

## Fuller, Heather

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**From:** Ray Steele [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 01 October 2014 00:59  
**To:** Reviews@  
**Subject:** Electoral Review of Warwickshire County  
**Attachments:** Boundary Commission Whitnash.docx

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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For the attention of  
Review Officer  
Mr D Owen  
Warwickshire Review  
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Dear Mr Owen

I attach a letter as my response to the Electoral Review of Warwickshire County – Draft Recommendations in which I express my support for the response of Whitnash Town Council to this review.

As a committee member of the Whitnash Society which is part of our community we are deeply concerned about the way in which the ability of Whitnash to function as a viable community is being slowly eroded and appeal to you to prevent this continued injustice.

Yours sincerely  
Ray Steele Chartered Engineer M.I.Mech.E.  
The Whitnash Society

1<sup>st</sup> October 2014  
Review Officer  
Mr D Owen  
Warwickshire Review  
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
Layden House  
76–86 Turnmill Street  
London EC1M 5LG  
[reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk)

Dear Mr Owen,

The following letter was sent to you by Whitnash Town Council. I wish to add my support to Whitnash against the boundary changes.

The proposed boundary changes will destroy the community spirit that exists in Whitnash. The people are proud of the history of Whitnash that can be traced back to the Domesday Book and the early settlers that came to this place.

**Personal Notes** I first moved to Whitnash in 1964 for a number of years. I returned in 1990 to retire. Sadly since then I have witnessed thoughtless planning by WDC that has increased the number of houses endlessly. This is still going on through the Local Plan despite valid protests from people who care for their community. Whitnash is in the south of Warwick District that has been unjustly targeted by WDC to accept the bulk of all houses claimed to be needed. Boundary changes have now decimated what is left of Whitnash that is surely being absorbed into Leamington for no other reason than to take over control of Whitnash if it can no longer function as a town.

I am a committee member of the Whitnash Society, and members are appalled at the treatment that is being metered out to Whitnash. The changes to our boundary are considered to be a spiteful backlash by WDC after the campaign to oppose the draconian house building plans that will destroy the community spirit in the south of the district. Whitnash suffers more than other communities because it is being whittled away by the changes to its boundary. There cannot be a reasoned argument by WDC other its desire to destroy the town status for some obscure reason

I work with Whitnash Town Council members in opposing the WDC plans that will cause great harm to Whitnash and its community. I have suggested that the boundary changes should be the subject of an independent examination to investigate why Whitnash has been treated with disrespect by WDC.

I appeal to you to see the harm that will befall Whitnash with these unreasonable and unnecessary proposals to reduce its size. Its Neighbourhood Plan has been effectively made unworkable since the land identified has now been given to Leamington.

Regards

Ray Steele Chartered Engineer, M.I.Mech.E.  
The Whitnash Society Committee Member  
Member of the Whitnash Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee.

**LETTER FROM WHITNASH TOWN COUNCIL to Mr Owen  
Electoral Review of Warwickshire County Council – Draft Recommendations**

Whitnash Town Council has considered the Electoral Review of Warwickshire County Council – Draft Recommendations and would like to request that The Local Government Boundary Commission for England respects the integrity and name of our Town and the views of the respondents.

Whitnash is a community in its own right and should not be split by the changes in the Draft Recommendations of the Electoral Review of Warwickshire County Council or Warwick District Community Governance Review.

Whitnash Town Council has considered the draft recommendations and rejects the suggestion that the area east of railway should become part of Leamington Willes Ward as it is a historical part of Whitnash and Brook Valley Nature Reserve should be protected as it is part of Whitnash's heritage.

Whitnash Town Council also recommends that the border in the west near Othello Avenue that is proposed in the Draft Recommendations, which is an illogical and irregular border, should be tidied up and simplified so that everything east of Othello Avenue is Whitnash Electoral Division. This is the same recommendation we made when the Warwick District Council boundary review was undertaken previously. We also made the same comment in Warwick District Council Community Governance Review in May 2014.

Whitnash Town Council recommends that all the land north of Harbury Lane and East of Tachbrook Road should become part of Whitnash Electoral Division as there are approximately 300 houses being built there and it is a natural boundary. Residents will not be able to understand why they are represented by Bishops Tachbrook Parish Council which is a disconnected village some 1.5km away. Whitnash Town Council has serious concerns about the recent Community Governance Review undertaken by Warwick District Council. Under these proposals, Whitnash is reduced in size and the area of east Whitnash completely removed. Our town has not only shrunk in size, but we have lost our history and heritage. East Whitnash including Brook Valley nature reserve and the Holy Well is included in Leamington Spa, which has no affinity with this area. Our designated Neighbourhood Plan area includes this area, but it is arbitrarily removed without

adequate explanation. *Please see attached explanation of the Whitnash Emblem and a brief history of Whitnash which will no longer be applicable if the Draft Recommendations of the Electoral Review of Warwickshire County Council and Warwick District Community Governance Review is implemented.*

The Town Council wishes to appeal this vexatious decision to redefine Whitnash and remove its natural boundaries and heritage.

I have included a copy of our letter to the Chief Executive of Warwick District Council expressing our disappointment at the outcome of the Warwick District Council Community Governance Review.

