



Melksham Documents

This page is intentionally left blank

Area A9 - Melksham and Melksham Without

Letters and other documents

No.	From	Date
1	Community Action Whitley and Shaw CAWS letter to Melksham Without PC 25 October 2015	25/10/15
2	Development and Streets - Former George Ward School November 2015	11/15
3	Extract from Melksham Town Council e-mail 19 February 2014	19/2/14
4	Extract from Melksham Town Council e-mail 30 July 2014	30/7/14
5	Extract from Melksham Without PC e-mail to Broughton Gifford PC 22 December 2014	22/12/14
6	Extract from Melksham Without PC e-mail to Seend PC 22 December 2014	22/12/14
7	Letter from Broughton Gifford PC 5 October 2015	5/10/15
8	Letter to Melksham Without PC 4 April 2014	4/4/14
9	Melksham Seniors Updated Boundary 2 November 2015	2/11/15
10	Melksham Public Meeting Minutes - 4 November 2015	4/11/15
11	Melksham Public Meeting Minutes - 20 October 2015	20/10/15
12	Melksham Public Meeting Minutes - 21 October 2015	21/10/15
13	Melksham TC letter 1 July 2013	1/7/13
14	Melksham Without PC letter 23 July 2014	23/7/14
15	Melksham Without PC letter 28 March 2014	28/3/14
16	Melksham Without PC Response on CGR 12 October 2015	12/10/15
17	Extract of email from Mr P Davis 11 November 2015	11/11/15

Summary of e-mails received

No.	From	Date	For / Against
1	Melksham Without PC	21/10/15	MWOPC "headlines" for residents

This page is intentionally left blank



Mrs T Strange, Clerk
Melksham Without Parish Council

By Email

25 October 2015

Dear Teresa,

Community Governance Review: Proposed Merger

Please take this letter as CAWS's response to the Wiltshire County Council-led Community Governance Review, and in particular to the proposed merger of Melksham Without Parish Council (MWOPC) and Melksham Town Council (MTC).

As you know, CAWS (Community Action: Whitley and Shaw) was established to represent the interests of the people of Whitley and Shaw, and to provide a forum for community engagement. CAWS was established by local residents, and has had the support of MWOPC. CAWS objects to the proposed merger of MWOPC and MTC.

Local Representation

CAWS is a good example of localism in practice. It enables local residents to have power over matters which might previously have been outside of their reach. It allows local residents to have a stronger voice. It is in many respects a devolution of power to the community. MWOPC's involvement with CAWS, and with similar groups representing other villages within its catchment, illustrates MWOPC's strong commitment to localism.

MWOPC provides very effective representation of the interests of the villagers falling within its catchment, and provides an accessible and competent forum for the consideration of local concerns. Because MWOPC's focus is on the villages that surround Melksham, it is perfectly suited to representing the people that live in those villages. This is particularly so where the interests of the villages are not entirely the same as the interests of the town. Furthermore, having a separate council to represent the villages helps ensure that the distinctive identities of the villages are maintained.

Were MWOPC and MTC to merge, the voice of those living in the villages would be less strong.



It follows that a merger of the two councils, particularly in circumstances where there may be a reduction in the overall number of councilors, will lead to a democratic deficit. In turn, all local residents (including those of the town) will receive less effective representation.

The Councils' approach in this exercise must be guided by the provisions of the Localism Act 2010. The Act codifies the national Government's policy of ever-greater decentralisation. As a matter of principle, the proposed merger runs contrary to that policy, and to the stated aim of the Act. Thus, as a matter of principle there is no good reason to merge MWOPC and MTC.

Financial considerations

If there are no matters of principle with which to justify the merger, what then of matters of practice?

There is a dearth of published information setting out the practical benefits of a merger. There is, for instance, none shown on the relevant part of the Wiltshire County Council website ([here](#)). I assume that the chief justification for the proposed merger is financial, and I have in mind comments made by MTC member Cllr Hubbard, and quoted in the Melksham Independent News ([here](#)) that the proposed merger will reduce premises costs, and that "... the extra money can be spent on improving facilities in the town."

MTC is a significantly more expensive organization than MWOPC. This is demonstrated in the precepts charged by both councils. MTC charges a precept of £86.87 whereas MWOPC charges a precept of £41.63, i.e. less than half that charged by MTC.

A merger of the councils will inevitably lead to an increase in precept for those living in the MWOPC area; in addition to losing effective democratic representation, the residents will pay significantly more for their council-run services.

It is at least arguable that a merger could be justified if it would result in a significant saving in costs. Cllr Hubbard's statement refers to one saving, this being from premises costs. I note from MWOPC's published accounts for 2014/15 that its premises costs were £6,435.00. For the same year, MTC's total expenditure was £570,487.00 ([source](#)). The efficiency saving brought about by reduced premises costs would, therefore, be in the region of 1% of MTC's budget.

In any event, I note that Cllr Hubbard's comments only refer to there being financial benefits for the town.



Summary

CAWS considers that the proposed merger of the councils will not be in the best interest of the residents of Shaw and Whitley. The merger will weaken the effectiveness of local representation and in many respects runs contrary to the policy of localism.

Furthermore, any merger would increase the burden of taxation on local residents. It would at best result in an efficiency saving in the region of 1% of the MTC budget, and in any event, there would be no obvious financial benefit for village residents.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Ashkowski
Secretary, Community Action: Whitley and Shaw

This page is intentionally left blank

George Ward School, Melksham

Persimmon Homes (Wessex)
Persimmon House, Tetbury Hill
Malmesbury, Wiltshire, SN16 9JR

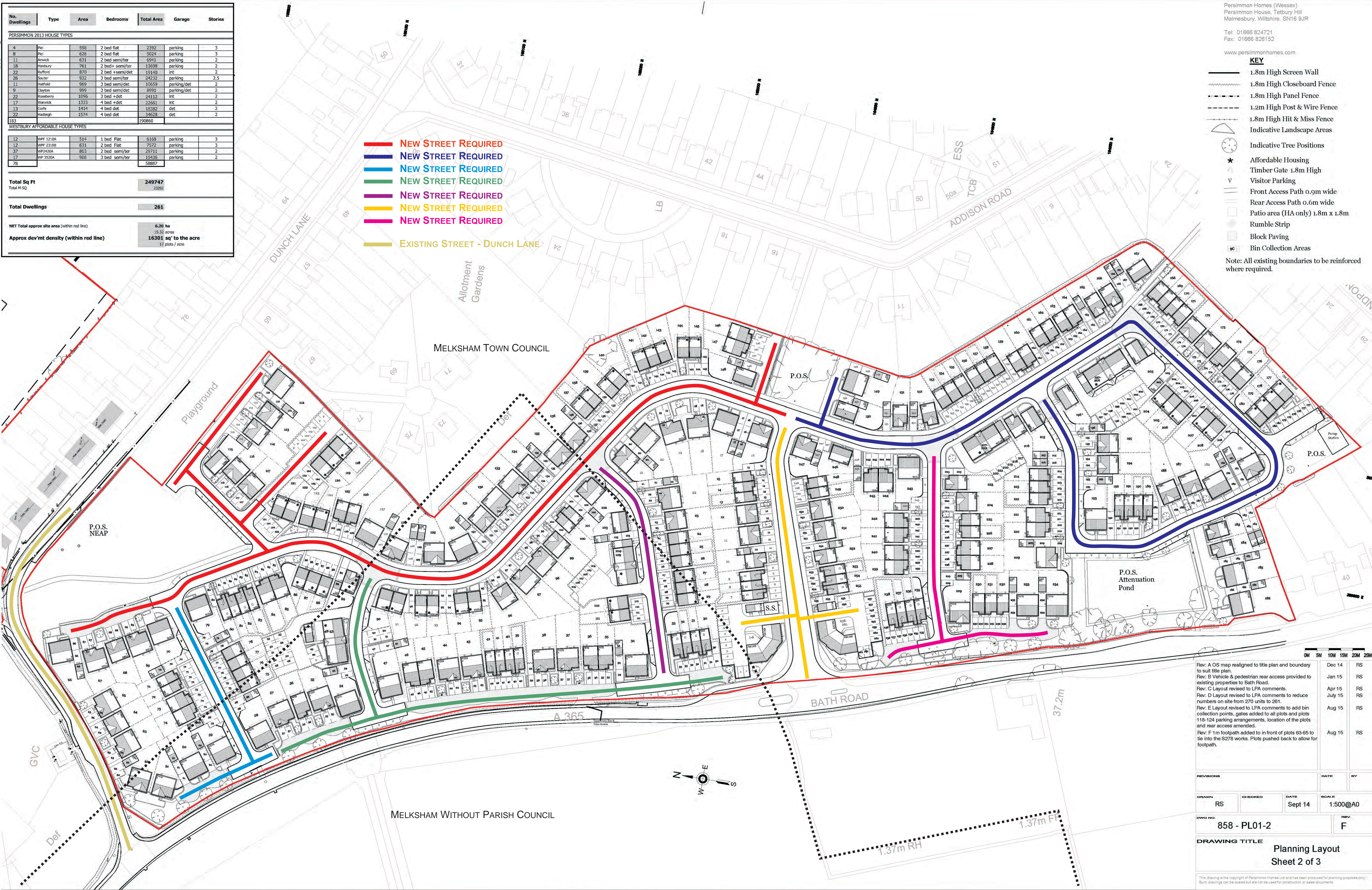
Tel: 01688 824721
Fax: 01688 826152

www.persimmonhomes.com

- KEY**
- 1.8m High Screen Wall
 - - - 1.8m High Closeboard Fence
 - · - · 1.8m High Panel Fence
 - - - 1.2m High Post & Wire Fence
 - - - 1.8m High Hit & Miss Fence
 - Indicative Landscape Areas
 - Indicative Tree Positions
 - ★ Affordable Housing
 - ▲ Timber Gate 1.8m High
 - ▼ Visitor Parking
 - Front Access Path 0.9m wide
 - Rear Access Path 0.6m wide
 - Patio area (HA only) 1.8m x 1.8m
 - ▨ Rumble Strip
 - Block Paving
 - ⊞ Bin Collection Areas
- Note: All existing boundaries to be reinforced where required.

No. Dwellings	Type	Area	Bedrooms	Total Area	Garage	Stories
PERSIMMON 2013 HOUSE TYPES						
4	Flat	598	2 bed flat	2392	parking	3
8	Flat	628	2 bed flat	3026	parking	3
11	Arwick	631	2 bed semi/ter	6941	parking	2
18	Harbury	761	2 bed + semi/ter	13698	parking	2
22	Rufford	870	2 bed + semi/det	19140	int	2
26	Souler	932	3 bed semi/ter	24232	parking	2.5
11	Wadfield	969	3 bed semi/det	10659	parking/det	2
9	Clayton	999	3 bed semi/det	8991	parking/det	2
22	Rosberry	1096	3 bed + det	24112	int	2
17	Warwick	1333	4 bed + det	22661	int	2
13	Corfe	1414	4 bed det	18382	det	2
22	Madegh	1574	4 bed det	34628	det	2
183				190860		
WESTBURY AFFORDABLE HOUSE TYPES						
12	WPF 1210A	514	1 bed Flat	6168	parking	3
12	WPF 1210B	531	2 bed Flat	7572	parking	3
37	WP240A	803	2 bed semi/ter	29711	parking	2
17	WP 3520A	908	3 bed semi/ter	15436	parking	2
78				58887		
Total Sq Ft				249747		
Total M Sq				23202		
Total Dwellings				261		
NET Total approx site area (within red line)				6.20 ha		
				15.32 acres		
Approx dev't density (within red line)				16301 sq' to the acre		
				17 plots / acre		

Page 597



REV	DATE	BY	
Rev: A	OS map realigned to title plan and boundary to suit title plan.	Dec 14	RS
Rev: B	Vehicle & pedestrian rear access provided to existing properties to Bath Road.	Jan 15	RS
Rev: C	Layout revised to LPA comments.	Apr 15	RS
Rev: D	Layout revised to LPA comments to reduce numbers on site from 270 units to 261.	July 15	RS
Rev: E	Layout revised to LPA comments to add bin collection points, gates added to all plots and plots 118-124 parking arrangements, location of the plots and rear access amended.	Aug 15	RS
Rev: F	1m footpath added to in front of plots 63-65 to tie into the S278 works. Plots pushed back to allow for footpath.	Aug 15	RS

REVISIONS	DATE	BY		
DRAWN	RS	CHECKED	DATE	SCALE
			Sept 14	1:500@A0
DWG NO.	858 - PL01-2		F	
DRAWING TITLE				
Planning Layout Sheet 2 of 3				

This drawing is the copyright of Persimmon Homes Ltd and has been produced for planning purposes only. Such drawings can be scaled but are not to be used for construction or sales documents.

