

Northumberland County Council

Personal Details:

Name:

E-mail:

Postcode:

Organisation Name: Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham Parish Council

Comment text:

The Parish of Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham would like to respond to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in response to its suggestion to split the existing Parish. Firstly the proposed boundary changes will result in Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham Parish Council having to communicate with two County Councillors which will make life difficult from a small Parish Council perspective. The proposed suggestion is to move Whittingham into Wooler constituency and leave the smaller parishes of Callaly and Alnham in Rothbury. The Parish Council have a relationship with Councillor Steven Bridget in Rothbury which has been carefully built up over a number of years. Existing numbers circa: Whittingham 191 homes, 325 residents Callaly 59 homes, 115 residents Alnham 39 homes, 69 residents This situation could, and will, in the opinion of the Parish Council, lead to splitting the Parish Council down the line and dismantle a community of remote villages and hamlets which has been built up over the last 30 - 40 years thus lead to a less sustainable future for Callaly and Alnham. This could adversely affect shared community amenities like Whittingham Primary School and the Whittingham Memorial Village Hall, geographically part of the Whittingham Vale and Coquetdale, as they would be added onto another area. This could result in Whittingham not being given the priority it deserves and currently receives as part of Rothbury Ward. All Parish Council and any Public Meetings are held at the Whittingham Memorial Village Hall which is at the centre of the Community on the basis there are no other venues across the remote Parishes. Following its success during Storm Arwen this Village Hall is currently also being assessed in conjunction with Councillor Steven Bridgett as a Rural Hub co-ordination point. Across the whole of the Parish and with the assistance of the local Mountain Rescue Team they are looking to equip this with satellite phone, full time generator and ensure that the kitchen has all essentials to allow it to be a Rural Hub location in an emergency. Taking into consideration the local distances, all of the 3 Parishes are nearer to each other than to Rothbury and Wooler. Local residents of Whittingham have also given feedback that geographically Wooler, which is circa 12 miles North, would not be a sensible Town to be aligned on the basis they would tend to frequent Rothbury or Alnwick thus putting Whittingham out on a limb in terms of community support. The local Church of England School is also part of Village Community and whilst it welcomes children outside of the 3 Parishes it is intrinsically linked to St Bartholomew's Church in Whittingham. Members of the 3 Parishes do also frequent the Church especially for Christian festivals/events, weddings etc. The Church, School and Village Hall are also used by the local Scout Group supporting the 3 Parishes so also offer a link together. The Village Hall also has a number of events such as cinema/music nights, keep fit, indoor bowls club and is shared and frequented by the 3 Parishes. This Hall is also available for after Church events such as christenings and funerals as well as other occasions thus integrating it into the local community which is deemed to be the 3 Parishes. Events and updates both personal and political are covered off in the bi-monthly publication of "The Vale News" which is a local newsletter hand delivered across the 3 Parishes to ensure a community spirit and allow remote locations to continue to be updated and involved. This is a comfort to the more elderly members of our Community who are unable or unwilling to access more modern methods of communication. The Vale News is used for written articles and supported by the Parish Council of Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham to communicate and update all areas of village life within this very small rural patch of Northumberland. Finally the Parish of Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham is well advanced in drafting its Neighbourhood Plan. This has been approved by the Northumberland National Park and has fantastic support from Sarah Brannigan, Senior Planning Officer at Northumberland County Council. Much valuable work has already been done, by the local Steering Group which was formed across the 3 Parishes. It has collected important evidence about the present-day Parish and its planning history. It is clear from this work that the area has considerable unity: it forms a single rural community, united by geography, land use and communications. In this unity Whittingham is a central component. In detaching Whittingham (under 200 homes) it would

leave Callaly and Alnham (jointly under 100 homes) as a small and unfeasible remnant lacking its heart. It is also apparent that by removing Whittingham it would make it impossible to frame a Neighbourhood Plan on the basis of Callaly and Alnham alone and would subvert all that has been achieved so far. It would also feel wrong to tag this location onto a Town like Rothbury's Neighbourhood Plan as there are totally different requirements and objectives. The Parish Council considers that being answerable to two different wards will bring unnecessary complications, one point of contact being enough, and understands that the Boundary Commission would have had no idea that these 3 Parishes are run as one and have been for a considerable time. Splitting these up now is not an option. Thank you Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham Parish Council

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded