

## **CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **SUBMISSION TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND BY COUNCILLORS TREVOR JONES AND BOB PULLIN (Frenchay and Stoke Park Wards).**

In our role as Councillors for a significant proportion of the area covered by the Commission's proposals for the Stoke Gifford Ward, published in August 2017, we believe strongly that Stoke Gifford Ward should remain a 3 member ward,

In summary, we understand and support the tenet of the Commission's arguments for the need to increase the size of individual ward electorates and ensure their parity. However we believe that separating Little Stoke off from the rest of the Parish would be disadvantageous to the close identity enjoyed by the whole local community as it has repeatedly expanded from a small centre.

In addition, to hive off Little Stoke into a single Member Ward as suggested by the Commission, when there is still much extra development, both approved and planned for the local area, would be impractical. We believe that it would fail to provide the comprehensive civil representation its residents have come to enjoy over many years.

Having noted the Commission's proposals, to delete the Frenchay and Stoke Park Ward that we have represented since 2007, we support the proposal that what is currently the Stoke Gifford South Parish Ward, namely the area south of the main GWR Bristol to London rail line and north of the A4174, be incorporated into the Stoke Gifford Ward boundary to ensure electoral parity.

All of Stoke Gifford is in the same civil and ecclesiastical parish with its own Parish Council. The Parish Council actually has its own HQ/ Offices in the Little Stoke part of the Parish, where it holds its regular Parish Council meetings with residents. We therefore urge the Commission to re-link the proposed Little Stoke Unitary Ward with the proposed two seat Stoke Gifford Unitary Ward to support the efficient and provision of civil representation.

This leaves the University Parish Ward, coterminous with the proposed new South Glos Council University Ward, separated from the new Stoke Gifford seat. However, this area will still be served, both by the Parish Church and Vicar of St Michael's and the Parish Council. We recognise that the community in this area continues to grow and will, together with additional development sites, undoubtedly require further adjustment during a future review. We are confident that the Parish Church and Council will ensure that, in the interim, the expanding community are well supported.

In our opinion, breaking up the Stoke Gifford community into what amounts to three "electoral administrations" makes no sense whatsoever and can only be divisive. Therefore while, with significant further growth to come, electoral parity is currently supported by the proposed introduction of the University Ward, further division in Little Stoke would significantly reduce that parity. We will now detail evidence which, we believe, supports our opinions.

The St Michael's "Heart of the Community Centre has expanded rapidly in recognition of all the new housing developments and is used by all residents of the Parish, not just those between Gypsy Patch Lane/Winterbourne Road and the A4174. The Centre has meeting rooms, its own café and will soon

hold the new Community Library that is been started and will serve all residents of the parish. It already has outreach teams that serve the area to the south of the A4174.

Additionally Stoke Gifford Baptist Church is part of a Trinity partnership with Little Stoke and Amberley Road (Stoke Lodge) Baptist Churches ensuring that the congregation is drawn from across all part of the parish, not from one particular area.

The two youth clubs in the Parish work closely together and each attracts young people from across the Parish, not just from their immediate area. Currently, two primary schools serve the whole of OUR proposed 3 Member Ward, St Michael's Ratcliffe Drive and Little Stoke Primary. St Michael's Primary is currently over-subscribed, necessitating the continuing use of temporary classrooms in addition to new purpose built replacement classrooms. The fluid catchment areas for both schools attract pupils from the south of Gypsy Patch Lane/Winterbourne Road to attend Little Stoke School. In due course, the area will be served by up to three planned additional primary schools. The same fluidity occurs with the different playgroups across the Parish to suit parental working arrangements.

The two secondary schools, together with the three Specialist colleges based on adjacent campuses in New Road, draw pupils from all parts of the Stoke Gifford Parish and beyond, enabling pupils from Little Stoke to share the benefits of a wide choice of educational provision.

The Concord Medical Centre at Braydon Ave in Little Stoke is currently undergoing a second significant expansion, to include Minor Injury Clinic facilities for residents from right across the Parish Area.

The **three** Parish Council managed playing fields, each with differing roles and functions, are spread across the Parish. As a result residents from all part of the Parish will potentially use all three of them at different times. Mead Park is kept as a playing field with regularly cut grass, children's play equipment and sand pits. Forty Acres ground is kept as a wild life haven and is managed as such, while Little Stoke Park is laid out as a Recreation Ground with various and different sport pitches such as rugby and football, a state of the art MUGA and the BMX track, both used by the whole community. The Little Stoke Ground has recently been upgraded to provide a prestigious Gloucestershire FA County League standard pitch. One of very few in the area.

Meanwhile there is extensive public use of five-a-side football and other MUGA pitches at the WISE and Abbeywood Community School sites, outside of school hours. Similarly, the additional sports and recreational equipment provided by the Stoke Gifford Trust on North Road includes the cricket pitch and tennis courts which serve the whole community.

In closing, we would ask the Commission to recognise that Little Stoke is, and has always been part of the Stoke Gifford Parish Council area!

We note that, elsewhere across South Gloucestershire, the Boundary Commission has majored on maintaining Parish boundaries, and making them coterminous with new Ward boundaries, wherever possible.

In our opinion the Little Stoke one member Ward must be re-joined with the proposed two Member Stoke Gifford Ward to retain an efficient three Member Stoke Gifford Ward in parity with surrounding Wards.



**Cllr Trevor Jones**



**Cllr Bob Pullin**