This page is intentionally left blank

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.

This page is intentionally left blank

John,

In your email of 27 June 2014 you requested that Melksham Town Council's proposals as part of a prospective Community Governance Review be forwarded to you such that the Working Party can assess the extent and implications associated with those proposals. Accordingly, I detail below some observations for consideration as part of this process:

1. Melksham Town Council believes that the parish boundary between Melksham Town and Melksham Without Parish Council has become anomalous in the light of recent housing development particularly on land to the east of the town.
2. Furthermore, proposed residential development proposals have been submitted in respect of land south of Western Way, Bowerhill, Melksham; land east of Semington Road, Berryfield, Melksham and land east of Spa Road, Melksham. Should these proposals come to fruition the urban conurbation of Melksham will continue to spread eastwards whilst the urban footprint to the south of the town will expand and effectively link with Berryfield and Bowerhill.
3. The emerging core strategy dictates that some 800 new homes will need to be identified within the Melksham community area by 2026. Whilst the location of residential development has yet to be determined and is intended to be the subject of neighbourhood planning analysis, it is apparent that Melksham's expansion will continue and that community governance in turn will need to be effective and convenient, reflecting the identity and interests of the expanded community.
4. The Town Council notes that the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews ("the Guidance") issued in 2010 recognises that over time communities may expand with new housing developments which can often lead to existing parish boundaries becoming anomalous as new houses are built across the boundaries resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours.
5. The Town Council notes also that it is suggested within the Guidance (para. 26) that it is good practice for a principal council to consider conducting a review every 10-15 years. In essence therefore any review conducted now should be cognisant of the need to ensure that the integrity of boundaries deemed necessary are sufficiently robust to remain appropriate during that time frame.
6. Melksham Town Council believes that a unified council with a common agenda will serve to provide a positive benefit for the wider Melksham community. It is not suggested that either Melksham Town Council should absorb Melksham Without Parish Council or vice versa. Rather, it is proposed that the two parishes should be dissolved in their current form and a new common parish created. The parameters of the new parish will effectively be those currently defining the outer boundary of Melksham Without Parish Council.
7. It is recognised that Shaw and Whitley may feel subsumed by such a proposal and, if that is perceived to be the case, and subject to appropriate consultation, it may be deemed appropriate that Shaw and Whitley be grouped under a newly defined parish council with Atworth for example.

8. Melksham Town Council understands 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. One unified council for Melksham may be better placed to work in the best interests of residents in the wider Melksham community thereby improving its capacity to deliver better services and being better placed to represent the community's interests. A united council, working toward a cohesive strategic plan, will allow synergies to be exploited and efficiencies generated.
9. The Town Council believes that Melksham Town and Melksham Without are interdependent on each other for social and economic cohesion. The rural communities all look towards Melksham town as the nearest shopping centre and focal hub in terms of retail, commerce, some sporting activities, transport interchange, library, banks, medical and other services, including the exciting community campus proposition. Melksham Without on the other hand, with Bowerhill 's vibrant industrial estate and secondary school, the parish sports facilities, open space and rural environment is essential to the residents of Melksham town for the provision of education, employment and recreation.
10. It is recognised that future residential growth should contribute towards delivering improved infrastructure and in particular growth should contribute towards town centre regeneration, including traffic management improvements. This clearly impacts upon all residents who identify with and frequent the town which sits at the heart of the wider community it serves.
11. The proposed Melksham link to join the Wilts and Berks Canal to the Kennet and Avon Canal via the River Avon through Melksham has major implications for both parishes. In Melksham Without, the Canal will traverse the village of Berryfield, providing extensive environmental benefits in terms of sustainable transport, cycling and walking. For Melksham, the canal link via the River Avon will increase tourism and provide the market place for a thriving recreation economy. A united council would ensure that this unique opportunity is tapped to its full potential.
12. The emerging Core Strategy's future vision for Melksham is described as a thriving and accessible town with a respect for its heritage and rural environment and a strengthened employment base. This chimes with a desire to create a cohesive, attractive and economically vibrant community with its own sense of place and local identity which, Melksham Town Council believes, will be best achieved through a united council which will be empowered to provide stronger local leadership, promote community cohesion, and encourage greater resident participation.
13. The Guidance states that *"the general rule should be that the parish is based on an area which reflects community identity and interest"* (para. 80) and makes reference to the ability to amalgamate two or more parishes (para. 87). Moreover the Guide suggests that in deciding what recommendations to make as part of a review *"the principal council must have regard to the need to secure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient"* (para. 94).

14. The Guidance acknowledges it may be preferable to group together parishes so as to allow a common parish council to be formed though this must be compatible with the retention of community interests (para. 114). Furthermore the Guidance expressly refers to a scenario where the principal council *“may conclude that the provision of effective and convenient local government and/or the reflection of community identity and interests may be best met by the abolition of a number of smaller parishes and the creation of a larger parish covering the same area”* (para. 117).
15. Melksham Town Council recognises 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 best thing for the people of Melksham, the Town Council respectfully requests that Wiltshire Council explores the viability of creating a united Melksham Parish Council, with a common agenda, as part of any forthcoming Community Governance Review.

I hope this is helpful in explaining the Town Council’s current stance but please do not hesitate to contact me again should you and or the Working Party require anything further at this stage.

Best regards,

Steve

Steve Gray
Town Clerk
Melksham Town Council
Town Hall
Melksham
Wiltshire
SN12 6ES

T: (01225) 704187

F: (01225) 707858

E: stephen.gray@melkshamtown.co.uk

Disclaimer and Confidentiality Notice

This email and any attachment are confidential to the intended recipients and access to this email by anyone else is unauthorised. If you should not have received this email, please notify us immediately by reply email and then destroy any copies and delete this message from your system. Unless authorised by Melksham Town Council, copying, forwarding, disclosing or using this email or its contents is prohibited. Melksham Town Council is not responsible for controlling transmissions over the internet and makes no representation or warranty as to the absence of viruses in this email or any attachment.

This page is intentionally left blank

For the attention of Broughton Gifford Parish Council

Copy to:

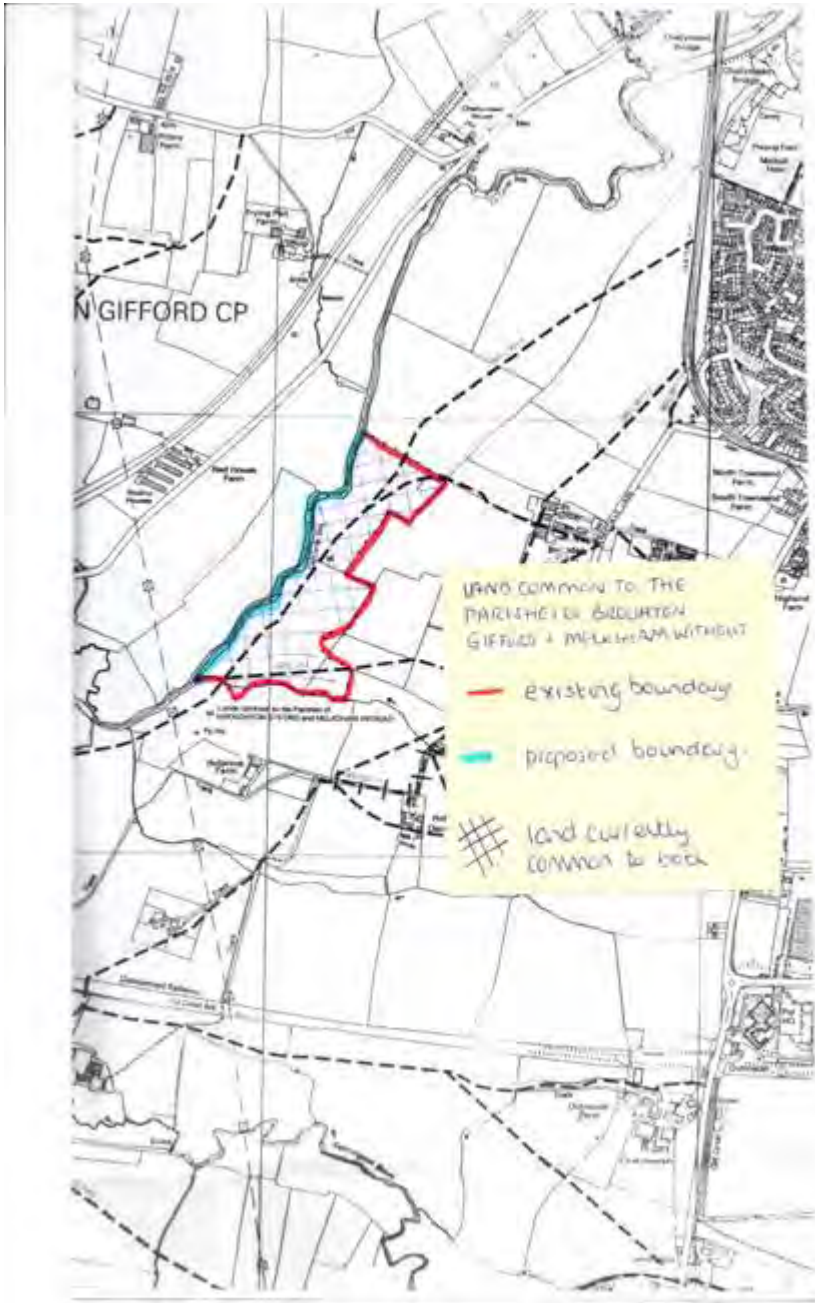
Roy While, Melksham Without South Cllr
Terry Chivers, Melksham Without North Cllr
John Watling, Head of Electoral Services
William Oulton, Democratic Services

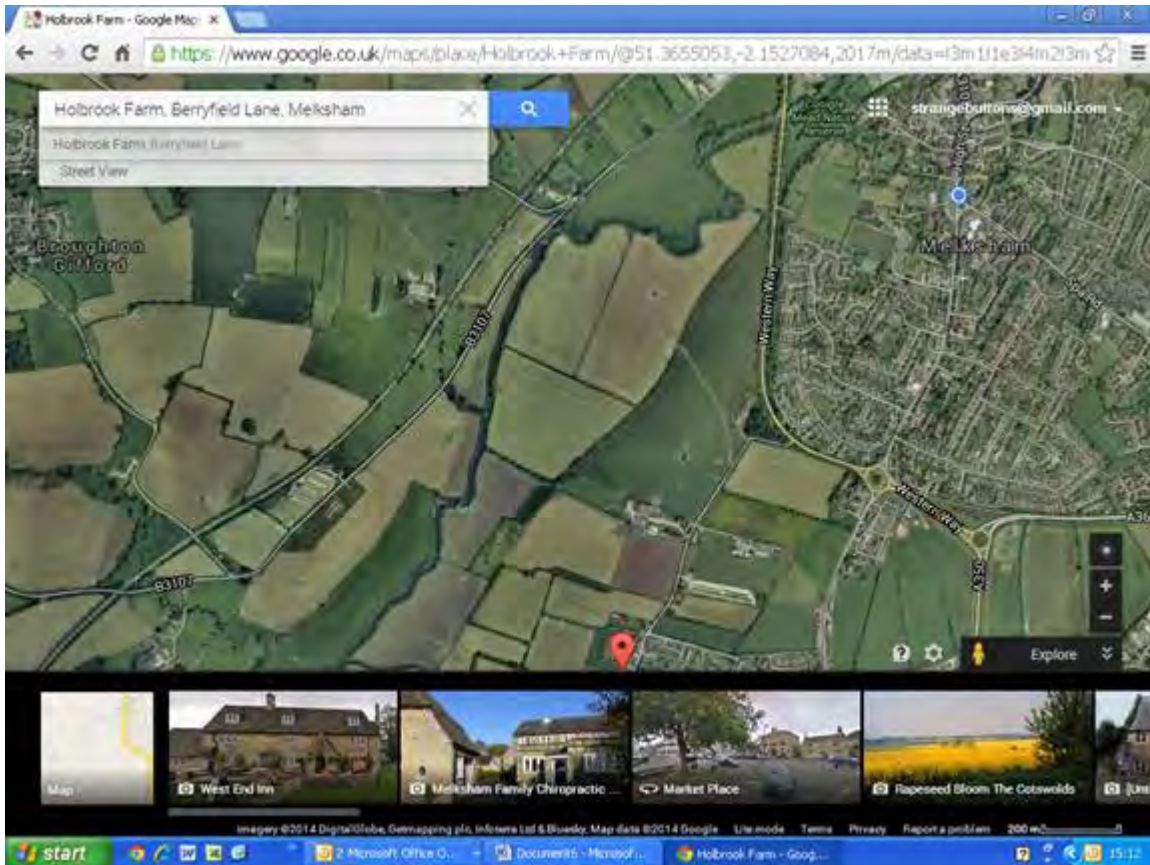
Dear Dawn

Land common to Melksham Without & Broughton Gifford Parish Councils

Please find details below of a Parish Boundary Review requested by Melksham Without Parish Council. This was discussed at the Community Governance Review meeting that Wiltshire Council held on Friday 12th December with Melksham Town and Melksham Without Parish Councils. At that meeting the Parish Council were asked if there were any other boundary reviews (other than the boundary with the Town) that they wished to be considered and the Council put forward the land common to both Melksham Without Parish and Broughton Gifford Parish; suggesting the River as the proposed boundary line.

