

Received - 1 MAR 2012



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 Inhiss
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.