

## Local residents submissions to the Bedford Borough Council electoral review.

This PDF document contains 9 submissions from local residents.

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16. Mr Hunt, Honorary Alderman



17. Mr Pennington



18. Mrs Faulkner



19. Mr Bentham



20. Mr & Mrs Lowe



21. Ms Turner



22. Mr Akhtar



23. Mr Arnold



24. Mr Harris

**Skerten, Alex**

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**From:** Gregory, Eleanor  
**Sent:** 19 May 2010 16:12  
**To:** Buck, Richard  
**Subject:** FW: Kempston West is missing

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**From:** Shan Hunt [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 17 May 2010 22:58  
**To:** Reviews@  
**Cc:** Cllr W. Hunt; Cllr Carl Meader; Cllr Sue Oliver  
**Subject:** Kempston West is missing

Dear Sir/Madam,

I note that page 19 of your report contains no reference to Kempston West.

I think that a two member ward adjoining Kempston South and West would maintain the integrity (mainly) of the existing ward. A Town Council seat of four members would be a natural consequence.

Yours faithfully,

Shan Hunt

Honorary Alderman

Bedford Borough Council

**Skerten, Alex**

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**From:** Gregory, Eleanor  
**Sent:** 21 May 2010 14:59  
**To:** Buck, Richard  
**Subject:** FW: Bedford Review

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**From:** Liam Pennington [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 21 May 2010 11:11  
**To:** Reviews@  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Bedford Review

FAO Review Officer, Bedford Review

With regards to the above review for the new Bedford authority, I would like to make one submission with regards to the proposed Kempston Rural ward.

As all the other wards representing Kempston have its name as a prefix – “Kempston X” – it seems potentially misleading in the context of an authority wide review to recommend a substantially larger rural ward using the same device. “Kempston Rural” could well be understood to represent only the existing parish area of the same name.

To ensure that the new division has a name which is clear to electors and electoral administrators, which is geographically accurate and as concise as possible, I recommend “Kempston Rural” is re-named “Turvey, Stagsden, and Rural Kempston”

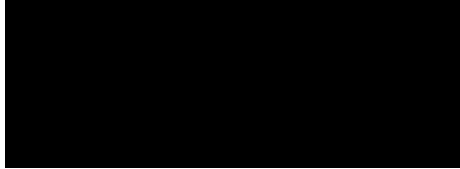
If possible, could any communication and further reports be sent to my home address, at [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Regards

Liam Pennington | [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]





20 May 2010

Review Officer  
Bedford Review  
Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
Layden House, 76-78 Turnmill Street  
London EC1M 5LG

Dear Sir

### **New Electoral Arrangements for Bedford Borough Council May 2010**

I disagree strongly with the LGBC proposal to create a new Elstow Ward with Stewartby. The BCFE criteria sought evidence of community and transport links - Paragraph 45 states *"Where respondents provided evidence of community identity, we have sought to reflect this in the proposals"*. There is no evidence of community links between Elstow and Stewartby.

**Identity** - Elstow is the birthplace of John Bunyan with an 11th Century Abbey Church and a 15<sup>th</sup> Century Moot Hall. By contrast, Stewartby is a modern 20<sup>th</sup> Century industrial village.

**Geography/Transport** Elstow and Stewartby Parishes adjoin but villages are 6 miles apart Stewartby adjoins and is much closer to Wixams/Wilstead and Wootton. No public transport or direct road link. Stewartby's only bus service is to Wootton; Ampthill is the nearest town. Stewartby is west of the A530 Ampthill Road; Elstow is east of the A6, near Bedford.

**Community/school links** - None at all. Stewartby children attend Wootton Upper School. Stewartby Parish Council objected to the proposal to put Stewartby in a new Elstow Ward.

### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS REJECTED**

#### **Option A - Wilshamstead Ward (Wilstead/Elstow villages) retained (- 8% variance)**

LBGC considered the existing Ward patterns but rejected my proposal to retain a 2-Member Wilshamstead Ward (Wilstead & Elstow) which worked well in Bedford Borough Council and Bedfordshire County Council. Paragraph 79 *"On balance, we consider that... this proposal would not reflect community identities in this area as accurately as the Council's proposal"*.

How does the Council proposal 'reflect community identities' in Elstow and Stewartby?

*Para 79 - "the main population centres of Elstow and Wilshamstead are divided by the A421 by-pass"*. Wrong as most of old Elstow village is located south of the A421 by-pass. Wilstead Road (note the name) is Elstow's main road, exiting south of the A421 by pass onto the A6, 400 yds and one junction north of Wixams development. Evidence was sent to BCFE by Elstow Parish Council and the undersigned of the strong historical, community, social and transport links between Elstow and Wilstead villages:

**Identity** -2 historical villages, recorded in the 1086 Domesday Book with close farming ties.

Elstow villagers use Wilstead Pharmacy, shops, school, doctor, preschool and school.

