

Heatherside Ward, Surrey Heath - Boundary Submission Proposal - Option 2
By Cllrs Paul Ilnicki, Ian Cullen and Jonathan Lytle (40 + years in council between us)

Heatherside, a tight knit village community, well established and still growing after nearly 50 years, provides a wonderful centre and support to a thriving community of over 6000 residents young and older generations. While primarily a family orientated community, there is also an aging population of longtime residents* who may be less than comfortable with the modern communication technology but are familiar with their ward voting patterns and polling station, and know their local councillors personally.

The well-known and popular community Heatherside has significant characteristics we believe it would be essential to maintain:

- Clearly identifiable boundaries around the thriving village community
- Strong social cohesion through many local groups and community organisations
- Established Community bound by Church and School
- Well supported and named bus service and transport links

Our understanding is that the Commission aims to deliver equality for local voters while also serving the interests and identities of established communities. While we acknowledge that defining boundaries primarily on voter numbers is key to these proposed changes, we respectfully submit that it is important to take into account the diverse interests of this long established and highly successful community.

Based merely on numbers, either Heatherside Ward or Parkside Ward must lose one councillor. Efforts to reach agreement have not achieved a satisfactory result, hence two optional suggestions being submitted to the Commission.

Option 1 is to take an area from what is acknowledged by all to be a clearly defined residential ward, the current Heatherside Ward, and annex it to the current Parkside ward.

Option2 is to move the main area between Upper Chobham Road and the M3 (East Parkside) back into Heatherside from the Parkside Ward, as they were prior to the 2003 boundary change

Heatherside Ward has clearly identifiable boundaries that are both natural and constructed through main and access roads that do not conflict with the established community, unlike Option 1. Heatherside's Community groups, facilities and interests, bind the community together and will only be enhanced further by Option 2 boundary changes.

Heatherside has the traditional village amenities, including a regionally acclaimed GP surgery as 3rd best GP Surgery in Surrey, Heather Ridge County Infant School with which councillors continue are very involved, the Church and Community Centre, all at the centre of the natural hub of the clearly defined triangular residential area, and are particularly close to the alternative annexing Option 1.

We have a very involved residents association as well as the busy Community Centre and Association, that plays host to many other community events and societies: Daily Pre school and Creche, WI, Parish Church, a host of clubs and organisations for all ages including U3A. Then there are the football clubs and teams, other sports, leisure and various recreation areas serving the thriving community, literally beside the Community Centre, in the Recreation ground. Popular restaurants and local shops add a vital dimension to this busy hub. Hence, fracturing this ward and community using the alternative Option 1 would undermine the social cohesion.

As three Councillors, established and playing a very active role, individually and collectively, the needs of residents of all ages and groups are well served. The increase in work and association with those that live in the community with the Heatherside Residents Association also complements the long serving Heatherside Community Centre at the middle of the ward.

The Option 1 change to our Heatherside boundary being considered would break in two the community, particularly as their roads and adjoining pathways serve the community strongly.

Mike Robins, Chairman of Heatherside Community Association (HCA) is "absolutely appalled" by Option 1 - his words - and he is happy for them to be used in this context. He is not the only leading constituent to have expressed such a view.

Community leaders themselves also want their voices heard in the arguments and have expressed concerns about the impact of any reduction in Councillors to the community.

Option 2 would move 1009 electors to Heatherside bringing the electorate to 5818. With the retention of 3 councillors for Heatherside this would represent a variance of 6.6%. Parkside ward would reduce to 4107

electors with 2 councillors which would represent a variance of 1 %.

The attached map provided demonstrates the logic and simplicity of the natural boundaries we are proposing.

The numbers are comparable with Option 1 on the table whilst also significantly taking into account the Heatherside village and community.

As a complete and well recognised community, with so many people contributing to its strong heart, it is hard to imagine how residents will feel if they lose part of their identity by being "moved elsewhere", even if in real terms the move is only an electoral convenience.

So far as we are concerned, the work in such a busy community is demanding and diverse, embracing individual as well as group needs, from planning and tree concerns to dealing with two recent traveller incursions. These caused much consternation but were brought to a satisfactory conclusion rapidly and with minimal disruption thanks to knowledgeable co-operation between the three local councillors and council officers. These unfortunate events demonstrated how, as a team, the Heatherside Councillors, from diverse professional backgrounds, work closely together to serve their constituents and assist with their multi-varied concerns.

- As defined by the ONS within Surrey Heath 18.7% (year on year increase from 2000)

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10th October 2016