

Representation from the Woldingham Association to the consultation on the review of the electoral arrangements for Tandridge District Council by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Summary

1. We believe that the case for substantial changes to the existing ward boundaries is not supported by the evidence for two main reasons:
 - a. Little has changed in Tandridge District since the Report on the Final Recommendations on the Electoral Arrangement for Tandridge in Surrey was completed in 1998, and
 - b. There is currently only one ward that is more than 10% above the average electoral ratio and only two projected in 2028, and so there are no extreme electoral imbalances to address.
2. In recognition of the objective of three councillor wards, we have also suggested possible ward combinations that would create more three councillor wards that would leave no wards with a variance of more than 10% in both 2022 and 2028. However, as we do not live in these wards, our suggestions have not assessed whether these potential combinations fulfill the remaining criteria. In all cases, we would defer to representations made by residents of those wards.
3. Although we tried, we could find no further combinations to create three councillor wards that improved the overall electoral ratio and that had the potential to meet the three criteria. This leaves an unavoidable scattering of one and two councillor wards, all of which have current and projected variances of less than 10%.
4. Paragraph 2.12 of the Technical Guide explains that the three councillor objective will be met "*as far as is practicable*". While we have put forward some suggestions, we believe that what the discussion in Section 4 shows is that the "*as practicable*" limit noted in paragraph 2.12 of the Technical Guide is reached very quickly.
5. This is not surprising given that today only one ward has more than 10% variance and so the current situation is not seriously unbalanced, the 1998 Boundary Review went to some lengths to create wards that met the three criteria in a balanced way, and that so little has changed since then.
6. We strongly believe that the objective of having three councillor wards should not override the three criteria. This is consistent with paragraph 2.12 of the Technical Guide. There is no evidence that supports significant changes to the boundaries, and the current and projected electoral imbalances are not extreme.

Therefore, we believe that at most only minor changes should be made, and we hope that the Local Government Boundary Commission comes to the same conclusion.

7. The structure of this representation is as follows:
Section 1: Introduction to the Woldingham Association
Section 2: Characteristics of Woldingham ward
Section 3: What has happened since the 1998 Report
Section 4: Discussion of possible ward combinations
Section 5: Conclusion
8. In preparing this representation, we have relied on:
 - a. Report on the Final Recommendations on the Electoral Arrangement for Tandridge in Surrey – Dated 1998. (“1998 Boundary Review”)
 - b. Electoral Reviews – Technical Guidance – Updated April 2022 (“The Technical Guide”)
 - c. “Consultation Spreadsheet” – the spreadsheet which includes population projections and wards that accompanies this consultation and which can be found in the Tandridge section of the consultation web-site.

Section 1. Introduction to the Woldingham Association

9. The Woldingham Association was formed more than 110 years ago to carry forward the vision of Woldingham implemented by William Gilford. He purchased the two farms adjacent to the tiny hamlet of Woldingham in the late 1800’s and set out a village of spacious and sylvan character where built form was subservient and harmonious with the undulating topography and high quality landscapes in which it resides.
10. Our mission remains the same today as it was when we were founded – to promote and conserve the special character of Woldingham and the surrounding countryside.
11. We were the de facto Parish Council until the Woldingham Parish Council was created in 2000. Consistent with that long history, we were active when we fell under “Godstone District Rural Council”, “Caterham and Urban District Council” and continue to be active now that we fall under Tandridge District Council.
12. We are a volunteer organisation entirely funded by our members. Every household is eligible to join. We are strictly non-political. We have no affiliation to any other group, including the Woldingham Parish Council, although we do co-operate from time to time.