**Geography/transport** - A6 and A600 road links (5 minutes) and frequent bus services.

Network of cycle paths, bridleways, footpaths, e.g. John Bunyan Way, link the 2 villages.

**Community links** - Safer Neighbourhood Police Team shared, Elstow Cricket Club (Wilstead Chair) Elstow Abbey (Wilstead Churchwarden) Women's Institute, Carpet Bowls

**Option B – New Elstow Ward** (Bedford Conservatives proposal) – 3,066 - 0% variance  
This new Ward would unite Elstow with 1,106 Cauldwell voters in Mile Road and 13 other roads but was rejected in spite of the strong community, geographical and school links. These 14 streets are all in the Abbey Middle and Elstow Lower school catchment area.

**Identity** – Elstow would retain its distinct village identity. It already has two large estates close to urban Bedford, so the Cauldwell houses would not change Elstow significantly.

**Geography/Transport** – 2 neighbouring communities, divided by Elstow Brook but linked by a footpath for Elstow children at Abbey Middle school. Abbeyfields Park is a shared facility. Mile Road provides a natural north/south boundary between Cauldwell and Elstow Wards.

**Community Links** – Abbey Middle School is in Mowbray Road (Bedford) but is across the Elstow Brook in Elstow Parish. Many Cauldwell children attend Elstow Lower School /Abbey Middle School ,now federated under one Executive Head Teacher. Elstow has only one shop so residents use Gostwick Road Pharmacy and Store which delivers newspapers.

### **Option C – revised proposal**

Options A and B meet the BCFE community evidence criteria and are within the 10% limit. However both options have a 'knock on effect' on other Wards, so an alternative proposal is

**Option C**, creating a new Elstow Ward, similar to Option B, with four related Ward changes:

- 1. Elstow Ward – 2,990 voters** (-3% variance) Elstow Parish + **800** Cauldwell voters
  1. 13 streets in Option B, excluding 306 in Mile Road and Kempston Hardwick (29)  
If you check Elstow map on the Council Proposal (P49) it is also a geographical solution, squaring off the Elstow map, which has a missing section in the north east corner.
  2. **Kempston South** + 29 Kempston Hardwick voters from KempstonS/Wootton Ward
  3. **Cauldwell Ward – 3,094** per Member (0% variance) + 393 Kingsbrook voters from Redwood Grove/The Sidings, off Elstow Road ( Bedford Conservatives proposal)  
Perfect electoral equality (LGBC proposed +7%) Ward has high levels of deprivation.
  4. **Kingsbrook Ward 3,059** per Member (0%) - 393 voters moved to Cauldwell.  
Perfect electoral equality in another social deprived Ward (LGBC proposal +6%).
  5. **Wilstead Ward – 3,453** (+12%) + Stewartby/Wixams. LGBC proposal 3,470 +13%  
LGBC has rated the Council estimate of 6% population growth estimates as too high. Wilstead village population is static and dropped from **2,095** in 2009 to **2,040** in 2010, having a large elderly population and few children. Wixams voters totalled only **93** in May 2010 due to the housing recession and may only rise by 300 by 2013, ie 1,000 below Council estimates. Wilstead Ward would be 3,400 (2,040+ 393 + 1,020) LGBC rated Council population 6% growth estimates as high. Many Wixams voters will live in Central Bedfordshire and a Wixams Parish have to be created in due course.

The LGBC and the Council both commented on Wilstead's community identity but ignored Elstow's unique cultural heritage and failed to apply community criteria to the new Ward. Either Elstow has been sacrificed to balance the numbers or to satisfy the Liberal Democrat dominated Council's desire to find a safe seat for a Wootton/Stewartby Lib Dem Member. This is totally unfair to the people of Elstow so please consider these alternative options.

Yours sincerely

**Lynne Faulkner (Mrs)**

Former Bedford Borough Councillor and  
Bedfordshire County Councillor (Wilshamstead)

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**From:** Boss [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 03 June 2010 23:41  
**To:** Reviews@  
**Subject:** RE: Bedford Borough Review

Please disregard the first part of the response below. Having studied your maps it is clear that you have done so (and got it right too). The report did not mention any of this.

My question regarding the Urban Community Councils still stands though.

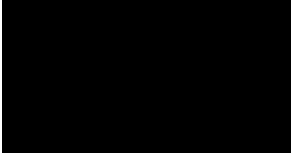
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**From:** Boss [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 03 June 2010 23:28  
**To:** 'reviews@lgbce.org.uk'  
**Subject:** Bedford Borough Review

16/07/2010

You haven't looked at the areas in Kempston that are part of Cauldwell and the bits of Cauldwell that should be in Kempston!  
Also, what effect does all this have on the Urban Community Councils?

