

## Mansfield, Simon

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**From:** Clerk@brockham.org  
**Sent:** 02 December 2021 12:13  
**To:** reviews  
**Cc:** 'Councillor Karen Gargani'  
**Subject:** Boundary Commission - Mole Valley Review  
**Attachments:** 211202 BPC comment Boundary Commission final.pdf

**Categories:** Submissions, Simon

Please find attached consultation response from Brockham Parish Council on the local boundary review.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to add our viewpoint.

Thanks, Claire

**Clerk to Brockham Parish Council**

Parish Council Post Box, Village Hall, Brockham Green, Brockham, Betchworth RH3 7JJ

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Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
14th Floor  
Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
London  
SW1P 4QP

2 December 2021

Dear Sirs

**Re: Brockham Parish Council – Boundary Commission Review Submission**

I am writing on behalf of Brockham Parish Council (BPC).

Brockham is a rural village located in east Surrey in the east district of Mole Valley. The Parish Council is made up of 9 Councillors who represent a population of about 2320 residents in 1200 households.

**Introduction**

BPC has reviewed all the documentation and note that the recommendation is that Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) should have 39 District Councillors representing 13 wards with electorate of approximately 5,820 per ward. The recommendation is that each ward will have three members.

The following comments and submission from BPC refers to the eastern part of MVDC only. BPC does not have the resources to consider the whole of the District and therefore makes no recommendation for any of the existing wards to the west and south of Brockham.

**Recommendation**

BPC's recommendation is for the full parishes of Brockham, Betchworth and Buckland to remain as a two member ward i.e. HA, HB and HL (known as the 3B's). Our proposed electorate in 2027, whilst only 3,968 electors, clearly demonstrates an electoral equality with the expected ratio of electors to each District Councillor.

BPC makes this recommendation for the following reasons: -

- The Parish Council has historically been a 2 member wards.
- We believe the efficiency and effectiveness of the Parish Council will be compromised if we were split up into more wards.
- The 3B's represent a predominantly rural area which is mainly in the metropolitan Green Belt with identifiable built up areas in the centre of each village. This is distinct from the

largely built up neighbouring area of Dorking to the west.

- The 3B's engage on a regular basis with our two District Councillors and should the Boundary Commission consider various areas of Brockham. Betchworth and Buckland to be split up, i.e. between the west and southern wards this could mean BPC having to work with many District Councillors. This would be untenable, particularly given a forecast electorate of just 2500.
- We have a 'part time' Clerk who is pro-active and always working closely with the residents in the community to improve the local area. Indeed, residents approach BPC for their local issues and recognise us as their first port of call for District issues to be resolved. It would become intolerable should the work load escalate due to the proposed changes.
- We would find it time consuming and most inconvenient for the Clerk and Councillors to deal with local District issues within the Parish because there would be too many District Councillors to work with to resolve the various requests.
- We would not be able to demonstrate local democracy at our Parish level. The Parish Council is a defined, and elected, tier of local government and should not have its role and impact in the local community diluted by being conjoined with other large and more urban centres, and certainly not at their or others behest.
- The electorate is confused enough about which council provides which services and who represents them at the different tiers of local government. To include part of the parish into different District wards will not do anything to improve the electorate's engagement with local democracy.

The justification that Brockham should remain as part of the 3Bs with Betchworth and Buckland are: -

### **Community and Charity**

- Residents in Brockham, Betchworth and Buckland recognise and identify with the 3B's as the conduit for the local ties with various community groups and sporting activities within our area. These include: -

The the local horticultural society, various fitness classes, fine art society, WI, Girls Alive, Young Farmers, singing groups, Baby and Toddler Group, Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Cubs and Scouts, etc.

Local cricket teams play in Brockham and Buckland.

The Surrey Hills Adventure Company operates a range of water based and woodcraft activities at Buckland Park Lake.

The Big Field at Brockham provides a venue for a range of recreation, leisure and sporting activities including rugby, football and occasional cross-country events.

The Recreation Ground at Brockham has play areas, a cricket club and is a central point for local recreation and leisure and sporting activities and includes an external gym which is open to all residents in the three villages.

The Elizabeth Bailey field provides a small play area and children's playground to the South of the Village.

- North Downs School, operates across three sites; one in Betchworth, one in Brockham and one in Leigh. School children from Brockham, Betchworth and Buckland attend the North Downs School which is an important element joining our communities.
- Brockham Surgery is part of the Brockwood Medical Practice which serves the 3Bs as does the pharmacy located on Brockham Green.
- Brockham is served by Brockham Church, which is located adjacent to Brockham Green and includes a Memorial Garden. Betchworth Parish Council runs a burial ground which is open to Brockham residents at a preferential rate in recognition of the historical boundaries of Betchworth civil parish. St Michael's Church in Betchworth and St Mary the Virgin in Buckland are served by a part time rector who, supported by the two PCCs provides a full range of church services and support to Betchworth and Buckland.
- Betchworth Post Office, now the only post office, is located within Betchworth and used by residents from all three villages.
- Residents have easy access to various shops, restaurants and pubs (running east to west) including: -

Squires Garden Centre, All Electric, Buckland Nurseries, Buckland Deli and Gifts, The Pheasant, Buckland Park Lake, Betchworth Village Shop, The Red Lion, Hartsfield Manor, The Grumpy Mole, The Royal Oak, Brockham Village Shop, Brockham Pharmacy, Chittys Butchers and Strood Green Community Shop.

- Various local charities serve the 3Bs and have volunteers from the three villages to run them. These charities include: -

Brockham Emergency Response Team (BERT), Betchworth United Charities, Poland Trust, Mid Surrey Community fridges.

In addition, some of the charities receive annual endowments that will consider the needs of residents and accept sheltered housing requests and applications from residents in all three villages.

