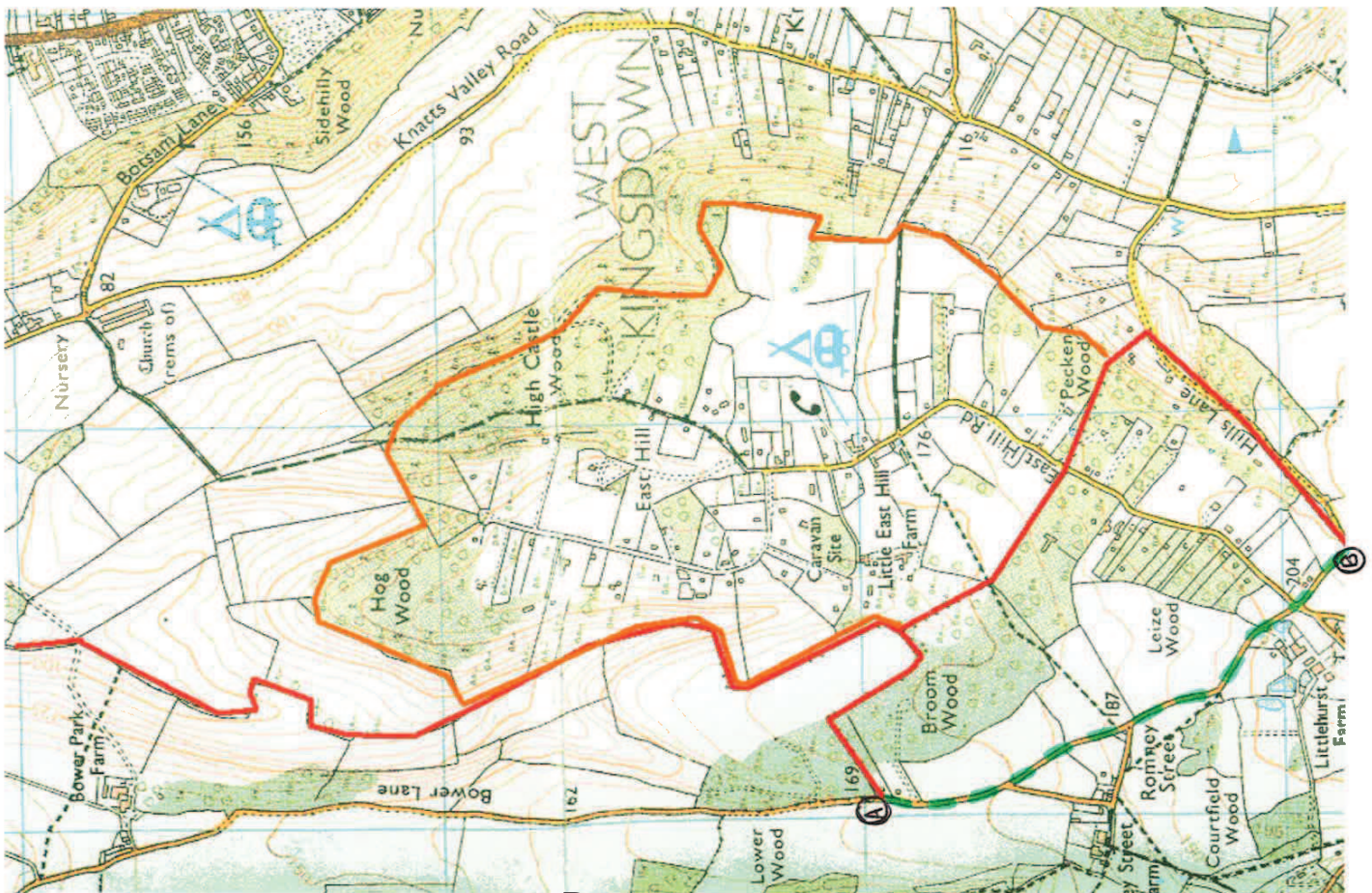
1. That the boundary be moved as indicated by the green dotted line, squaring an area and encompassing Broom Wood and Lieze Wood areas. This would only involve the Parish Change for around 14 houses. This would involve carrying on the boundary form Pont A on the map along Bower Lane to the junction of Hills Lane – Point B on the map
2. Members of the Parish Council have seen the proposals suggested by Shoreham Parish Council and do not consider this to be a practical option as many of the residents are near to the main village of West Kingsdown than they are to Shoreham Village.

I trust these are clear and look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,


Mrs Lynda Harrison
Parish Clerk

Attachments: 1 map



Mr I Bigwood
Electoral Services Manager
Sevenoaks District Council
Council Offices
Argyle Road
Sevenoaks
TN13 1HG

8 March 2012

By post and email elreg@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Dear Mr Bigwood,

Further to our earlier telephone conversation, please find detailed below the outcome of last night's Shoreham Parish Council Meeting in relation to the SDC Community Governance Review:

1. Motion considered: *inform SDC of the reasons why the Parish Council's previous proposal (1 February Council meeting Minute 120 c) v)) that the boundary of the parish should be changed to include all properties on both sides of Twitton Lane in the Shoreham ward (from Offord Parish) has more merit than that proposed by Offord (i.e. the opposite).*
The Council understand that residents in Twitton Lane have been consulted on this matter by Offord Councilors and that the majority align themselves with Offord Village and not Shoreham. It was RESOLVED that the residents of Twitton Lane should decide this issue.
2. Motion considered: *inform SDC of the reasons why the Parish Council's previous proposal (1 February Council Meeting Minute 120 c) v)) that the boundary of the parish should be changed to include all of East Hill Road in the Shoreham ward (from West Kingsdown Parish) has more merit than that proposed by West Kingsdown (i.e. the opposite).* The Council received anecdotal evidence that the residents wish to remain in the Shoreham ward and it was RESOLVED that the residents of East Hill Road should decide this issue.

3. Motion considered: *inform SDC that the Parish Council accepts West Kingsdown Parish's proposal that the boundary of the parish should be changed to include Leize Wood and Broom Wood areas in the West Kingsdown Parish (from Shoreham Parish). It was RESOLVED that this motion was superfluous as the woods should not transfer to West Kingsdown Parish if all the properties in East Hill Road are to be in Shoreham Parish. This is linked to item 2 above.*

I trust this response is clear. Please advise if you require anything further.

Yours sincerely,

J Godfrey (Mrs)
Clerk

Ian Bigwood

To: Parish Council, Crockenhill
Subject: RE: Community Governance Review

From: crockenhill parish council [mailto:crockenhillpc@btinternet.com]
Sent: 01 March 2012 09:37
To: Ian Bigwood
Subject: Re: Community Governance Review

Ian
my apologies as I thought I had already replied to you. Phil Hobson approached our Chairman informally at a pub and asked for thoughts. We sent him the following email and heard nothing from him since. I can do no further than this as do not have another meeting until 22nd March. Hope that is enough for your report.

Dear Phil
following your informal chat with Colin Etheridge the proposal put forward was discussed at our last meeting. Although in principle Members are not adverse to the change they are concerned that this boundary has only recently been changed and Kent have not even caught up with the last change yet! Therefore any decision made now should be a long term one. In addition, we would like the boundary to be along a defined line, be that fields, trees or a road and not across open land.

If you would like to formally send a letter from Shoreham Parish Council to Crockenhill Parish Council setting out the proposal and definitive line, then we will be happy to formally respond.....

Barbara Morris
Clerk, Crockenhill Parish Council
Village Hall, Stones Cross Road, Crockenhill, Kent BR8 8LT
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Community Governance Review

February 2012

Formation of an Independent

Badgers Mount Parish Council

Requested by:

The Badgers Mount Residents Association

The Badgers Mount Residents Association (BMRA) would like Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) to consider Badgers Mount Ward splitting from Shoreham Parish Council (SPC) and forming a Parish Council in its own right.

Brief synopsis of reasons for Badgers Mount Ward splitting from SPC

- Badgers Mount and Shoreham are completely separate communities, the centres of which are some 2 miles apart, they share no natural boundary or landscape and they have no social or transport links
- Badgers Mount residents do not use facilities in Shoreham
- The three Wards of SPC are served by three different District Councillors, and are covered by separate policing areas
- The majority of the precept is spent on facilities within Shoreham
- Badgers Mount Ward Councillors are often outvoted on matters which they are concerned about, due to the disparity in the number of councillors in each Ward
- The majority of SPC meetings are spent on matters relating to Shoreham and sometimes Badgers Mount councillors are discouraged from taking part in discussions.

Background

The Parish Council has voted that it wants to remain a 3 ward Parish Council. It is not entirely surprising that this decision was arrived at given that the Shoreham Parish Council consists of 6 Shoreham Ward representatives, 3 Badgers Mount Ward representatives and 1 Well Hill Ward representative. If you consider that Badgers Mount contribute a significant sum to the Council's precept each year, which is largely spent on Shoreham's amenities and expenses, it would clearly disadvantage the Shoreham Ward if Badgers Mount Ward were to break away from Shoreham Parish Council.

Further to this, Shoreham Parish Council also voted to reject a notion by the Chairman to change its name to Shoreham, Well Hill and Badgers Mount Parish Council. This deprives Badgers Mount and Well Hill of having their own identity.

