

# Agenda



Listening Learning Leading

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## A MEETING OF THE

# Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY 6 MARCH 2017 AT 6.30 PM

MEETING ROOM 1, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK, MILTON, ABINGDON, OXFORDSHIRE, OX14 4SB

### Members of the Committee:

David Nimmo-Smith  
(Chairman)  
Charles Bailey

Anthony Dearlove (Vice-  
Chairman)  
Margaret Davies

Paul Harrison  
Bill Service

### Substitutes

*Felix Bloomfield*  
*Stefan Gawrysiak*

*Elaine Hornsby*  
*Toby Newman*

*David Turner*  
*John Walsh*

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## **1 Apologies for absence**

To record apologies for absence and the attendance of substitute members.

## **2 Minutes** (Page 3)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2016 – **attached**.

## **3 Declarations of interest**

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

## **4 Urgent business and chairman's announcements**

To receive notification of any matters which the chairman determines should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances which have made the matters urgent, and to receive any announcements from the chairman.

## **5 Public participation**

To receive any questions or statements from members of the public that have registered to speak on items on the agenda.

## **6 Community Governance Review - review of the size of Cholsey Parish Council** (Pages 4 - 7)

To consider a report on the review of the size of Cholsey Parish Council – report **attached**.

## **7 Community Governance Review - request from Kidmore End Parish Council** (Page 8)

Kidmore End Parish Council has submitted a request to reduce its number of parish councillors from 12 to 10. The request is **attached** at appendix one to this report. The committee is invited to consider the request.

### **Recommendations:**

1. To decide whether to undertake a community governance review of Kidmore End Parish Council.
2. If the committee agrees to undertake a review, to authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to draft and publish the terms of reference for the review.

MARGARET REED

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

# Minutes



OF A MEETING OF THE

Listening Learning Leading

## Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

HELD AT 6.30 PM ON THURSDAY 20 OCTOBER 2016

MEETING ROOM 1, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK, MILTON,  
OX14 4SB

### Present

Margaret Davies, Anthony Dearlove, Paul Harrison and David Nimmo-Smith

**Officers:** Steven Corrigan and Margaret Reed

### 12 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Charles Bailey and Bill Service.

### 13 Election of chairman

**RESOLVED:** to elect David Nimmo-Smith as Chairman of the committee for the remainder of the 2016/17 municipal year.

### 14 Appointment of vice-chairman

**RESOLVED:** to appoint Anthony Dearlove as the Vice-Chairman of the committee for the remainder of the 2016/17 municipal year.

### 15 Minutes

**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2015 as a correct record and agree that the Chairman sign them as such.

### 16 Declarations of interest

None.

### 17 Community Governance Reviews

The committee considered the report of the head of legal and democratic services on whether to conduct a community governance review of Cholsey Parish Council.

The committee considered and supported the request from Cholsey Parish Council to review the number of parish councillors.

In respect of Great Western Park, Margaret Reed, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, provided a further update to the issues set out in paragraphs nine and 10 of her report. She advised that the Great Western Park Residents Association (GWPR) is pursuing discussions on the management of the GWP community centres and is not currently pursuing the previous objective of seeking parish council status. As such GWPR's previous request for parish council status was on hold and a further report would be submitted in due course.

**RESOLVED:** to

1. undertake a community governance review of Cholsey Parish Council as requested in appendix one to the report of the head of legal and democratic services to the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee meeting on 20 October 2016;
2. approve the draft terms of reference attached as appendix two to the report of the head of legal and democratic services to the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee meeting on 20 October 2016;
3. authorise the head of legal and democratic services to finalise and publish the terms of reference for the review;
4. note that the committee will receive a further report in due course on the request to undertake a community governance review of Great Western Park.

## **18 Review of parliamentary constituencies**

The committee considered the report of the head of legal and democratic services on the review of parliamentary constituencies and the initial proposals published by the Boundary Commission for England (BCE).

The committee supported the proposal to rename the Henley constituency the Henley and Thames constituency. In order to reflect the geographical area covered and the main population centres contained in the constituency the committee agreed to make representations proposing that the Wantage constituency is renamed the Didcot and Wantage constituency.

The committee noted the changes to the proposed Henley and Thames constituency and agreed to make representations to exclude Fringford (currently in Banbury) from the constituency on the grounds that the community had no synergy with the rest of the constituency and looked to Banbury and Bicester.

