

Appendix 3 to Agenda item 12

Chichester Electoral Review Representations about the LGBCE's Draft Recommendations

West Sussex County Council – Proposed response, subject to confirmation by the Governance committee on 12 September

The County Council notes with concern the proliferation of wards spanning county division boundaries. A greater number of district wards than we are comfortable with will have their territory divided between two county councillors. We recognise that this is in part inevitable given the 25% reduction in the number of district councillors; however we strongly feel that a simultaneous, whole-county review would have produced a more sympathetic result, to the benefit of all our residents. We are aware that a pilot whole-country review of both districts wards and county divisions is currently underway in East Sussex and, pending successful completion, we hope that this will be adopted as standard practice in future.

The County Council generally accepts the Commission's proposals and welcomes the fact that the District Council's scheme has been largely adopted for consultation. It has several comments for the Commission's consideration:

1. The delay in the review (caused by the additional consultation period for the West Sussex review) means that the five-year projections could be out of date. Particularly in the Tangmere and Shopwyke areas, further outline planning permissions are now in place and build out progressing. It is hoped that the District Council can have these taken into account in the population projections. This is also likely to be the case for the Midhurst area.
2. Given the increased (and progression of) planned development in Tangmere and Shopwyke, the County Council believes that the Commission's proposal for a two member ward covering Tangmere, Oving and Hunston should be split into two wards, one covering Tangmere and one covering the other areas. The County Council generally prefers singlemember wards in rural areas as this provides better clarity for local people as to who they should contact.
3. The County Council is concerned about the large ward comprising Bosham, Fishbourne and Donnington, which spans both Chichester West and South Divisions. If the Commission agrees to accepting revised projection figures, it is hoped that it might be possible to split this from a

single three-member ward down to two wards.

The Commission may also wish to consider whether, on electoral equality grounds, any net gain is achieved by a large Bosham to Donnington Ward when the Hunston to Tangmere Ward is expected to exceed the +10% variance by end 2021/early 2022 and that an Apuldram/Donnington/Hunston Ward (entirely co-terminous with the Chichester South Division) would be @+7.5% above the District average. The District Council proposal has one, single-member, ward (N Mundham/Oving) in the Bosham to Tangmere arc spanning two divisions, whereas the Commission's has two wards with five members.

4. Within the City of Chichester, the County Council recommends that the Pound Farm Road area should be placed in Chichester South Ward, to provide better co-terminosity with the County Council wards.

5. The County Council believes that the proposed City Council ward of 'Portfield' would be better entitled 'Arundel Park' as this part of Chichester is best known by that name.

6. If revised electorate projections are accepted, it is also hoped that Elsted & Treyford Parish can be placed in Harting Ward as its main community links are with Harting rather than Midhurst, including shops and schools. It is noted that discussions are underway between Elsted & Treyford Parish and Trotton with Chithurst Parish with a view to some form of amalgamation. Having both these parishes within Harting Ward would avoid warding parish councils in this area in future.'

In respect of Harting Ward

Elsted & Treyford Parish Council

To whom in concerns:-

Elsted and Treyford Parish Council is extremely concerned that the Boundary Review for Chichester has ignored the concerns that we expressed earlier in the year, which we assume you were made aware of? The Parish was only consulted through Chichester DC and a response was sent to CDC in February 2016 which strongly opposed moving Elsted into the Midhurst Ward. To re-iterate, the response was as follows:-

Electoral review of Chichester District by the LGBCE. A response by Elsted and Treyford Parish Council to the Stage One public consultation

Elsted and Treyford Parish Council have read and considered the proposals for amended boundaries as suggested by CDC and support the inclusion of Elsted and

Treyford Parish within the proposed enlarged Harting Ward that also includes Rogate/Rake and Trotton with Chithurst parishes.

Our specific response to Question 11 of the Consultation Document is:-

“Concerning the ‘interests and identities of local communities’ we would like it noted that the proposed Harting./Rogate Ward would be rural in nature. Elsted and Treyford Parish has many traditional ties with Harting and all the Parishes within the proposed Ward. Harting parish and Elsted, Treyford cum Didling - and Rogate with Terwick and Trotton with Chithurst - are long-established United ecclesiastical Benefices.

