

Bracknell Forest Borough Council

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Comment text:

Response to consultation is attached.

Uploaded Documents:

https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1597917355_200820+WPC+response+to+Boundary+Commission+consultation+on+draft+report+FINAL.docx



Review Officer (Bracknell Forest)
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August 2020

Dear Sirs

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION: BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL ELECTORAL REVIEW

We have received and reviewed the draft recommendations for the electoral review of Bracknell Forest Borough Council published on 30th June and note the proposed changes to electoral boundaries and warding arrangements contained therein.

Winkfield Parish Council understands the need to satisfy the statutory criteria and ensure that all residents of Bracknell Forest have adequate and accountable representation and is of the view that the proposals will benefit the residents of Winkfield parish, particularly those of the Forest Park, Martins Heron & The Warren areas. There will also be benefits for residents in the Harmanswater and Crown Wood areas by enhancing the synergy that already exists between the two settlements and receiving continuous focused support from the Ward members that reside in those areas.

The current warding arrangement links Forest Park with Crown Wood, and Martins Heron & The Warren with Harmanswater, despite Forest Park and Martins & The Warren falling within Winkfield Parish and Crown Wood and Harmanswater falling within Bracknell Town. This creates some degree of confusion as to which area is covered by which authority. The proposed ward of Forest Park and Martins Heron & The Warren would bring the wards in line with the current parish boundary, enhance the sense of community and provide clarity to residents. This would also apply to a singular ward for Crown Wood and Harmanswater, both of which fall within Bracknell Town Council boundary.

The areas of Martins Heron & The Warren, Forest Park, Harmanswater and Crown Wood, by the nature of their layouts, are undeniably interconnected. The numerous residential settlements within Bracknell Forest have been designed over the years to provide easy access to the town centre from all areas. Winkfield Parish Council is aware that there is resistance from Bracknell Forest Council to the current proposals and that some Ward members are not in favour of separation of the areas in terms of ward boundaries. Bracknell Forest Council Ward Councillors have advised that there have been some minor concerns raised by residents relating to the perception that the ward boundary changes might affect the catchment area for the school, as many children from Forest Park attend Crown Wood School. There is however an equal degree of agreement amongst the residents of Forest Park to maintain its inclusion in Winkfield, as many identify as residents of Winkfield and feel they are more closely connected to Martins Heron & The Warren than with Crown Wood. Residents naturally gravitate to Martins Heron



which is served by a large supermarket, community shops, main line rail station and community centre, which creates an extremely strong community hub.

As residents of the Parish ward of Winkfield, the communities of Forest Park and Martins Heron & The Warren currently have access to the facilities mentioned in our previous submission. The Community Centre's of Martins Heron & The Warren (managed by WPC) and Forest Park (managed independently) are closely aligned and synergise well. Hirers are regularly referred between the two on account of availability and suitability and a mutual commitment to serving the community's needs. Indeed, the Chair of the Forest Park Community Association is also the Head of Grounds Maintenance & Facilities for WPC and they are both serviced by the same cleaning staff.

Winkfield Parish Council also provides numerous community activities which are heavily utilised by residents of Forest Park and Martins Heron and The Warren:

- the Northern Parishes Arts Week,
- the annual Cycle Ride,
- ad hoc open garden tours, afternoon teas, etc and
- Christmas Wreath Making workshops

Furthermore, Winkfield Parish Council provides allotments, around 20% of which are currently allocated to residents of Forest Park, Martins Heron & The Warren, with further demand for this facility from the areas in question.

The views of residents of Martins Heron & The Warren and Forest Park have been incorporated into our NDP, with representation from all areas and a thorough character assessment having been conducted and included. Planning applications for Forest Park are considered by Winkfield Parish Council taking into account the needs of the communities and character of the area. A newsletter has been hand delivered to all residents since 2002 and provides regular updates of activities and events within the Parish and useful local information.

WPC reiterates its concerns that merging the communities of Martins Heron, The Warren and Forest Park with Crown Wood, Harmanswater or Bullbrook would be detrimental to the Parish in the event of a future review of the Parish boundary. This arrangement could result in a large reduction in Precept to the Parish Council and would subsequently disqualify residents of the southern section of the parish from accessing the many community activities mentioned above. With the existing area covered by Bracknell Town Council already significantly residential, there would be little scope for expansion to provide additional facilities to compensate for this growth in residents.

Although due to the design and density of housing there are fewer facilities owned by Winkfield Parish Council within Forest Park and Martins Heron than in other areas of the parish, there is a very good level of knowledge of the area within the Council and it makes significant investment of money, time and attention to the areas. The parish wards are currently served by seven Parish Councillors and given the



high level of residents in this area, this is deemed as appropriate and necessary. They are committed to serving their communities, often organising community walks and local litter picks to enhance the areas.

Winkfield Parish Council worked with Bracknell Forest Council for some time to secure the lease on Martins Heron & The Warren Community Centre which concluded in November 2018 and is now under the full management of the Parish Council. Since this time, the centre has been transformed and management improved, enabling a larger proportion of residents to access the facilities. An extremely positive rapport has been built up with both existing and new regular hirers. The pre-school that operates from the site offers a critical service to vulnerable children residing in the local area but predominantly those from Forest Park and Martins Heron & The Warren. There has also been significant work involved in transferring the lease for the recreational area at Bog Lane and this is ongoing. Winkfield Parish Council has also advised Bracknell Forest Council that it has aspirations to take over the management of Savernake Park and Forest Park Community Centre should Bracknell Forest Council be minded to relinquish management of either facility.

If the areas of Forest Park, Martins Heron and The Warren were not retained within Winkfield Parish, the existing leases held with Bracknell Forest Council for both Martins Heron & The Warren Community Centre and Allsmoor Field would need to be relinquished and the Parish Council could not continue to manage and enhance these facilities.

The Parish Councillors serving the southern part of the Parish have taken time to interact with local residents regarding the boundary review to gain their opinions on the proposed changes and the Council has invited comments to be submitted. Our most recent newsletter has also provided details of the consultation to enable residents to submit their own responses.

Winkfield Parish Council has carefully and objectively considered the impact of the proposed recommendations on the communities involved and has incorporated these considerations into the formation of its response to your consultation.

Winkfield Parish Council is extremely supportive of the recommendations made by the Local Government Boundary Commission.

Yours faithfully



Clerk to the Council
Mrs M Milsom