

SUNNINGWELL PARISH COUNCIL

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Steven Corrigan
Democratic Services Manager
Legal and Democratic services
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

24th January 2017

Dear Steven,

We refer to the Community Governance Review in relation to the Local Government Review and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 about which you wrote to us on 1st December.

We welcome the news of this review and wish to take the opportunity to raise some additional boundary issues which we ourselves have mooted in earlier discussions with your staff.

Sunningwell Parish Council believes that parish boundaries should align, as far as is practically possible, with the natural boundaries by which a community identifies itself. We very much agree with the suggestions which you have put forward in so far as these relate to our own parish boundaries to the east. The old A34 Oxford Road running through Bagley Wood represents a far more logical eastern boundary for our parish provided that the residents affected are not unhappy with the proposed change.

However, we would earnestly request, from a community cohesion point of view, the inclusion of three additional small groups of dwellings in this review as detailed below and which we have also outlined on the attached map.

1. Boars Hill (Chilswell Farm Cottages) - the three Chilswell Farm Cottages off Foxcombe Road a few yards beyond our northern boundary. These are very remote and separated from any other community but have a close attachment with Boars Hill / Sunningwell parish.
2. Boars Hill (the top of Hinksey Hill where it forms an extension of Foxcombe Road) - the 14 houses on the north side of Hinksey Hill up to and including the house called Brunswick (recently renamed from Wishem House) being an extension of Foxcombe Road before reaching Hinksey Hill itself. Similarly to those above, these houses have for several generations or more been deemed a part of the Boars Hill community and, we feel, naturally relate to Boars Hill / Sunningwell rather than the parishes of which they presently form an outlying part.
3. Boars Hill (west part of Lincombe Lane and western (lower) part of Fox Lane - the lower Fox Lane salient consisting of about 20 or so houses which form an outlying and separated part of Wootton parish but are contiguous with, and form a natural part of, Boars Hill / Sunningwell and likewise have been deemed a part of the Boars Hill community for many decades or more. Indeed some of the residents along one branch of Lincombe Lane actually have to drive through our parish to reach Wootton! The other, eastern, part of Lincombe Lane has always formed a part of Sunningwell Parish and this split is quite incongruous; the boundary having been set long before any dwellings existed in this area.

It should be noted that the addition of the above three areas would bring the parish boundaries in line with those adopted over 50 years ago by the Boars Hill Association which is an active and long established organisation set up and managed by the local community itself.

The attached map shows the areas which we feel should form a part of this review.

We would stress that, although it is our sincere and considered opinion that these areas would more logically and socially form a part of Sunningwell Parish, nevertheless, we are not seeking to annex them without regard to the wishes of the resident voters in each of the various small communities concerned.

Accordingly we would request that the registered voters in each of the areas concerned, where we are suggesting a change, should be consulted. Ideally this should be done by some form of secret ballot managed by the VoWH DC so that the voters themselves can decide, in each of the separate areas, which parish best represents their own feeling of identity. The end result may, or may not, result in a change in the various cases but the parishes to which they presently

belong should be prepared to accept the verdict, as we in Sunningwell will, whichever parish each area decides it would prefer to be a part.

As you will see from the attached map we also envisage, for similar community cohesion reasons, that the part of Sunningwell Parish which is now to the south of the A34 and commonly referred to as “Abingdon North” should, as part of this boundary review, be ceded to Abingdon Town provided, however, that in doing so Sunningwell Parish will not lose any CIL grants, to which it would otherwise be entitled, resulting from the already existing development plans for this area.

We hope to hear of your favourable response to our proposals.

Brian Rixon
Parish Clerk - for and on behalf of Sunningwell Parish Council

