

## **COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY FEBRUARY 11<sup>TH</sup> 2020**

### **ITEM No: 9 – To agree a Parish Response to the NFDC Boundary Review**

#### **BACKGROUND**

At our last meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup> 2020 the Parish Council agreed that having both wards of the Parish within one NFDC ward remains an overwhelming aim. This - happily - is also something that NFDC also wants to achieve for the three Parish Councils within the District that are currently divided across two District Council wards.

It was felt that NFDC's initial expected proposal to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England ("LGBCE") for a ward of Copythorne (North & South), Ashurst and Netley Marsh (with two District Councillors) appeared sensible. The subsequent likely inclusion of Bramshaw to that possible ward was also considered to be acceptable. It was though felt important that we find out from Bramshaw PC and Minstead PC how they viewed this possible proposal before Copythorne PC submitted its response to the LGBCE.

The Clerk to Bramshaw PC has advised me that her councillors discussed the impact of the proposed boundary changes on Bramshaw PC at their meeting on January 28<sup>th</sup> 2020. They are content with being grouped with Copythorne (North/South), Netley Marsh and Ashurst & Colbury and so do not intend making any representation.

The Clerk to Minstead PC has told me that her councillors discussed the NFDC proposal with Diane Andrews (in general terms) at their meeting on January 6<sup>th</sup> 2020. Their feeling is that Minstead would prefer to remain grouped with Bramshaw and Copythorne plus, perhaps, Netley Marsh, on the grounds that Minstead has more in common with those rural parishes. The councillors do not want to be grouped with Lyndhurst which is seen as a 'town' and somewhere to avoid on account of the traffic.

The grouping preferred by Minstead PC, would (based on the 2025 estimate) have a forecast electorate of 3549 without Netley Marsh and 5317 with it and so wouldn't fit the requirement for each ward councillor to have an electorate of 3075 voters +/- 10% (i.e. a range of between 2768 and 3383). It would be 15% over target for one ward councillor without Netley Marsh and 14% under target for two ward councillors with Netley Marsh.

The expected NFDC proposal to LGBCE for Copythorne is that Copythorne North and South will be included in one new NFDC ward comprised of Ashurst & Colbury; Bramshaw; Copythorne; and Netley Marsh which would have a total forecast electorate of 6,496 voters to be served by two councillors. This equates to 3,248 each, so within the target range mentioned above (it is 6% above the target figure).

Adding Minstead to the proposed ward would increase the electorate to 7,114, which equates to 3,557 per ward councillor, 16% above the target figure and so would not be acceptable to the LGBCE.

As explained last month, we as a Parish Council are invited to make representations to LGBCE as to what we would like to see in terms of our local District Council ward(s). In explaining our opinion, we should use evidence and give examples, whilst thinking about the three legal factors the Commission uses to draw new boundaries which are in summary that the new wards deliver electoral equality for voters, that they reflect community interests, and that they promote effective local government.

(Cont'd./....)

(.../Cont'd.)

In summary, we need to consider whether we are in favour of the expected NFDC suggestion and if not we need to explain why and suggest an alternative that complies with the three legal criteria that LGBCE have to use.

## RECOMMENDATION

That on behalf of Copythorne Parish Council I make the following submission to the LGBCE:-

*“The Parish of Copythorne has for decades been a split parish with our North and South wards in different New Forest District Council wards.*

*Within our submission to the then Local Government Commission for England as part of the 2000 Electoral Boundary Review Copythorne Parish Council stated a desire for the Parish not to be divided between two district wards. It was noted in the final report for that Review that New Forest District Council considered ways in which this might be possible (for example by forming a two-member ward of Copythorne, Netley Marsh & Minstead); however, it concluded that “it would have caused problems in forming acceptable wards” in this part of the district. So, Copythorne has remained a “split Parish”.*

*At the initial meeting to launch the Electoral Boundary Review we noted with pleasure that one of NFDC’s stated aims for the review was to reunite the two wards of Copythorne into one District Council ward.*

*By way of background, Copythorne is formed of six villages (Bartley, Cadnam, Copythorne, Newbridge, Ower and Winsor) and can be described as a rural parish. The Parish Council is working on a number of projects to improve the feeling of connectivity between the six villages which each have their own identity. Having the two Parish Council wards in one District Council ward remains an objective. The Parish can be described as a gateway to the New Forest.*

*We note that in its submission to the LGBCE, NFDC is expected to recommend that Copythorne (both North and South Wards) become part of a new District Council ward with the neighbouring parishes of Ashurst & Colbury, Bramshaw & Netley Marsh. This ward would have an expected (2025) electorate of 6,496 served by two ward councillors. This equates to 3,114 voters per councillors which is around 6% above the “target” of 3,075.*

*Copythorne Parish Council supports this recommendation as it groups us with neighbouring parishes with broadly similar characteristics to ourselves. External boundaries for the ward are clearly defined and links with the other Parish Councils concerned already exist.”*

**David Rigby**  
**Parish Clerk**