

FOR: LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

REFERENCE: WARD BOUNDARIES IN BATH AND NORTH-EAST SOMERSET

SUBMISSION ON CHANGES TO WARD BOUNDARIES BASED ON THE COMMUNITY IDENTITY OF COMBE DOWN WARD

*“For some, community identity could be defined by the location of public facilities such as doctors’ surgeries, hospitals, libraries or schools.” “It will certainly not be the case that merely saying that such facilities exist can justify a community identity argument. We would be looking for evidence that such facilities **stimulate or provide a focus for community interaction.**” LGBCE¹.*

*“There is no exact definition of what makes a neighbourhood. Local perceptions of neighbourhoods may be defined by natural dividing lines such as roads and rivers, changes in housing design or tenure, of the **sense of community** generated around centres such as schools, shops or transport links.” Cabinet Office 2001 (ibid).*

SUMMARY

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has proposed changes the boundaries of the Combe Down Ward in BANES. Specifically:
 - a. The boundary with a new Claverton Ward should cross through Combe Down village.
 - b. Part of Widcombe Ward (Perrymead) should be included in the Combe Down Ward.
 - c. Parts of Odd Down Ward (Hansford Square, Frome Road and St Martins) should be added to Combe Down Ward.
2. This submission rejects the first two proposals outright as impracticable and that they make no sense in the electoral representation of the residents affected by the proposals. The proposals are potentially damaging to the interests of those affected.
3. The submission reviews the third proposal and concludes that it has some merit but probably goes too far and could disadvantage the residents of St Martins who have a closer affiliation with Odd Down than Combe Down.

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

4. The submission seeks to identify the nature of the identity of the Combe Down Ward in terms of both the facilities and the ‘private realm’ of community interaction. It initially takes the conventional approach of investigating physical boundaries, housing and services, community spaces and transport links. It then looks at the social interactions within the community (identified in 2017 by the Combe Down Heritage Society). It considers these factors in relation to the LGBCE proposals for changes to Combe Down Ward, which would result in the move of part of the ‘old village’ to a new Claverton Ward and the addition of areas currently in Widcombe and Odd Down Wards. The

¹ http://www.lgbce.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/10410/techincal-guidance-2014.pdf

implication of the construction of 700 new homes in the centre of the Ward on the former MOD Foxhill site will be discussed.

5. Although submitted on behalf of the Combe Down Heritage Society the opinions are those of the author as it has not been possible to circulate the membership to seek approval.

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AND SETTLEMENT

6. Combe Down occupies part of the limestone plateau that curves to the south of Bath city centre some 150m above the River Avon. Historically the plateau was open downland for sheep grazing with areas identified (from west to east) as South Down, Odd Down, Combe Down, Claverton Down and Bathampton Down. The lack of water on the limestone and steep slopes to both north and south meant that prior to the 1700s there was little settlement on the Downs.

7. The 1700s saw significant changes, particularly with the establishment of new turnpike roads and developments associated with the quarrying of Bath Stone on Combe Down and on Bathampton Down. By the end of the Georgian period the nascent communities of Odd Down, Combe Down and Claverton Down were firmly established. Odd Down developed around the Red Lion Inn on the new turnpike to Wells (A367) and the older (Roman) route to the west (Bloomfield Road). Combe Down was relatively isolated above Widcombe on the east-west turnpike (B3110, North Road). Claverton Down was a small settlement around the Brassknocker Inn, itself detached from Claverton village. Only Odd Down and Combe Down developed as significant service centres, the former much influenced by the Bath Union Workhouse constructed 1836-38 on the Frome Road.

8. The Victorian period saw only minor infilling with individual villas and a few workers' terraces, reflecting the downturn in Bath's fortune as a spa town and the decline of the quarrying industry following the discovery of extensive deposits of Bath Stone at Corsham.

HOUSING IN COMBE DOWN

9. Combe Down's housing stock ranges from fine Victorian villas (Church Road) and 20C 'country houses' (Horsecombe Vale) to 1930s semi-detached (Southstoke Road) and former council houses, now privately owned or held by social housing enterprises (e.g. Foxhill Estate and Trinity Road). Apart from the 'old village' area with its Georgian aspect, the housing and street design is unremarkable. Socio-economic variation is apparent within Combe Down but wealthier residents have not in general gated their homes. Property crime is low in the Ward and the housing has a generally open aspect². Vistas to both the north (across Bath towards Lansdown) and the south (rolling countryside towards Warminster) give it a semi-rural feeling. Easy access to open space is a key feature of Combe Down, surrounded as is by Springfield Park (North East), the Bath Skyline (predominantly National Trust) to the north, and the Cotswolds AONB to the south. Walking routes to Bath down Fox Hill or Hanging Lands Lane from the Hadley Arms have a rural, almost bucolic feel. Shepherds Walk along the top of the plateau scarp on the south of Combe Down provides fine views across the AONB.