It is noted that no residential properties are affected.





I hope that this boundary review meets with the approval of Broughton Gifford Parish Council and that you could let us know the view of the Parish Council in due course.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year from all at Melksham Without.
Regards, Teresa

Teresa Strange
Clerk
Melksham Without Parish Council
First Floor
Crown Chambers
7 Market Place
Melksham
Wiltshire
SN12 6ES
01225 705700
clerk@melkshamwithout.co.uk
www.melkshamwithout.co.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

For the attention of Seend Parish Council

Copy to:

Roy While, Melksham Without South Cllr
Jonathon Seed, Summerham & Seend Cllr
John Watling, Head of Electoral Services
Paul Millard, Senior Rights of Way Warden for West Wiltshire
William Oulton, Democratic Services
Mike Mills, Chair of BRAG (Bowerhill Residents Action Group)

Dear Rosemary

Melksham Without Parish Council boundary with Seend Parish Council.

Further to our telephone conversation last week, please find details below of the Parish Boundary Review requested by Melksham Without Parish Council. This was discussed at the Community Governance Review meeting that Wiltshire Council held on Friday 12th December with Melksham Town and Melksham Without Parish Councils. At that meeting the Parish Council were asked if there were any other boundary reviews (other than the boundary with the Town) that they wished to be considered and the Council put forward the boundary with Seend Parish Council covering the area where BRAG (Bowerhill Residents Action Group) have established a picnic area on the bridleway from Locking Close to the K&A Canal.

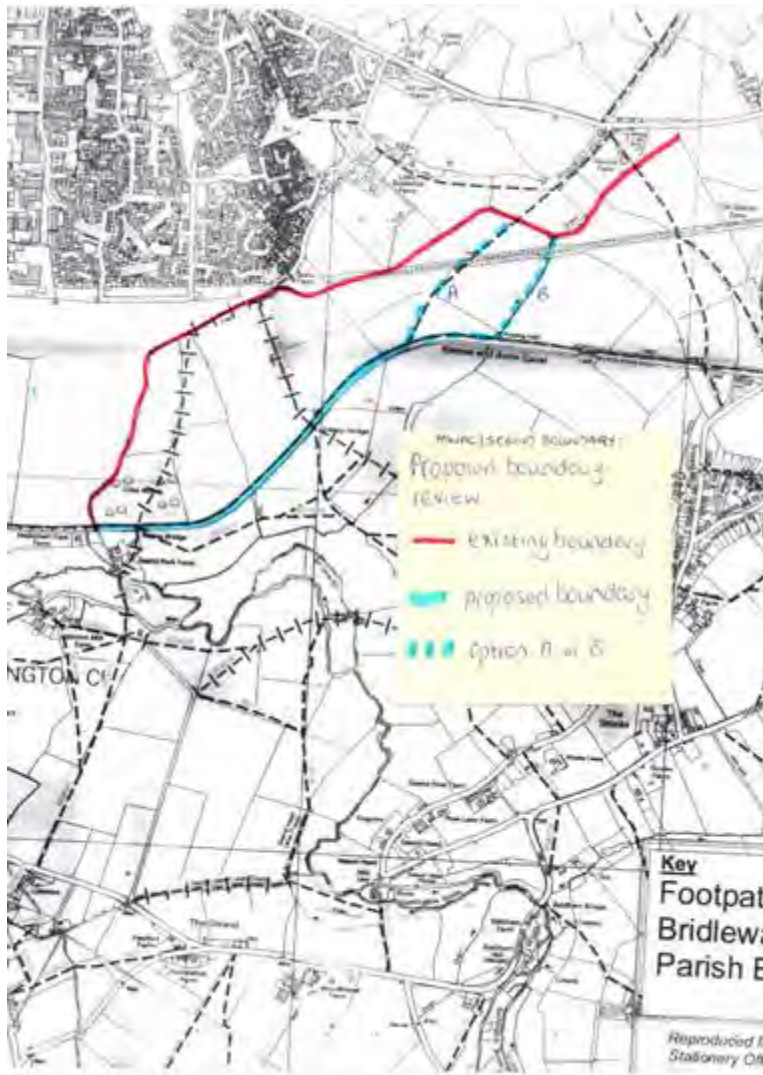
Melksham Without Parish Council proposed that the boundary between Melksham Without and Seend Council becomes the Kennet & Avon Canal as currently the boundary extends over the Canal into the land south of Bowerhill including the land that BRAG (Bowerhill Residents Action Group) have established a picnic area, enhanced the bridleway with tree planting, erected benches and a noticeboard. All assets have been donated by BRAG to Melksham Without Parish Council which they insure and maintain, in particular the "oil drum" bin which is emptied weekly by the Melksham Without Parish Council caretaker.

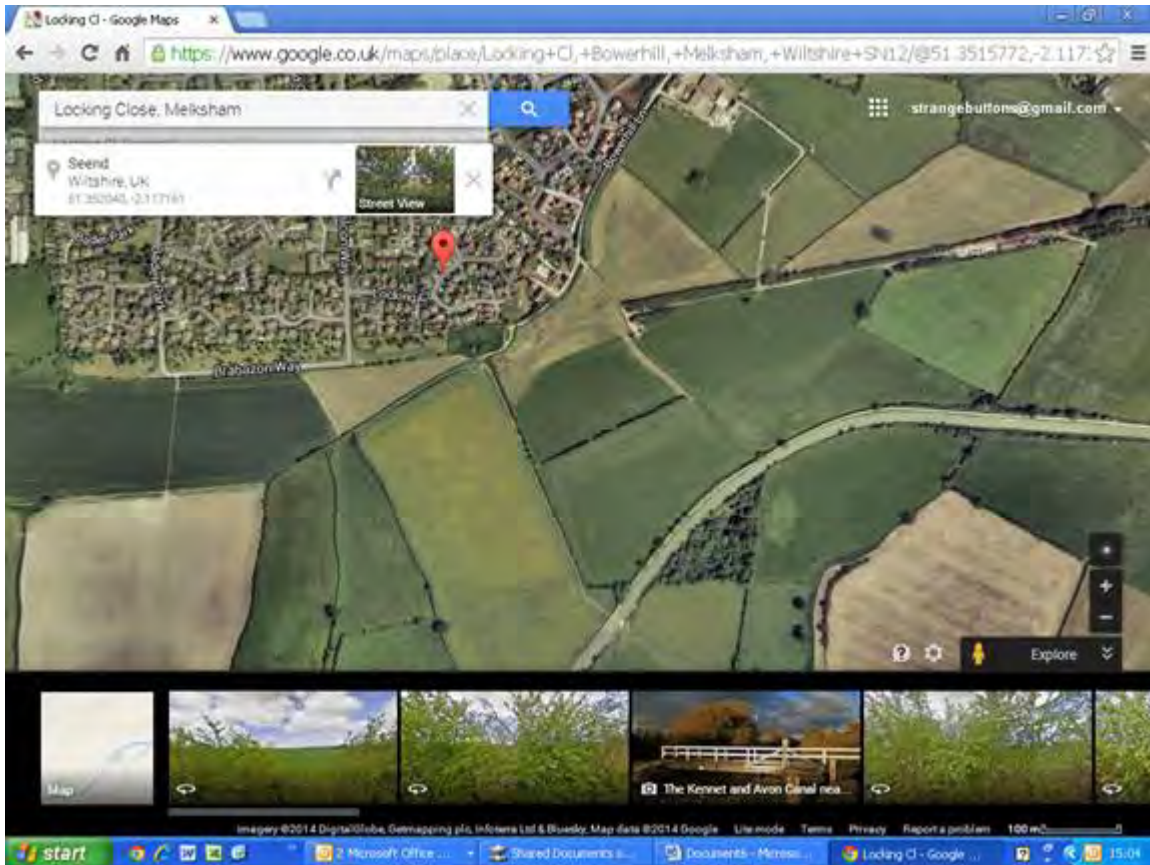
Melksham Without Parish Council suggest that option B is the preferred option for joining back up to the existing boundary as it follows an established field line with a hedgerow, whereas option A crosses an open field (both A & B follow existing Rights of Ways). *See map below.*

The land has several Rights of Ways within it, and these presumably would need to be renumbered from the Seend series to the MW series. The BR S17 would then be MW45 all the way to the canal, the section of S13 between the railway and the canal would need a new number, finally S18 would become a continuation of MW36. The section of canal towpath along the revised boundary would be MW16 instead of S52 over that length. (Due to these changes I have copied Paul Millard, Rights of Way Officer for West Wiltshire into the email for his information).

It is noted that no residential properties are affected.

Please note that BRAG have recently installed a series of benches in Bowerhill in the Melksham Without parish, and two benches – one either side of the brideway exit onto the canal footpath - in the parish of Seend.





I hope that this boundary review meets with the approval of Seend Parish Council and that you could let us know the view of Seend Parish Council in due course.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year from all at Melksham Without.
Regards, Teresa

Teresa Strange
Clerk
Melksham Without Parish Council
First Floor
Crown Chambers
7 Market Place
Melksham
Wiltshire
SN12 6ES
01225 705700
clerk@melkshamwithout.co.uk
www.melkshamwithout.co.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

BROUGHTON GIFFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Mary Jarvis B.A.Hons. (Local Policy)

Brambling Cottage,

78 The Common,

Broughton Gifford, Melksham,

Wiltshire SN12 8ND

Tel: 01225 782941 Email: maryj@broughtoncommon.co.uk

www.broughtongiffordparishcouncil.org.uk

Office hours: Tues & Wed 2.30 p.m. – 6.00 p.m. Fri 9.30 – 1.00 p.m.

5th October 2015

Mr John Watling,
Head of Electoral Services and Deputy Returning Officer
Wiltshire Council
County Hall Bythesea Road,
TROWBRIDGE, Wilts. BA14 8JN

Dear Mr Watling

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – MELKSHAM WITHOUT AND BROUGHTON GIFFORD LCP

Thank you for your letter of 3rd September.

Broughton Gifford Parish Council OBJECTS to the proposal to give the lands common to the two parishes of Broughton Gifford and Melksham Without, to the Melksham Without parish for the following reasons:

1. These lands are a unique part of our parish and have been common to both parishes for many years without causing any problems to either party.
2. There are many other parish boundaries in Wiltshire that are not defined by a firm natural feature. The obsession with making everything uniform works against the individual characteristics and historical formation of the parishes.
3. Melksham Without is already the largest rural parish in Wiltshire and does not need these lands for any particular purpose.
4. No prior consultation took place with Broughton Gifford Parish Council as it did with Melksham Without and Melksham Town Councils. We found out about the proposal from Melksham Without initially, rather than Wiltshire Council as the Electoral Service for the area. As a Council we feel that the formulation of this proposal has therefore been biased in favour of one view. No reply was received to our letter of initial objection.
5. We understand that there is also a proposal being considered to make Melksham Town and Melksham Without one parish. Should this happen, the lands common to both parishes could change overnight from a very rural riverside meadow to part of the urban area of the Melksham Town parish

6. We understand that this area up to the river will in future be part of the overall planning site for the planned Wilts and Berks Canal development. Broughton parish would like to be involved in plans for this area, with a view to possibly benefitting in future by having a cycle bridge over the river to join up with a towpath/cycle path into Melksham Town. Having these lands common provides a good platform to work together for the benefit of both parishes.

