Local resident submissions to the Elmbridge Borough Council electoral review

This PDF document contains submissions local residents with surnames beginning A-C.

Some versions of Adobe allow the viewer to move quickly between bookmarks.
Dear Mr Hinds,

I have been a resident of Hinchley Wood in the Borough of Elmbridge for over thirty years. I am visually impaired and chose to live in Hinchley Wood, after much research, because it is a very strong and vibrant community. The heart of the village is the Memorial Green near the railway station, and around it are all the amenities that I need, within easy reach with the assistance of my guide dog. I have all the shops that I need plus my doctor’s surgery, a dental practice and veterinary practice to take care of my dog. There is a very strong community spirit amongst the businesses and with their customers. There has been a thriving residents’ association for many years who are very active in arranging local events. From time to time my local councilor arranges volunteer working parties of local residents to clear the pavements of overhanging tree branches etc. which is particularly beneficial for me with my disability.

I am appalled that Elmbridge Borough Council are recommending boundary changes that would totally eliminate the ward of Hinchley Wood, which has a strong, self-contained community, to divide it between Thames Ditton and Weston Green, which are themselves quite separate communities. There is no rational reason for the proposed change and I feel strongly that it is a cynical political move to eliminate the opposition of two independent councilors.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Nina Aberdein
From: Jane Alembick
Sent: 27 March 2015 11:44
To: Reviews@
Cc: 
Subject: Elmbridge Borough Council Boundary Review

Dear Sirs,

Hinchley Wood Ward

We are writing to register our support of Hinchley Wood remaining an independent ward.

Hinchley Wood has an easily recognised identity as a village. In our opinion, there are two areas around which local activities are centred:

a) the village centre, encompassing the shops and the Memorial Gardens
b) St. Christopher’s Church, Hinchley Wood Primary and Secondary Schools

The Memorial Gardens host several annual events, e.g. the Family Summer Fete, Remembrance Day service, Christmas Carols, which all provide an opportunity for the community to come together. St. Christopher’s Church has recently become a community hub, hosting numerous activities. Under the current proposals for ward re-organisation, the church and both schools will become part of the Long Ditton ward. What happens when there is a school problem, identified by parents living in the proposed new Hinchley Wood/Weston Green ward and whose children attend the local schools: do they consult the ward councillor for Hinchley Wood/Weston Green or the school’s Long Ditton councillor and what if the advice is conflicting?

As far as we are aware, there was no consultation with residents before Elmbridge Council took the decision to reduce the number of its councillors. Once that decision had been taken, it would appear that it has become a numbers game with an unnecessary movement of voters to fit in with the proposed 16 three-member wards, conforming to the +/- 10% tolerance on electoral equality.

Hinchley Wood has no affiliation with Weston Green and there is no community overlap. Indeed, the two areas are divided geographically by the A307 and Ditton Common and it is difficult to see how any future localism (as desired by the current Government) could ever be achieved. Would this become a detached ward? There are no direct transport links between the two areas for residents who do not drive, unlike the current Hinchley Wood ward which has a direct bus route through the middle of the ward. Where will the new voting stations be and how easy will it be for non-drivers to reach them? It is neither particularly easy nor safe for pedestrians to cross the A307.
Hinchley Wood Residents’ Association has been in existence since 1932 and is still very active to this day, representing its residents’ views both in the community and at local level since the formation of Elmbridge Borough Council.

As noted in LGBCE Technical Guidance, Ward/division patterns, section 4.35, we feel it is vitally important “that council members represent … collective communities”. A Hinchley Wood/Weston Green ward would be a split community, with each area potentially losing its unique identity.

Yours faithfully,

Brian and Jane Alembick
Dear Sirs,

I am writing regarding the proposals to carve up the Ward of Hinchley Wood between the Wards of Long Ditton and Weston Green.

As a long-standing resident since May 1989 I am absolutely aghast that such a thing has been proposed. It is an affront to local democracy and not helped by appearing to have been rushed through with little or no consultation with local residents. Had it not been for Hinchley Wood Residents’ Association bringing it to our attention within the last two weeks we would have been unaware of these proposals until it was too late as we have received nothing whatsoever from the Boundary Commission to alert us to the fact that they are, in fact, planning to deprive us of all local representation.

Hinchley Wood is a village with a very strong feeling of community. We are disparate from either Weston Green or Long Ditton and have no natural links or affiliations with either of these villages - however parochial this may sound. We are all villages with different perspectives, different strengths and different needs. We are proud of Hinchley Wood and our Councillors understand what makes Hinchley Wood different from our Long Ditton/Weston Green neighbours. They represent our interests very strongly and always have - because they, too, live in Hinchley Wood and know what makes this village tick. Should your proposals go through, Hinchley Wood would cease to be represented by any councillors from within our own communities - something which has been a strong plus throughout the 26 years I have been living here. Splitting the Hinchley Wood Ward between Long Ditton and Weston Green would destroy this community. Surely, in this day and age when people neither know nor care about their neighbours such a strong sense of community should be treasured, not destroyed? Hinchley Wood is not like that: we know each other and care about our community. As a community we try to help others less fortunate by collecting for various charities such as for Christian Aid or by donating Christmas gifts or Easter Eggs for distribution to those less fortunate.

Our local Residents Association Councillors have strongly represented local interests and are much valued by us Hinchley Woodians for this very reason. Our strong community spirit has enabled us to fight off giants such as McDonalds and we are proud of our achievement. Our Councillors stood beside us throughout, giving us the strong support and help we needed to fight off this real threat to our village. They have nurtured the community of Hinchley Wood, sending periodic newsletters and always being available to assist with local issues. We have always felt our local councillors have the interests of...
Hinchley Wood residents firmly in their sights and cannot help but wonder if the proposed changes to the boundary reflect the fact that the Residents’ Association has been something of a thorn in the side of Elmbridge Council. This is why many of us feel the proposed restructure is an affront to local democracy.

Hinchley Wood has a very strong feeling of community which revolves around St. Christopher’s Community Hub, the Memorial Gardens and the local shops. We have local Scout and Guide troops which are affiliated to the church and two very good local schools which also have strong ties with the church. For longer than I have lived here Hinchley Wood has come together as a community to commemorate Remembrance Sunday in the Memorial Gardens and there has always been a well-attended carol service at Christmas time - previously in the Memorial Gardens but latterly at St. Christopher’s Church. The Scouts and Guides hold fairs in the Memorial Gardens and there is an annual Traders Fair in the Gardens - all of which bring the local community together.

I work within St. Christopher’s Community Hub and have seen first-hand all the efforts made to engage with the local community. The church is a vital part of Hinchley Wood life: the schools make good use of the church for concerts and rehearsals; the vicar and I are both Governors at the Primary School and the vicar also takes assemblies at both schools. However, St. Christopher’s Community Hub welcomes all and there are many activities taking place there which have nothing to do with religious activities. There is a nursery school during term time and various classes in Yoga, Zumba, sequence dancing, line dancing, Kung Fu, Weightwatchers and a new children’s Ballet class is due to start soon. The church is also frequently used by the National Health Blood Transfusion Service and the venue is so popular the NHBTS no longer needs to advertise the sessions; it is also used as a Polling Station during local and national elections. We hold various events for young families, such as the weekly Stay and Play sessions for pre-schoolers; ‘Messy Church’ and Film Matinees monthly and ‘Mustard Seeds’ - a special monthly service especially for young families. Various ad hoc functions take place within the Hub, such as Quiz Nights - the last of which drew some 120 people - a Bollywood dance, Tea Dance etc. Of course, the church is also the centre of the community at Christmas and Easter, when the various services draw in many members of the community, young and old.

Prior to working at St. Christopher’s, I worked in the local coffee shop and was able to see first-hand how cohesive Hinchley Wood is as a community. There were many elderly customers who came from Gibson Court, Royston Court and Hinchley Manor. Their presence emphasised the strong communal spirit within Hinchley Wood. When Gibson Court was gutted by fire in 2010 the Hinchley Wood community came together, donating clothes, toiletries, food and money to those who had lost everything but the clothes they stood up in. The distribution of these donations was organised by St. Christopher’s Church, strongly supported and assisted by the Hinchley Wood tradespeople.

When my husband and I moved to Hinchley Wood in May 1989 we were struck by the strong sense of community here. We had dogs and people would talk to us when we walked them. We were made to feel welcome in the community. When my eldest daughter was born I lost touch with my work colleagues and would have been very lonely had it not been for the welcome I received from local playgroups and young mothers in Hinchley Wood. This strong community and village feel has endured, despite many changes within the village, including the building of many more homes on ex-Government land and brownfield sites. Despite welcoming many new families into the area Hinchley Wood remains as much as community as ever. Surely such a growth in population should enable the democratic voice of Hinchley Wood to remain strong, rather than silencing us by merging us with two other communities who do not share our history or our concerns and whose councillors will always put the needs of those two communities, which would be their own home communities, before those of Hinchley Wood.

Please re-think your proposals as they are profoundly undemocratic and unfair to Hinchley Wood residents.
Yours faithfully,

Mrs. Amanda Jane Ali

Sent from Windows Mail
Hinds, Alex

From: Fuller, Heather
Sent: 23 March 2015 16:25
To: Hinds, Alex
Subject: FW: Hinchley Wood ward

From: HEATHER ALLEN
Sent: 23 March 2015 16:11
To: Reviews@
Subject: Hinchley Wood ward

For the attention of the Review Officer

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing with regard to Elmbridge Borough Council's proposal to divide up Hinchley Wood ward between Long Ditton and Weston Green.

Hinchley Wood is very much a community in its own right, quite distinct from Long Ditton and Weston Green. It is a 1930s' settlement, centred around its square of shops around the Memorial Gardens by Hinchley Wood Station and around its church - St. Christopher's - and the excellent primary and secondary schools in Claygate Lane. I have lived in Hinchley Wood since the year 2000; my three children have attended the local schools and sung in the church choir; and my husband and I are very much involved in the life of the church - I am the secretary of the Parochial Church Council. The church and church hall have become the community hub, offering a wide range of activities and social events for the local community. Social interaction also takes place in the two cafes and the restaurant, all popular with the local community, including the elderly in the three blocks of sheltered flats. The shops themselves are high-quality, individual shops, including butcher, baker, greengrocer, newsagent, hardware store, vet, drycleaner's, hairdresser's, amongst others. The shopkeepers hold an annual fair in the Memorial Gardens for the benefit of the local people. The Memorial Gardens are also, of course, the focus for the Service of Remembrance in November. For the youngsters in Hinchley Wood, there are the scouts and guides at the Lynwood Scout Hut, the football club nearby and dance classes at Hinchley Wood School. For keen gardeners, there are the allotments in Lynwood Road.