10. The most dramatic changes in Odd Down and Combe Down came about with the construction of both social housing and private housing in the 20C. In the case of Odd Down, social housing formed the core of the urban expansion from the 1920s onwards. Within Combe Down the social housing of the Foxhill Estate was an isolated post-war development. It was geographically separate from the rest of the community, bordered by North Road (B3110), the Admiralty's Foxhill defence

² <https://www.police.uk/avon-and-somerset/CS220/>

establishment and the steep escarpments above Perrymead and Entry Hill in the north. A much smaller social housing estate was built near to the heart of the Combe Down old village (Trinity Road). Priory Close, which is accessed from Ralph Allen Drive, was the most significant post-war private housing development.

11. The sale of the MOD Foxhill defence site in 2013 to the Curo Housing Group led to planning permission for 'Mulberry Park', with predominantly private housing. Construction is underway and some 700 homes, a day nurse, a primary school, a community centre and one or two small retail units will occupy this key site in the centre of the Ward. The development has been designed to have an identity of its own and to bridge the obvious physical (and social) disconnects between the Foxhill Estate and the community to the east (Stonehouse Lane, Priory Close) and the 'old village'.

FACILITIES AND TRANSPORT LINKS AS COMMUNITY IDENTIFIERS

12. Based on the physical and urban geography, service provision and transport links it would seem there are two distinct communities in the existing Combe Down Ward with contrasting identities. For convenience they will be called the Old Village and West Combe Down. However, as we will see later, social interaction and use of shared facilities and services across both communities suggests that the linkage is better than might be expected.

THE 'OLD VILLAGE' OF COMBE DOWN

13. The 'old village' is the area loosely bounded by Combe Road/Summer Lane, Shaft Road and North Road/Priory Close. Services are primarily located along The Avenue, and are thus central to the old village. The community is well served with a GP and dental surgeries, a convenience shop, pharmacy, a delicatessen, a hair salon, two estate agents, three public houses and a chip shop. Business premises include a car repair garage, undertaker, picture framer, a bicycle workshop and graphic design studio. There are two places of worship with meeting rooms. There is a day nursery, a state elementary school, a private prep school (with a swimming pool open to the public) and a day care centre for the elderly. The new Museum of Bath Stone is on Combe Road. Ralph Allen School, a state-funded secondary academy is found to the east of the old village.

14. The Firs Field acts as a centrally located 'village green', with adequate open space for informal games as well as the children's playground. The village war memorial is a prominent feature. 'Backstones' provides a small open space near the rugby club. There are extensive allotment gardens at the east end of the old village beyond Church Road. The club house and rugby pitches of Combe Down Rugby Club are just to the north of the old village.

15. The recently completed Character Assessment of eastern Combe Down (Old Village) notes:

"The occupation is generally of medium-to-low density, although some back lanes are closely built with small workshops interspersed with 19th century cottages. Even in areas which evolved as living places for the working community (e.g. Tynning Road, Gladstone Road and Quarry Vale) the small scale, often terraced cottages are provided with generous gardens originally for growing vegetables. These ensure that the overall impression is never cramped. The convoluted layout of the roads in the village centre and the lack of outward views lead to a sense of enclosure; however as one moves towards the long straight lines of North Road and Bradford Road, a greater sense of space is apparent." [REFERENCE NEEDED]

16. Transport links into and away from the old village are quite limited. Access from the top of Ralph Allen Drive is by a one-way road (The Avenue) or two minor roads from North Road (Combe Road and Tynning Road) which, with The Avenue, join Church Road. There is no access from Church Road to

Shaft Road, or from Gladstone Road to Church Road which adds to the enclosed feel of the old village. Within the old village is a network of closes and footpaths (known by the Somerset term as 'drungs'). These help to tie the community and are an identifiable feature in the character assessment. A minor route to the south (Summer Lane) leads to Monkton Combe, the Warminster Road and to the south-east (Bradford on Avon and Trowbridge). The No.2 bus route from Bath bus station comes up Ralph Allen Drive to the heart of the old village and returns via North Road and Ralph Allen Drive.

