

Response to Chesterfield Boundary Commission draft proposals. By Cllr Paul Holmes and
Chesterfield Liberal Democrats.

Introduction

Boundary Commissions always have a difficult job to do in balancing the need for electoral equity (in this case a democratic balance of 2,105 voters per Cllr), with creating coherent Wards with a sense of community and rational boundaries such as river, canal, rail, road, parks and so on. It is never possible to do this entirely and anomalies and compromises will always be necessitated by the electoral numbers.

In this case we feel that the Boundary Commission have, overall, produced a very coherent and balanced set of proposals and have improved on last time around in 1998/9, when some very strange splits were produced. This time for example the Commission proposals eliminate:

- a) The entirely artificial divide that was previously created in Walton Ward by splitting Somersby Avenue and associated Streets and Closes between Walton and West Wards.
- b) Similarly, the very artificial split in Boythorpe, which saw streets such as Hunloke Avenue, Hunloke Crescent and Boythorpe Road divided 'down the middle' between Holmebrook Ward and Rother Ward, has gone. The whole Boythorpe area is now one cohesive part of the proposed new Brampton Ward.
- c) The strange dividing line between Rother Ward and Hasland Ward has been removed reuniting the Derby Road community into one area (Rother) instead of creating an entirely spurious link to Hasland. Hasland in reality is entirely separated from the Derby Road/Rother area (and vice versa) by the Midland Mainline Railway.
- d) A coherent Dunston Ward has been retained with some 'tidying up' of the anomaly around Racecourse and Occupation Roads where part was split between Dunston/Moor Wards. Likewise, the anomaly of the 'newish' Highgrove/St Chad's area being in Moor instead of Dunston has been removed.
- d) On a larger scale the creation of an enlarged Linacre Ward with a clear 'natural' boundary of the B6150 Loundsley Green Road plus the B6051 Newbold Road, makes for a much more coherent Ward. The polling district of the former Loundsley Green Ward, which was on the 'Linacre' side of Loundsley Green Road had been separated from the Linacre area by an artificial line, drawn up the middle of the entire length of Linacre Road. Houses on one side were supposedly in Loundsley Green -despite being entirely separated from that area by a very busy major road, the B6150. Yet houses a couple of yards across the estate road, Linacre Road, were in Linacre despite their only local shops, facilities and primary school being just over the estate road, supposedly in Loundsley Green!
- d) In exactly the same way the elimination of the entirely imaginary boundary line running down the centre of Cuttholme Road and the extension of West Ward across that road and up to the natural boundary of the Holme Brook, means that an artificial division of that estate is removed. The estate shops and community centre (former church) were for

example previously supposedly in one Ward (Loundsley Green) in the half of the estate on one side of Cuttholme Road but are now to be in one unified area instead. The Holme Brook, Old Hall Road and the River Hipper and associated Park areas all provide clear cut boundaries for the communities making up West Ward -with North East Derbyshire of course making an unmoveable boundary on the other side of the Ward.

e) In the Whittington area we were pleased to see the Commission recommend the creation of a single Whittington Ward as that area shares schools, road links, Park, Community Groups, Church and much of its history in common. The existing dividing line between Old and New Whittington Wards already in fact includes a portion of Old Whittington in New Whittington Ward. A single Whittington Ward reflects on the ground reality and as well as reflecting community it respects natural boundaries such as major roads, railway line, canal and rivers.

f) The proposed Whittington Moor boundaries improve the adjacent areas to Dunston (as referred to above) and also end the split roads around the Chantry Avenue/Flamsteed area where there were irrational Ward boundaries between the currently existing Moor and St Helens Wards.

These are all examples of where we think the Commission proposals are well thought out, and in many cases, follow much better community and natural boundaries than was previously the case. For the greatest part we entirely support the package of proposals put forward whilst recognising that not every difficulty can be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Of course, there are a few areas where we suggest final changes -as proposed below.

Brampton Ward – Minor suggestions.

Currently known as Holmebrook Ward the proposed new Brampton Ward follows much the same boundaries with a few streets out and a few streets in. A much better name - previously and now - would be Brampton and Boythorpe Ward as this more realistically reflects the composition of the Ward.

The unification of all parts of Boythorpe Road and the Boythorpe Estate is very welcome as splitting roads down the middle made little sense last time in 1998.

A case could be made for both sides of Old Hall Road and the relevant section of Ashgate Road being included in the new Ward (as is being done with both sides of Boythorpe Road) rather than running an imaginary line up the centre of the road.

Overall, we very much support the proposed Ward.

Walton -Minor suggestion.