Badgers Mount residents have not been given an opportunity by the council to express **their** views. Therefore the Badgers Mount Residents Association would like to make a representation to Sevenoaks District Council regarding their views on the matter.

There has been a substantial history of the Badgers Mount Residents seeking independence from the Shoreham Parish. Indeed one of our residents, Mr Albert Thomas made a bid some thirty or so years ago, and he is still of the opinion that this move would most definitely be the right decision for the community of Badgers Mount.

The present parish, formed in 1894, and consists of several separate communities, Shoreham, Badgers Mount and Well Hill being the largest of them. Badgers Mount has no social links with Well Hill or Shoreham. Landscape wise, we are more similar to Well Hill than Shoreham. We share very little characteristics with the village of Shoreham. Shoreham has a High Street, a shop, several pubs, and the properties generally are smaller and terraced in nature. Shoreham benefits from having several amenities such as allotments, tennis courts, recreation ground and public toilets. Shoreham also suffers from parking issues. Badgers Mount properties are generally larger, detached with big gardens. We only have one pub which actually, falls within Halstead Parish really. We have no shops or other amenities. Shoreham is the only part of the Parish with recreation space and allotments. If Badgers Mount became an independent parish it is aware that they would have a duty to provide these facilities if possible and if there is a proven need for them.

However, the three communities are actually neighbours and do share concerns from time to time, so it would be beneficial to remain in contact with both communities if a split was successful.

Shoreham Parish Council implemented a working party to establish the positive and negative aspects of re-organising the parish. Below is information which identifies differences and common interests / concerns:

Differences and Common Ground between the three Wards of Shoreham Parish Council

<u>District Councillors</u>	Shoreham, Badgers Mount and Well Hill are all served by different District Councillors.
<u>Emergency Services and Policing</u>	Shoreham and Badgers Mount are served by Kent Fire & Rescue, whereas Well Hill obtain first response from London Fire & Rescue. The three wards are covered by 3 separate policing areas.

Local Services /
Facilities

Each of the three areas access services provided by different post offices, shops and libraries.

There is no public bus service linking Badgers Mount to either Well Hill or Shoreham. Our residents have to walk a fair distance or drive to use any facilities in Shoreham village.

Although Shoreham has a railway station it is not on the same line as Knockholt station thus limiting those who can access their services from Badgers Mount. Also, due to the parking problems in Shoreham even if our residents drove to Shoreham to access their facilities it is not possible to park.

Few pupils from Badgers Mount or Well Hill attend or have attended Shoreham Village school.

Shoreham and Badgers Mount are covered by Tunbridge Wells telephone directory, whilst Well Hill is covered by Bromley area directory.

Limited participation in Shoreham based societies by Badgers Mount and Well Hill residents.

Some interest in acquiring allotments from Badgers Mount

Common Concerns

Shoreham and Badgers Mount both have sites identified within the KCC Minerals & Waste Consultation Proposals.

Having reviewed the positive and negative aspects of the alternatives available, the following options seemed the most viable:

Option 1

Status Quo remains, i.e. Shoreham, Badgers Mount and Well Hill make up one parish council

Option 2

Badgers Mount becomes a ward of Halstead Parish Council, thereby adding 545 electors to the existing 1208

Option 3

Each of the three wards forms its own parish council

These options are explored in more detail below:

Option 1 - Status Quo (Least favoured option)

Shoreham, Badgers Mount and Well Hill make up one parish council, as exists now.

- There would be some difficulty in developing a Neighbourhood Plan that would adequately meet the needs of these three very different communities.
- Badgers Mount Ward Councillors feel that due to the ratio of representation by Shoreham Ward Councillors, it is easy for them to get 'outvoted' on topics which matter to them and their ward.
- It has been suggested by A Shoreham Ward Councillor, as well as some Shoreham residents, that Badgers Mount Ward Councillors should not voice their opinions on matters relating to Shoreham Village. This could unfortunately cause bad feelings between the different wards. Given that 90% of the matters discussed at the Parish Council are Shoreham related, this would make Badgers Mount Ward Councillors largely silent and redundant if they were to abide by this request.
- Evidence of Lack of Respect for Badgers Mount Councillors in Shoreham Parish: This is a comment made by a resident on a social network site, discussing situations arising in Shoreham. We believe it shows the myopic view held within the parish regarding the Badgers Mount Parish Councillors remit.

" ... I was in attendance and can only endorse Ann's report as a very fair representation of events. But I was astounded by the view of some PC members, noticeably by those that do not live in the village and following a debate about whether the PC should split, where it was stated, very sensibly, that those not in an area should abstain on issues not relevant to them, I was appalled to see some members who do not live in the village them commenting on the lines in Crown Road." (21 hours ago – 5th February 2012)
- The residents of Badgers Mount currently and historically have felt they have no identity. A sense of identity is important for any community. It is noticeable in the Shoreham Parish Plan that was compiled in 2005, the illustrations (of which there are several) are entirely of Shoreham village. Well Hill and Badgers Mount have village signs and a pub each which could have been featured, but do NOT. The Badgers Mount residents feel a distinct need for their own identity.
- Badgers Mount residents will continue to contribute heavily to a precept that will ultimately benefit the residents in Shoreham, more so than anywhere else in the Parish.

- Badgers Mount would continue to miss out on notifications such as the Waste and Minerals Consultation invitation to stakeholder meetings, and more recently, the Community Governance Review.

Detailed below is a list of positive and negative aspects of the status quo remaining:

Positives

- There are established structures in place that are proven
- All Wards benefit from economy of scales
- Level of income established
- Size of the parish *may* carry more weight
- Diversity of Wards could be seen as a strength, inhibiting a myopic view of issues

Negatives

- Badgers Mount and Well Hill contribute to a larger precept that does not necessarily benefit their own communities
- Wards do not share the same District Councillors
- Little social contact between residents of the 3 areas, so no established link
- Served by 3 policing areas, so consistent approach difficult to achieve
- Councillors have to consider issues that have little relevance for their Ward
- Badgers Mount and Well Hill residents find it difficult to attend meetings in Shoreham due to location and parking issues. This means they often miss out on hearing about important changes in their communities, such as the Minerals and Waste Consultation process.
- Badgers Mount Parish Councillors are not always respected by all the Shoreham Councillors or Shoreham community.
- There are no public transportation links between the three villages

Option 2 - Badgers Mount becomes a Ward of Halstead Parish Council

It has been considered that perhaps Badgers Mount ward would benefit by joining Halstead Parish. However, whilst we enjoy a more natural (geographically) neighbourly relationship with Halstead, this union could still disadvantage Badgers Mount:

- Financially there would be no benefit to Badgers Mount residents as Halstead still has a wealth of amenities to fund. Having said this, as Halstead is 1.5 miles nearer to Badgers Mount than Shoreham it could be expected that Badgers Mount residents would be able to access Halstead's amenities more readily than they do Shoreham's amenities.
- Badgers Mount Ward Councillors would be joining an existing established structure, which would be easier than establishing a new parish council, however this could cause friction amongst existing ward councillors who might resent 'new blood' having the right to make decisions for their ward.
- Badgers Mount Ward Councillors would experience the same situation as they currently do with Shoreham, in being outnumbered and outvoted by even greater numbers of existing parish councillors

Regrettably, BMRA therefore feel that it is not in Badgers Mount's best interests to become part of Halstead Parish Council. They would like to forge stronger links with Halstead Parish though, if they are permitted to become independent from Shoreham Parish.

Option 3 - Each Ward Forms its own Parish Council

- A District Council must establish a parish council if the population consists of 200 or more local government electors. The number of electors in each ward is above 200: Badgers Mount – 545, Shoreham – 892, Well Hill – 216; so all wards are viable as an independent parish. This would amount to Well Hill possibly becoming the smallest parish council in the district.
- The Shoreham Parish Plan that was drawn up in 2005, indicated that 55% of Badgers Mount residents wanted independence from Shoreham Parish. The BMRA took a brief vote this month from residents as to whether they would prefer to stay within Shoreham Parish, or whether they would prefer to break away and form an independent parish council. The vote yielded a 76% vote in favour of splitting from Shoreham.

- Consideration needs to be given as to whether potential benefits are greater than increased costs. The greatest benefit for Badgers Mount has to be for it to gain its own identity and greater control over what level of precept it is prepared to pay.

Ward within current parish and percentage of electorate	No. of Councillors required	Change in income from precept at present level	Cost of Parish Clerk	Cost of insurance	Section 137 of Local Gov Act 1972* expenditure permitted: (£10,168 currently for whole parish)
Badgers Mount 33%	5		Est. £4,000 p.a. 5 hrs. per week plus expenses	Est. £1,000 p.a. plus expenses	£3,352
Shoreham 54%	7	Reduced by 45 %: residents would need to pay more	Unchanged: £12,000 plus expenses	Unchanged: £1,500	£5,486
Well Hill 13%	5		£2,000 p.a. plus expenses	Est. £500	£1,328

* This enables local councils to spend limited money for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory expenditure. It is capped. Most of this expenditure is grants that are awarded

Independence for Badgers Mount would mean:

- All meetings would take place within the Badgers Mount Memorial Hall, which is easily accessible for all residents in Badgers Mount and would obviously encourage them to attend and participate in increased numbers.
- The meeting would be more concise as all the matters discussed would be relevant to Badgers Mount.
- The community is expected to become more involved in the Parish Council work with more people willing to stand as Councillors as they will not feel demoralised by being out-voted on issues that matter to Badgers Mount residents.
- Matters could be discussed in more detail due to less time constraints, and there could be increased time allocated to residents to enable them to voice their concerns.

