

Oxfordshire

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Comment text:

Please see attached.

Attached Documents:

- LGBCE Response-CRL (002).pdf



Our Ref: LGBCE/Oxon/Consultation/001/CRL

Date: 23 October 2013

Dear Sir or Madam,

Re: Proposed Boundary Changes - Wantage and Grove

I wish to take this opportunity to comment on the proposed boundary changes for Oxfordshire County Council. My comments deal solely with the proposed changes that would remove Charlton from the Wantage division. The comments are made as an individual constituent.

In 1870, John Marius Wilson, in his "Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales" described Charlton as a hamlet in Wantage parish. Ever since, Charlton has become ever more closely allied with the Wantage area. The post 2nd World War housing estates of AERE and Charlton Heights created an expansion to Wantage that was without boundary - where Wantage stopped and Charlton began was difficult to decide, unlike the separation between Wantage and Grove.

Charlton, Blewbury & Hendreds

The Commission is proposing to remove Charlton from the Wantage division and create a new division stretching from Garston Lane in Wantage to Blewbury - in a straight line, over 8.4 miles (13.5 km) away with mainly open countryside between the two. Why Blewbury? - which has no community ties with anything this side of the major A34 which creates a distinct division between Charlton, the Hendreds and Blewbury. Charlton even contains the following:

- Wantage Community Hospital
- Wantage & Grove Cricket Club
- Wantage Community Support Centre

While there has been a strong historical connection between Wantage and Charlton and the Harwell campus, with many residents of the former employed at the latter, that has faded and the Harwell Campus is probably better served through linkage to Didcot, Chilton and Blewbury.

With the growth of many other places in Oxfordshire, new divisions have been created as North, South, East and West around a central hub e.g. Didcot, while places like Abingdon and Banbury have used names within their boundaries. Compare the proposal for Wantage, where as the population grows, part of the electorate, i.e. Charlton, is sliced off and linked with communities miles away and with little commonality. This makes no community sense although I suspect it makes political sense.

Such a major amputation would disenfranchise Charlton's population from the local adjacent services and infrastructure that they will continue to use within the town, while effectively having no voice in the future of these services and infrastructure, and may even be refused access to them.

Such piecemeal "slicing and dicing" of communities with a map and a red pen, without considering the consequences for residents' access to local infrastructure and services, echoes the 1916 Sykes-Picot creation of African State boundaries with no thought for, or input from, the different native communities, never mind the consequences of those actions. And that hardly turned out to be a success.

Yours faithfully

