

**Notes of the Joint Meeting of the Creation of Parishes Working Parties held on
16th November 2009.**

Present

Councillors:-

David Everitt
Derek Howe
John Legrys
Ian Meller
Graham Partner
Paula Purver
Ray Woodward

Officers:-

Melanie Phillips, Democratic Services Manager
Louise Beeston, Senior Electoral Services Officer
Helen Lisney, Legal Assistant

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Matthew Blain, Tony Gillard and Phil Holland.

2. Declarations of Interest

Personal interests were declared by Councillor Legrys for reasons of him being a member of the Hugglescote and Donington le Heath Forum and Councillor Meller for reasons of him being a Parish Councillor in Ravenstone.

3. Scoping Report.

Members were taken through the report of the Democratic Services Manager which set out the position in terms of where we were in the process regarding the conduction of community governance reviews for both Whitwick and Hugglescote and Donington le Heath. It was noted that the timetable for the reviews was very tight given that the reviews must be completed within a year and the work includes extensive consultation and is required to fit in with the dates of the Council meetings. With this in mind, it was reported that draft recommendations would need to be considered at the next meetings which are due to be held in December. This would then enable these to be taken to Council for approval and then be sent to all those who had made representations for further consultation. Once all the comments had been received following this consultation, Members would consider the responses before putting together the final recommendations. Members were asked to consider the following to enable the Democratic Services Manager to draft some recommendations based on their views, in readiness for the next meeting:-

- Firstly, whether or not to have a Parish Council and if so,
- Should the Parish be warded or be a single Parish Council?
- How many Members should be elected to sit on the Parish Council?

- Were they happy with the proposed boundaries?
- What did they want to name the Parish Council?

Guidance on the number of Councillors suggests the following

Electorate	Councillor Allocation
Less than 500	5 - 8
501 – 2,500	6 - 12
2,501 – 10,000	9 - 16
10, 001 – 20,000	13 - 27
Greater than 20,000	13 -31

Members received copies of all the responses which had been received to date following the consultation to assist them in forming their views. It was noted that the consultation period does not expire until 30th November so any further responses received would be brought to the next meeting. The following statistics were reported to Members:-

Whitwick

Consultation with 1,680 properties in Thringstone and 3,036 properties in Whitwick including commercial properties. A total of 4,716.

Responses to date:- For 29, Against 5, Total 34.

As it stands at present, the total electorate in the proposed parish is 7,012.

Hugglescote and Donington le Heath

Consultation with 934 properties in Hugglescote, 230 properties in Coalville and 702 in Snibston including commercial properties. A total of 1,866.

Responses to date:- For 8, Against 7, Total 15.

As it stands at present, the total electorate in the proposed parish is 3362

Members were advised that, once the recommendations had been drafted and approved, these would be sent to all those who had made representation during the first stage of the consultation with a covering letter inviting further comments. Copies of all the representations made during the first stage of the consultation would also be made available.

4. Considerations and Issues for the Next Meeting

Having had regard to the above, Members deliberated the issues surrounding the proposed creation of the parishes. It was considered that the establishment of a parish council would enable the local people to be better represented at a more local level. However, concern was expressed that there appears to be little knowledge amongst the general public of how the political processes within parish councils work with some Councillors stating that public participation at parish council meetings is scant except when a controversial issue is being discussed; although it was accepted that this could also be said of district council matters. It was also felt that,

judging by the some of the responses to the consultation, there was little understanding of what a parish council can do. There was concern that, whilst there were many positive views from members of the public in wanting a parish council, there is often a general reluctance from local people to stand as a parish councillor due to a lack of understanding of what is involved. The Democratic Services Manager advised that, should approval be given to the creation of the parish councils, officers would work very closely in helping them set up and service their meetings until a clerk had been appointed and the parish council felt able to 'stand on its own two feet'. Members welcomed this and also suggested that a prospective parish councillor event be held to try and encourage members of the community to stand as parish councillors in readiness for the elections. The Democratic Services Manager agreed to arrange this in the event of the parishes being created.

The issues arising from the discussions in relation to each proposal are set out as follows:-

Whitwick: - Accepting the fact that the consultation period has not yet expired and that further representations may still be received and that these will be considered at the next meeting, Members agreed that they would like to pursue the creation of a Parish Council, in principle, and that the draft recommendations should reflect this. It was suggested that the parish should not be warded and that the number of Parish Councillors be 11. The name of the Parish Council shall be 'Whitwick Parish Council'. However, it was asked whether consideration could be given to extending the proposed boundary to include the monastery**. Maps were examined to see where the parish boundary could be sited to ensure this could happen and it was agreed that this option be explored. Members asked that the Chairman of the Parishing Whitwick Steering Group be invited to attend the next meeting of the Group. The Democratic Services Manager agreed to write a letter of invitation.

Action to be taken:

The Democratic Services Manager to:-

- contact the Chairman of the Parishing Whitwick Steering Group to seek his views on the proposed change to the boundary** and invite him to the next meeting.
- extend the consultation to those areas captured by the suggested change to the boundary**.
- write to all those who have made representations to seek their views on the proposed boundary change** and
- draft the recommendations based on the above for consideration by Members at their next meeting.

*Post Meeting Note:- ** This proposal has since been retracted.*

Hugglesecote and Donington le Heath - Accepting the fact that the consultation period has not yet expired and that further representations may still be received and that these will be considered at the next meeting, Members agreed that they would like to pursue the creation of a Parish Council and that the draft recommendations should reflect this. It was suggested that the parish should not be warded and that the number of Parish Councillors be 9. The name of the Parish Council shall be 'Hugglescote and Donington le Heath Parish Council'. However, it was asked whether consideration could be given to extending the proposed boundary to include

the Highfield Sreet area. Maps were examined to see where the parish boundary could be sited to ensure this could happen and it was agreed that this option be explored. Members asked that the Chairman of the Hugglescote and Donington le Heath Forum be invited to attend the next meeting of the Group. The Democratic Services Manager agreed to write a letter of invitation.

Action to be taken:

The Democratic Services Manager to:-

- contact the Chairman of the Hugglescote and Donington le Heath Forum to seek his views on the proposed change to the boundary and invite him to the next meeting.
- extend the consultation to those areas captured by the suggested change to the boundary.
- write to all those who have made representations to seek their views on the proposed boundary change and
- draft the recommendations based on the above for consideration by Members at their next meeting.

Members conveyed their sincere thanks to officers for all their hard work on the reviews.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 7.05pm.