

Boundary Commission Review DCC, 2023

Having, at a late stage, been notified of the Derbyshire County Council suggestions for changing the Division boundaries within Chesterfield, I would make the following observations:

DCC note the Boundary Commission guidance that, **as well as pursuing electoral equality, Division Boundaries should also reflect the interests and identities of local communities – establishing electoral arrangements which, as far as possible, maintain local ties and where boundaries are easily identifiable.....and that.....Parish and Ward boundaries must be adhered to wherever possible.**

Staveley North & Whittington Division

However, the DCC proposals for the Staveley North & Whittington Division completely ignore these guidelines.

First, they propose adding part of Dunston (FA1) and bits of Whittington Moor Borough Wards (bits of PA1 & PA2) to Staveley North & Whittington Division. This would:

- a) Break up or cross two Borough Ward boundaries ref Dunston and Whittington Moor.
- b) Break up or divide two Polling Districts within Whittington Moor Ward.
- c) Completely ignore the natural boundaries posed by all three of the River Whitting; Midland Mainline Railway and the A61 Inner Relief Road (Dronfield By Pass) -all three of which physically, completely, separate Whittington from the Whittington Moor/Dunston areas. Physical and Community Boundaries which the recent Boundary Commission Review for Chesterfield Borough, emphatically said should be adhered to when rejecting suggestions that were then made about trying to create an artificial and physically divided Borough Ward extending from Old Whittington across to parts of the areas now being suggested once again.

Secondly, the proposals continue the current artificial divide which cuts the community of Lowgates, Mastin Moor and Woodthorpe (previously Lowgates Borough Ward and now Staveley North Ward under the recent Borough changes) in half by splitting Mastin Moor and Woodthorpe off to be part of Staveley County Division whilst Lowgates and Barrow Hill are part of Staveley North and Whittington Division.

We would propose that instead of adding electoral numbers from Dunston and Whittington Moor (and so totally ignoring natural and community boundaries, splitting 2 Borough Wards and splitting two Polling Districts within one of those Wards) the Staveley North & Whittington Division should instead be enlarged by adding the whole of Staveley North Borough Ward in. This would end the current artificial divide that splits Staveley North Borough Ward/community by splitting Mastin Moor and Woodthorpe off into Staveley Central. The only major transport route (car and bus) for Mastin Moor and Woodthorpe residents is to and from Lowgates along the A619 Lowgates/Worksop Road. There is no direct route from those areas to Staveley Central other than the road that passes through Lowgates.

This would mean that the new, enlarged, Staveley North & Whittington Division would be above the average 10,430 electors per new Division in Chesterfield (although that average figure is 2% below the County average anyway). That however would be a 'price' worth paying in order to maintain the integrity/community boundaries at the Whittington/Dunston end and to re-establish such community and Ward boundaries/integrity at the Lowgates/Mastin Moor end.

Staveley Division.

Removing Mastin Moor & Woodthorpe from the Staveley Division would leave that Division too low on electoral numbers. That however would be easily rectified by adding Hollingwood back to the Staveley Division (from Brimington Division) which would:

- a) End the artificial split in the Staveley South Borough Ward which is caused by separating Hollingwood (MA1) from Inkersall/Staveley South. A split which the recent Boundary Commission Review of Borough boundaries was emphatic should be avoided.
- b) End the artificial split entailed by taking Hollingwood MA1 (also a Staveley Town Council Ward) away from the Staveley Town Council area and linking it artificially with areas that instead form the Brimington Parish Council area.

Brimington Division

In turn, this would leave Brimington Division too low in electoral numbers.

Immediately adjacent to Brimington Divisions boundaries are the areas of JA2 and JA5 from Spire Ward. Both of these include large new estates (one, literally, only just being built/in the process of being built, on the former Arnold Lavers site and the other only being built some 20-25 years ago on the site of the former Markham Engineering Works). Neither area therefore has any historic link or community identity with the areas of Spire (Borough) Ward to which they are now linked or, having until this year, being respectively linked to the now defunct Borough Wards of St Helens and of St Leonards. The necessary numbers of electors could therefore be moved from those areas to join Brimington Division.

Adopting the above proposals would prevent/end gross cross Ward, Polling District, Town Council and natural boundaries divides:

- a) Between Dunston/Whittington Moor & Whittington.
- b) Between Lowgates and Mastin Moor/Woodthorpe as part of Staveley North.
- c) Between Hollingwood and Staveley South/Brimington.

The shift needed between Brimington and the adjacent Polling Districts affects no established community links and would keep the enlarged Brimington Division within a natural boundary defined by the A61 Inner Relief Road and the Chesterfield end of the A632 Hady Hill Road. Borough Ward/Polling District splits here are far outweighed by the number of such splits elsewhere, thus removed as proposed above.

In turn any shortfall thereby caused in the DCC proposal for a rather strange elongated Spire and Whittington Moor Division could be met by Whittington Moor retaining the area DCC proposed adding to Staveley North & Whittington plus the associated part of Dunston. A better solution all round for the rest of Chesterfield would be the proposals sent in by County Cllr Ed Fordham which suggest much better community based Divisions which follow natural boundaries and traditional communities far more closely than the DCC proposals, namely:

Walton & Brampton West & Loundsley Green -as DCC propose.

Brockwell and Linacre

Brampton East & Rother

Hasland and Spire

Dunston & Whittington Moor.

Paul Holmes, Borough Cllr for Whittington Ward and Leader Lib Dem Borough Council Group.

Plus

Cllrs Barry Bingham, Kelly Thornton, Paul Jacobs, June Bingham and Jane Collins who are variously County, Borough and Town Cllrs across the Whittington and Staveley North area.

Derbyshire

Personal Details:

Name: Paul Holmes

Email: [REDACTED]

Postcode: [REDACTED]

Organisation Name: Leader Lib Dem Borough Council Group (District or county councillor)

Comment text:

Please see attached:

Attached Documents:

- Boundary Commission DCC Review -5 Chesterfield.docx