

Starkie, Emily

From: Hinds, Alex
Sent: 13 August 2015 12:05
To: Starkie, Emily
Cc: Fuller, Heather
Subject: FW: Mepal Parish Council comments

Tis for Emily.

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From: Fuller, Heather
Sent: 13 August 2015 11:24
To: Hinds, Alex [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Mepal Parish Council comments

From: Mepal Parish Council [REDACTED]
Sent: 13 August 2015 10:57
To: reviews <reviews@lgbce.org.uk>
Subject: Mepal Parish Council comments

RESPONSE TO THE EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW

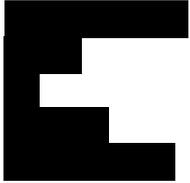
After discussion, and with reference to the papers circulated and comments collected by the councillor who attended the recent public meeting, it was agreed that the Parish Council is happy in principle with the proposed reduction in numbers of District Councillors.

As to warding, the Council wished to make the following points:

- whilst it is important to ensure good electoral equality, this should not rest solely on number of electors represented. Parish Councils are the grass roots of democracy, and a good link with the District Council, through frequent attendance of the local district councillor at parish council meetings, is very important to this, so that councillors remain familiar and in touch with the work and personnel of the Parish Councils they represent. In a rural area, therefore, attendance at parish council meetings presents a significant burden to a councillor, both in the number of meetings and in the variety of issues raised, as these will vary considerably, from parish to parish, as the local communities themselves vary. The maintenance of strong links between Parish and District are important in ensuring democracy at local level, and this factor needs to be recognised in the warding arrangements.
- It was felt vital that community identity be maintained. Small villages readily lose their identity (or are perceived by their electors to have lost it in the eyes of their representatives), where one or more small parishes are represented jointly with a larger settlement. For Mepal, the last warding change, which separated the parish from Sutton parish, has been of clear benefit.

- Community identity is very local. A group of small rural parishes will have little self-identity as a group; but a similarity of geographical position creates some similarity of need and interest among the several different communities. Warding in rural areas will have to rest on this rather than on common identity throughout the group.
- Shared village facilities, similarity of need and practised group working in some areas of interest, increase mutual sympathy within a group of parishes and these factors should be significant in defining wards. Mepal for example has a good deal in common with Witcham and Coveney within the present ward, but little if any knowledge of or interest in Little Downham. Its interests are more plainly shared with Wentworth. It shares facilities only with Witcham eg football and cricket pitches, the school for the two villages, sited in Mepal, and (since 1926) a single Anglican incumbent of the two livings.

Barbara Green
Clerk to Mepal Parish Council



Please be aware that my hours are part time and may be worked in the evening, so if you are unable to get hold of me, please leave a voicemail or email and I will get back to you as soon as I am back in the office.