



Compton and Shawford Parish Council
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Boundary Commission for England
(Review of Parliamentary Constituencies)
14th Floor
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

24th November 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

South East Region Initial Proposals: Boundaries for the Winchester and Test Valley Parliamentary Constituencies.

Compton and Shawford Parish Council notes, from the South-East Region Initial Proposals document, that the parish of Compton and Shawford will no longer be located within the parliamentary constituency of Winchester. This is a cause of great concern to the Parish Council and on 1 November 2016, the council passed the following motion:

The parish of Compton and Shawford has close and long standing ties with the city of Winchester. Consequently, the Parish Council would prefer to remain within the constituency of Winchester, ideally, together with the neighbouring parishes of Otterbourne and Hursley.

The council is extremely disappointed with your initial proposal and would ask you to reconsider. The parish of Compton and Shawford has extremely close economic, transport and social ties to the city of Winchester. The purpose of this letter is to provide evidence to support the retention of this parish within the Winchester constituency, preferably with our close neighbours.

Proximity

Our parish is adjacent to the City of Winchester. Our primary bus, road and rail services all run into Winchester. At its closest, the northern boundary of our parish is just 1.15 miles, and the village of Compton only 2.4 miles from the centre of Winchester. As a result, we share many of Winchester City Centre's issues: traffic, commercial development, housing policy and transport. It would be a duplication of effort if we had to lobby through the Test Valley MP, when Winchester was lobbying on the same issues through the Winchester MP. There is no closeness, historic tie or shared facilities with Romsey and the Test Valley.

We have several facilities directly servicing Winchester City, which reside wholly or significantly in our parish and have been the subject of past discussions with the Winchester MP. We believe the following are strong arguments for re-consideration:

Future Development

Bushfield Camp, on the northern edge of the parish, has boundaries with the parish of Badger Farm and Winchester's St Michael ward. The Winchester Local Plan refers to this area as being of mixed development for housing and commercial purposes for the benefit of Winchester. Its owners, the Church Commissioners, are working closely with Winchester

City Council and others on development plans, which may include a Science Park and housing. Since a recent, highly publicised campaign to give this former World War II camp protected Village Green status failed, any proposals for development are likely to be highly controversial and require the local MP's attention.

Parking

A continual problem for the historical City of Winchester. The South Winchester Park and Ride, accessed from M3 J11, serves Winchester from the south and lies wholly within the parish of Compton and Shawford.

Rail

Shawford railway station has become a valuable stop on the Waterloo-Winchester-Southampton railway line and, because of parking problems in Winchester, has become popular for local, commuting and business travel to London. There is strong local interest in maintaining the level of service and negotiating with the franchise operator for improvements to the service and the station. Many of the service and capacity issues are common to Shawford and Winchester. The Winchester MP, Steve Brine, has taken a keen interest in the future development of the station and its surrounds, and has been heavily involved in meetings with the current rail franchise holder and other key stakeholders. There is no commonality with Romsey Station, which has no direct services to London and is operated by a different Train Operating Company.

M3 Motorway

The motorway bisects the parish as it bypasses Winchester. The Parish Council has worked closely with successive Winchester MPs, during three decades, over the planning, mitigation of construction impact, maintenance and the long campaign for a low noise surface. Due to the length of the motorway under the Winchester MP's jurisdiction he was able to organise crucial meetings with senior officials from the DfT, which resulted in bringing forward a key noise reduction programme.

Cycle Routes:

The recently restored historic Hockley Viaduct, owned by Winchester City Council, lies within the parish. It forms the start point for the Viaduct Way cycle and footpath route from the South Winchester Park and Ride into Winchester.

Ties with Oliver's Battery and Badger Farm

The Commission accepted the Parish Council's response to the 2015 LGBCE enquiry into Winchester District wards, i.e. that the wards of Compton & Otterbourne and Oliver's Battery & Badger Farm should be combined into a five parish three-member ward. This arrangement is working very well and we are now able to work with them and the Winchester MP on areas of common concern such as development, transport, education, and erosion of natural settlements.

Housing

There have been many attempts to reduce the natural settlement gaps between Oliver's Battery and Compton. This is likely to continue and needs the support of an MP common to both parishes.

Open Spaces

There is a good network of well-used footpaths and bridleways around the boundary between Compton & Shawford and the neighbouring parishes of Oliver's Battery and Badger Farm, both of which will remain within the proposed constituency of Winchester.

Services

The Sainsbury's supermarket in Badger Farm is where many, if not most, residents do their regular shopping; many residents use the doctor's surgery in Badger Farm and the shops in Oliver's Battery (butcher, post office etc.) are a valuable resource for residents of all three parishes.

Historic, Social and Education

Oliver's Battery (pre-1956) and parts of Badger Farm (pre-1985) were part of the historic parish of Compton. Before Oliver's Battery had its own church, parishioners used to walk to church in Compton. Some still attend Compton Church. The adjacent primary school is just 2.4 miles from the centre of Winchester and has pupils whose homes are located within the city boundaries. Most pupils from the school go on to further education at Winchester Secondary Schools and Colleges.

Conclusion

The Parish Council believes that there is a strong case for the parish of Compton and Shawford to remain within the constituency of Winchester and notes that, with just 1340 electors (as at May 2105) this could be accommodated within the legal upper limit of 78,507. It would raise the number of constituents from 76,083 to 77,423.

While the Parish Council would prefer that its neighbouring parishes of Otterbourne, Twyford and Hursley, should also remain within the constituency of Winchester, it recognises that to do so would entail major revisions to the current proposals. One possible solution would be to move the mainly rural wards of Wonston, Micheldever and Sparsholt from Winchester to Test Valley. But this suggestion should not detract from the very strong argument for the parish of Compton and Shawford to remain within the parliamentary constituency of Winchester.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Southgate
Chairman
Compton and Shawford Parish Council

cc Steve Brine MP
Councillor M Bell
Councillor B Lamming
Councillor J Warwick