



Tandridge Electoral Review Consultation 2023

Submission Prepared by Woldingham Parish Council

20 March 2023

Introduction

Beyond the need to ensure effective citizen representation through free and fair elections, local authorities must respect and enforce the following core principles: **transparency, accountability, participation and inclusion.**

Slicing and dicing communities for the sake of mere electoral equality and an arbitrarily enforced 3 representative-sized ward serves neither natural justice nor procedural justice. The principles of local representation dictate not only that people are fairly served by electoral equality, but that accountability and inclusion are served. Wards that marry communities of disparate interests and no connection, in which the voices of any one community will be drowned out by larger communities of differing interests, will not feel included nor will their representatives need to be accountable to them to be re-elected.

Thus it is encapsulated in the 2009 Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act, Schedule 2, paragraph 2 (3), that to make recommendations for District Council ward boundaries, the Local Government Boundary Review Commission of England (LGBCE) “must have regard to:

- a) the need to secure that the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of members of the district council to be elected is, **as nearly as possible**, the same in every electoral area of the council,
- b) the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and in particular— (i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable, and (ii) the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties,
- c) the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and
- d) in the case of a district council that is subject to a scheme for elections by halves or by thirds, or that has resolved to revert to being subject to such a scheme under Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (c. 28), the **desirability** of securing that each electoral area of the district council returns an appropriate number of members of the council.”

The Woldingham Parish Council note the difficulty of balancing these requirements and thus the language rests on **desirability** of delivering equal numbers of Councillors per ward and as nearly as possible the same ratio of electors to the number of Councillors in each ward of the District. This is not language absolute. And the LGBCE's own technical guidance states that the three-Councillor objective should be met "as far as is practicable". The 1998 Tandridge Electoral review had complete freedom to determine the ward pattern in the District and after careful deliberation and evidence, created the ward pattern which is currently under review. We note that little has changed in the district since that time, and certainly little has changed for Woldingham. Electoral equality in the District remains high, with wards all within roughly 10% of required levels of representation.

We submit that in a geographically dispersed District with much of the population concentrated in a very small geographic area of the Northwest of the District, some variability of ward size must be retained in order to fulfill the second and third statutory requirements: reflecting identities and interests of local communities and delivering effective and convenient local government.

Flawed District Briefing and District Consultation Process

The Parish Council have been reaching out to other Parish Councils and to District Councillors in other wards as well as to constituents in the Parish. We believe the electoral cycle vote to have been taken without full understanding of the implications of the chosen electoral cycle on the size and combination of populations in a district ward.

The District Councillors we have spoken to were unaware of the criteria beyond the ward Councillor numbers and were not briefed about these other criteria in the 2009 Act nor the difficulty of achieving them. An FOI request has been answered by Tandridge District Council ("TDC") demonstrating that no information was shared with the District Councillors on the core legal requirements other than the number of Councillors required by ward. And there was no discussion about the difficulty and tradeoffs required to achieve such wards.

The public consultation on electoral arrangements was also woefully insufficient. The Woldingham Parish Council were unaware of the public consultation that TDC undertook on the electoral cycle and we have yet to uncover a single Parish Council that was aware of it.

In addition, only 217 people in the District (a 0.3% response rate of the current 65,461 electors) responded to this poorly communicated consultation, evidencing the vast lack of awareness. The consultation also did not explain the implications of electoral cycle change, something which would have vastly influenced both the outcome and the participation.

Many Parish Councils, District Councillors and residents we spoke with now believe changing the ward pattern for the sake of the electoral cycle weakens the democratic process more than it strengthens it. The political cycle should be considered in light of the importance of ward needs, rather than the reverse. Even some of the political parties submitting a suggested map to the LGBCE in this process told us they have done so because they believe they have been directed to purely make the numbers work as 3 Councillor wards. They acknowledge that the maps take absolutely no other criteria into account.

