

Surrey

Personal Details:

Name: [REDACTED]

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Organisation Name: Betchworth Parish Council (Parish or town clerk or officer)

Comment text:

Related subject: Mole Valley, Surrey County Council

Betchworth Parish Council would like to mirror our comments that were given to the Mole Valley Boundary review (which I have attached for your information). We would like to reinforce our requests for: the 3 B's of Betchworth, Brockham and Buckland to be allocated to the same division, for the 3 B's to be allocated to a division wholly focused on rural parishes and not market towns and we like consideration to be made to keep the newly formed ward of Brockham, Betchworth, Boxhill, Buckland and Headley together.

Attached Documents:

- Betchworth Response Ward.pdf

BETCHWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Via email only - reviews@lgbce.org.uk

To who it may concern
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

27 November 2021

Dear Sir or Madam

Having consulted with Councillors it is Betchworth's preference to remain as a combined '3 B's' ward with Brockham and Buckland. The reasons for this are set out below:

EXISTING ALIGNMENT WITH BROCKHAM:

Planning: shared values for minimal impact on the rural landscape and green belt

Community: Betchworth and Brockham share a combined community with an open door policy for each others' residents to join many of the thriving local clubs and societies; the local horticultural society, fitness classes, art society and choir to name but a few.

The River Mole: The River Mole runs through Betchworth and Brockham & information is regularly shared between villages regarding flooding and bridge accessibility and closures due to extreme weather events.

Shared issues with roads and highways: Due to a shared commuter network of country lanes and rural roads to the M25 and Gatwick, any local diversions directly effect neighbouring villages. Local information is shared via local social media between Betchworth and Brockham. We also work together to combat speeding and share relevant data.

Shared air traffic issues: Due to the geography of the villages (Betchworth stretching North to South) Betchworth shares many issues relating to Gatwick and Heathrow's air traffic with Brockham's residents. Air traffic directly effects each others communities and community groups share information.

Geography, Shared Land and the Betchworth Estate: The Betchworth Estate (agricultural, farmland and greenbelt countryside) forms a large proportion of the Parish of Betchworth. The land wraps around Brockham Parish and is enjoyed by Brockham and Betchworth residents.

The Poland Trust: The Poland Trust is a charity which provides accommodation for the elderly. Accommodation is available to qualifying residents from the parishes of Betchworth, Brockham, Leigh and Buckland. The Betchworth United Charities supports The Poland Trust.

Brockham Surgery: The local medical surgery is located in Brockham and is the primary facility for Betchworth residents.

The Betchworth United Charities: The Betchworth United Charities is a charity 'supporting persons in the parishes of Betchworth and Brockham who are elderly, in need or suffering hardship or distress'.

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Footpaths: Brockham and Betchworth share a network of local footpaths and walks which connect both villages and Councils raise any issues or complaints with each other.

Climate change and flooding: Betchworth and Brockham have shared projects underway to combat climate change and flooding. A large amount of agricultural land in Betchworth with ditch systems surrounds Brockham and we work together to help our community.

Local School: The North Downs Primary School is split over three sites; one in Betchworth, one in Brockham, one in Leigh. School children regularly travel between Betchworth and Brockham and the children from Betchworth and surrounding rural areas (outside the Brockham school catchment) will attend the Brockham school from Y3. This is an important element which joins our communities.

Toddler Group: Children of Betchworth residents have been welcomed by Brockham's toddler group for many years.

Betchworth Rail Station on the North Downs Railway and provides links for our communities and passes through Betchworth, Buckland and Brockham.

Historic Betchworth Estate and Castle: Betchworth Castle lies within Brockham. The Castle is frequently visited by schoolchildren from North Downs Primary School (Brockham, Betchworth and Leigh) school.

Betchworth United Charities

Betchworth Post Office: Located in Betchworth, offers postal and banking facilities to residents predominantly from the 3B's.

Local Events: Brockham and Betchworth regularly share information on local events and extend invites to each other.

Administration: Neighbouring clerks meet regularly to discuss joint issues

Young Farmers: Agricultural life is a large part of the community focus.

Betchworth's agricultural landscape is supported by the local Young Farmers and community. A 'heartstart' defibrillator course hosted by Betchworth was well attended by the local Young Farmers whose members come from a combination of Betchworth, Buckland and Brockham.

Similarly there are strong reasons for wishing to remain in a ward with Buckland, as follows;

EXISTING ALIGNMENT WITH BUCKLAND

Community: Betchworth and Buckland share a combined community with an open door policy for each others' residents to join many of the thriving local clubs and societies; the local horticultural society, fitness classes, art society and choir to name but a few.