Barry Bentham



## Skerten, Alex

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**From:** Gregory, Eleanor  
**Sent:** 02 July 2010 11:46  
**To:** Skerten, Alex  
**Subject:** FW: Submission re. Castle Ward Boundary, Bedford Borough  
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

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**From:** CHRIS LOWE [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 30 June 2010 21:16  
**To:** Reviews@  
**Subject:** Submission re. Castle Ward Boundary, Bedford Borough

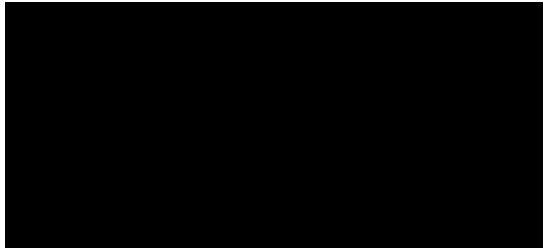
We would like to submit our objection to any changes to the east boundary of Castle ward in Bedford Borough.

The latest plans we have seen suggest streets such as Denmark, George and Dudley, together with Philpotts, Irwin and the East part of Castle Road, will move into Newnham Ward.

We strongly feel that Newnham Avenue remains the most sensible east boundary for Castle Ward. Apart from the extremely strong sense of community within Castle Ward (consider for example the excellent Zero Carbon Castle group, and the local shops and cafes along Castle Road) it seems to us illogical that part of Castle Road and the streets off of it would not be part of Castle Ward.

Yours faithfully,

Chris and Tammy Lowe  
[REDACTED]



6<sup>th</sup> July 2010

Review Officer  
Bedford Review  
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
Layden House  
76–86 Turnmill Street  
London EC1M 5LG

Dear Sir or Madam

**Bedford Borough proposed boundary changes**

It appears from the draft recommendations on new electoral arrangements for Bedford Borough that the Boundary Commission are working to the erroneous assumption that there are community links between Elstow and Stewartby. This just is not the case. I have lived in Elstow for over ten years and until this week, when I went out of pure curiosity, I had never been to Stewartby. I cannot see that my family will ever have any reason to go to Stewartby for shopping, social occasions or to access public services – and it is unlikely that Stewartby residents would take a detour into Elstow when Bedford is just a couple of miles further. There is no natural link or community between these two disparate parishes.

On the other had I pop down the A6 frequently to the doctor and pharmacy, the shop and takeaway food outlets and to visit friends in Wilstead. Therefore a combined electoral ward of the parishes of Wilhamstead and Elstow seems absolutely natural to me and a large number of friends and colleagues I have spoken with. Far from feeling divided by the A421 Bedford bypass, I view the two villages as linked by the A6 trunk road, to the extent that the journey time to the heart of Wilstead by car is shorter than that to the centre of Stewartby.

I appreciate it is difficult to understand community dynamics and cohesion from a distance by looking at maps and population numbers but I hope you will consider these important local points as the proposal as it stands to combine Elstow with Stewartby makes no sense to local residents.

Yours sincerely



Margaret J Turner

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**From:** AKHTAR PARVEZ [mailto: [REDACTED] ]  
**Sent:** 08 July 2010 13:52  
**To:** Reviews@  
**Subject:** Bedford Borough Council

Dear Sir/Madame,

I wish to respond to the draft recommendation for Bedford Borough.

There will always be discussion and debate about the boundaries and in the whole those concerns are often not genuine but rather as a way of preserving self interest. In my opinion the boundary commission has done a reasonable job on the Borough warding arrangement on the whole. I would have preferred something different but purely from self interest perspective. There is however one exception. I cannot see any reason why Elstow and Stewartby have been joined together to form a ward. There is no historical link, community link or geographical link. It is purely to balance numbers and as such it has caused much anger in Elstow itself which has a long and proud history of Independence. I am sure Stewartby would be better served by having a Councillor on its own as they are always threatened with industrial development due to the legacy from the brickworks and need a strong vocal voice to fight for their interests. I therefore hope this is re-considered.

Regards

Parvez Akhtar

**From:** clivearnold [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 08 July 2010

**To:** Reviews@

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Elstow boundary

For Richard Buck

Dear Mr Buck,

I write in support [Option B](#) of the submission you will have received from Lynne Faulkner. Viz; **Option B** – **New Elstow Ward** (Bedford Conservatives proposal) – 3,066 - 0% variance

This new Ward would unite Elstow with 1,106 Cauldwell voters in Mile Road and 13 other roads but was rejected in spite of the strong community, geographical and school links.

