

**Community Governance
Review 2022/23**

**Second Additional Draft
Recommendations of the
Electoral Review
Committee**

July-August 2023

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[Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review 2022/23](#)

[Guidance on Community Governance Reviews](#)

[Draft Consultations Information Pack](#)

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[Additional Draft Recommendations Consultation – Committee Meeting 26 June 2023](#)

[Online Second Additional Draft Recommendations Survey](#)

All documents can also be accessed from links available at <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/council-democracy-cgr>

Contact CGR@wiltshire.gov.uk or CGR, Democratic Services, County Hall, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN for questions or other details.

What is a Community Governance Review?

1. A Community Governance Review is a process under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 which allows for the review of Town, City, and Parish Council governance arrangements. This is to ensure that they are reflective of the identity and interests of local communities, and that they provide effective and convenient governance.

What can a Community Governance Review change?

2. A Community Governance Review can make changes to parish governance when there is clear evidence to do so, including changing:
 - Parish areas: such as changes to boundaries between parishes, mergers of two or more parishes, or creating a new parish out of part of one or more existing parishes;
 - Electoral arrangements within parish areas: such as changes to the number of Parish Councillors, or introducing/changing parish warding arrangements;
 - The name of a parish;
 - The grouping together of parishes under a common Parish Council;
 - Other governance arrangements.
3. A Community Governance Review cannot change the Electoral Divisions of Wiltshire Council. However, it can request those Divisions be amended by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (“The LGBCE”), who are responsible for such decisions, in order to align to any changed parish boundaries.

The Electoral Review Committee

4. Wiltshire Council has established the Electoral Review Committee (“The Committee”) to oversee any Community Governance Review process.
5. This is a politically proportionate committee of ten Wiltshire Councillors to oversee the process and prepare recommendations for Full Council, who make the decision.
6. The members of the Committee when setting these Draft Recommendations were as follows:

Cllr Ashley O’Neill (Chairman)

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling

Cllr Ernie Clark

Cllr Ian McLennan

Cllr Ian Thorn

Cllr Gavin Grant (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Allison Bucknell

Cllr Jacqui Lay

Cllr Paul Oatway QPM

Cllr Stuart Wheeler

On what grounds will a Community Governance Review be decided?

7. Any decision relating to parish arrangements must ensure that those arrangements:
 - Reflect the identity and interests of local communities;
 - Ensure effective and convenient local governance.
8. In conducting a review and making recommendations, the Committee follows the guidance issued by the relevant Secretary of State and the LGBCE.

9. Factors that are not relevant to the statutory and guidance criteria, such as council tax precept levels, cannot be taken into account.

Background to the 2022/23 Review

10. From 2017-2019 the LGBCE undertook an Electoral Review of Wiltshire Council. While this retained the number of divisions at 98, the changes as approved by Parliament made consequential changes to many town and parish governance arrangements.
11. Combined with development growth across existing town and parish boundaries, or creation of new communities with their own identity within an existing parish, Wiltshire Council determined that reviews were necessary in some areas to ensure the community governance arrangements were still reflective of local identity and interests, and were effective and convenient.
12. All parishes in Wiltshire were contacted in the summer of 2019 to see if there were any changes to governance arrangements they wished the Council to consider, and a number of requests were received. Due to resourcing, these would be considered when the Council, through the Committee, determined it was practicable to do so. Parishes were recontacted in subsequent years to confirm if they still wished to proceed with a review of their area.
13. Following a committee meeting on 31 May 2022, on 19 August 2022 Wiltshire Council published terms of reference for a Community Governance Review for the following parish areas:
 - Biddestone & Slaughterford
 - Bratton
 - Castle Combe
 - Dilton Marsh
 - Donhead St Mary
 - Flgheldean
 - Fovant
 - Grimstead
 - Grittleton
 - Heywood
 - Ludgershall
 - Monkton Farleigh
 - Netheravon
 - Nettleton
 - Tidworth
 - Warminster
 - Westbury
 - Yatton Keynell
14. The terms of reference also specified that any parishes 'surrounding those listed' were also included within the scope of the review. This was to enable complete consideration of any options which might emerge during information gathering. Such parishes included Fittleton cum Haxton, Edington, Colerne, Chippenham Without, and others.
15. For the avoidance of doubt, the Committee is able to recommend, and the Council to approve, governance changes which were not suggested by any parishes or individuals, if it considers it appropriate to do so under the criteria and guidance. Any such proposal would need to be subject to consultation before approval.

Pre-consultation

16. During the first stage of the review the Committee received additional proposals relating to the review areas and prepared background information on each area, such as electorate projections.
17. During the second stage the Committee undertook pre-consultation information gathering, including:
 - Sessions between representatives of the Committee and affected unitary councillors, and sessions with affected Parish Councils;
 - Online surveys for those areas potentially impacted by a change of parish in proposals as submitted to the Council.