In general, we are very pleased with the proposed changes to the boundaries of Walton. These changes will better define the community of Walton, incorporating the major roads and bus routes of our area. Somersall Park and the river Hipper provide a good natural

boundary marker to the northern edge of the ward. The roads Walton Back Lane and Matlock Road effectively mark the western and southern edges of the ward respectively.

We were pleased to see that the new housing development next to Walton Hospital is proposed to be part of Walton ward, together with the residential streets off and around Fenland Way/Holbeach Drive. The only other suggestion that we would make, is to include the houses on the southern side of Whitecotes Lane, as they have more in common with the northern side of Whitecotes Lane and the rest of Walton.

Brockwell and Spire Wards - Major proposal

The bulk of the western side of the proposed Spire ward currently sits within the Brockwell ward. Residents in Foljambe Road, Albion Road and Gladstone Road by example are users of the allotments on Ashgate Road, they have their GP at Ashgate Manor and dentists on Ashgate Road. The residents of streets such as Cromwell Road, Avondale, Cobden, Gladstone and Queens Street have always been together in Brockwell (and before that in the old Central Ward).

This part of Chesterfield knows that they are in Chesterfield, that they are close to the town centre but many of them consider themselves to live in Ashgate and Brockwell as communities - not the town centre - and yet under the proposals will be moved into a ward that is dominated by the town centre, by the basin of the River Rother the canal, and the Hospital in Calow with Hady.

The proposed cutting off of these residents into Spire ward is counterintuitive and splits a community along an artificially constructed boundary. It makes much better community sense to leave the entire areas west of the Town Hall in Brockwell ward.

Due to the need for electoral equity in numerical terms, those houses West of Sheffield Road (which makes a clear boundary line) should also be included. That is the streets currently in St Helens, bounded by Sheffield Road and Newbold Road and scheduled for transfer to the new Spire Ward (some adjacent parts of St Helens already being proposed, by the Boundary Commission, for transfer to Brockwell).

This would make Brockwell a 3 Member Ward (6,665 electors +5.5% variance) based upon clear geographic and community identity and leave Spire as a 2-member Ward (4,511 electors + 7% variance) based upon areas from Spital down to the newer areas of St Helens being constructed at 'waterside' and the older areas of St Helens between Sheffield Road and the adjacent Waterside site. The new Brockwell Ward retains a community integrity. The new Spire Ward, straddling the Town Centre incorporates 2 or 3 different communities - but less different communities than initially proposed by the Boundary Commission and less than the existing St Leonards Ward. Any 'Town Centre ward' will inevitably include disparate areas separated rather than unified by the Town Centre itself. These proposals however minimise that as much as possible.

The summary of this submission is as follows:

Streets we propose should move from Spire to Brockwell (currently part of Old Brockwell Ward) - **Total 1408**

Albion Road	44 x
Avondale Road	72 x
Chesterfield	1
Clarence Road	77 x
Cobden Road	83 x
Compton Street	71 x
Cromwell Road	72 x
Cross Street	43 x
Cross Street Villas	6 x
Foljambe Road	62 x
Gladstone Court	4 x
Gladstone Road	97 x
Hawksley Avenue	2 x
Hunters Walk	45 x
Lime Tree House	7 x
Lister Close	13 x
Lower Grove Road	24 x
Manvers Court	37 x
Marsden Mews	7 x
Marsden Street	12 x
Newbold Road	33 x
Nightingale Close	6 x
Portland Close	31 x
Queen Street	63 x
Queens Court	12 x
Recreation Villas	8 x
Rose Hill	9 x
Rutland Road	103 x
Saltergate	22 x
Spencer Street	67 x
Spire Heights	91 x
Spring Place	5 x
St Margaret's Drive	41 x
St. Margaret's Mews	4 x
Stirling Court	46 x
Tennyson Avenue	55 x
West Bars	22 x
West Street	11 x

Streets proposed to be moved from Spire to Brockwell (old St Helens Ward). **Total - 755**

(PA2) St Helens	Abercrombie Street	30
(PA2) St Helens	Alder Court	9
(PA2) St Helens	Amber Court	9
(PA2) St Helens	Ashford Court	21
(PA2) St Helens	Avon Court	12
(PA2) St Helens	Brunswick Street	11
(PA2) St Helens	Cavendish Court	32
(PA2) St Helens	Dowdeswell Street	35
(PA2) St Helens	Higher Albert Street	66
(PA2) St Helens	Highfield Road	28
(PA2) St Helens	Homeport Mews	5
(PA2) St Helens	Lea Court	13
(PA2) St Helens	Madin Street	18
(PA2) St Helens	Malthouse Court	11
(PA2) St Helens	New Queen Street	76
(PA2) St Helens	Newbold Road	33
(PA2) St Helens	Princess Street	20
(PA2) St Helens	Sheffield Road	125
(PA2) St Helens	St Helens Close	18
(PA2) St Helens	St Helens Street	88
(PA2) St Helens	Thornfield Court	42
(PA2) St Helens	Victoria Mews	1
(PA2) St Helens	Victoria Street	38
(PA2) St Helens	Winster Court	14
(PA2) St Helens	Chesterfield	0

Staveley North – Query and proposal.