Thank you for consulting with Broughton Gifford Parish Council.

Please would you let my Council know of any progress or outcomes in the Community Governance Review

Kind regards

Yours sincerely,

Mary Jarvis

Clerk

This page is intentionally left blank

4th April 2014

Economic Development and Planning
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Ms Teresa Strange
Clerk
Melksham Without Parish Council
First Floor
Crown Chambers
7 Market Place
Melksham
Wiltshire SN12 6ES

Dear Ms Strange

Community Governance Review – Adjustment to the Melksham Town and Melksham Without Parishes

I write in response to the letter sent to Dr Brand by Mary Jarvis on 28th March 2014. Dr Brand has requested that I reply on his behalf. There are two matters raised in the letter, the first regarding the Community Governance Review and the second regarding the coalescence of Bowerhill with Melksham. I will respond to each matter in turn.

In terms of the Community Governance Review (CGR) that the Council is undertaking, this started on 1 April 2014 and will end March 2015. The CGR has been approved by Council and will be undertaken under a Working Party chaired by Cllr Stuart Wheeler. To that end we will be inviting comments on certain areas including many of the towns, based on requests we have received. The Council has a duty to consider all requests made, which includes a request regarding Melksham to consider boundaries.

Turning to the matter of coalescence, I understand that the 'possible development' of greenfield land referred to relates to a speculative proposal by a developer. Unfortunately, the Council cannot prevent developers submitting planning applications for land they wish to promote and will assess any applications on their merits against the policies within the adopted and emerging development plan for the area, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Council has committed to preparing a Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) to identify new housing sites, which will consider land at Melksham to meet the requirements of the Core Strategy and ensure sufficient land is identified for development in line with the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy. This identifies 'Melksham and Bowerhill village' as a Market Town and states that "*Market Towns have the potential for significant development that will increase the jobs and homes in each town in order to help sustain and where necessary enhance their services and facilities and promote better levels of self containment and viable sustainable communities*" (Core

Policy 2). Core Policy 15, as recently proposed to be changed, requires about 2,240 new homes to be provided at Melksham over the period 2006 to 2026.

The Site Allocations DPD will involve an assessment of all potential site options for development around the town to identify the most sustainable options for growth. The Council considers that a plan led approach involving public consultation is the most appropriate mechanism to identify new sites at the town and will take into consideration factors including landscape constraints or allocated uses of land that may exist. In implementing the current version of the emerging Core Strategy consideration will also need to be given to paragraph 5.80, which states: *"it is recognised that both Berryfield and Bowerhill have functional relationships to Melksham and have important individual characteristics which should be protected, where practicable."*

I trust you will find this information of help.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alistair Cunningham', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alistair Cunningham
Associate Director, Economic Development and Planning
Direct line: 01225 713203
Email: alistair.cunningham@wiltshire.gov.uk

These Views are expressed by Melksham Seniors Executive Committee and Brian Warwick, Chair Melksham Community Seniors 55+ Forum, to the Wiltshire Council on Community Governance Review – October 2015

Comments are made on the basis of the "Guidance on community governance reviews" by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England of which "Principal Authorities are required, by section 100 (4) of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, to have regard to this guidance which is issued by the Secretary of State, under section 100 (1) and (3), and the LGBC under section 100 (2).

3. From 13 February 2008 Unitary County councils Have had responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews and have been able to decide whether to give effect to recommendations made in those reviews. In making that decision, they will need to take account of the views of local people.

Our views also take into account the submission of the Melksham Without Parish Council, which we fail to agree with, as it unlikely to provide the appropriate development of the desirable infrastructure to meet the needs of an expanding Melksham Community.

We are pleased that the County Council is carrying out wide consultation and seeking the views of residents and local organisations in Melksham as well as holding public meetings. Our local independent Newspaper in Melksham is also giving the public the opportunity to express their views and at the same time increasing the awareness of the importance of the review in the public domain at a low cost to the County purse.

We are also pleased that Melksham Town Council have also provided the public and local organisations with the opportunity to input their views during the period of their deliberations. It was the very wise views expressed by individuals and organisations on the economic opportunities and social benefits that we found to be of great value in helping members of our Forum to formulate our responses.

Melksham Town is a major retailing area with five six national supermarkets and a major department store, it also support a wide range of renowned restaurants, The three local surgeries are in close walking Town centre, as are the chemists and retailing establishments, even Melksham Without Parish Council recognise the importance of having their offices in the Town Centre because of the ideal geographical location in respect of the their dispersed communities. Having one Council would in our view create a closer social structure, particularly bearing in mind the majority of amenities are in the Town Centre and also the development and location of the campus in the centre of the Town, which will be serving all of Melksham.

There is also a desirable need to consider the wider issues around the Health and wellbeing of the the hard to reach members of our wider communities and the older people and disabled who are well served by the facilities within the Town compared with outlining communities, having one council would provide an opportunity to adopt a more strategic and economical opportunity to improve those services and links with the voluntary sector. Much has been made by Melksham Without in respect of their lower precept that of course is not a matter or consideration in this review, That fact however, that the Parish have referred to it, highlights the unfairness where close neighbours are actually subsidising many of the local amenities and facilities that all the local Melksham communities benefit from, though unfortunately they also fail to provide an equitable contribution to the local voluntary sector compared with support of the Town Council.

Yet, Melksham voluntary groups do not identify their level of support on Melksham Town or Melksham Without boundaries but on need and of serving the residents of Melksham without any discrimination as to parish or community boundaries. In fact, many of our own services and projects around social isolation are based on the needs of Melksham Without parish communities.

Melksham Seniors support services are provided on need, rather than based upon the Melksham Without support of reasonable equity per head in funding. This is making it extremely hard for the voluntary sector to provide the desirable levels of equitable services under the present boundary structures with the parish, with so few facilities and such low financial support for tackling loneliness and social isolation for they're ageing population.

The 2007 Act places a duty on principal authorities to have regard to the need to secure that any community governance for the area under review should reflect the identities and interests of the local community in that area, in the case of ONE council that would be the wider community as previously recognised in respect of Chippenham.

Whilst it is recognised that there is a distinct identities of the surrounding villages of Shaw, Whitley, Beanacre, Berryfield and Bowerhill. They are all in fact individual communities with very little if any cohesion in its geographical structure other than historical for forming rural now outdated ring around Melksham Town which in 2015 provides their main retailing and allied services, alongside the majority of social infrastructure other than small village halls and school buildings and in the case of Bowerhill a soon to be defunct leisure centre.

A cohesive community is one where there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities. We believe that a one Melksham council would best serve those needs. That the villages and all the local communities would still be able to readily maintain their local identities and these could be further enhanced by naming each new electoral ward by their chosen community name. The local Village Halls would also continue to be known as their chosen name as would local voluntary groups, exactly in the same way as similar long established local communities in Melksham Town, such as Forest and Queensway which have retained that close community identity without any problems. Forest of course going back more than 100" years. We are also mindful of the County devolution plan to ensure the town councils and community groups are cost effective and sharpens the focus of public services, brings in additional resources and achieves better outcomes. With local grant funding currently leveraging in £6 of community resources for every £1 awarded, one council would be better able to achieve that goal.

Principal councils have a duty to consider the wider picture of community governance in carrying out their reviews. In some areas there may be well established forms of community governance such as local residents' associations, or community forums which local people have set up and make a distinct contribution to the community, there is no reason what so ever that could not be further developed and even enhanced.

Throughout England local communities have retained and in some cases improved those links as a result of mergers. We also believe that the quality of life in our community can be enhanced for older people by a more cohesive community wide strategy in which the supply, design and location of homes are appropriate for the opportunities and challenges of later life; and in which decisions around the built environment and transport, cultural and leisure services create places in which growing old is a pleasure rather than a continuous battle because of a lack of strategic support. Melksham Seniors Forum is an excellent example of developing a strong Melksham cohesive community group without the constrains of the parish boundaries. The senior forum would not however be able to provide the regular ageing better active ageing activities and films shows, along with projects tackling loneliness and social isolation without the community infrastructure the Town provide and the £1,500 grant we received from Melksham Town, that is compared with the Melksham Without grant of £100, which does not even cover the community transport cost which is incurred for three activity events for older people living in the parish area's of Melksham.

The use of the Melksham Assembly Hall and the Town Hall for seniors projects and activities alongside the uses by many other community groups, clearly demonstrates that Older People in the Parish of Melksham Without, would not adequately have their social and active ageing support needs fully met without the use of the facilities provided by the Town and the welcome support of the Town precept.

We are of the view that there an extremely strong case for ONE council in Melksham to provide the right economical, commercial and health and well-being support which will assist in enhancing our community social structure for different generations, which will be needed even more as the Population of the Town grows. We believe there is a need to ensure that the right infrastructures will be able to be put in place to serve those needs by having one council , which would be more appropriately equipped to plan and cater for the needs of future generations. The present council structures would unlikely be able to provide the right level of dynamism to create the right cohesive community structure that meets the needs of an expanding and hopefully vibrant expanding community.

Brian Warwick & Melksham Community Seniors 55 + Forum.

This page is intentionally left blank

WORKING GROUP ON PARISH & COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE WORKING GROUP ON PARISH & COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS MEETING HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2015 AT ASSEMBLY HALL - MELKSHAM ASSEMBLY HALL, MARKET PLACE, MELKSHAM, SN12 6ES.

Present:

Cllr Ernie Clark, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Ian McLennan and Cllr Stuart Wheeler

Also Present:

Ian Gibbons
John Watling
Paul Taylor
Jessica Croman

1 Welcome & Introductions

The Chairman welcomed those present and introduced the panel.

2 Purpose and procedures of the meeting

The Chairman explained the reasons for Community Governance Reviews, procedure for the meeting, and that decisions on boundaries would be taken by Full Council.

Cllr Jon Hubbard raised an objection due to the inadequate notification of the meeting. A leaflet distributed by Wiltshire Council did not provide the relevant information and made no reference to the meeting date, time or venue.

3 Proposals

Maps were presented showing the proposals.

3a Snarlton Lane/ Thyme Road Area

Comments in support:

Alan Baines – Woodrow resident

- It's the fourth time Melksham Town Council have expanded into the rural parish
- Logical development of a growing town
- Boundaries should follow distinct boundaries – the boundary is clear here. The eastern expansion road is clear boundary although it does not have planning consent, if it had consent then logical.

4 **Whole Parish Merger**

Comments in support:

Bruce Sanders – Melksham Town Council

- The review is not about changing community identities as all areas will retain their identity
- The merger will enhance governance for the whole of Melksham and surrounding villages
- Currently issues affecting Melksham TC and Melksham Without are discussed separately and information is not being shared
- Melksham Without is not providing some facilities that Melksham TC can provide
- There is constant negotiation and the two councils are not working effectively and efficiently.
- One council can do a better job than two separate councils.

Terry Welsh – Melksham Town Council

- Rural buffer zone – always desire to keep the buffer zone
- Bowerhill is its own community, but Melksham has long established communities within Melksham and have built their own facilities. Eg Queensway community
- Communities can keep their own identity
- Melksham Town Council understands the needs of the rural communities
- Each area will have their own Cllrs to represent them.

Mick West – Neighbourhood Plan

- The Town Council and Melksham Without Town Council are composing a plan to keep developers away
- Identity of communities are crucial to the plan
- Other towns all have communities within communities but how are they represented? Some have decision making powers some do not

- If the councils do not join then the parishes are not big enough to be recognised because separately they cannot be provided with more facilities such as hospitals etc.
- Majority of people in the communities are new comers and do not understand where their council tax goes and do not care
- People want efficient services do not care otherwise

Comments against:

Michelle Tall – Chair of Cause for Whitley and Shaw

- The review is all about identity
- The councils can meet and talk about issues to make it work. Get people together. That is not an excuse to merge.
- Do not support
- Melksham Without do a great job and fulfil the needs of the villages
- Without Melksham Without our group would not have happened
- The needs of Melksham town would overtake the surrounding small villages
- People in the villages do care and that is why people are here at the meeting today.

Cllr Mike Mills – Melksham Without Parish Council - Bowerhill Resident

- Oppose plans
- Live in Bowerhill and have spoken to many people, no-one is in support of the proposal
- Solid community spirit
- The area was nominated as the best kept large village in the past and shows that people take great pride in their area
- The area has its own facilities
- Core strategy recognises Bowerhill as an individual area and planning has been refused based on that.