The committee noted that the proposals do not take account of changes to district ward boundaries requested by South Oxfordshire District Council to reflect those changes made at parish level by the South Oxfordshire District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2015. Although the council had received confirmation from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England that these changes would be made these had not yet been reflected in a related alteration order. The committee agreed to alert BCE to these impending changes and request that it amends its proposals to reflect these.

**RESOLVED:** to

1. support the proposal to rename the Henley and Thame constituency;
2. propose that the Wantage constituency is renamed the Didcot and Wantage constituency;
3. request the exclusion of Fringford from the proposed Henley and Thame constituency;
4. request the Boundary Commission for England to amend the constituency boundaries to reflect the Local Government Boundary Commission for England related alteration order.

## **19 Interim Review of Polling District and Polling Places**

The committee considered the report of the head of legal and democratic services on the interim review of polling districts and polling places.

The committee supported the proposal to subdivide polling district RBA in Didcot implemented for the elections in 2016 to address the queues experienced at the local and parliamentary elections in 2015.

Whilst reluctant to designate schools as polling places, the committee agreed to designate Culham School as the polling place in Culham recognising that no suitable alternative venue existing in the village and to avoid the need for electors to travel to Clifton Hampden.

In respect of South Moreton the committee agreed to designate North Moreton Village Hall as the polling place. Although the village had a school the committee was mindful of South Moreton Parish Council's support for the proposal.

The committee noted that the provision of a suitable polling place in Nuffield was an ongoing issue. Without a suitable venue in Nuffield the committee agreed to designate Nettlebed Village Club as the polling place for Nuffield and requested officers to work with the parish council to identify alternative options within the village.

**RESOLVED:** to

1. designate Culham School as the polling place for Culham;
2. subdivide the existing polling district RBA to create two polling districts with Ladygrove Community Centre and Willowbrook Leisure Centre as the respective polling places;
3. designate Nettlebed Village Club as the polling place for Nuffield;
4. request officers to work with Nuffield Parish Council to investigate alternative options in Nuffield parish;
5. designate North Moreton Village Hall as the polling place for South Moreton.

The meeting closed at 7.10pm

Chairman

Date

# Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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To: COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE AND ELECTORAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

DATE: 6 March 2017

## Community Governance Review – review of the size of Cholsey Parish Council

### Recommendation:

1. To agree to undertake a second stage consultation proposing no change to the current number of parish councillors for Cholsey Parish Council.
2. To authorise the head of legal and democratic services to undertake the consultation.

### Purpose of Report

1. To invite the committee to agree to undertake a second stage consultation on retaining the number of parish councillors for Cholsey at 13.

### Strategic Objectives

2. Community governance reviews contribute to the council's strategic objective of building thriving communities.

### Background

3. At its meeting on 20 October 2016 the committee agreed to undertake a community governance review (CGR) of Cholsey Parish Council in response to a request from the parish council to reduce the number of parish councillors from 13 to 12 in response to a reduction in the electorate number as a result of Winterbrook transferring from Cholsey into Wallingford.

## Initial consultation

4. The purpose of the first stage consultation was to seek views on the number of parish councillors for Cholsey Parish Council. The consultation took place between November 2016 and 31 January 2017. Only one response was received from Cholsey Parish Council itself which, in light of housing growth in the village (particularly at the former Fairmile Hospital site), no longer supports a reduction in the number of parish councillors.

## Size of parish councils

5. When considering the number of councillors to be elected for a parish the council must have regard to the number of local government electors for the parish and any change to that number that is likely to occur within five years of the date on which the terms of reference were published. The number of registered electors for the parish of Cholsey is currently 3,034.
6. Joint guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in 2010 provides further information on community governance reviews and the factors influencing size and membership of parish councils. On size, the guidance says:

“154. In practice, there is a wide variation of council size between parish councils. That variation appears to be influenced by population. Research by the Aston Business School Parish and Town Councils in England (HMSO, 1992), found that the typical parish council representing less than 500 people had between five and eight councillors; those between 501 and 2,500 had six to 12 councillors; and those between 2,501 and 10,000 had nine to 16 councillors. Most parish councils with a population of between 10,001 and 20,000 had between 13 and 27 councillors, while almost all councils representing a population of over 20,000 had between 13 and 31 councillors.

155. The LG BCE has no reason to believe that this pattern of council size to population has altered significantly since the research was conducted. Although not an exact match, it broadly reflects the council size range set out in the National Association of Local Councils Circular 1126; the Circular suggested that the minimum number of councillors for any parish should be seven and the maximum 25.

