

ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2012 commencing at 5.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

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

7. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bosley declared that he sat on West Kingsdown Parish Council.

Councillor Mrs Davison declared that she sat on Edenbridge Parish Council.

Councillor Mrs Clark declared that she sat on Ash-Cum-Ridley Parish Council.

Councillor Brookbank declared that he sat on Swanley Town Council.

Councillor Ms Lowe declared that she lived in one of the disputed areas.

Councillor Grint declared that he lived in Badgers Mount.

8. Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 October 2011

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 October 2011 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

9. Community Governance Review

At the meeting of the Electoral Arrangements Committee on 27 October 2011 it was recommended that a community governance review be undertaken in respect of the whole of the Sevenoaks District Council area. A timetable and terms of reference were agreed with the review commencing on 30 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, a letter to elected representatives and a letter to Kent County Council.

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 had the responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews and have been able to decide whether to give effect to recommendations made in those reviews.

The Committee noted that no submissions affecting the following parishes had been received: Chiddingstone, Cowden, Edenbridge, Farningham, Fawkham, Halstead, Hever, Horton Kirby & South Darenth, Kemsing and Knockholt.

The Chairman stressed that no decisions were due to be taken at the meeting and the Committee were approving recommendations for a further stage of consultation. The Committee considered each of the recommendations in turn.

In considering recommendations (n) and (o), the Chairman noted that Well Hill Residents' Association had not yet addressed issues raised by the District Council in 2006. The Chairman suggested that before a decision could be taken it would be helpful for the Well Hill Residents' Association and the Badgers Mount Residents' Association to address the following issues:

1. The degree of support amongst Well Hill/ Badgers Mount electors;
2. The number of electors subscribing to the Well Hill Residents Association / Badgers Mount Residents Association;
3. A financial strategy/ business plan drawn up to demonstrate viability of a new Parish Council;
4. A plan to manage legal issues, planning issues and issues arising from the Localism Act 2011.

The Committee acknowledged that Badgers Mount Residents' Association had addressed some of the issues in their submission, but Members felt it would be helpful to have further clarity.

Resolved:

- (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;

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- (i) that the proposal of Otford Parish Council that the whole of the hamlet of Twitton be included in Otford Parish thereby transferring properties (containing 12 electors) from Shoreham Parish be adopted;
- (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 are not progressed until further discussions between Shoreham Parish Council and Crockenhill Parish Council take place;
- (m) that the status quo in the vicinity of East Hill be maintained;
- (n) that further information be sought from the Badgers Mount Residents Association on their proposal to form a separate parish of Badgers Mount;
- (o) that further information be sought from the Well Hill Residents Association on their proposal to form a separate parish of Well Hill;
- (p) that the proposal by the Shoreham Society to form a separate parish of Shoreham (without Badgers Mount and Well Hill) not be moved forward until such time as the outcome of recommendations (n) and (o) are known;
- (q) that (provided the three wards of Shoreham Parish are retained) 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.

10. Polling Districts and Polling Places Review

At the previous Electoral Arrangements Committee, Councillor Mrs Hunter offered to contact, Whitbread's, the owners of the Bull Beefeater & Swanley Premier Inn, London Road, Swanley, at a more senior level to see whether they might reconsider their opposition to its use as a polling venue.

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 not an ideal layout for electors, it was felt to be superior to recent venues because it was situated within the Birchwood polling district.

The Chairman noted that there was a clear need for a polling station in the area and thanked Councillor Mrs Hunter and the Electoral Services Manager for the work they had undertaken in order to secure the polling venue.

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Resolved: That the Bull Beefeater and Swanley Premier Inn be used as the polling venue for the Birchwood polling district.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 5.50 PM

CHAIRMAN