

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee



held on Thursday 4 August 2022 at 7.00 pm
in the First Floor Meeting Space, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton,
OX14 4SB

Open to the public, including the press

Present in the meeting room:

Members: Councillors Ron Batstone (Chair), Sarah Medley (Vice-Chair), Paul Barrow,
and Alison Jenner

Officers: Steven Corrigan, Democratic Services Manager

Remote attendance:

Officers: Susan Baker, Electoral Services Team Leader, Jordan Kennedy and Chris
McMullin, Electoral Services Officers

15. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Mike Pighills.

16. Minutes

RESOLVED: to adopt as a correct record the minutes of the committee meeting held
on 26 May 2022 and agree that the Chair signs them as such.

17. Declarations of interest

None.

18. Urgent business and chair's announcements

None.

19. Public participation

None.

20. Community Governance Review - Harwell East Proposals

The committee considered the report of the head of legal and democratic which invited it to consider proposals for consultation on the creation of a new parish.

The committee was advised that Council had agreed, at its meeting held on 16 July 2014, to establish a new parish. In doing so, Council agreed that the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee should determine the timing of the creation of the new parish. The committee had previously deferred consideration of the issue to allow for the community to grow and establish an identity and for further details regarding any unitary proposals for Oxfordshire to be discussed at that time.

Having previously agreed to create a new parish the committee was invited to agree to undertake consultation with local residents and stakeholders on the following matters:

- The name of the parish.
- Whether the new parish should have a parish council or an alternative style of council (community, neighbourhood or village).
- The ordinary year of elections.
- The council size (number of councillors).
- Whether the parish should be divided into wards.

The committee welcomed progress on the implementation stage of the new parish. Although currently part of Harwell parish, the residents of the new area had a well-defined separate community which justified the creation of a new parish. Committee members expressed the view that the working title name for the new parish of Harwell East may not best reflect the identity of the area. Residents in the area did not necessarily identify with or feel part of Harwell and in fact many identify with Didcot.

Officers responded to questions from committee members as follows:

- Confirmed that Harwell East was a working title and that consultees would be asked to propose more appropriate names for consideration.
- The size of the parish council (number of parish councillors) could be reviewed in the future to reflect any increase in the size of the electorate.
- There is currently no proposal to alter the number of parish councillors for Harwell Parish Council.
- The results of the consultation will be reported to a subsequent meeting of this committee to make a final decision and authorise officers to make the relevant Reorganisation Order to establish the new parish. The committee would be asked to establish a shadow authority to take forward issues such as the setting of a precept, appointing a clerk and finding a venue for council meetings.
- The establishment of the new parish will not impact on either the district ward or county division boundaries.

- The boundary of the parish would be along the side of the A34 bordering the new parish.
- Clarification about which local authority had responsibility for the provision of parish boundary signs would be obtained.

RESOLVED: to consult on the following:

1. the name of the new parish with a working name proposal of Harwell East;
2. the style of council with a proposal that it should be a parish council and be called Harwell East Parish Council;
3. the effective date for the new council will be 1 April 2023, with elections for the new council to take place in May 2023;
4. the size of the council with a proposal that it should have eight parish councillors;
5. the warding arrangements for the council with a proposal that it should not be warded.

The meeting closed at 7:26pm