Long Ditton and Weston Green are completely separate places with their own character, facilities and events. I feel very strongly that Hinchley Wood ward should remain in its own right and not be divided up and parcelled out. The ward boundary should reflect Hinchley Wood's very distinct local identity and the interests of its residents. We need our own voice.

I do hope, therefore, that you will reject Elmbridge's proposal to split up the ward.

Yours faithfully,

Heather Allen (Mrs.)
To the Review Officer (Elmbridge)

Local Government Boundary Commission

3rd Floor Layden House, 76-86 Layden St

London EC-1M 5LG

Dear Sir,

I write to express my strong opposition to Elmbridge Borough Council’s proposal to redraw its ward boundaries, particular in my ward of Hinchley Wood. The concept of 48 councillors – down from 60 and equally distributed among 16 wards, is fundamentally flawed and needs to be completely re-evaluated.

This is a vicious numbers game, to which the Boundaries Commission has clearly indicated its approval by saying it is ‘minded’ to accept the Conservative-ruled council’s recommendation of 48. After many hours of studying this situation and talking at length to some of the main players in the game (Council members, Elmbridge officers and the Boundary Commission’s review officer) I have concluded that the prime mission of local government – to serve local communities – is being overridden, perhaps deliberately so.

I am not a civil servant or involved in any local, regional or national governmental organisations. But in my opinion as a resident this exercise should start – and finish - with communities, around which the structures of local government should be formed, not the other way around.

Instead, my vibrant, clearly-established community of Hinchley Wood is proposed to be electorally ripped in two, with half merging with one ward and the other half merging with another, just to get the numbers ‘right.’

**MOTIVATION**

Why? We are told in a blog by Walton Conservative Councillor Andrew Kelly, chairman of the task group overseeing the process: “It’s been a long-term wish of Elmbridge Conservatives to reduce the number of Councillors that sit on Elmbridge Borough Council. We’ve had 60 Councillors since 1976 and we believe that number if too high given how much has changed since then.”
He has explained to me that since then responsibilities have moved a number of council functions to other authorities, highways being just one. Staffs are getting smaller, the internet has made communications much easier, councillors are attending fewer meetings. “We are not alone,” he says. “I looked at other areas around the country: eight out of 10 are reducing the number of councillors.”

Mr Kelly may be right about the national councillor reductions, but I suspect this is unsustainable in this new era of democratic accountability, when more and more local government failings are being exposed.

Councillor John o’Reilly, Conservative leader of the council, said at a council meeting on April 10, 2013 that £50,000 could be saved immediately with 12 fewer councillors. But this is out of an annual budget of £18 million and it is unlikely to produce any such savings in the longer term. Indeed, a study for the University of Manchester in 2008 http://www.cmist.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/archive-publications/working-papers/2008/2008-06-how-many-elected-representatives.pdf says that while administrative support costs for INCREASING the number of councillors are likely to increase in the short term, in the longer term it may lead to savings ‘as a result of more effective policy making and use of resources, as councillors are more likely to be in closer contact with residents and have a greater understanding of their views and concerns.”

We are fortunate that Elmbridge has one of the wealthiest populations in the country, but that does not mean we are personally expected to pay for road repairs, waste collection, policing and schools. Following a national Conservative Party policy of freezing all council tax rises Elmbridge has proudly done that for several years even when ‘waste’ has been cut back and inflation has been at 2-3%. But it is questionable how long this can last, with central government grants growing rapidly smaller and smaller . Are tax freezes REALLY a voter’s dream?

My own experience is that local needs are today more complex and requiring more work. An ageing population demands better and faster services, childrens’ services have more safeguards built in than even five years ago; Liaison between social services at borough, county and national level grows ever more sophisticated as new laws take effect.

The amount of work for both councillor and council official continues to grow as legislation grows. A single planning application, for instance, requires more approval from more agencies than ever before, with lower quality slipping past fewer staff. As a Neighbourhood Watch area coordinator I am already seeing the quality of police support to my community dropping as back-room staff are cut to keep up ‘front-line numbers,’ notably in provision of local public information and accurate and up to date crime statistics for Hinchley Wood.

I have tried to study the motivation for this boundary change and can find little evidence for the need. Certainly no specifics have been offered by council leaders as to where and how public services are being hampered by the existing system. As a Conservative voter at national and county level myself, I am surprised that Mr Kelly has trotted out Conservative Party dogma regarding reduction of Council members, with Mr O’Reilly merely quoting
numbers. Elmbridge, he says, has by far the largest number of councillors in Surrey. “The largest in terms of population is Reigate and Banstead, who have 51 members. Guildford are probably the next largest in terms of population and they have 48.”

But, he told a council meeting in April, 2013, 30 or 35 was ‘inappropriate’ given the council’s structure, and 51 or 53 would raise the question ‘why do it at all?’ “There is no way you can scientifically say ‘this is the right number’ and 48 therefore represented a good compromise between a measurable, but not significant, reduction from 60.”

“The way a smaller council would operate would enable members to scrutinise effectively and through a smaller, more efficient Cabinet, we will get better decisions on services and that would provide tangible benefits.”

In other words: an arbitrary number designed to produce business-like efficiencies. And just how and what are these efficiencies? We are not told: Specific examples are not given.

I note that, according to the Manchester University study, Basingstoke and Deane council attempted to reduce its council size by 50% in 2007. It got to the third stage of consultations with the Boundary Commission and studied 83 submissions. In the end it decided to make no change in the number of councillors.

A hopeful beacon – if a worrying process!

One reason for 48 proposed Elmbridge councillors, apparently, is that the number is divisible by three, the number of councillors each of the 16 wards ward would have. And this is because the council voted in November to have ‘elections by thirds’ ie each councillor would stand for election/re-election to four-year terms in different years, with one year ‘fallow.’ The majority agreed this would be the best way to stay regularly in touch with voters, rather than all going to the polls together once every four years.

The price, however, seems to lock Elmbridge into a system where it HAS to have three councillors in every ward, not allowing two as Hinchley Wood, Weston Green, Long Ditton and one or two other areas have now. The three, the council says, just don’t have enough voters for qualify for three. “We knew if we did elections by thirds that was what we would have to do (change the ward size),” Councillor Kelly told me. “If you wanted to keep communities intact you would have sought to get two-member wards by going to whole term (four-yearly) elections.”

The two-member exceptions being proposed by the Resident Associations, he added, would not be accepted by the boundary commission “because none in the country have been allowed.”

I do not accept this: Carefully considered and valid alternatives have been offered by residents associations, but apparently rejected by the ruling majority without study. The council cannot say, in its submission to the commission, that Elmbridge has five main towns and eight villages ‘each with its own distinctive character,’ and then cut one of them – Hinchley Wood – in half. As already stated, local government serves the community, not the other way round.
ABOUT HINCHLEY WOOD

Hinchley Wood drew its community strength from its residents from the very moment of its creation in 1931. One of the newest communities in north east Surrey, the area was just green fields between Thames Ditton, Surbiton, Esher and Claygate until the new A3 Kingston by-pass intersected with the 1885 Waterloo to Guildford via Cobham at what was quickly to become Hinchley Wood. Developers seized the opportunity to build new family homes for London commuters, and in an astonishing burst of construction over seven years a new railway station, hotel, petrol filling station, shops and most of the properties of the suburban township were built.

One man in particular had the understanding and vision of what the new community could be. Edgar Royston Pike, a machine gunner in World War 1 barely 12 years earlier, was an author and historian who was one of the first residents and was prominent in the creation of the Hinchley Wood Residents Association. A liberal and independent thinker, he drafted the association’s rules that party politics and religion should have no place in the association’s affairs. “I just wanted this to be a good place to live,” he said. He and the association had no higher aims than that ‘local government has to be local.”

The association, in 1937, played a major role in preventing developers from building some 3,000 houses on 650 acres of land on the Lovelace Estate between Surbiton, Hook and Hinchley Wood in 1937, which would have wrecked the much-valued Green Belt of the area. Royston Pike helped ensure that the standards of building thousands of three and four-bedroom detached houses, semis and flats homes for middle-class families were the highest for miles around. And all within easy walking distance of the village’s magnificent shops.

“When Royston Pike, with other far-seeing residents, initiated the residents association, no-one could have known the enduring impact it was to have on the evolution of local affairs,” wrote Howard Mallinson in his history of Hinchley Wood in 2002. “It lives on today with its die still cast with the Royston Pike hallmark.: non-party political public service to the community.”

The community spirit he and others bequeathed to the village was still very evident 60 years later, when the old Hinchley Wood Hotel, long since a pub at the corner of Manor Rd North and the A309, was closed and snapped up by McDonalds as a fast food outlet. Nothing seemed to stop it, because the site already had commercial food licenses.

But with the help of some Kingston-on-Thames ‘eco-warriors’, and strongly supported by the Residents Association, Hinchley Wood residents physically blocked all access points to the property with caravans and vehicles. They stayed there, 24 hours a day, seven days a week until, many months later, McDonalds caved in and sold it on. It was the first time anywhere in Britain that the thrusting, expanding corporation had ever been stymied by local opposition.

I was one of the hundreds of locals who did shifts at the barriers (‘Aux Armes, citoyennes!’) and wrote a story about it for national publication.
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/property/4809632/Victory-for-the-village-that-took-on-McDonalds.html It didn’t end quite as I wanted - a new pub – and became senior citizens 5/
flats. But at least it removed the threat of a likely major source of traffic, noise and litter at the heart of our village. And added several score of new residents who would really value the amazing convenience of their location.

Pike went on to influence creation of Residents Groups in neighbouring communities. And as of today, while they have consistently returned conservative county councillors and their Member of Parliament, Hinchey Wood has never elected any Elmbridge council representative who was not a Residents Association member. (Does this failure of Conservative candidates here lie at the heart of why the Council majority wants Hinchley Wood to be split in two?)

Royston Pike also became the ‘father’ of Esher Urban District Council in 1947. His ongoing legacy is Elmbridge Council’s Royston Pike Lectures, whose 40th anniversary has just been marked with a lecture about him – by a Council employee.

HINCHLEY WOOD TODAY

I did not know any of this when I and my family first came to Hinchley Wood in 1983. Arriving from Washington DC as Europe/Middle East/UK representative for my company, I selected it for its strategic location: half way between Heathrow and Gatwick, easy train access to Waterloo and government offices, fast access to the A3, a London phone number, good schools for my children, proximity to my wife’s sister in Cheam, a quiet road with instant access to Littleworth Common for jogging and walking the dog.