If we cannot achieve variable ward patterns in this process, we have asked our District Councillor to commence the process to bring this back to a vote of the full Council, and we hope to have a chance in a public forum to discuss these issues more fully.

We note that there is precedent for such a reconsideration, as Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) recently faced much the same issue. TWBC asked the LGBCE to suspend the consultation and they consulted and considered anew.

These are difficult issues and as Tandridge District Council was last reviewed 25 years ago, there is no collective knowledge about the difficulty of delivering larger wards given the very distinct and often geographically and topographically disparate communities within the District.

I. Woldingham Parish Council Position

Woldingham Parish Council has considered the criteria within the 2009 Local Democracy Act and the consultation request from the LGBCE. We have also surveyed our community and have heard from a statistically significant 15% of all electors.

The case for substantial changes to the existing ward boundaries is not supported as:

1. Little has changed in Tandridge District since the Report on the Final Recommendations on the Electoral Arrangement for Tandridge in Surrey was completed in 1998;
2. There is currently only one ward that is more than 10% above the average electoral ratio and only two projected in 2028, and so there are no extreme electoral imbalances to address; and
3. The second and third criteria of the 2009 Local Democracy Act would in many instances not be fulfilled.

We submit the current status of Woldingham be retained **as a single Councillor ward**, recognising the history and character and unique geography and topography of the Village, rather than the laboured combinations of current wards that would be required to redraw the electoral map into a 3-Councillor ward.

The following demonstrates the evidentiary basis for this.

A. Electoral equality

Based on projections of the electorate in 2028 and the finding that TDC should have 42 Councillors, the average electorate for all TDC wards is 1692 electors per Councillor. On the same basis, Woldingham has a projection of 1710 electors. Therefore, retaining the status quo of Woldingham as a single Councillor ward achieves almost perfect electoral equality (+1%). Any possible proposed combination with other parishes worsens electoral equality.

B. The Local Community Identity

1. History

Although there was a settlement in Woldingham in Saxon times, the earliest written reference comes in the Domesday Book where the land was bequeathed by William the Conqueror to one of his knights, Richard of Tonbridge. The village retained an agricultural base centered on St Agatha's Church until the opening of the railway line in 1884. This brought Woldingham into easy reach of London and whilst there was a spurt in housing development, the Village retained its distinct character, separated from surrounding

communities by farmland or other open spaces and steep hills along all its boundaries, a separation which remains today. Woldingham is in the Green Belt, part of it is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the village contains Sites of Special Scientific Interest, attributes which Woldingham works to protect. Whilst the number of houses has increased, the centre of the Village has remained unchanged, reflecting a distinct feel to Woldingham that sets it apart. Today Woldingham is still rooted in the late 19th century sensitive design of William Gilford, who purchased the entire parish and laid out a simple infrastructure following the old field tracks and boundaries. He imposed covenants to control development and preserve the spacious leafy character of the village. These covenants shaped and continue to preserve this unique village evolving within its Victorian designed framework.

2. Identity

Woldingham has a strong sense of identity, evident in a myriad of organisations and governing documents that are designed to protect and serve the community. Notably, the community spends a great deal of time protecting its special character and the Green Belt and AONB within which it sits. When The Woldingham Parish Council wrote the Woldingham Neighbourhood Plan (passed by 85% of the referendum), we did extensive community research on the priorities of the community. Protecting the special character of the village and protecting the Green Belt were by far the top priorities expressed and these priorities remain critical today.

Last week the Woldingham Parish Council surveyed residents online over the course of 4 days. A very statistically significant 15% of the electoral population responded to the survey and 97% stated they prefer Woldingham to remain an individual ward. The reasons given mirror the reasons we reflect in this document.

Woldingham's distinct identity is reflected in the large number of activities, documents and communication tools dedicated to Woldingham.

Documents and Sites Dedicated to Woldingham

Perhaps unique amongst its peers in the District, Woldingham has worked hard for decades to ensure it has planning and supplementary planning documents to protect and maintain its unique character and history.