“Recently Trotton with Chithurst Parish approached Elsted and Treyford to establish whether there was the possibility of joint working, including the creation of a Common Parish Council, or other arrangement of mutual benefit and to improve efficiency. This approach is currently under review. Following the closure of Elsted School in 1985 children from this Parish are within the catchment area of the replacement Harting Primary School, built to serve both communities. Harting Parish borders Hampshire and many Elsted and Treyford residents tend to use community and commercial facilities in either South Harting or nearby Petersfield, where there is a far wider range available than in Midhurst.

“For these reasons we would not support transferring the Parish of Elsted to Midhurst ward or seeing Trotton transferred to a new ward centred on Lynchmere.”

In addition to what we stated a few months ago: - We have no reason to change our view, indeed in the light of the LGBCE proposal to split Elsted and Treyford parish from Harting and Trotton with Chithurst parishes and attach us to the 2 member Midhurst ward our views and concerns are more heart-felt. We believe that in spite of the Chichester District council proposal which created a ward just over 1% greater than the 10% variable the LGBCE use as a bench mark, you should reconsider their proposal to exclude us from the ‘new’ Harting ward. This is because we sincerely believe that in this instance the natural affiliation and established contacts and arrangements between Elsted and Treyford and the other 3 parishes that are proposed to be part of Harting ward mean that Elsted and Treyford should be part of that rural ward, not an outlier of the substantially urban ward of Midhurst. In any case we note that Midhurst will be served by two members, and would prefer to be part of a one member ward.

A further point to consider is that residents of this parish use the combined shop and post office in South Harting. The building that houses these facilities is owned by many local people, including Elsted and Treyford residents. There must be no discouragement for people to reduce their use of this facility, as it is a case of use it or lose it.

As far as we are aware no organisation or individual objected to the CDC draft proposal for a 'greater' Harting ward. In spite of the fact that it is slightly oversized in terms of electorate, as you should be aware CDC members, neighbouring parishes and others support it on the grounds that it reflects local community cohesion, as well as making good and natural sense,

The Chairman of the Parish Council has contacted a large proportion of its residents by e-mail and invited them to respond directly to the commission.

E-mail sent to Local Residents

Dear All

Local Government Boundary Review

Do You think that Elsted and Treyford Parish should be part of a larger Midhurst Ward or remain part of Harting Ward?

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF CHICHESTER: DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has published draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Chichester District Council. There is now an eight week public consultation on the Commission's draft recommendations on new ward boundaries across Chichester District Council. The consultation closes on 10 October 2016.

In summary the Commission is proposing that Elsted and Treyford should form part of a larger Midhurst Ward which would be represented by two Chichester councillors. At present Elsted and Treyford is part of Harting Ward which has a single Chichester Councillor

View the draft recommendations

You can view the Commission's draft recommendations at <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east/west-sussex/chichester> where you can find interactive maps, a report and guidance on how to have your say. The Commission has not finalised its conclusions and is now inviting representations on the draft recommendations.

The link below provides a summary outlining the Commission's draft recommendations and a copy of the letter sent to the Chief Executive of Chichester District Council. An interactive map of the Commission's recommendations for Chichester, electorate figures and guidance on how to propose new wards is available on the consultation area at: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/6923>

The Commission website is at www.lgbce.org.uk.

Elsted and Treyford Parish Council was consulted earlier in the year and concluded that Harting and Elsted and Treyford should remain part of the same ward as there is a much greater synergy between them than there would be with Midhurst.

