

Local Government Boundary Commission**5th December 2021**

Dear Sirs,

We do not wish to rehearse the argument, needless to say we do not agree with the Liberal Democrat Administration's desire to retain the current cycle of electing in thirds. Their stance is extremely damaging to communities, whichever way the lines are drawn in trying to create thirteen three-member "mega wards" in a constituency the size of Mole Valley.

As we exit the pandemic, minds should be focussed on driving efficiencies, increasing productivity, and raising morale among council staff and Officers.

Moving to all-out elections is an easy win which achieves all of the above.

It is clear from the comments at Council by Liberal Democrat Councillors, that it is their irrational fear of losing all-out elections that is driving the Liberal Democrat administration's approach, instead of what is factually in the best interests of the residents of Mole Valley.

The vast majority of Councils operate all-out elections, and those with larger areas such as Mole Valley, are even more likely to operate all-out elections, more than 4 out of every 5.

Presumably this has much to do with the challenges facing larger constituencies when considering the creation of "mega-wards" to facilitate electing in thirds, as we are experiencing here.

We have taken an approach which retains existing polling districts and groups existing wards by similarities in their nature, together with representations from our members.

This is straightforward in the south of the District with the following combining to make the new "mega-wards" as shown in the illustration.

The South**Western Villages**

Westcott is combined with Leith Hill and Okewood Hill and gains Mickleham & Westhumble from MWP (Former Mickleham, Westhumble & Pixham).

Dorking Northwest

Dorking North gains BA from Dorking South.

Dorking Southeast

Dorking South loses BA and gains Pixham (FC) from MWP (Former Mickleham, Westhumble & Pixham) and Chart Downs (DB) from Holmwoods.

Holmwoods & Beare Green

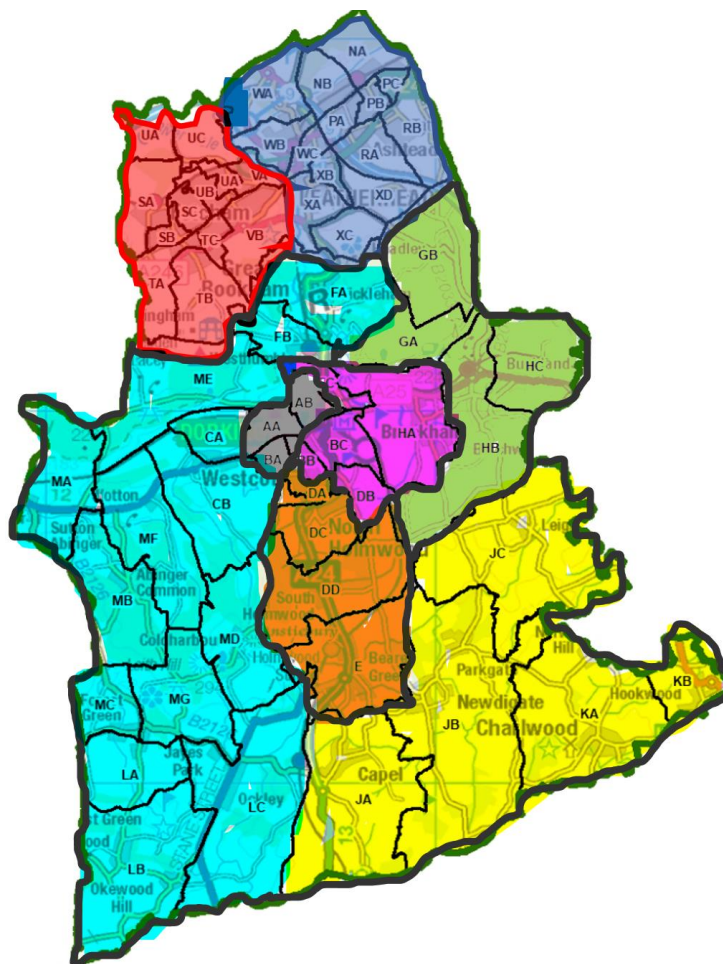
Holmwoods loses Chart Downs (DB) and gains Beare Green.

The Four Bs & Headley

Brockham, Betchworth & Buckland gains Headley & Boxhill.

Southern Villages

Capel, Leigh & Newdigate gains the former single member ward of Charlwood.



The North

The North is an altogether more challenging prospect. With the changes to the constituency boundaries in 2023, it is risked that a ward might be created of polling districts in each constituency. This may not be without precedent, but it can hardly be considered desirable.

Despite spending many hours looking at this, we are unable to arrive at a solution which protects the integrity of all the communities across the District which are inextricably linked to giving the constituency its character.

For this reason we will not be making a proposal involving the current wards of Bookham North, Bookham South, Fetcham West, Fetcham East, Leatherhead North and Leatherhead South, Ashted Village, Ashted Park and Ashted Common.

Summary

We have received representations from our members and are aware of the difficulties our own Councillors have had in trying to make this work. In the context of the North this has proved impossible.

With regards to the South, we are advocating the splitting of Mickleham, Westhumble and Pixham into Mickleham & Westhumble, which are natural bedfellows, and Pixham, which really has always had more in common with Dorking.

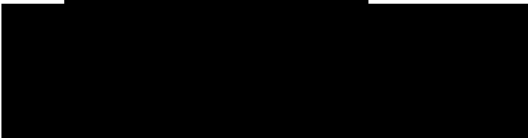
This reflects the desire of members in those areas.

It has also been expressed by our members that Headley and Boxhill, again natural bedfellows, should remain together as a community that has grown together. They also see themselves as more Dorking and not Leatherhead and it is important to make that distinction. Especially mindful of the constituency boundary changes scheduled for 2023. The new wards for the south are detailed above.

Moving to a uniformed thirteen, three- member ward structure likely favours us electorally, but it is absolutely not in the best interests of residents when operated in conjunction with electing in thirds.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Roger Jones

Chairman
Mole Valley Conservative Association