Planning: shared values for minimal impact on the rural landscape and green belt

Betchworth and Buckland Society: The Betchworth and Buckland Society is an active society with members from Betchworth and Buckland. It embraces the communities of Betchworth and Buckland with the following objectives:

- Protect the natural and built environment in the two villages
- Provide financial support / advice for projects that enhance village life
- Encourage interest in local history, culture and character
- Promote social events, bringing together residents and to raise funds

Local Events: Buckland and Betchworth regularly share information on local events and extend invites to each other.

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Church and Shared Church Services: The post of Rector is combined for the villages of Betchworth and Buckland. Lay duties and responsibilities are shared between the villages and the congregations at both churches are a combination of Parishioners from both villages.

Shared issues with roads and highways: Due to a shared commuter network to the M25 and Gatwick, any local diversions directly effect neighbouring villages. Local information is shared via local social media between Betchworth and Buckland. We also work together to combat speeding and other road related issues, and share relevant data.

Administrative: Neighbouring clerks meet regularly to discuss issues which effect both Parishes.

Air traffic: Due to the geography of the villages (Betchworth stretching North to South) Betchworth shares many issues relating to Gatwick and Heathrow's air traffic with Buckland's residents. Air traffic directly effects each others communities and community groups share information.

Footpaths: Buckland and Betchworth share a network of local footpaths and walks which connect both villages and Councils raise any issues or complaints with each other. There is also a published booklet of walks between the Parishes.

Geography: Much of Betchworth Parish's boundary adjoins Buckland's boundary

Climate change and Flooding: Betchworth and Buckland share initiatives to combat climate change and flooding. The Parish Councils work together to assist the community.

School: A large proportion of young children from Buckland attend the Betchworth North Downs Primary School and enhances the early years community.

Betchworth United Charities: As well as supporting Brockham, the Charity supports members of the Buckland community.

Betchworth Post Office: Located in Betchworth, offers postal and banking facilities to residents predominantly from the 3B's.

Toddler Group: For many years, the Betchworth and Buckland Toddler Group has been held in Buckland's Reading Room and run by parents/grandparents from Betchworth and Buckland. It has welcomed all children from Betchworth and Buckland.

Family Activities: A thriving 'Family Activities for Betchworth and Buckland' group helps to nurture the community of families with young children by organizing inclusive joint events for all ages of children in the Betchworth and Buckland communities.

Betchworth Rail Station on the North Downs Railway and provides links for our communities and passes through Betchworth, Buckland and Brockham.

Planning: shared values for minimal impact on the rural landscape and green belt Without doubt, Betchworth Parish Council wishes to express a strong wish to remain in a ward with Brockham and Buckland. As described, there is a strong history of alliance with Brockham and Buckland, and the three villages support each other and share helpful information.

If a two member ward, remaining unchanged and aligned with Brockham and Buckland is not a viable option, whilst remaining open to suggestions, Betchworth is of the opinion that the best 'fit' in order to enable the numbers to work would be to

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align with the Headley and Box Hill ward, with a proposed electorate of 5831 to make a 3 member ward.

Headley and Box Hill have also expressed a wish to align with Betchworth, Brockham and Buckland, as we share the same geographic landscape and community values, and would enable Brockham, Betchworth and Buckland to remain aligned:

- Betchworth shares a Parish boundary with Box Hill and Brockham
- The views from Betchworth, Buckland and Brockham look towards the famous chalk hills and Box Hill, and vice versa
- The swathe of greenbelt land between Box Hill and Headley and the 3B's accommodates the well known North Downs Way, which provides access to another network of footpaths to Brockham, Betchworth and Buckland.
- The land contains historic lime kilns and historic chalk quarries which are of shared interest in the locality and enjoyed by the local communities.
- Box Hill and Headley, along with Brockham, Betchworth and Buckland, all suffer from air traffic pollution from Heathrow's flight path, as well as Gatwick.
- Box Hill and Headley, as well as Betchworth, Buckland and Brockham all share an interest in retaining the openness of the countryside.
- The Pebble Hill Road (B2032) is the main link between Betchworth, Brockham, Buckland, Box Hill and Headley. The road is heavily used by commuters as well as local traffic and cyclists, suffers from flooding and has a constant requirement for maintenance. Additional shared interest in the road would be welcome.

Thank you for considering these comments with your review. We hope you find this information useful and are grateful that you have requested this insight into our interactions with neighbouring parishes.

We hope that the suggestion to remain with the 3B's with the addition of Headley and Box Hill to the Ward is workable.

Please don't hesitate to contact Betchworth Parish Council should you wish to discuss any of these matters further.

Your sincerely

Cheryl Sexton
Clerk, Betchworth Parish Council
clerk@betchworth-pc.gov.uk / 07858 617253