I found that many of my neighbours found Hinchley Wood similarly appealing, whether they be S. Korean, Swedish, Sri Lankan, Portugese, Indian, Mauretanian, British or any other nationality. My two children went to Hinchley Wood primary school and partially to the secondary school, mostly by walking or riding their bicycles. On the famous day of the Great Storm of 1987, when most roads in the area were blocked by fallen trees and downed telephone wires, my wife joined with other local parents in escorting them around the fallen trees and through the eerily-quiet streets to the school for a very truncated day of lessons.

HINCHLEY WOOD SHOPS

The 29 shops in Station Approach and Manor Rd north are easily the best, most comprehensive and most accessible that I have seen for the village’s size anywhere in the south of England, perhaps the whole of the country. They need to be listed, in order, to show you exactly WHY this is such a tremendous community:

1/ Crossy’s hardware and petfood store.

2/ JD Cards. Newsagent and card shop

3/ Osteopathy Clinic.

4/ Manor Rd Veterinary clinic and expanded surgery. A Medivet showcase.

5/ Beauty Spa Brazil.
6/ Georgies coffee shop

7/ Budgens mini-supermarket. And Post Office. This is Budgen’s national showcase. Not franchised. With ATM

8/ Hinchley Wood fruiterers.

9/ Wallis Jones chemist.

10/ Gascoigne Pees estate agent.

11/ Wine and Dine wine shops. (currently closed, but not for sale)

**Opposite: Station Approach:**

12/ S3 Dental. NHS and private. Several dentists, with specialisations

13/ Jewsons Builders Merchants (back of shops) with trade and public hardware/rental

14/ The Bathroom Gallery. Remodelled, expanded bathroom and tiles shop.

15/ Lantern Surgery. Doctors office.

16/ Hinchley Wood News. Newsagents

17/ Len’s barber shop. Men’s hairdresser.

18/ Esher Valet. Dry Cleaners.

19/ Panshi Bangladeshi Restaurant. And take-away.

20/ Ladies Hairdressers.

**Opposite. Station approach.**

21/ Grosvenor Billinghurst. Estate Agents.

22/ Angling shop

23/ Costa coffee shop. New


26/ The Complete Service. Home appliances and electrical repair shop

27/ Fix-IT. TV, hi-fi repairs.
Also, near the station.

28/ Hinchley Wood Medical Clinic

And, other side of traffic lights

29/ Shell Petrol station, with car wash and shop. And ATM.

And NO PARKING CHARGES. This is unusual for a London suburb and, as long as drivers do not try to park all day, will continue to have unmetered parking. The facilities are so well used and excellent in Hinchley Wood that vacant shops do not remain so for long.

The K3 bus running along Manor Rd South and North through the length of the village brings all its residents who prefer not to drive to the centre of Hinchley Wood and provides a good, 15 minute –interval service six days a week.

OTHER COMMUNITY FOCUS

The Memorial Gardens at the centre of the shopping area is where villagers come regularly to engage in fund raising for scouts and guides. There they also mark Armistice day, a Residents Association Fun Day with stall holders and games, carols at Christmas time, and help put Christmas lights up around the square.

St Christopher’s C of E Parish Church on Claygate lane, built at the same time as most of the rest of Hinchley Wood, is revitalised as a religious and community centre. With its old fashioned pews replaced by more flexible seating, it attracts many young people and pre-schoolers – and also serves as the village’s polling station. It produces and distributes a regular newsletter throughout the community.

Scouts and Guides are oversubscribed; the Cadet group at the school is doing well; there is a well-used children’s playground next to a sports ground on which there is a thriving football club and two allotment associations.

A Save Hinchley Wood newsletter and the Residents Association website keep residents informed of news and events, as well as coverage in the local Surrey Comet and Surrey Advertiser newspapers.

In my area of 200 homes around Heathside there are regular coffee mornings at Georgies at the Hinchley Wood shops. My wife is involved in a neighbourhood Book Club, Neighbourhood Watch is expanding, and in Watch 6 (Heathside, Medina, Harefield) I am coordinator with 10 street reps who are currently contacting all residents here to encourage them to look out for the safety and welfare of their neighbours.

AND YET...

All this community activity goes on quietly and almost sight unseen. It is true, not least from my own experience, that Hinchley Wood is largely a bedroom community for London commuters who are too tired and preoccupied by their families when they get home each
night. The village does not make much news, crime is relatively low, and many residents are barely aware what ward they live in let alone who represents them in council.

On Mar 27, 2015, the Surrey Advertiser weekly newspaper ran a Vox Pop series of quick interviews with people on the streets of Cobham. Almost all said they were not aware of the proposed changes in ward boundaries and had no idea what effect, if any, they would have on them. One 70-year-old said he didn’t know what ward he lived in. “I do care but I have never really had any reason to contact them,” he is quoted as saying.

A week earlier the same newspaper quoted Council leader John o’Reilly as saying: “People in Cobham will still live in Cobham. The church in Hinchley Wood will still be in Hinchley Wood. It may be located in a different electoral boundary. Is that so significant? “

Even one of the councillors who is overseeing and directing the boundary changes said he is only ‘vaguely’ aware of Hinchley Wood when asked if he knew the village.

Unlike me, who owns his own home, has a wife and children educated and active in the local community and has extended his home to accommodate his son and daughter-in-law with hopes of a new generation of Hinchley Woodites, the councillor does not appear to have a family and is not a property owner. Records show he is not employed outside of his memberships of several Elmbridge committees. Apparently proud of his political activities he said questions about his background were ‘offensive.’

What neither he nor Mr O’Reilly do not seem to know about that the strength of what already exists in Elmbridge’s communities is that they are there as bedrock, quietly running in the background. They are Home, and if people say they don’t even know what ward they live in then that is a mark of how well they are taken for granted. It has taken more than 90 years for Hinchley Ward to get the way it is, and election after election they vote for non-political councillors to keep it calm, settled and a place they feel happy and secure.

There are some natural and obvious boundaries to Hinchley Wood. To the south it is the green belt from the Esher side of Littleworth Common and the eastern edge of Sandown Park racecourse to the A3 Esher bypass at Chessington. Claygate looks and feels like a different village. To the north it is the Woking to London rail line. To the north east it is the A309 to the Long Ditton boundary east of Severn Drive and Hinchley Wood school.

Once under the rail bridge on Hampton Court Road past the Scilly Isles one immediately senses this is a different area. There is almost nothing about Weston Green that feels it is an extension of Hinchley Wood, neither in the shape of the roads nor of the houses. Only Sugden Rd continuing along Manor Rd north feels like it is still Hinchley Wood (indeed it was until redistricting in 2000).

Frankly, I find the likes of Mr O’Reilly and Mr Kelly wielding a pen on a map and telling me I must now split my community and join with a neighbouring area I know nothing about does not encourage me to be comfortable about the representation of my council’s plan to the boundary commission. I believe the vote to reduce the council size in April 2013 had only
a narrow majority, and I am not sure a vote on the council’s plan was even taken on March 16
(council voting is poorly recorded.)

**It certainly was not a mandate.**

And so the calculators and maps came out. Whilst we, the public, have been innocently
asleep since February 1 - when the boundary commission confirmed the Council’s request to
work on a 48-member council - Alex Mammous and her team at the civic centre in Esher,
guided and directed by Andrew Kelly, have redrawn lines on the Electoral map to get each
ward with 6,000 electors, plus or minus 10%.

At the time of writing – three days before the commission’s Mar 31 deadline - there is
still no council plan/map to study and offer reactions. The initial draft I have seen for
Hinchley Wood is ridiculous.

Most ridiculous is that St Christophers Church and both Hinchley Wood schools on
Claygate Lane have been placed in Long Ditton (note the name: Hinchley Wood school). It is
not because Long Ditton councillors thought there were Hinchley Wood voters living at the
schools but because residents in the ‘new’ Long Ditton area of Severn Drive, Hinchley Park,
Avondale and Hillcrest Gardens would not be contiguous with ‘old Long Ditton’ and would
not easily be able to get together with it unless they travelled somehow down Rectory Lane,
accessible only on the wrong side of a slip road of the A309 approaching the A3.

So, with one strike of the pen, Hinchley Wood Schools – and even St Christopher’s
Church and about a quarter of the village’s houses– find they are no longer in Hinchley Wood
for council purposes. Never mind that we in Heathside, Harefield and Medina have long had
to turn left onto the northbound lane of the A309 to go around the often-congested Scilly Isles
roundabout in order to come back the other way to reach the Hinchley Wood shops.

**A further absurdity** is that, apparently, due to an amendment proposed by Thames
Ditton councillors and passed immediately after the council boundary plan was approved on
Mar 16 Long Ditton found itself short of the number of voters required in the plan’s numbers
game. A few more were needed to be taken from Hinchley Wood.

The area the council seems to have decided on was Manor Road South and Greenways,
moving the new ‘boundary’ to the railway line instead of somewhere on Telegraph Hill.

Ironically, at the top of Telegraph Hill is a plaque in stone, placed there by the Hinchley
Wood Residents Association, in honour of Royston Pike, who did so much for the
development of Hinchley Wood, Esher and Elmbridge Councils. Last week, as an Elmbridge
Council employee was informing a room full of Elmbridge citizens about his life and long
devotion to his home area, other council representatives were ignorantly – or consciously -
preparing actions which would effectively kill the political significance of the association he
founded and see his commemorative stone placed in another ward.

**I swear I heard him turn in his grave.**
CONCLUSION

The exercise of reducing the numbers of Elmbridge councillors from 60 to 48 is fundamentally flawed. Its rationale has not been shown to be justified nor democratically demonstrated to its voters. There are many other comparable boroughs around the country with some 60 councillors that have no interest in changing (I have examined Wycombe District Council as an example).

Due process has not been followed in its avowed principles of appreciating the distinctive community of Hinchley Wood and elsewhere, both in the leadership of the plan’s preparation and in consulting those it affects most – the voters.

The plan’s conception and birth are riddled with party politics. It fails to balance electoral equality by ignoring the workloads of councillors in different wards – including the preparational work done by parish councillors in Claygate – and draws boundary lines which disproportionately weaken opposition councillors. (In the case of the contentious Jolly Boatman and Hampton Court station development site by Hampton Court bridge, for instance, it removes troublesome East Molesey opposition to perceived more friendly Thames Ditton).

The majority of Elmbridge Council councillors are either foolishly ignorant of Hinchley Wood as a vibrant and magnetic community or malicious in dividing the community into three wards involving Weston Green and Long Ditton.

The Council has displayed no interest in thoroughly examining alternative proposals from Residents groups or of signalling any intention to test the alleged underlying law that requires elections by thirds to be matched by three councillors in each, roughly-equal wards.

The plan denies the basic democratic principle that local government exists to serve the community, not the other way round.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Boundary Commission rejects the Elmbridge Borough Council plan.