Planning and supplementary Planning Documents:

- The Woldingham Neighbourhood Plan was researched and written from 2013-2016 and launched in 2016. Hundreds of community members participated in working groups and focus groups to support it. And 50% of all households in Woldingham responded to the survey on priorities and needs.
- Woldingham Village Design Statement, adopted by TDC in 2005
- Woldingham Character Assessment, adopted by TDC in 2011
- Woldingham Village Design Guide, adopted by TDC in 2011

Village Communications

- Woldingham Village Magazine, established April 1928
- Woldingham website, run by the Parish Council but covering all life in the village
- A wide variety of local organisation websites, linked to from Woldingham.com

Community Groups reflecting Woldingham Identity

Paragraph 4.41 of the Technical Guide also refers to activities of local voluntary organisations. Woldingham has a plethora of community groups dedicated to serving it which exist purely for the welfare and needs of Woldingham. These include:

- Woldingham Association – a 120-year old body dedicated to preserving the essential character of Woldingham and promoting the interests of its residents
- Woldingham History Society – custodian of many valuable records and documents about the Village
- Woldingham Horticultural Society – maintains flower beds in the Village and holds lectures and an annual competition
- Woldingham Players – Performances and Play Readings
- Woldingham Panto - For 75 years has performed the annual Village panto
- Woldingham Scouts/Guides/Cubs/Rainbows/Brownies/Beavers – involving Woldingham's next generation
- Woldingham Tennis/Cricket/Badminton Clubs – Promoting sport in the Village with local facilities
- Woldingham 123 club – Baby and Toddler Group
- The Woldingham Garden Village Residents Association and the Woldingham Peace Centre Charity - established just after WWII to protect and promote the historic Peace Hall monument to soldiers that died in the war and to protect and promote this former hilltop army camp community in Woldingham
- #viralkindnesswoldingham - community support during the pandemic
- Keeping Woldingham Safe - community safety group
- Woldingham Neighbourhood Watch - community safety group
- Woldingham Welcomes - now annual welcome fair to the village ongoing at least bi-annually for decades
- Meridian Ladies Group
- Woldingham Writers Group
- Woldingham Women in Fellowship

3. Transport

While Woldingham is serviced by train connecting it to London (Victoria and London Bridge) to the North and Oxted and East Grinstead to the South, this is largely a commuter service. Further, most households must drive to access the train station, given the geographic spread of the village and the lack of pavements. There is also a very limited bus connection to Caterham.

Households in Woldingham tend to own at least one car, necessitated by the lack of services and the topography. Non-commuter journeys in and out of Woldingham are therefore by private car. Due to the hilly nature of the Woldingham area, many of the roads in and out of the village are quite narrow with some single car width at multiple points. Direct links to many other villages are therefore difficult to navigate. The limited number of good roads through the hills surrounding Woldingham are another reason Woldingham has developed as a very integral community, with few links outside.

There is only one easy and convenient road to exit and enter Woldingham that does not experience constrained width and problems during inclement weather: the Woldingham Road, which leads to Wapses Lodge roundabout, although even this, given Woldingham's hill and valley topography, became flooded twice in the last decade, largely cutting off Woldingham until the flooding subsided.

4. Facilities and Interests

Although predominantly a rural community, Woldingham is well served by facilities in the Village. These include:

- Two C of E churches and a graveyard – St Agatha's and St Paul's
- Two Village Halls – Village Hall in the centre of the Village and the Peace Hall in the Garden Village area of Village
- Post Office and well-stocked village store
- Several other local businesses – vehicle maintenance, beauty salon, estate agent, Saddlery and country pursuits, gardening centre with cafe
- Woldingham Village Social Club, serving the community since 1920
- Woldingham and North Downs Golf Clubs – village golf courses with restaurants and bars
- The Craigmyle Glebe - an endowed recreation area for sports, events, dog walking

Woldingham residents must travel outside the village boundaries for major shopping needs, but these are only partly met by the adjoining districts. The majority of shopping needs are fulfilled by online shopping. There are supermarkets, restaurants and specialist shops in Warlingham, Caterham and Oxted, although residents need to travel much further outside the borough including nearby Kent, Croydon, Bluewater and even Central London to get a wider availability of offerings.

