

28 March 2015

## Response to the LG BCE draft recommendations for Winchester

We were disappointed to see that your draft proposal does not reflect the points made in our submission to the first round of consultation.

We strongly believe that our original submission satisfies all of your legislative objectives much better than does your draft proposal. This letter explains why.

We note that the legislation requires you to have regard to:-

- Electoral equality, where each Councillor represents roughly the same number of voters
- the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and in particular
  - the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable,
  - the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties,
- the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and
- the desirability of 3-member wards (given that Winchester City Council voted, albeit by a narrow margin, to retain election by thirds)

### LG BCE Draft recommendation

The Boundary Commission draft proposal is to separate Compton & Shawford from its current neighbours, Otterbourne and Hursley, and put us into a ward with Twyford and a dozen other parishes in the Meon Valley.

Such a geographically large new ward, split across two different County Council divisions, would

- break existing ties, thus diluting community identity, and
- make local government less effective, less convenient, and more difficult for our ward councillors to deliver.

### Our proposal

Our proposal *to combine the existing Compton & Otterbourne ward with Olivers Battery & Badger Farm ward into a new 3-member ward wholly contained within the County's Winchester Downlands Division* would

- meet the requirement for electoral equality even better (to within about 0.1% of the target number of electors per councillor, using 2020 projections);
- be well-connected by roads (A3090, Poles Lane and Otterbourne Road/Main Road) and footpaths
- preserve existing ties
- enhance community identity by reconnecting us with neighbouring parishes with whom we have shared interests and historic links, and thus
- make it easier for our ward councillors to deliver effective and convenient local government.
- sit nicely with the strong desire of Colden Common and Twyford that they remain together as a two-member ward. That ward would meet the requirement for electoral equality to within about 0.5%.

## Justification

### Common interests and initiatives between Compton & Shawford and Otterbourne

- **Speed and volume of traffic** along the busy Otterbourne Road/Main Road running through our two adjacent parishes
- **Transport** - the Winchester-Southampton bus service.
- **Motorway noise:** our parishes are both affected; the long campaign for a low noise surface on the M3 was launched back in 2001 at a joint meeting hosted by Otterbourne PC and chaired by C&S PC
- **Open Spaces**
  - The Sparrowgrove and Oakwood Copse Conservation Trust was formed a few years ago to purchase and conserve for public enjoyment land sold off by Southern Water. This woodland straddles the boundary between the two parishes. The trust is supported by both parish councils.
  - **Play areas** - C&S Parish Council contributed to the cost of play equipment in Otterbourne because parishioners in the south of our parish are likely to use it
  - A joint interest in preserving the Otterbourne-Southdown local gap to the south (“Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 - Joint Core Strategy” Policy CP18)
- **Shared services**
  - Williams Garage, convenience store and Post Office located just inside Otterbourne are a valuable resource for C&S parishioners in general and in particular those who live in the southern part of our parish

### Common interests between Compton & Shawford, Otterbourne and Hursley

- **Church:** These three civil parishes make up the ecclesiastical benefice of Compton, Hursley and Otterbourne
- **Traffic:** the busy Poles Lane, where the Veolia waste station is sited, runs along our border with Otterbourne and into Hursley, so affects all three parishes
- **Open countryside:** over recent years there have been many planning applications for developments in farmland near Silkstead where the boundaries of the three parishes meet. Having all three parishes in the same ward makes it easier to have a consistent approach to planning matters.

### Common interests between Compton & Shawford, Olivers Battery and Badger Farm

- **Historic:** Olivers Battery (pre 1956) and parts of Badger Farm (pre 1985) were part of the historic parish of Compton
- **Church:** Before Olivers Battery had its own church, parishioners used to walk to church in Compton. Some still attend Compton Church
- **Open Spaces:**
  - There is a very good network of well-used footpaths and bridleways around the boundary between Compton & Shawford and Olivers Battery and onwards to Badger Farm. We are looking at joint projects for their upkeep.
  - **Bushfield Camp:** this is a very valuable open space, lying mostly in Compton & Shawford but enjoyed by many residents of Olivers Battery and Badger Farm. It forms part of the Winchester-Compton Street Local Gap.

- **Services:**

- the Sainsburys supermarket in Badger Farm is where most residents of all three parishes do their regular shopping,
- many residents use the doctor's surgery in Badger Farm
- the shops in Olivers Battery (butcher, post office etc.) are a valuable resource for residents of all three parishes

### **Observations about ward size**

Since the last ward boundary changes took effect in 2002, we have been part of a 2-member ward.

I am not aware of any feeling that this has put us at a disadvantage, despite the legislative preference for 3-member wards in a district council elected by thirds.

We know that the Boundary Commission has to strike a balance between the different aims set out in Schedule 2 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

We would prefer that you give priority to effective local government and the preservation of local ties, and, where appropriate, show flexibility over the number of members per ward.

### **Knock-on effects**

Clearly, implementing our proposals would have knock-on effects for the rest of your recommendations.

We note that one of the party groups on the City Council submitted a proposal which came to the same conclusion as us for our area of the district. That is, combining Compton & Otterbourne with Olivers Battery & Badger Farm, and retaining Twyford & Colden Common as a two-member ward.

Their proposal was worked through for the whole of Winchester district.

### **Summary**

We believe that merging the current 2-member wards Compton & Otterbourne and Olivers Battery & Badger Farm into a new 3-member ward is the most effective and efficient solution for local democracy and best reflects the three main considerations laid down in legislation.

We understand that all our neighbouring parishes will be making representations consistent with ours.

Adrian Walmsley  
Chairman  
Compton & Shawford Parish Council  
28 March 2015