

## **Supplementary Response to Wiltshire Council: Community Governance Review Consultation.**

In response to the submission made by Hilperton Parish Council (which is appended below) Trowbridge Town Council makes the following supplementary response to the CGR consultation.

**1. Are you answering this survey as?**

- A representative of a Parish or Town or City council affected by the proposal

**2. Which of the following town and or parish reviews are you referring to? (please write the area name such as Area A1 Salisbury or A8 Corsham from the list of schemes shown on the Councils website)**

**Trowbridge and Surrounding Parishes Area 3: Properties and land to the South and West of Elizabeth Way (the new Hilperton Gap Relief Road) and the A361/Hilperton Drive including properties in Wyke Road and Paxcroft Mead.**

**3. What is your name and postcode or your business or organisation name?**

Trowbridge Town Council - Lance Allan, Town Clerk

**8. Finally do you have any other views about this review that you feel should be taken into account?**

### **Area 3a - Wyke Road**

Where is it suggested by Wiltshire Council that the CGR Working Party is either able to suggest or has indeed suggested that the residents of this area can decide which parish they reside in? There is no information on the Wiltshire Council web site or in the government guidance which suggests that the residents can make a decision. Surely, as Trowbridge Town Council has repeatedly been told, it is a matter for Wiltshire Council to make a decision, based upon the evidence presented to it. Clearly part of that evidence, but only part, will be the views of the residents living in that area; additionally evidence relating to community identity, efficient and effective local government, but also strong clearly-defined boundaries tied to firm ground detail will also need to be taken into consideration.

Trowbridge Town Council would suggest that there is no clear evidence with regard to community identity and efficient and effective local government for the Wyke Road area.

Looking at the government guidance it is clear that; if there is a fine balance with regard to community identity and efficient and effective local government and if it is determined that there should be separate civil parishes for different communities to reflect community identity and facilitate efficient and effective local government, then the only issue is where the boundary between the two should be and then '*strong clearly-defined boundaries, tied to firm ground detail*' should be the determining factor.

In this area the main roads are the strongest and most clearly-defined boundaries and therefore the B3105 Canal Road and Elizabeth Way should form the boundary between Trowbridge and Hilperton. In fact this area and much of Hilperton Marsh and the Hilperton Gap was part of Trowbridge until 1991 and has only been part of Hilperton since then. (See the extracts from the West Wiltshire Parishes Order 1991 maps attached.)

Hilperton Parish Council has provided neither evidence nor reasoning why the main roads should not form the revised boundary.

### **Area 3b – Hilperton Gap**

Hilperton Parish Council should be careful when using emotive language such as 'land grab'. A significant proportion of the Hilperton Gap was part of Trowbridge for nearly 100 years, from the establishment of parish councils in 1894 to the change of the boundary in 1991. Almost all of the area to the south of the new Elizabeth Way was part of Trowbridge. Hilperton Parish might itself be accused of a land grab to a much greater extent than Trowbridge: As a result of the West Wiltshire Parishes Order 1991, the Civil Parish of Hilperton increased in land area, through 'grabbing' bits of Trowbridge, Semington and Melksham Without, by over 70%, from 436 hectares to over 750 hectares, (Trowbridge is 956 hectares). The areas of Hilperton which Trowbridge Town Council has suggested should now become part of Trowbridge are smaller than the areas of Trowbridge which were lost to Hilperton in 1991.

Hilperton Parish Council has provided neither evidence nor reasoning why the main road should not form the revised boundary.

### **Area 3c - Paxcroft Mead south of Hilperton Drive/Halfway Close and brook (sic)**

So, Hilperton Parish Council understood that the Working Party had made a decision. This is clear evidence that the Working Party had gone beyond its remit and was acting Ultra Vires. Perhaps this is why the officers responsible for the consultation ignored the decision of the Working Party and included the Town Council's suggestion in the consultation. The Working Party cannot claim that it was acting 'completely neutrally' if had decided that one parish's proposals would not be presented for consultation and another parish would be allowed to have additional proposals presented which had not been discussed at the meeting of the Working Party with the Trowbridge area parishes.

How can Hilperton Parish Council justify describing the area east of Leapgate, around Hackett Place as 'greenfield' when they themselves go on to explain that it includes; a Primary School, a community centre, shops, a public house and 'only' about thirty (in fact over fifty) residential properties? Yes, it also includes a cricket ground and parts of the Paxcroft Brook public open space, but this is hardly 'greenfield'.

Hilperton Parish Council has asked how the Trowbridge Town Council proposal would improve communities and local democracy. Trowbridge Town Council is grateful for the opportunity to do just that:

- The main A361/Hilperton Drive is the strongest and most-clearly defined boundary between Hilperton and Trowbridge. People living either side of the road would clearly understand and appreciate that this formed a boundary. Trowbridge would then be responsible for all parts of the town (which are not connected to neighbouring parishes).
- Hilperton is a parish of around 2000 houses, more than 10% of those houses are in Area 3c, yet none of the Hilperton Parish councillors live in Paxcroft Mead, that is all of Paxcroft Mead, (including Newhurst Park), some 500 houses or around 25% of the parish. Two of the Trowbridge Town Councillors (Councillor Roger Andrews and Councillor Nicola Blackmore) live in Paxcroft Mead. Hilperton Parish Council did not engage with the Paxcroft Mead Residents' Association (PMRA) about the boundary review. Trowbridge Town Council did engage with PMRA and circulated information to the residents and provided copies of all of the town council's reports to members of the public attending public meetings. Trowbridge Town Council can therefore already demonstrate that it is providing and can provide better local democracy to Paxcroft Mead.