That if, having been asked, the commission feels it is obliged to respond positively to the Council’s request to examine ward boundaries, that it does so with a map that fully respects local communities and, if necessary, gives Hinchley Wood, Long Ditton and Weston Green ‘special circumstances’ status that gives each two-councillor wards.

That the commission examines, clarifies, and challenges any law that results in Hinchley Wood and other communities being denied their right to be represented at Elmbridge Council in the cooperative manner of their choosing, including that of electoral quality.

Yours Sincerely, Peter Almond
Elmbridge District

Personal Details:

Name: Elizabeth Ambekar
E-mail: 

Organisation Name:

Comment text:

We have recently moved to Hinchley Wood and are very concerned to learn that there is a possibility of the boundaries changing and what is a wonderful local community losing it’s identity. The local, community, nature of Hinchley Wood was an important factor in our decision to move and has become even more important since our move. We do not live in or feel part of the communities of either Long Ditton or Weston Green (or in fact Esher which most postcode searches default us to), which have their own identities and community hubs. Already we feel the importance of Hinchley Wood as an individual community. We use the local doctor, are planning to send our children to the local schools, use the local shops and support the active residents association. To take away the identity of Hinchley Wood through these changes and merge it with either Long Ditton or Weston Green (as lovely as they are) flies in the face of building local communities. Having councillors that represent our local views and concerns is very important. We need to have people who are local and understand the issues that affect us on a day to day basis. To have that focus potentially distracted by the concerns of Weston Green and / or Long Ditton does not reflect the needs of Hinchley Wood. We would be very concerned to see this change happen.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded
Dear Alex,

Hope you are well. I have seen notices up around Hinchley Wood regarding the proposed boundary changes and thought (as a relatively new resident) that it would be a good idea to understand the changes.

I do object to splitting Hinchley Wood. As mentioned, my husband and I are relatively new residents, we moved to the area as we like the community, and we wanted access to good schooling for our newborn daughter. I am worried that a split would impact this.

We actually bought our house because we want our daughter to go to Hinchley Wood school, which she can walk to. The current proposal would have the school in Long Ditton and us living in Weston Green. I don't know what it would mean - whether we would have to consider moving? It would also be a shame as we have become more involved with the Hinchley Wood community - going to the local church and getting to know the local people. I am worried about the impact boundary changes would have on this.

I know I speak for a lot of local people when I say that I really feel strongly that the boundary change should not take place.

Thank you for your consideration,

Alix

Sent from my iPhone
Elmbridge District

Personal Details:

Name: Natalie Bailey
E-mail: [redacted]
Organisation Name: [redacted]

Comment text:

To whom it may concern I am a Hinchley Wood Resident and would like to make my objection known to the proposed change to split the Hinchley Wood ward between Weston Green and Long Ditton. Hinchley Wood is an active community in its own right, with central shops (providing meeting points for residents) and the community memorial gardens which host lots of community events throughout the year. Dividing this community up and plonking them into other communities will inevitably result in a lost community with no identity, as its own interests will be lost in conflict with Weston Green/Long Ditton demands. As a resident of Heathside [redacted] I especially oppose this, as the very location means that I have no sense of affiliation with either Weston Green or Long Ditton, as geographically they are both locations across busy main roads (one across the extremely busy Scilly Isles and Portsmouth Road and the other across the A3 Bypass) meaning that geographically at least, Hinchley Wood is a distinct and geographically isolated community in its own right. I would urge decision makers to take into account the strong community aspect of Hinchley Wood much of which is driven by St Christophers Church the Scout and Guiding Hut and the Memorial Gardens and surrounding shops and especially to take into consideration its unique geographical location - splitting it up means further isolation and a lost community, with so sense of identity. Yours faithfully Natalie Bailey

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded
To whom it may concern,

We moved to Hinchley Wood early last year and have found it to be a wonderful community with a separately identifiable character. Hinchley Wood has a great range of community activities including the lovely fair last year in the gardens, our 3 year old son still talks of the Punch and Judy show! Hinchley Wood benefits from local shops centred around the gardens - these are mostly independent shops fiercely protected by the local community.

It would be a great shame to carve up Hinchley Wood. Please do take this email, and the many other letters you should receive, into consideration.

Thank you,
Jenny Ballinger
Dear Mr Hinds,

I would like to raise my objection to the proposed Elmbridge Boundary changes that will affect Hinchley Wood, a place that I have lived for over 30 years.

It makes no sense to split Hinchley Wood in two and attaching the two halves to Weston Green and Long Ditton, two areas where there is no natural affinity.

Hinchley Wood obviously exists as an individual community with its own village centre, shops and strong, well supported and long established church and scout/guiding activities. This strong and distinct community needs to have individual representation.

Yours sincerely,

Derek Barnett
I have lived in Hinchley Wood for 30 years of my adult life and I am very concerned that we may no longer exist as a ward. Geographically we may be relatively small, but we have a unique community held together by the church, the local shops, primary and secondary schools, bus and train services. We have no natural links with Long Ditton and Weston Green. These two places are also quite small and I would suggest that 2 councillors for each ward would make more sense. None of the places are towns, and splitting any of the three communities would have a detrimental effect on each of them.

Jane Barnett
Hinds, Alex

From: Fuller, Heather
Sent: 23 March 2015 15:13
To: Hinds, Alex
Subject: FW: Elmbridge boundary review

From: Wendy Beaney
Sent: 23 March 2015 15:10
To: Reviews@
Subject: Elmbridge boundary review

Review Officer

Hinchley Wood Residents Assoc is & has been maintaining our interests in the local countryside, roads, housing & planning issues, for many years & losing Hinchley Wood Ward would mean losing their imput, to the detriment of our community.

We have lived here for 45 years & have enjoyed the Scouts, Guides, Sport, Dr's. + village life, & we would not like Hinchley Wood to be lost in other larger wards.

Please keep H.Wood as an independent ward.

Mike & Wendy Beaney
Dear Sir,

Elmbridge Boundary Change Proposals Review

As a long time (40 years) resident of Hinchley Wood I write re the current draft proposal for the elimination of the Hinchley Wood ward by splitting and absorption into the Weston Green and Long Ditton wards.

Hinchley Wood is a clearly defined community totally separate, both physically and socially, from both Weston Green and Long Ditton. A visit to the locality will reveal that Hinchley Wood is centred round the Memorial Gardens with a wide range of shops skirting the outer boundary and Hinchley Wood railway station adjacent to it. A Shell service station is also nearby. The main road through Hinchley Wood is Manor Road which in its turn is crossed by Claygate Lane which is the site of Hinchley Wood’s church, St. Christopher’s, and Hinchley Wood Primary and Secondary schools. Off Claygate Lane is Lynwood Road, which is the site of the Hinchley Wood Scout and Guide Headquarters, local allotments, sports grounds, including football club, and children’s play park. Housing areas which are segregated from the main centre by the railway line are all served by footpaths and rail bridges to provide easy pedestrian access.

There is a K3 bus service between Kingston and Esher which passes through Long Ditton and Hinchley Wood, but there is no public transport link with Weston Green. By way of contrast, Hinchley Wood and Weston Green are separated by the main Portsmouth Road with open common land forming a significant buffer between the two, and there are no common community links between the two.

Similarly there is distinct separation between those areas of Hinchley Wood proposed for incorporation into Long Ditton. In fact, to quote the 1998 Boundary Commission report ‘… Severn Drive and Hill Rise may share closer ties with Hinchley Wood … given their geographical location and the fact that they would need to pass through … Hinchley Wood ward to access Long Ditton ward. … ’ Other areas proposed for inclusion in Long Ditton are even more distinctly separated by being on the opposite side of the Kingston Bypass and remote from Long Ditton, extending as far as the Hinchley Wood filling station close to the heart of Hinchley Wood.
There is a strong sense of ‘belonging’ within the Hinchley Wood community. St. Christopher’s Church serves not only as a place of worship, but with a sizeable church hall has also developed over the years to be a community hub. In addition to what one would expect at the church, i.e. a Mother’s Union and other church groups, it hosts quiz nights, film nights, social functions, the Women’s Wednesday fellowship, nursery groups, elderly community lunches, yoga classes, Blood Transfusion sessions, and various ad hoc meetings/events etc.. The adjacent schools host gym related sporting/keep fit activities and after school clubs and are also host to the local Air Training Corps squadron..

Community events are also a feature of life in Hinchley Wood. The Memorial Gardens, in addition to being the venue for the annual Armistice Day parade and service, is also used for communal activities with an annual Scout Fun Day, a separate family fun day supported by local businesses, decorated Christmas tree provided by local traders, communal Carol Singing around the Christmas tree, community litter picking/spring clean-up/bulb planting etc..

Most, if not all, of the organisations/activities have been given excellent support and backing by our local councillors throughout the years. They have worked tirelessly in representing and pursuing our interests both in the council chamber and with local government departments and we have to thank them for their ongoing work on our behalf. Regrettably, we believe that this is now threatened by the proposal to do away with the Hinchley Wood ward. We anticipate that our interests would be subordinated due to the increased burden on councillors and particularly by potential conflict with Weston Green/Long Ditton demands on their time.

I strongly urge that our ward and two councillor representation be retained in your final recommendations.

Yours faithfully,

Don Beardshall
Review Officer (Elmbridge),
Layden House,
76-86 Turmill Street,
London EC1M 5LG

Dear Sir,

Elmbridge Ward Boundary Planning Review

I write regarding proposed changes to the electoral ward structure for Elmbridge B.C., particularly insofar as they would affect my local ward of Hinchley Wood, which would disappear to be split and absorbed between Weston Green and Long Ditton.

Hinchley Wood is a clear and distinct community in its own right, both socially and physically. As a member of the Hinchley Wood community for the past 40 years, I have the privilege of sitting on the St. Christopher’s Church PCC, and as a committee member and treasurer of the H.W. Mothers Union, and similarly with the H.W. Women’s Wednesday Fellowship. In the past I was leader of the 1st. H.W. Scout Cub pack and established the first Beaver Colony in Esher District during my time with the Scout Group. In these positions I have witnessed at first hand the unstinting support and help we have had from our local councillors over many years.

In the event that part of our community is pushed into Weston Green Ward and part to Long Ditton ward each will become subservient to the other communities. Councillors will be imbued with a greater workload which will inhibit their time available to handle both individual resident’s interests and also those of community groups. Of particular concern is the risk of Hinchley Wood community group interests being subordinated to those of Weston Green and Long Ditton as, being a lesser portion of each, the Hinchley Wood element is relegated in importance for allocation of grants and other council controlled work in the community.

Since the last boundary review in 1998, two councillor representation has worked very well. To change this to 2 wards with 3 councillors each to merely achieve a cosmetic 3 yearly electoral cycle would be a significant retrograde step for all concerned.