Draft Recommendations Preparation and Consultation

18. At its meeting held on 21 December 2022 and 4 January 2023 the Committee considered an information pack compiling all relevant materials including all the information above and other relevant information. It formed draft recommendations and consulted upon these from 7 February – 28 March 2023. The consultation included:
 - 4 public meetings, in Biddestone, Grittleton, Heywood, Netheravon
 - An online survey
 - Letters to households who were proposed to be transferred from one parish to another
 - A public briefing note sent to relevant parishes
 - Hard copies of materials in local libraries

Additional Draft Recommendations and Consultation

19. At its meeting held on 20 April 2023 the Committee considered an information pack compiling all relevant materials including all the information above and other relevant information. It confirmed some recommendations and formed additional draft recommendations for others. These were consulted upon from 10 May to 7 June 2023 as an online consultation, noting they were minor changes to the preceding recommendations.
20. At its meeting on 26 June 2023, the Committee considered a further information pack with details of consultation responses and confirmed all but one of the remaining recommendations. It was agreed to consult further on that amended recommendation, with the detail delegated to officers to prepare.
21. The further recommendation related to a single property presently within Castle Combe, as part of Recommendation 4.
22. These Second Additional Draft Recommendations therefore relate only to a single element of Recommendation 4 (Grittleton/Nettleton/Castle Combe). The affected resident has been directly contacted, and each of the relevant parish councils will be contacted.

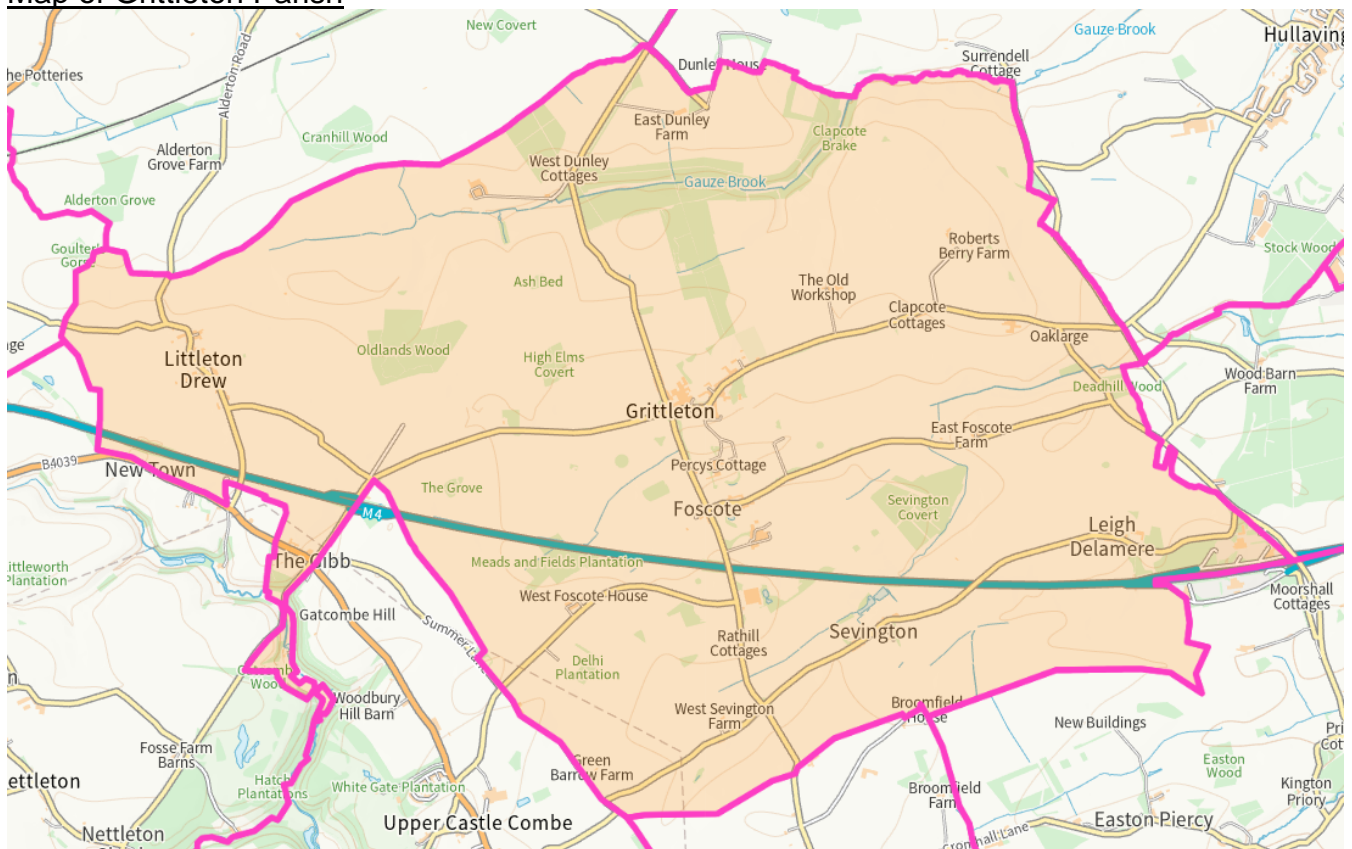
SECOND ADDITIONAL DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Grittleton, Castle Combe, and Nettleton

