

Hatley Parish Council

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Review Officer (South Cambridgeshire)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor Millbank Tower
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ELECTORAL REVIEW OF SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to you on behalf of Hatley Parish Council in response to the draft consultation on the Electoral Review of South Cambridgeshire District Council. Hatley Parish Council agreed at the meeting held on Tuesday 19th May 2016 for their original response, provided in January 2016, to be upheld. The original response is included below.

Background

The parish of Hatley is comprised of two small rural hamlets, Hatley St. George and East Hatley, which are located in the arable farmland of South Cambridgeshire. The parish has a population of approximately 185 residents across a total of 75 dwellings, most being classed as commuter workers, although many do also work from home. With the exception of the larger neighbouring village of Gamlingay (3 miles north west of Hatley St. George), this rural area offers very few amenities and services to the residents of Hatley. Gamlingay has become a natural extension to the parish of Hatley in terms of transport links, churches, public services, facilities and community organisations.

Hatley Parish Council's Response to the Consultation

Hatley Parish Council does not wish to provide any recommendations for electoral boundaries across South Cambridgeshire, but strongly urges the LGBCE to keep the parish of Hatley in the same District Ward as the neighbouring parish of Gamlingay. The two parishes are intertwined across a range of services and have important community links, which will be highlighted within this response. It is certainly not considered by Hatley Parish Council that the larger village of Gamlingay in anyway

diminishes the character, or erodes the identity, of the much smaller parish of Hatley - quite the contrary. The Parish Council hereby requests that electoral boundary review avoids splitting Hatley's local ties with Gamlingay for the benefit of the local community. Hatley Parish Council would like the following evidence to be taken into account so that the shared community interests are preserved and the parish is represented within a truly local Ward, combined with Gamlingay.

Public Facilities and Services

The only public service in Hatley is the Post Office which additionally offers some basic groceries and fresh produce for local residents on given days of the week. The neighbouring village of Gamlingay offers a wide range of public services and facilities that are otherwise unavailable for many miles around. These include two food stores, two newsagents, a farm shop with a café, a petrol station, car repair and MOT services, a bakery, two hairdressers, an estate agent, a café, a chemist, a lower and a middle school (catchment schools), three preschools, a children's day care centre, a restaurant and three take-away food outlets, two public houses and a medical practice. The medical practice includes a General Practice, District Nurse and Health Visitor Services, Clinics and an Emergency Service.

Gamlingay also offers the residents of Hatley access to a local fitness gym, sports clubs and sport facilities. There are a wide range of community events held throughout the year and classes for various hobbies and sports held weekly at Gamlingay's Eco-Hub Community Centre. The Eco-Hub is easily accessed by residents of Hatley via a short drive, a public bus service or the Gamlingay and Hatleys Car Scheme, as detailed further on. The Eco-Hub also offers Hatley residents access to a thriving local library service and a public computer suite.

Churches

The Benefice of Gamlingay includes St. Mary The Virgin Parish Church (Gamlingay), The Church of St. Mary (Everton) and The Parish Church of Hatley St. George. The Gamlingay Parochial Church Council oversees the services, maintenance and events for this group of churches, which formally ties the parishioners of Hatley to the community in Gamlingay. The Holy Communion service takes place in Hatley St. George on two Sundays a month, however all other Holy Communion and Morning Prayer services are offered in the Gamlingay Church, thereby encouraging both a bond and shared interests between the two parishes. The Hatley St. George Church hosts the annual Hatley Big Weekend in June, including the village fete, which involves participants from organisations that span both Gamlingay and Hatley, as well as welcoming visitors from both villages.

Transport

The parish of Hatley has one main road that runs through it connecting with Gamlingay to the North West and Croydon to the South East. The only public transport service is the C2 bus Service that operates on Thursdays, taking residents of Hatley into Gamlingay, where they can connect to other bus services, or can continue on the C2 to St Neots. This service operates on a Thursday so that residents have the opportunity to visit St Neots on market day. There is also a Demand

Responsive service (Bus No. 28) which links 20 local rural locations, including the Hatleys and Gamlingay.