- Ward Councillors would feel they could make a real difference to their community. History has suggested that ex Badgers Mount Councillors have left Shoreham Parish Council because they do not feel they can make a difference. They did not feel that with the current ratio of representation, they would get changes that would benefit Badgers Mount.
- Any money would solely be for the benefit of Badgers Mount residents.
- They would have more control over the level of precept and Council Tax liability to the community.
- There could be more volunteers to serve on the Council that was so locally focused, although this cannot be assumed.
- They could draw up a more personal Neighbourhood Plan, in accordance with the Localism Act.
- Halstead, Knockholt and Badgers Mount District Councillors put in very rare appearances at Shoreham Parish Council meetings. One would hope, if the meetings are held in the local hall and are purely about Badgers Mount, that the District Councillors would be happy to pop along for 30 minutes per meeting to deliver a report.
- Most importantly, Badgers Mount residents would finally achieve the independence and sense of identity many of whom have sought for decades.

Financial Considerations

First Years' Forecast Running Costs for Badgers Mount Parish Council:

	Shoreham estimated 2010/11	Suggested for Badgers Mount	
ADMINISTRATION			
Advertising	0	50	
Audit fees	335	250	
Chairman's special allowance	100	100	
Clerks salary	11,556	4000	
Clerks expenses, postage, stationery	200	150	
Clerks mileage	400	250	
Members allowance	50	750	Shoreham budget 2011/12 - £1500

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Members mileage	150	150	
Office computer	450	450	
Photocopier	50	50	
Office rent	360	350	
Office telephone	300	250	
Hall hire	550	500	
Legal expenses	0	0	
Elections	0	1000	? maybe funded by SDC
Insurance	1400	1000	
Shoreham Post	1540	750	
Training	450	500	
Sundry office	100	100	
Subscriptions - KALC	613	600	
SLCC	160	150	
others	70	100	
Office Scribe licence	195	200	
	<u>19029</u>	<u>11700</u>	

Dog bins	1500	500	
General repairs	1000	500	
Grass cutting	500	600	
Black sacks	50	50	
Salt bins & salt	1000	500	
Footpaths	50	50	
Lengthsman	600	400	
Refuse freighter	540	250	S'ham total budget for 2011/12 = 750
	<u>5240</u>	<u>2850</u>	

PROJECTS

Fort Halstead working group	50	50	S'ham budget for 2011/12 = 250
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SUMMARY

Administration	19029	11700	
Amenities & general services	4650	2850	
Projects	50	50	
Grants	4000	1000	
Emergency planning	50	50	
Possible projects (unknown)	6940	1000	
	<u>34719</u>	<u>16650</u>	

For precept, allow for second Clerks salary	4000		Only req if Clerk sick for year
	<u>20650</u>		

Finally we would strongly suggest that each new Parish should still keep links with its neighbours, to form alliances and offer support on joint issues of threat or benefit, i.e. KCC Minerals & Waste Consultation, the development of Fort Halstead, or achieving faster broadband. Badgers Mount would like to embrace the essence of the Localism Act by the 'shifting'...[of] power... towards local people.' The Act promises to give 'new rights and powers for communities and individuals', and 'reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally'. This can only happen for the people of Badgers Mount if they are given their independence. The Act states that it will; 'giv[e] people the opportunity to take control of decisions that matter to them,' and the only way that can happen is if Badgers Mount is allowed to stand alone. 'The Localism Act therefore gives local communities the power to decide', and Badgers Mount has decided it would like to form The Badgers Mount Parish Council to represent the local community.

NB: The Badgers Mount Residents Association were disappointed not to receive direct correspondence from the District Council regarding the Governance Review. We are after all, a known community group to you and you do state in the Terms of Reference: 'Specifically, the District Council will write to all parish councils and to other known community groups.' Would you please ensure that the BMRA are kept FULLY up to date on any other matters that affect Badgers Mount.

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Ian Bigwood

From: Phil Hobson [ph2011@shorehamparishcouncil.gov.uk]
Sent: 23 February 2012 23:49
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Community Governance Review
Attachments: wh-pc-v2.pdf; Draft gov review report.doc

Dear Mr Bigwood,

In connection with the Community Governance Review I would strongly suggest that the Well Hill Hundreds Ward of Shoreham Parish Council should be removed from Shoreham Parish and turned into a standalone parish. Residents in the Well Hill Hundreds Ward are not as well served by local government as it would be if it had its own parish council. Well Hill has its own sense of identity and issues that are not found anywhere else in the parish. For the first time in many years, children are being born in Well Hill. In order to create an environment where families with young children can feel confident to stay in Well Hill, the community needs to take control of its destiny. It can no longer be swept along with solutions that are designed for other parts of the parish. It needs its own solutions to its unique challenges. The Well Hill Residents' Association and the Well Hill Lane Road Association go some way to take on those challenges. But they lack the funds to employ an administrator, such as a clerk, to be truly effective. If the Well Hill Hundreds Ward became a parish council, the local community would have the funds to deliver solutions tailored to Well Hill.

A few years ago the Well Hill Residents' Association produced a document - which I have attached - which highlighted the reasons that a parish council for Well Hill would be desirable as such a parish should reflect a small, distinctive and recognisable community of interest, with its own sense of identity.

Very little has changed and the document is still valid today. What I can add is that my time on Shoreham Parish Council (continuously for more than 11 years) has highlighted even more differences that separate Well Hill from the rest of the Shoreham Parish. Three recent examples are emergency evacuation, policing and broadband.

In 2009 a fire, late at night, in Well Hill required residents to evacuate their homes. Some residents were taken to Chelsfield School - in the London Borough of Bromley, for shelter and sustenance. Well Hill is the only part of Shoreham Parish where an evacuation would need to be done outside of the Sevenoaks District Council Area. This illustrates that Well Hill needs to build relationships with Bromley whereas the rest of the parish does not.

Policing operational areas have, for several years become coterminous with District Council Ward boundaries. This has resulted in Shoreham Parish being covered by three policing areas. This makes it difficult to have a cohesive meeting between the Parish Council and Kent Police. The meeting is either very long with a large police contingent (to cover the three areas) or else aspects of policing in the parish do not get the attention they deserve. It would be far better from an administrative and practical view for a Parish Council to only have to liaise with a single policing area.

Earlier this year, the Well Hill Ward had access to fast broadband. This was a project that Well Hill liaised with Crockenhill Parish Council to achieve as it would not have any impact on any other part of Shoreham Parish. This is typical of many of the services Shoreham Parish Council provides in that they are usually unique to one part of the parish. In fact, I would go as far as to say that it is almost impossible for any parish wide scheme to be implemented due to the very different needs and aspirations of each ward in Shoreham Parish.

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I have also attached a document produced by Shoreham Parish Council which contains information about the differences of the three wards. It contains a wealth of information including the estimated costs of splitting the parish council. It also mentions that "Independence for each ward would mean that for each council: All meetings would take place within that ward and all matters discussed relevant. Any expenses would solely be made for the benefit of that ward. There could be more volunteers to serve on the council that was so locally focussed, although this cannot be assumed."

Well Hill does not form a cohesive community with any other part of Shoreham Parish. Well Hill does not have facilities or services that are used by other parts of Shoreham Parish and Well Hill residents usually use services outside Shoreham Parish rather than within the parish.

Well Hill has its own identity which is very different to other parts of Shoreham Parish. It is a very independent and resilient community. For Well Hill to flourish, it needs to harness that sense of independence and resilience. Well Hill has a sense of place – a place with a 'positive' feeling for people and local distinctiveness. Making the Well Hill Hundreds a parish would be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area and it would be effective and convenient.

There would not be any negative impact on community cohesion for the rest of the parish as there is no cohesion between the wards of Shoreham Parish.

A Well Hill Parish would create a cohesive, attractive and economically vibrant local community. It would be a representative, accountable governance systems which both facilitate strategic, visionary leadership and enable inclusive, active and effective participation by individuals and organisations; and have effective engagement with the community at neighbourhood level including capacity building to develop the community's skills, knowledge and confidence. It would also enable Well Hill to have community representation to other bodies such as Transport for London and Kent County Council where the views would reflect a distinctive and recognisable community of place, with its own sense of identity.

The Commission on Integration and Cohesion's report, Our Shared Future, is clear that communities have expert knowledge about their own circumstances and that actions at the local level contribute to achieving integration and cohesion, with local authorities well placed to identify any pressures. For Shoreham Parish, the local expert knowledge is usually limited to the ward a person lives in. If the Well Hill Hundreds Ward remains part of Shoreham Parish, I believe that Well Hill residents will continue to hide their knowledge and expertise.

