



# ***Barkham Parish Council***

*Arborfield Green Community Centre,  
Sheerlands Rd,  
Arborfield,  
Reading*

*Telephone / Fax      0118 976 2089      RG2 9ND  
E-mail      [clerk@barkham-parishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@barkham-parishcouncil.org.uk)*

Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Windsor House  
50 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0TL

3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023

To whom it may concern,

**RE: Combined consultation on Ward Boundaries November 2022 and February to April 2023 following input from Wokingham Borough Council.**

Barkham Parish Council (BPC) supports the creation of a new three-councillor ward although we do want to question the name proposed.

The number of residents in Barkham Parish already exceeds that in Arborfield and Newland Parish and this gap will increase further since the Strategic Land Development Location (SDL) known as Arborfield Green is currently only about 50% developed and almost all of that is in Barkham. BPC took the decision, early in the planning process that we would do our best to work with WBC and the developers to provide the new and existing residents with the facilities possible. Despite that Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) is still refusing to accept that Barkham Parish currently contains the majority of residents in this Ward and the Parish Council ask that the name of this Ward be called **Barkham and Arborfield** to highlight the two intact parishes. Regardless of the order in which the Names appear, the Parish Council would strongly oppose the use of the word “with” in place of “and”, as this is not consistent with the naming conventions of the Borough.

The Parish Council’s reasons for supporting the creation of the new ward are set out below:

1. The Developers of the SDL wanted to give it a marketing name. The list was filled with names which were predominantly Arborfield based. This left the new development to be called Arborfield Green, the name of a very old, tiny parish in the former Garrison, which was required to maintain its links to Arborfield Parish Council in the Village via one standing Councillor.

It has left the residents of both Barkham and Arborfield confused by the name of the area in which they live. They are surrounded by Arborfield Green, Arborfield Cross and Arborfield Village, whilst being administered by WBC Officers who freely admit they have no idea where the boundaries are and use Arborfield as the place name out of habit, even when they are identifying prospective road works and naming specific road junctions in Barkham!

This new Ward is now a more defined area and will hopefully enable the Ward and Parishes to function more efficiently than a one councillor ward. It has become increasingly evident that there are disadvantages, particularly when circumstances have led to that one councillor being unavailable and therefore unable to provide the correct assistance and advice to the Parish he was elected to serve.

2. Barkham Parish was recognised in the Domesday Book completed in 1086 by order of King William I. The Manors of Barkham and Arborfield were united by marriage during the 1330s and the relationship endures to

the present day. The Churches of St. James, Barkham and St. Bartholomew's, Arborfield are part of a group of churches within the Benefice of Arborfield and Barkham, under a single rector. The parishes share a common War Memorial and conduct joint Remembrance Sunday services each year.

Barkham Parish has been a very stable parish for many years, built along either side of Barkham Road, from the Railway Station to the entrance of Arborfield Garrison at Biggs Lane. This was the route taken on a regular basis by the military horses which were manually driven along the road at night to replenish the supply of horses needed for the troop during the 1914-1918 War. Residents and volunteers manned the side roads and entrances along the route to keep them under control. The Garrison was effectively "behind the wire" at this time, with Military Housing and working structures only, including the stables and Horse Infirmary.

When the R.E.M.E College was established, the housing levels increased and the population was randomly split between Barkham and Arborfield. Post 1945 housing grew very steadily and by the 2011 Census the Barkham figure was absolutely within the limits to justify one Ward Councillors, although the occupation levels in the Garrison housing varied according to the ongoing deployment of the Troops.

By this time, the Military had been speculating for some time that they would be pulling out of Arborfield Garrison and releasing the land to Developers for private housing. The first projected figures were for some 2000 houses to be built on Garrison land, almost all of which were in the Barkham Parish, 12 houses were located in the Arborfield Parish. This new Strategic Development was to include all infrastructure necessary for the new residents and also for the existing population in Barkham Parish.

Also included in this joint new Strategic Development was a second site towards the South, bounded by the A327 with a separate negotiated contract. This is in Finchapstead Parish.

At this time Barkham and Arborfield Parish Councils took the decision to work together to produce a joint Neighbourhood Plan, believing it would give both parishes some influence in their future development, although it was accepted that Neighbourhood Plans could not be used against the Policies in place in Wokingham Borough. They gave residents the opportunity to express their views and wishes about their future. After many months of hard work, the referendum was eventually held in February 2020 and was overwhelmingly approved.

3. We are blessed with a local area of ancient woodland which is found between Bearwood Road in Barkham and Sindlesham Road in Arborfield. The Coombes is a much-valued area of woodland with many footpaths and Bridleways for both dog walkers and riders. There is currently a joint project between Barkham and Arborfield Parish Councils who are trying to purchase and protect The Coombes for future generations, In addition, there are interconnected areas within the new SDLs and The Coombes which allow for walking in the countryside.

We consider it quite appropriate that Barkham and Arborfield should be part of a larger ward with three members, but would like to make the point that Barkham Parish has accepted almost double the housing numbers during the last two terms of voting, whilst Arborfield have accepted minimal development.

We also welcome keeping Arborfield Green in the same ward, as the new District Centre and Community Centre will become the new focal point of Barkham.

Yours sincerely,



Ellen Tims  
Clerk to Barkham Parish Council

# Wokingham

## Personal Details:

Name: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Postcode: [REDACTED]

Organisation Name: Barkham Parish Council (Parish or town clerk or officer)

## Comment text:

To whom it may concern,

Please find attached a response from Barkham Parish Council, for the Ward Boundary Review that is taking place in Wokingham.

## Attached Documents:

- 2023.03.27 - Ward Boundary Review Consultation Response for submission.docx