Additionally, the Gamlingay and Hatleys Car Scheme has been in operation for over 20 years, organising transport by volunteer drivers for anyone where public transport is unsuitable or unavailable. This is a useful resource to residents with medical appointments on days that the C2 public bus service is not operating, and when the Demand Responsive may be restricted in availability due to demand by other users across the 20 villages that it services. The scheme provides transportation for a wide range of purposes, not just medical appointments.

Communications

The wide range of services and community groups that are located in Gamlingay are promoted to the residents of Hatley each month via the community news publication 'The Gazette'. This publication officially calls itself 'The Newspaper for Gamlingay, East Hatley & Hatley St. George' confirming the sense of community that exists between the large village of Gamlingay and the smaller hamlets of Hatley. It includes 'What's On' community events, local trade and service advertisements, village information, church notices and articles by various community organisations. There is also an online publication called 'The Post', which was in print in 2015, covering news and events across both Hatley and Gamlingay.

This mutual community identity is further emphasised when visiting the websites of either Hatley (www.hatley.info) or Gamlingay (www.Gamlingay.org), both of which refer users to the other site for news and information. Neither website makes reference to any other local village websites, illustrating the strong bond that exists between Gamlingay and Hatley.

Community Groups and Organisations

There is a vast range of groups and organisations based in Gamlingay that are made available to the residents of Hatley. They are actively promoted to the residents of Hatley and in some cases representatives from Hatley are requested to join. Examples include the Women's Institute, Gamlingay & District History Society, Gamlingay Players, Gamlingay & District Gardening Club, Gamlingay Photographic Society, Greensands Medical Practice Patient Participation Group, the Gamlingay Environmental Action Group, GamArch (local archaeology group that sought test pits in Hatley last summer), Forward Gamlingay (Youth Services) plus various sports clubs, fitness classes, children's groups, such as Brownies and Scouts, and much more.

The Gamlingay Community Turbine is a local project, 'by the community for the community', that was installed just outside of the village to generate energy that could offset the village's carbon footprint. A portion of the profit raised from the energy sales, is used to fund local charities and 'green' projects 'in the Parish of Gamlingay'. It is therefore significant to note that funds were recently given to Hatley St. George Church for the purchase and installation of a composting toilet, providing further evidence that Hatley is considered to be part of a wider community alongside Gamlingay.

South Cambridgeshire Council Members

Hatley has been very fortunate in recent years to be represented by two District Councillors who reside in Hatley and Gamlingay respectively. The Councillors attend almost every Parish Council meeting and are able to provide useful updates, as well as information and advice when sought by the Parish Council. Fully appreciating that there will be changes to the number of District Councillors going forward, it is important to Hatley to be represented by a Councillor who lives close by, if not in Hatley, who is familiar with Hatley and can offer knowledge, understanding and a passion for the local area. If Hatley is placed in a Ward that encompasses a far wider geographical range of small villages, there may be less visibility of the Local Member and less knowledge of Hatley's current and historical issues by the Local Member.

Summary

We hope that the points outlined above help to demonstrate that there is a shared local opinion of a wider community that comprises both Gamlingay village and the hamlets of Hatley Parish, and that this identity reaches across a wide range of services and community groups. It is vital to Hatley, as a much smaller rural community, that these essential links and relationships with the larger village of Gamlingay are not severed. Gamlingay does not have any overbearing impact on the character of Hatley, quite the opposite. The relationship has grown and the links have become more wide ranging despite the gradual growth of the village of Gamlingay. It is the view of Hatley Parish Council that a new Ward comprising of both Gamlingay and Hatley will be the most suitable outcome of the review and will best serve the interests and needs of the residents of Hatley.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Kim Wilde.

Kim Wilde
Clerk to Hatley Parish Council