Community cohesion is about local communities where people should feel they have a stake in the society, and in the local area where they live by having the opportunity to influence decisions affecting their lives. For residents of the Well Hill Hundreds Ward their local area is where they live and to better influence their lives would require local administration that is only concerned with their local area. Having the Well Hill Hundreds as part of Shoreham Parish diminishes that sense of individual identity.

In rural areas, the Government wants to encourage the involvement of local people in developing their community and having a part to play in shaping the decisions that affect them. A parish can be a useful and democratic means of achieving this.

It is for all the above reasons that I urge you to create a parish for the Well Hill Hundreds so that the community can capitalise on its unique identity and strengths in order to create a more vibrant and cohesive community.

Cllr Phil Hobson

Agenda Item 3

Any of the statements or comments made above should be regarded as personal and not necessarily those of Shoreham Parish Council, any constituent part or connected body.

Agenda Item 3

A Proposal for a New Well Hill Parish Council/Meeting

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Summary

Well Hill is located in the northern part of the Parish of Shoreham. Crockenhill Parish is to the north, Eynsford to the east, London Borough of Bromley to the west. It is in Sevenoaks District Council's Crockenhill and Well Hill Ward.

Well Hill has a separate and distinct identity to the main villages (Shoreham and Badgers Mount) in Shoreham Parish.

It does not have a strong community connection with either Shoreham or Badgers Mount. Its strongest connection with another community is to Chelsfield Village which, unlike both Shoreham and Badger Mount, is within easy walking distance.

It is, therefore, proposed that there is the constitution of a new parish by the separation of the Well Hill Hundreds Ward of Shoreham Parish. This is desirable having regard to the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and to secure effective and convenient local government.

Introduction

Parish Councils have two main roles: community representation and local administration. For both purposes it is desirable that a parish should reflect a small, distinctive and recognisable community of interest, with its own sense of identity. The feeling of local community and the wishes of local inhabitants are the primary considerations.

Well Hill is a small, distinctive and recognisable community of interest, with its own sense of identity.

Well Hill has its own Mission Church. When it was built more than 100 years ago, it was part of Shoreham Ecclesiastical Parish. In 1936 the Lord Bishop of Rochester reviewed the parochial circumstances of the various parishes in this Diocese from the spiritual, administrative, and geographical standpoints. It was felt that "Well Hill, three miles from Shoreham Parish Church, could be much more effectively administered by being transferred to Chelsfield, one mile distant."

The M25 is a psychological barrier that lassoes Well Hill into London. It was not so long ago that the properties on the west side of Pump Lane were in the Greater London area. Several residents who moved into their houses in the Greater London area now find themselves in Sevenoaks District.

Less than four years ago the boundary commission created a new Well Hill Hundreds Ward and split it away from Shoreham and moved it to Crockenhill for District Council elections.

Agenda Item 3

A Proposal for a New Well Hill Parish Council/Meeting

Local Support

In the last two years, three surveys of residents views have been obtained. In all cases there has NOT been a majority support for the status quo - that is, Well Hill staying as part of Shoreham Parish Council. Each survey took a slightly different approach and the results are summarised below. The basic question was “would your community be better served by staying as part of Shoreham Parish Council, being part of a different parish council or becoming a separate parish council?” The survey by Shoreham Parish Council did not give the option of being part of a different parish council.

The Well Hill Residents’ Association survey allowed each adult in a household to respond. Therefore, these results reflect the views of adults in the Well Hill Hundreds Ward. In addition, other results from the same survey were compared to the 2001 Census and, using standard statistical methods, it was found that the respondents were a representative sample of the whole population.

The Shoreham Parish Plan Group survey only permitted a single response per household so it is not obvious if the results can be directly compared to Well Hill Residents’ Association results. Other results from the Shoreham Parish Plan Group survey were compared to the 2001 Census and it was found that the households were a representative sample of the whole population but not as good a sample as the Well Hill Residents’ Associations sample.

The Shoreham Parish Council survey was sent to registered electors and could be compared to neither the Well Hill Residents’ Association results nor the Shoreham Parish Plan Group’s results. As this was the only question asked, it was not possible to use other questions that were similar to 2001 Census questions to compare Shoreham Parish Council’s sample to the 2001 Census to ascertain if it was a representative sample of the whole population.

Organisation	Date	Respondents	Stay with Shoreham Parish Council	Become Part of Another Parish Council	A New Well Hill Parish Council
Well Hill Residents’ Association	Late 2003	Adult	34%	14%	51%
Shoreham Parish Plan Group	Early 2004	Household	40%	28%	33%
Shoreham Parish Council	Late 2004	Registered Elector	50%	(not an option)	50%

Local Facilities

Almost all local facilities to Well Hill are NOT located within Shoreham Parish. Without exception, the nearest facilities to Well Hill are not the nearest facilities to Shoreham Village. For example, the closest library to Well Hill is Orpington, whereas the closest library to Shoreham is Otford. In most cases there are several facilities of the same type that are closer to Well Hill than the same facility in Shoreham. For example, there are three Post Offices that are closer to Well Hill than the one in Shoreham Village.

There are few reasons for Well Hill residents to venture to Shoreham Village and mingle with Shoreham residents as the facilities that are local to Well Hill are not as local to Shoreham Village and vice versa. It is unlikely that Well Hill residents will use the same local facilities as Shoreham residents. For this reason Well Hill cannot be seen to be part of the Shoreham community.

A comprehensive list of useful facilities is given in Appendix A and the distance from Well Hill. The distance figures were obtained from <http://www.upmystreet.com/> or by direct measurement. The table shows the location of facilities that are closest to Well Hill and the distance to them. It also shows the location of the facility closest to Shoreham Village and the distance of the facility from Well Hill.

Looking at the example of post offices, the Shoreham Post Office is 2.4 miles from Well Hill. Yet, there are three Post Offices (Pratts Bottom, Chelsfield and Ramsden) that are closer to Well Hill than the one in Shoreham.

With Well Hill being about two and a half miles from Shoreham, and less than three miles from Orpington, it is not surprising that most facilities used by Well Hill are in the Orpington area.

To put the distance between Well Hill and Shoreham into perspective, the distance between Well Hill¹ and Shoreham Village Hall is about 50 metres longer than the distance from the car park at the front of Sevenoaks District Council offices in Argyle Road to the Dunbrick Recycling Centre.

Whereas Shoreham will tend to use facilities in Shoreham, Otford and Sevenoaks, Well Hill residents use facilities in Chelsfield, Orpington and Swanley.

¹measured from the fork in the road known as Well Hill and where the Parish noticeboard is located

Local Survey

In late 2003 the Well Hill Residents' Association (WHRA) organised a questionnaire to find out the views of residents on many issues. The results are available on the web at <http://www.whra.org.uk/cgi-bin/whra/qresults.cgi> and some of these specific results lead to the conclusion that an independent Well Hill Parish Council would be in the best interests of residents.

What is the Local School?

The question asked was "How many children do you send to the following Primary schools? "

Only half the primary age children in Well Hill attend the Shoreham Parish school. A third attend the closest school to Well Hill which is just inside the London Borough of Bromley. We feel that if more residents were aware that they do not have to have their children educated in a KCC-funded school, most of the children from Well Hill would, in fact, attend Chelsfield Primary School. Chelsfield Primary School is within walking distance of Well Hill, whereas Shoreham Primary School is not.

Place of Work

The question asked was "Where is your main place of work, school or college?"

40% of residents spend the day time to the north (Dartford), the west (London) or in Well Hill whereas Shoreham Village is to the south east of Well Hill. This gives Well Hill residents more of a London/Dartford affinity than a Shoreham affinity.

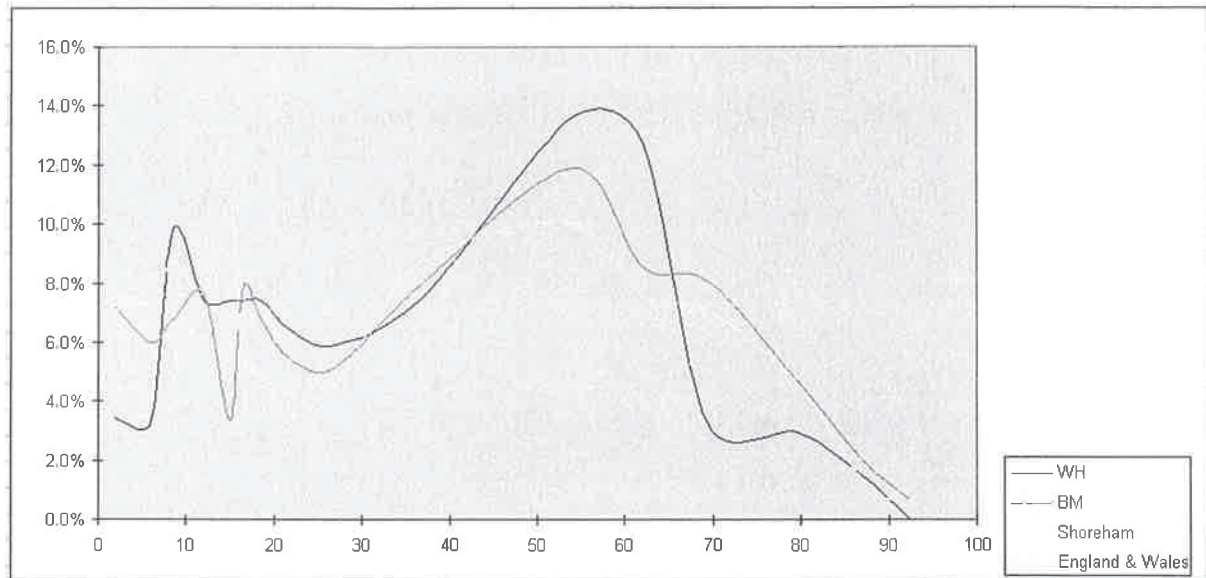
Place of Worship

The question asked was "How often do you use the following?"