Yours faithfully,

Moira Beardshall (Mrs.)
Objections to losing Hinchley Wood as a constituency in Elmbridge Council

As I understand it, the local government boundaries should reflect the identities and interests of local communities. On this basis I will list out below those things that make Hinchley Wood a thriving community, with very much its own identity.

1. We have a highly successful Hinchley Wood Primary and Secondary school. Estate Agents will tell you that the Ofsted Rating of Outstanding in 2013 for the senior school is making property in the local area even more attractive to young families moving out of London.

2. Our Church, St Christophers has an extensive diary of events and has successfully become a hub of the community under the leadership of the Rev John Kronenburg. The Church and Church Hall are used for a wide variety of faith based and secular events by the local community.

3. The Hinchley Wood Scout Group with its related Cubs and Beavers are oversubscribed…….they are the most successful Scout Group in Esher district. They have won the Top Troop Trophy 4 years in a row…equaling past records and are looking good to possibly win a 5th year, to set a new record. Their jumble sales and Christmas Card deliveries are part of the warp and weft of our community. The Hinchley Wood Guides and Brownies are equally contributing to our sense of community. Their excellent exhibition of 100 years of Hinchley Wood Guides and Brownies can be seen online or at the Elmbridge Museum.

4. Hinchley Wood railway station is conveniently located next to our “village green” or more formerly Memorial Gardens. The station was of course the stimulus for the creation of Hinchley Wood from 1933.

5. At the Memorial Gardens the K3 bus stops every 15 minutes for most of the day connecting us to Esher and Kingston, whilst forming our own mini transport hub with the close by rail station.

6. Around the Memorial Gardens we have our 28 shops and services, the commercial hub of Hinchley Wood. The vast majority of the businesses
are independent sole traders. We have our Doctor Dentist and Physiotherapist Beauty salon, and hairdressing salons for men and for women. Although we have a Londis and associated Post Office., which is very useful, we also have top notch butcher, baker and greengrocer. Again although we have a builders’ suppliers just off the Memorial Gardens we have a gem of a shop in Crossys the hardware/DIY shop. Male friends from other parts of Elmbridge remark how they envy us Crossys.

If you have trouble with your old TV, Smart TV or Audio then Peter from Fix It will pop down and put you right.

Apart from the two coffee shops we now have a highly successful Bangladeshi curry house the Panshi. Its worth noting as the site has been a restaurant of various hues for over 25 years but none of the previous incarnations lasted long. The Panshi has been a success due to its quality of food and personal service combined with sensible pricing. With the result it has become our local neighbourhood restaurant where you are quite likely to meet friends and neighbours any time you go.

7. Our annual Hinchley Wood Fun Day held in the Memorial Gardens is a great place to catch up with folk and contribute to local charity whilst having a bit of fun.

8. We have an excellent Hinchley Wood Residents Association which is a true test of local commitment to the community......as contributions are voluntary, its amazing how many folk gladly pay up to ensure Hinchley Wood continues to have its own independent voice.

A small light in the gathering darkness of poor turn outs at elections.

Summary
Hinchley Wood by any measure is a thriving community with its own identity............it does seem perverse to break it up and share it with areas that don’t appear to stack up in the same way.?
Finally the question “is Hinchley Wood a strong community? “and in consequence deserve its own councilors? could be answered by reflecting back to 2000 when it stopped Mcdonalds turning the site of its old pub into a drive in take away. That campaign had many branches but the 100 day occupation of the pub car park was a singular example of this communitys spirit.
By email to: alex.hinds@lgbce.org.uk

Alex Hinds
Review Officer
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG

31 March 2015
Dear Mr Hinds,

**Hinchley Wood Ward**

I am writing to ask you use your good offices as Review Officer to stop Hinchley Wood being split into two, with one half going to Long Ditton and the other half going to Weston Green for the purposes of proposed new ward boundaries.

These three villages each have their own characteristics and they enhance local community and a sense of belonging because of their distinct identities. I know these villages very well having first lived in Weston Green and then moved to Hinchley Wood 10 years ago.

The proposal to split Hinchley Wood for local government purposes ignoring its history, geography, community, residential affinities, its business centre, thriving Community Hub and its ability to offer local job opportunities makes little sense in its current form. The proposal needs to be adjusted to fit the facts on the ground.

If implemented as currently proposed, this would be a major retrograde step for Hinchley Wood setting it back and potentially fracturing the heart of the village for profoundly important reasons, not least that it would work against the social cohesion and inclusivity that we have collectively worked for years to achieve.

The success of our endeavours shows in the following ways:-

- Greater social cohesion, for example, through the Hinchley Wood Community Magazine, our Summer Fair, volunteering and community work by our uniformed young people (scouts etc.)
- Reduced crime statistics making Hinchley Wood one of the safest places in Britain to live;
- The vibrant Community Hub scores a high 72 per cent community usage (or occupancy rate) across 7-days a week, using the Surrey County Council Community Usage criteria;
- The Community Hub offers residents of Hinchley Wood activities for all ages covering recreation, health, fitness, education, political meetings and community interest groups;
- Thriving shopping centre whose future survival is dependent upon the support of residents of Hinchley Wood, and whose allegiances could be compromised by any boundary changes.
Decisions at Elmbridge Council relating to Hinchley Wood need to be cohesive – covering the whole village, without raising the risk of one part of Hinchley Wood being decided on criteria that support Long Ditton’s future and the other half based on what is best for Weston Green. It is essential that the current joined-up thinking that is deployed on Hinchley Wood’s matters continues.

It is self-evident that the effect of these proposed changes to boundaries will have a smaller impact on Weston Green and Long Ditton (which will remain intact, although expanded) than for Hinchley Wood, which would be slashed in half.

The Boundary Commission is known for its recommendation NOT to split up communities. Furthermore, Surrey County Council (including Surrey Community Action) and the Community Foundation for Surrey fully understand that community buildings, such as the Community Hub in Claygate Lane are vital for the promotion of social cohesion, inclusivity and play an important part in creating successful communities.

The benefits of successful communities are too many to mention, but they include, lower rates of local anti-social behaviour with less public money spent on public places maintenance and policing; better mental and physical health leading to lower demand for healthcare services; better education leading to responsible future leaders. There are many other benefits, too.

All of these imperatives are part of the Hinchley Wood community as we seek to play our part nationally towards a better future for all. Our success to date is there for all to see.

I ask you to consider these points with the seriousness they deserve and would simply suggest that one way out of the conundrum would be for the three villages to retain their existing boundaries, but rather than make two artificially bigger areas with three local councillors, maybe retain the three existing areas/villages with two councillors in each. This would simultaneously achieve the greater aims of reducing the size of the Council from 60 to 48 members, while meeting local need.

Yours sincerely,

T J Blair
Hinds, Alex

From: Egan, Helen
Sent: 14 April 2015 09:34
To: Hinds, Alex
Subject: FW: Elmbridge boundary review Hinchley Wood Ward

From: Malcolm Blanchard
Sent: 13 April 2015 11:02
To: Reviews@
Subject: FW: Elmbridge boundary review Hinchley Wood Ward

Just checking my emails yesterday, it would appear that the email below to yourselves may not have gone through.
Apologies if it has but would it be possible to include same if not.

Regards Malcolm Blanchard

From: Malcolm Blanchard
Sent: 26 March 2015 16:42
To: reviews@lgbce.org.uk
Subject: Elmbridge boundary review Hinchley Wood Ward

Dear Sirs,

I understand from our residents association that Elmbridge Borough Council have put forward a proposal to carve up the Hinchley Wood Ward and split it between two adjacent wards.

The purpose of this email is to object to this proposal mainly on the grounds that Hinchley Wood is a vibrant independant community that requires their own Councillors to protect and stand up for the rights of this Ward.

Amongst other things Hinchley Wood has its parade of shops, which are quite extensive. church and village Hall. Both Primary and Secondary Schools (one of the best state schools in the Country).

It also has Doctors, Dentist, Vets, coffee shops and restaurants. There are Guides/scouts, petrol station, and the ward has its own railway station.

Despite Elmbridge Borough Council, the residents fought off a major building development on Green Belt Land that eventually went to a public inquiry.

Perhaps that is why the Council are so keen to dispand Hinchley Wood Ward.

That is why we need an independant voice to protect Hinchley Wood.

Regards Malcolm Blanchard

Resident of Hinchley Wood,
PROPOSED RE-DRAWING OF ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES IN ELMBRIDGE

Dear Sir

I write to oppose the proposed redrawing of the Electoral Boundaries around Molesey.

Molesey is a clearly defined community and entity, clearly separated from surrounding districts.

A quick glance at the map will show that Molesey has clearly defined boundaries which are:

1. The River Thames to the North
2. Large reservoirs to the West
3. A major transport route - Hampton Court Way (A 309) to the East
4. More reservoirs, open land and sport fields to the South.

As I understand it, one prime object of the Boundary Commission is to retain defined communities and not to split such communities purely to ‘get the numbers right’.

To date, Molesey has had 3 electoral wards with 3 councillors in each – which is exactly what is required by the proposed new arrangement in Elmbridge.

In my view, this is the way it should remain for Molesey – a clearly defined entity.

If this is impossible, the proposed rearrangement should be rejected as not meeting one of the prime objects required by the Boundary Commission.

Yours faithfully

Colin Bocking
Elmbridge District

Personal Details:

Name: Martin Bone
E-mail: 

Organisation Name:

Comment text:

a. At the present time, with so many pressures on local services and budgets, there are other priorities which are a lot more important and should therefore be occupying the time and efforts of councillors than making changes to boundaries and election arrangements; b. I believe that any monetary savings will be minimal in the overall scheme of things taking account of the relatively low costs of councillors; c. From my experience, existing councillors are already overstretched and, given the work involved in managing cuts and demands on services, we should not be contemplating a reduction in the number of councillors at this time; d. I believe there are some proposals to change boundaries to make Wards with 3 councillors following a reduction in the total number of councillors. Whilst accepting that this is an ideal situation, I nevertheless feel very strongly that Long Ditton, Hinchley Wood and Thames Ditton should remain separate, even if this means having Wards with 2 councillors. Each of these communities has a church, both infant and junior schools and a shopping centre, providing identifiable centres for the local community around which the residents cohere. In addition, they also have residents associations and sports clubs carrying their name and representing their area. It would be a travesty for these communities to be arbitrarily divided up for academic and bureaucratic reasons.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded
Please see my comments below

I write to object to the proposed change of boundary in Elmbridge which would mean that the present Hinchley Wood ward would be divided between Weston Green and Long Ditton.
I have been a resident of Hillcrest Gardens Hinchley Wood for 31 years and seen lots of changes in that time. Many for the better but also lots of bad proposals ie McDonalds taking over the Hinchley Wood Hotel and recent planning application to expand food outlet at Shell petrol station that have been fought and won with the help of the strong Hinchley Wood Residents Association who have the vast majority of support from the community at every election. If Hinchley Wood was split each half would become a minority area of the wards in which they are allocated and the voice of Hinchley Wood residents would not be so easily heard, I have no idea what the issues are within the Weston Green ward that I would be linked to and doubt that anyone there knows of the issues within Hinchley Wood. They are near and yet so far.
Hinchley Wood has a strong community spirit and needs to stay as one unit with councillors who live within Hinchley Wood we don't want to be divided
Regards
Shirley Bonnet
Dear Borough council,

It would be a great shame if Hinchley Wood lost its community representation as a distinct electoral ward on Elmbridge B.C. Retaining its unique distinction allows this community to operate as a ‘community’ - so that those who live in it, care for it, especially for the many people who rely on access to amenities by foot. The more merged the amenities become the harder it is to access them and the more disengaged people feel. Our high streets are fast becoming a thing of the past, which has an impact on local jobs and in the long run the value of the properties around it.

