
Moreton, Bobbingworth & the Lavers Parish Council

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24 November, 2009

Our Ref. CNT 1319

Mr. Ian Willett
Democratic Services
Epping Forest DC
Civic Offices
High Street
Epping, Essex
CM16 4BZ

Your Ref. PU/IW/CL/ER/11/5/2

Dear Mr. Willett

Community Governance Review

Thank you for your letter of 20th October and the report of the Cabinet's concerns. The Parish Council debated these at their meeting on Monday 9th November. I can say that members were alarmed and confused by the Cabinet's response and I have been asked to respond with their views. They were unable to come to any firm conclusion because the details presented are very vague.

(a) Cost

The Council were alarmed by the potential cost of this very minor change to the warding of the parishes. The change only affects a total of 595 electors. You estimate an initial £300 for consultation materials but indicate a potential for a further £500 on the basis that the community may ask for more issues to be reviewed. The PC are at a loss as what these may comprise or why any other issue should be encompassed within a straight consultation on a simple issue. The Council were further alarmed by your statement that it MAY BE necessary for newspaper advertisement with an estimate of £2000 when there is a possibility of alternatives. Several Councillors, who have experience of advertising in local papers believe a reasonable cost would be around £250 per issue. Members believe a hand delivered consultation to every house (approx 200) in the parishes affected, together with advertisements in the local village magazines would be the most effected way to communicate. The two village magazines have a circulation of 950 in the district and members are positive that this would prove a better communication than in the public notice section of a local paper.

So faced with an indeterminate cost ranging from £550 to £2800 they are unable to make any sensible response to Cabinet. However as far as they are concerned, the only PC contribution to the cost will be the delivery of the consultation papers to every house hold affected.

(b) Number of Parish Councillors

Members are confused by the Cabinet's comment on saving cost by reducing members. All of the Councillors work for their community voluntarily without payment of attendance allowances or expenses. The only costs I can attribute to each member is printed material (now much reduced due to use of e-mail) and occasional training courses or materials, to date a minimal amount each year. It should also be recognised that the combined parishes' population is distributed over a rural area of approx. 13 square miles and this requires greater not less representation.

Reducing members would only reduce the effectiveness of the council and not reduce costs. There is no benefit to the community by reducing members and the council has no intention in doing so.

Yours faithfully,


Colin Thompson
Clerk to the Parish Council.

Rec 27/11