Of the churches, the local Well Hill church is the most popular, closely followed by Chelsfield Church. Other churches are more popular than either Shoreham or Crockenhill churches. Well Hill is not within Shoreham Ecclesiastical Parish. Chelsfield church is the local church used by Well Hill residents for christenings, marriages and, sadly, burials.

Age Distribution from 2001 Census

There is a clear difference in the age make-up of Well Hill when compared to Shoreham and Badgers Mount. The following graph has been constructed from data publicly available from the 2001 Census.



The dark blue line representing Well Hill shows a marked deviation from the yellow line representing Shoreham. Well Hill has lesser proportion of school age and pre school aged children and a significantly lower proportion of those in the 65-75 age group (3.2% for Well Hill, 7.1% for Shoreham and 8.1% for Badger Mount). Having a significant difference in the demographic makeup of the wards of Shoreham Parish can indicate distinctive and separate recognisable communities.

Finances

In the financial year 2004/2005 the Well Hill Hundreds Ward's contribution of Shoreham Parish Council Precept was £5,800². If the same level of precept was levied for a separate Well Hill Parish Council (£5,800) there would be sufficient funds to provide for the administration costs and service costs of the new parish council.

Administration costs would be low. A clerk would only be required for a few hours per week. In a recent advert for a parish clerk, the workload was specified as "18 hours month with 12 evening meetings a year"³ - it is unlikely that a Well Hill Parish would require as much time as that as, apart from meetings, consultation documents, etc. there would not be much for the clerk to do. Obviously, if residents required more services, the administration load and cost could rise but this would be in line with the wishes of the community.

²This figure was supplied by Shoreham Parish Council in November 2004

³KAPC Parish News dated 2nd May 2006 for Selling Parish Council

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A Proposal for a New Well Hill Parish Council/Meeting

Conclusion

The Well Hill Residents' Association believe that there are compelling reasons why a new Parish Council would be in the best interests of the residents of the Well Hill area.

The Church recognised that Well Hill should not be part of Shoreham Ecclesiastical Parish 70 years ago. Four years ago the boundary commission moved Well Hill out of Shoreham for District Council elections.

We believe that the time is now right for Well Hill to become independent. Making the split from Shoreham Civil Parish would complete the split started 70 years earlier when Well Hill became part of Chelsfield Ecclesiastical Parish and continued in 2003 with the District Council elections.

Appendix A

Comparison of Well Hill and Shoreham Village

This table compares the distance of many facilities from Well Hill.

The first column names the facility.

The next two columns list one or more locations of that facility in order of its distance from Well Hill and the distance of the facility from Well Hill by the quickest route.

The next column lists a single location of the facility that is closest to Shoreham Village. The last column shows the distance of that facility from Well Hill (not Shoreham). For example Shoreham Village Hall is no distance at all from Shoreham Village but is 2.5 miles from Well Hill. The nearest bank to Shoreham Village is in Otford and that bank is 3.4 miles from Well Hill.

	Well Hill		Shoreham	
Post Code	BR		TN	
Telephone Exchange	Knockholt		Otford	

A Proposal for a New Well Hill Parish Council/Meeting

Facility	Nearest to Well Hill	Distance From Well Hill (miles)	Nearest to Shoreham	Distance From Well Hill (miles)
Library	Chelsfield Village (mobile)	1.0	Otford	3.1
	Orpington	2.7		
Village Hall	Chelsfield Village	1.0	Shoreham	2.5
Church	Well Hill	0.0	Shoreham	2.8
Post Office	Pratts Bottom	1.8	Shoreham	2.4
	Chelsfield	1.9		
	Ramsden	2.0		
Bank	Orpington	2.7	Otford	3.4
	Swanley	3.3		
Pharmacy	Chelsfield	1.9	Otford	3.2
	Ramsden	2.0		
	Green Street Green	2.5		
	Orpington	2.7		
Doctor	Chelsfield	1.9	Otford	3.2
	Green Street Green	2.5		
Hospital (NHS)	Farnborough	4.0		
	Sidcup	5.0		
Dentist	Chelsfield	1.9	Otford	3.4
	Green Street Green	2.5		
	Orpington	2.7		
	Swanley	3.3		
Optician	Orpington	2.7	Sevenoaks	5.9
	Sidcup	5.5		
	Chislehurst	5.7		
	Hayes	5.8		
Primary School	Chelsfield Village	1.0	Shoreham	2.6
	Halstead	1.6		
	Goddington	1.7		
Local Shop	Goddington	1.7	Shoreham	2.5
Railway Station	Knockholt	0.8	Shoreham	3.1
	Chelsfield	1.9		
	Orpington	2.7		
Bus Stop	Chelsfield Village	0.8	Shoreham	2.4
Town served by nearest bus stop	Orpington	2.7	Sevenoaks	5.9
Petrol Station	Goddington	1.8	Otford/Bat and Ball	4.2

Agenda Item 3

A Proposal for a New Well Hill Parish Council/Meeting

	Pratts Bottom	1.8		
	Green Street Green	2.5		
	Knockholt	2.6		
	Swanley	3.3		
Supermarket	Green Street Green	2.5	Otford/Bat and Ball	4.2
	Orpington	2.7		
	Swanley	3.3		

Community Governance

The parish council is asked to consider making recommendations to Sevenoaks District Council for any changes in the parish boundary. The purpose of this document is to make it easier for councillors to assess the implications and form an opinion. The time frame is as follows:

we have 3 weeks to make a response to Sevenoaks District Council

Sevenoaks District Council considers responses and makes its recommendation

A period of Consultation follows during which time the parish council may need to talk to residents

Implementation in 2015

The present parish, formed in 1894 consists of three separate communities, each with a clear sense of their own independent identities each having established its own Residents Association/Society. However the three communities are actually neighbours and do share concerns from time to time. It is only Shoreham that has a community/recreation space and has allotments, which is the first duty of a parish council to provide if there is a need and it is possible to do so. Below is information which identifies differences and common interests/concerns:

District Councillors	Emergency Services and Policing	Local services/facilities	Concerns
Badgers Mount, Shoreham and Well Hill served by different District Councillors	Well Hill get 1 st response from London Fire and Rescue not Kent as do B.Mount and Sh'm. 3 separate policing areas	Each of the three areas accesses services provided by different post offices, shops and libraries. Few pupils from Badgers Mount or Well Hill attend or have attended Shoreham Village School. Well Hill receives Bromley 'phone book, Sh'm and B. Mount receive T.Wells. Limited participation in Sh'm based societies by B.Mount and Well Hill residents. Some interest in acquiring allotments from B.Mount.	Currently both B.Mount and Sh'm over mineral and gravel extraction.

The Committee met to review the pros and cons of the options available and present them in a form that the Parish Council could consider and thereby make a recommendation

Options:

Status Quo remains: Badgers Mount, Shoreham and Well Hill make up one parish council

Each of the three wards forms its own parish council

Shoreham Parish comprises Badgers Mount and Shoreham wards

Shoreham Parish comprises Shoreham and Well Hill wards

Badgers Mount and Well Hill form a separate parish council and Shoreham is independent

Badgers Mount ward becomes a ward of Halstead Parish Council* thereby adding 545 electors to the existing 1208

Well Hill ward becomes a ward of Crockenhill Parish Council* thereby adding 216 electors to the existing 1269

*These two options require that the other parish councils would not be opposed to admitting them.

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Status Quo: There would be some difficulty in developing a Parish Plan that adequately met the needs of these three different communities. Details of some of the pros and cons below:

Pros	Cons
There are established structures that work	Well Hill and Badgers Mount contribute to a larger precept that does not necessarily benefit those communities
Everybody benefits from economy of scales	Wards do not share same District Councillors
Level of income established	Little social contact between residents of the 3 areas, so no established link
Size of parish may carry more weight	Served by 3 policing areas, so consistent approach difficult to achieve
Diversity of wards could be seen as strength and inhibiting a myopic view of issues	Councillors have to consider issues that have little relevance for their ward

Each ward forms its own Parish Council: Is this viable?

A District Council must establish a parish council if the population consists of 200 or more local government electors. The numbers of electors in each ward is above 200:

Badgers Mount – 545, Shoreham – 892, Well Hill – 216: thus even Well Hill is just viable as an independent parish. However 2004 figures show the smallest parish in Sevenoaks District had 428 electors (represented by 5 councillors) and the next smallest Cowden had 609 (represented by 7 councillors)

Consideration needs to be given as to whether potential benefits are greater than increased costs.