Everybody looses in the long run!

Nicole Brannan
Elmbridge District

Personal Details:

Name: Saranne Bristow

E-mail: 

Organisation Name:

Comment text:

Hinchley Wood has been in existence since the 1930s when building began on what used to be a dairy farm. It has a special identity of its own which, over the years, has developed into the strong community it is today. We are fortunate to have fantastic local shops located in the heart of our village including a post office, doctors' surgery, and a vet as well as two coffee shops and a restaurant which are well used by the local community and by us personally. The local shops are a focal meeting place for residents who are well catered for by the wide range. We have lived in Hinchley Wood for 17 years and are saddened that splitting our strong community by an arbitrary boundary change is even being considered. We have no links with Long Ditton whatsoever. Community spirit in Hinchley Wood is strong. Over the years we have been involved in organising and providing musicians for the annual Carols round the Christmas Tree in the Memorial Gardens, in conjunction with the choir from St Christopher's Church in Hinchley Wood, an event much enjoyed by the local community. We have also been involved with the Remembrance day service when the Church, local Scouts and schoolchildren and residents take part. These are events when Hinchley Wood comes together as a community.

Hinchley Wood Primary school always welcome residents' children from other schools to their annual Summer Fair. Several smaller groups of residents held street parties to celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. The current proposal is to split and divide Hinchley Wood between Long Ditton and Weston Green. Please do not condemn Hinchley Wood to the basement of history; we are a vibrant and living community who thrive under the banner of residents of Hinchley Wood.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded
Dear Sir

I have lived in the Hinchley Wood ward for 29 years. The residents here have always felt the area has a clear identity which they have maintained and enhanced over the years. The proposal to break up the ward and associate the fragments with other wards which do not share this identity makes no sense except one. I regard the proposal as a cynical attempt by the Conservative councillors to break up the influence of the Residents Association and that of their councillors, thus ensuring their perpetual dominance of the council. If such a change is implemented it would be detrimental to local democracy and the interests of the residents of Hinchley Wood ward.

I am very disappointed that this proposal was generated purely for political ends and not for the good of the residents and the democratic process.

Yours faithfully

Jon Budd
Elmbridge District

Personal Details:

Name: kate burnside
E-mail: 

Organisation Name: 

Comment text:

I strongly object to the carving up of Hinchley Wood in this way. We are a distinct community with a separate set of shops, church and indeed ethos from the wards with which we would be merged. Not even merged but split - hardly a reasonable or sensible way to treat a community. As a member of Hinchley Wood’s community I have lived here for 12 years. I use the local shops - butchers, bakers, hardwear store, newsagent and convenience store as well as services provided by the vets, hairdresser, barber, dentist, pharmacy and physiotherapist. I use neither Long Ditton nor Weston Green services as I have my own local services on my doorstep. I am a member of our local church which is increasingly acting as a community hub - for Hinchley Wood - rather than Long Ditton or Weston Green (which have their own community bases). During our recent fight to prevent the introduction of feeder primary schools for our Hinchley Wood secondary school (which would restrict places to local children), our local Hinchley Wood councillors were responsive and accessible to discuss this specific local issue. Whilst this campaign was ultimately unsuccessful I remain grateful for the Hinchley Wood councillors who represented me in this local matter. I would not have been represented so efficiently and sensitively had I been part of a larger ward. I urge you not to allow the loss of Hinchley Wood as a distinct, functional and cohesive community and ward.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded
-----Original Message-----
From: James Bywater
Sent: 23 March 2015 19:04
To: Reviews@
Subject: Elmbridge boundary review

I am writing to complain about this proposed boundary change which looks like unnecessary fiddling. Hinchley wood is its own unique area with architecture and transport links that are different from those around it.

Combining areas together would achieve little and risk sacrificing this long history and autonomy.

James Bywater

Please excuse my brevity. Sent from a hand held device.
I wish to object to the proposed boundary changes.

Hinchley Wood is a distinct area within Elmbridge, as are other communities and villages.

Representation can only be truly effective when councillors live in their local community.

Mr T Cain

18-03-2013

Sent from my iPad 📱
Dear sirs

The proposal to change the ward boundaries for Hinchley Wood do not properly reflect the distinct identity of the local community in this part of Elmbridge. In particular I would comment as follows:

1. Hinchley Wood has a strong, vibrant and proud residents association which is at the heart of the community. This is demonstrated by the fact that both local councillors are representatives of the apolitical residents association. Changing the boundaries would impact on the strength of this independent voice.

2. Hinchley Wood has a strong sense of local community focused around the primary and secondary school, memorial garden and the numerous independent shops including a butcher, baker, green grocer, hardware store and cafe. Neither Weston Green nor Long Ditton have the extent of facilities and organisations that can be found in Hinchley Wood. Indeed, with its schools and transport connections, Hinchley Wood is relied upon by the surrounding area for many of the services they also rely.

3. From the carols and numerous fairs in the memorial garden through to the various clubs and societies, including uniformed organisations and sports clubs, many using the facilities of the secondary school and recreation ground, there is a wide ranging network of local groups and activities which strongly identify with Hinchley Wood.

4. For many years, Hinchley Wood has demonstrated itself as an independent and distinct place and community. This was most obviously demonstrated by the long and successful campaign to stop McDonald’s from opening a restaurant on the site of the old pub something few communities have managed to successfully defend. This independent character continues to thrive through the local shops, societies and the ongoing strength of the residents association which continues to sit at the heart of the local community. Given the independent nature of Hinchley Wood, I would strongly urge the commission to reconsider the proposal to merge the Hinchley Wood ward into Weston Green and Long Ditton neither of which share the characteristics of the local community.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Carrington

None Uploaded
Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to register my objection to the proposed redefinition of the Hinchley Wood Boundary.

Reducing the number of councillors to 48 will result in less electoral fairness, the interests and identities of some communities being disregarded and a less efficient delivery of local government.

The publication of the proposed ward boundaries by EBC on the 16th March shows that EBC is intent on destroying the ward of Hinchley Wood. This intentional and wilful breaking up of a community that has a real identity, has natural borders, is supported by the vast majority of its constituents and has all the facilities necessary to support its population has no rational basis.

Hinchley Wood is a strong and vibrant community which is focused on the shops just by the cross roads of the A309, Manor Road North and Manor Road South. EBC’s proposed boundary changes effectively split the community of Hinchley Wood in half right across its centre.

There is sufficient justification to keep Hinchley Wood ward as a single community. Effective representation for Hinchley Wood currently works well with two councillors and therefore the correct solution is to keep Hinchley Wood as a two councillor ward. This will result in electoral fairness for Hinchley Wood electors and will protect the interests and identities of the community.

With kindest regards

Carolyn Chamberlain
Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to register my objection to the proposed redefinition of the Hinchley Wood Boundary.

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The publication of the proposed ward boundaries by EBC on the 16th March shows that EBC is intent on destroying the ward of Hinchley Wood. This intentional and wilful breaking up of a community that has a real identity, has natural borders, is supported by the vast majority of its constituents and has all the facilities necessary to support its population has no rational basis.

Hinchley Wood is a strong and vibrant community which is focused on the shops just by the cross roads of the A309, Manor Road North and Manor Road South. EBC’s proposed boundary changes effectively split the community of Hinchley Wood in half right across its centre.

There is sufficient justification to keep Hinchley Wood ward as a single community. Effective representation for Hinchley Wood currently works well with two councillors and therefore the correct solution is to keep Hinchley Wood as a two councillor ward. This will result in electoral fairness for Hinchley Wood electors and will protect the interests and identities of the community.

With kindest regards
John Chamberlain
Hello

I am writing to urge the council to reconsider its proposal for incorporating Hinchley Wood into Thames Ditton and Weston Green. Such a carve up fails to meet the needs of the community of Hinchley Wood which remains a discrete and separate community. We have a village atmosphere which is greatly prized by its residents with the village green and surrounding shops as well as remembrance day ceremonies in the Memorial gardens. As a psychotherapist I work within the community and am aware of the specialness of the place.

Also, the services provided by the schools, doctors, restaurants, hardware shops vet are all for Hinchley Woods residents. These are important for our quality of life. There seems to be no real need to change the present situation where the Hinchley Wood Residents Association represents admirably the needs and aspirations on Elmbridge Council. Please stop this tinkering with our community.

With thanks

Sherna Ghyara Chatterjee
Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist
For the attention of the Review Officer (Elmbridge)

Dear Sir

With reference to the review of the Ward boundaries we would like our opinion to be noted.

Hinchley Wood exactly matches the requirements set out in law that the Wards should reflect the interests and identities of local communities.

It has its own village centre with a very good range of shops, a doctors surgery, a main line railway station with good services to London and Guildford, a beautiful memorial garden and excellent road connections.

There are also excellent nursery, primary and secondary schools as well as scout and guide groups and St Christopher’s church which has become the local Community Hub. Hinchley Wood has three large complexes for elderly residents. All the above makes this a unique and individual village not to be cast aside for political or money saving reasons.

The residents of Hinchley Wood are very well represented on the council by their elected councillors, who ensure the wellbeing of the Ward. These Councillors are kept in touch with the views and wishes of the residents through the long established Residents Association.

All these facilities make for a cohesive and integrated community and it is hard to see how any change could improve the current arrangement.

We believe that it is completely illogical to propose the split of the Hinchley Wood Ward into two, with each part going to the two adjacent Wards, which would inevitably result in electoral unfairness. We are, therefore, wholeheartedly opposed to the proposal to divide the ward of Hinchley Wood.

Yours faithfully

Rosemary and John Coath
Elmbridge District

Personal Details:

Name: Christopher Cockerill
E-mail: [Redacted]
Organisation Name: [Redacted]

Feature Annotations

Map Features:

Annotation 2: I believe that the Ward of Hinchley Wood should remain distinct from those surrounding it and retain the current boundary line.

