

Bishopstone Group – Community Governance Review

Phase 1 Consultation response

From 13 February to the 6 April, Herefordshire Council conducted a parish wide consultation with the community of Bishopstone group parish in connection with their community governance review. The community were asked to provide their views on whether they supported proposals to move a boundary currently within The Bishopstone Group parish area on the north side of the A438 at Sugwas Pool, Swainshill, to Stretton Sugwas parish. The initial stage of the review was to find out local views and assess what solutions are the right ones to pursue to a full proposals consultation.

The consultation was made available for anyone to respond to on-line via Herefordshire Council website. Hard copies were made available on request. The consultation was also promoted using social media, local newsletters and the parish council web-site. In addition, the residents within the boundary area under review were written to inviting their responses in relation to the proposals.

Consultation response:

Two responses to the Bishopstone group questionnaire was received. One response was in support of the proposed change, and one was not supportive. The evidence offered in support of the proposal noted that the residents within the boundary area under review look towards Stretton Sugwas as their parish, and that there was a large geographic disconnection of those properties from most of the Parish. It therefore made sense to propose this change. There was no supporting evidence offered by the response that was not supportive of this change.

It is important to note that the parish council has indicated its support for the perceived boundary anomaly to be addressed. Parishioners in the Bishopstone group should also note that the neighbouring parish of Stretton Sugwas is also supportive of the boundary anomaly being addressed. Recognising that there is a closer geographic connection to the parish of Stretton Sugwas for those properties in the boundary area under review.

The effect of this change would mean that the area and houses marked in blue on the map would transfer from Bishopstone group parish governance over to Stretton Sugwas parish governance arrangements. This will necessitate a minor ward boundary change between the wards of Stoney Street and Creden Hill.

National government guidance notes that ‘A review of parish boundaries is an opportunity to put in place strong boundaries, tied to firm ground detail, and remove anomalous parish boundaries. Since the new boundaries are likely to be used to provide the building blocks for district ward, London borough ward, county division and parliamentary constituency boundaries in future reviews for such councils, it is important that principal councils seek to address parish boundary issues at regular intervals’.

Recommendation: The balance of evidence indicates that there are sufficient grounds to formally propose that the boundary anomaly affecting a small number of properties on the north side of the A438 at Sugwas Pool, Swainshill, and Sugwas parish is progressed. This will necessitate a minor ward boundary change between Stoney Street and Credenhill wards.

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Phase 2 Consultation response

From 11 May to 29 June, Herefordshire Council conducted a parish wide consultation with the community in the group parish of Bishopstone on their community governance review proposals. This followed a first wave of consultation where the community were asked to provide their views on proposals to move a number of properties appear to be affected by a boundary anomaly in the east of the parish lying close to the Stretton Sugwas parish border.

Following the first phase of consultation it was felt that the balance of evidence could conclude that the local community were supportive of this proposal and the following recommendations were made:

Recommendation: The balance of evidence indicates that there are sufficient grounds to formally propose that the boundary anomaly affecting a small number of properties on the north side of the A438 at Sugwas Pool, Swainshill, and Sugwas parish is progressed. This will necessitate a minor ward boundary change between Stoney Street and Credenhill wards.

Based upon the above recommendations, a phase 2 consultation was undertaken to test levels of community support or opposition for making the proposed changes to the boundary anomalies identified. The consultation was open to anyone to respond to on-line via Herefordshire Council website. Hard copies were made available on request. The consultation was also targeted and promoted using social media, local newsletters and the parish council web-site. The additional step was taken to hand deliver letters outlining the proposed changes to the households identified as being in scope of this review.

The metrics from the social media campaigns indicate that 3,361 people received details of the Bishopstone community governance review consultations and fact sheets. This generated 141 'clicked links' through to the consultation pages.

Fact sheets and maps were made available alongside the consultation so that those responding to the consultation could review further information on the changes being proposed. This included the existing boundary lines between the adjacent lying parishes/wards and the new boundary lines that would result from the community supporting such a change. In addition, the fact sheets provided local information on local population figures, projected growth, information on the local neighbourhood plan and consequential changes to local council tax for any homes directly affected by a possible ward boundary change.

Consultation response:

One responses to the phase 2 Bishopstone consultation was received, that response was un-supportive of the proposed change. There was no supporting evidence offered by the consultee other than noting that it was '*Change, for change sake*'.

It is important to note that the parish council has indicated its support for the perceived boundary anomaly to be addressed. Parishioners in the Bishopstone group should also note that the neighbouring parish of Stretton Sugwas is also supportive of the boundary anomaly being addressed. Recognising that there is a closer geographic connection to the parish of Stretton Sugwas for those properties in the boundary area under review. Both local ward members, from Stoney Street and Creden Hill ward are also supportive of the changes being proposed.

The effect of this change would mean that the area and houses marked in blue on the map would transfer from Bishopstone group parish governance over to Stretton Sugwas parish governance arrangements. This will necessitate a minor ward boundary change between the wards of Stoney Street and Crenden Hill.

Triangulation:

National government guidance notes that 'A review of parish boundaries is an opportunity to put in place strong boundaries, tied to firm ground detail, and remove anomalous parish boundaries. Since the new boundaries are likely to be used to provide the building blocks for district ward, London borough ward, county division and parliamentary constituency boundaries in future reviews for such councils, it is important that principal councils seek to address parish boundary issues at regular intervals'.

The balance of evidence indicates that there are sufficient grounds to change the boundary anomaly affecting the following properties on the north side of the A438 at Sugwas Pool, Swainshill, and Sugwas parish is progressed.

