

Wellington – 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 Wellington in connection with their community governance review. The community were asked to provide their views on whether the parish boundary be amended. This would involve two properties which were currently in Moreton parish moving to Wellington parish and properties to the northern boundary adjacent to the railway currently in Wellington moving to Hope under Dinmore Parish.

The consultation was made available on-line for anybody to respond to 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.

Consultation response:

One response to the consultation was received which was supportive of the proposals. The principal evidence offered in support noted that both the geographic proximity and community connections of the houses in question were better served by the boundary changes being proposed.

Parishioners in Wellington should also note that the neighbouring parish of Moreton-on-Lugg is supportive of the boundary anomaly at the southern edge of Wellington Parish and the north western edge of the Moreton-on-Lugg being addressed.

The effect of this change would mean that the area and houses marked in blue on the map would transfer from Moreton-on-Lugg's parish governance over to Wellington parish governance arrangements. This will necessitate a minor ward boundary change between the Sutton Walls and Queenswood ward. For the properties located to the northern boundary adjacent to the railway to Hope-under-Dinmore, this will necessitate a parish boundary change.

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 1: The balance of evidence indicates that there are sufficient grounds to progress to formally proposing that the ward boundary anomaly affecting a small number of properties adjacent to the A49 near Marsh House Farm and Westfields be reviewed and addressed.

Recommendation 2: The balance of evidence indicates that there are sufficient grounds to progress to formally proposing that the parish boundary anomaly affecting a small number of properties adjacent to Burghope wood and Queenswood Country Park be reviewed and addressed.

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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 parish of Wellington 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 two local properties, currently located in Moreton on Lugg, to the parish of Wellington. In addition, moving three properties located on the northern boundary of Wellington parish in to Hope under Dinmore Parish.

Following the first phase of consultation consultees were supportive of this proposal and the following recommendations were made:

Recommendation 1: The balance of evidence indicates that there are sufficient grounds to progress to formally proposing that the ward boundary anomaly affecting a small number of properties adjacent to the A49 near Marsh House Farm and Westfields be reviewed and addressed.

Recommendation 2: The balance of evidence indicates that there are sufficient grounds to progress to formally proposing that the parish boundary anomaly affecting a small number of properties adjacent to Burghope Wood and Queenswood Country Park be reviewed and addressed.

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 4,666 people received details of the Wellington community governance review consultations and fact sheets. This generated 205 '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:

Three responses to the phase 2 consultation were received all of which were supportive of the proposed boundary changes. The principal evidence offered in support noted that geographic proximity and community connections were better served by the boundary changes proposed. No direct responses were received from the three properties located on the northern boundary of Wellington parish, proposed to be located in Hope-under-Dinmore parish. One response was received from the two properties directly affected by the proposed ward boundary change, Aylus Cottages, currently located in the Moreton on Lugg parish. A summary of the responses is set out below.

- *The outlying cottages cannot feel well connected to the community in Wellington*

(Individual from Wellington Community)

- *We live at Aylus Hill Cottages and feel more affinity to Wellington parish*

(Individual from Moreton on Lugg Community)

Parishioners in Wellington should also note that the parish council in Moreton-on-Lugg is supportive of making changes to the boundary anomaly at the southern edge of Wellington Parish and the north western edge of the Moreton-on-Lugg.

Triangulation:

While no direct responses to the consultation were received from the properties in scope of the boundary change in the north of Wellington, Herefordshire Council did directly approach Hope under Dinmore parish councillors to test their opinion on the proposed boundary change. The parish councillors were supportive of the changes going ahead. In addition, useful local insights were offered on the local connections the three houses in question share with Hope under Dinmore. The houses are serviced by a single access road that passes through the village of Hope under Dinmore, not Wellington. The residents are more likely to feel a greater connection to and rely on local services within Hope under Dinmore.

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*'. In rural areas, the Government wants to encourage the involvement of local people in developing their community and having a part to play in shaping the decisions that affect them.

Recommendation 1: *That the parish boundary in the Moreton on Lugg parish and the parish of Wellington be moved between Queenswood and Sutton Walls (Marked A on the map below) to enable two properties, namely Aylus Cottages, to move from the parish of Moreton on Lugg into the parish of Wellington and that this proposal does not require other changes to the existing governance arrangements for the parishes affected;*

Recommendation 2: *The parish boundary between Wellington and Hope Under Dinmore is adjusted to enable three properties, namely the Old Fruit Farm, Bathfield and Queens Wood House to move from their current parish, Wellington, into the parish of Hope Under Dinmore; and that this proposal does not require other changes to the existing governance arrangements for the parishes affected. (Marked 'B' on the map below).*

The effect of this change would mean that the area and houses marked 'A' on the map would transfer from Moreton-on-Lugg's parish governance over to Wellington parish governance arrangements. This will necessitate a minor ward boundary change between the Sutton Walls and Queenswood ward. For the properties located to the northern boundary adjacent to the railway to Hope-under-Dinmore, marked 'B' on the map. This will necessitate a parish boundary change. With the houses noted in recommendation 2 moving into the parish of Hope-under-Dinmore from Wellington.

Resource implications: No financial implications, a small amount of staff time will be required to update the electoral register following the boundary realignment.

Map of Hope under Dinmore, Wellington and Moreton on Lugg. Area marked 'A' is proposed to move from Moreton on Lugg parish into Wellington parish. Area marked 'B' is proposed to move from Wellington parish into Hope under Dinmore parish.