The greatest part of the proposed new Staveley North Ward is the currently existing Lowgates & Woodthorpe Ward. In our original submission we argued that this could simply be left as it was as it forms an existing geographically cohesive and correctly sized electoral area as a 2 Member Ward.

The Commission however have proposed transferring part of Lowgates out of the Ward and into Staveley Central even though that area, around Markham Crescent and Belmont Drive has always been part of Lowgates and is physically separated from Middlecroft/Staveley Central by both a by pass and an industrial estate. The Commission is then adding Barrow Hill to Lowgates and Woodthorpe to make the new Staveley North Ward even though Barrow Hill has never been linked with those areas and is 1.8 miles away via a country road.

We cannot see any logic to this and think the existing Lowgates boundaries should be retained as they currently exist.

Staveley South – Proposal

The Commission proposal is to break up the existing Inkersall and Hollingwood Ward (including Duckmanton) by removing Hollingwood and adding Hollingwood to Brimington.

Hollingwood however is part of the Staveley Town Council area, a traditional part of Staveley and since 1998 has been linked with Inkersall and Duckmanton. If Hollingwood is transferred to Brimington (which elects its own Parish Council) then its historic and community link with Staveley and Staveley Town Council is broken.

Hollingwood also has historic and community links with Barrow Hill as explained in some detail by one of the Residents submissions to the Commission last year. Both Barrow Hill and Hollingwood are part of Staveley, elect to Staveley Town Council and have traditional community links that will be strengthened as the area between them is built up by the housing destined for the former Staveley Works site -where residents of both areas used to work. Also of course Barrow Hill and Hollingwood formed their own Borough Council Ward before the 1998/9 reorganisation separated them and joined Hollingwood to Inkersall and Duckmanton.

For all these reasons we still believe, as in our original submission last year, that adding Barrow Hill to the existing Hollingwood and Inkersall area would provide a coherent electoral area maintaining traditional links and maintaining the Staveley Town Council links as well. To keep within electoral limits Duckmanton would need to transfer to Staveley Central.

Staveley Central -proposal

Instead of removing a part of Lowgates to make up electoral numbers in Staveley Central (see above) then this could be achieved via transferring Duckmanton. Duckmanton is physically closer to Poolsbrook (part of the existing Middlecroft & Poolsbrook and the proposed Staveley Central) than it is to Inkersall. In fact, the two, prior to the 1998/9 reorganisation, formed a small Borough ward of their own.

Brimington

The above changes to the Commission's proposals would maintain the integrity of the Staveley and Staveley Town Council areas. They have more community rationale than transferring Barrow Hill to somewhere 1.8 miles away and transferring Hollingwood to an area with its own Parish Council instead of keeping it within the Staveley community.

Not joining Hollingwood to Brimington, as in the Commission's initial proposals, would mean the Brimington area forming 2 cohesive Brimington Wards each electing 2 Borough Members and all electing to Brimington Parish Council (except Tapton which is unparished and has never been part of the Brimington area in that respect).

We made proposals for how this could be done in last year's submission.

And Finally!

The small number of houses on Thompson Street, Eastside Close and Pottery Lane East are an isolated area that was literally cut off from the Whittington Moor area when the bypass was built. Currently they are an isolated part of Old Whittington Ward and under the Commission proposals they are an isolated part of Brimington North. To achieve this the Ward Boundary looks as strange as something usually seen in the USA. It might make more sense to leave them in the proposed new Whittington Ward as their physical link is closer to the bottom of Whittington Hill/Station Road than it is to the first houses in Brimington.

END.

Mansfield, Simon

From: Paul Holmes [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 January 2022 20:41
To: reviews
Subject: Re: Just one week left to have your say on proposed wards for Chesterfield Borough Council
Attachments: Boundary Commission final stage.docx

Categories: Submissions, Simon

Please find attached the comments of Chesterfield Liberal Democrats.

Cllr Paul Holmes, Leader 17 LD Cllrs.