Background

1. Grittleton is a small parish including the communities of Grittleton, Littleton Drew, and Sevington, lying either side of the M4 on the Western border of Wiltshire. It is bordered by Luckington and Hullavington to the North, Stanton St Quintin and Kington St Michael to the East, Yatton Keynell, Castle Combe, and Nettleton to the South, and Acton Turville in South Gloucestershire to the West. In August 2022 the parish was estimated to contain approximately 439 electors. It is served by a parish council of up to 9 councillors, and is unwarded. The parish is part of the By Brook Electoral Division of Wiltshire Council.

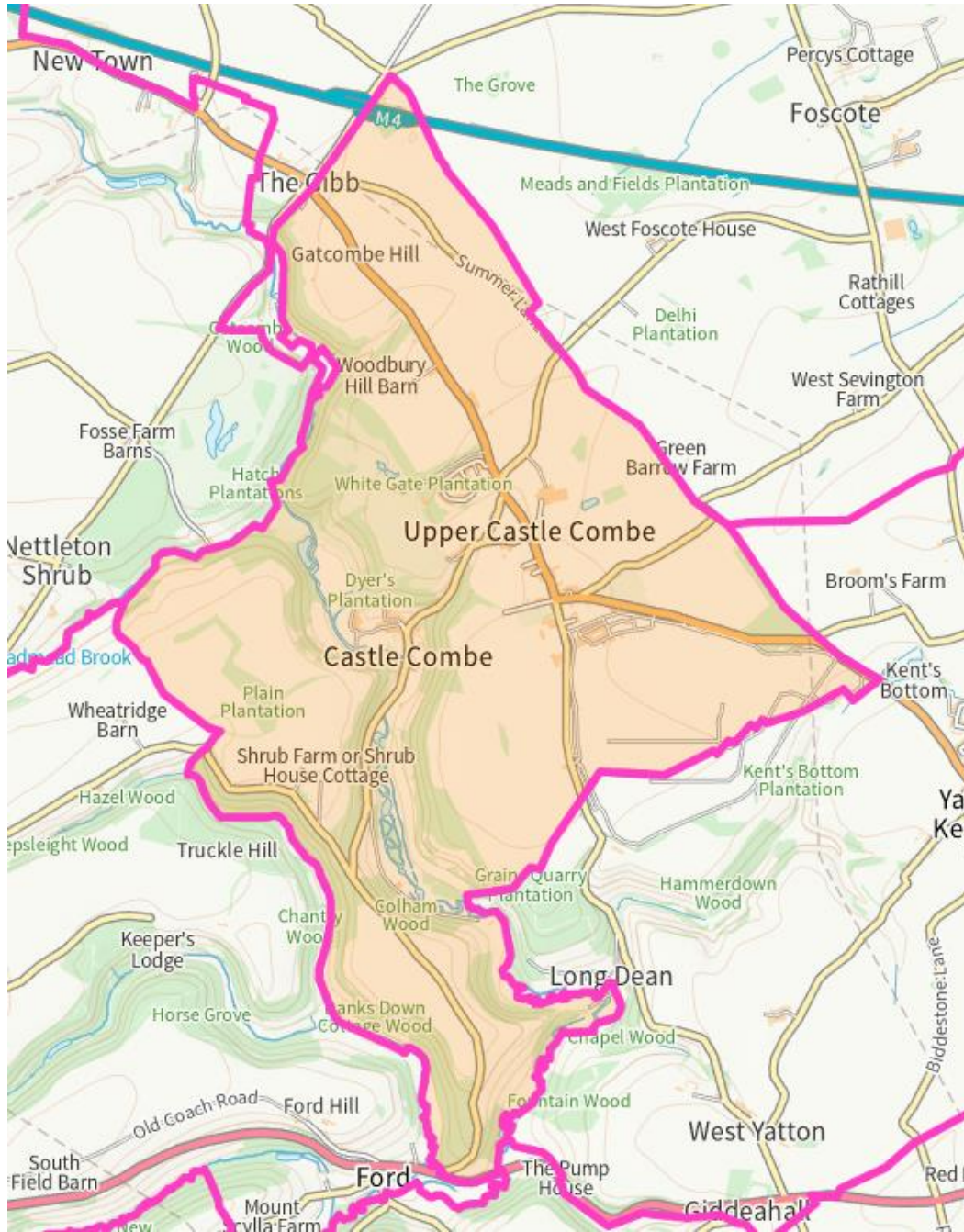
Map of Grittleton Parish



Map from <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/election-maps/gb/>

