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Please see attached document with regards Selborne Parish, above proposed to be split between Binsted and Bentley Ward and Whitehill Hogmoor and Gretham Ward.

**Uploaded Documents:**

**[https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download\\_document?file=draft%2F1511868359\\_SELBORNE+PC+RESPONSE+TO+BOUNDARY+COMMISSION+CONSULTATION.pdf](https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1511868359_SELBORNE+PC+RESPONSE+TO+BOUNDARY+COMMISSION+CONSULTATION.pdf)**

**RESPONSE FROM SELBORNE PARISH COUNCIL**

**TO**

**THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION'S  
ELECTORAL REVIEW DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS  
WITH REGARD TO WARD BOUNDARY CHANGES**

**INTRODUCTION**

- 1.** In an attempt to explain the context, to provide some of the history of Selborne Parish and to explore the wider picture and some of the local issues that affect the villages within it, this response to the Draft Electoral Review Recommendations considers some of the implications of losing the whole of Blackmoor to Whitehill Hogmoor & Greatham and offers an alternative boundary recommendation for Blackmoor.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONTEXT**

- 2.** Legislation requires that community governance should reflect the identities and interests of the local community of that area and that it should be effective and convenient.
- 3.** Changes to Parish Council boundaries can be made where a boundary is shown to be anomalous or redundant or if there has been a major change in the local population. Consideration has to be given to the size, population and boundaries of the proposed new area and to the impact on community cohesion. Community cohesion is linked specifically to the interests of local communities. Typical questions for consideration of the merits of the case will include whether or not the proposed new area would improve community cohesion, and whether or not the proposed altered boundary would improve community empowerment at the local level.

**THE PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGE AT BLACKMOOR**

- 4.** The proposed boundary review is intended to equalise the number of electors each district councillor represents. The proposed boundary severs the whole of Blackmoor ward from the parish of Selborne by drawing an arbitrary line to the west of the village of Blackmoor. It is difficult to understand how this

would reflect the identity or interests of the local community, how it might be effective and convenient, or how it could contribute to community cohesion when it divides and separates a community. In all probability, it would cause division, confusion and ineffective and inconvenient local governance.

5. There is an inherent affinity in character, identity and history between Blackmoor and Selborne. Any inherent affinity between Blackmoor and the proposed Whitehill Hogmoor and Greatham ward is as hard to imagine as it is difficult to understand why the boundary recommendation for Blackmoor has been conceived in its current form.
6. To add to the confusion, 'Parish Electoral Arrangements', on page 24 of the Draft Recommendations Report, paragraph 62 states that "Selborne Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Blackmoor 3; Oakhanger 9." This recommendation curiously leaves the 555 electors (as stated in the 2014/15 Electoral Register) who are residents of Selborne out of the equation altogether; it attributes to Oakhanger a number of electors that greatly inflates the reality of 110 electors (2014-15 Electoral Register). It also includes Blackmoor which other parts of the Draft Recommendations Report excludes and transfers to Whitehill Hogmoor & Greatham. Currently, Selborne Parish Council comprises 6 members for Selborne, 3 for Blackmoor and 3 for Oakhanger. There is nothing wrong with that.
7. We recommend that any land that is directly or indirectly connected to Blackmoor Estate and its land and interests should remain within Selborne Parish, and that those parts of the current Blackmoor ward of the parish that more properly belong to Whitehill / Bordon should be transferred to the new Whitehill Hogmoor & Greatham Parish.

## **PRIMARY HISTORIC SOURCES**

8. Selborne village and Blackmoor share joint interests and have historic joint interests.
9. Domesday Book records Selborne, Norton, Rhode and Oakhanger in the same parish. Manorial Documents record "Manors of Selborne, Selborne Makerel (Gurdon), Temple Southerington (Southerington), Norton, Blackmoor (part of Woolmer Forest), Oakhanger.

10. The Victorian Estate village of Blackmoor was built in the 1860s by the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Selborne, then Lord Chancellor. In 1918, his son, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Selborne conveyed a piece of land in Selborne to Selborne Parish Council for the purpose of a recreation ground. In 1925, his son, Lord Wolmer, gave a new area of land for a recreation ground, replacing the 1918 recreation ground.
11. Selborne Parish Council was created in 1894. It was part of Alton Rural District from 1894 - 1974 until it became part of East Hampshire District in 1974. The boundary of the civil Council was altered 1929 when Whitehill civil parish was formed. Since that time, Selborne Parish Council's boundary has continued to include Selborne, Oakhanger and Blackmoor, including Bradshott Lane, Blackmoor, as part of Selborne parish, and parts of Honey Lane, Blackmoor, as part of Selborne parish.

