

# Solihull

## Personal Details:

Name: [REDACTED]  
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Organisation Name: (Member of the public)

## Comment text:

I would like to comment on the above proposals. My family has lived in Solihull for 55 years, always within close walking distance of Solihull town centre and St Alphege church, which we have family connections with. We have lived the last 20 years in St Alphege ward and am extremely concerned and disappointed that the proposal means we will be moving to the Shirley East ward.

My details are as follows:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

I give my views as an individual and they are particularly in connection to my part of St Alphege ward moving to Shirley East and part of Blythe ward, Monkspath, moving into St Alphege ward.

My initial comment is that I only found out about these changes because I signed up to a news letter. No one I have spoken to is aware of these proposed changes, which is very worrying as constituents haven't been given the opportunity to respond and don't seem to be aware of this consultation.

My objections and reasons are as follows:

1. Community and culture

- Many people aspire to live in St Alphege ward. It's prestigious and considered, by many Silhillians, to be the heart of Solihull.

- The closeness and connection to Solihull centre is greater than that of Shirley High Street. Neighbours here always walk into Solihull High Street several times a week to meet up and socialise, use restaurants and shop. We never ever shop or visit Shirley High Street. Our polling station is SA04 and is proposed to move into Shirley East.
- St Alphege church was built in 1220 and in 1242 a weekly market was established and markets are still held in the town centre today. These markets are enjoyed by all residents, and particularly St Alphege residents, because of the closeness and connection to the High Street. St Alphege himself is a saint.
- At the end of the 1700's a grammar school and courts were established. These buildings still exist today.
- In 1840 a description of Solihull was written and it describes a mixture of housing for rich and poor, with larger houses built along the main roads. Blossomfield Road is a main Road from Solihull and has houses along it dating back to Victorian times.
- Alderbrook Road, which is also to be moved to Shirley East, has its majority of houses dating back to Victorian times.
- Shirley East by comparison consists only of houses, in the main, dating from 1930 to 1960.
- There is no comparison or connection to the Shirley East building profile.
- There are 35 listed buildings in St Alphege ward and none that I'm aware of in Shirley East.
- The land of Blossomfield was owned by Alfred Lovekin, a prominent jeweller and silversmith, who had Tudor Granger House and Stables built for him in Blossomfield Road in 1887. St Alphege had become an affluent commuter suburb of Birmingham by that time. Lovekin sold Tudor Grange House, Stables and land to Alfred Bird ( who owned the famous Bird's Custard factory in Birmingham) in 1901. The house, coach house and stables are grade 1 listed and still contain all their original features today. Tudor Grange House stands in its own grounds opposite where I live. It was used as a hospital in the 2nd world war.
- Part of the land was sold off for redevelopment and my property at White Falcon Court, Alder Park Road, still has the original boundary wall from 1887, indeed as do other properties along Blossomfield Road.
- Totehill House in Blossomfield Road was also owned by Alfred Bird and donated for use as an auxiliary hospital in 1940. It then became Red Cross House before being sold.
- Sutton Lodge in Blossomfield Road was built in 1859 and still stands in its own grounds and is converted into flats. It was owned by the Bird

family.

- A 1947 official Solihull Guide includes Blossomfield Road.
- Solihull Methodist Church was built in Blossomfield Road in the 1930's and is still a church today.
- The Olympic torch was carried from Solihull town centre along Blossomfield Road in 2012 by famous athletes.
- Alderbrook school and 6th form is one of the top Solihull schools and was built as Harold Malley Grammar school for girls in 1960. Roland Collins, a renowned head master who also lived locally , created a history of the school. It became Alderbrook school in 1973. My children and Grandchildren all went to Alderbrook school.
- Alderbrook and Blossomfield Roads are recorded in the famous Edith Holden's nature diary from Victorian times.
- There are old archived photos of Blossomfield Road, showing some properties that still exist from 1850's, 1900, 1906, 1958.
- There is a plan from 1902 showing boundary land and mentioning Blossomfield Road, Alderbrook Road and Cotsford. All destined to be lost from St Alphege if this boundary change goes ahead.

## 2. Proximity to Solihull Town Centre and St Alphege church.

- The distance from Alder Park Road, where I live, to Solihull Town Centre is 1 mile. My distance to Shirley High Street is 3.2 miles. This clearly demonstrates a closer proximity within walking distance to Solihull Town Centre.
- Councillor Ken Hawkins states that Monkspath, in Blythe ward, is accessible to Solihull town centre, the distance being 2.2 miles.

## 3. House prices to demonstrate differences.

- St Alphege, as I mentioned earlier, has always been an affluent ward since the 1800's. I demonstrate this with values taken from the Zoopla house price site.

### - St Alphege houses

Blossomfield Road. £750,000 - £1,200,000

Alderbrook Road. £950,000 - £3,725,000

Alder Park Road. £820,000 - £1,500,000

- Shirley East houses

Willow Road. £400,000 - £550,000

Radbourne Road. £334,000 - £529,000

- Blythe Ward - Monkspath houses

Average prices - £250,000 - £450,000

I use the above to highlight the price differences and lack of similarity. The St Alphege roads, Blossomfield and Alderbrook in particular, are very old roads steeped in history going back to the 1850's.

- Monkspath is a large residential and light industrial area built in the 1980's. It has two old buildings and apart from those, is modern and has no heritage or connection that links it to St Alphege.

#### 4. Bordering wards

- The proposal is that part of Blythe ward, Monkspath, be moved to St Alphege stating that it has a similar identity, is close in proximity to Hillfield (another relatively new housing development that sits next to Monkspath) and is more urban than rural. However there is also a swath of green parkland between Monkspath and Hillfield, which makes it similar to the other areas of Blythe Ward.

- House building is spreading out in Solihull, so those other areas of Blythe won't remain rural indefinitely. Cheswick Green and Dickens Heath are already urban modern housing estates that are, in my view, more closely linked to Monkspath in style and size.

- Blythe ward borders Shirley South and Dorridge & Hockley Heath. Could the Monkspath electorate, or part, be accommodated in these wards? The numbers of constituents from St Alphege roads, Blossomfield and Alderbrook etc aren't that many and probably could easily be left where they are.

In conclusion, we have a much stronger connection, both culturally and heritage wise to St Alphege ward, dating back to the early 1800's and possibly earlier. We have no identity with Shirley East, or any other Shirley wards, indeed Councillor Hawkins points out that the Shirley wards have a very strong identity together. We do not fit in to that at all, and never visit Shirley. We have very strong ties with Solihull Town Centre. I know the St Alphege community well, having lived in the ward for the last 20 years. My 55 years in Solihull have always been within walking distance of St Alphege church and the High Street.

The proximity in walking distance shows that we are much closer to Solihull centre than Shirley.

The difference in house prices demonstrates the house size and style differences and desirability differences. Monkspath was built in the 1980's, the roads there aren't at all the same. We have a lot more greenery with a feeling of space and differing architecture.

There are other options available to Blythe ward and Monkspath. It would be an awful mistake to move this part of St Alphege, destroying the connection and heritage links to old Solihull. To allow the historical properties to be moved to Shirley East doesn't make any sense. Our area's links are clearly aligned to St Alphege and should remain so.

I hope you will give my views your full consideration as, due to lack of consultation by SMBC, virtually no one will be aware of this. I am sure you would get a lot of objections ordinarily.

I do have supporting documents should you require them, but I am unable to link them to this email on my phone. Please let me know if you wish me to send attachments and I will attach them to another email.

## **Attached Documents:**

*None attached*