Comment text:

Dear Sir, Recently it came to my attention that the Boundary Commission is proposing to change the ward boundaries for the local council elections in Elmbridge. The Hinchley Wood ward would be divided and amalgamated into the wards of Long Ditton and Western Green; an act that I believe is not in keeping with the statutory criteria that the commission must follow when creating or changing ward boundaries. I feel strongly affiliated with Hinchley Wood, and have no contact or connection with Long Ditton or Western Green for the following reasons: • I have lived at the same address on in Hinchley Wood for the entirety of my 20 years, and as a result feel a strong sense of community and attachment with the village as an entity that is unique from the surrounding areas. • I attended Hinchley Wood Primary School which resulted in not only an increase in affiliation with Hinchley Wood as a distinct entity, but also a fostering of connections with other friends and families within the village which are still maintained today. This has created a community within Hinchley Wood which is in no way linked with Long Ditton or Western Green. • I regularly use the shops and amenities of the square in Hinchley Wood which are a two minute walk from where I live. The Butchers, Bakers, Grocers, Newsagents, coffee shops and others clearly constitute a distinct village centre which results in me having no contact at all with neighbouring wards. • Events such as the summer fete held in the square are attended by myself and the wider community within the village fostering a distinct body of people within this ward. These events are a chance for local businesses and residents to gather, reaffirming and creating connections within the local area. As such these events reinforce the sense of community that I feel within Hinchley Wood. • I feel the Hinchley Wood residents association represents me and has strong connection to my community. I have no knowledge or desire to find out about any similar group in the neighbouring wards as I feel they do not have a connection to the area within which I live. • The station is at the centre of the village and community. It is used by myself on a regular basis and my parents every day, and as such is significant in my identification of my place of residence. To visitors and myself it is clear that I live in Hinchley Wood, and not in Western Green or Long Ditton. • Due to my location, if these proposals were to succeed I would become a member of the Western Green Ward. Geographically not only am I much closer to the distinct village centre of Hinchley Wood but due to the presence of a busy main road and much greater distance I do not visit Western Green. As a result I have absolutely no sense of being part of that area which I feel is separate and absolutely disconnected from the community of Hinchley Wood. The statutory criteria that the boundary commission must follow during this process of ward allocation states that ward boundaries must reflect the interests and identities of local communities. I am a part of the distinct community of Hinchley Wood due to the reasons outlined above, and in no way feel any sense affiliation with Western Green. As a result, I feel that Hinchley Wood should remain a separate ward. Regards, Christopher Cockerill Local Resident

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded
Elmbridge District

Personal Details:

Name: Giles Cockerill

E-mail: ********

Organisation Name:

Comment text:

Boundary Commission proposals: Hinchley Wood, Elmbridge, Surrey Dear Sir, I am very concerned to hear of the proposal to abolish Hinchley Wood ward and disaggregate voters to adjoining wards. I have lived in Hinchley Wood since 1990 and over the past 25 years have felt very much part of a distinct Hinchley Wood community, separate and different from the adjoining areas of Weston Green and Long Ditton. That feeling of community has been a strength of Hinchley Wood since it was established in the 1930s, and is just as strong today. My sense of belonging to that community comes from numerous local inter-actions centred on the geography, facilities and contacts that I share with others who live in Hinchley Wood ward. These include:• All three of our sons attended Hinchley Wood Primary School, and other parents we met there remain our local friends today;• Every morning I commute to my job in central London from Hinchley Wood railway station, as I have for the past 25 years. I frequently meet the same people on the platform and chat to them including about local issues;• I am registered with the local GP surgery and Dentist in the centre of Hinchley Wood;• I use the Hinchley Wood shops every week, for meat, groceries, convenience goods, hardware and newspapers.• Together the railway station and the shops around Station Approach are the geographical and activity heart of the community for those on both sides of the railway line, which serves to unite rather than divide our community. • The hugely popular annual events held in the Memorial Gardens in Station Approach and sponsored by the local shops are a living signal of the strength of that community. • For 25 years I have belonged to the Hinchley Wood Residents’ Association and have supported them through numerous local issues to improve and support our amenities, and ensure that local development is managed in a way that reflects community concerns. • The most notable and nationally recognised successes of the Hinchley Wood community have been the successful and widely acclaimed campaign to prevent McDonalds opening a drive-through restaurant on the A308/Manor Road North crossroads, and resisting the HASQUAD (Heathrow and South West Quadrant) transport study proposals. These achievements further strengthened the identity and common cause of our community. One of the three criteria that the Boundary Commission is statutorily required to consider in making changes is to ensure that the pattern of wards should reflect the interests and identities of local communities. This proposal to abolish Hinchley Wood ward blatantly does not meet that criterion. Hinchley Wood is a thriving and distinct community with a busy heart and a long track record of acting to protect the interests of local residents. I have virtually no contact with Weston Green or Long Ditton wards and feel no sense of community with either of them. Weston Green is separated from us by the very busy Portsmouth Road which is a major barrier to safe pedestrian access, and offers virtually none of the shops or other facilities that we have within a few hundred yards of safe pedestrian access in the heart of Hinchley Wood. Mr Giles Cockerill CBE

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded
Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to register my views on the current review of electoral boundaries in Elmbridge.

I am a resident of Hinchley Wood, where I have lived with my family for over fifteen years. I am very concerned to hear of the proposal to abolish Hinchley Wood as a distinct electoral ward and divide it between Weston Green and Long Ditton. I believe this would be a real blow to the community and its' sense of identity.

Hinchley wood is a close and friendly community with a thriving community spirit - and I feel a real sense of belonging that I think is shared by the majority of residents. My children were all brought up here and attended the local school which is at the centre of the community. I commute daily from the local station where I know my fellow commuters and use the local shops around the square. I am registered with the local doctor and dentist in the square, and attend the various events put on by the community in the Memorial Gardens. I have been a member of the thriving community association for twenty five years - attending their annual meetings and supporting the regular newsletter.

I believe dividing Hinchley Wood between surrounding wards would have a detrimental impact on this sense of community identity - and that it is not in the interest of the local community - who regularly vote residents association councillor onto the local council. I do not identify with the Weston Green or Long Ditton wards - the former is divided from Hinchley Wood by the busy Portsmouth Road, and the latter is a village in its own right with its own centre. I therefore suggest that Hinchley Wood - with its distinct 1930s core along with more modern additions, is left as a distinct electoral area with its own councillors.

Mrs J Cockerill

Sent from my iPad
Elbridge District

Personal Details:

Name: Jonathan Cockerill
E-mail: 

Organisation Name: 

Feature Annotations

Map Features:

Annotation 1:

Comment text:

Dear Sir/Madam, I write concerning recent proposals by the Boundary Commission to divide the Hinchley Wood ward in the borough of Elbridge between two neighbouring wards. I am very strongly opposed to this proposal for the reasons set out below. The Boundary Commission must take into account three statutory criteria when deciding the extent of wards. One of these is that the pattern of wards should, as far as possible, reflect the interests and identities of local communities. I have lived in the same house in Hinchley Wood for 22 years - my whole life. I went to primary school at Hinchley Wood Primary. I take the train to college every morning from Hinchley Wood station and I do most of my shopping at the Hinchley Wood shops. When asked where I live, I strongly identify as being part of the Hinchley Wood community, not any other. I absolutely do not identify or feel associated with Weston Green or Long Ditton and do not feel part of their communities. I am a Hinchley Wood resident and my life and thinking is centred on Hinchley Wood. A major road and a 15 minute walk physically separates where I live from Weston Green, a place I seldom visit. Similarly, Long Ditton is a 30 minute walk to the North. I currently live two minutes from the Main Square, one minute from Hinchley Wood station and a 15 minute walk from the two Hinchley Wood schools. Weston Green and Long Ditton are both fairly minor villages in the local area. Neither of them have their own station and both have a very limited selection of shops and local amenities. Hinchley Wood, on the other hand, not only has the largest selection of shops and local amenities between Claygate and Esher (completing three sides of a large square), it has its own railway station, two schools, a post office, a petrol station, a community garden in the main square and a relatively large population. Hinchley Wood has many things that help to define it as a separate community. The main square is surrounded by independent businesses where I and many other locals go to shop regularly. I regard these shops as my local newsagents, bakery, grocer, butcher, hairdresser and post office. I shop in the main square regularly, several times a week. Small business owners and their customers are on first name terms, people stop in the street to have a chat and everyone feels part of a tangible community. At home we regularly receive community publications and newsletters informing us of news and events in the community. We also receive visits from members of the Hinchley Wood Scout Group, and we try as far as possible to help them in their jumble sales and other money raising activities. In addition, there are many events throughout the year that help define the community. The Remembrance Day Service in the Memorial Gardens brings the community together to remember their war dead. I have very fond memories of winter and summer fairs of recent years, and distinct memories of being one of the Hinchley Wood children who helped the mayor open the new Memorial Garden gate in 2000-2001. I also remember, with some degree of pride, when the Hinchley Wood Residents Association united the community to protest successfully against plans for a McDonalds restaurant on the site of the old pub. Hinchley Wood has a strong sense of shared identity and shared history. This is a separate identity, distinct from our neighbours in Weston Green and Long Ditton. It would be a gross breach of the requirement to reflect the interests and identities of local communities in the pattern of the wards should the Boundaries Commission ignore the existence of this community and decide to break up the Hinchley Wood ward. A community as distinct and as separate as Hinchley Wood absolutely deserves to retain its own electoral representation. Therefore, I urge the Commission to reconsider their proposal. Yours faithfully, Jonathan Cockerill, local resident.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded
**Elmbridge District**

**Personal Details:**

**Name:** Matthew Cockerill  
**E-mail:** [redacted]  
**Organisation Name:** [redacted]

**Comment text:**  
I feel very strongly that the proposed changes to the electoral boundaries which would result in the abolition the Hinchley Wood ward should not go ahead. Having grown up near the station, I very much consider myself to be a member of a vibrant and distinct community in Hinchley Wood, and have no affiliation to, or knowledge of, any community in Western Green. I regularly use the Hinchley Wood shops, station and bus stops, whilst never venturing into Western Green for any such reasons (or any reason at all). The busy road and roundabout between our ward and theirs creates a distinct community boundary, with little cross contamination of any sort. For example, we consider Hinchley Wood as it stands to have every amenity except for a local pub, as the Greyhound in Western Green seems very much removed from us on this side of the Portsmouth Road. Meanwhile the doctors, dentist, pharmacy, coffee shops, hardware store, petrol station, schools, and church mean that Hinchley Wood exists as its own distinct and self contained village in suburbia, with its own distinct community to match. As a result of the presence of these facilities, most of which are situated in the very heart of Hinchley Wood, It remains a self contained area, and should therefore be represented as one. I live in Hinchley Wood, which is very much a separate part of Elmbridge in terms of character, and should therefore remain that way.

