

WOLDINGHAM



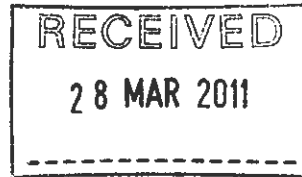
PARISH COUNCIL

Karen Newman – Parish Clerk



March 25 2011

The Review Officer (Surrey)
Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG



Dear Sir

**Reference: The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Review for Surrey, with particular reference to the District of Tandridge**

As the Parish Clerk I am writing to you on behalf of the **Woldingham** Parish Council, which is part of the District of Tandridge in the County of Surrey.

We note with dismay that in the Commission's review into the Electoral boundaries for Surrey there is a proposal from Surrey County Council to change the boundary of the 'Caterham Valley Division' such that our Parish of **Woldingham** is removed from its current Division and placed into the Division of Warlingham.

Historically **Woldingham** Parish has always been a part of the Caterham Valley Division and its very rural nature bears no relation to the Division of Warlingham which has a much more urban feel to it. The two communities of Warlingham and **Woldingham** have no real relationship as there is a large and deep valley which divides the two settlements. Warlingham retains its

urban nature as it lies on the edge of the London conurbation. If one was to travel south from London through Croydon, Sanderstead and then to Warlingham the urban nature is continuous. Then the traveller reaches the first part of open Greenbelt and Farmland and then arrives at the small rural village of **Woldingham**. From our point of view, as a Parish Council, we have no relationship with the Parish Council of Warlingham – but instead have much more in common and indeed have worked with the Parish Council of Caterham Valley itself.

Both Caterham Valley Parish Council and our Parish Council each have a particular area that has been given special planning status and recently both Parish Councils have worked on a review of those which have been accepted by the District Council for its Planning Guidance.

Woldingham's residents gravitate either southwards or south-westwards to the **rural** town of Caterham (designated as a Rural Town by SEEDA a couple of years ago). Most residents of **Woldingham** tend to use the Doctors' surgeries in Caterham and use the local community hospital in Caterham.

Our village residents tend to use the shops and supermarkets in Caterham – and Oxted. We have a couple of Stables within the village and they have to use appropriate Veterinary Practices in Caterham or further south – ie in the rural area.

Leisure activities in the area are concentrated in either Caterham or further south. Many residents use the swimming pools in both Caterham and Oxted as well as various fitness centres. The small theatre in Caterham has many supporters and members from **Woldingham**.

A very important issue is that Woldingham remains in the catchment area for secondary schools in Caterham and Oxted NOT Warlingham. This is very important to residents. The local Independent School for both Boys and Girls (from 3 – 18) is in Caterham and many residents use this school.

Transport is another big issue in this area; whilst our village is an area of relative prosperity the transport links are very poor although we have one bus that links us to Caterham only.

It is our contention that our community has no affinity with the Warlingham Division and that to move the boundaries to join the two would be an arbitrary decision based on mere numbers of voters and not natural community cohesion.

We understand that there is an acceptable tolerance of variance of 10% between the Divisions and recognize that currently Warlingham Division is below that tolerance level. We also note that currently the Caterham Valley Division is within a percentage point or so of the variance level – in fact near enough on the absolute average. However, should **Woldingham** Parish be removed from Caterham Valley Division into the Warlingham Division then Caterham Valley Division would end up being much below its current perfectly acceptable number. Thus one Division is corrected at the expense of another.

More important than the numbers is the community cohesion that is at risk. We do not feel that our community should be at risk of removal from its natural and historic grouping – merely to satisfy the requirement to even out a small discrepancy in numbers.

If any changes had to be made then our only suggestion is for the Parish of Whyteleafe, also in the current Caterham Valley Division to move into the Warlingham Division. The Parish Councils of Whyteleafe and Warlingham have often co-operated – witness a recent joint Parish Plan. Part of the Parish of Whyteleafe already has Warlingham in its address and one of the three train stations within the Whyteleafe Parish is even called Upper Warlingham. Thus the better fit of parishes would be for Whyteleafe Parish to join the Division of Warlingham.

It should also be pointed out that in a paper for Surrey County Council sent to them by yourselves it clearly states that the following are advisable:

- a) **Good Electoral Equality** – it appears that this is just not possible with the whole of the District of Tandridge. (Indeed the Division of Lingfield, further south in Tandridge will, after adjustments also have a large discrepancy – and yet this does not seem to be at issue.)
- b) **Community Identities** – already explained above.
- c) **Easily Identifiable Boundaries** – the topography of the land clearly identifies a large and natural boundary between Warlingham and **Woldingham** in that the deep valley between the two settlements clearly separates them. Also the Green Belt and farmland between the two communities are noteworthy.
- d) **Support from local residents, parish and town councils** – this Parish which will be most affected is completely **opposed** to this suggestion and wants to remain firmly within the Caterham Valley

Division. Whilst we cannot speak for the **Woldingham** Association (a Residents Association) we understand that they also support remaining within the Caterham Valley Division,

If **Woldingham** were to stay where it is now, three out of the four criteria above would be satisfied; if it were moved then only one of the four criteria would be satisfied – and that of numbers only – surely ignoring the whole premise of ‘Localism’.

We have consulted with our current County Councillor – who also happens to be a Parish Councillor here in **Woldingham** and she considers that the current situation should continue unchanged. She is firmly of the opinion that the Caterham Valley Division has the correct number of voters now and is projected to have the correct number of voters in 2016. Please also note Warlingham Division has a much greater chance of getting more homes within its own boundaries than **Woldingham** as Warlingham has more land which could be developed. **Woldingham** is a village largely made up of GreenBelt or protected land status included wooded hillsides. Thus in the future, Warlingham may well get a greater number of houses than is currently projected which would bring its numbers up over time.

We urge the Commission to keep the status quo for our own community and to keep the Parish of **Woldingham** within the Division of Caterham Valley.



Karen Newman (Mrs)
Parish Clerk.