WEST COMBE DOWN

17. West Combe Down is loosely bounded by Southstoke Road and Entry Hill in the west and includes the Foxhill Estate and the housing along and to the south of Bradford Road, approximately west of Horsecombe Grove. Residents of Hansford Square, which is accessed from Entry Hill and Bradford Road would include themselves in this area (which is not currently in the Combe Down Ward).

18. West Combe Down is not as well serviced as the old village. There is a typical council-owned 'parade' of shops known as the Foxhill Shops. This contains two convenience stores (one has a Post Office counter), a pharmacy, an ironmongers, bakery/cafe and dog grooming parlour. However, these shops complement the Old Village in that there is no longer a Post Office, ironmongers or bakery in The Avenue or Combe Road. There is a public house (The Cross Keys) in the extreme south-west of the Ward. Sydenhams builders merchants is located off Hawthorne Grove.

19. Open space is found in Springfield Park and a small open area with some allotment gardens between Bradford Road and Hawthorne Grove. The Glasshouse playing fields are just beyond the ward boundary in Odd Down ward. There are two places of worship, St Peter & St Paul Catholic Church and St Andrew's Community Church. The Foxhill and Combe Down Community Centre on Hawthorne Grove is council owned. West Combe Down does not have a primary school. Children attend either Combe Down primary or St Martin's primary in Odd Down. There is no GP surgery in West Combe Down.

20. Transport links in West Combe Down are focussed to the west. Foxhill Estate is enclosed with access from Fox Hill road or via Hawthorne Grove from Entry Hill. Fox Hill road is blocked by barriers at the north edge of the estate to prevent vehicular use to Perrymead. The road is narrow and steep and was closed for reasons of safety as it was a dangerous 'rat run' to Bath. The principal routes to Bath from West Combe Down are via Entry Hill or the Wellsway. Routes to the south and west go to Frome, Radstock and Keynsham. The No.3 bus comes from Bath bus station up the Wellsway, then via Frome Road and Southstoke Road to the Foxhill Estate. It returns by the same route. The No. 20 bus route passes along the B3110 North Road providing transport to Bath University (20A East) and Odd Down and Twerton (20C West) for both communities.

21. The significance of the isolation of the Foxhill Estate should not be overlooked. It is not the task of this submission to review the housing policies of successive governments. However, it is clear from Prof Mark Hepworth's study of Foxhill in 2012 that the estate had the potential to become a 'permanently excluded place' in terms of the life chances of the residents³. The arguments over the approach to regeneration have become polarised with the Foxhill Residents Association rejecting

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http://api.ning.com/files/xOOYlQav7C5kVlegHfnhsK8roAsrOHmesJ2uoueBXAlwV3aXjtRmD*ebQm4g3VhvbJXzYnLFzYdmUrl3ZFf98E3POVYITKX8/FoxhillFinalReportGoeconomicsApril2012.pdf

proposals that would see the demolition of over 500 homes⁴ and BANES accepting the Curo Housing Group's view⁵.

COMMUNITY PROFILE, FACILITIES, INTERACTION AND COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

22. The 'public realm' approach to community identification might stop at this point:

"Given the complexity of communities and the absence of widely available and directly observed information about people's behaviour in the 'private' realm of the community, it seems that resort will have to be had to proxy indicators such as the facilities [noted in the preceding paragraph]. These facilities serve to locate the cores of communities." Chisholm & Dench 2005, para 3.18⁶.

Chisholm and Dench recognised that 'community' is much more than the physical attributes of the built environment. This submission proposes that, in the absence of in-depth surveys of the activities and opinions of residents, a reasonable proxy of the private realm is provided by the nature of community associations, many of which relate to the facilities.

23. The community in Combe Down is fairly permanent. The age structure approximates to the UK average (Census 2011⁷) but is under-represented in the age group 25-44 which is typical of Bath. It is 94% white, with 6% mixed or other ethnicities. 61% of households are privately owned, 27% social rented and 11% privately rented. A lucky 1% live rent-free. The population is better educated than average. The community matches the national average for employment sectors except for Education which is well above average. 3.6% were unemployed, 33% were retired, and other statistics such as household size and health were also close to the national average.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES, ASSOCIATIONS AND INTERACTIONS

