

CGR_F

Parishes Affected

Sunningwell, Wootton and Cumnor

Matter to be considered

Amending the parish boundary to include the area of Boars Hill currently in Wootton and Cumnor parishes and amending the parish name to reflect the change.

Impact on district and county council boundaries

Affects Botley and Sunningwell, Cumnor and Wootton district wards
Affects Kennington and North Hinksey county divisions

Summary of parish council responses

This is a request from Sunningwell Parish Council with support provided from the Boars Hill Association.

Sunningwell Parish Council has clarified that it is not proposing the transfer of land at Long Furlong in Sunningwell parish or seeking a change to the name of the parish but supports the submission from the Boars Hill Association.

Cumnor Parish Council object to the proposal.

Wootton Parish Council object to the proposal.

Summary of other responses

These are set out in the engagement summary document.

Recommendation

1. To consult on a proposal to make no change to the current boundary between Sunningwell, Cumnor and Wootton parishes.
2. To consider undertaking a Community Governance Review of the wider area (Sunningwell, Wootton, Cumnor, Kennington, Radley and South Hinksey) following the elections in May 2023 to include consideration of a new parish for Boars Hill.

Justification for recommendation

The submission for the boundary change between Sunningwell and Wootton provides two main reasons for the proposal:

- That the semi-rural community of Boars Hill has more in common with Sunningwell parish than Wootton parish
- That Wootton Parish Council has neglected the residents of Boars Hill whilst Sunningwell has supported projects that have supported Boars Hill.

In addition, there is a request from the Boars Hill Association supported by Sunningwell parish Council, to transfer those Boars Hill properties located in Cumnor parish to Sunningwell parish to place all of Boars Hill within one parish.

The petition evidence submitted by Boars Hill Association appears to show strong support for the proposal. This seems to suggest that there is a strong sense of community with those residents living within Boars Hill and that the identities and interests of the residents would be better served being part of Sunningwell parish.

However, the responses to the initial engagement process suggest that the residents of Boars Hill situated within Wootton parish do share common identities and interests with those in the village of Wootton and that Wootton Parish Council provides effective and convenient local government in respect of access to services. They use the same facilities (schools, shops, community hall) and the cricket team shares the name of both communities (Wootton and Boars Hill Cricket Club). There is limited evidence to support residents sharing identities and interests with residents of Sunningwell Parish and access to services would not be as convenient.

The proposal to transfer properties at Chilswell Cottages from Cumnor parish to Sunningwell parish was considered, and rejected, as part of a previous community governance review in 2016/17 which formed part of requests/proposals from Sunningwell Parish Council to transfer land from Cumnor, Kennington, Radley and South Hinksey parishes to Sunningwell parish. As set out in the previous paragraph, there is no evidence to suggest the residents of Chilswell have a shared identity or interests with residents of Sunningwell parish or that such a move would provide for effective and convenient local government. This area has a historical connection with other hamlets in Cumnor (see Cumnor Parish Council's response dated 27 April 2022).

Whilst evidence has been provided of a strong community identity within Boars Hill, and disquiet regarding effective representation of Boars Hill residents within Wootton parish, the engagement exercise provides little evidence to support the review criteria of a shared identity or interest with Sunningwell parish or that the change would provide greater access to effective and convenient services.

The current arrangements for parishes in this area of the district have existed for many years. Many rural areas parishes are made up of different

communities and hamlets and have boundaries that have become obscure over the years as developments have taken place but which continue to support community identity. This is true across the parishes of Sunningwell and Wootton with neighbours living in different parishes. It may be considered that a wider review of the area is required to address these anomalies. This review has also not considered whether the strength of community would support the creation of a separate parish covering the Boars Hill settlement.