Durable factors – topography and nationally protected landscapes

16. Woldingham village is set on the top of the escarpment from which the land falls steeply away in all directions. Woldingham ward includes a large proportion of these steeply sloping hills which are a distinctive characteristic of the ward.
17. The village centre is located on relatively flat land central to the ward, while the areas below and beyond contain sporadically placed dwellings. This configuration creates a structural village “hub” in Woldingham ward to which residents naturally gravitate.
18. The road links between Woldingham and other areas are inherently limited by the fact that constructing roads on steeply sloping hills is expensive, and will continue to be so. This limits future dilution of this “hub” effect, thereby perpetuating the isolation identified in the 1998 Boundary Review.
19. The distinctive topography is explained in more detail on Page 6 of the Woldingham Character Assessment¹:

Woldingham village straddles a long ridgeline extending northwards from the escarpment to the south, as is typical of the North Downs. The highest point of this ridge is 248m AOD from which the ridge imperceptibly falls to the north to the highest point in the village, in its historic core, at 230-235m AOD....

From here the village land form drops gently at first and then steeply west and east...

The resulting landform is dramatic, and typical of chalk downland.At the highest point Character Area F sits at 235m AOD....At its lowest Character Area I [ed: both within the village] sits at 160m.
20. The Ordnance Survey map shows that the western areas of Woldingham ward are at around 120m AOD, which is a substantial fall from 248m AOD and which occurs entirely within the ward boundary in all directions.
21. Furthermore, in recognition of the high quality landscapes that surround the village, the remainder of Woldingham ward is designated Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Area of Great Landscape Value, and/or Green Belt.

¹ Woldingham Character Assessment is a Supplementary Planning Document adopted by Tandridge District Council in 2011. This document describes the visual character of Woldingham village and is the main evidence that was used to develop the Woldingham Design Guide, which is another Supplementary Planning Document also adopted in 2011. Both documents are current Supplementary Planning Documents, and they can be found on www.tandridge.gov.uk in the planning policies section.

There is also a nearly 130 Ha Site of Special Scientific Interest (Woldingham & Oxted Downs SSSI) in the southwestern area of the ward.

22. The factors identified above that underpin the isolation and self-containment are long-lasting and durable, and so will continue into the future.

Community Identity and Interests

23. Paragraphs 4.37 to 4.44 of the Technical Guide explain some of the ways that community identity can be demonstrated.

24. Paragraph 4.39 of the Technical Guide states:

For others, an area's history and tradition may be the basis of its sense of community identity. However, communities change over time and historical considerations may not have such importance in areas which have been subject to recent development or population dispersal.

25. Section 2.1 of the Woldingham Village Design Statement² summarises the history of Woldingham which we believe contributes to its community identity today. Section 2.1 explains:

Woldingham was recorded in the Domesday book with a population of about 50 people. In the 13th century the parish was split into two farms – the manors of Upper and Nether Court. Both houses remain central to the village with the latter listed Grade II; and a church was built on the site of the present St Agatha's. By the 1801 census the population was only 33. In the 19th century, cottages of local flint were built on the site of earlier small dwellings around The Green. The village remained a tiny agricultural hamlet until the coming of the railway in 1884.

At this point William Gilford purchased the entire parish and laid out a simple infrastructure following the old field tracks and boundaries, with large plots of at least half an acre (many far larger), each with road frontage, a building line of 7.6m (25 ft) and stipulations that the building be of high quality and only used as a dwellinghouse. He imposed covenants to this effect to control development and preserve the spacious leafy character of the village. Known as the Gilford Covenants and enforceable today by The Woldingham Association Limited, these shaped and continue to preserve this unique village evolving within its Victorian designed framework.

² The Woldingham Village Design Statement is a Supplementary Planning Document adopted by Tandridge District Council in 2005. This document is current and can be found on www.tandridge.gov.uk in the planning policies section.

26. This strong visual link with the history of Woldingham is very much alive today because so little has changed, as explained in page 5 of the Woldingham Character Assessment³, as follows:

Key to the character of these late 19th century and early 20th century plots is the extensive garden and generous tree and shrub planting which contrived to lose houses within their plots thus creating the leafy character desired and covenanted by William Gilford.

Apart from the subdivision of a few individual plots, little has changed.....

