

Cllr David Snowden

Caring & Campaigning for Bishop's Stortford



Cllr David Snowden

Meads Ward (Conservative)
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The Review Officer (East Hertfordshire)
LGBCE
PO Box 133,
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5th December 2021

Dear Review Officer,

I am writing in response to the Electoral Review of East Hertfordshire District Council, and the consultation being carried out at present into Warding Arrangements.

I have been a councillor for Meads Ward on Bishop's Stortford Town Council since 2018 and East Herts District Council since 2019. I am the Deputy Leader of Bishop's Stortford Town Council and Chairman of its Finance Committee.

At present, the electoral arrangements for the area covering Meads Ward are deeply unsatisfactory. The current Meads Ward created in the 1998 Review has all the hallmarks of being the 'leftovers' ward. It is a polycentric ward taking in the area around Stansted Road on the east side of town, the area around Stansted Road on the west side of town and part of the town centre. The 'Meads' open space and parkland which runs down the centre of the ward results in there being significantly fewer community ties within the ward than seen elsewhere in the district. The main link between the two portions of the ward is the A1250 at the very south of the ward. There is no further road link until the B1004 Michaels Road at the north of the ward which is very much a secondary axis of communication. Traffic is very light on Michaels Road compared to the A1250.

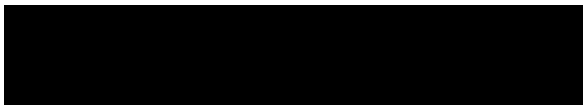
My experience of having been a councillor for three years in Meads Ward is that the concerns of my residents – and the casework I receive – is markedly different on the two sides of the ward. In the Rye Street area local residents are most concerned about issues relating to the construction of the Bishop's Stortford North development at the north of Rye Street, and the potential for further building on the 'Meads' land south of Meadowlands. On the eastern side of the ward, most of my casework is related to local parking issues, congestion on Stansted Road and environmental issues.

It is my belief that community ties would be best reflected in a warding pattern which creates a strong boundary between the east and the west of town, so that a cross-town ward is not necessary. I support the use of the River Stort as a dividing line, which would allocate four councillors to the east of Bishop's Stortford and ten councillors to the west of Bishop's Stortford.

As a result, I support the East Herts District Council (EHDC) Conservative Group's boundary review submission, and would offer the following additional thoughts:

- The Stansted Road area has very strong links with the Parsonage Estate, which is currently in All Saints Ward. I would support linking these two areas in a two member ward. The housing in the area is of a similar type and age – mainly post-war. The most important community organisation in this area is the Parsonage Residents Association which covers over 90% of the Stansted Road area as well as the Parsonage Estate. The south of the current All Saints Ward is covered by different residents associations: the Haymeads Residents Association and the Warwick Road Maintenance Association. I would support the division proposed by the Conservative Group on EHDC where Dunmow Road and the streets off it form the northern boundary of a two-member All Saints Ward.
- The Rye Street area in the west of the ward has closer links to the east of the current Silverleys Ward. This area is covered by the Chantry Residents Association. The EHDC Conservative Group's submission rightly, in my opinion, moves the streets between Hadham Road and Cricketfield Lane into a new Meads Ward taking in this area plus the Rye Street area.
- The division of the Town Centre is distinctly unhelpful in promoting effective local government. There is significant local confusion as to which ward various key central shopping streets and amenities are included within. Uniting the town centre within the Conservative Group's proposed Meads Ward make a large amount of sense. Including all the retail frontage north of a line between Station Road and Newtown Road would mean that over 95% of all town centre retail would be in Meads Ward along with the Town Council offices, St Michael's Church, the Old River Lane redevelopment site and Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre.
- The River Stort offers a much more natural boundary within Bishop's Stortford than the railway line. It is broadly used by the Church of England for ecclesiastical parish boundaries in this area of Bishop's Stortford. It also avoids dividing Hockerill shopping parade between westward and eastward looking seats. I fully support using the River Stort as the western boundaries of the Conservative Group's All Saints and Parsonage Wards.

Yours faithfully,



Cllr David Snowdon