Other factors which it has also considered include:-

- Elsted and Treyford Parish has no automatic affiliation with Midhurst. Midhurst is five miles by road from the main centre of population at Elsted.
- Midhurst is a second-rate shopping centre compared to Petersfield. Whilst the roads to Midhurst are as good as the roads to Petersfield, having arrived at Midhurst the town is disadvantaged by the tyranny of too much traffic, and has a poor selection of shops. Conversely, Petersfield is easy to access, has many good shops relative to its size and is used by many in preference to Midhurst.
- Better to be served by one member, not to have the task split between two. This situation affecting a urban / rural ward will create a bias, probably and understandably towards the major population centre (Midhurst) rather the periphery (Elsted and Treyford)
- Two-member Midhurst division will be a semi-urban ward, with add-ons of small rural parishes to make up the numbers to justify it being a two-member ward – Elsted and Treyford is a rural parish, and wish to remain a composite part of the rural Harting ward, made up of similar settlements to this parish.
- Elsted, Treyford cum Didling is an equal part of the United Ecclesiastical Benefice of Harting
- Elsted village school closed in 1985. A new school was then built in South Harting to cater for both Harting and Elsted and Treyford primary school children.
- Elsted residents use the combined shop and post office in South Harting. There must be no discouragement for people to reduce their use of this facility, as it is a case of use it or lose it.
- Elsted and Treyford, and Trotton with Chithurst, Parish Councils have recently discussed the possibility of closer joint working, including becoming a Common parish council. Whilst the proposal of being a Common Parish council is currently not being progressed, there is every possibility that it will be re-visited. Putting these two parishes in different wards will make such an amalgamation - which could have huge local benefits - very complicated if not impossible to achieve.
- There are strong social links between Elsted & Treyford and Harting residents who use the public houses in the adjoining ward. The Village Hall in Elsted is also used heavily and provides a first class facility for the adjoining parishes.

Have your say

The Parish Council encourages everyone who has a view on the draft recommendations to contact the Commission and suggest that Elsted and Treyford should remain in the Harting Ward.

Before finalising the recommendations, the Commission has to consider every representation received during consultation weighing each submission against the criteria the Commission must follow when drawing up electoral arrangements:

To deliver electoral equality where each councillor represents roughly the same number of electors as others across the district.

That the pattern of wards should, as far as possible, reflect the interests and identities of local communities.

That the electoral arrangements should provide for effective and convenient local government.

Get in touch

The Commission welcomes comments on the recommendations report by 10th October 2016. Representations should be made through their active consultation portal <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/6923>.

By email to: reviews@lgbce.org.uk.

Or in writing to:

Review Officer (Chichester)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

If you agree or disagree with the Parish Council please let me know and you are welcome to contact me at anytime.

Regards

Andrew Leno

01730825636

The Commission is asked to consider the contents of the above e-mail which further sets out the reasoning behind the Parish's objections.

The Parish Council will be meeting again on the 22nd September 2016 to consider any responses received and will be responding to the Commission before its deadline. In the meantime the Parish would ask the Commission to read carefully any comments made by its residents whose comments to date have overwhelmingly supported the views expressed by the Parish.

Finally The Parish Council would point out that it was only supplied with the draft proposals last week which has further reduced the length of the consultation period.

Midhurst Town Council

The Boundary Commission proposes, to provide an equitable balance of electoral voters, that Elsted and Treyford Parish is moved into the Midhurst ward.

Midhurst Town Council has reviewed the proposal and objects to it for the following reasons:

1. With the scale of housebuilding, particularly with sites that have not been taken into account, and with the Elsted and Treyford Parish added to the Midhurst ward, it is highly likely to pass the benchmark 10% variance that the Boundary Commission applies.
2. The addition of Elsted and Treyford Parish adds considerably to the land area of what is essentially an urban ward, adding to the possible burden of the elected councillors. This is essentially an unsustainable compromise in order to fix numbers.
3. There is little or no connect between Elsted and Treyford Parish and Midhurst. The nearest shops, school and other facilities are in Harting and Petersfield which is the shopping destination for most of the population, not Midhurst.
4. There are currently discussions between Elsted and Treyford Parish Council and Trotton with Chithurst Parish Council, with a view of some form of amalgamation. If progressed, Trotton is in Harting ward and it is eminently sensible that the Elsted and Treyford part is also in the same ward.
5. Both Elsted and Treyford and Trotton with Chithurst Parish Councils have voted to keep to the original proposal, as has Midhurst Town Council and most likely Harting Parish Council.

Midhurst Town Council therefore requests that the Elsted and Treyford Parish remain as part of the Harting Ward as proposed by CDC in its submission to the Boundary Commission.