2. Grittleton Parish Council requested a review of its southern boundary in relation to the area known as The Gibb, where a community of properties was currently split between Grittleton, Nettleton, and Castle Combe. It was suggested this community should be unified within a single parish. No specific proposal or preference was submitted.
3. Castle Combe is a small parish bordered by Grittleton to the North, Yatton Keynell to the East, Biddestone & Slaughterford to the South, and North Wraxall and Nettleton to the West. In August 2022 the parish was estimated to contain approximately 268 electors. It is served by a parish council of up to 7 councillors, and is unwarded. The parish is also part of the By Brook Electoral Division of Wiltshire Council.

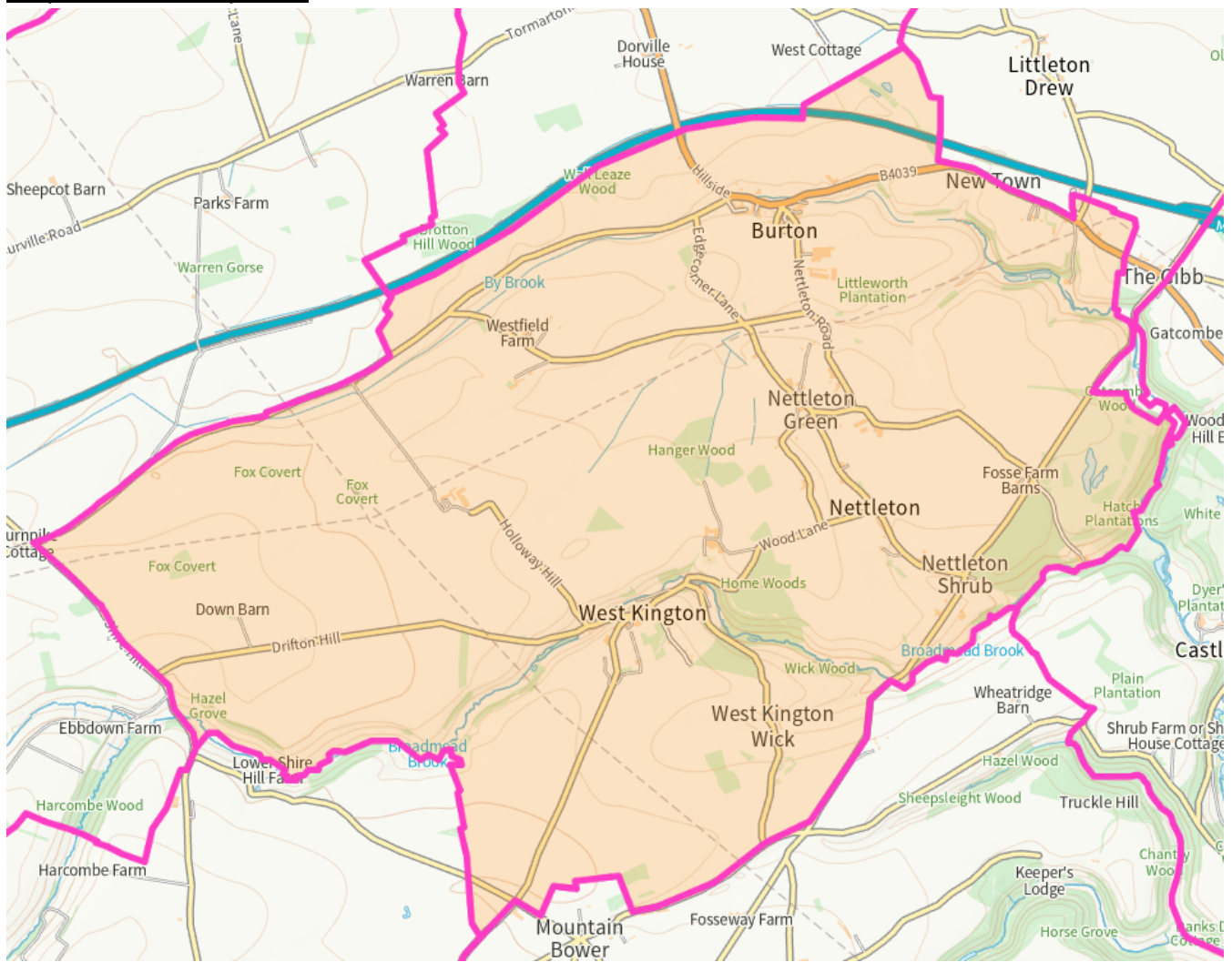
Map of Castle Combe parish



Map from <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/election-maps/gb/>

