

Wiltshire Council

Electoral Review Committee

8 February 2022

Parish Name Change Review

Purpose

1. To consider proposals to change the names of two parishes.

Background

2. Changing the name of a parish or parish council can be done through a Community Governance Review process in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
3. However, such a change may also be progressed under s.75 of the Local Government Act 1972.
4. As the latter would be a simpler process in terms of structure, consultation and decision, the Committee at its meeting on 21 September 2021 resolved that where a request was received solely regarding a parish name change, the s.75 process would be followed
5. This report relates to requests from the following parishes:
 - Biddestone;
 - Charlton.

Main Considerations

6. In order to change the name of a parish, a decision would be required by Full Council, who would then notify the Secretary of State, Director General of the Ordnance Survey, and the Registrar General, along with a parish name change order.
7. There are no specific consultation requirements where a change of parish name is being considered under s.75, only proscribed notifications after the event as detailed under Paragraph 6 above.
8. However, the Council must have reasonable grounds for making a change that has been proposed by a parish council. On this basis, a briefing note was sent to all Wiltshire Council Members and parishes in the council area on 12 November 2021. An online survey was launched on the same date, which remained open until 31 December 2021. Several reminder emails were sent to the parish councils involved to publicise the suggestion. Charlton was not included in that briefing note as the request from the parish arrived after publication of the briefing note. However, this was provided to the parish council for circulation on 26 November 2021 following their previous inclusion in a Community Governance Review. The council's webpage on reviews was updated to include both name change surveys.
9. S.75 allows the Council to change the name of a parish at the request of a parish council (or parish meeting if there is no council). This means that the Council may only approve or not approve that suggested name, and cannot substitute some other

proposal. For instance should a new suggestion arise as a result of a survey, unless the parish council had indicated formal consent for that alternative proposal.

Biddestone

10. Biddestone Parish Council requested that the name of the parish be changed to Biddestone & Slaughterford Parish Council. The reason for the request was:

Biddestone Parish consists of two villages, Biddestone village and the much smaller Slaughterford village, with outlying rural farms and cottages. For many years the parish council has unofficially called itself the Biddestone & Slaughterford Parish Council to reflect the fact that the residents of both villages are of equal importance. The Parish Council would now like to formally request the change of name from Biddestone Parish to Biddestone & Slaughterford Parish.

11. 18 responses were received to the parish council's proposal. 17 were in favour, with 1 against. Details are included at **Appendix A**.

Charlton

12. Charlton is located near Pewsey and is one of two parishes named Charlton in Wiltshire. It is currently represented by Charlton and Wilsford Parish Council.
13. Charlton has also been included in the separate Community Governance Review due to an anomaly with its status with Wilsford as a joint parish council. This is where the two parishes have been treated as one entity for electoral purposes, when they should be electing parish councillors to each parish, who then sit on the same joint parish council. As part of that review the name could be changed as requested (see below), however this would not take effect until May 2025, whereas an order under S.75 would enable a change to be made in 2022.
14. The proposal from the Charlton and Wilsford parish council is to change the name of the parish of Charlton to 'Charlton St Peter', and to change the name of the parish council to 'Charlton St Peter and Wilsford Joint Parish Council'.

The reason for the suggestion is that this is the name widely used for Charlton and by which the parish is recognised, and how the parish council is referred to at present.

15. No responses were received on the online survey specifically regarding the name change. However, the survey on the wider Community Governance Review, which includes confirming the joint parish council being called 'Charlton St Peter and Wilsford Joint Parish Council', received 8 responses, all in favour.
16. Additionally, the Committee had previously recommended to Council to make a change to a parish name at request of a parish council. This was the parish of Cheverall Parva, where no responses were received to an online survey, as the Committee was satisfied the reasoning offered and support of the parish council justified this.
17. The Committee could therefore recommend the change be approved.

Safeguarding Implications

18. There are no safeguarding implications.

Public Health Implications

19. There are no public health implications.

Procurement Implications

20. There are no procurement implications.

Risk Assessment

21. There are no risk issues arising from this report.

Equalities Implications

22. There are no equalities implications.

Environmental and Climate Change Implications

23. There are no environmental implications.

Workforce Implications

24. There are no workforce implications.

Financial Implications

25. There are no financial implications.

Legal Implications

26. This report is consistent with the requirements of s.75 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Options

27. The Committee may recommend that Full Council approve the proposed name changes for the parishes as listed, decline to make any recommendation to Full Council at this time, or seek consent of the parish councils as listed to recommend an alternative name to Full Council if appropriate.

Proposal

28. To consider whether to recommend Full Council approve the following name changes:

- 1) The Parish of Biddestone be changed to the Parish of Biddestone & Slaughterford;
- 2) The Parish of Charlton be changed to the Parish of Charlton St Peter;
- 3) The Joint Parish Council of Charlton and Wilsford be changed to the Joint Parish Council of Charlton St Peter and Wilsford.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Responses to s.75 parish name change survey

Background Papers

None