

## **Chorleywood Residents Association Response to the Proposed Political Boundary Changes**

The Local Government Boundary Commission's draft recommendations propose that Three Rivers District Council should have 39 Councillors in the future. This is a reduction of 9 councillors. In addition the recommendations also outline how those Councillors should represent 13 three-member wards across the district.

Chorleywood Residents Association consulted with its members seeking feedback on these proposals and detailed below is a summary of the feedback we received.

1. **Impact, Implications and Communication** - Concerns have been raised by residents regarding the lack of publicity about the proposed boundary changes. Many of them were only aware of this due to the Residents Association posting this on our website and "tweeting" it. Furthermore the full implications and impact of these boundary changes on our community are not clear nor understood. In an article in the Chorleywood News magazine our District Councillor Martin Trevett is described as saying the changes are the best deal on the table. But who is it the best deal for and why and are the boundary changes meant to imply advantages and disadvantages. Presumably this has no effect on the Parish Boundaries and the Parish Council but again this is not clear. Residents feel they have virtually no information for making informed comment on this and they do not understand the wider implications for the future. The impact and implications should be clearly stated in this consultation phase so everyone is fully informed and aware.
2. **Secondary Education** - Our local secondary school, St Clement Danes, would be part of Chorleywood North & Sarratt in the revised boundary scheme. It has been stated that one of the reasons for the proposed boundary change is parents in Sarratt send their children to St Clement Danes school. What is not clear is how this would affect children in the proposed Chorleywood South boundary who also attend this school. It is not clear why this is given as a reason for changing the boundary to advance the school into another ward.
3. **Alignment to Parish and County Boundaries** - Currently the Chorleywood Parish boundary is closely aligned to the existing Three Rivers District Council boundary with the exception of Rickmansworth West (Valley Road area). In addition the Herts County Council boundary also follows the current Three Rivers boundaries (joining together Chorleywood West, Chorleywood East and Sarratt). We do not understand therefore or see the sense in the proposed new District boundary deviating from this. It seems only to align with the Buckinghamshire/Hertfordshire boundary and the Metropolitan railway line. This deviation from the current Parish and County boundary would seem to introduce unnecessary complexity without any obvious benefit to Chorleywood and its surroundings.
4. **Differences in Communities** - The proposed northern part of the ward will pair Sarratt with the "new" Chorleywood North. In the previous boundary consultation a number of residents from Sarratt commented that they value having their own District Councillor at the moment. They are understandably concerned about being merged with a different type of community as their "new" councillor will not be able to accurately represent their rural views. This is a valid point as Sarratt is a very rural part of the district and their needs are quite possibly unique in the locality. If these boundary changes proceed Sarratt will be treated in the same way as all other wards in the district and this will be to the detriment of their needs as a rural community. The proposed southern part of the ward will now include Heronsgate and we

*agree this is sensible as Heronsgate has much in common with Chorleywood and its residents use the shops and amenities in Chorleywood. This new southern ward also proposes to include Maple Cross. This is a very different and indeed urban area compared to Chorleywood. Unlike Heronsgate the residents in Maple Cross tend to use the facilities of nearby Rickmansworth rather than Chorleywood so we cannot see the sense in pairing an urban community with a semi-rural community such as Chorleywood who have very different needs.*

5. **Pairing Similar Communities** - *As the whole purpose of the reorganisation is to get electoral wards across TRDC with a roughly equal number of voters in each ward our recommendation would be to group Chorleywood into a single ward within the district in the reorganisation. Maple Cross could be paired with Mill End /Rickmansworth town and Sarratt could be paired with the Croxley Green wards. This would respect the differences in these communities pairing them with communities that have similar issues and needs. Both 'parts' of Chorleywood are very closely linked in all aspects of village/town life and facilities used making it sensible to link both parts of Chorleywood as one ward. What is the value in splitting an existing village/town?*

*By looking at any map you will see very clearly that Chorleywood is a distinct community in its own right and it will be to its detriment if these proposals proceed by pairing it with communities that have different issues and needs. Whilst we understand the principle of the proposals is to obtain equal size wards we do not think that breaking up communities to achieve this is the best option. We feel it would be better to prioritise keeping communities together and aim for approximately equal ward sizes instead.*

*If you have any questions on the points we have raised above please contact me at*



*Kind Regards,*

*Debbie Rosario*

*Chair – Chorleywood Residents Association*