## **ISSUES THAT LINK BLACKMOOR WITH SELBORNE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

### **Planning, Minerals & Waste and Agriculture**

12. Historically, two local commercial businesses have affected all of the three villages in Selborne Parish (Selborne, Oakhanger and Blackmoor). These are Selborne Brickworks and Blackmoor Estate.
13. Selborne Brickworks is located in Honey Lane, approximately 1.5km north west of Blackmoor, 2km east of Selborne and 1km south of Oakhanger. Its Area extends to 11.6 hectares. The existing land use is agriculture. Clay extraction to support brick making at Selborne Brickworks was permitted, with the planning condition that the land be reinstated with inert fill material and restored to agriculture afterwards. The site is allocated in Policy 22 (Brick-making clay) of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan. However, the Brickworks is not currently operational as the planning permission for the extraction of clay lapsed in 2010. It is not known if brick-making is to re-commence.
14. Notwithstanding this, in 2011, permission was granted on appeal for the construction of an anaerobic digester on the site to enable the production of sufficient biomethane to supply all the energy that the brickworks require for its operations. The permission includes lagoons, a feedstock handling building and a gas-conditioning unit on the existing brickworks site and on the

adjacent land. All vehicle movements associated with the operation of the AD plant are required to use the access haul road across Chapel Farm from Oakhanger Lane.

**15.** Because of the local network of narrow rural lanes, any and all activities at the Brickworks have the potential to affect each of the villages of Blackmoor, Oakhanger and Selborne. Over the years, there have been a number of unauthorised activities associated with the Brickworks and with land at Chapel Farm, Oakhanger. On behalf of the residents of all three villages, the Parish Council has regularly participated in a liaison panel with Hampshire County Council to try and address and resolve the problems that have arisen from time to time.

**16.** Blackmoor Estate Ltd straddles land around and between Blackmoor, Selborne and Oakhanger and has the potential to affect all three villages. Its area is approximately 1,000 hectares. The Estate is one of only three remaining commercial apple growers in Hampshire. Blackmoor Orchards grow apples, pears, cherries and plums for many of the supermarkets on 250 acres of orchards, whilst Blackmoor Nurseries now supplies increasing numbers of plants directly to people who want to grow fruit from a specialist nursery in their own gardens. The Estate is the UK's leading grower of fruit trees and soft fruit. All of the apple, pear, plum and cherry orchards are situated on land that is part of Selborne. Yet all the fruit from these orchards is graded and packed in Blackmoor. The fruit nursery is in Blackmoor and the Estate is managed from there. This is just one illustration of how Selborne and Blackmoor, their interests and their communities are indivisible.

**17.** With regard to Minerals & Waste, Blackmoor Estate has interests in a soil recycling plant and green waste composting site, with associated development, run by Williams of Bordon on the Estate's land near the A325. It also has interests in active sand extraction at Rookery Farm, the other side of Oakhanger. The sand extraction is linked to a processing plant and inert landfill at Lode Farm near Kingsley, run by Tarmac. On behalf of all three villages, the Parish Council has regularly responded to consultations and/or applications for planning permissions in connection with these operations. If Blackmoor becomes part of a Whitehill Hogmoor & Greatham parish, Selborne Parish Councillors will effectively be disenfranchised and unable to take an effective or influential part in any consultations.

## CONCLUSIONS

18. Ultimately, a change in parish boundary must bring about improved community engagement and better local democracy, and must result in more effective and convenient delivery of services.
  
19. In considering a revision to the boundary of Selborne parish, amongst other things the following issues will need to be addressed:
  - How would the separation of Blackmoor from Selborne and Oakhanger ensure that community governance arrangements continue to reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government?
  
  - With a range of historic joint interests, and present day circumstances and challenges that still link Blackmoor with Selborne and Oakhanger, how would the interests and collective well-being of the local communities in each individual village be best served by having Blackmoor off from the parish of Selborne?
  
  - If Blackmoor is wholly cut away from being part of a single parish unit with Selborne and Oakhanger to become part of Whitehill Hogmoor & Greatham, how will Selborne Parish Council be able to respond to and deal with our joint issues effectively?
  
20. If Blackmoor were to be wholly incorporated into a new Greatham parish, councillors from Selborne, Oakhanger and Blackmoor would still need to continue to work together on issues that will continue jointly to affect these villages and their shared rural environs. Historically the three villages have been able to share expert knowledge and take an integrated approach towards responding to planning applications and other issues that jointly affect them.
  
