



MELTON PARISH COUNCIL

MPC(21)78

TO CONSIDER REVISED PROPOSALS FROM THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION RELATING TO THE POLITICAL MAP OF SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL WHICH HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR MELTON

The link below gives access to the Electoral Commission draft recommendations, including the map, draft recommendations summary and draft recommendations report.

[Have your say via our consultation portal](#)

The presentation is rather poor, as it's not clear without spending time looking at the material which are the original recommendations, and which the revised.

However in terms of what is important to Melton, the original proposals for the new Suffolk County Council electoral divisions to come into force from 2025, published last year, showed Melton parish as being entirely within the new Wilford Division. This basically includes all the villages in the peninsular with which Melton shares issues relating to traffic on the A1152.

It has been suggested that the southern part of the parish should be included within the Woodbridge Division for CC electoral purposes, but that suggestion was not adopted originally. However in the latest revised proposals it has been, with all of Melton south of Woods Lane / Wilford Bridge Road now being proposed for inclusion in Woodbridge Division; the remainder being in the Wilford Division. In the original proposals the forecast electorate for the new Wilford Division was 8,209; that is now revised down to 7,784, reflecting the new proposals. The new Woodbridge Division was forecast to have an electorate of 8,610. Following the removal of settlements to the west of the town but with the addition of the southern part of Melton, that is revised to 8,556.

Whilst these latest proposed changes only affect the representation of Melton at Suffolk CC, nevertheless Councillors will be concerned that the proposal could in time erode the community cohesion between the various parts of the large Melton parish, and could see a move towards the alteration of parish boundaries between Melton and Woodbridge.

The proposal that Melton be split emanates from Woodbridge. I reproduce below a copy of a note from Cllr Caroline Page to Cllr Porter which makes clear her position and that of her Group:

Dear Alan,

Thank you for email.

It is not a rumour, it is a fact that a number of people and groups - me included- are in favour of redrawing the county division boundary to include part of Melton parish in the Woodbridge division. The boundary commission thinks the proposal has some merit.

As you know, this is part of a wider redrawing of all Suffolk County boundaries, to lose 5 council seats.

This redrawn boundary would include the far side of Pytches Rd, the Bury Hill estates and a chunk of Bredfield Road, all of which have practical links to Woodbridge.

I reiterate, this is a County boundary division only and would not affect their membership of Melton Parish or the precept.

As regards County divisions, I am sure you are aware Melton is currently not stand-alone, it is in the Wickham (Market) division. Wickham is to go in any version of the upcoming boundary changes.

If you object strongly enough, Melton will still not be stand-alone. It will be parcelled up with much of the existing Wilford division to include such villages as Orford, Ramsholt, Chillesford, and I believe Rendlesham, amongst others, while Woodbridge takes in Ufford.

So, as you see from the above, while I appreciate your concerns I think you are missing the point.

Woodbridge County boundary already has historically contained a part of Martlesham parish for a lot longer than I have been County Councillor.

It allows me to deal with the road California although the parish boundary runs centrally down the middle of it. The only difference the County boundary makes to Martlesham is that they have a claim on my time, my locality budget and a written report from me at parish meetings (which they have seemed to positively enjoy over the last 13 years as I gave different news to the standing Councillor, who was of a different party.)

In fact Martlesham parish is divided between FOUR County boundaries without losing its identity.

The great advantage to Melton and Woodbridge in the proposed changes would be that there would no longer be a County division line running down the centre of Pytches Road, making such County issues as Highways maintenance more difficult than they need.

It would also allow the county-run Woodbridge County Primary to be in the same division as its catchment pupils. It would also be helpful in joint bus ventures as the link with Martlesham has helped very much with this.

In short you would not be losing any part of Melton parish, Melton would merely be gaining an additional County Councillor to advocate for the needs of your residents.

Perhaps you would like to ring me, in light of this information, and discuss the matter further. I understand there are several people busy spreading disinformation regarding this boundary

change. They are well aware both of the Martlesham parish split and the fact that any County divisional change would not affect the independence and integrity of Melton parish.

Best wishes

Caroline Page

Melton Councillors may well feel that to reduce the impact of Melton in discussions around the A1152 will be something that is to be resisted. Highways issues are a significant part of the County Councillor portfolio as far as Melton is concerned, and in that regard Melton has much more in common with the peninsular villages than with Woodbridge.

Whilst at this point in time the proposals will only affect the County Council elections, in time a shift in focus for part of civic life might well lead to an erosion of community cohesion within the large and scattered parish of Melton.

The Boundary Commission does emphasise in its publications that as well as improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents, it takes account of community identity and makes arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

Melton Councillors may feel that the revised 2021 proposals do not achieve all of those objectives and may wish to make representations to the Commission. The deadline for that is 21 June.

William Grosvenor

Clerk and Executive Officer to the Council

15 June 2021