27. When combined with the durable factors above, it is apparent that Woldingham ward has not been subject to either development or population dispersal which would dilute its community identity as referred to in paragraph 4.39 of the Technical Guide.
28. Community interests and activities are focused around the centrally located village. This area contains, among other facilities, two Churches, a Village Hall with both large and small rooms for hire (including being licensed for weddings), outdoor recreation areas including community tennis courts and cricket pitch, pavilion, primary school, one-stop shop set in a short parade of small shops, and village club serving refreshments.
29. In terms of links to other areas, residents rely on either the internet or their cars to access what is not available in the village. However, it is important to recognise that while more services may be available in the larger settlements (such as Oxted), a much wider range of services can be found in the larger towns adjacent to Tandridge District, such as Reigate, Redhill and Croydon. These are just another 15-20 minutes away by car, and so Woldingham residents regularly travel "just that bit further" in order to access a much wider array of services.
30. Paragraph 4.41 of the Technical Guide also explains that evidence of community can also be found in collective engagements with the local authority, as follows:
- Evidence of the identity of a community may be presented where there are recorded community interactions and collective engagements with the principal local authority for their area. The existence, and activities of, town and parish councils, residents' associations, and local voluntary organisations will, for example, be sources of evidence for this.*
31. We have used planning as an example of collective representation to the principal local authority because successful adoption of policies and complex planning documents for Woldingham illustrate clear and defineable outcomes

³ Supplementary Planning Document adopted by Tandridge District Council.

implemented by the local authority in the interests of Woldingham. Examples of collective engagement are:

- a. In 2001, in conjunction with the Woldingham Association and our ward councillor at the time, Tandridge District Council included a planning policy specific to Woldingham in the 2001 Tandridge District Council Local Plan. Figure 2 contains the text of this policy:

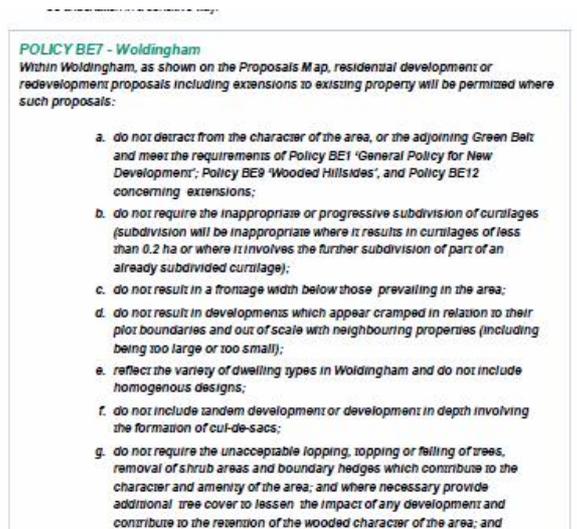


Figure 2: Woldingham-specific planning policy in the 2001 Tandridge District Council Local Plan

- b. In 2005, in conjunction with a group of Woldingham residents and our ward councillor, Tandridge District Council adopted the Woldingham Village Design Statement. This document defined the visual character of Woldingham and is still being used as a Supplementary Planning Document by Tandridge District Council to assess planning applications today.
- c. In 2011, in conjunction with Woldingham Parish Council, the Woldingham Association and our ward councillor, Tandridge District Council adopted the Woldingham Character Assessment and Woldingham Village Design Guide as Supplementary Planning Documents. These continue to be used by Tandridge District Council to inform planning decisions in Woldingham.
- d. In 2016, Tandridge District Council adopted the Woldingham Neighbourhood Plan which contains planning policies for Woldingham Parish. This project was co-ordinated by a Steering Group comprised of local residents, the Woldingham Association and the Woldingham Parish Council. The ward councillor at the time was also helpful in its adoption.

This document is used by Tandridge District Council to assess planning applications today.

