

Eleanor Gregory

From: Eleanor Gregory
Sent: 08 January 2010 17:11
To: Richard Buck
Subject: FW: Electoral review of Bedford Borough
Attachments: 2010.01.11 electroal review ltr.doc; 2010.01.08 electroal review ltr.doc



From: Lizzie Barnicoat [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 January 2010 13:31
To: Reviews@
Subject: Electoral review of Bedford Borough

To whom it may concern,

Please find attached two letters in response to the recent stage of public consultation regarding Bedford Borough. One response is from Elstow Parish Council, one is from Renhold Parish Council. Both Council's are happy for their comments to made public.

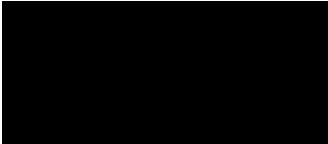
If you need any clarification regarding the comments contained within the letters please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards

Lizzie Barnicoat
Parish Clerk

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RENHOLD PARISH COUNCIL



11th January 2010

The Review Officer (Bedford)
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW

Dear Review Officer,

RE: UNITARY AUTHORITY ELECTORAL REVIEW OF BEDFORD

In response to commencement of the first consultation stage for warding arrangements for the borough of Bedford, Renhold Parish Council discussed this item at their full Council meeting held on Thursday 26th November.

At that stage, the Council made the following comments:

Firstly, as Renhold is a rural parish, it is imperative that the entire village remains as such, because the needs of Renhold differ considerably to an urban area. Therefore the polling district currently named NT (Norse Road), the Council strongly feel that this be included within the ward that Renhold is. The residents contribute to Renhold Parish Council's precept so it is natural that they be involved and able to decide on occasions such as elections who represents them as part of a rural parish. Norse Road acts as a physical barrier, so the Council reiterate the importance of the new warding structure to include these electorate. Also the children within the Norse Road developments are within the catchment area of Renhold Lower School, so again a strong indication that the electorate should be part of a rural ward.

Renhold is currently in the Great Barford ward, since the construction of the Bedford bypass it has placed a significant physical boundary between Renhold and the parishes to the south of the new road (Great Barford, Willington and Cople).

The Council believe that due to the proximity of the adjoining villages of Wilden and Ravensden it is natural that Renhold be within the same ward as both. There are also strong community links between the three parishes, these include:

- Very small geographical distance separating them
- Police working within the same Safer Neighbourhood Area Team
- Transport links of: bus routes, a network of bridleways and footpaths that run between the three parishes
- Current school links between the communities

Following receipt of the letter from Bedford Borough regarding their consideration for warding review, Renhold Parish Council again have considered the consultation proposals on possible warding arrangements as posted on the Borough website.

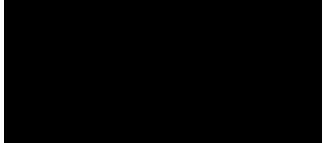
The Council is very supportive of the proposal to include Cranbourne Gardens and The Spires within the ward of Renhold, as they included in their original wishes. The Council cannot reiterate how important it is that this inclusion MUST go ahead. Also, due to the proximity of Ravensden to Renhold it is a natural link, so the Council would like to support this also, particularly as both parishes in the proposal have new developments included.

If you have any questions regarding the above, then please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Lizzie Barnicoat
Elstow Parish Clerk

ELSTOW PARISH COUNCIL



8th January 2010

The Review Officer (Bedford)
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW

Dear Review Officer,

RE: UNITARY AUTHORITY ELECTORAL REVIEW OF BEDFORD

Further to your letter regarding the ideal number of electorates per elected member and following great consideration by Elstow Parish Council, the Council would like to draw your attention to the following in regards to the warding of Elstow.

In response to commencement of the first consultation stage for warding arrangements for the borough of Bedford, Elstow Parish Council discussed this item at their full Council meeting held on Tuesday 24th November.

Firstly, as Elstow is a rural parish, it is imperative that the entire village remains as such, because the needs of Elstow differ considerably to an urban area.

Elstow is currently in the Wilshamstead ward, this ward arrangement works very well at present and Elstow has a long history of working with the neighbouring parish of Wilstead. The Council reiterate that Elstow needs to preserve its ancient and separate identity from the urban boundary of Bedford. The separation between Bedford and Elstow is presently and physically shown by the established green corridor. It is vital that Elstow is protected from being subsumed into the urban area to prevent urban sprawl and to prevent damage to Elstow's conservation areas, and to ensure Elstow does not go the way of other villages which are now overrun and lost within the urban area that is Bedford. The Council very strongly oppose any connection to an urban area of Bedford.

The needs of the two parishes, Elstow and Wilstead, are similar and on many occasions the parishes have worked together, so it is natural with such an affinity between the two that this structure remains.

There are also strong community links between the two parishes, these include:

- Only two miles of agricultural land separating them
- Police working within the same Safer Neighbourhood Area Team
- Transport links of: bus routes, cycle routes, a network of bridleways and footpaths that run between Elstow and Wilstead

- The re-alignment of the A6 affecting both parishes
- The Wixams development impacting the infrastructure of both villages
- Current pre-school and school links between both communities
- Historic records dating back over a thousand years to the Domesday Book 1086

It is important to preserve social, family and relationship links between the villages, the social capital of village life is very different from that of urban/town life and must be preserved.

The links between Elstow and Wilstead are positive and effective, enjoying a long, shared history and a good working relationship, therefore, Elstow Parish Council feel very strongly that this must remain, and as an historic, rural, village Elstow should stay in a ward with Wilstead.

Finally, prior to the unitary authority, Wilshamstead ward was previously represented by three elected members (two Borough, one County Councillors), since the unitary authority this has been reduced to one. Following the completed consultation on the council size and representational ratio, Elstow Parish Council strongly believe that the Wilshamstead ward should contain both the same parishes as at present, though with representation by two elected members. This will cater for the first Wixams village as it develops/grows, also as the first village will fill the land space between Elstow and Wilstead.

Following receipt of a letter from Bedford Borough dated 2nd December, Elstow Parish Council met on 8th December and formally considered the consultation proposals on possible warding arrangements as posted on Bedford Borough's website.

After much consideration and discussion by the Council, their view is that the priority for Elstow is its status as a rural village. Their wish is to preserve this and they see remaining in a rural ward as vital in this regard.

The Council's preference for Elstow remains the retention of its warding links with Wilstead as stated above; however, at this time the Council is amenable to the proposal of joining Stewartby to form a new ward as this would continue Elstow's inclusion in a rural ward.

If you have any questions regarding the above, then please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Lizzie Barnicoat
Elstow Parish Clerk