Trotton with Chithurst Parish Council

Our next council meeting is not until 14th September. This message is therefore just to let you know that the subject is on the agenda for our next meeting and that council members have already made it clear that they intend to reiterate and

reinforce the objections they sent last time regarding separating us from Elsted & Treyhurst parish council. I will get our comments to you as soon as possible after our meeting.

Cllr Andrew Shaxson

To whom it concerns:-

1) My name is Andrew Shaxson. I have been a resident of Elsted parish all my life - 2/3rds of a century. I have been the District Councillor for the present Harting ward since 1999, and am also a Parish Councillor. I have represented Elsted and Treyford (E&T) parish since 1987, and for 12 years of that period I chaired the parish council. I am currently the vice-chairman. I am also a member of, and chair, Harting Parish Council. I live within 250 metres of the Harting Parish boundary, and own and run a third generation farming business located in both Elsted and Harting parishes – by way of illustration, of the 37 acre field adjacent to my house 15 acres are located in Elsted and 22 acres in Harting parish.

2) As the above illustrates I have very deep seated commitments to both Harting, and E&T parishes and parish councils. I am also knowledgeable about the wider area. Consequently I fully supported the proposal by Chichester District Council to include E&T parish in the enlarged Harting ward, as a consequence of the 'public consultation on new ward boundaries' that took place earlier this year. At that stage you received representation from Trotton with Chithurst PC to the effect that they both wanted to be in Harting ward, and supported the inclusion of E&T Parish within the enlarged Harting ward. You accepted their reasoning on the basis of Community Identity (para 30). E&T PC wrote in a similar vein, and although that information was sent to Chichester DC for consideration, and they took account of it in their submission to you, the parish council presumably didn't contact you as they are not listed as a consultee on the LGBCE website.

3) The reason that you haven't recommended the inclusion of E&T parish in the proposed Harting ward seems to be only because if done the variance in the ward electorate would be "somewhat high" (para 31 of your report). It is about 1% larger in terms of the electorate than the preferred upper limit – in the case of Harting ward that is 30 or so too many voters. You also state that whilst E&T parish "clearly has links" with the parishes in Harting ward, it has "reasonable road links" to Midhurst, indicating that to be the grounds for moving it to Midhurst Ward.

For the reasons I state below I don't believe that the draft proposal joining E&T to Midhurst Ward reflects the make-up, needs and wishes of communities in this locality. This can be done by adding E&T to Harting, Rogate and Trotton with Chithurst parishes, thereby making a larger Harting ward. I shall now provide evidence for my whole-hearted support for that view.

a) E&T and Harting share a primary school. Elsted primary school was closed in 1985, and Harting school shortly after. The children of this parish and Harting are now jointly educated at a new site in South Harting. It was purposefully built as a joint parish school.

b) Elsted, Treyford cum Didling, and Harting are a United Benefice, containing three churches – one each in South Harting, Elsted and Didling. E&T residents consequently and habitually worship in Harting - and Harting residents in E&T. Harting also has a Congregational chapel which has benefitted E&T worshippers since the closure of the chapel at Elsted Marsh in the mid-1960s.

c) Harting has a combined Community Shop and Post Office. This facility is not just used by many E&T residents, but in order to keep it nearly 20 years ago both Harting and Elsted residents invested in it – I did. It is a Community owned Facility, therefore nothing must be done to discourage use of this shop, on the principle 'use it or lose it'.

d) E&T residents are encouraged to join organisations based in Harting – such as the Harting Horticultural Society (the chairman is an Elsted resident), and the Harting Society (one of the members of its small committee is an Elsted resident). Furthermore, Harting and Elsted have long benefitted from symbiotic arrangement concerning their cricket clubs.