24. Education-related facilities. The following are of note:

- a. Combe Down Primary School. This is a two-class entry C of E 'Church School' dating from 1830 for ages 5 to 11. It is now part of the Palladian Academy. The school is in the centre of the Old Village with a catchment area across the Combe Down Ward. It is primarily accessed on foot. The school promotes interaction between parent/carers and has an active PTA. There is considerable socialising at the 'school gate' and particularly on the walk to and from school for parents/carers living in Foxhill. <http://www.combedown.com/>
- b. Combe Down Nursey. This occupies the handsome former GPO Telephone Exchange (built 1938) on Combe Road. It opens at 7.30 and closes at 6.30pm. The catchment area is across South Bath. <http://www.thebathnurserycompany.co.uk/>
- c. After-School Club. A private provider cares for children from Combe Down Primary after school, using the Scout Association facilities on The Avenue. It is of value to working parents. <http://www.superpirates.co.uk/tribal/>

⁴ <https://bathnewseum.com/tag/foxhill-residents-association/>

⁵ <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/WAM/doc/BackGround%20Papers-1186979.pdf?extension=.pdf&id=1186979&location=VOLUME3&contentType=application/pdf&pageCount=1&appid=1001>

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http://www.lgbce.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/10388/communityidentityfinalreport12april2005_18260-13469_e.pdf

⁷ http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/census_2011_-_ward_profile_-_combe_down.pdf

d. Ralph Allen School. Most of Combe Down's 11-year olds proceed to Ralph Allen School (Palladian Academy) although some go on to St Gregory's Catholic School in Odd Down. The school, at the east of the ward, has a good reputation for academic and sporting achievement and there is little evidence of 'middle class flight' to other state schools or Bath's private schools. <http://www.ralphallenschool.com/>

e. Monkton Combe Preparatory School. A private school which caters for children aged 3-13 in the east of the Ward, accessed from North Road. The school opens its swimming pool to Combe Down Primary School and on a subscription basis to the local community. A few local children attend this school. <http://monktonprep.com/>

f. Prior Park College. A Catholic secondary school occupying the historic Prior Park on Ralph Allen Drive, adjacent to Combe Down ward. Although few pupils live in Combe Down the boarders make use of retail facilities in the old village and some staff live in the ward. <http://www.priorparkcollege.com/>

25. Places of Worship. The four places of worship are active and provide regular religious services, pastoral care and a wide range of outreach services. Life events (Christenings, Marriages and Funerals) are an important aspect of the wider community involvement.

a. Holy Trinity Church. This is the C of E parish church in the heart of the old village. The church (built 1841) is well-attended and has a Sunday School in the Trinity Rooms on The Avenue. It focuses across the age range and has church-related activities for men, women, families and senior citizens. The Trinity Rooms are also used for activities such as 'keep fit' classes. <http://www.htcd.church/>

b. St Andrew's Community Church, Foxhill. This is part of the Holy Trinity benefice and was constructed in 2011 to replace a Mission Chapel destroyed by fire in 2005. In addition to religious services it has an active outreach programme with a Monday 'Mums and Babies' Group, a Tuesday Toddler Group, a Thursday Youth Club, a Lunch Club and social events for the elderly and hosts the Mothers Union meetings. A debt advice service is based here. <http://www.standrewscommunity.church/>

c. Union Chapel, Church Road. This is the oldest place of worship (1815). It is a non-conformist foundation which provides a Monday parents and toddlers group, Wednesday 'Kids Club' after school, a Friday Youth Group, coffee mornings and a monthly lunch club for seniors. They use Bath Community Transport to bring seniors to the chapel on Sundays. <http://www.unionchapelbath.org.uk/wp/>

d. Ss Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Entry Hill. The church focusses on the provision of Catholic services, the sacraments and pastoral activities for the community in south Bath. The priest is also the Catholic Chaplain to the two universities in Bath. Their outreach includes a weekly soup-run for the homeless in Bath. <http://www.stspeterpaulbath.org.uk/>

26. Sports and Social Clubs. Combe Down has numerous sports and social clubs which cover a wide range of age groups.

a. Combe Down Heritage Society. The society focusses on the history of Combe Down, particularly the quarrying of Bath Stone. The quarries were extensive, covering virtually the entire Ward from Entry Hill in the west to Shaft Road in the east. The membership is from across the ward, but is under represented from the Foxhill Estate. Meetings are held in Combe Down Primary School Hall. The Society maintains a village archive in the lower

ground floor of the Museum of Bath Stone on Combe Road.

