

**NORTH EAST HAMPSHIRE CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION**

*Basingstoke Conservative Club, The Mount, Basingstoke, Hampshire*

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2ND April 2011

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing to you on behalf of the North East Hampshire Conservative Association with reference to the Hart District Council boundary review that is currently taking place. The purpose of the letter is to give the views of the Conservative Association and to support the proposal that has been voted through Hart District Council.

The starting point for the Hart District Council proposal was the guidance from the Commission stating three principles; equality of representation, community identity and effective and convenient local government. They used parish boundaries where appropriate to give a start to community identity; this is easy enough in many parts of the District where a parish is smaller than an ideal ward size. However it becomes trickier when a parish is too big to be included in a Ward. This was very clear in the cases of Fleet Town Council and Yateley Town Council in that they are so much bigger than the ideal ward size that this was not going to help. Church Crookham was only slightly larger however, so this is where they started.

The Conservatives' submission to Hart officers included Humphrey Park with the rest of "traditional" Church Crookham parish, which gave numbers that were there or thereabouts. This was intended to preserve the current community defined by the parish as far as we could. The rest is the Queen Elizabeth Barracks development site and Quetta Park military housing. I am confident that the parish council and others will be able to embed these areas into the Church Crookham community even if outside the District ward.

We then considered the rest of Church Crookham parish, Ewshot parish, Crookham Village parish, Dogmersfield parish, Winchfield parish and the new Hitches Lane development. We considered that the four complete parishes, all being rural or semi-rural and adjacent to the larger settlement of Fleet and Church Crookham, are separate communities but with a community of interest. The two new developments of QEB and Hitches Lane are different from others in Hart in having connected areas of countryside derived from the Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space created out of the Special Protection Area for Birds, and this semi-rural aspect marks them as both different from others and with an affinity to each other and the four parishes. The common representation of these and Zebon Copse will contribute significantly to effective and convenient local government.

Elvetham Heath is small enough to be encompassed within one ward, and has been kept that way. In addition the railway line to the South and the M3 to the North create strong physical boundaries for this Ward that also shape the local community and help to make it geographically distinct from the rest of Fleet. Other boundaries within Fleet are always going to be artificial, and the Conservative Association is content with the officers' division. Yateley again is an artificial division, and the Conservative Association is content with that. On the numbers, Eversley, Hartley wintney, Bramshill, Heckfield and Mattingley are coterminous and thus fit although at five parishes is a considerable workload, however being a three member ward will help. Similarly Hook and Rotherwick fit the geography and the numbers, and represent the only unchanged ward in the proposal. That leaves Odiham, Long Sutton, Greywell, South Warnborough and Crondall. This is slightly undersized in electorate terms but at five parishes again represents a considerable workload.

An opposition group proposed an alternative map, which both opposition groups supported on a whipped vote. They have indicated an intention to submit this scheme to the Commission. The primary difference is in Wards D and E on the Hart Council proposal; see Wards S and T on the opposition scheme. However, the issue with the opposition proposal is that it fails to respect existing community boundaries. In order to create two wards in this area they were forced to add a large area from Fleet Town Council area, thus disrupting the community cohesion in Fleet. That is the reason that the Conservative Group moved away from a previous plan to find a solution which met the requirements for community cohesion and effective and convenient local government which the Commission is looking for. Sadly the division of Church Crookham parish into more than one ward is unavoidable. The officer recommendation which is a development of the Conservative illustrative plan places the balance of Church Crookham – the Queen Elizabeth



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parish ward including Humphrey Park, Quetta Park and the new development of Queen Elizabeth Barracks – with Zebon Copse, which Cllr Radley asserts has an affinity with Church Crookham, although a five year resident of Zebon Copse has seen little evidence of that. The bulk of the areas in this ward are either military or former military housing with a transient population. Their development as settled communities has only recently begun with the selling of large areas of military land for residential housing schemes. The Council's proposal will allow these areas to develop both politically as a new ward from the ground up and as new housing with residents drawn in from inside and outside the District.

The opposition members were unable to persuade a majority of the Council to support their scheme, and the Association supports the Council proposal

Yours faithfully



Andrew Henderson  
Chairman