4. Nettleton is a moderately sized parish on the eastern border of Wiltshire including the settlements of West Kington, Nettleton, and Burton. It is bordered by Grittleton and Acton Turville in South Gloucestershire to the North, Castle Combe to the East, North Wraxall and Marshfield in south Gloucestershire to the South, and Tomarton in South Gloucestershire to the West. In August 2022 the parish was estimated to contain approximately 570 electors. It is served by a parish council of up to 9 councillors, and is unwarded. The parish is also part of the By Brook Electoral Division of Wiltshire Council.

Map of Nettleton parish

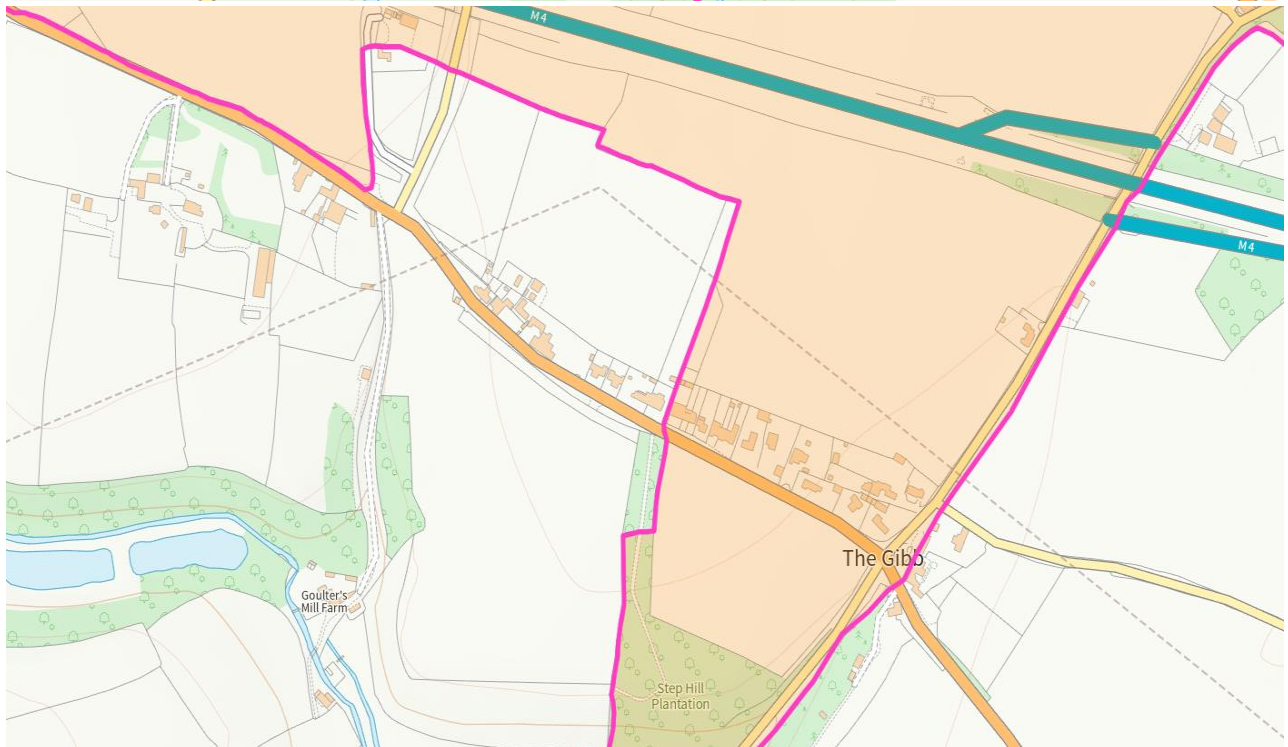
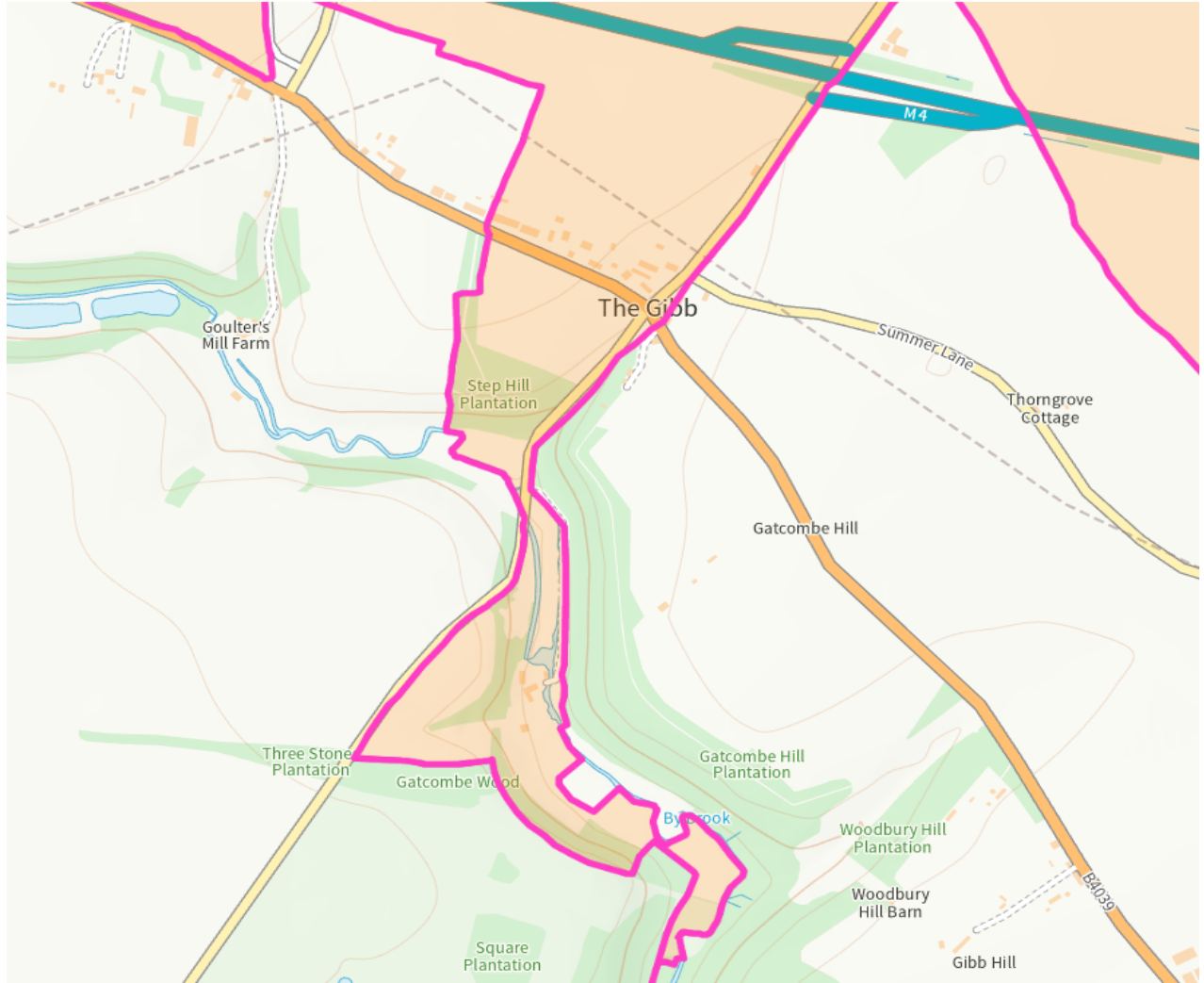