<http://www.combedownheritage.org.uk/>

b. Combe Down Rugby Club. The club was founded in 1896 and has two senior teams in the Dorset and Wiltshire League. The club has Junior and Mini-Rugby teams and training. The club recruits from south Bath but the core membership is from Combe Down. The clubhouse is an important social venue with a bar and large meeting room. Events range from watching international rugby on large screens to quiz nights. <http://combedownrfc.rfu.club/>

c. Combe Down Cricket Club. The cricket club plays its home fixtures on the Glasshouse Playing Fields at the west end of the Ward. The Senior team plays in the Wiltshire Cricket League. As they have no clubhouse they use Combe Down Rugby Club or the Cross Keys Inn for social events. <http://combedown.play-cricket.com/> and @CombeDownCC

d. Combe Down Stone Legacy Trust. Money from the Section 106 Agreement from the Combe Down Mine Stabilisation Project was used to provide a purpose-built Museum of Bath Stone on Combe Road. The Trust is the management organisation that maintains the facility that is also used by community groups such as: @museumbathstone
<http://www.ralphallencornerstone.org.uk/>

1) Combe Down Film Club. A programme of films presented by local enthusiasts.

2) Combe Down Exploring Art Group. Local fine art discussion group.

3) Sewing Club. Weekly lessons in sewing, dress-making and soft furnishings.

4) Animation Club, using stop-motion filming (for under 12s).

e. Traditional Skittles Teams. Traditional skittles is played in a wood floored alley using wooden skittles and balls, both smaller than modern 10 pin bowling. Two public houses have skittle alleys and teams. The Hadley Arms has two alleys and five teams in the Bath Sportsmen's Skittles League and Bath L.V. Skittles League. The King William IV pub also has an alley and a team. Membership is drawn from Combe Down and the locality.

<http://bathsportsmensskittles.weebly.com/>

f. Combe Down Art Group. This local group, around 25 strong, meets at the Foxhill Community Centre. Activities include painting days, demonstrations and workshops

<http://www.cdag.co.uk/>

g. Foxhill Arty Buddies. This is a group which helps underprivileged children and people with special needs explore their creativity. The group meets in Foxhill and is supported by Time Bank Plus, a charitable group that coordinates skills transfer.

<http://timebankplus.co.uk/wp/?cat=11>

h. Friends of Firs Field. This group was established c2010 to protect the interests of the community in the management and use of the Firs Field (War Memorial Field). It liaises with the Council's Parks Department and organises two major events on the field each year: Remembrance Day Prayers on 11 November, and a Village Fair, usually in July. The Firs Field was granted "Centenary Field" status in 2016 as part of the WW1 commemoration. The names of some 56 local men are on the war memorial. Some of the streets in Mulberry Park are being named after fallen servicemen who lived nearby.

<https://bathnewseum.com/tag/firs-field/>

i. Friends of Combe Down Surgery. This group raises funds to help with the smooth running of the surgeries on The Avenue in Combe Down and on Sulis Manor Road, Odd Down. It purchased, maintains and provides drivers for the surgery car as well as purchasing medical equipment that would not normally be available in a small surgery. This is the only surgery given an 'Outstanding' grading by the Care Quality Commission in BANES.

<https://www.combedownsurgery.co.uk/practice-info/friends-of-combe-down-surgery/>

j. Friends of the Jewish Burial Ground. This group, set up in 2006, is dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the historic Jewish burial ground in Combe Down (on Greendown Place). The last burial was before WW2. As there is no longer an established Jewish community in Bath local people stepped in to prevent the site decaying.

<https://www.facebook.com/bathjewishburialground/>

k. Peggy Dodd Centre, Summer Lane. This is a day centre for people with memory loss. It was established in 1996, supported by a National Lottery grant. It has an active fund-raising group, mainly involving people in Combe Down, and expanded provision by 33% in 2016/17. It holds events ranging from "Open Gardens" in the neighbourhood to recitals and plant and book sales. <http://www.peggy-dodd-centre.org.uk/index.php>

l. 10th Combe Down Scout Group. The group has premises on The Avenue beside the Firs Field. It caters for boys and girls from 6 to 18 years. It recruits across Combe Down and is very successful with Beaver, Cub and Scout activities. The quarterly fund-raising Jumble Sales are legendary. <http://www.combedownscouts.org/>

m. Combe Down Short Mat Bowls Club. This is an activity held in the Scout Hut on Friday afternoons. It is popular with senior citizens as an activity with social and health benefits.

n. Trinity Road Community Club. This is a typical local group based around the 40 retirement flats and bungalows in Trinity Road managed by the Curo Housing Group. Regular Social Activities include coffee mornings, Bingo, music and movement, games afternoon, meals and trips out. <http://www.housingcare.org/housing-care/facility-info-8436-trinity-road-combe-down-england.aspx>

THE MULBERRY PARK DEVELOPMENT – A NEW COMMUNITY?