- Brockham Parish Council run a community Speedwatch programme with Betchworth PC.

### **Transport – Highways, Aviation and Footpaths**

- The 3Bs are located between Reigate and Dorking with the M25 to the north and Gatwick Airport located to the south.
- The A25 runs through our three villages and with a shared commuter network of country lanes and rural roads to the M25 and Gatwick so any local diversions directly affect us. We also work together to combat speeding and making our road network safer.
- The No 32 bus route, which runs between Redhill and Guildford, routes via Buckland, Betchworth and Brockham Mondays to Saturdays.
- The North Downs Railway Line runs through the 3Bs, and the three parishes are served by Betchworth railway station.
- The Surrey County Council led Active Travel initiative is to upgrade the right of way between Brockham and Betchworth to a bridleway to encourage family friendly cycling

(including travel to school) between the two parishes. There is also a longer-term objective to provide a cycle track alongside the A25 Reigate Road through the 3Bs.

- There is a network of rights of way between the 3Bs which provides local residents a choice of circular walking routes between the 3Bs which encourages use and sharing of the local amenities. The Parish Councils have been working together, investing in improving accessibility on its rights of way (Brockham and Buckland) and Betchworth is currently working a similar initiative to provide improved options across the 3Bs for all residents to enjoy.
- Owing to the geography of the villages Brockham shares many issues relating to Gatwick and Heathrow's air traffic with all residents in the three villages. Air traffic directly affects the three communities and community groups share information.

## **Environmental**

- The River Mole runs through Brockham, Betchworth and Buckland and the three Parish Councils and their residents are actively involved in ongoing local flood management managing bridge accessibility and closures in extreme weather conditions and ongoing ditch clearance and maintenance.
- The Parish Councils have shared projects underway to combat climate change and flooding. It is imperative with the amount of agricultural land in the villages and all the ditch systems which surround Brockham that we work together to help our communities.
- It is recognised that the local sewerage systems are under pressure and a joint initiative across the 3Bs to minimise the volume of surface water drainage entering the foul water network is underway.
- The Three Parish Councils are working together to improve awareness with the environment and Brockham houses the Terracycling facility at Brockham Village Hall which is shared between the three villages.

## **Operational**

- Residents identify that we have two District Councillors who know the local area and **are** able to work with BPC on local needs of the community.
- The Parish Clerks for the three villages work together and meet regularly to discuss joint issues and ensure the conduit between the 3B's is maintained as residents expect.

We recognise the electorate of BPC will be too small for a ward on our own however we believe BPC can and should all be in one ward with Betchworth and Buckland whose name should include Brockham.

## **OPTION 2**

If the Boundary Commission is unable to accept our two-member ward proposal, BPC preferred approach would be that we are adjoined with the north boundary of our ward to amalgamate Brockham, Betchworth and Buckland (3Bs) with Box Hill and Headley

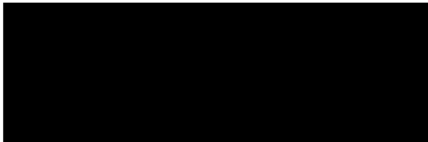
BPC make this proposal for the following reasons: -

- The proposed electorate would be 5831 making a three member ward.

- This would keep Brockham Parish in one distinct ward.
- For all the reasons stated above Brockham could remain linked with Betchworth and Buckland.
- The northern boundaries of the 3B parishes run along the brow of the North Downs and include land designated part of the internationally recognised Mole Valley Gap to Reigate Hill Escarpment Special Area of Conservation which has a UK SSSI designation.
- Land in all 3B parishes located to the north of the North Downs Railway (NDR) falls within the Surrey Hills AONB.
- Land located between the A25 Reigate Road and the NDR is currently designated Area of Great Landscape Value. Natural England recently announced it had commenced a review of the Surrey Hills AONB boundaries. There is a reasonable expectation that the AONB boundary extensions will include proposals to include Buckland Park Lake therefore linking with the 3B's parish.
- Headley already has a Parish Council and Box Hill has a very effective Neighbourhood Council.
- Box Hill and Headley already have strong community ties between the two which regard themselves as a linked community.
- Box Hill and Headley share many of the same characteristics such as their geographical placement at the top of the North Downs, a shared Church of England parish, Green Belt, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty status, poor transport sustainability (narrow roads, limited bus service), conservation land-owners (National Trust, Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust).
- Any development across Brockham, Betchworth and Buckland will impact the views from sections of Box Hill and similarly any development along the ridge will be in full view of much of the 3Bs.
- Headley is impacted when traffic diverted from the M25 as traffic routes between Leatherhead and the B2032 on Pebblehill Road.
- Both Box Hill and Headley are similarly affected by air traffic if not more impacted by overflying.
- Brockham will benefit from knowledge from Box Hill and Headley on working with the National Trust which would help Brockham and the Big Field (owned by the National Trust). Brockham has declared a climate emergency and is focused on protecting AONO and buffer zones.
- Surrey Hills AONB is seen by many as overly focused upon West Surrey – there is the potential for a larger ward comprising 3Bs, Boxhill and Headley to effect change.
- As buses do appear to be routed up Pebblehill Road between Dorking and Boxhill there could be the potential to promote a stop at Betchworth Railway station and/or elsewhere in the 3Bs.

BPC's proposal is for BPC to have as few District Councillors as possible so we can focus on matters of interest and concern to our residents with our preference to remain a two member ward but should we have to amalgamate and become part of a larger three member ward our proposal is for the whole of BPC to be adjoined with Box Hill and Headley.

Yours faithfully



Claire Minter  
Brockham Parish Clerk  
 [Clerk@brockham.org](mailto:Clerk@brockham.org)

CC Betchworth, Buckland, Headley Parish Council  
Box Hill Residents Association