- e. In addition, collective representations for Woldingham have been made by the Woldingham Association to Tandridge District Council on subsequent district-level planning documents, most recently on the newest emerging Local Plan for Tandridge District, where the Woldingham Association submitted detailed representations to Tandridge District Council which included KC advice. Our ward councillor was involved at all stages.
32. We believe these are also relevant examples because they show how the district ward councillor is a vital component in nurturing these Woldingham-specific documents through the local planning authority adoption process. Such nurturing requires focus, determination and time, which is possible primarily because Woldingham is a single councillor ward. The planning system is always changing, and so this work is never-ending.
 33. Paragraph 4.41 of the Technical Guide also refers to activities of local voluntary organisations. There is not room to list the very large number of local voluntary organisations whose focus and identity is centred on Woldingham. Many are long-standing, such 1st Woldingham Scout Group which is 110 years old and also one of the oldest organisations in the village, and the Woldingham History Society.
 34. We also have a number of recently formed groups, and it is these we have highlighted because their formation shows how ward residents are forming new groups and having new ideas which perpetuate the community identity and interests of Woldingham:
 - a. #viralkindnessWoldingham: This was set up in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by local residents and continues today. Volunteer residents were organised to provide support for residents that might need a bit of extra help during the pandemic. This was an excellent example of how a large number of volunteers each making a small contribution resulted in a significant positive impact for those living in Woldingham. This initiative combines modern – social media -- and traditional communications methods. Volunteers also:
 - i. raised over £700 to buy PPE materials for Woldingham School which was using its 3D printers to make face masks,
 - ii. raised over £5,000 to replace the trees that were subject to an arson attack at the beginning of the first lock down in early 2020,
 - iii. donated to other residents who were making scrubs and other PPE,

- iv. sourced and organised food suppliers from London and surrounding areas (such as farms) whose food was otherwise going to go to waste due to hospitality being closed.
- b. Keeping Woldingham Safe is a recent group which has reinvented Neighbourhood Watch using social media, such as whatsapp groups, to benefit Woldingham.
- c. Welcome day for new residents: This event was held in 2022 and hosted by the "Village Club" which is 103 years old. The purpose was to welcome those who have recently moved to Woldingham and to introduce them to the wide range of local community groups. These groups laid out exhibition stands which were staffed by volunteers from those groups. Participating local groups included:
 - i. The Glebe (the main recreation ground in the village which was deeded to Woldingham village by a generous benefactor to create a trust which is run by volunteers)
 - ii. Woldingham Badminton Club
 - iii. Badminton For Fun
 - iv. Woldingham Village Cricket Club
 - v. Parish Churches of St Paul's & St Agatha's
 - vi. Woldingham Writers Group
 - vii. Woldingham Association
 - viii. Woldingham Parish Council
 - ix. 1st Woldingham Scouts, Brownies, Cubs and Rainbows.
 - x. Meridian (Ladies Group)
 - xi. 123 Club (For babies and toddlers)
 - xii. #viralkindnessWoldingham/Good Neighbours
 - xiii. Woldingham Neighbourhood Watch / Keeping Woldingham Safe
 - xiv. Woldingham Players (the local drama and music group)
 - xv. Woldingham Pantomime
 - xvi. Woldingham & District Horticultural Society
 - xvii. Woldingham Magazine
- d. In the countryside, 1st Woldingham Scout Group created the "Woldingham Parish Boundary Path celebrating Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee" which was launched as part of the Woldilngham Jubilee celebrations. This path links the footpaths/bridleways around the perimeter of Woldingham Parish into a coherent journey around the parish, taking into account the steep hills and glorious landscapes of this area. Professionally designed permanent posters have been installed at various points along path to guide users on their journey. Figure 3 shows this poster.



Figure 3: 1st Scout Troop Woldingham Parish Boundary Path Poster installed along this newly created network of paths

- e. Residents of the ward have also donated to purchase special parcels of land in the parish for community benefit, such as Madeira Walk (which is a unique area of rare chalk downland), and Great Church Wood. The latter is an ancient and semi-ancient woodland which purchased by Woldingham residents who then donated it to the Woodland Trust. There are footpaths throughout this woodland.

