For a quarter of a century I lived in the All Saints area of Kettering, once on Neale Avenue and twice on Bath Road. It is my firm belief that Brambleside and All Saints are intrinsically linked as communities. I spent many days in my younger years in the 80’s and 90’s exploring Brambleside on my bicycle with friends and venturing further afield to Weekley Hall Wood.

The alleys that link the two areas were then and still are very busy with pedestrian and cycle traffic, as many children from All Saints attend Brambleside Primary Academy, students from both areas traverse them to get to the nearest secondary school - Kettering Buccleuch Academy, dog walkers use Brambleside as a link to Weekley Hall Wood and the meadows there and residents access the two public houses, The Beeswing and The Briars, which are situated on Brambleside and are the nearest for most residents of All Saints (without heading into the town centre).

There are several strong communities in All Saints, including those residents of the Avenues (Kingsley, Neale and Blandford) who hold annual events including a street sale that extends to the entire area around (including many parts of Brambleside). As councillors myself and my colleagues arrange a road closure and steward Kingsley Avenue for Halloween, when a large proportion of the homes in the street decorate their houses and attract thousands of trick or treaters from the wider area.

Another example of a brilliant community are the residents of William Street in All Saints, who during the pandemic lockdowns came outside together to celebrate their street, and ran many socially distanced events. The upshot of that, is another annual road closure to facilitate a street party, the formation of a community gardening group who have work within All Saints church grounds to create a garden. This has volunteers come from both All Saints and Brambleside.

Rockingham Road Pleasure Park is a Green Flag award winning park and is a focus point for the residents of All Saints and Brambleside. It’s Victorian Bandstand plays host to bands throughout the summer and community festivals are organised to take advantage of the space. The park also contains outdoor gym equipment, the largest children’s play area in the north of Kettering, dog walking space, BMX track and a bowls club.

There are several local community hubs in All Saints, while other than the two aforementioned pubs, Brambleside has none. Residents of Brambleside attend the Midland Band Club, the Athletic Club, Rifle Band Club, Kettering Arts Centre (hosted at St Andrews church), All Saints church and a new community centre is being planned to server the entire area in Britannia Road.

Weekley Hall Wood to the north of Brambleside is another key destination for residents of the north of the town. The wood and meadow have always been popular, but they reached new levels of use during the pandemic lockdowns by people using the meadow and wood for their exercise and to connect with nature and the countryside. The forest there is the closest to Kettering and a campaign to oppose the area being built on has further increased its popularity. I also believe that to extend the ward boundary to the north to include the area most used by residents would be beneficial. This would not increase resident numbers, aside from including the two houses on the former route of Weekley Wood Lane, which are very much closer to Brambleside. See Fig 1.

There is a public right of way that runs through Weekley Hall Wood to Kettering town centre. This roughly follows the route of an ancient footpath and traverses the Brambleside and All Saints areas, residents use it to walk into town or as a route to the countryside and is another example of how the communities are connected.

As a councillor for this area, I would urge you to consider keeping All Saints and Brambleside connected. I am aware the current number of residents don’t support the current three councillors, however, by moving the southern boundary up to around Regent Street, then the numbers equate to a fair proportion for a two member ward.

**Councillor Dez Dell representing the current Cloverhill ward on North Northants Council and Brambleside ward on Kettering Town Council**

Fig 1. Suggested boundary for ‘Brambleside & All Saints’ or ‘Kettering North’ ward.

A map of a neighborhood

Description automatically generated