156. In considering the issue of council size, the LG BCE is of the view that each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities. Nevertheless, having regard to the current powers of parish councils, it should consider the broad pattern of existing council sizes. This pattern appears to have stood the test of time and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, to have provided for effective and convenient local government.

157. Principal councils should also bear in mind that the conduct of parish council business does not usually require a large body of councillors. In addition, historically many parish councils, particularly smaller ones, have found difficulty in attracting sufficient candidates to stand for election. This has led to uncontested elections and/or a need to co-opt members in order to fill vacancies.

However, a parish council's budget and planned or actual level of service provision may also be important factors in reaching conclusions on council size.”

7. The National Association of Local Councils Circular 1126 recommends:

Electors	Councillors	Electors	Councillors
Up to 900	7	10,400	17
1,400	8	11,900	18
2,000	9	13,500	19
2,700	10	15,200	20
3,500	11	17,000	21
4,400	12	18,900	22
5,400	13	20,900	23
6,500	14	23,000	24
7,700	15	45,000	25
9,000	16		

8. The above table suggests a parish council size of no more than 11 parish councillors for a parish the size of Cholsey. However, as set out in paragraph seven above, there is a wide variation in council size and the current Cholsey Parish Council allocation reflects the range reported as typical by the Aston Business School. In addition, whilst Cholsey Parish Council has not had contested elections in either 2011 or 2015 it has not carried vacancies. This suggests there is interest locally in standing as a parish councillor. The parish council is active dealing with major projects, planning applications, a neighbourhood plan, managing local facilities and local amenity groups. No other changes have been suggested or recommended during the initial consultation stage. Officers therefore recommend that a second stage consultation is undertaken proposing no change to the current size of Cholsey Parish Council.

## Financial Implications

9. Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, local authorities have responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews. The process is prescribed and involves officer time and other associated costs, such as postage and printing. These costs will be met from within existing budgets.

## Legal Implications

10. The Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee has delegated authority to deal with all matters relating to parish community governance reviews.

11. All community governance reviews will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements laid down in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the joint guidance on community governance reviews published by the Communities and Local Government Department and LGBCE in 2010.

12. The council will implement any changes by making a reorganisation of community governance order. Where the changes impact on arrangements put in place by the LGBCE's reviews of the electoral arrangements for Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council, the council will need the LGBCE's consent before making an order.



## **Risks**

13. There is a risk that someone could challenge the outcome of a particular review item through judicial review. Council officers will mitigate against this by ensuring that at all times the council follows the requirements laid down in the 2007 Act and guidance.

## **Conclusion**

14. The council has completed the initial consultation stage of a community governance review of the number of the size of Cholsey Parish Council. In light of the response to the consultation and the evidence that the current allocation of parish councillors to elector is reasonable, the committee is invited to agree to undertake a second stage consultation on retaining 13 parish councillors for Cholsey Parish Council.

## **Background Papers**

- Report (agenda item 6) to Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 20 October 2016

## KIDMORE END PARISH COUNCIL

R F Penfold MBE

Clerk of the Council

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30 Venetia Close  
Emmer Green  
Reading  
RG4 8UG

25 October 2016

Dear Mr Hill

### SIZE OF COUNCIL

At its recent meeting, the Council discussed whether to seek a reduction in the maximum number of councillors for the Parish.

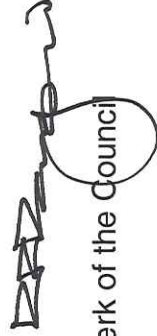
The maximum number of parish councillors for the Parish has been 12 for over 43 years. The number was not reduced in 1977, when the boundary of the Parish was significantly changed, by the transfer of some suburban roads, like Rosehill Park and The Ridings, Emmer Green, into Reading.

Although the incidence of contested elections has been low, over the years there have usually been 12 councillors. However, more recently, there have rarely been 12 councillors: indeed, since the quadrennial election in 2011, there have been 12 councillors for 6 months only – April, November and December 2012, and January, July and August 2013. Latterly, there have only been 9 councillors since January this year. The average number of councillors each month since May 2011 is 10.4.

Against that background, the Council decided to request your Council to make an order reducing the maximum number of parish councillors to 10. I presume that such an order, when made, would take effect from the next quadrennial elections, in 2019.

Please confirm that your Council will consider making such an order.

Yours sincerely



Clerk of the Council

D Hill Esq  
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