35. These are just a few examples of the diverse range of interests, groups and community events which represent the identity and interests of Woldingham. We add that our ward councillor for Woldingham is kept pretty busy attending a large proportion of these community events, which is such an important part of the work of a district councillor.

Section 3: What has happened since the 1998 Boundary Review

- 36. This section explains that very little has happened in Tandridge District (or in Woldingham) since the 1998 Boundary Review in terms of population growth, changes to population concentration or electoral inequality.
- 37. Table 1 uses the population figures in the 1998 Boundary Review and in the Consultation Spreadsheet to show how total population growth from 1997 to 2022 has been around 11%. This is an annual growth rate over that 25 year period of less than 0.5% per year. That is very low in any context, in our view.

Population change since 1997	1997	2022	%chg
Westway (Caterham)	1897	3438	81.2%
Whyteleafe	2588	3252	25.7%
Portley (Caterham)	2913	3381	16.1%
Valley (Caterham)	2824	3222	14.1%
Felbridge	1593	1809	13.6%
Warlingham East & Chelsham & Farleigh	3841	4356	13.4%
Lingfield&Crowhurst	2960	3328	12.4%
Harestone (Caterham)	2881	3229	12.1%
Oxted S	4249	4739	11.5%
Burstow&Horne	4399	4855	10.4%
Oxted N & Tandridge	4182	4534	8.4%
Dormans&Felcourt	2857	3073	7.6%
Tatsfield&Titsey	1485	1566	5.5%
Godstone	4333	4536	4.7%
Limpsfield	2763	2878	4.2%
Queens Park (Caterham)	2820	2933	4.0%
Warlingham West	2733	2825	3.4%
Bletchingley & Nutfield	4383	4496	2.6%
Chaldon	1392	1421	2.1%
Woldingham	1659	1590	-4.2%
Totals	58752	65461	11.4%

Table 1: Population growth in Tandridge District wards between 1997 and 2022.
Rural ward data may not be directly comparable as some areas were not parishes in 1998.

38. That very low average hides a wide distribution of population growth between the wards. Table 1 shows 81% growth in Westway to nearly flat in the rural areas in the lower section of the table. We note that the population figures in the rural areas may not be directly comparable between 1997 and 2022 as some of these rural areas have become parishes since then.
39. This large difference in population growth is due to housebuilding in these non-Green Belt settlements which has led to a large number of people moving from areas outside of Tandridge District into areas such as Westway-Caterham where the new houses were built.
40. As highlighted in the 1998 Boundary Review, it remains the case⁴ that just over 60% of the population resides in the main settlements of Caterham, Oxted, Warlingham and Whyteleafe. This population concentration is another durable factor which affects the extent to which three councillor wards can be created that also meet the three criteria.
41. This low population growth is also consistent with the fact that Tandridge District is predominately rural, is 94% Green Belt with more than 30% covered by either

⁴ 1998 Boundary Review Report Section 2, Paragraph 6

the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in recognition of the distinctive and high quality landscapes in this area. The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty also adjoins parts of the eastern Tandridge administrative boundary.

42. As explained earlier, the Consultation Spreadsheet shows that currently only one ward has a deviation of more than 10% from the average electoral ratio, with two projected in 2028 (the second at 11%).
43. Therefore, we believe that significant changes to the current ward boundaries are not justified.

Section 4: Discussion of possible ward combinations

44. We first reiterate the “three criteria”, as explained in paragraph 3.5 of the Technical Guide and which includes more detailed explanations of these three criteria:

- a. *The need to secure equality of representation*
- b. *The need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and*
- c. *The need to secure effective and convenient local government*

45. We also refer to paragraph 2.12 of the Technical Guide, which explains that the objective of three councillor wards will be implemented “as far as is practicable” and having regard to the “three criteria”:

As far as is practicable having regard to our other statutory criteria, the number of councillors in each ward reflects the council’s electoral cycle. This is to give electors in every ward across a local authority’s area the same opportunity to participate in every local election.