Teresa strange – Clerk - Melksham Without

- Identity of communities is essential – communities need to be effective and convenient for residents – should not be about saving costs
- If there is a full merger the focus will become town centric
- Villages should be utilised more and the Town Council do not do that.
- If merged then will the villages still have the same representation?
- A merger may be cheaper but will not necessarily be better for everyone.

Additional comments:

Phil Mcmillan – Melksham Community Partnership

- Currently groups are able to go to both Melksham Without and Melksham Town Council to apply for grants. Will the grant pot remain the same?
 - Unable to answer

Ian Cardy – Resident

- What will the representation of a whole merged council look like?
- Currently there are 15, would that be doubled? Or would the numbers be reduced?
- This is key information to amalgamation
- All areas need to be represented fairly
 - These are proposals put forward by the Town Council – if accepted then it would be necessary to re-ward the area. That is a separate exercise and would be looked at if that happens. It will not happen until Full Council decides on the merger

John Clover – Parish Cllr - Bowerhill Resident

- Schools and facilities like hospitals is nothing to do with the size of parishes but based on the whole population

5 **A365 and Dunch Lane Junction**

No comments

6 **Seend, Locking Close and the Canal**

Comments in support:

Chairman Bowerhill Nature Group

- The current boundary follows the old railway line and closed a long time ago
- It makes sense to move and tidy up the boundary
- The Bridal way is funded by s106 money by Bowerhill
- Bowerhill get grants from Melksham Without to maintain the area
- If we want any facilities we have to ask Seend for permission
- Want to ensure area stays a rural area

Teresa Strange – Clerk Melksham Without

- Melksham Without Parish Council current contribute a lot of time and money to the area
- Delighted to share the area and would Seend like to contribute funds?

Comments against:

Cllr Seed – Cllr for Seend Parish Council

- The Seend Parish Council met recently to discuss the proposal and the message was clear, we do not support the proposal
- The picnic area is within the boundary and so what, the whole area is for public use. The grant came from Melksham AB so for all people
- Other bridal ways are not shown on the map
- Charles wood was paid for by the Charles family who live on the other side of the canal. They are concerned that the land should not be split up. Want to keep it all in Seend. Charles wood should be kept in Seend
- Why stop on that bridal way? Why not carry the boundary along the whole canal? Because Melksham put a picnic area there without knowing it wasn't their land, but so what it's for everyone.

Tony Merch – Seend PC

- Seend Parish welcome sharing of the area
- No compelling reasons to change the boundary
- Fears of the land being developed
- Provides a rural buffer between areas
 - Boundaries have no significance by planning

Seend Resident

- If the boundary is changed how will Seend be affected?
- Melksham is growing which is making the villages worried
- Seend want a rural life and want to stay there not be closer to the growing development

7 Land Between Berryfield Lane and River Avon

No comments

8 Close

The Chairman thanked all those present for their attendance.

(Duration of meeting: 7.00 - 8.00 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Jessica Croman, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718262 , e-mail jessica.croman@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

WORKING GROUP ON PARISH & COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE WORKING GROUP ON PARISH & COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS MEETING HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2015 AT MELKSHAM OAK COMMUNITY SCHOOL.

Present:

Cllr Jon Hubbard and Cllr Stuart Wheeler

Also Present:

Ian Gibbons, John Watling and Will Oulton

1 **Welcome & Introductions**

The Chairman welcomed those present and introduced the panel. It was noted that Cllr Ian McLennan and Cllr Ernie Clarke had been unable to attend this meeting.

2 **Purpose and procedures of the meeting**

The Chairman explained the reasons for Community Governance Reviews, procedure for the meeting, and that decisions on boundaries would be taken by Full Council. In making his presentation, the Chairman highlighted the following issues:

- That the Council was obliged to review boundaries where requests had been received.
- That all political groups were represented on the Working Group which would formulate proposals to be put to the meeting of the Full Council.
- The statutory guidance that had be given, and the key considerations that should be referred to in the deliberations;
- The Chair drew the meeting's attention the FAQs in the agenda papers;
- That the purpose of the meeting is to explain the proposals and to seek views;

That the Working Group intended to present recommendations to the November meeting of Council;

The Chairman emphasised that when the recommendations were considered by Council, he would not vote on the matter, so as to mitigate the appearance of bias; he also noted that none of the parishes in his division were subject to any reviews and that therefore he could take dispassionate view during the deliberations of the Working Group.

The Chairman invited Ian Gibbons, Wiltshire Council's Monitoring Officer, to reiterate the advice he had given throughout the process, with regard to the position of members in relation to discussion and the provisions of bias and predetermination, with regard to formulation of recommendations. It was specifically noted that Cllr Jon Hubbard would withdraw from the Working Groups debate of any proposals that affected parishes within his division or parish for which he is a member but that Cllr Jon Hubbard would be able to debate and vote as a Wiltshire Councillor when the matter was considered by the meeting of Full Council. Mr Gibbons emphasised that the Council had satisfied itself that the process thus followed was in accordance with a law.

The Chairman stated that the Working Group would hold a meeting in Assembly Hall on 21st October and 4th November, the latter scheduled in response to criticism that the first two meetings had not been adequately publicised.

The Chairman noted that the Working Group had received a full submission by Melksham WO Parish Council in response to proposals.

3 Proposals

John Watling presented the maps showing the proposals. In summary the Working Group has looking at two options; the merger of the two parishes; or the 4 smaller schemes to be considered as an alternative.

At the meeting the agenda order was amended so that the larger scheme was presented and discussed first.

4 Whole Parish Merger

Bruce Sanders – Melksham Town Council

- That Bowerhill is not an old estate, and is relatively modern, and that he did not agree that Bowerhill that lose its identify;
- That the Melksham Town Council and Melksham WO could share resources, and work together more on common causes doing more for the community;
- That a merged Council would be better able to bear the burden of more devolved responsibilities; and

- That Melksham Town Council should benefit from new housing developments on the edge of the town.

Steve Gray - resident of Bowerhill and employee of Town Council

- That he was proud to live in Bowerhill, but he saw it as part of Melksham town; and
- That he wanted to see more working together and merger is best way to do that.

Comments against:

Cllr Mike Mills - Bowerhill and Berryhill Ward in Melksham Without Parish Council

- That he had not found a single resident of Bowerhill in favour of merger;
- That Bowerhill has clear village identity and boundaries, with its own school, hall, and action group doing environment work; and
- Bowerhill had been identified as a separate community in Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy, which recognised that there is a rural buffer that protects the distinct boundary.

Cll John Glover – Melksham Without Parish Council

- Thanked the legal officer for his advice, and the clarity on the position of members with interests;
- That the parish of Melksham Without is divided by clear boundaries i.e. the roads and open countryside;
- That the villages have their own identity from Melksham and from each other, and that each has their own village and community facilities, some provided by the parish; and
- That he saw no benefit to the merger, as the Councils do work together already, separately, on the Local Planning issues.

Cll Richard Wood – Melksham Without Parish Council

- That Melksham Without Parish Council and the Town Council work well when it is needed;
- That he did not feel there will be a huge savings arising from a merger; and
- That Melksham Without Parish Council had made proposals were the boundary could change to take into account of proposed new housing.

Bob Whiffing – Bowerhill resident and Scout Leader

- That Bowerhill had separate troop, which was an indication of different community identity;

- That he was concerned that the merger would benefit Melksham Town Council more than the communities of Melksham Without Parish Council;

Chris Eileen – Bowerhill Resident;

- That he had concern of the impact on building.

Cllr Stuart Wheeler stated, in response to an issue raised, that Parish Council boundaries do not have a significant impact on planning applications; but that can be relevant to the development of neighbourhood plans.

5 **Snarlton Lane/ Thyme Road Area (Melksham Without)**

Comments in support:

Cllr Alan Baines – Woodrow Road Resident, and Melksham Without Parish Council

- That the overhead powerline should mean that land near it may not be developed;
- That the new distributor road is a firm boundary; and
- That any new development would be well connected to the town, with residents using some facilities in the town

Cllr Rolf Brindel – Spa Road Resident, and Melksham Without Parish Council

- That he feels that Bowerhill has a separate identity; and
- That the proposed Eastern Road clearly defines the boundary for the eastern edge of the town.

Comments against:

There were no further comments.

Cllr Stuart Wheeler stated, in response to an issue raised, and with reference the guidance, that the working group can consider evidence of likely population movements arising from potential development, and was not restricted to considering the impact of housing with planning permission.

6 **A365 and Dunch Lane Junction**

Comments in support:

Cllr Richard Wood – Melksham Without Parish Council

- That the old boundary had followed an old estate boundary; and
- That it was an anomaly and needs to be moved to one parish.

Comments against:

There were no further comments.

7 Seend, Locking Close and the Canal

Cllr Mike Mills – Chair of Bowerhill Action Group, and Melksham Without Parish Council

- That the bridle path had been paid for by s106 agreement;
- That there is a community run picnic area on the land;
- That Seend Parish Council did not appear to be interested in managing the land; and
- That the Canal is the sensible boundary.

Teresa Strange – Melksham Without Parish Council

- That the Parish Council need to ask permission from Seend Parish Council to then collect rubbish on Seend's land.

Comments against:

Cllr Kevin Rigg – Seend Parish Council

- That he had replied to the consultation and was opposed to what he saw as a land grab;
- That he saw the land as a buffer between to the two villages, and had concerns over the impact of its removal on community identity;
- That in general, there is substantial investment in the community and large number of developments in the pipeline;
- That if the town continues to grow, then it may make sense to merge the councils, but until a plan is more clear supports Bowerhill remaining separate.

Steve Valks – Member of Seend Planning Group

- Land is important in Seend's Plan, concerned over negative impact.

8 Land Between Berryfield Lane and River Avon

Comments in support:

Cllr Alan Baines – Woodrow Road Resident, and Melksham Without Parish Council

- That it makes sense that it is joined to Melksham WO as that is the authority to the East of the river

Comments against:

There were no further comments.

9 Close

The Chairman informed the meeting that recommendations will be taken to the Full council meeting on the 24 November.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting, and drew attention to the additional meetings to be held in the Assembly Hall Melksham on the 21 October and 4 November.

(Duration of meeting: 7.00 - 8.07 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Jessica Croman, of Democratic Services, direct line , e-mail

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

WORKING GROUP ON PARISH & COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE WORKING GROUP ON PARISH & COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS MEETING HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2015 AT ASSEMBLY HALL - MELKSHAM ASSEMBLY HALL, MARKET PLACE, MELKSHAM, SN12 6ES.

Present:

Cllr Ernie Clark, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Ian McLennan and Cllr Stuart Wheeler

Also Present:

John Watling
Ian Gibbons
Paul Taylor
Fiona Rae

10 Welcome & Introductions

The Chairman welcomed those present and introduced the panel.

11 Purpose and procedures of the meeting

The Chairman explained the reasons for Community Governance Reviews, procedure for the meeting, and that decisions on boundaries would be taken by Full Council.

12 Proposals

Maps were presented showing the proposals.

12a Snarlton Lane/ Thyme Road Area

Comments in support:

Nick Westbrook

- The new community in this area has been created in a similar way to Bowerhill. Most of the population is concentrated in two blocks and we

need to find ways of absorbing them into the wider community.

Lisa Ellis

- As a resident of Bowerhill, doesn't particularly identify with that area. Would you consider merging the area to the south?
- Cllr Wheeler: can only look at proposals in front of us for now. But alternative proposals could be suggested in the future.

John Glover

- Melksham Without suggested and support this proposal.

Comments against:

None.

Additional comments/ questions:

Richard Bean

- Resident of Shaw.
- A large number of houses about to be built between Shaw and Shurnhold. Will be large population expansion if Melksham town have to absorb them.

13 Whole Parish Merger

Comments in support:

Paul Carter, resident of Melksham

- Concerns about governance if the whole merger were to go ahead. Believes that Melksham would be best served by one council.
- All Wiltshire Council-owned assets in the area should be transferred to the parish council – e.g. playing fields, toilets. Then residents of town can decide what is best for the town. Stronger form of democracy.
- Cllr Stuart Wheeler clarified that this review does not deal with transfer of assets.

Terri Welsh, Melksham Town Council

- Melksham Town Council has to pay for Assembly Hall, etc. Wiltshire Council is transferring more services to the community.
- The bigger the area, the better the community will be placed to deal with increased financial pressures.