Yours sincerely  
Jenny Mason  
TOWN CLERK

22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014  
Mr Chris Elliott  
Chief Executive

Warwick District Council  
Riverside House  
Milverton Hill  
Royal Leamington Spa  
CV32 5HZ  
Dear Mr Elliot

**Warwick District Community Governance Review**

Whitnash Town Council at its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014 expressed its grave disappointment at the outcome of the Warwick District Community Governance Review. This decision will destroy our Community and heritage. The loss of East Whitnash is devastating and it now appears that Warwick District Council aims to either make Whitnash a non-existent town or include the whole of our distinct and separate town into an area of Leamington Spa? Please can you tell us how you are going explain to residents of the new housing development behind Landor Road and Ashford Road (Woodside Farm) that they will be living in, and be represented by councillors of Bishop's Tachbrook, a separate village that is some miles away? We look forward to hearing your rationale behind this decision.

Back in the 1930s Whitnash extended as far north as Prospect Road and ASDA. Indeed, many residents of the St Margaret's Road area still think of themselves as being in Whitnash, one only has to look at the name of the pub, Whitnash Tavern and Whitnash Children's Centre.

Please can you to justify to the residents of Whitnash the reasons why Warwick District Council and its predecessors have chipped away at Whitnash over the years at every opportunity afforded by boundary reviews?

The Whitnash Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is dismayed with this decision and the utter waste of public money. The Whitnash Draft Neighbourhood Plan public consultation starts on 1<sup>st</sup> October until 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and all the aims and objectives in this plan are no longer viable or achievable as a result of the Warwick District Council's perverse decision.

The designated Whitnash Neighbourhood Plan includes East Whitnash and the Brook Valley and one of the policies is to have a 'Whitnash Wood' area.

Brook Valley and the ancient well in East Whitnash form part of Whitnash's history and heritage. Members of the Whitnash Society and local residents worked tirelessly to enhance this nature reserve and protect the wildlife over the years. There is a bench at Brook Valley commemorating the Founder member of the Whitnash Society who led this project.

Warwick District Council, Community Development Foundation and Whitnash Town Council all contributed money to the Whitnash Neighbourhood Plan which is now wasted. Warwick District Council may have public resources to waste, but Whitnash Town Council has a precept and does not have unlimited funds.

Is it worth continuing the Whitnash Draft Neighbourhood Plan public consultation when we are leading residents to spurious outcomes after the

consequences of the Warwick District Community Governance Review are taken into account?

Warwick District Council carries out consultations and then ignores any comments and views expressed by the consultees.

It would be helpful if you could set out both the stages of consultation and decision making to date together with the options available to Whitnash Town council to challenge and appeal this decision.

We await your reply.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Mason

TOWN CLERK

### **WHITNASH EMBLEM**

The badge of Whitnash has a meaning for the items shown on the badge.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> third of the badge is a tree as 'Near the White Ash' an ancient name for the town.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> third is a sheave of corn, as Whitnash is an agricultural area with good fertile land.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector is a wavy blue line representing a stream or river in our case the Whitnash Brook as it is a good clean water supply, on it there is mounted a silver bell, a story goes the church went down to the brook to bless the water, and the bell fell in, the bell has not been seen since, but it has been said that you can hear the bell on certain occasions.

Intersecting the top 2 sectors is a field gate, this represents when Whitnash was one of the last places in England to be enclosed in 1850.

At the bottom of the badge there is a book which represents that Whitnash was one of the first parishes in England to publish a Parish magazine. At the top there is a bear holding a tree stump this is the county badge of Warwickshire in which Whitnash is situated, and the whole badge is mounted onto an English rose.

'Enclosure' is when the Government said that all land owners' fields were to be physically out lined with a fence or hedgerows so people would know the boundaries of their land.

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### **The Town of Whitnash**

There is evidence that Whitnash existed as a settlement of the Britons in the time of the Romans, but it may have been a village in the Iron Age times. The earliest settlements are believed to have been close to the brook, which marks the boundary between Whitnash and Radford Semele, and near to the Fosse Way, which forms the southern boundary of both parishes. The name Whitnash is thought to mean 'near The White Ash' but sensible, alternative suggestions include 'Place near the Wood' (from a Celtic derivation) and 'Meeting Place for the Wise' (from Saxon Witan or council').

Mentioned in the Domesday in 1066 when the population was 112, the village seemed relatively stable and prosperous. In the following centuries the population increased, probably because of fertile soil. The parish was one of the last in England to have open fields, which were enclosed around 1850.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was a steady increase in the population from 203 in 1811 to 520 in 1891. In the 1930's a number of new houses were

built, adding to the black and white half-timbered properties (mostly dating back from the seventeenth century) and the Victorian cottages and houses. In 1951 the population was 1,682 and in 1961 it had risen to 4,486, in 1977 it was around 7,000 today it is approximately 12,000 and still rising.

Although the village has changed much since 1860's when American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne visited and found a delightful sleepy atmosphere, there are still some black and white cottages, an old inn and several seventeenth century cottages remaining. At St Margaret's Parish Church, the tower dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. St Margaret's was largely rebuilt in Victorian times to designs by Sir George Gilbert Scott. Some stone work and monuments from the Norman church have been incorporated into the present building. There is also a Methodist Chapel which was erected in 1967 to replace an earlier building as well a Roman Catholic Church which was built in 1971. Thus there has been an attractive mix of properties of differing ages and this gives Whitnash a distinctive character all of its own.

Whitnash became a town in 1972 and adopted the office of Mayor in 1992.