

Hi John,

Melksham Town Council understands that Wiltshire Council considered a report on a prospective community governance review at its meeting on 12 November 2013 and that as a consequence it was resolved to set up a cross party working group to undertake the necessary preparatory work for a community governance review; to request members to come forward with any known outstanding community governance issues; and to receive a further report with recommended terms of reference for the review in 2014.

In a briefing note to town and parish councils it was pointed out that if a Town or Parish has suggestions on their boundaries or amalgamation these should be forwarded to you via email. You are aware that Melksham Town Council believes that its boundary with Melksham Without Parish Council has become anomalous in the light of recent development, and our representations to Wiltshire Council in this regard are acknowledged as Refs: 12 and 16 on *Appendix A – Present Queries* which accompanied the report on Parish/Community Governance Review presented to Wiltshire Council on 12 November 2013.

In addition to these representations, at a meeting of Melksham Town Council held on 17th February, the Town Council expressed a desire to work with Melksham Without Parish Council to discuss and explore the possibility of working together to develop a unified council with a common agenda that will serve to provide a positive benefit for the wider Melksham community.

Melksham Town Council recognises that Wiltshire Council's stated vision is to create stronger and more resilient communities. The Town Council is of the view that greater responsibility will be devolved to town and parish councils over time to provide additional services, which will have the effect of placing yet greater demands on the ability of third tier councils to cope effectively. By working together as one council for Melksham, the Town Council considers that a unified Melksham council may be better placed to work in the best interests of residents in both parishes by working toward a cohesive strategic plan that will allow us to exploit synergies and generate efficiencies.

The Town Council understands that the prospect of one council for Melksham may be perceived as a radical departure from the established structure of local government within the locality. However given the challenges ahead, allied to the desire to do the right thing for the people of Melksham, the Town Council believes it is incumbent on the two parishes jointly to at least explore together whether a united council with a common agenda can be achieved and to identify the advantages and disadvantages associated with it.

The Town Council has therefore invited Melksham Without Parish Council to jointly explore the possibility of working as one council and I have been requested to make you aware of this in order that the possibility of amalgamating the two councils is considered as part of any forthcoming Community Governance Review.