

Submission from Woolverstone Parish Council

As we understand it, the aim of the electoral review is to recommend ward boundaries that mean:

1. Each councillor represents approximately the same number of voters.
2. Ensure that the pattern of wards reflects the interests and identities of local communities
3. Promoting effective local government.

We do not feel in Woolverstone that the recommendations as they stand reflect the interests and identities of villages on the Shotley peninsula. In addition that the proposed ward of "Chelmondistan" deprives us of a constituency which includes our Surgery and our Local Academy. It also excludes one of the main shopping areas on the Peninsula

Furthermore, the proposals ignore our historical connectivity through the Berners estate. In addition, they fail to notice the road network connections and take into account the integrity of the area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which covers a large area of the Shotley Peninsula

Woolverstone Parish Council does not agree with your proposals for the Shotley Peninsula as expressed in the "Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Babergh District Council."

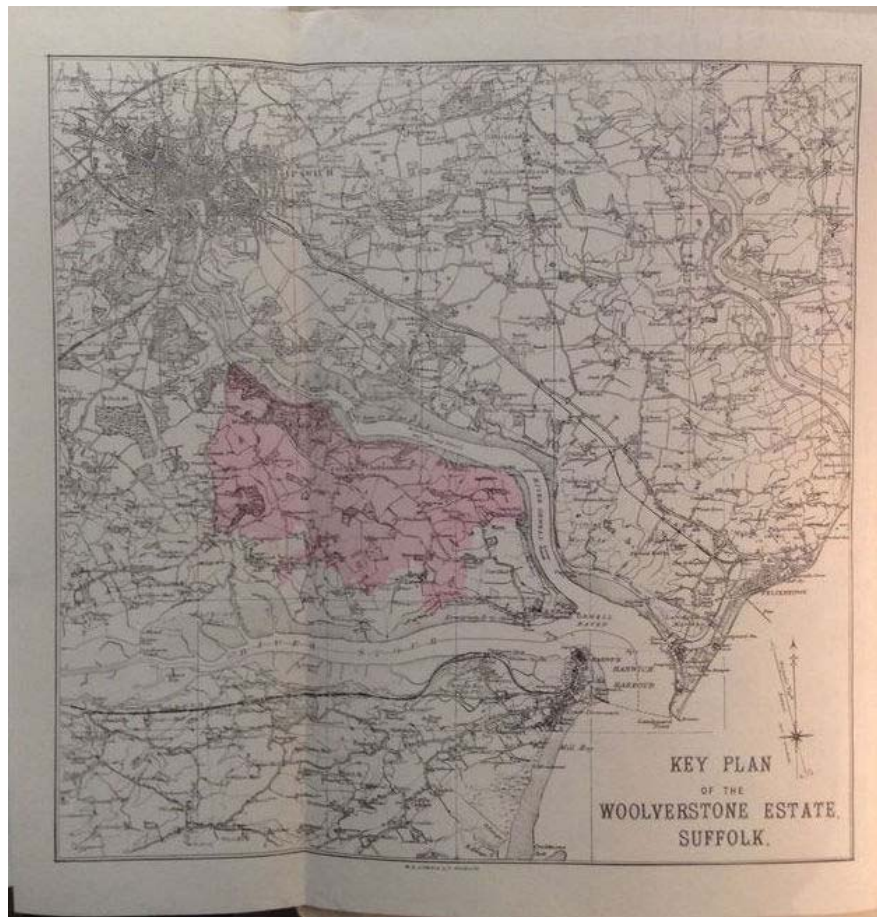
We also note that no reference was made to Woolverstone's submission when discussing issues on the Shotley Peninsula in the section "Chelmondistan" p9.

Firstly, we are at a loss to understand the chosen spelling of "Chelmondistan" as the name for the ward it is proposed Woolverstone is part of. This must be a misspelling, surely.

Secondly, we agree with the ward of Shotley having a single councillor and including Erwarton. We suggest the name of Ganges for this ward recognising the historical connections. This would give numbers of 2219 with expected growth with Ganges and Marina developments of a further 435 houses this could rise to 2466 – which we think is an understatement.

Thirdly, we think the composition of "Chelmandistan" does not reflect the geography or history, road network of the Shotley peninsula. We think that this ward should comprise: Woolverstone, Holbrook, Freston, Chelmondiston, Harkstead, Stutton, Tattlingstone and Wherstead. This would give numbers of 4,711. With Holbrook designated a core village current developments will increase population to nearer 5,000. This should be the 2 councillor ward as it keeps the Shotley peninsula connected historically, architecturally and geographically with common road links and interests.

Fourthly we suggest "Chelmondistan" is called "Berners" ward to recognise the historical connection with a family that owned nearly all the land in this ward for nearly 250 years. Below is the map of Woolverstone Estate at sale in 1937. The area shaded in red was owned by the Berners family since 1776.



Lastly, we think that Brantham and Bentley should form a single councillor ward. Number roughly 2,903. We can see no logic in joining Holbrook and Brantham together.

The Peninsula has traditionally been seen as bounded by the A137 to the West as far as Brantham. The villages on the Shotley Peninsula are connected by one main "in and out" road (B1456) and some minor country lanes. A lesser used road, B1080, connects Freston crossroads through Stutton to A137. Nearly all traffic converges at Freston crossroads. The villages across the Peninsula share a community of interest and identity.

This is a unique area, both geographically and historically. The Shotley Peninsula is bounded on both sides by rivers - the Orwell and the Stour. The entire coastal fringe, apart from a small section at Shotley Gate, is part of the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the interior is part of the AONB project area. Until 1937 most of the peninsula was in the hands of one family, the Berners family (1773 - 1937), with their seat at Woolverstone Hall in the village of Woolverstone. Much of the legacy of the estate exists in the architecture, traditions, farms and families around the villages. We feel that the Shotley Peninsula will be best served by respecting the geography and history of the area.

Would we be pleased if you would give careful consideration to our proposal for ward changes in this part of Babergh District.