

Surrey

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Comment text:

Related subject: Hersham Division within Surrey County Council. To be kept intact

I think the boundary for the Hersham Division should remain unchanged, with the exception of ward HC which could move to Cobham and Downside. This ward has 40 voters.

Hersham Division area currently encloses the following ward codes: MA, MB, MC, AC, OD, PD AND HC. However since the A3 was rerouted in the 1960s, the ward HC has been isolated from the rest of Hersham and it makes sense to put it with Cobham. Then the south boundary becomes the A3 road.

Hersham has clear geographic and locality boundaries:

to the South it is defined by the A3 trunk road

to the East is defined by the River Mole which itself is bounded by extensive Green Belt including golf courses.

to the North the boundary is the railway;

to the West its boundary is Seven Hills Road. To the western side of this road is an enclosed, security-gated and exclusive private estate of mansions known as St George's Hill, with no public access.

This area is also known as the Hersham Settlement area. It is predominantly the same as the St Peter's Hersham Church of England Parish boundary. This well-defined community is currently represented using these boundaries for Hersham Division on Surrey County Council. It fulfils the commissioners' primary guidance with regard to keeping community ties and geographic boundaries.

Please do not look to the Elmbridge Borough Council Hersham Village boundary for precedent. The last Local Government Boundary Change for Elmbridge has been an unmitigated disaster for the settlement area of Hersham. This ignored the fundamental aims and guidelines of the Commission in that it did not keep the settlement area as a single unit but fragmented it into 5 parts with HC, PD, OD and AC being allocated to neighbouring areas.

PD is primarily Whiteley Village retirement estate, which has always looked to Hersham Village as its community.

But the biggest disaster has been to include AC in with Esher. This has not worked well. I give some examples: these are not trivial but have serious impacts.

1. In the recent Design Code consultations with Elmbridge, AC was included within the design discussions for Esher. It was pointed out that Elmbridge ward boundaries were based solely on elector numbers, whereas a design code should be based on our settlement area, ie people, geography and the built environment, but this was refused. The result will be that some residents living within 100m of the Hersham Village shopping centre are covered by Esher ward councillors and design code discussions whilst others on the same road are covered by Hersham Village ward councillors and design code discussions. Bear in mind also that any building development within the area AC is publicised in Esher Ward and not Hersham Village Ward. The CIL payments (community infrastructure levy) are given to Esher when they should be spent in the settlement of Hersham. The reality is that Longmore Estate (most of AC) , but especially the Old Esher Road area to the south of the main road, both fall in a no-mans-land.

2. One iteration of 2017/8 Parliamentary Boundary Review (which was not implemented), proposed splitting Hersham Settlement area into two constituencies, along the east-west dual carriageway that bisects the area. This included the part of Ward AC which is south of the dual carriageway being in a different constituency to the rest of the village centre MA ward. 2 MPs in the centre of our village! Two roads having two MPs: Mole Road (AC and MA interface) and Westcar Lane (MA and OD interface). Daft, it's true, but it got all the way through to a final consultation, before the whole exercise was dropped and recently restarted in 2022.

3. The current Parliamentary Boundary Consultation 2022 proposes the use the C of E parish/Hersham Settlement area/current Elmbridge Division Boundary. Thank goodness!

4. There is only one road across this boundary that links Hersham to Esher, although it accounts for approx half of the boundary length.

It makes no sense to put ward AC into Esher Division, so please do not consider this if others put the suggestion forward.

I therefore request that the commissioners keep Hersham Division intact and allow this community to be continue to be represented by a single county councillor.

Attached Documents:

None attached