Adrienne Westbrook

- It is important that Melksham has a strong voice. At the moment, the voice is disjointed. Excellent councils but disjointed voices of inhabitants.
- The Town and Parish councils don't have the power needed to help Wiltshire Council put the money in this town. The only solution is through strength. Need united council.

Nick Westbrook, Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Community Area Partnership

- Size of Melksham when combined – population of 28,000 – just behind Chippenham. Third largest area in county excepting Salisbury.
- There are some governance concerns in Melksham Without. Will the proposal for a single council involve re-warding area so there is a fairer distribution of representation for the area – especially Shaw, Whitley, Beanacre etc? This information about the consequences of the merger is needed in order to make an informed decision, taking representation and precepts into account.
- Cllr Wheeler explained that if the whole parish merger was adopted by full council, the panel would then request authority to consider the area, including how it would be warded and what an appropriate number of councillors would be, in consultation with councils. It was also explained that the next elections were in May 2017 and no changes to boundaries would be made before then.
- Cllr Wheeler: precepts – government conditions – cannot take into account different precepts. Should not and cannot form part of deliberations. It was also explained that, under FAQs, there is information about precepts and variation and that the panel cannot predict the effect of proposals on precepts.

Brian Warwick, Older Persons' Champion, Melksham Seniors

- One council will overcome some equity and equality issues.
- Concerned about infrastructure side. Facilities required to service any community are closely linked to community identity. Majority of facilities are in Melksham Town Council.
- Seniors cover whole Melksham Area Board area – majority of activities are biased to town (52% in Melksham Town, 48% Melksham Without). There would be advantages for Melksham people if there were just one council.
- Opportunity to put right structures and support in place. Stronger voice for Melksham – focus on people of Melksham, support and facilities – one council speaking on our behalf. Need to be very positive and think about the future of Melksham.
- Strong community identity – from 'Melksham'. E.g. grants are given to out-of-parish areas.

Janet Giles, Seend resident

- If the whole merger goes ahead, would the secondary bits still happen?
- Cllr Wheeler explained that he did not want to anticipate the full council decision. But if whole merger was decided, the other proposals would likely be looked at again.

Elizabeth Bean, Shaw resident

- No idea of other people's comments or the bigger picture regarding the consultation. Would it be possible to make this a vote/ referendum?
- Cllr Wheeler explained that the decision was reserved to full council. NB he would not be voting on any of the proposals. Can contact unitary councillors. There will be a summary of responses.

Graham Ellis, Melksham Without resident

- Disappointed that the proposals don't look ahead to what local representation would be. Worries from some members of the public could be mitigated with some more information about this.
- There is very little funding for transport projects in Melksham – would argue that this is partly due to smaller size of Melksham. Combining numbers would help deal with this.

Comments against:

Alan Baines, Melksham Without Parish Council

- Advantages of large council are dubious. Almost creating a district – why stop there? Why not include Atworth, Broughton Gifford, Seend etc. But we had those previously before the creation of Wiltshire Unitary Council.
- The proposals will be Melksham centric. Qualities of smaller villages are being threatened – would be urban dominated council.
- Local Government Boundary Commission advice suggests (clause 114) that it may be preferable to group parishes to form common parish council. Creation of new parishes or abolition of very small parishes would be inappropriate to create an artificially large unit. E.g. Wiltshire doesn't include Swindon. Big difference between urban and rural areas. This proposal would create an artificially large unit.
- Separate urban voice and rural voice and balance between the two is very important. Melksham Without covers largest rural area in Wiltshire. Creates an artificially large unit, retrograde step.

John Glover

- In Melksham Without, different villages have their own identities, e.g. own village halls.

- There are limitations placed on councils and how much they can give out in grants – 2 councils doesn't equal 2x the grant.
- Some residents from Bowerhill commented that they did not identify with Melksham and believed that residents from other outlying areas would feel the same.
- Melksham Without provides a voice for the villages around Melksham. Some residents believed that this voice would be lost with the merger.
- Bowerhill has clearly designated boundaries and clear identity. People are proud to live there.

Additional comments/ questions:

Colin Goodhind, Longford Road resident

- Was in support of whole merger as it would be better funded, easier for people to understand. Needs to know what the opportunity will be to find out more information about re-warding and costs to local people.

John McNeilage, Shaw resident

- Confusion over the whole merger. Would like to know how many councillors would be in the new plan or the new ward layout. Without an idea of what the proposals would entail, people would be very uncomfortable in providing positive feedback.

14 **A365 and Dunch Lane Junction**

Comments in support:

Mr Bean

- Clear distinction of where boundary should run. Added advantage that it brings in more money to the town council.
- Current boundary goes through field – houses are already in the town. No change for them.

John McNeilage

- In favour of the logical and obvious new boundary.

Comments against:

None.

Additional comments/ questions:

Brian Warwick

- Hopes it will be very clear where boundary lines are and where individual properties are.
- Unclear splits have caused lots of problems in the past and it is always better not to split communities.

15 **Seend, Locking Close and the Canal**

Comments in support:

Teresa Strange

- Picnic area in the proposed change area – developed solely by a Bowerhill group, including the maintenance of the site. Also funded by Melksham Without Parish Council. If the area of land was within Melksham Without, there would be more convenient and effective local services: volunteers would be covered under insurance, and Melksham Without would no longer have to ask Seend permission to go on land.
- Parish boundaries should align to obvious physical boundaries which the proposal ensures.

John Glover

- There is no reason why 3d and 3e cannot be decided alongside any decision of whether there is a whole merger.

Comments against:

Janet Giles

- Other proposals concerned new property builds, large number. This change of land must mean that there are plans for a new development. Cllr Wheeler clarified that parish boundaries have nothing to do with planning permissions.
- Doesn't want to lose part of parish, no logical reason – all parishes are different sizes.
- It is a very small area.
- Doesn't want to have to ask permission to go on land. It was clarified that Janet Giles wouldn't have to ask permission to go on her land.

Additional comments/ questions:

Mary Jarvis

- Create an area of land common to Seend and Melksham Without – both sets of residents enjoy usage of the area.

16 **Land Between Berryfield Lane and River Avon**

Comments in support:

Brian Warwick

- The proposal would overcome problems of ownership.

Comments against:

Mary Jarvis, Clerk of Broughton Gifford

- Defensive of territory. Think it's a splendid anomaly. Thinks that landscape will change anyway with the canal – the canal could be another physical feature to determine parish boundaries.
- Would prefer it to be left as it is.

Additional comments/ questions:

None.

17 **Close**

(Duration of meeting: 7.00 - 8.00 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Fiona Rae, of Democratic Services

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

This page is intentionally left blank



Melksham Town Council

Town Hall, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6ES

Tel: (01225) 704187

Email: townhall@melkshamtown.co.uk



Cllr Jane Scott OBE
Leader – Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

1 July 2013

Dear Councillor Scott,

Re: Community Governance Review

Melksham Town Council believes that the parish boundary between Melksham Town and Melksham Without Parish Council has become anomalous in the light of recent housing development particularly on land to the east of the town.

Indeed, you may recall that the degree of confusion over the boundary between Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council initially resulted in incorrect tax base figures being provided by Wiltshire Council to the two councils for the purposes of determining the appropriate budget and precept requirement for 2012/2013.

Representations concerning the unsatisfactory Melksham/Melksham Without boundary issue have already been made to Dr Carlton Brand by letter dated 22 February 2012, and his response of 1 March 2012 is attached to this letter for your information.

As you will be aware, the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 devolved the power to take decisions relating to the creation or abolition of parishes; the boundaries of parishes; and the electoral arrangements of parish councils, to principal councils who have the responsibility for undertaking Community Governance Reviews and deciding whether to implement any recommendations made in those reviews.

The Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued in 2010 by The Local Government Boundary Commission on behalf of the DCLG recognises that making changes to the boundaries of existing parishes will ensure that community governance arrangements continue to reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government. The Guidance recognises that over time communities may expand with new housing developments which can often lead to existing parish boundaries becoming anomalous as new houses are built across the boundaries resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours. In such circumstances, it is suggested that the council should consider undertaking a community governance review, the terms

of reference of which should include consideration of the boundaries of existing parishes in order to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features.

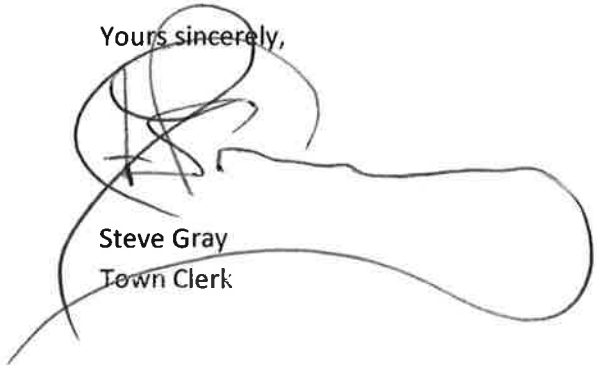
At Melksham Town Council's Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 24 June 2013, Councillors reaffirmed their belief that the Melksham town boundary had become anomalous in the light of recent housing development and sought to impress upon Wiltshire Council the urgent need to undertake a Community Governance Review that would encompass and address this situation. In that vein, Melksham Town Council passed the following resolution:

Further to the commitment made by Wiltshire Council that following the 2013 elections it would reconsider the issue of Community Governance Reviews to ensure that existing developments are allocated to the most appropriate parish, town or city council and that boundaries therefore better relate to a sense of place and community, could Wiltshire Council confirm to Melksham Town Council how it intends to take forward that commitment?

Melksham Town Council would be grateful for, and looks forward to, your response in due course.

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,



Steve Gray
Town Clerk

1 March 2012

County Hall
Bythesea Road
TROWBRIDGE
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Mr S Gray
Town Clerk
Melksham Town Council
Town Hall
Melksham
Wiltshire
SN12 6ES

Dear Mr Gray

Thank you for your letter of 22 February regarding the boundary between Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council.

I have forwarded your letter to John Watling, Head of Electoral Services. John will contact you directly to discuss this further.

We recognise that there is a degree of uncertainty about boundaries as there has been a lot of development on the boundaries between four of the parish wards. John and his team will be happy to go through this with you.

However, I understand that any alteration to boundaries will require a governance review and Council agreed that any such reviews would take place after the 2013 elections.

I hope that this is helpful.

I will ask John to contact you to discuss your concerns. In the meantime, if you would like more information please contact him on 01249 706599 or by email john.watling@wiltshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely



Dr Carlton Brand
Corporate Director

This page is intentionally left blank



MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Teresa Strange

First Floor, Crown Chambers
7 Market Place, Melksham
Wiltshire. SN12 6ES
Tel/Fax: 01225 705700

Email: clerk@melkshamwithout.co.uk
Web: www.melkshamwithout.co.uk

23rd July 2014

Mr John Watling
Deputy Returning Officer & Head of Electoral Services
Wiltshire Council
County Hall, Bythesea Road
Trowbridge, BA14 8JN

Dear Mr Watling

RE: COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Further to your correspondence about the commencement of a Community Governance Review please find the Parish Council's initial response.

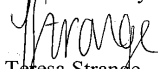
As previously expressed in a letter to Dr Carlton Brand (dated 28th March 2014) following a letter from Melksham Town Council suggesting that talks begin with a view to amalgamating the two parishes, the Parish Council agreed not to pursue this invitation.

While the Council accepts that a boundary revision is required to take in the new development east of Melksham which is constructed mainly outside the current boundary of Melksham Town, and also considers that the whole school site (ex George Ward) proposed for housing development should all be within the Town's boundary; the Parish Council cannot see any reason at all to explore the amalgamation of the two Melksham parishes.

Melksham Without is primarily a rural parish with a variety of villages and communities. These range from such ancient settlements as Beanacre and Shaw to the more modern village of Bowerhill. All the settlements are separate from the town and are far more rural area than the town and distinct as village communities.

The Parish Council looks forward to hearing from you in more detail as the Community Governance Review progresses.

