

**Electoral & Community Governance Review Committee
Public Meeting held on 1 April 2011 at Matching Village Hall**

ECGRC Members Present: Councillors J Philip (Chairman), D Stallan (Vice-Chairman),
D Jacobs and D Wixley

Other Councillors: Councillor A Boyce

Apologies: Councillor C Whitbread
County Councillors A Jackson and G McEwen

Representing Matching Parish Council: Councillor R Morgan (Chairman) and E
Fenwick (Parish Clerk)

Representing MBL Parish Council: Councillor A Busch (Vice Chairman) and C
Thompson (Parish Clerk)

Public: 25 in attendance

(1) WELCOME

Chairman of the Electoral and Community Governance Review Committee, Councillor John Philip welcomed those present and introduced the Members present, before outlining the running order for the evening.

(2) PRESENTATION BY EFDC

Returning Officer Ian Willett gave a short presentation outlining the current position of the Community Governance Review. He explained the origin for this boundary review, and summarised the complicated nature of this boundary being also a District, County and Parliamentary demarcation.

Referencing the map (distributed separately), Mr Willett confirmed the existing boundary and the proposed change, before detailing the progress made regarding this boundary review so far. Mr Willett then explained the reasons for this public consultation and the options available to the public through the previously dispatched consultation documents.

(3) COMMENTS BY PARISH COUNCILS

Councillor R Morgan, on behalf of Matching Parish Council, stated that they were in favour of the proposed change to the boundary, but were not actively encouraging voters either way.

Councillor A Busch, on behalf of Moreton, Bobbingworth & The Lavers Parish Council, stated that they agreed with the sentiments held by Matching, and that they would support the wishes of the residents of High Laver. They were against any reduction in numbers of Councillors, and added that they felt the timing of the Review was unfortunate with regards to the forthcoming Parliamentary Constituency Review.

(4) QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

- What is the current precept for Matching Parish Council?
 - £10, 500 (The cost of a contested election would therefore be significant).
- Why are there different letters?
 - There were 3 different forms: One per household for Matching residents, one per household for MBL residents, and one per elector for MBL Matching Green residents.
 - This was to consult with everyone affected, maintaining priority for those directly affected in a transparent and simple manner.
- Why have Matching residents only just become aware of this Review?
 - This Review was initiated in June by MBL in order to combine the 3 Laver wards. As part of the consultation for this, the boundary with Matching was raised and is therefore being investigated. It is quite likely that Matching residents would have been unaware of this as the previous consultation was limited to MBL residents.
- How would a 50/50 split of opinion be resolved?
 - If there is no clear consensus of views with regard to the second stage of consultation, the issue would be decided by the Electoral & Community Governance Review Committee.
- What do I do if I believe I have been sent the wrong letter?
 - Please contact your Parish Council. If a clerical error has occurred they will put you in contact with Ian Willett who can advise you further.
- What is the total cost implication for this Review?
 - To date, the Review has cost £1,100 (from existing District Council money). The biggest foreseeable cost would be the additional election. If this were just a Parish election, it would cost Matching Parish Council £2,000 - £2,500. If a District election ran concurrently this figure would be split between the Parish and the District Councils.
 - The estimated costs were therefore in the region of £4,000.
- Is this anomalous nature of the boundary unique within Epping Forest District?
 - There are many anomalous boundaries at the District Level. These are only reviewed and changed if they cause a problem regarding community governance.
 - The Matching boundary has been the subject of controversy in the past, which adds significance to the reoccurrence of this issue.

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- Will the information from this consultation be disseminated to residents?
 - The results of this consultation will be presented to the Electoral & Community Governance Committee for discussion. The agendas and minutes of these meetings will be published online and are open to public access.
- Who decides if there should be extra/fewer Parish Councillors?
 - This is primarily guided by the views of the Parish Councils, and whether they felt able to cope.
 - There is also a question about this in the circulated consultation document to gauge public opinion.
- How many Parish Councillors are there currently?
 - Matching = 7
 - High Laver = 4
 - Little Laver = 2
 - (Magdalen Laver = 2; 'The Lavers' = 8)
- Is there a chance of Matching/MBL becoming part of Harlow District Council?
 - There is currently no chance; Harlow Council is due to sign an agreement undertaking not to initiate a boundary review. The forthcoming Parliamentary Constituency Review, however, might regroup Parishes differently.
- Can you give us more information regarding the Parliamentary Constituency Review?
 - The review will begin in the South-West, reordering constituencies into groups of approximately 76, 641 voters, roughly 10% higher than current sizes. It is understood that the intention is not to split wards, though this can not be guaranteed.
 - Councillor D Jacobs understood that England was to be divided into regions, with Essex in the Eastern region also including Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. He understood that the two latter counties would combine, as would Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. Essex and Suffolk would remain as present, though Essex would go down from 18 to 17 constituencies.

(5) CLOSE OF MEETING

It was noted that more detailed consultation documents were available on the District Council's website, and that the outcome of this consultation would be freely available to the public online through the reports and minutes of the Electoral and Community Governance Review Committee meeting scheduled for 19 May 2011.

Councillor Philip closed the meeting, thanking everyone who attended.