Ward within current parish and percentage of electorate	No. of Councillors required	Change in income from precept at present level	Cost of Parish Clerk	Cost of insurance	Section 137 of Local Gov Act 1972* expenditure permitted: (£10,168 currently for whole parish)
Badgers Mount 33%	5		Est. £4,000 p.a. 5 hrs. per week plus expenses	Est. £1,000 p.a. plus expenses	£3,352
Shoreham 54%	7	Reduced by 45 %: residents would need to pay more	Unchanged: £12,000 plus expenses	Unchanged: £1,500	£5,486
Well Hill 13%	5		£2,000 p.a. plus expenses	Est. £500	£1,328
* This enables local councils to spend limited money for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory expenditure. It is capped. Most of this expenditure is grants that are awarded					

Independence for each ward would mean that for each council:

All meetings would take place within that ward and all matters discussed relevant.

Any expenses would solely be made for the benefit of that ward.

There could be more volunteers to serve on the council that was so locally focussed, although this cannot be assumed.

Each new Parish could form links with neighbouring parishes on joint issues of threat or benefit, e.g. mineral and gravel extraction, achieving faster broadband

Shoreham Parish comprises Badgers Mount and Shoreham Wards

Pros	Cons
Some status quo maintained	Loss of precept contribution from Well Hill, est up to 13%
Some economy of scale in covering running costs	Wards not served by same District Councillors
Share some common concerns	Badgers Mount still contribute discussion time and support cost of amenities in Shoreham B.Mount residents may feel they do not benefit from

Shoreham Parish comprises Shoreham and Well Hill Wards

Pros	Cons
Shoreham benefits from Well Hill contribution to precept	Well Hill would still contribute to amenities within Shoreham
Some social links already established as well as council structure	The precept would need to increase by about 30%
Well Hill remains part of bigger parish council without being overwhelmed as it could be by linking with Crockenhill	Well Hill Councillor would still be outnumbered by Shoreham Councillors

New Parish comprising Badgers Mount and Well Hill Wards

Pros	Cons
Economy of scale: a beneficial option to being two separate parishes	Need to establish new structures
More overlap in services accessed, transport links	Focus of Well Hill in some areas more towards Bromley/London than Sevenoaks district
Badgers Mount benefits from Well Hill Contribution	Some increase in running costs over maintaining status quo

Badgers Mount joins Halstead Parish

Well Hill joins Crockenhill Parish

Although grouped together, one option does not depend on the other. However pros and cons are similar. Both the wards of the current Shoreham Parish would (if admitted) join existing established structures and could possibly more easily access amenities they would contribute to. However in either case the councillors joining to represent these wards would be outnumbered by those of the existing parish councillors.

Agenda Item 3

Ian Bigwood

From: Diane Wisdom [dianew1616@hotmail.com]
Sent: 24 February 2012 16:33
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Community Governance Review

Dear Mr Bigwood,

With reference to the possibility of making Well Hill a parish in it's own right, I should like to add the following comments:

Well Hill is currently served by Shoreham Parish Council but I do not feel that Shoreham is close enough in proximity to Well Hill to fully understand our needs and circumstances.

I believe that we should be given the opportunity to form a totally independant Parish Council, which would have the ability to dedicate it's efforts and funds, to directly improve the lives of Well Hill residents.

Most residents of Well Hill use the facilities of Chelsfield and Orpington, as opposed to those of Shoreham, hence there is not a great deal of interaction between the two villages.

The Annual Produce Show in Chelsfield Village is always supported by residents of Well Hill. This is one small example of our tendency to be more involved with areas we feel more connected with and which we generally travel to, and through, in our day to day lives.

I also believe that residents would be more likely to take an interest in, and get involved with, a dedicated Well Hill Parish Council than they currently do under the umbrella of Shoreham Parish Council.

Notwithstanding the above comments I believe that Shoreham currently has a thriving Parish Council. I do not believe that it will suffer in any way by Well Hill forming it's own Parish Council.

In fact I believe that, in the case of major issues for the whole area, there could actually be a benefit in having the co-operation, and opinions, of two separate councils as opposed to just one.

I trust that you will take these comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely

Diane Wisdom
Resident of Well Hill Lane.

Ian Bigwood

From: Tom Eldridge [tetservices@gmail.com]
Sent: 23 February 2012 12:06
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Community governance review

Dear Sirs

I live in Well Hill, BR6 and understand registered voters have the opportunity to express their views on the review. Well Hill is currently part of Shoreham Parish Council together with the Badgers Mount area, and as I understand, we can put our thoughts forward now with a final review being undertaken in April.

The question seems to be should Well Hill and Badgers Mount remain as part of Shoreham Parish Council, form their own Parish Councils or combine in any combination.

As I understand, the benefits of becoming our own Parish Council would give Well Hill

- financial independence
- the ability to set its own Parish levy as part of the KCC council tax
- freedom to use this funding as Councillors see fit for the Well Hill area.

The drawbacks are

- 5 councillors would need to stand to form a Parish Council. In such a small area, (216 voters), I think it would be difficult to achieve that level of interest from residents.
- If only a couple of residents stand, they could 'co-opt' up to 2 others each to form the quorum required. This could lead to a number of likeminded councillors making decisions for the local population without opposition.
- In such a small community there is always the possibility that pressure could be put on a councillor to achieve something that otherwise might not have been agreed, or be in the best interests of the whole community.
- When issues need to be discussed that would affect the wider community, or issues that are outside our small area, we would need form links with neighbouring Parish Council to make our voice heard and have any impact.
- A large portion of the funding raised would need to be allocated to the costs of a Parish Clerk, reducing available spending in the area.

Surveys were carried out in 2003 by Well Hill Residents Association and 2004 by Shoreham Parish Council on this matter and the results were roughly a 50/50 split from those that responded.

Well Hill Residents Association has only been advised of this current review this month which has not given enough time to conduct a co-ordinated survey of all residents opinions. It would be in the best interest of all residents to have a proper opportunity to be surveyed before any final decisions are made.

The benefits of remaining with Shoreham Parish Council give the Well Hill community; security with established links, economy of scale financially, the larger Parish Council view carrying more weight in local issues.

On balance, I feel the interests of the residents of Well Hill would be best served by remaining as part of Shoreham Parish Council.

Regards
Jill Eldridge

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Ian Bigwood

From: Jessica Reid [jessnut79@googlemail.com]
Sent: 24 February 2012 14:36
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Well Hill as a standalone council
Attachments: wellhillparishcouncilfeb2012.doc

I have attached a copy of my letter with my thoughts on Well Hill Parish Council becoming a stand alone parish. I have also copied and pasted it below.
Many thanks

Dear Mr Bigwood,

In connection with the Community Governance Review I have some reservations that the Well Hill Hundreds Ward of Shoreham Parish Council should be removed from Shoreham Parish and turned into a standalone parish. Whilst I agree that it would be a great idea with regard to a lot of matters, I disagree with it on other matters. I have outlined my pros and cons below.

Residents in the Well Hill Hundreds Ward are not as well served by local government as it would be if it had its own parish council. Well Hill has its own sense of identity and issues that are not found anywhere else in the parish. If the Well Hill Hundreds Ward became a parish council, the local community would have the funds to deliver solutions tailored to Well Hill.

I understand that the policing of the area is currently covered by 3 policing areas. This makes it difficult to have a cohesive meeting between the Parish Council and Kent Police. The meeting is either very long with a large police contingent (to cover the three areas) or else aspects of policing in the parish do not get the attention they deserve. It would be far better from an administrative and practical view for a Parish Council to only have to liaise with a single policing area.

I do not believe that a Well Hill Parish would have any negative impact on community cohesion for the rest of the parish. A Well Hill Parish would also enable Well Hill to have community representation to other bodies such as Transport for London and Kent County Council where the views would reflect a distinctive and recognisable community of place, with its own sense of identity.

My main reservation would be in regards to planning. Having a parish with such a small population, 214, I feel that some of the planning applications would be viewed unfairly as some people aim to prosper within the community and others aim to hinder any developments or forward thinking by residents and business's. I feel that the Shoreham Parish Council would give a more unbiased opinion on such planning applications.

Another reservation that I have is that within such a small community will there be enough diversity within the councilors'. Yes, there are more and more families on Well Hill now but unfortunately due to family ties with young children I very much doubt that any younger mums or dads would have time to sit on the council therefore would there needs and views within the community be over looked or missed anyway.

It is for all the above reasons that I urge you to consider the proposal of a stand-alone parish for Well Hill very carefully.

Jessica Reid (Well Hill resident).



Shoreham, Sevenoaks, Kent

Registered with the Civic Trust. Charity No. 261828
Affiliated to the Council for the Protection of Rural
England and the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies.

Please reply to:



Ian Bigwood
Electoral Services Manager
Sevenoaks District Council
Council Offices
Argyle Road
Sevenoaks, TN13 1HG
elreg@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Dear Mr Bigwood

We respond to the consultation on the Community Governance Review.

It was reported to the last committee meeting of the Society towards the end of January that the Parish Council had supported in principle the setting up of separate Parish Councils for Badgers Mount, Well Hill and Shoreham, and had set up a working party to look into the practical implications. It was therefore considered that there was no need for the Society to take further action. It was therefore with some surprise that the Society discovered that the Parish Council had apparently changed its mind at its meeting at the beginning of February. This left the Society too little time to follow its own consultation procedures prior to 25th February.

