

28th July 2022

VWHDC Community Governance Review (2022)

Response to the Proposal NOT to change the existing Parish Boundary and to the proposal to change Wootton Parish Council's name to Wootton and Boars Hill Parish Council.

Wootton Parish Council wishes to express its support in retaining the existing Parish Boundary and to rename Wootton Parish to Wootton and Boars Hill.

Despite the Vale of White Horse DC's link to the online survey being published after the publication of the Community Magazine the Parish Council has obtained 234 signatures on a petition to demonstrate the desire of residents to maintain the existing boundary.

The Parish centers around the Wootton and Dry Sandford Community Centre and Pre-School, the Boars Hill and Wootton Cricket Club, the Community Park, all of which receive significant financial support from Wootton Parish Council in addition to the Bystander Public House and the Besselsleigh Road shops, which are at the heart of the Community and are all resources extensively used by residents of the area which has been identified for review. Currently the Boars Hill Association delivers their publication to Wootton Village as this shares the same "Boars Hill" postal address were some areas of Boars Hill to be separated from the existing Parish, this would cause ill-feeling among those residents.

Additionally, the area under review represents a significant portion of the Parish's income from Precept and given that the loan on the Community Centre was taken with a term of 50 years, the result would be a significant increase of precept on the remaining population.

Although different parts of the village, such as Old Wootton, Boars Hill, and the B4017 corridor, have their distinctive social and architectural characters, the village is a well-integrated community as is evidenced in the replies to the questionnaire sent out in preparing our Joint Neighbourhood Plan with St Helen Without (made December 2019). There was a strong feeling of belonging to a neighbourhood and a strong satisfaction with the area as a place to live. This sense of community has been enhanced by the lack of significant housing development in the parish since 1970, apart from the relatively small Deerhurst Park. While there will be some development over the next ten years - notably a new housing estate on the old industrial park - there will not be a substantial increase in population and little change to the village's existing character.

Wootton is a medium-sized rural parish with a diverse social, economic and, to a growing degree, ethnic profile, and the Wootton PC see no reason why its boundaries should be altered under the Community Governance Review. It also feels that the views of this diverse community are well represented on the current Parish Council which has a positive gender, age and work experience balance and has ambitions to enhance further the parish's pleasant and welcoming environment in the coming years.



Wootton Parish Council
c/o Clerk to the Parish
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Wootton, Abingdon
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Wootton Parish Council supports the change of name to the Wootton and Boars Hill Parish Council. There are several reasons for this.

It would distinguish the Wootton/ Abingdon Council from the other Wootton Parish Council in Oxfordshire and the host of other Woottons in England (in Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, and so on).

It seems strange that when the original council was established in the late nineteenth century that the proposed name was not adopted, given that the parish was formed from two hamlets and Boars Hill was developing fast as place to live for affluent Oxford dons, such as Sir Arthur Evans. Indeed, on Social Media Apps, such as Nextdoor, the area “Boars Hill” covers the Wootton, Boars Hill, Henwwod and Whitecross, largely reflecting the existing Parish Boundary.

The Parish Council recognizes that residents of Boars Hill have developed an understandable pride in maintaining the special visual aspect of their area and that some among them feel that the area’s unique heritage is not fully appreciated by other sections of the village. Renaming the Parish Council would be one way of demonstrating that Boars Hill is a much-loved part of the village, whose artistic and intellectual history gives it an important place in the life of the county and the country, not just Wootton.

Renamed or not, the Parish Council looks forward to working closely with the Boars Hill Association to maintain the beauty and character of this special area. It hopes, too, that a member of the Association will be willing to come on the Council and help us continue our vision of turning the entire village into a community that would have warmed the heart of Matthew Arnold and all the other poets and writers forever associated with this unique part of our parish.

In summary, Wootton Parish Council wish for the existing Parish boundary to be maintained and we feel that given the Neighbourhood Plan has been made and covers the whole of our parish and that of St Helen Without PC it would be incredibly complicated to amend any boundary. However, we would like the Parish to be renamed to be more inclusive of all the areas of our Parish and to differentiate ourselves from other similarly named parishes.

Yours sincerely,

Wendy Quigley
Clerk to the Parish