46. Although we put forward these suggestions, what our assessment really shows is that the “as practicable” limit is soon reached.

Suggestion 1: Two new three councillor wards in Caterham-on-the-Hill Parish

47. The three existing two councillor wards of Portley, Queens Park and Westway could be combined to create two new three councillor wards that are wholly within Caterham-on-the-Hill Parish. The electoral ratio would be below 10% in 2022 and 2028 for each of the new three councillor wards as shown here.

	No of Cllr	2022	% Varianc	2028	% Variance
Combined Caterham-on-the-Hill Ward 1	3	4876	4%	5312	5%
Combined Caterham-on-the-Hill Ward 2	3	4876	4%	5312	5%

48. This reduces the total number of wards by one to 19, and increases the percentage of three councillor wards from around 30% to around 47%. We believe this combination has the possibility of retaining community identity and interests and being effective and efficient government because it is wholly contained within the parish. However, we do not live in these wards, and so defer to the consultation responses from those who live in them.

Suggestion 2: Combine Dormanland & Felcourt with Felbridge

49. This reduces the total number of wards by one, and brings the current variance above 10% in Felbridge to below 10% while also creating a new combined three councillor ward, as shown here.

Average elector per councillor		1559		1692	
	No of Cllr	2022	% Varianc	2028	% Variance
Combined Dormansland, Felcourt & Felbridge	3	4882	4%	5324	5%

50. However, the map shows that this combined ward would be among the largest in terms of geography. It would also be predominately rural with settlements some distance apart, which may make navigating through the entire ward problematic, which would not represent effective or efficient government.

51. As with Suggestion 1, we do not live in these wards, and so we defer to the consultation responses from those who live in these wards.

Suggestion 3: Combine Limpsfield and Tatsfield wards to create a new single councillor ward

52. This reduces the total number of wards by 1 and would be within the 10% variance.

Average elector per councillor		1559		1692	
	No of Cllr	2022	% Varianc	2028	% Variance
Combined Limpsfield, Tatsfield & Titsey	3	4444	-5%	4817	-5%

53. As with Suggestion 2, the ward is geographically large, with distant rural settlements and rural road links, and so may not represent effective or efficient government. This also shows how difficult it is to create additional three councillor wards.

54. As with Suggestions 1 and 2, we do not live in either of these wards, and so defer to the consultation responses from those who live in these wards.

Suggestion 4: Combine Whyteleafe, Valley and Harestone wards to create two new three councillor wards

55. This suggestion is another example of the difficulty and complexity that arises when trying to creating new three councillor wards. We have included it because we found this to be the only other northern combination that could possibly create a three councillor ward.
56. The suggestion is to redraw the ward boundary in Caterham Valley Parish to increase the electorate in Harestone ward sufficiently to support three councillors, and then create a new three councillor combined ward that would incorporate the remaining part of Caterham Valley Parish and all of Whyteleafe.
57. However, the combination splits the parish of Caterham Valley and includes Whyteleafe, and so does not follow the parish boundaries. It does once again illustrate the difficulty in creating new three councillor wards.
58. The two new wards would be within the 10% variance as shown here.

Average elector per councillor		1559		1692	
	No of Cllr	2022	% Varianc	2028	% Variance
Combined Caterham Valley & Whyteleafe	3	4852	4%	5253	3%
Combined Caterham Valley & Whyteleafe	3	4852	4%	5253	3%

59. There are road links between the northern part of Caterham Valley parish and Whyteleafe ward, and so this could possibly meet the effective and efficient government criteria.
60. It may not meet the community identity and interests criteria. However, as with the previous suggestions, we defer to the consultation responses of those who live in these wards.
61. With regards to any other combinations, we found that one or more of the following factors meant that other alternatives that we explored failed to meet the three criteria:
- highly concentrated population and very low population density elsewhere,
 - poor or non-existent road connections and no natural links,
 - geographic isolation,
 - too many parishes per ward councillor, and
 - strong community identities supported by logical and coherent parish boundaries.