First of all we do as a society fully support all the suggestions for minor boundary changes put forward by the Parish Council including those directly affecting the ward namely in East Hill and Twitton. We also suggest that consideration is given to changing the boundary between the Well Hill and Shoreham ward so those few houses the Shoreham side of the M25 are moved into Shoreham.

Secondly we attach the proposal that has been drafted on behalf of the Shoreham Society. You will note that this does not conflict with the proposals put forward on behalf of Badgers Mount and Well Hill. Although it is known that there is strong support for a separate Shoreham Council we are also aware of contrary views, which is why we needed to have our own consultation followed by a committee meeting before those proposals could be formally submitted. Unfortunately it had not been possible to arrange a committee which is why the proposals are still in draft.



Richard Inniss
Vice Chairman
Cc Sheila Birkin (Chair)

INTRODUCTION

The present parish, formed in 1894 consists of three separate communities, each with a clear sense of their own independent identities and areas of influence. Each has established its own Residents Association/Society. It is only Shoreham that has a community/recreation space and has allotments, which is the first duty of a parish council to provide if there is a need and it is possible to do so.

Shoreham Ward is based on Shoreham Village and the Darent Valley. It has its own church (St Peter and St Pauls) and village school. The shop was saved as a community project. There are 4 public houses. The Village Hall is a primary focus for village activities. It has a station and a bus service serving Sevenoaks. Most of the village is a conservation area and preservation of its character is an important concern. It shares District Councillors with Otford. The medical practice is in Otford.

Shoreham Ward is the only ward with social housing and previous Housing Needs surveys indicate that future demand is mainly based on the Shoreham village. There are particular concerns with the Conservation Area, number of listed buildings and the River Darent which do not involve the other areas.

Badgers Mount is in the western part of the area and with the exception of the odd property the other side of the M.25 from Shoreham. It is in the Halstead and Knockholt ward and so has separate district councillors from Shoreham. The nearest shops are in Halstead, as is the nearest school. Residents look towards Halstead or north to the London Borough of Bromley. Knockholt Station abuts Badgers Mount. Halstead Church serves the community

Well Hill is located in the northern part of the Parish of Shoreham, with Crockenhill Parish to the north, and London Borough of Bromley to the west. It is in the Sevenoaks District Council's Crockenhill and Well Hill Ward. Well Hill has a separate and distinct identity to the main villages. Its strongest connection with another

community is to Chelsfield Village which is within walking distance. It is more accessible to Badgers Mount than Shoreham. Well Hill is not within Shoreham Ecclesiastical Parish. Chelsfield church is the local church used by Well Hill residents for christenings, marriages and burials.

The differences are summarised in the following table:

District Councillors	Emergency Services and Policing	Local services/facilities	Churches	Societies/Events
<p>Badgers Mount, Shoreham and Well Hill are served by different District Councillors</p>	<p>Well Hill get 1st response from London Fire. Badgers Mount and Shoreham are served by Kent. There are 3 separate policing areas</p>	<p>Each of the three areas accesses services provided by different post offices, shops and libraries.</p> <p>Few pupils from Badgers Mount or Well Hill attend or have attended Shoreham Village School. Halstead is the nearest school to Badgers Mount</p> <p>Well Hill receives Bromley 'phone book, Shoreham and Badgers. Mount receive T.Wells.</p>	<p>Shoreham has St Peters and St Pauls (C of E).</p> <p>Well Hill has The Well Hill Mission Church</p> <p>Badgers Mount supports the Church in Halstead.</p>	<p>Limited participation in Shoreham based societies by Badgers Mount.</p> <p>Properties the eastern side of the M.25 in Well Hill do connect with Shoreham Village however the remainder (majority) look towards Chelsfield .</p> <p>Badgers Mount activities are based on Halstead and the Church Hall which is in Badgers Mount</p>

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

Parish Councils have two main roles: community representation and local administration. For both purposes it is desirable that a parish should reflect a small, distinctive and recognizable community of interest, with its own sense of identity. The feeling of local community and the wishes of local inhabitants are the primary considerations.

Shoreham has a recognisable community of interest, with its own sense of identity.

The M25 is a barrier that separates Shoreham from both the majority of Well Hill and Badgers Mount.

The interests of Shoreham ward and , in particular, Badgers Mount often conflict. This is accentuated by the fact that the principal facilities run by the Parish Council are in Shoreham (Recreation Ground, Allotments, Amenity Land and Public Toilets). Badgers Mount wish to support facilities in Halstead (for example the church) which are not within the Parish Council area.

This can be detrimental to the proper governance of the area. It is considered that a separate Parish Council could provide more effective and convenient administration and would be in accord with move to localism. It would also accord with the district council boundaries.

There is a need for separate Parish Plans and in particular separate Neighbourhood Plans for the 3 areas and this is better organized if Shoreham with its different concerns and problems is separate.

VIABILITY.

At present there are 892 electors in Shoreham, 545 in Badgers Mount and 216 in Well Hill. There are therefore sufficient electors to form a viable parish council. It is understood that the smallest parish in SDC has only 428 electors. At present there are 6 councillors for the Shoreham Ward and this should be sufficient for the new Parish Council.

There would be an increase in the expenditure falling on Shoreham residents as Badgers Mount/Well Hill would no longer be contributing to the toilets and recreation ground, however other than for projects (when grants have been available), expenditure on the Recreation Ground is modest and the Allotments are mainly self funding. There would be less work for a clerk so that cost should not change in proportion to the council tax payers. The actual effect on the total precept would be minimal.

CONCLUSION AND PROPOSAL

The Shoreham Society propose that the creation of a separate Parish Council be considered to cover the existing Shoreham Ward (which includes East Hill, Romney Street and part of Twitton).

It is hoped that this would provide better and more efficient governance for this locality.

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PARISH COUNCIL OF
SUNDRIDGE WITH
IDE HILL

11 Springshaw Close
Sevenoaks
Kent TN13 2QE

BARBARA CORNELL
Clerk to the Council

Telephone/fax: 01732 454091
email: sundridgewithidehillclerk@yahoo.co.uk

Mr Ian Bigwood
Electoral Services Manager
Sevenoaks District Council.

BY EMAIL to: elreg@sevenoaks.gov.uk

23rd February 2012

Dear Mr Bigwood

Local Governance Review

The Parish Council has instructed me to give you the following response to the Local Governance Review which began on 30th November 2011.

The Sundridge with Ide Hill Parish Council welcomes the review of the powers, responsibilities and organisation of Parish and Town Councils.

There have been enormous social, economic, political and attitudinal changes that impinge upon the way these Councils work and on community and Government demands of them.

Sundridge with Ide Hill PC believes that merely seeking unguided individual responses from Councils is an inappropriate mechanism for what are serious, relevant and difficult judgments about the functioning of government and delivery of services at the local level..

Sundridge with Ide Hill PC looks to Sevenoaks District Council to facilitate proper discussion and consideration of ways in which the lowest tier of elected government can operate most effectively in difficult financial situations and truly represent local communities given changed circumstances and expectations. This process should examine current needs, clarify different roles and look at alternative models that might be adopted. Inevitably there would be a need to discuss such contentious issues as boundary changes, merging councils, collaborative arrangements and ventures, and the role of SDC itself. As far as possible there should be a consistent approach across the SDC area.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Cornell

Mrs B Cornell
Clerk to the Parish

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Community Governance Review

Proposal(s) for Change(s) to a Parish Boundary & Parish Electoral Arrangements

(Please return by Friday, 24th February 2012)

Name of Parish: Westerham Parish Council

Name, address and telephone no. of Parish/Town Clerk:

Mrs Angela Howells – Parish Clerk
Russell House
Market Square
Westerham
Kent TN16 1RB 01959 562147

Precise description of proposal(s): a map (scale not less than 1:10,000) must also be provided with the proposed boundaries clearly defined:

To amend the boundary between Westerham and Brasted parishes in order to include in Westerham parish the isolated cottage known as High View, located on the eastern side of the French Street valley, which is accessed and serviced entirely from Westerham and has no practical connection with any property in Brasted parish.

The new boundary should follow the boundary of the French Street Farm estate, so as to take in High View cottage and the adjoining field immediately to the south. On the map attached, the existing parish boundary is marked in green. The proposed new boundary is shown in blue.

Details of properties affected by the proposal(s) must be given below:

The house known as High View, and the field immediately to the south.

Reasons for proposal(s):

High View is an isolated cottage on the eastern side of the French Street valley. It is now part of the estate of French Street Farm, which is owned by Lord Astor, resident in French Street House which adjoins the Farm.

When the house was built probably in the early part of the 20th Century, access to it would have been by a track or footpath from Brasted Chart, through the woodland to the east. But later on a tarred road was made leading to the house from French Street and the house became owned by the owners of French Street House and Farm.

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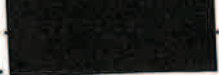
Consequently all access and all services are now provided from the French Street side coming from Hosey Hill (B2026) and Westerham town. There is no connection with Brasted Chart and no vehicular access from there.