Unlike some wards, residents do not have access to a GP, vet or dentist and travel further to a wide variety of towns in the district for these services. No one centre serves Woldingham.

The long list of local groups and facilities is testament to the deep sense of community and internal engagement amongst the residents of Woldingham. Alongside this is the fact that Woldingham is a rural community with a keen sense of enjoyment from the beautiful surroundings in which Woldingham is set. The large woodland areas of Marden Park and Great Church Wood, along with countless walking paths on every side of and through the village, provide ample space for dog walkers and ramblers alike. Adjacent to the North Downs Way, longer walks are possible and as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations the Woldingham scout group marked out a 23 km route to match the Parish Boundaries, a route almost entirely in open countryside.

5. Boundaries

Because of the rural nature of the Village and the protection afforded from Green Belt status, none of the Woldingham Parish Boundaries touch a built up area. The boundaries are therefore not mere lines on a map but really a reflection of Woldingham, a community in its own right, with its own character and a sense of self-reliance and self-containment.

C. Effective and Convenient Local Government

The transport routes in and out of Woldingham limit the ease of a Councillor moving from ward to ward, or indeed 3 District Councillors coming into the Ward regularly.

The sheer number of Woldingham community groups and the high focus Woldingham places on planning and protection of the Woldingham character and the Green Belt, as evidenced by the many detailed planning and supplementary planning documents in Woldingham, require detailed and specific knowledge and keep a District Councillor incredibly busy. Adding to that workload with additional Parishes to visit would be extremely burdensome.

D. Summary

In summary, Woldingham meets electoral equality almost perfectly, and to merge it with other wards would deliver less electoral equality in the larger ward. It has an integral and separate identity from other villages and towns around it, driven by geography, topography, poor transport links, history and the unique character and needs of the village and its inhabitants. The lack of good roads, the size of the ward itself, the number of groups and the issues it manages would place a high burden on additional Councillors needing to familiarise themselves with the many issues and planning documents and engage with the village. The burden on one Councillor serving it is already high, adding to the remit is prohibitive.

II. Options to Combine with Other Wards

Options for 3 Councillor ward

Given TDC's vote to consolidate wards so that each ward should be represented, as far as is possible, by 3 Councillors, the Parish Council has reviewed the potential patterns of wards covering all geographical areas that are contiguous with the Woldingham Parish boundary. For the reasons outlined above, it remains our view that all options are suboptimal – both for Woldingham and for neighbouring Parishes – and the best option is to retain a single Councillor for Woldingham.

That said, we have considered the possible scenarios of combining with adjacent wards and analysed the strengths and weaknesses of ward combinations with adjacent parishes.

Option 1: Woldingham is joined with the Parishes of Chelsham and Farleigh, Tatsfield, and Titsey

This would be the most appropriate option, should we have to become a 3 Councillor ward, although we cannot comment on the preferences or interests of the other communities. It most closely matches the indicators used to measure effective and convenient local government and from a Woldingham perspective it reflects a high-level commonality of interests and concerns across the population. This needs to be considered against a lower level of electoral equality.

We note that 34% of Woldingham Electors felt affinity for warding this way, the highest affinity with any possible combined ward options.

This option would create a new ward covering all of North East Tandridge of approximately 7 miles in length of largely self-contained communities with similar rural profiles. The boundary of the ward would match existing parish boundaries. We recognise that this would break an existing 3 Councillor ward that has existed since the last boundary review, but it would also mean that the areas have much greater commonality on rural matters.