- Bradworthy
- Pear Tree Cottage
- Elandwin
- The Bounds
- Longhope
- Old Weir Farm Cottages
- Sugwas Pool Cottage
- Miramar
- Anchorage
- Heathmere, and
- St. Margarets Bunglallow.

This will necessitate a minor ward boundary change between Stoney Street and Crendenhill wards. Map below refers.

Recommendation:

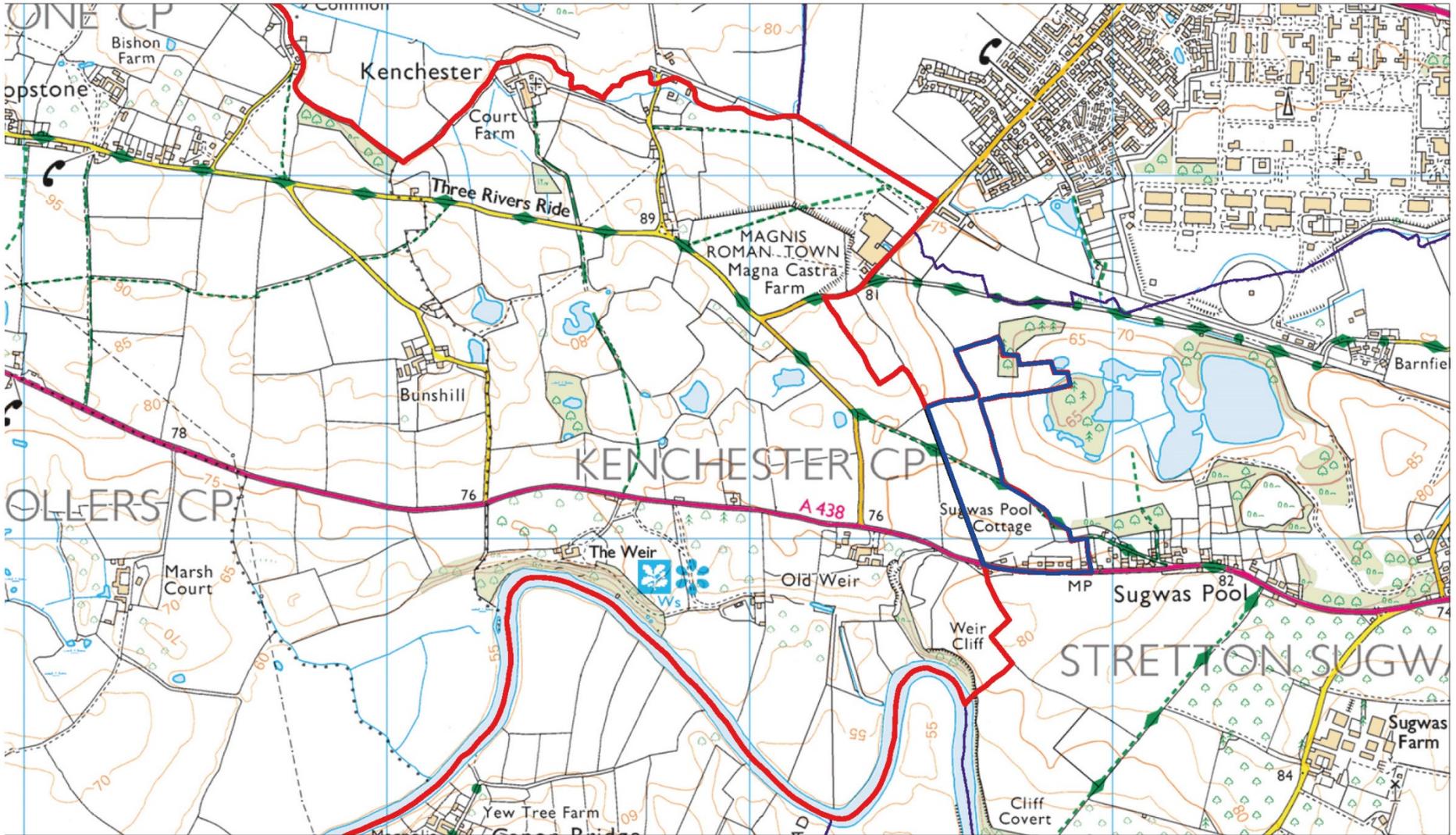
- I. That the parish boundary between the Bishopstone group parish and the Stretton Sugwas parish be moved between Stoney Street and Crendenhill ward to enable the following properties (Bradworthy; Pear Tree Cottage; Elandwin; the Bounds; Longhope; Old Weir Farm Cottages; Sugwas Pool Cottage; Miramar; Anchorage; Heathmere, and St. Margarets Bunglallow) to be moved from the Bishopstone district group parish to Stretton Sugwas parish, and that this proposal does not require other changes to the existing governance arrangements for the parishes affected;***
- II. That consequent upon this change being made that the Council recommend to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) that the boundaries of the Stoney Street and Crendenhil ward be changed to ensure coterminosity with the new parish boundary;***

Resource Implications: There are no financial implications arising from this change. Some staff time will be required to update the electoral register to record this change. For the houses moving from the Bishopstone Group Parish, there will be a slight elevation in council tax payments.

See

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/13465/information_sheet_bishopstone_group_parish

Map of Bishopstone group parish and border with Stretton Sugwas parish. Area mark with black line is proposed to move from Bishopstone group parish into Stretton Sugwas parish.



PLAN - Kenchester Parish boundary - section - PROPOSED
SCALE 1:10000



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Proposed Boundary Line



Existing Boundary Line