

County Council Report

Cllr Toni Coombs & Cllr Spencer Flower

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Reporting Potholes and Overgrown Hedges

In the time it takes to notify the parish council or any of the councillors, residents can easily report issues directly to the county council via the dorsetforyou website.

<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/roads-highways-maintenance/roads-highways-and-maintenance.aspx?folderIds=5543,6301>

The benefit of using this system is that the job goes directly to the workforce and is added to their job sheets electronically. Residents therefore receive a faster response to their queries.

Each complaint receives a unique job number that can be tracked.

Councillors are however, still happy to receive requests from residents too.

Boundary Review for Dorset Council Warding

The Local Government Boundary Commission has now published its consultation of the new warding for the proposed Dorset Council, which will run until 27th August 2018. Details can be found by accessing the link below:

<https://dorsetareacouncils.wordpress.com/publications/>

Implications for Alderholt, Woodlands and Horton:

The Joint Committee's scheme for this area proposed that two grouped parish councils should be split between wards. The area covered by Knowlton Parish Council (consisting of Chalbury, Horton, Wimborne St Giles and Woodlands parishes) was divided between Badbury & Allen Vale and Cranborne & Alderholt wards, and the area covered by Vale of Allen Parish Council (consisting of Crichel, Hinton, Gussage All Saints and Witchampton parishes) was divided between Badbury & Allen Vale and Cranborne Chase wards.

The LGBC view is that having grouped parishes in the same ward contributes to effective and convenient local government as, for example, it avoids small parishes having to deal with several different district councillors. Splitting grouped parishes between wards should therefore be avoided unless there is strong evidence that such a split would lead to a better balance of our three statutory criteria.

They have looked at different warding patterns for this area and concluded that it is not possible to create wards with acceptable electoral equality in this area without splitting both grouped parishes. Firstly, putting all of Knowlton Parish Council in Cranborne & Alderholt ward will lead to an electoral variance of 20%. Given Cranborne & Alderholt's location on the district boundary, it is not possible to remove parishes from it to ensure acceptable electoral equality. It also cannot be combined with the neighbouring three-councillor Verwood ward.

Alternatively, if Knowlton Parish Council was put in Badbury & Allen Vale ward and then Vale of Allen Parish Council in Cranborne Chase ward, there would be electoral variances of 21% in Badbury & Allen Vale, -13% in Cranborne & Alderholt and 13% in Cranborne Chase. They consider this level of electoral inequality to be so high that it is preferable that both groups of parishes be located in more than one ward.

The LGBC considered two other alternatives. The first would be to amend several other rural wards across the eastern part of Dorset. Given the Joint Committee provided some evidence to support its wards and no councillors objected to its proposed Badbury & Allen Vale, Cranborne Chase and Cranborne & Alderholt wards, they are unwilling at this stage to make major changes to the Joint Committee's proposals in what would be little more than a numerical exercise.

The final alternative, and one the LGBC considered, was to combine Badbury & Allen Vale, Cranborne & Alderholt and Cranborne Chase wards into a three-councillor ward. However, this would cover more than 110 square miles and consist of more than 20 parishes. On balance, they consider that such a large ward would be difficult to represent and therefore would not meet their criterion in relation to effective and convenient local government.

LGBC are making one small amendment to the Joint Committee's proposal. This is to put all of Horton parish in Badbury & Allen Vale ward. The Joint Committee included the Wedge Hill area in its Cranborne & Alderholt ward and if LGBC were to follow this proposal they would be required to create a parish ward which is projected to have only six electors in 2023. Subject to that change, they are adopting the Badbury & Allen Vale, Cranborne Chase and Cranborne & Alderholt wards as proposed by the Joint Committee.

Implications for Verwood:

There was support for a three-councillor Verwood ward as it was wholly within Verwood parish and consisted of an area that is either part of or linked to the town. However, it was also suggested that the Potterne area should be included in Verwood ward as electors in this area associate more with Verwood than Three Legged Cross to their south.

The LGBC have carefully considered all the comments and propose to amend the Joint Committee's scheme by including the Potterne area in Verwood ward. This affects only 13 electors so has almost no effect on electoral equality and, based on the evidence they have received, also better reflects the community identity of those electors.