

Community Governance Review – Comments Received

Abbots Langley Parish Council

The Chairman added the following item to the agenda on the grounds of urgency. (Standing Order 14 refers.)

Councillor Sara Bedford introduced the Community Governance Review being carried out by Three Rivers District Council that will shortly be going out to consultation.

The review addresses the parish ward boundaries and proposes the creation of an Abbots Langley West ward (2 members) and a Hunton Bridge ward (1 member), which will effectively balance the proportion of members to electors. The ward boundaries will return to those in place for the 2015 Parish Council elections, although with different ward naming.

It was proposed by Councillor Brenda Kersey and seconded by Councillor Jane Lay and **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council support this proposal and that delegated authority be granted to the Clerk to respond to the consultation when it opens."

Councillor Matthew Bedford

In general the existing parish wards are a good reflection of the communities within the parish and provide for good electoral equality.

Since the last parish elections in 2015 there have been two changes implemented as a result of the review of County Council division boundaries in the area:

- 1) division of the former Abbots Langley & Bedmond parish ward into separate parish wards for Bedmond (1 parish cllr) and Abbots Langley (4 parish cllrs). There is a clear distinction between these two communities and the existing arrangements make sense and also provide for good electoral equality;
- 2) division of the former Hunton Bridge & Langleybury parish ward into separate parish wards called Hunton Bridge & Langleybury; and Hunton Park. The "Hunton Park" parish ward is an artificial construct. Almost all its residents feel part of Hunton Bridge and have Hunton Bridge (WD4) addresses; although a small number in Upper Highway have Abbots Langley (WD5) addresses. In addition, the creation of two separate parish wards, both significantly undersized, necessitated the reduction in representation of the Abbots Langley West parish ward from two parish cllrs to one, resulting in a significant under-representation of that part of the parish.

Existing parish wards and electoral variance:

(electors per parish councillor with variance greater than 10% of parish average highlighted in red)

Parish ward	Polling districts	No. of electors	No. of Parish Cllrs	Electors per Parish Cllr
Abbots Langley	DAD; DAE	3860	4	965
Abbots Langley West	DAG	1815	1	1815
Bedmond	DAB	1155	1	1155
Hunton Bridge & Langleybury	DAFA	397	1	397
Hunton Park	DAFB	787	1	787
Leavesden	DAH; DAI; DAJ	5743	5	1149
Primrose Hill	DAA	2008	2	1004
		15765	15	1051

I would therefore propose three adjustments as follows:

- 1) move the boundary between polling district DAFB and DAG so it runs along the centre of Upper Highway. This would move the properties on the east side of Upper Highway into the Abbots Langley West parish ward (even numbers - 87 electors). This boundary would then follow the boundary between WD4 (Hunton Bridge) and WD5 (Abbots Langley) postcodes and would more closely reflect the community boundaries in this part of the parish. Both these polling districts are already in the same parliamentary constituency; the same county council division; and the same district ward. So there is no restriction in moving electors between these polling districts.
- 2) re-unite the parish wards of Hunton Bridge & Langleybury and Hunton Park into a single parish ward called Hunton Bridge & Langleybury, to be represented by a single parish councillor. This re-unites the Hunton Bridge community in a single parish ward.
- 3) increase the representation of the Abbots Langley West parish ward to two parish councillors. This addresses the significant under-representation of this parish ward.

That would result in the following wards and electoral variances:

Parish ward	Polling districts	No. of electors	No. of Parish Cllrs	Electors per Parish Cllr
Abbots Langley	DAD; DAE	3860	4	965
Abbots Langley West	DAG (as adjusted)	1902	2	951
Bedmond	DAB	1155	1	1155
Hunton Bridge & Langleybury	DAFA; DAFB (as adjusted)	1097	1	1097
Leavesden	DAH; DAI; DAJ	5743	5	1149
Primrose Hill	DAA	2008	2	1004
		15765	15	1051

This provides for significantly improved electoral equality between the parish wards. The existing arrangements result in the number of electors varying between minus 62% and plus 73% of the average for the whole parish. Under these proposals, the number of electors per parish councillor for all parish wards is within 10% of the average for the whole parish councillor (range between minus 10% and plus 10%).

Councillor Stephen Cox, Leader, Three Rivers Labour Group

We are firmly of the view that Abbots Langley West Ward should have two seats and that Hunton Park and Hunton Bridge and Langleybury Wards should be combined and return one member. This, to us, seems self-evidently the right thing to do.