21. In order to continue effective joint working, if the whole of Blackmoor ward were to be assigned to a new parish then our Selborne parish councillors would also find it necessary to liaise

with a district councillor from a neighbouring ward as well as with their own, and, in addition to attending their own parish council meetings, also attend the meetings of the new parish to which Blackmoor would belong, but without being able to take part or influence decisions or vote. This will increase the number of meetings that parish councillors will need to attend in order to keep up to speed with the full facts on any particular matter.

22. Such an arrangement would be unhelpful, undemocratic, would not reflect the demographic needs of the area, would not reflect the identity and interests of the local community, would be neither effective nor convenient, would divide community cohesion and would result in Selborne Parish Councillors often being disenfranchised on matters that affect Selborne Parish by virtue of not being able to vote in another parish on issues with regard to Blackmoor which will continue to be an integral part of our parish life regardless of whether or not a new boundary line is drawn.

23. A far better solution would be to examine what it is that currently makes up Blackmoor ward and to ask whether the identity and interests of the local community is best served by the current arrangements. An analysis of the ward indicates that half of Blackmoor ward is rural and properly belongs in Selborne parish, and the other half is more urban and more properly belongs in Whitehill.

24. An analysis of the 2014-15 Electoral Register reveals that there were 251 electors in the Blackmoor ward of Selborne Parish in total. Of these, 123 were resident in the rural parts of Blackmoor that in some way either identifies with or is directly connected to Blackmoor Estate. The remaining 128 electors were resident in Whitehill, Bordon. The breakdown of that number is as follows:

- a. Plantation Way, Whitehill, Bordon: 79 electors
- b. Bracken Lane, Whitehill, Bordon: 14 electors
- c. Drift Road, Whitehill, Bordon: 23 electors
- d. Firgrove Road, Whitehill, Bordon: 12 electors

TOTAL number of Whitehill Bordon residents currently registered as part of Selborne Parish (Blackmoor) = **128 electors**

25. In other words, 50% of the current Blackmoor ward of Selborne Parish should be part of Whitehill in any event and should not be part of Selborne Parish.

26. Such an arrangement would better reflect the identity and interests of Blackmoor as much as it would reflect those of neighbouring Whitehill Hogmoor. This would greatly improve community cohesion and salvage community empowerment at the local level instead of ambushing it.
27. In terms of numbers of electors, this arrangement would mean adding approximately 123 electors to the forecast 4644 in a new Selborne ward (currently unsatisfactorily named in draft as 'Binsted & Bentley ward'). For Whitehill, Hogmoor & Greatham it would mean adding approximately 128 electors to the forecast 4261 for that new ward with 2 district councillors. This equates to an approximate +2.6% increase for Selborne, bringing its total to +3.6%, and it equates to an approximate +3% for Whitehill, Hogmoor and Greatham, bringing the total for that new ward down to -4%.
- 28.** There is evidence to support the inclusion of areas belonging to Bentley and Binsted within a new Selborne Ward boundary. The South Downs National Park map shows that Selborne shares a common geomorphology with Binsted and with parts of Bentley. Together we complete the East Hampshire Hangers. This was the reason why the then Countryside Agency included areas around the 'Binsted Peninsula', including Bentley Station and Alice Holt Forest within the national park boundary: because of our common geology, common landscape, common interests, common identity. Having almost all but a very small percentage of the ward boundary within the national park would lead to effective and convenient governance and would also make it easier for district councillors and parish councils to deal with / respond to planning issues and planning applications.
- 29.** The population of Binsted and Bentley area is well spread out, on account of the area being very rural in character, just as the settlements in Selborne parish are.
- 30.** In summary, evidence leads us to the conclusion that the Boundary Commission's draft District Council ward boundary is an acceptable arrangement, with the exception of the proposed inclusion of 50% of the current Blackmoor ward of Selborne parish that more properly belongs to Whitehill, Hogmoor and Greatham, and with the exception of the draft name that has been suggested.
- 31.** If the evidence and logic for transferring approximately 50% of the current Blackmoor ward to Whitehill, Hogmoor and

Greatham is accepted, then we recommend that the number of parish councillors for the revised Blackmoor ward of Selborne parish be adjusted accordingly to either 1 or 2 councillors.

- 32.** Finally, we would question whether the proposed name for the revised EHDC ward, 'Binsted and Bentley ward', is the most appropriate choice. Selborne is internationally famous on account of its natural beauty and the writings of the 19<sup>th</sup> century naturalist, Gilbert White. Binsted and Bentley are not internationally famous. We therefore recommend that the villages of Binsted and Bentley and their environs, as indicated on the maps, be incorporated into a revised and enlarged 'Selborne ward'.