



# Thames Ditton & Weston Green Residents' Association (Founded 1934)



The Review Officer (Elmbridge)  
Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
14th Floor Millbank Tower,  
London  
SW1P 4QP

10 August 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

## **Elmbridge Electoral Review – Objection to proposals for Thames Ditton**

I write on behalf of the Thames Ditton & Weston Green Residents Association. The Association, established in 1934, is a non-party-political organisation concerned with protecting the amenities and furthering the interests of the inhabitants of Thames Ditton and Weston Green. We have over 1,100 subscribing households representing some 2,360 members.

The Association strongly objects to the Boundary Commission's proposals to move approximately 940 Thames Ditton residents from the Thames Ditton ward into the Long Ditton ward ie. we consider that the whole of the CB electoral register should remain in Thames Ditton.

The following are our principal reasons for believing that the Thames Ditton ward boundaries should remain as they have been for the last 120 years:

1. The core ward is the ancient parish of Thames Ditton denoted by Thorkhill Road, going south from the Portsmouth Road to the railway line and then the boundary follows the railway line until it reaches the junction of Claygate Lane and Portsmouth Road. From there it follows the existing boundary to Hampton Court Way and north along the Hampton Court Way to the River Mole where it goes east to the River Thames, which forms the north-east boundary.
2. This core ward therefore has a clear community identity and on its eastern side has a clear geographic boundary of a railway line on an embankment.
3. To maintain electoral equality we support the proposal from Molesey Residents Association that the roads north-west of the River Mole should remain in the Molesey East ward. (Bridge Gardens, Cedar Road, Cedar Close, Kingfisher Court, Oarsman Place, Queens Reach, Hampton Court parade, Bridge Road, even numbers), estimated at about 375 residents.
4. Moving these residents into Thames Ditton will cause confusion: residents in one Elmbridge ward will have two different County councillors.
5. The one ward of Thames Ditton would sit in two different CIL infrastructure levy areas funded by and reporting to different Council committees
6. The problem of electoral equality would not arise if the Commission were prepared to consider the Elmbridge Residents' Group Councillors' proposals for 3 x 2 member wards for Hinchley Wood, Long Ditton and Weston Green respectively, proposals for which the rules allow and which would be the only 2 member wards in the borough.

We would particularly like to highlight the relevance of our case to two of the main criteria used by Boundary Commission when making its recommendations:

**a) Wards should as far as possible reflect the interests and identities of local communities**

- The proposal to remove all residents on the CB register on the roads east of the Portsmouth Road to Long Ditton ward would divorce them from the Thames Ditton ward, parish and community of which they have been a part since 1100 AD. The Thames Ditton ward's boundary has included them since the first local council (the Esher & the Dittons Urban District Council) was established in 1895.
- Residents in these roads look to Thames Ditton as the centre of their community for shops, doctors, schools, village hall (now Vera Fletcher Hall), St. Nicholas Church, village green (Giggs Hill Green), Thames Ditton Centre for the Community, Girl Guides etc. Thames Ditton ward councillors respond to local residents re: improving/campaigning for High Street shops, doctors' services, leisure services, such as at Giggs Hill Green.
- Giggs Hill Green is Thames Ditton's village green, Thames Ditton Cricket Club has played on the green since 1833, and all the houses round the Green as well as in Angel Road have always felt part of the Thames Ditton community.
- There is an active Residents' Association for the whole of Thames Ditton and Weston Green. The community magazine "Thames Ditton Today" and website serves the whole of the existing Borough wards of Thames Ditton and Weston Green.

**b) Boundary Commission should provide for effective and convenient local government**

- To remove 940 electors from the Thames Ditton ward based organisation that represents them, Thames Ditton & Weston Green Residents' Association, diminishes community involvement in the democratic process. It also confuses local residents as to whom to lobby re: parking, shops, services etc.
- Giggs Hill Green Conservation Area runs along the Portsmouth Road side of the Green and extends into Angel Road. Thames Ditton Conservation Area Advisory Committee covers the area; there is no Long Ditton Conservation area or Advisory Committee that could take this on which could provide the protection residents enjoy at present
- As stated earlier moving 365 residents from East Molesey to Thames Ditton Ward would mean that residents of Thames Ditton ward would be in two different county divisions. This would lead to confusion as there would then be two county divisions in one Elmbridge ward which does not lead to effective and convenient local government

## **Commission's proposals based on inaccurate information**

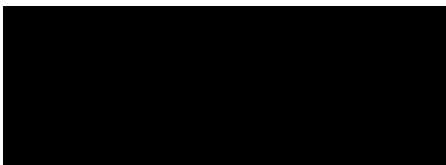
We are very concerned that your recommendations are based on the proposals of a political group which used, as its basis, **totally inaccurate information** about the history and geography of Thames Ditton: this submission referred to a 'parish of Ditton' and to 'Ditton' being designated as a 'town' in 1895 and it referred to the 'town of Ditton' in 1933. **There is not and never has been a town or settlement of 'Ditton'**. Thames Ditton ward has been a separate unit of local government since the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. Long Ditton and Thames Ditton have always been separate parishes, originally in the Kingston Hundred (as opposed to the Emleybridge Hundred) and the implication that there is only one unit of "Ditton" should in no way be considered by you. Reference is made at the foot of this letter to some of our sources.

**The CB electors that the Boundary Commission proposes to transfer to Long Ditton have always been in the ancient parish of St. Nicholas, Thames Ditton, and then the Esher & the Dittons Urban District Council (1895 – 1933), Esher Urban District Council 1933 – 1973 and Elmbridge Council 1974 – 1976 (65 councillors) and Elmbridge Council 1976 – present day (60 councillors).**

Furthermore, the Local Government Boundary Commission Report No. 30 on proposed wards for Elmbridge report 1975 recommended that Area E (the present CB register) should remain as part of the Thames Ditton ward and not be transferred to Long Ditton. The report states "*the desire of Area 'E (to remain part of Thames Ditton) appeared overwhelming*". This view was accepted then by the Commission and nothing has changed since then.

We strongly urge you to reconsider the recommended boundaries as they relate to Thames Ditton, so that we do not lose the valuable community identity which we have always enjoyed.

Yours faithfully,



Rhodri Richards  
Chairman  
Thames Ditton & Weston Green Residents' Association

\* Sources include:

'Esher: the Story of a Council 1895 – 1974'. E Royston Pike  
Parish Church of St Nicholas, Thames Ditton: 'Some Notes on its History Structure and Contents, 1952'.

John Speed map, 1610: 'Surrey described and divided into Hundreds'

Local Government Boundary Commission For England Report No. 30.