**Uploaded Documents:**

None Uploaded
Dear Mr Hinds,

I have been made aware of a proposal for a possible boundary change affecting Hinchley Wood. I have been a resident in Hinchley Wood for 20 years and during that time I have been really impressed by the strong sense of community cohesion in the area. There is a good mix of families with children and older people both of whom support each other very effectively – it has been a privilege to meet some of the original residents who moved in during the 1930’s when the development was first built.

I am most dismayed at the possibility that Hinchley Wood may be carved up and tacked on to two other areas. It seems most illogical as the area is united with a definite centre or ‘heart’ – focused around the village shopping and communal green next to the station. It is also important to remember the real draw of families to keep the area alive with the incredibly successful Hinchley Wood Primary and Secondary Schools attended by over 400 and 1000 pupils respectively.

So I fail to see why you would wish to break up an area in which new residents are clamouring to buy because of the excellent community feel of the area coupled with the superb schooling opportunities. The residents have a strong sense pride in their community that can be witnessed for example by the attendance at the annual fairs on the green, and community lead events such as street parties for the Royals in recent years. Also when MacDonald’s tried to take over the local pub and community pulled together to mount a robust counter case and ultimately succeed getting this thrown out and a more suitable building for retired residents created instead. The community has strong established pillars such as its own church St. Christopher’s, its own scouts and its own Hinchley Wood schools that draw from the local catchment area (and are very heavily oversubscribed).

Hinchley Wood is thriving with new residents keen to move in - breaking it up seems illogical and counter to the wishes of the local community.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Janet Cole MBA
24th March 2015

Review officer (Elmbridge)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
3rd floor Layden House
76-86
Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG

Dear Sirs

I am writing to protest in the strongest possible terms at the proposal to merge Hinchley Wood ward with either Long Ditton or Weston Green in the Borough of Elmbridge, Surrey.

Hinchley Wood is a long-established community with a full range of local services and facilities:

1) The shops around the green are prosperous and well supported
2) There is a restaurant and two coffee shops
3) It has a doctor’s surgery
4) It has a dentist’s surgery
5) St Christopher’s Church is flourishing and the Community Hub (formerly known as the Church Hall) is in wide use by local organisations
6) There is a full troop of cubs, scouts and guides, who are recruited from the locality
7) There is a nursery, primary school and a secondary school, which is so successful that its catchment area is strictly limited
8) There is a Shell garage

It will be seen from the above that this is a complete and self-contained community. Much of the local population is made up of commuters because of the proximity of the railway station. In addition, there are several retirement homes, which increase the density and make-up of the population. Both these factors suggest that local representation is important.

The links with Long Ditton are tenuous. I do not believe that many people in Hinchley Wood send their children to either of their primary schools, nor do I believe that St Mary’s church draws people in from the adjacent parish. There is a small row of shops, but people in Hinchley Wood have no need to use them because of 1 and 2 above.

Connections with Weston Green are virtually non-existent, apart from young people attending Esher College. I myself have no reason to go there - and I have lived in the area for twenty years!
Both the level of population and clear local identity indicate that the Hinchley Wood ward needs to be maintained. I can therefore only speculate that the purpose behind this proposal is to cut out the councillors who have been elected regularly over many years by the Hinchley Wood Residents' Association.

If this ward were to be merged then the Hinchley Wood vote would be seriously diluted and the councillors replaced with others who, however conscientious, are less likely to be aware of local issues - and quite possibly less of a thorn in the side of councillors from the main political parties!

I would be obliged if you would let me know the outcome of this consultation.

With thanks

Professor Tim Connell

PS I have tried to send this by e-mail several times without success.
Dear Sir,

As a long time residents of Hinchley Wood, we object to the absorption of our particular area into either Long Ditton or Weston Green.

We have a thriving Community served by the four-per-hour K3 bus service, and with a direct twice hourly rail service to London. The station placed at the head of the Square housing the majority of the shops, is in the heart of the community. There is a large central shopping area, well-known for the friendliness of it’s shopkeepers, the service and quality of the goods sold. Perhaps one should really say, famed for their provision of the necessary adjuncts to life. Our Italian Bakery receives visits from as far afield as Weybridge, our butcher is similarly known for its superb meat. In addition, there is nowhere else within five to six miles, in Thames Ditton, Long Ditton, Weston Green, Claygate, or Esher where one can go for any of the necessary tools, screws, nails, brooms, buckets, etc., available at Crossy’s hardware shop.

We have two coffee shops, and a restaurant, a fruiterer, electrical appliances and TV repairs, a fishing tackle shop, two estate agents, a pharmacy, plus a doctor’s surgery in the heart of the shopping area, as well as an osteopath, a vet, party shop, stationers and a rapidly growing Budgens Supermarket and Post Office. And that is not all. Unless one has a preference for travelling further afield, everything else is on the doorstep. If any boundary change needs to be drawn up with the accompanying name change, then why not target the other areas? Neither of the suggested areas, into which we would be swallowed, has such a wonderful or well-known shopping area.

We are also fortunate in having two dedicated councillors, who have worked hard to represent the people of this area, and been very successful, for example, in warding off changes to the Green Belt status of the Surbiton High School playing fields, keeping the area as it should be, an amenity for Hinchley Wood. The central hillside area is a joy for everyone, but particularly those local commuters who need to relieve stress with a walk amongst the greenery of the trees around the perimeter. This and the garden area in the square surrounded by the shops, offer space where various community events take place.

Our Residents Association provides strong evidence of the sense of Community which was needed in the successful battle against the provision of a MacDonald’s takeaway and drive-through restaurant on the site now occupied by the Hinchley Manor Retirement flats. We all realised that our area would be likely to become much dirtier, untidy and unsightly with such a development in the midst of shopping and residential buildings. The residents won the day, maintaining the attractiveness of the area.

Finally, we have an exceptionally good Secondary School and Primary school, strongly supported by the residents and businesses, and bearing the name of the area.

By reason of size Long Ditton with 6343 residents, is the largest Ward (compared with 5068 in Hinchley Wood), but it has need of a railway station, the most logical being Surbiton with its vast selection and regular timetable. Weston Green has the smallest population of 3843, perhaps 5-6 shops, and a preponderance of pubs/restaurants to attract passers-by on Hampton Court Way. The nearest railway station is Esher, half a mile away, or Hinchley Wood, approximately the same distance.
We thus feel that Hinchley Wood has much more to offer in terms of amenities than the other two wards and thus deserves to stand alone. Alternatively, its best association would be with Weston Green but still retaining the name Hinchley Wood (rather than becoming Weston Green), as would the schools and the railway station.

Suzanne and Tom Connor
Elbridge District

Personal Details:

Name: Jeremy Corris
E-mail: [redacted]

Organisation Name:

Feature Annotations

Map Features:

Annotation 1: Merge Thames Ditton and Weston Green Wards

Comment text:

If a reduction in councillors is absolutely necessary (and I am far from convinced that any savings are justified or in accordance with the LGBCC guidance), then the number of councillors should be reduced to a minimum of 54. Regardless, the existing Hinchley Wood (HW) Ward should remain unchanged. I oppose the Elbridge Borough Council (EBC) proposals in terms of both the number of councillors and the removal of the HW ward. A reduction of councillors from 60 to 48 will destroy the accountability by community which currently exists. As an example, the proposals imply that my councillor will now be the representative for Long Ditton or Weston Green. HW has a thriving community and shopping centre with some 25 shops and businesses in the main centre. Long Ditton has under a dozen and no centre, Likewise with Weston Green ~ no centre and only a handful of shops. HW has regular village events in the Memorial gardens, the hub of the village. There are the key elements of any village ~ a bakers, a butchers, a greengrocers, a general hardware store, coffee shops, restaurant and a doctors surgery. Why has this not been taken into account in the EBC review? Neither Weston Green or Long Ditton has the same village community. HW is a thriving local community centred around the shops and its interests will not be adequately represented. EBC has not considered or included the large number of Parish Councillors when compiling their submission. The proposed reduction in councillors will result in the number of residents per councillor in Elbridge being significantly higher than the average of other Surrey Authorities. Claygate is the only Parish Council in EBC and has committees relating to environment, highways & transport, planning and communications. These Parish Councillors contribute significantly to local resident rights and support and the existence of all of the Parish Councils in Surrey should have been taken into account when reviewing representation. Even ignoring this, Elbridge has the third highest number of electors per Councillor. The EBC review deliberately seems to ignore the existence of 660 Parish Councillors in 6 other Surrey Districts. Parish Councils interact with the Local Authority on a significant number of matters and these should be considered when assessing the number of electors per Councillor. HW also has a larger than average number of elderly residents who tend not to have access to the internet and therefore rely on local Councillors more. As a result, EBC and HW votes will not be equal to others outside the area, which breaches the Electoral Equality guidance, and is a fundamental democratic principle. There will be no representative for HW in future. There will be an inevitable move to concentrate on Weston Green or Long Ditton residents. The voice of HW residents will not be heard and our village will be neglected. If a redrawing of boundaries is necessary, then it would be better to merge Thames Ditton and Weston Green Wards. In conclusion, I consider that the proposal of the LGBCC to reduce the Councillors to 48 is unsupportable. EBC has failed to review the boundaries fairly in accordance with the Electoral Guidance under which it operates. Specifically the proposal to remove the HW Ward implies a clear political bias that should not be left unchallenged. HW Residents Association is a distinct political party with no affiliation to any of the mainstream parties. The proposal is a clear attempt to destroy local accountability and marginalise the voters of HW.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded
Elmbridge District

Personal Details:

Name: Timothy Crudas

Organisation Name:

Comment text:

We live in [redacted] in Hinchley Wood, and do not wish to become part of Long Ditton. Nor do we want to be split away from the rest of Hinchley Wood, which has a separate and distinct community identity. The Ward boundary should reflect this. The central shopping and Green area is a strong focus for the community - including all those, like us, living South of the A309. As well as frequenting the Shops and using the station daily, we are proud to attend the Village Fair, and the Remembrance Day Parade both of which add to the strong identity that Hinchley Wood has. Both our children have grown up as members of Hinchley Wood Cubs and have continued into Scouts and Explorers. This is one of the most successful Scout Groups in the Country, has been well attended for over 60 years by children from within the current Ward boundary. The scouts run an annual Fair on the Village Green which is extremely well attended by the local community and again, reinforces the community identity. None of my family has any dealings with Long Ditton. We are proud members of the Hinchley Wood Residents' Association and we wish to retain a Ward Boundary that reflects our community. Thank You.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded