

# Surrey

## Personal Details:

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## Comment text:

This is from Nick Darby, though I am using my family email address, hence may appear as if from my wife.

Please see below my submission in respect of the review for the Dittons. I am the County Councillor for this area. I am sending this in that capacity, and as mentioned at the end, also as a member of the Thames Ditton and Weston Green Residents Association.

### The Dittons

Thames Ditton and Long Ditton are closely linked, the name itself being a good indication. They are mentioned in the Domesday Book along with Weston Green. The intention to split them is artificial.

### Geography

There is a particularly artificial divide between Thames Ditton and Molesey, namely Hampton Court Way from Embercourt roundabout up towards Hampton Court. This road has a 40mph limit, is wide, arguably faster than it should be, prone to accidents, also prone to gridlock during commuting times also any time there are events in Esher (eg racing at Sandown), Hampton Court (eg the Flower Show) and stretching as far as Twickenham (eg Rugby and music events at Twickenham). These are examples of a significant divide and lack of community, not natural boundaries.

To this I would add the cross-over of the 2 sections of Summer Road, with its no right turn, from Summer Road, and similar across Hampton

Court Way into Summer Road pushing vehicles up to the Embercourt roundabout. These changes were made 20+ years ago following accidents and at least one fatality.

On the other hand Portsmouth Road which crosses the Dittons is narrower, not prone to gridlock, and more naturally provides crossings at Angel Road, Claygate Lane, and Thorkhill Road for traffic, the latter with lights. towards Thames Ditton, also to Long Ditton, There is the junction with St Leonards Road, also 2 with Giggs Hill Road. The lights lead to the "Rec" in Long Ditton, also the Long Ditton Village Hall. Thames Ditton itself leads some way south at the Angel Road, Claygate Lane, and Thorkhill Road junctions, the latter also to the Ferry Lane cul-de-sac. The Angel Pub is by the Angel Road junction, well frequented by both communities. As further history, the river Rythe passes under Angel Road at various points , one of those close to its junction with Thorkhill Road, then at the back of the Angel, before meandering to the east, then going under Portsmouth Road at Winters Bridge, and into the Thames along the side of Ferry Road.

### Communities

By reason of the above it is fair to say there is a real sense of Community within the Dittons. There are 2 Residents Associations, the Thames Ditton and Weston Green Residents Association, and the Long Ditton Residents Association. As the Divisional Member for the Dittons I attend "Exec" and open meetings of both, work well with both sets of Elmbridge ward members of the various political groups, and write articles, as well as dealing with the usual resident queries for all parts of both areas. I am therefore well known in both areas, this following on from my predecessor.

On specific items, both areas were involved with the Local Plan submissions for Green Belt retention, this within Long Ditton, though highly relevant to Thames Ditton and Weston Green as well. Also relevant is the recent application for Village Green status for a well used recreational area used by many, not far from the border of Long Ditton. The well used Long Ditton Village Hall is available to and close by all.

In no case can the same or close to it be said to exist for Molesey - At best there is little in common between the Dittons and Molesey, no joint meetings, nor liaison with ward Councillors, certainly at County level. As examples I give the efforts to prevent Green Belt release, this hugely affecting the Dittons as a whole, but not Molesey. In the case of the Village Green application Thames Ditton & Weston Green Residents Associatiob (along with a significant number of individuals) contributed to the significant costs involved.

Weston Green is and remains a vital part of the local community, evidenced by the name of the Residents Association. Weston Green Road extends from Thames Ditton Station, across Hampton Court Way, emphasising the historical connection. Similarly, many of the houses in this area were part of the Speer estate, which included all of the land which now forms Esher College. To this I would add Speer Road. Please also note the separate commentary we have provided in relation to Weston Green, to highlight the connection we have.

Also in relation to the overall Community, it is right to mention both the Dittons Scouts and the Dittons Fair. The former is based at \*the Shack" with its surrounding space off Claygate Lane They are almost on the Boundary of Long Ditton with Tmes Ditton next to the popular and we'll used Model Railway.

The Dittons Scouts hold an annual Armistice Day celebration and parade at the Memorial on Giggs Hill Green, accompanied by Wrath laying.

The Dittons Fair takes place annually on a May Sunday on Giggs Hill Green, well attended with many stalls, entertainment and catering. This event has taken place over many years.

#### Local Authority business

By reason of my comments above I believe these demonstrate the significant advantages in Thames Ditton and Long Ditton working together in pursuit of common interests, significant disadvantages in not doing so. Any divide would serve no useful purpose (previous attempt at the same thing merely repeating earlier failure), indeed very much to the contrary. I am not aware of any benefit in making change so far as the number of electors is concerned. the electoral numbers for the Division are not improved, indeed to the contrary.

It is here right to mention the prior meeting/discussion between various of the local Surrey Divisional Members before the Boundary Commissioners recent report was published. This considered boundaries and voter numbers, suggesting only minor changes to the Dittons, on the Boundary with Hinchley Wood.

My comments in the previous paragraph perhaps illustrate the lack of cohesion or willingness of Molesey to consider joint interests. The discussion I mention in the previous section, as I have said, did consider various tweaks to the boundaries of the Dittons, in my view reflecting a sensible view and consideration of what might be varied. Overall therefore, the change proposed to the Dittons would be an immense backward step, and serving no useful purpose, indeed significant damage. I speak for both the Thames Ditton and Weston Green Residents Association, and the Long Ditton Residents Association. You will no doubt hear from them and others. In general terms, I also support the earlier submission by Surrey County Council.

And finally, on a very personal note it has been an enormous pleasure over the last 6+ years to serve the communities of Thames Ditton, Weston Green and Long Ditton, to listen to residents, to try to solve any issues, to get to know many. It would be a tragedy if the proposed changes were to be approved..

Nick Darby

Surrey County Councillor for the Dittons, and Member of the Thames Ditton and Weston Green Residents Association

## Attached Documents:

*None attached*