The house is therefore for all practical purposes treated as being within Westerham parish and there is no sense in it being technically located in Brasted parish.

Details of consultations you have had with parish councils affected by your proposals and the outcome of those discussions:

The proposal was discussed at the Brasted Council meeting on 13th February and a copy of a letter from Brasted Parish Council stating that they supported this proposal is attached.

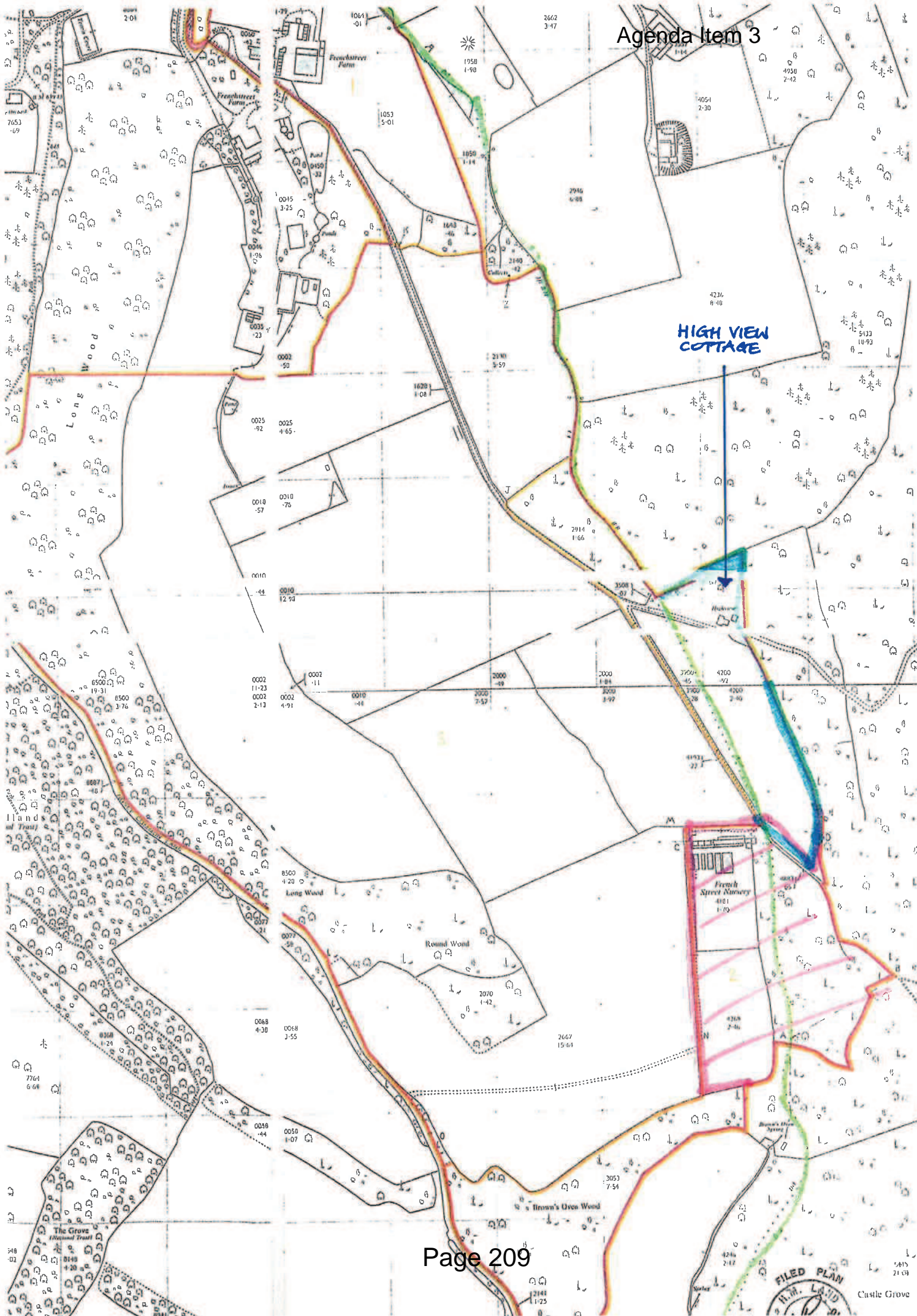
Any other comments:

Signed: 

Date:
17/2/12

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS)

..... ANGELA HOWELS



Agenda Item 3

6/2/12

FRENCHSTREET HOUSE
WESTERHAM
KENT TN16 1PW

Tel : 01959 562051
Fax: 01959 561286
astorjj@parliament.uk

The Clerk
Mrs A Howells
Westerham Parish Council
Russel House
Market Square
Westerham
Kent TN16 1PW

3rd February 2012

Dear Mrs Howells,

Highview Cottage, Frenchstreet, Westerham TN16 1PW

In view of the Government's Consultation on Boundary Changes I would like to add my support to the change of boundary of my property Highview Cottage.

It currently comes under Brasted Parish Council due to access in the past by horse and carriage to the property which is now a bridlepath offering no access to traffic. Access to the property is through Frenchstreet which is within Westerham Parish Council's boundary.

I can see no reason why Brasted Parish Council would object to this change.

Yours sincerely,



Lord Astor of Hever, DL

BRASTED PARISH COUNCIL

Pat Thomas
Parish Clerk
Southwood Cottage
Puddledock Lane
Westerham, Kent TN16 1PY

Tel: 01732 750531
clerk@brastedpc.kentparishes.gov.uk

Mrs Angela Howells
Clerk to Westerham Council
Westerham Parish Council
Russell House
Westerham Kent TN16 1RB

15 February 2012

Dear Angela

Re: Community Governance Review

Thank you for your letter of 4 February 2012 with information about the proposal from Westerham Parish Council for change to a Parish Boundary.

At their meeting on 13 February 2012, Brasted Parish Council voted unanimously to accept this proposal going forward for the Community Governance Review.

Please let me know if you need more information.

Yours sincerely



Mrs PB Thomas

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POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW

Electoral Arrangements Committee – 27th March 2012

Report of the: Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Corporate Resources

Status: For Decision

Executive Summary:

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Mrs Bracken

Head of Service Head of Legal – Mrs Christine Nuttall

Recommendation to Electoral Arrangements Committee

(a) The Bull Beefeater & Swanley Premier Inn be used as the polling venue for the Birchwood polling district.

Reason for Recommendation: this is the last outstanding item of the review of polling districts and polling places carried out in 2011.

Introduction

1. At the previous Electoral Arrangements Committee Councillor Mrs Hunter offered to contact the owners, Whitbreads, at a more senior level to see whether they might reconsider their opposition to the use of The Bull Beefeater & Swanley Premier Inn, London Road, Swanley as a polling venue.
2. A site visit was arranged at which the Manager of the premises agreed to the use of the first floor training room as a polling station. Access would be through reception and via a lift or stairs and a short distance along a corridor. Whilst this is not an ideal layout for electors (polling venues rarely are), it was felt to be superior to recent venues because it was situated within the Birchwood polling district.
3. Local Member Cllr Mrs Sargeant is fully supportive of the proposal whilst local Member Cllr Ball agrees that it is worth giving the venue a try in the absence of a better alternative.
4. It is proposed to use the venue for the first time at the inaugural election of a Police & Crime Commissioner on 15th November and a review of it's suitability will be carried out after the poll.

Key Implications

Financial

Agenda Item 4

The likely charge for the use of this venue is £120 which compares favourably with the costs of other polling venues.

Community Impact and Outcomes

The aim should be to provide a polling place for every polling district that is easily accessible to all electors, including those with disabilities. Whilst access is not ideal the new venue provides a better option for the majority of Birchwood electors.

Legal, Human Rights etc.

There are no legal or human rights implications in this report.

Resource (non-financial)

Staff input has been required to investigate alternative polling arrangements and will be required in order to keep polling arrangements under constant review.

Value For Money and Asset Management

Whenever there is a perceived lack of polling facilities within a polling district, suggestions are made by interested parties for the use of a temporary building. This involves the delivery and setting up of a “portacabin” containing furniture, ramp access, toilet facilities and a generator to provide electricity; there is also the security of these temporary structures to consider. Enquiries of neighbouring authorities indicate a cost of well over one thousand pounds for the use of each “portacabin”. It is important on cost grounds, therefore, to try to find alternative solutions.

Conclusions

5. There have been many reviews of polling arrangements over the years, often as a result of boundary changes or the implementation of policies, e.g. alternatives to schools and an increase in the provision of polling places to encourage turn-out. In between, a constant watch is kept on providing the best facilities available.

Risk Assessment Statement

- Legislation requires district councils to carry out four yearly reviews. 2011 was a review year and this report concludes the process. There appears to be no legal sanction if the deadline for completion of the review by the end of 2011 has not been met. In any event, polling venues are kept constantly under review regardless of when the four yearly review is held.
- Section 18B of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (inserted by the Electoral Administration Act 2006) states

“the authority must seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in its area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;

the authority must seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled”

Agenda Item 4

Background Papers:

Electoral Administration Act 2006

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places
(Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006

Representation of the People Act 1983

Electoral Commission Circular EC28/2007

Contact Officer(s):

Ian Bigwood – ext. no.7242

Dr. Pav Ramewal
Corporate Resources Director

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