With a predicted population of 4,110 across the Parishes in 2028, this would mean a variance of +19% for the new ward.

Under this revised configuration, the total population for the other Parishes north of the M25 (Caterham, Caterham Valley, Whyteleafe and Chaldon) would be just under 30,000 with a variance of 2% (assuming 18 Councillors), the best possible combination of the map for them, and for the Parishes south of the M25 would be 37,000 with a variance of -5% (assuming 21 Councillors). As warding with equality is a challenge in TDC, this could be the one ward which is least well matched.

Parish Cooperation

Woldingham already shares snow gritting services with Tatsfield and Titsey. We jointly purchased a gritter which we store at Warren Barn Farm in Woldingham, and we buy and store our grit together each winter.

Transport

Transport links between Woldingham and these Parishes are through Slines Oak Road and the Ridge, which provide direct access by car. Although geographically large, we note that it is roughly 11 minutes' drive from the Tatsfield Parish meeting to the Woldingham Parish meeting and roughly 11 minutes' drive from the Woldingham Parish meeting to the Chelsham and Farleigh Parish meeting. Large areas of these parishes are farmland, without meeting places for communities and Councillors. These areas form the Northeastern rural wards of the Tandridge District. They share rural and village characteristics and concern for Green Belt issues.

Facilities

Tatsfield - Strong art group with annual art fairs in the Village Hall - advertised on the Woldingham FaceBook community page and enjoyed by Woldingham residents. Titsey - Woldingham residents regularly visit Titsey Woods to access walking routes.

Chelsham & Farleigh - pubs regularly visited by Woldingham residents.

Boundaries

Woldingham directly borders Chelsham & Farleigh by road and some of the rambling routes used by Woldingham residents cross both Woldingham and Chelsham and Farleigh. Tatsfield & Titsey are accessed through C&F or by driving in the Ridge, when for only an instant, unbeknownst to the driver, is one out of either Parish.

Option 2: Woldingham is joined with Oxted North

This would be the Council's second option if forced to accept a 3 Councillor ward – it matches the indicators used to measure effective and convenient local government and it reflects the closest community interests through its transport and community links when compared with any other options that are entirely within the boundaries of TDC.

32% of Woldingham electors felt affinity with Oxted North as a ward, the second most preferred option in our survey.

This option would create a new ward covering Woldingham and the current Parish ward of Oxted North. At 9,500 inhabitants, Oxted is already too large to be a single electoral ward and would need to be split under any configuration.

Despite the physical boundary of the Ridge at the south of the parish of Woldingham and the M25, transport and road links and facilities links with Woldingham are greatest with Oxted. It is 3 minutes by train and has two direct road connections, although both are only fit for vehicles less than 6ft 6ins wide plus one slightly longer route fit for all vehicles. There would be no further requirement to split any other of the surrounding parishes. Where exactly the boundary would lie to create electoral equality is a matter for the LGBCE as merging with the North Oxted ward as it stands would not create electoral equality.

However, there are options to reduce the variance, for example by moving the ward boundary within Oxted further to the north (for example along Godstone Road / East Hill) and Tandridge Parish could move with Godstone Parish, although this would have a knock on effect on the south of the district.

Under this revised configuration, the total population for the other Parishes north of the M25 (excluding Tatsfield and Titsey, which would likely join with Limpsfield) would be just under 30,500 with a variance of 0% (assuming 18 Councillors) and for the Parishes south of the M25 (excluding Oxted North) would be 34,500 with a variance of 3% (assuming 21 Councillors).

Transport

Oxted North is accessible via train from Woldingham to Oxted. However the station at Woldingham is 1 mile from the village centre, compared to being in the middle of Oxted town. Residents predominantly drive to Oxted. Road links are via Tandridge Hill Lane and Chalkpit Lane, both roads are extremely narrow and only fit for vehicles less than 6ft 6ins wide. Chalkpit Lane is also used by large quarry lorries which often block the road.