Map from <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/election-maps/gb/>

Initial Proposals and Pre-consultation information gathering

5. The current parish boundary of Grittleton includes a narrow spike of land running to the south broadly following the line of the By Brook watercourse and joining the Fosse Way road toward running from the north toward Nettleton Shrub.
6. The Gibb is a small settlement within the parish of Grittleton south of the M4 along the B4039 between Burton and Castle Combe. There is a crossroads where the B4039 meets the Fosse Way, and a road connecting north to the settlement of Littleton Drew, in Grittleton.
7. The largest residential part of the settlement lies within the parish of Grittleton, with a small number of properties including the Salutation Inn within Castle Combe, and a number of other properties running along the B4039 within Nettleton.

Maps of The Gibb



Maps from <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/election-maps/gb/>

8. Grittleton Parish Council stated the general and historic view of the area would be that the residents would feel most aligned with Grittleton, though they stated no specific consultation had taken place. As part of the Committee's engagement with the local parish councils, it was suggested the strip of land running to the south including Gatcombe Mill could reasonably be transferred to Castle Combe, and Grittleton Parish Council agreed with that suggestion. They also agreed a very small section of Castle Combe containing only a few buildings north of the M4 would more appropriately align to the Grittleton communities.
9. Castle Combe Parish Council agreed that the area of The Gibb involving Nettleton and Grittleton should be unified under one of those councils. They considered the Salutation Inn, which was advertised as being part of Castle Combe, should remain within their parish. They proposed the narrow strip of land to the south of the settlement, alongside the Fosse Way, be transferred to their parish.
10. No response was received from Nettleton Parish Council to requests for engagement. A representation was received regarding historical ecclesiastical boundary changes involving benefices and parishes across North Wiltshire including this area, though the complexity of these did not directly relate to the simpler civil parish boundaries.
11. An online survey was set up for November 2022 to allow comments on the submitted proposals. The councils in the area were asked to promote this, to assist the committee with any local views at this stage. No comments were received.