62. Therefore, we believe that no further combinations are “practicable”. This leaves a scattering of two and single councillor wards, which we believe is unavoidable for the reasons we have highlighted.
63. However, as we recognise that a cursory view of the map might indicate otherwise, we explain why some combinations with Woldingham do not meet the three criteria in more detail here:
- a. Harestone or Valley (both in Caterham Valley Parish): This combination splits Caterham Valley parish and attaches the isolated ward of Woldingham to either Harestone ward or Valley ward. This would split the Caterham Valley parish. It would not reflect the community interests and identity of any of the wards affected. The only road between Woldingham and Harestone crosses into the existing Valley ward, and so the ward would be incoherent, and not meet the effective and efficient government criteria. Combining with Valley would artificially bisect the built-up area that currently stretches from Whyteleafe to Harestone. This combination would also block the possible combination of Caterham Valley Parish and Whyteleafe.
 - b. Warlingham West: The current ward boundary between Warlingham West and Warlingham East appears to be necessary due to population concentration. It appears that this split retains community identity and allows for effective and efficient government because Warlingham West only includes the rest of Warlingham parish and Warlingham East has by far the dominant number of residents as Chelsham & Farleigh is so small. This configuration appears to meet community identity and interests.

However, this would no longer be the case if Warlingham West were to be combined with Woldingham, because the combined ward would include Woldingham parish, and so dilute the current focus on Warlingham West. This would not meet the community interests and identities of either Warlingham West/Warlingham East or Woldingham, and instead would be detrimental to all of them.

Furthermore, there is just one single track, 2m restricted width, steep (14-20% grade) unlit rural lane between Warlingham West and Woldingham known as “Bug Hill”. This road enters Warlingham West, and then follows the boundary between Warlingham East and West. This means that those who wish to participate in events located in either Warlingham West or Woldingham have to travel through the suburb of Warlingham West and up/down this single track lane.

As Bug Hill is the boundary between the Warlingham East/West, it could also be argued that the combined ward is incoherent because Bug Hill is

also part of Warlingham East. All other roads between Woldingham and Warlingham West travel through Whyteleafe ward, and so the combined ward which would be incoherent. Therefore, the combination would not be effective or efficient government.

In addition, this combination worsens electoral equality for Woldingham from 2% above average (1% in 2028) to -6% below average (2022 and 2028), while only making a minor improvement for Warlingham East, from -9% to -6% below average (2022 and 2028).

- c. For these reasons, we believe that combining with Warlingham West would not meet the three criteria.

64. However, if -- despite all of the evidence in this representation explaining why further three councillor wards are not "practicable" -- the Boundary Commission considers single councillor wards to be unacceptable⁵, then we put forward two combinations with Woldingham which our assessment shows would possibly the three criteria by stretching them. These two options are:

- a. Combine with Oxted North. This would require the ward boundary line between Oxted North and Oxted South to be redrawn to increase Oxted South by approximately 500, and Tandridge Parish to be combined with Godstone ward. The parish boundaries would be contained fully in the new wards, and so community identity and interests are likely to be retained – albeit subject to local consultation responses. The electoral ratio for the new combined and realigned Oxted wards would have a variance of around 10%, while Godstone & Tandridge would be very close to the average.

There are some rural road links between Woldingham and Oxted North, and the new ward itself would be less spread out than the current Oxted North and Tandridge ward, and so participating in activities throughout the new combined ward would be easier. This meets the effective and efficient government criteria.

There has also been ad hoc cooperation in areas where interests align, such as the future of the Oxted Quarry which adjoins Woldingham ward and working to stop the building of a gigantic DPD super distribution centre in the Surrey Hills AONB on a site that also adjoins Woldingham.