Facilities

Residents of Woldingham visit Oxted North regularly for shopping, entertainment, education (Oxted School) and leisure facilities.

Interests

Woldingham Parish Council has for years worked closely with Oxted North Parish & District Councillors on the Oxted Quarry issues at our shared boundary and also on footpath issues where Oxted North Parish meets Woldingham Parish.

Boundaries

Direct access to Oxted North via car from The Ridge via Chalkpit lane and Tandridge Hill Lane. Bridle tracks and walking routes connect the two Wards.

Other options considered and refuted:

Option 3: Woldingham is joined with Warlingham West

We understand that some proposals suggest that Woldingham be merged with the Warlingham West ward. Whilst this would retain the North Western part of Tandridge in its current format, the links in terms of interests and identity are non-existent.

We further note that currently the Northwest of Tandridge (excluding Warlingham East and Chelsham and Farleigh and Woldingham), has 15 Councillors and a 2028 electoral population of 25,756, which would deliver excellent electoral equality at only +1.48% of the average. Adding Woldingham to the population skews the average dramatically outside the bounds of acceptability.

Warlingham West is an urbanised area which has no community links with rural Woldingham. It has little Greenbelt and what it has is under threat of development. The community issues and needs it faces, though of course worthy, have little or nothing in common with Woldingham. The two communities have no history of shared issues and activities.

There are no public transport links between the wards, the only road between the two electoral areas is a single track and the least used of any of the Woldingham boundary roads. Woldingham residents feel little affinity with Warlingham West (19%) and the poor road links ensure it is less accessed.

Transport

No public transport between Wards, one poor and little used road, Bug Hill.

Boundaries

Woldingham borders Warlingham West along Bug Hill.

Effective and Convenient Local Government

Movement between Warlingham West and Woldingham is difficult, making transit between the communities difficult without driving a long way out of the way. Even from Wapses Lodge roundabout, by entering Whyteleafe Ward, the road up to Warlingham West, Succombs Hill, is a challenging and hair-raising drive. In addition, Ward issues are completely different, simply increasing the burden of all Councillors serving the area.

Option 4: Woldingham is joined with Harestone (Caterham Valley)

This would retain the North East of Tandridge in its current format. However, with the exception of the Tillingdown estate, which looks towards Caterham, there are no links in terms of interests and identity with Harestone ward and it is not possible to access the ward at all from Woldingham except along a public footpath which is inaccessible except in dry weather or by travelling into Caterham and back out again. There is no direct link to Harestone via roads. This makes efficient and effective government difficult.

Similar to the option of combining with Warlingham West, the Northeast of Tandridge (excluding Warlingham East and Chelsham and Farleigh and Woldingham), has 15 Councillors and a 2028 electoral population of 25,756, which would deliver excellent electoral equality at only +1.48% of the average. Adding Woldingham to the population skews the average dramatically outside the bounds of acceptability.

Only 2.7% of the Woldingham electorate felt any affinity with Caterham.

Transport

There is one little used bus between Woldingham and Harestone that runs twice daily. It is not practicable for Woldingham residents or Councillors. The only direct road access is for the Woldingham Tillingdown Lane residents, a gated community of a few houses.

Boundaries

Woldingham borders Harestone through Tillingdown Lane, which is inaccessible through Woldingham as it is the exit road for the Tillingdown estate residents.

Option 5: Woldingham is joined with Caterham town / Caterham Valley

This would require a new pattern of wards across Caterham to accommodate Woldingham. Whilst the Boundary Commission may determine a pattern that delivers the acceptable levels of electors in each ward, this would be at the expense of good governance particularly for Caterham, as it would cut across existing long-standing boundaries within Caterham, and it would not reflect shared interests and identities as the two areas have very different profiles. The A22 is a natural barrier between Woldingham and Caterham.

