



28 January 2016

The review officer (Eastleigh)
LGBCE
14 Floor, Millbrook Tower,
LONDON
SW1P 4QP

Dear Sirs

The Parish of Allbrook and North Boyatt

It is probably appropriate for you to take a close look at the parish of Allbrook and North Boyatt. The formation of which did not follow the guidance that came with the Act that transferred parishing from DCLG to local authorities.

Not that adherence to the guidance was a duty placed upon the Borough of Eastleigh by the Act as our MP at the time Chris Hulne and the electoral commission pointed out.

The parish is formed of three communities, the area at the north end of Pitmore Road which had been part of Winchester until a boundary review had transferred it to Eastleigh, the mid and south end of Pitmore Road incorporating the village of Allbrook and about a hundred dwellings situated to the north of the large Boyatt Wood estate.

I will deal with Boyatt Wood first. Boyatt Wood would have been a perfect parish. It was built in the mid to late 1970s and is defined by four boundaries, two railway lines, a motorway and a link road. It has a church, a doctor's surgery, a dental practice, a parade of shops, three schools two at junior levels and a senior one with a community facility. It has a large amount of employment in a large business park, principally in warehousing for retail and distribution.

When in 2009 the people of Boyatt Wood were asked if they wanted to be part of a parish they voted decidedly no.

Living at the top of Pitmore Road are people who remember it being part of Winchester and people who would like you to return it. Their allegiance is to the village of Otterbourne and its Victorian (at least) Parish Church and to Winchester. You may well get letters from them.

Housing development down Pitmore Road to the older settlement of Allbrook took place in the 1950s. In recent years Allbrook has lost its shops and pub through lack of use.

Before the parishing exercise took place a pressure group, headed by an experienced parishing officer working in a private capacity, persuaded enough people that a parish formed around the people living along Pitmore Road would be worthwhile. So an approach to the council was made.

Instead of councillors taking heed of officers, in that a parish of Allbrook could not be formed if the guidance was followed, they went ahead with the wishes of the pressure group and offered the people a vote on whether to become a parish. The vote was in favour.

Which was all very well until councillors started looking at revenue. Around that time I spoke to the leader of the pressure group. She made a convincing argument around forming a community with community activities taking place in a (yet to be built) village hall.

My view is that the bulk of her support came from people who had persuaded themselves that if Allbrook became a parish then parish councillors could push to join with the village Otterbourne and thence become part of Winchester with all its benefits including higher house prices and access to higher performing state schools for their children.

If that were so then they were out thought by Eastleigh's senior councillors because they carved away the northern most section of the Boyatt Wood estate and added it to the proposed parish of Allbrook thus putting people who could be relied upon to support Allbrook staying with the Borough of Eastleigh in the majority.

But the housing from the north of Boyatt Wood was not enough to create sufficient revenue so councillors decided further slice from Boyatt Wood was needed. But that involved taking on the prickly North Boyatt residence association. So it was left with the leader of the Allbrook group to leaflet us. Which she did not do. So when the meeting was called to discuss our annexation (remember we had voted against being part of a parish) not one of us turned up.

What we were left with is a parish with an ill defined boundary that represents the interests of three communities that have little in common. A parish that does not have any services nor amenities nor any employment within it.

We could have funded a judicial review with the aim of raising the status of the guidance but chose not to. Choosing instead to keep an eye on parish spending.

It is not that the parish council does not work but that it cannot do what government intended when it set up parishing.

Your faithfully



D W Prior