27. The LGBCE is aware of this development and has taken account of the expected increase in the electorate in their proposals for Ward boundary changes. The developer is Curo and some 700 homes will be created ranging from apartments to four bed houses. The great majority of the homes will be owner-occupied or purchased by investors for private rent. The layout of the scheme shows a central access road from Bradford Road, with a secondary access from Fox Hill road. The focal point will be an open, mainly green-space area at the junction of the access roads. A single entry primary school (210 places) is currently under construction and will be run by the Bristol-based Educate Together Academy Trust⁸. A community facility (the Hub) and day nursery are also under construction⁹. Curo has indicated that a few small retail units will be available in the centre of the development.

28. The retailers at the Foxhill Shops rejected a proposal that they should relocate to the heart of Mulberry Park. The loss of passing trade on Bradford Road would make their businesses unviable. It is possible that the nursery and the single class entry primary school will be barely sufficient to cater

⁸ <http://www.educatetogether.org.uk/mulberrypark>

⁹ <http://www.bathchronicle.co.uk/news/bath-news/milestone-development-10m-community-hub-936654>

for Mulberry Park's future needs. So, although this development aims to create a 'new community' in Combe Down will it do more than provide a social focal point for Mulberry Park? If so, it will not assist with the regeneration and integration of the Foxhill Estate. Nevertheless, Mulberry Park will reduce the isolation of the Foxhill Estate caused by the security fences of the former MOD site, it will provide new community facilities, more inclusive public transport and a new east-west cycle path along the top of the escarpment to Hanging Lands Lane and Priory Close/Ralph Allen Drive.

CONCLUSION ON THE PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARY CHANGES

23. The Combe Down Ward has a strong physical and social identity. It occupies a specific part of the limestone plateau bounded by steep scarps to the north and south, and green space to the east (National Trust land, Ralph Allen School and the University's Sulis Club playing fields). The western boundary is less well defined as the Combe Down plateau transits into the Southstoke plateau and Glasshouse/St Martin's areas of Odd Down.

24. The proposal for a Claverton Ward boundary across Combe Down's 'old village'. It is quite clear that the proposal for a boundary through the old village of Combe Down along the Long Drung is untenable. The physical links, facilities and above all the community links demonstrate that the whole of the old village has a strong identity as 'Combe Down'. Community representation and decisions need to be taken across the whole area of the old village. The recent controversy over the possible loss of Combe Down Allotments at the end of Church Road illustrates how anomalous the proposal is. Under the proposal the Allotments would be in Claverton Ward, yet most of the affected electorate would be in Combe Down. ***This proposed change is rejected with the suggestion that the boundary between Claverton and Combe Down Wards should be to the east of Shaft Road.***

25. The proposal for part of Widcombe Ward (Perrymead) to be included in the Combe Down Ward. Perrymead is situated at the bottom of the limestone escarpment to the north of Combe Down. There are no close relationships between these areas. They do not share facilities such as shops, although Combe Down residents may use the Widcombe shops in passing. The LGBCE might have been unaware that Fox Hill is not a vehicular route. The only vehicular route is by Ralph Allen Drive. The most direct access between Combe Down and Perrymead is by steep footpaths, one of which is virtually impassable in winter. In conclusion, Perrymead has much better, long established links to Widcombe. ***It would be a nonsense to remove Perrymead from Widcombe Ward and the proposal should be rejected on grounds of detachment and poor electoral representation.***

26. Parts of Odd Down Ward (Hansford Square, Frome Road and St Martins) should be added to Combe Down Ward. This proposal is questioned more on the grounds of the way it could disadvantage the affected electorate, especially those who live in St Martins (the site of the former workhouse/hospital) which is adjacent to the primary school and local facilities that form the community core in this part of Odd Down. Hansford Square has a more direct link to Combe Down and some children from here attend Combe Down Primary School and residents use facilities and some are members of the associations mentioned above. This becomes less likely to the west of Hansford Square. ***It is suggested that further research into the proposed changes is needed to ensure that the best interests of the electorate are met.***

Submitted by:

Martin Coulson, Combe Down, Bath

13 Jan 18