Hilperton Parish Council then goes on to admit that its own proposal for this area is in need of further alteration, suggesting that changes are needed regarding the boundary in the area of open space adjacent to Faverolle Way, without, it would appear, providing a map to detail their latest proposal. Hilperton Parish Council also then suggests amending its own proposal to leave the boundary 'as is' in the area of Walmesley Chase/Montague Court. How can this be justified against their emphasis on the need to 'improve communities and local democracy'? Leaving the boundary 'as is' in this area of Paxcroft Mead would leave some residents of Walmesley Chase in Hilperton and some in Trowbridge, it would leave some residents of Montague Court in Hilperton and some in Trowbridge and it would leave some residents of Painter's Mead in Hilperton and some in Trowbridge. This is not an improvement, it is maintaining an anomalous boundary, contrary to the government guidance.

Hilperton Parish Council has provided neither evidence nor reasoning why the main roads should not form the revised boundary.

## **Other Comments relating to Area 3c**

Where have Hilperton Parish Council got the idea from that there is a proposal to transfer 600plus houses between Trowbridge and Hilperton? It certainly isn't a proposal that has been made by Trowbridge Town Council, it is not a proposal that was made at the meeting of the Working Party with the Trowbridge area parishes. Is there a secret proposal which has not been the subject of consultation? Surely it cannot be the case, that the Working Party (a body which cannot legally make decisions on behalf of Wiltshire Council) has been dreaming up its own proposals? After all the Working Party are determined to present the proposals 'completely neutrally'.

Which proposal does Hilperton Parish Council support, the first one it made, the revised one indicated above, adjusting its original proposal, or the secret proposal to transfer 600plus houses?

Trowbridge Town Council has consistently made the same proposal for all of Area 3.

Hilperton Parish Council are concerned that there should be a 'consistent approach across the county'. If that is the case, and in Melksham the proposal is that the town council should merge with the neighbouring parish council and in Devizes the proposal is that the town council should merge with the neighbouring parish council and in Salisbury there are calls for the City Council to merge with a neighbouring parish council, then where does that leave Trowbridge? Perhaps Hilperton Parish Council would like to take over the whole of Trowbridge.

**Lance Allan**  
**Town Clerk**

# **HILPERTON PARISH COUNCIL**

## **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

### **Area 3a – Wyke Road**

*Hilperton Parish Council supports the suggestion of the CGR working group that the residents of these houses should choose which civil parish they reside in. The Parish Council would be happy for the ‘transfer in’ of the Trowbridge residents if no decisive decision can be reached by the residents themselves. The Parish Council feels that having all the houses in Hilperton would reflect the identity and interests of the community in that area and would, in addition, be effective and convenient.*

### **Area 3b – Hilperton Gap**

*Neither the Parish Council nor the Town Council proposals were displayed at the meeting earlier this month. The Parish Council is led to believe that neither proposal is being taken forward by the working group and so the ‘land grab’ by the Town Council for greenfield land, with no designation for development, will fall. Hilperton Parish Council is content if this is correct and the status quo will prevail for this area of land.*

### **Area 3c – Paxcroft Mead south of Hilperton Drive/Halfway Close and brook**

#### **Trowbridge Town Council Proposal**

*The Parish Council was surprised to see the Town Council suggestion for this area used in the presentation at County Hall, as the Parish Council understood that the working group had made a decision that the land to the east of Leapgate was not being taken forward; a decision the Parish Council would agree with as this is, basically, another greenfield ‘land grab’ (the ‘cricket square’ and surrounding open space) which would rip the heart out of the south of the parish. Only about thirty properties are in the area but it also contains one of the two Hilperton primary schools, the Community Centre (the Parish Council is the custodian trustee), all the shops in the Local Centre (including the local branch of Budgens, a fish and chip shop and a Chinese takeaway) and one of the three pubs in the parish (the Red Admiral).*

*The wish of the Town Council to seize the housing in the Painters Mead area is covered below.*

#### **Hilperton Parish Council Proposal**

*The realignment of part of the Hilperton/Trowbridge boundary follows distinct physical features and, as demonstrated at the Trowbridge CGR meeting, meets with approval from the residents who firmly see themselves as residents of Hilperton. In the FAQ paper supplied by Wiltshire Council, it states ‘Therefore any changes made by a CGR **must** (our emphasis) improve communities and local democracy’.*

*Not ‘maintain’ but ‘improve’. How would transferring these houses to Trowbridge meet this objective?*

*Bearing this statement in mind, the Parish Council would like to suggest that the proposed boundary suggested by it last year should be revised to more closely follow the fence line of the properties in Halfway Close/Hilperton Road so that all the open space to the north of Faverolle Way remains in Hilperton. It would also suggest that the boundary line should remain 'as is' in the area of Walmesley Chase/Montague Court.*

## **Other Comments relating to area 3c**

*At the recent Salisbury CGR meeting an item was discussed – at great length – as under:-*

*“Suggestions were received for the Hampton Park and Bishopdown Farm areas of Salisbury city, and Laverstock and Ford Parish. The two schemes seek to move properties into one parish or the other, hence the current consultation on the two proposals”.*

*Hilperton Parish Council understood that a similar scheme was under consideration for the Painters Mead area of Paxcroft Mead as shown by the powerpoint at the Trowbridge CGR meeting referring to proposals relating to ‘200 – 600 + properties being presented completely neutrally’; the idea being that the 600 houses would move either all into Trowbridge or all into Hilperton.*

*Is this proposal no longer under consideration? If not, why not? It would represent a consistent approach across the county.*

*Marylyn Timms  
Clerk to Hilperton Parish Council  
20<sup>th</sup> October, 2015*