e) It seems to be implied that because the roads to Midhurst are, quote "reasonable" (para 31), that E&T residents gravitate towards that town to shop. That isn't the case, as Midhurst only has a fraction of the range of facilities or retail outlets of Petersfield, located to the west of E&T. Elsted, the major settlement of the parish is over 5 miles from Midhurst, which therefore doesn't satisfy the criteria of being an adjacent town. Although further away than Midhurst, once one has got into a car (it has to be a car, there is no bus service in any part of the parish) for most people it makes sense to travel either to Harting for catch-up shopping or on through Harting ward to Petersfield – using roads that are effectively as "reasonable" as those to Midhurst, having been improved at the same time in the 1960s. Midhurst is 'spoilt' by the domination of traffic in the main street; it is not a shopping destination of choice for most E&T residents.

f) The above indicates that there is no automatic affinity with, or reason to habitually go to Midhurst. E&T, along with the three parishes currently proposed to make-up Harting Ward, is fundamentally rural, and outside the villages consists of many small groups of properties or isolated houses. It is therefore unlike the draft Midhurst ward which.....

g) would inevitably be dominated by its urban 'core parish', which would make up a high percentage of the total electorate. Three of the four other parishes that would make up this ward adjoin Midhurst parish, the other is nearby. E&T is by any definition an outlier – an add-on - indeed there are a number of residents of

the parish who according to Google maps live 11 miles and 22 minutes' drive (using the "reasonable" roads) away from the centre of Midhurst.

h) Midhurst ward would be represented by two members, whereas Harting Ward would be served by one. Research by CDC indicates that the local electorate prefer to be represented by a single member, so they endeavoured wherever possible to create single member wards. The electorate of this immediate area have indicated that they support the principle of being represented by one wholly accountable representative.

i) the inclusion of E&T into Midhurst ward would reduce the variable on Harting ward to + 3%, and increase the variable on Midhurst ward to + 8%. Plus 8% is the greatest variable of any ward according to the LG BCE draft proposals. It wouldn't take much for an increase in the relatively low housing rate of build currently proposed for Midhurst and the parishes within the draft ward that adjoin it to push that figure higher, perhaps more than 2% higher. If that is the case the issue of Harting ward being too large, which nobody hereabouts objects to, could be swapped for a similar one at Midhurst that could cause unknown outcomes.

j) Trotton with Chithurst and E&T are similar sized parishes with a long-standing affiliation. Trotton with Chithurst does not have a Community Hall, and uses Elsted Village Hall for certain functions. As Trotton and Chithurst Parish Council have informed you, for some time the two parish councils have been giving consideration to areas of mutual interest and advantage, including Joint working. The idea of amalgamating into a Common Parish Council has been discussed, and whilst not currently being taken forward, nothing should be done which might prevent this move to improve local representation, noting the implications of Parish Councils being expected to take on more responsibilities using a diminishing pool of volunteers. If E&T and Trotton with Chithurst were to be put into separate wards the opportunities for joint working, especially the ability to amalgamate, would be very seriously affected, if not prevented.

k) On a lighter note, noting that Community Identity and Effective Local Government are important criteria, the inclusion of E&T into Harting ward would recreate exactly the cluster of the parishes which made up the Hundred of Dumpford before the Norman Conquest. That has long-departed into the pages of history books, but did the Anglo-Saxon administrators get it right? I note that there has been a suggestion from Rogate that the ward be named 'Dumpford'. In spite of it sounding somewhat unfortunate, I understand the historic basis for that suggestion.

l) I am not aware of any organisation or individual who support the addition of E&T to Midhurst Ward – indeed Midhurst Town Council has indicated that they think it an adverse move. Perhaps it is ironic that in the 2001-2002 re-organisation of CDC ward boundaries Harting ward was deemed too 'small' and

Funtington ward too 'large'. The LGBCE proposed to deal with this discrepancy by transferring Marden parish from Funtington to Harting. Marden parishioners objected, citing lack of 'Community Links, interest and identity' with the Harting ward parishes. They were subsequently included with Funtington Ward, their obvious and natural home.

I ask that because of common Community links, Interests and Identity, and for all the reasons I have expanded on above, the natural place of Elsted & Treyford parish within Harting ward should be reconsidered. It should be treated in the same way as Marden parish in 2002.

In respect of other wards

Wisborough Green Parish Council

The Parish Council does not meet in August but I circulated your email to councillors. I can confirm that Wisborough Green Parish Council is supportive of the proposed Loxwood Ward.