Yours sincerely


Teresa Strange
Clerk

Serving rural communities around Melksham



First in Wiltshire

This page is intentionally left blank



MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL
Clerk: Mrs Mary Jarvis BA Hons. (Local Policy)

First Floor, Crown Chambers
7 Market Place, Melksham
Wiltshire. SN12 6ES
Tel/Fax: 01225 705700

Email: mary.jarvis@melkshamwithout.co.uk
Web: www.melkshamwithout.co.uk

28th March 2014

Dr. Carlton Brand,
Corporate Director,
Wiltshire Council,
County Hall,
TROWBRIDGE,
Wilts. BA14 8HD

Dear Dr Brand

**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – ADJUSTMENTS TO THE
MELKSHAM TOWN AND MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISHES**

Melksham Without Parish Council recently received a letter from Melksham Town Council to suggest that talks begin with a view to amalgamating our two parishes. This matter was discussed at a Special Meeting on 3rd March when my Council unanimously agreed NOT to pursue this invitation

I am therefore writing to emphasise that while as a Council we accept that a boundary revision is required to take in the new development east of Melksham which has been constructed mainly outside the current boundary of Melksham Town, my Council cannot see any reason at all to explore the amalgamation of the two Melksham parishes.

Melksham Without is primarily a rural parish with a variety of villages and communities. These range from such ancient settlements as Beanacre and Shaw to the more modern village of Bowerhill. All the settlements are separate from the town and are far more rural areas than the town and distinct as village communities.

Melksham Without Parish Council also wishes to emphasise its opposition to seeking to make Bowerhill and Berryfield part of the town. Both these villages are sustainable communities in their own right. Bowerhill for example has its own Community Hall, Sports Field, School, Shops, 2 play areas as well as many village community groups. Berryfield too has its own village hall and village association and allotments.

COALESCENCE THREAT - BOWERHILL & MELKSHAM

The Parish Council is particularly dismayed to find out in the last few days that consultation is taking place re possible development on the green land between Bowerhill and Melksham town. *See enclosed leaflet.* How has this been possible, given that at least half of this land was allocated in the West Wilts. Local Development Framework as recreational land? If development were to take place on the two fields being put forward, there would be complete coalescence of Bowerhill with the town; a situation vigorously opposed by the people of Bowerhill. The draft Core Strategy was also adjusted by the Inspector at its recent examination to ensure Bowerhill is cited as a village. It cannot remain a village if it has no visual green space around it.

My Council therefore seeks immediate confirmation from your Department that the past and present policies which are designed to protect this most important green visual gap between Bowerhill and the town are still in place and are being applied. How is that a proposed development between Bowerhill and Melksham is being put forward when the latest edition of the Core Strategy states 5.80 Pg 86 : *The identity of these separate communities will need to be preserved through the planning process. ?*

Such development too would also spoil the visual setting of The Spa buildings; one of Melksham's few historic settings. The Core Strategy 5.80 (Pg 86) also states: *Development at Melksham should protect the historic environment and in particular should protect the historic setting of The Spa.* Apart from one field being designated as recreational land in the WW Local Development Framework, both these fields are extremely important visually to retain an appropriate setting for the large Spa buildings that are surely the most prominent feature of Melksham as one drives along A365 toward the town.

Please would you therefore confirm as soon as possible and before our next Council Planning Meeting on 7th April that not only does Wiltshire Council recognise the importance of preventing any coalescence between Bowerhill village and the town but will be proactively opposing this development.

Thank you for your help in this matter. We look forward to hearing from you. Please note I am stepping down as Clerk today so please would you address your reply to the new Clerk Ms. Teresa Strange.
Yours sincerely,

Mary Jarvis
Clerk
Encl.

Copies to: John Watling, Deputy Returning Officer & Head of Electoral Services
Alistair Cunningham, Director Economic Dev. & Planning Services
Mike Wilmott, Senior Planning Officer, Wiltshire Council

This page is intentionally left blank

Response of Melksham Without Parish Council to Wiltshire Council on Community Governance Review – 12th October 2015

Comments against the "Guidance on community governance reviews" by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England of which "Principal Authorities are required, by section 100 (4) of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, to have regard to this guidance which is issued by the Secretary of State, under section 100 (1) and (3), and the LGBCE under under section 100 (2).

3. From 13 February 2008 Unitary county councils Have had responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews and have been able to decide whether to give effect to recommendations made in those reviews. In making that decision, they will need to take account of the views of local people.

The Parish Council query how Wiltshire Council are seeking the views of local people if they are not contacting them directly by letter, as they are doing in other areas of Wiltshire under review? The Parish Council understand that the cost of writing to all residents of Melksham and Melksham Without was cited as the reason for not writing a letter to each household; but the Parish Council query this as a legitimate reason for not writing. In addition the population against both parishes is circa 20,000 which gives a cost of postage of £10,800 for sending 2nd class plus an element for stationery (even lower for franked mail or via a specialist company); and therefore question the quoted figure of £20,000 that was given at the Wiltshire Full Council meeting.

By distributing a leaflet to residents via the Melksham Independent News that is delivered the day after the two public meetings is not effectively seeking views. Wiltshire Council could have found out when the deadline and issue dates for the newspaper was, and set the meetings accordingly. At present public meetings in Melksham and Melksham Without are for Tues 20th October and Weds 21st October with the newspaper issue dated Weds 21st October of which most homes receive a delivery on Thursday 22nd October and some over the following days. The Parish Council therefore request that these meetings are put back by a fortnight to the beginning of November. (NB: The Council have been notified on 15/10/15 that an additional meeting will be held on Weds 4th November, again in the Town and not in the villages of Melksham Without but the meetings on 20th & 21st

October are still to go ahead). It is noted that not all homes in Melksham Without are covered by the Melksham Independent News (e.g. Redstocks, Sandridge) or to some homes covered by the boundary reviews with those parishes on the outer ring of the Melksham Without boundary namely Seend and Broughton Gifford. There are local village publications, but the timescales are so short that the Parish Council is unable to advertise the meetings in the Bowerhill Villager (published monthly) and the Shaw & Whitley Connect (published every two months).

Melksham Town Council have provided no evidence that their request for both the Town and Parish Councils to be dissolved and a new Council to be created is as a result of the views of local people; or that they sought the views of local people before making the request.

8. b) the 2007 Act places a duty on principal authorities to have regard to the need to secure that any community governance for the area under review reflects the identities and interests of the local community in that area, and that it is effective and convenient; relevant considerations which influence judgements against these two principal criteria include the impact on community cohesion, and the size, population and boundaries of the proposed area:

The Parish Council consider that they have a unique understanding of the distinct character of the 5 separate villages/areas in the Melksham Without Parish and that the dissolution of the Parish Council and the creation of a new Council with the Town & Without parishes together will mean that the separate, distinct identities of the villages of Shaw, Whitley, Beanacre, Berryfield and Bowerhill and the East of Melksham housing development will be diluted and threaten their community cohesion. A cohesive community is one where there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities.

Villagers feel passionately about retaining their village identities, so ably demonstrated by the strength of feeling at recent planning committee meetings when residents gathered together to protest against the recommendation of SHLAA sites (Strategic Housing Land Allocation Assessments) that could lead to the coalescence of Shaw with Whitley and of both to Melksham (see Mins 17th August 2015 MWPC Full Council meeting) and of that of the potential of coalescing Bowerhill with Melksham (see comments against planning application for "Pathfinder Way" W/14/04846 refused); the prevention of coalescence is also supported by the Core

Strategy. These separate village identities are recognized and encouraged by Melksham Without Parish Council who engage and support with grant funding the variety of action groups such as BRAG (Bowerhill Residents Action Group), BASRAG (Berryfield and Semington Road Action Group) and CAWS (Community Action: Whitley & Shaw). There is a real danger that their voice will be lost if they became part of a much bigger boundary with areas of the town that are more densely populated having a louder voice. Melksham Without regularly conducts public consultation exercises in these distinct areas to seek their views, for example in Shaw & Whitley on 11th July 2015 and in Bowerhill on 19th September 2015, and would query if this depth of seeking views in these areas would continue if the villages were to become part of a bigger town and parish area. The parish council also provide grant funding for local village magazines/newsletters in the parish including the Bowerhill Villager, the Shaw & Whitley Connect magazine and newsletters published by BASRAG (Berryfield and Semington Road Action Group).

The community cohesion in Bowerhill is very strong, demonstrated by the very good work of BRAG (Bowerhill Residents Action Group); which has just been recognized as "outstanding" by the RHS It's Your Neighbourhood awards in September 2015, and yet the work they do in setting up, maintaining and developing the picnic area and bridleway at the Canalside is supported in practical and monetary ways by Melksham Without Parish Council despite the area being in the parish of Seend. The Parish Council provide grant funding for BRAG to enable them to obtain public liability insurance to cover their volunteers; they take on new assets to ensure ongoing maintenance and insurance cover and even provide the services of their Parish Caretaker to empty the large bin provided, on a weekly basis. The people of Bowerhill clearly have taken "ownership" of this area and the suggestion of the Melksham Without Parish Council is that the boundary should be moved to ensure that this land, on the opposite side of the canal from Seend, should be in Melksham Without, in the Bowerhill & Beanacre Ward. This does not affect any housing, but would address the fact that Melksham Without Parish Council already services the area.

15. In many cases making changes to the boundaries of existing parishes, rather than creating an entirely new parish, will be sufficient to ensure that community governance arrangements to continue to reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government. For example, over

time communities may expand with new housing developments. This can often lead to existing parish boundaries becoming anomalous as new houses are built across the boundaries resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours.

Melksham Without Parish Council recognize this and have therefore recommended that the boundary in the Town at the edge of the former George Ward school site be redrawn so that all of the new housing proposed under planning application W/14/11295 is within the town, rather than approx 60 of 266 houses falling within the Parish. The boundary should follow the A365 and then follow Dunch Lane rather than cut across the line of the former tennis courts on the former school site.

The Parish Council also concedes that the new Eastern Distributor road that encapsulates the approx 800 new houses on the East of Melksham housing estate, would be a desired redrawn boundary for the 733 houses that are currently within the parish, but would be logical to become part of the Melksham Town boundary as the community has expanded with this new housing development. Currently, some houses in Skylark Road and Rosemary Way are in both the parish and town.

However, this is the only area where there has been an expansion of housing and the boundaries have become anomalous and built across boundaries, and so the Parish Council sees no need for the town and parish councils to be dissolved and one bigger council set up to cover both areas, the boundary between Town and Without is accentuated by the A350/A365 Western Way and rural buffers and therefore the redrawing of the boundary to the "Eastern Way" eastern distributor road would suffice.

16. A community governance review offers an opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features, and remove the many anomalous parish boundaries that exist in England.

This stated reason is behind the requests of Melksham Without Parish Council for the 3 small schemes proposed.

1. Land at A365/Dunch Lane - boundary to be redrawn so that follows the A365 and then Dunch Lane rather than a former field boundary that predates the building of the George Ward school which is now being replaced by housing (reserved matters permission granted 23/09/15).

2. Land at Seend - boundary to be redrawn so that the boundary follows the line of the canal, rather than land on the opposite side of the canal from Seend belonging to Seend but serviced and maintained by Melksham Without Parish Council, with a clear sense of ownership and belonging to the people of Bowerhill.

3. Land common to both Broughton Gifford and Melksham Without - boundary to be withdrawn so there is a clear delineation, with the river becoming the boundary.

The Parish Council also concedes that the boundary at the East of Melksham may be better served if redrawn around the new housing development with the boundary to become the eastern distributor road, which the Parish Council has named "Eastern Way" with the Street Naming department at Wiltshire Council (Sept 2015) which would join and become continuous with the boundary at the other side of the parish which follows the A350/A365 Western Way.

23. Ultimately, the recommendation made in a community governance review ought to bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

The Parish Council does not believe that the proposal to dissolve the Town and Parish Council and create one new Council demonstrates any of the above. In fact, it argues that there is better community engagement and local democracy now, under the current boundaries.

To enable a manageable council, a newly created council would presumably have approx 17 councillors and that number is still large and unwieldy. When added together, the population of the two councils together makes the representation per councillor very high. The councillors are volunteers and it imposes a high burden of responsibility on those councillors with such high representation. It would therefore discourage those of a working age to become councillors, and thus the council is not therefore representative of its electorate. There are some councils that struggle to fill seats, and so the parish council feels it is a waste to cut the number of councillors by so many.

As an example, the current Melksham Without Parish councillors represent a figure of 498 electorate each, 273 houses. However, if a new council was created covering both the town and parish, and 17 councillors were appointed then each councillor would represent 1,052 electorate each, and 606 houses. This change would not bring greater democracy.

The parish council already actively engages with the members of its communities, and actively supports and facilitates the start up of action groups, for example CAWS was set up in early 2015 and BRAG has been long established. Assets in the community are also community led with management committees, supported with practical advice as well as grant funding, running village halls and playing fields in the Melksham Without Parish area.