Committee Discussion

12. The Committee was persuaded by the requests and representations from local councils that the current division of the community at The Gibb across several parishes should be addressed. It was felt that a simplification of the boundary would align to the criteria of better reflecting the identity and interests of that community, and be a more effective and convenient arrangement in governance terms.
13. The Committee noted there were a number of different options available, and whatever it ended up recommending it would be most interested in responses from residents of the area directly during consultation.
14. It was agreed that a small area to the south should be transferred to Castle Combe as suggested, noting the geographic proximity and the agreement of both impacted parish councils for this proposal. Likewise, it was agreed the small area of Castle Combe north of the M4 should be transferred to Grittleton given its separation from any settlement of Castle Combe.
15. In respect of the main area of The Gibb itself, this was some distance from the main settlements of Grittleton, Nettleton or Castle Combe parishes. The nearest significant settlement was that of Littleton Drew in Grittleton, and by road to Grittleton. Although the M4 might in isolation be seen as a natural boundary where only a few properties were involved, as suggested for a very small area of Castle Combe, there were direct connections across

it, so its construction after the designation of the parish boundaries had not negatively affected the community ties, and the parish already included significant areas of land south of the motorway, as well as outlying settlements such as Sevington and the main portion of The Gibb.

16. Therefore, when reviewing which area The Gibb naturally aligned with, the Committee considered the existing links with other communities, historic boundaries, and the geography of the region, as well as the spread of the houses and other properties in the area.

Committee Draft Recommendation Proposal

17. On balance it was considered that the larger part of the settlement lay within Grittleton, and connections to Littleton Drew and north along the Fosse Way were persuasive to arguing closer connection with that parish than either Castle Combe or Nettleton. It was determined that the road running north to Littleton Drew marked a sensible boundary with Nettleton, as the nature of properties and the geography of a natural incline toward the Gibb at that point marked a clear division between the areas, with the properties north of the road to be transferred from Nettleton.
18. In respect of the eastern boundary of the settlement, notwithstanding the representation of Castle Combe Parish Council the Committee felt that all the properties at the crossroad of the Fosse Way and B4039 were of a single character and identity. It did not appear there were reasons of community or governance which would justify why some properties at that confluence of roads would be in one parish and others in a different parish. The area was far removed from any settlements of Castle Combe itself, resulting in the Salutation Inn and other properties clearly aligning with The Gibb community.
19. It was not considered relevant in community terms where the Salutation Inn advertised its location as, especially as they could still advertise as being at or near Castle Combe, and their physical location would not be altered by an administrative reorganisation.
20. Accordingly, the Committee considered that a boundary running along Summer Lane, which already served as the boundary with Castle Combe for a part of its length, would make an appropriate dividing line between the parishes.

Consultation on the Draft Recommendations

21. 2 responses were received to the online survey, for the approximately 20 properties proposed to be transferred under the draft recommendations. Both responses were in support, with one being from Grittleton Parish Council. Comments were supportive of unifying the area in one parish rather than split across three different parishes.
22. The Committee was satisfied the proposals represented more effective and convenient arrangements for the parish, and more reflective of the Gibb being a single community. No additional objections had been received.

23. At a public meeting which was attended by Grittleton Parish Council there was discussion of a further property at the crossroads of the Gibb which had not been included within the proposal, and that this too was a part of the local community.
24. The Committee agreed to amend its proposal to include the property, and consult with the resident to determine if it was appropriate to transfer with the rest of the properties.