These 14 streets are all in the Abbey Middle and Elstow Lower school catchment area.

**Identity** – Elstow would retain its distinct village identity. It already has two large estates close to urban Bedford, so the Cauldwell houses would not change Elstow significantly.

**Geography/Transport** – 2 neighbouring communities, divided by Elstow Brook but linked by a footpath for Elstow children at Abbey Middle school. Abbeyfields Park is a shared facility.

Mile Road provides a natural north/south boundary between Cauldwell and Elstow Wards.

**Community Links** – Abbey Middle School is in Mowbray Road (Bedford) but is across the Elstow Brook in Elstow Parish. Many Cauldwell children attend Elstow Lower School /Abbey Middle School ,now federated under one Executive Head Teacher. Elstow has only one shop so residents use Gostwick Road Pharmacy and Store which delivers newspapers.

[As a life-long resident of the Mile Rd Estate and then Elstow village, I think her Option B is by far the most sensible arrangement, as Elstow and the Mile Road Estate are directly next to each](#)

other, have easy access between the two and these two areas share facilities. In addition to those facilities listed by Lynne, as Mile Road has no Post Office, but Elstow has, many residents from the former use Elstow Post Office.

I am curator of Moot Hall Museum and Elstow village green ([www.bedford.gov.uk/moothall](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/moothall)) and I know that people from the Mile Rd Estate regularly use the green for recreation. They also use the Abbey Church - many people from the Mile Road area opt to marry and get their kids baptised in Elstow Abbey (I and my brother were both Christened there) and many Mile Rd estate people (my parents, for example), eventually, are buried in the Abbey's graveyard.

In fact, the *only* 'barrier' between these two communities is the current council one - which exists only as a line drawn on a map.

I hope this is helpful.

*Clive*


Clive Arnold, 

**Skerten, Alex**

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**From:** Gregory, Eleanor  
**Sent:** 13 July 2010 18:01  
**To:** Skerten, Alex  
**Subject:** FW: Bedford review  
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

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**From:** TIMC HARRIS [mailto:   
**Sent:** 11 July 2010 15:08  
**To:** Reviews@  
**Subject:** Bedford review

Dear Reviews team

I have been made aware of your proposals regarding Bedford Borough. My particular interest is in my village Elstow.

It makes absolutely no sense to join Elstow with Stewartby. The villages have virtually nothing in common. There is no community cohesion behind this idea. Elstow is a historical village which attracts tourists from all over the world because of its links with John Bunyan. Many American and Dutch coach parties visit the village and it is on many tourist routes including the Bunyan trail walking and cycle route. Its focus as a village is predominantly rural. In contrast, Stewartby is an industrial village which is trying to come to terms with its loss of employment and the remaining scars on the landscape. The 2 villages are not connected by road. In fact it is a good 5 miles from Stewartby village centre to Elstow village centre. The schools have very different secondary catchment areas - Elstow kids go to John Bunyan, Stewartby kids go to Wootton - again a totally different focus.

Wilstead and Elstow have much more in common than Stewartby and Elstow. If all you are concerned about are numbers then a 2 seat Wilstead/Elstow ward would be much preferable given that the Wixams will boost the numbers to meet the requirements of equal size seats.

Wilstead and Elstow have much in common with their agricultural/rural focus along the A6 trunk road and historical coaching route which have linked the villages for centuries. The councillors and parish councillors are used to working together and this continuity and depth of understanding of local affairs is very important to ensure cohesion and good representation at a time of great change.

I would urge you to reconsider the council's recommendation which appears as if it might be politically motivated. I would urge you to install a 2 seat Wilstead seat which encompasses the historically and currently closely linked villages of Wilstead and Elstow.

Under no circumstances should you put Stewartby and Elstow together. I totally reject your assertion in para 79 about community identities

that the proposal to keep Elstow and Wilstead together would 'not reflect community identities in this area as accurately as the Council's proposal'. There is no real identity connection between Stewartby and Elstow but there is strong community linkage

between Elstow and Wilstead.

It appears as if local residents have already expressed their views about electoral equality in paras 74 and 79 but you have slavishly followed the Council's recommendations without giving any evidence to support your proposed decisions. Perhaps it is time for you to challenge various assumptions made about community identity. The villagers of Elstow and Wilstead are, I believe, content to continue to be joined together in an arrangement for 2 councillors which reflects the population growth in both villages. There is no evidence of community support from either Stewartby or Elstow for being joined together.

Please consider my response and I hope you see that to put Elstow and Stewartby together makes no sense whatsoever.

Yours faithfully

Tim Harris BA, MA, DAS