Caterham is a typical town which has no community links with rural Woldingham. Caterham town is not in the Green Belt and we are not sharing any services or working jointly on any issues. Similar to the above arguments, excluding Woldingham from this mix enables the LGBCE to create wards of much better electoral equality.

Only 2.7% of the Woldingham electorate felt any affinity with Caterham.

Option 6: Woldingham is joined with Whyteleafe

The profile of Whyteleafe is entirely different to that of Woldingham with different housing needs and urban / rural profile. Neither area is a centre or focal point for the other, therefore the governance would be difficult. The Parishes have no shared work.

Transport

There is a direct train line to Whyteleafe (Upper Warlingham) from Woldingham

Boundaries

Woldingham borders Whyteleafe at Wapses Lodge roundabout.

Option 7: Woldingham is joined with Godstone

The boundaries of Godstone ward already share the same well-established boundaries as Godstone Parish Council which is represented by 3 District Councillors. There would be no benefit in bringing the Parishes together into one ward, nor will it be sustainable to do so from a geographic point of view. The Parishes do not interact. In addition, it would not deliver electoral equality.

Transport

There are no direct transport links to Godstone.

Boundaries

Woldingham borders Godstone through Flower Lane which is, in many places, a single track road and occasionally impassable when flooded.

III. Conclusion

Why Woldingham should remain a single Councillor ward.

The 1998 Boundary Review concluded that even though it was under-represented Woldingham should be a single Councillor ward because it was isolated, centred around Woldingham village and had no compelling links with other areas.

Figure 4 of the 1998 Boundary Review shows that Woldingham ward had a 19% variance from average in 1997 and a 13% variance projected in 2022. The comparable figures today show a 2% variance in 2022 which is projected to fall to 1% in 2028. In other words, there is currently no imbalance in Woldingham ward to address, and so the reasons that applied in the 1998 Boundary Review for a single Councillor ward in Woldingham are even stronger today. Little has changed since then due to the durable and long-lasting factors that underpin the isolation and absence of natural links that existed then, that exist now and that will exist in the future.

Furthermore, we consider that the single Councillor ward has been successful for Woldingham and that having an election every four years has not prevented engagement with democracy or collective representation to the local authority. Indeed, a single ward Councillor has ensured that the focus of the ward Councillor is on communicating the needs and priorities of Woldingham ward residents to Tandridge District Council.

In addition, both residents and the ward Councillor are able to readily participate in activities throughout Woldingham ward because the ward is coherent and navigable. This also makes for a manageable workload for our ward Councillor which is very important and which none of the other combinations with Woldingham allow. All of this is consistent with effective and efficient government.

Woldingham delivers near perfect electoral equality as a single Councillor Ward. It is a demonstrably self-contained and distinct community with few or no clear links and interests in common with surrounding communities. The topography and geography of the village limit the physical links to surrounding areas, diminishing effective and efficient local government in any larger ward combination.

The large number of local and supplementary planning documents add to the burden of Councillors serving the ward. Combining such a different and high intensity workload with other wards with their consequent workloads would pose an undue burden on multiple Councillors. Further, other ward combinations across the District reduce electoral equality.

And finally, 97% of Woldingham electors have expressed that they find Woldingham's interests and needs so different from neighbouring wards that they would not feel democratically represented when combined with other, particularly other more urban, wards.

In short, after consultation with residents, the Woldingham Parish Council concludes that as the desirability to deliver 3 Councillor wards as far as is practicable cannot be met with reference to all 3 criteria of the 2009 Local Democracy Act, Woldingham should remain as a single Councillor ward.

Tandridge District Council

Personal Details:

Name: Deborah Sherry

E-mail:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Organisation Name: Woldingham Parish Council

Comment text:

Please find attached the Woldingham Parish Council submission for the 2023 Tandridge Electoral Review of ward boundaries. Best regards Deborah Sherry Chairman Woldingham Parish Council

Uploaded Documents:

Download (https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1679329307_Woldingham+Boundary+Review+Submission+20+March+2023+final.pdf)