⁵ If that is the case, then a solution must also be found for Chaldon. We found this difficult because combining Chaldon with either Westway or Queens Park prevents the two three councillor ward suggestion that would be wholly within Caterham-on-the-Hill parish. This then leads to other knock-on effects that divide even more parishes in the north.

- b. Combine with Tatfield & Titsey and Chelsham & Farleigh (which would be separated from Warlingham East) to create a new two councillor ward. This combination would be within 4% of the average electoral ratio and would incorporate each parish. Each parish would retain its identity, but there would be four parishes for two councillors. Navigating the ward would be more challenging than today due to size and the limited rural road network.

Why Woldingham should remain a single councillor ward

65. Lastly, we close by reiterating our conclusion that a single councillor ward for Woldingham continues to be supported by evidence and also meets the three criteria far better than any of the other options.
66. The 1998 Boundary Review concluded that even though it was under-represented Woldingham should be a single councillor ward because it was isolated, centred around Woldingham village and had no compelling links with other areas.
67. Figure 4 of the 1998 Boundary Review shows that Woldingham ward had a 19% variance from average in 1997 and a 13% variance projected in 2022. The comparable figures today show a 2% variance in 2022 which is projected to fall to 1% in 2028. In other words, there is currently no imbalance in Woldingham ward to address, and so the reasons that applied in the 1998 Boundary Review for a single councillor ward in Woldingham are even stronger today.
68. We explain in the previous sections why little has changed since then due to the durable and long-lasting factors that underpin the isolation and absence of natural links that existed then, that exist now and that will exist in the future.
69. Furthermore, we consider that the single councillor ward has been successful for Woldingham and that having an election every three years has not prevented engagement with democracy or collective representation to the local authority as we have explained previously.
70. Instead, a single ward councillor has ensured that the focus of the ward councillor is on communicating the needs and priorities of Woldingham ward residents to Tandridge District Council, as highlighted in the previous examples.
71. Furthermore both residents and the ward councillor are able to readily participate in activities throughout Woldingham ward because the ward is coherent and navigable. This also makes for a manageable workload for our ward councillor which is very important and which none of the other

combinations with Woldingham allow. All of this is consistent with effective and efficient government.

72. On that basis, the single councillor ward for Woldingham best meets the three criteria.

Section 5: Conclusion

73. This representation has shown that significant changes to the ward boundaries are not justified because little has changed in Tandridge District since the 1998 Boundary Review and there are no significant electoral imbalances.

74. While we have suggested a few possible combinations to create new three councillor ward, we believe that what our analysis shows is that the number of new three councillor wards that improve electoral equality and meet the three criteria is limited. This means that the number of three councillor wards in Tandridge District is approaching the "as far as practicable" limit.

75. Lastly, the conclusion that Woldingham should be a single councillor ward made in the 1998 Boundary Review remains as valid today as it was then due to the durable, long-lasting factors such as topography and protected landscapes which perpetuate the relative isolation and absence of links to other areas while also reinforcing community identity.

76. There is no electoral imbalance to address in Woldingham. Instead, combinations with other wards worsened electoral equality or did not meet the three criteria.

77. Therefore, we believe that Woldingham ward should remain as a single councillor ward.

78. Thank you for the opportunity to make our views known to the Local Government Boundary Commission.

Holt, Nicole

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 March 2023 20:34
To: reviews
Subject: Tandridge District Council ward boundary consultation
Attachments: WA_representation_to_BoundaryCommission_Final.pdf

Categories: Submissions, Nicole

Dear Local Government Boundary Commission,

Attached you will find a representation on the consultation regarding the ward boundaries in Tandridge District Council.

I would be most grateful if you could please acknowledge receipt of this document and that it can be opened and read.

Thank you very much.

Yours Sincerely,

Gina Miscovich

On behalf of the Woldingham Association