Consultation on the Additional Draft Recommendations

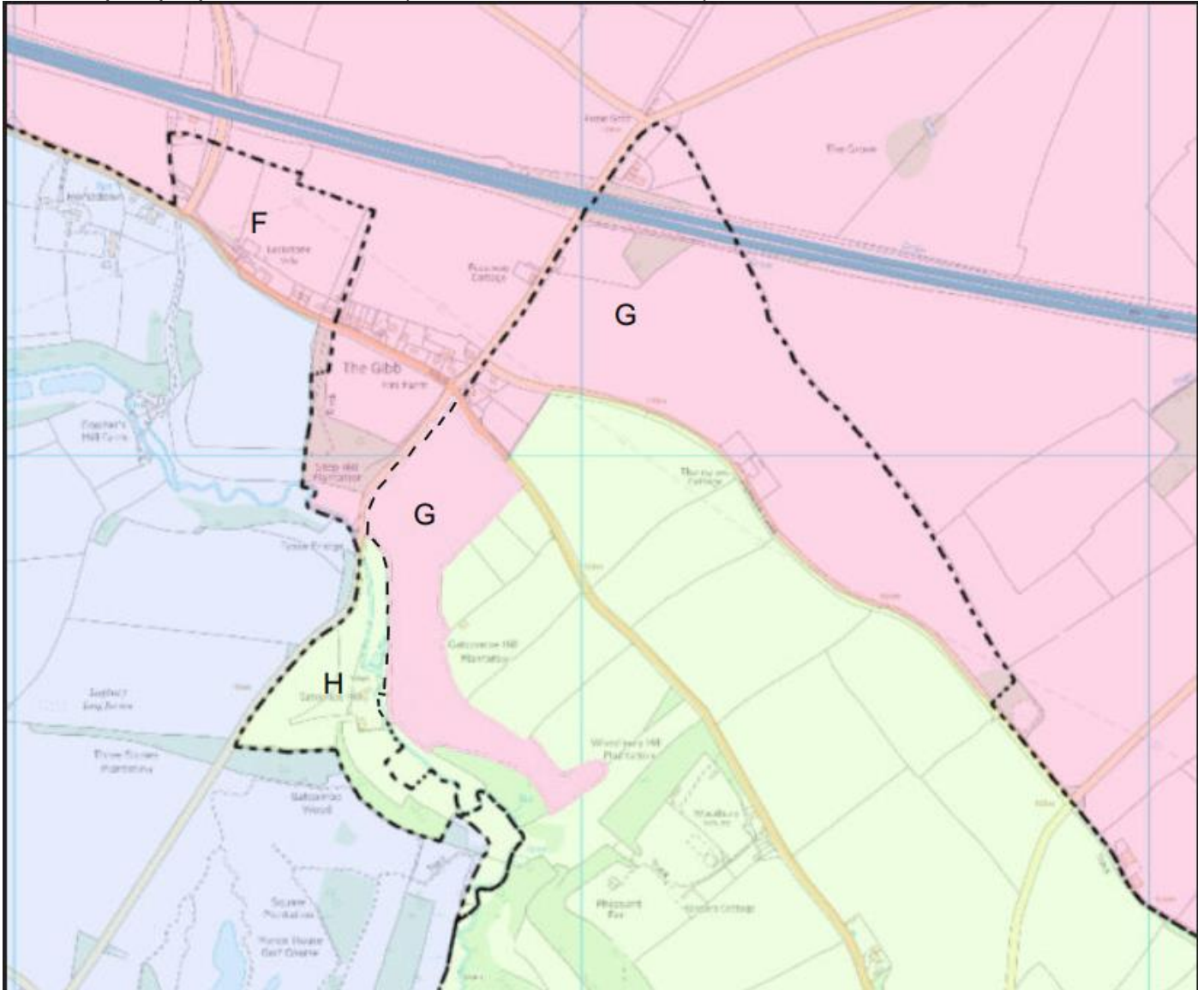
25. One response was received to the proposal, from the resident whose property had been added to the area proposed to be transferred to Grittleton. They stated that the proposed line included the house and part of the grounds but did not include outbuildings and the whole of the property. They stated they were the only property on that side of the road, and that they felt the property, which they said was previously known as Castle Combe estate gatehouse, should remain in Castle Combe.
26. The Committee noted the response from the resident. It considered that it was important to understand whether in terms of community identity there was any distinction between the property in question and the other properties at The Gibb which would justify their being located in separate parishes. If there was not, then despite the stated view of the resident it might not be considered an effective or convenient arrangement for a single property very far removed from any settlement of Castle Combe to be retained within the parish and separated from the rest of the nearby Gibb community.
27. Castle Combe Parish Council had confirmed their support for the transfer of the property as marked in the second consultation.
28. The Committee agreed to further communicate and consult directly with the sole impacted resident, given the Parish Councils had already indicated its agreement with the proposal meaning no other parties were impacted.
29. That consultation took the form of contacting the resident directly to clarify the line of their property, and asking them their view if the area as a whole were transferred to Grittleton. The resident provided a map of the area, which was used to produce the below recommendation so that others could provide any appropriate comment. The Local Member and Parish Council would also be contacted, with this document also uploaded to allow further comments as appropriate. This would enable the Committee to consider all possible options for a final recommendation.
30. Having considered the evidence, statutory criteria, guidance, and other relevant information, the Committee therefore proposed the following:

Recommendation 4

4.2 That the area shown as G in the map below be transferred from the parish of Castle Combe to the parish of Grittleton,

Reasons: Paragraphs 80, 83, and 85 of the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews (Areas F and H were confirmed as Final Recommendations at the 26 June 2023 meeting)

Map of proposed The Gibb (Grittleton/Castle Combe)



Map from <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/election-maps/gb/>