The parish council believes it already provides effective and convenient delivery of services to its residents. The average Band D cost across the 10,181 parishes (town and parish councils) in England for 2015-16 is £54.12¹, for Melksham Without this was below this average at £53.32 whereas the Town Council charge is £87.82. This was a significant increase for Melksham Without on previous years, as £30,000 was added to the 2015/16 budget for a specific project at Shaw Play Area. The average Band D figure for 2014/15 was £41.62 and has remained under that level for many years.

The play area at Beanacre, owned and maintained by the parish council, is visited and used by many town residents, as are the playing field facilities at both Shaw and Bowerhill Playing fields - although owned and maintained by Melksham Without Parish Council both the playing fields have bookings from many town residents by a variety of football teams. The Bowerhill Sports field is the home ground to AFC Melksham, and this year to 14 Melksham Town Youth teams. This means that Melksham Without parish council is providing facilities for town residents. However, King George V playing field and play area in the Town, as with others in the town, are owned and maintained by Wiltshire Council and therefore residents of Melksham Without are also paying to support those facilities through their council tax.

-
- ¹ published by the Dept of Communities and Local Government
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444971/Council_tax_statistics_for_town_and_parish_councils_2015-16_England.pdf

The Town Council proposal does not provide evidence of how this new council will improve the effectiveness and delivery of services to residents of Melksham Without. In fact, without such a clear line of communication, with elected councillors living and representing distinct areas in the parish one could question if the provision of services in the community facilities such as village halls and playing fields, such as toddler groups, friendship clubs and lunch provision for vulnerable groups could suffer. The parish council always supports the provision of services in the parish and that residents of the parish should not have to always make the trip into town to access services; this could be jeopardized if there was a more central, one stop shop approach to providing services in the town and without parish. The town council makes the argument that the services they provide in the town are used by the residents of Melksham Without and therefore they should contribute to them. However, the parish council takes issue with that claim and queries what services the town council provide. The majority of services in the town, such as public toilets, the library, King George V playing field is actually owned and maintained by Wiltshire Council and not the Town Council. The town council provide a couple of playing fields and allotments, but so do the parish council with residents of the town regularly using the playing fields at both Shaw and Bowerhill for training and matches as the pitches are hired by local teams. The Town Council provides the Assembly Hall, but the Parish Council owns Shaw Village Hall, and actively supports with grant aid Whitley Reading Rooms, Bowerhill Village Hall, Berryfield Village Hall and the church rooms at St Barnabas Church, Beanacre which undertakes the role of a village hall in Beanacre. The parish council also provides grant aid to halls in the town such as the Riverside Club and the Rachel Fowler Centre; as well as Melksham Christmas Lights, Melksham Carnival and Melksham Party in the Park which are events held in the Town.

30. Reorganisation of community governance orders creating new parishes, abolishing parishes or altering their area can be made at any time following a review. However for administrative and financial purposes (such as setting up the parish council and arranging its first precept), the order should take effect on the 1 April following the date on which it's made. Electoral arrangements for a new or existing parish council will come into force at the first elections to the parish council following the reorganization order.

Can Wiltshire Council please explain when they would make an order relating to the abolition of the two councils and the setting up of a new one, does this guidance mean that the councils would be dissolved in April 2016? Would this trigger an election? Or would you wait and any change would not take place until the unitary elections in May 2017? Can you please provide your interpretation of these dates and reorganization orders, and you plan if this recommendation is approved.

34In the case of a community governance review where a parish council already exists as a local authority, it too should be consulted. Other bodies might include local businesses, local public and voluntary organizations – such as schools or health bodies. The principal authority must take into account any representations it receives as part of a community governance review.

AND

35. Principal councils must consider the wider picture of community governance in carrying out their reviews. In some areas there may be well established forms of community governance such as local residents' associations, or community forums which local people have set up and make a distinct contribution to the community.

Melksham Without Parish Council asks how Wiltshire Council has consulted with local organizations, schools etc. Especially when there are well known local groups such as BRAG (Bowerhill Residents Action Group) who have regular contact with the Area Board through the grant funding process and planning process and therefore known to Wiltshire Council. Residents' Associations are alive and well in the parish such as at Ludlow Hewitt Sheltered Housing. The Parish Council have not been asked to provide details of any local groups, but Wiltshire Council will obviously know of the schools in the areas affected, and the businesses as they know who pays business rates. Could Wiltshire Council please share this consultation piece with the Parish Council including any responses received.

37. Principal Councils are required to complete the review, including consequential recommendations to the LGBCE for related alterations to the boundaries of principal area wards and/or divisions, within 12 months of the start of the community governance review. The review begins when the council publishes terms of reference of the review and concludes when the council publishes the recommendations made in the review.

Wiltshire Council began the process at the beginning of April 2014 and presumably will be 7 months past the 12 month deadline when it makes its recommendations on 24th November 2015.

38. Principal councils will need to build into their planning process for reviews reasonable periods for consultation with local electors and other stakeholders, for the consideration of evidence presented to them in representations, as well as for decision-making.

The Parish Council does not consider that reasonable time has been given to local electors for consultation. See point 3 above, about taking into account local peoples' views. A decision is being made by Wiltshire Council on 24th November and dates set for public consultation meetings were only advised to the Parish Council on 6th October with leaflets going out to residents via the local newspaper on the 21st October which will be delivered over the next few days.

The Parish Council has not been advised of any cut off date for making representations online but presumably the cut off will not be the 23rd November, as officers and the working party will have to be collating the information and reporting on it. The parish council feel that a cut off date should be published to inform residents to ensure that they are not commenting after the closing date. This would also apply to any residents that are not online and completing a hard copy survey.

45. As stated I the 2006 White Paper parish councils are an established and valued form of neighbourhood democracy and management. They are not only important in rural areas but increasingly have a role to play in urban areas.

One of the reasons stated by the Town Council for the dissolution of both councils and the creation of a new one is that they see duplication of effort with both councils meeting on Monday evenings reviewing the same things. The parish council disputes this and maintains that it represents the rural view and therefore often has a different opinion than that of the Town Council. An example is the recent planning application for the former George Ward school site for 266 houses (approved 23/09/15). Although both councils' planning committees were consulted on the application as the boundary runs through the site. Only the parish council requested that an

adequate footpath be provided so that residents of the new housing could access the local facilities safely on foot or by cycle. This includes access to the local primary school at Shaw, the churches at Whitley and Shaw, the play group and other groups who meet at Whitley Reading Rooms and the whole host of activities at Shaw Village hall such as pre-school, friendship club, WI.

47. An important aspect to approaching sustainable communities is allowing local people a say in the way their neighbourhoods are managed. One of the characteristics of a sustainable community is the desire for a community to be well run with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership. This means:

- a) representative, accountable governance systems which both facilitate strategic, visionary leadership and enable inclusive, active and effective participation by individuals and organizations; and**
- b) effective engagement with the community at neighbourhood level including capacity building to develop the community's skills, knowledge and confidence**

The parish council believes that this is already achieved by the existing two councils. The parish council believe that they already do this and it would be diluted and not enhanced by the dissolution of the two councils and setting up of a new, bigger one. The parish council already has resilient communities recently demonstrated by the active flood plan that the villages of Shaw and Whitley have with sandbags stored in place with means of distribution, products such as walkie talkies, pumps, generators and ration packs provided by grant funding from Southern Electric, and trained flood wardens in place; all supported and facilitated by the parish council. This demonstrates the building of the community's skills, knowledge and confidence, alongside their own action groups and recent consultation events and ability to obtain grants in their own right. The parish council have taken an holistic approach and are happy to cross boundaries and work with other councils when the need arises with the approach to the flood plan being based on the flow of water rather than parish boundaries and the trained flood wardens include those of Beanacre which is in the parish, but also those from Atworth (neighbouring parish) and Shurnhold (in the town boundary).

As per point 23 above, the town and parish residents have good representation per electorate by elected councillors. It is not that the

councils have vacancies and lots of co-opted councillors; there is currently effective representation, participation and leadership.

50. Parish Councils continue to have two main roles: community representation and local administration. For both purposes it is desirable that a parish should reflect a distinctive and recognizable community of place, with its own sense of identity. The views of local communities and inhabitants are of central importance.

The residents have a much better representation under the current system; see point 23 above about the numbers of electorate represented by councillors at present.

51. The identification of a community is not a precise or rigid matter. The patterns of daily life in each of the existing communities, the local centres for education and childcare, shopping, community activities, worship, leisure pursuits, transport facilities and means of communication generally will have an influence. However, the focus of people's day to day activities may not be reflected in their feeling of community identity. For instance, historic loyalty may be to a town but the local community of interest and social focus may lie within a part of the town with its own separate identity.

The parish council has a very clear understanding of this and fears that the five distinct identities of the separate parts of the parish will be lost if the parish council is dissolved and the villages become part of a larger council with the town. Children from Shaw, Whitley and Beanacre attend the secondary school in Corsham; and Broughton Gifford & Holt scouts; they also attend Atworth youth club. Children from Bowerhill attend play group and the primary school in Seend. These nuances are recognized by the parish council and these external volunteer groups are supported with grant funding by the parish council as they understand that they are attended by the residents of Melksham Without. There are concerns that the whole, new council will become Melksham Town centric, with much less regard for the relationships that residents from Without have with their other neighbouring parishes such as Atworth, Lacock, Broughton Gifford, Seend etc.

56. Parish Councils can contribute to the creation of successful communities by influencing the quality of planning and design of public spaces and the built environment, as well as improving the management and maintenance of such amenities.

Melksham Without Parish Council does contribute to the creation of successful communities already, and recognizes the diverse settlements in the parish such as the historic villages of Shaw, and Whitley; the industrial estate in Bowerhill and the new development East of Melksham. It actively seeks funding from a variety of sources and regularly requests and uses s106 funding. It has taken on community assets from Wiltshire Council such as Bowerhill Playing Field and has been instrumental in the project for the existing pavilion to be demolished and a new one rebuilt for the benefit of the local community; obtained Lottery funding towards new allotments; Landfill funding for a new MUGA at Shaw and s106 funding for a new one at Bowerhill. It consistently consults with its residents as to what their needs and aspirations are, and documents this with external bodies such as Wiltshire Council in the Open Spaces Study recently undertaken. The Parish Council does not see any improvement or better quality of contribution to successful communities if it became part of a larger council, more that it would become more diluted. The urban view will have a larger voice as a large population of a newly created council will be urban, not rural. At present the rural view is considered within the context of Melksham Without. As the majority of development will take place in Melksham Without, and not the Town, it is right that the rural view of these areas is respected. There is already a designated area for a Melksham Neighbourhood Plan that covers both the town and Without and so there is already joint working on cohesive planning issues without the need to create one new council.

58. It is clear that how people perceive where they live – their neighbourhoods – is significant in considering the identities and interests of local communities and depends on a range of circumstances, often best defined by local residents. Some of the factors which help define neighbourhoods are: the geography of an area, the make-up of the local community, sense of identity, and whether people live in a rural, suburban, or urban area.

AND

59. Parishes in many cases may be able to meet the concept of neighbourhoods in an area. Parishes should reflect distinctive and recognizable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity. Like neighbourhoods, the feeling of local community and the wishes of local inhabitants are the primary considerations.

This guidance keeps coming back to the views of local people, their sense of identity and their rural or urban view. How will Wiltshire Council be receiving and interpreting the views of local people? Will it be weighting the views of an urban population of the town which has almost double the population of those in Without?

65. Wider initiatives such as the Quality Parish Scheme and charters agreed between parish councils and principal councils also help to give a greater understanding of securing effective and convenient local government. In such cases, parish and town councils which are well managed and good at representing local views will be in a better position to work closely with partner authorities to take more responsibility for shaping their area's development and running its services.

Melksham Without Parish Council is perfectly capable of taking responsibility for developing and running services in its own parish, without having to become a new council with the town. Melksham Without Parish Council was the first council in Wiltshire to become accredited as a Quality Council when the scheme was introduced in 2009. All but one of its Councillors are elected rather than co-opted and their Clerk is qualified to CiLCA level. The parish has a large enough electorate, precept and reserves to be able to manage its own affairs. It is not a small village satellite to a big town that would benefit from the experience and precept of the town. It has its own population of circa 7,500 and is the largest rural parish in Wiltshire, covering an area of 2,904 hectares (7,173 acres).

78. The Local Government Commission for England in its 1993 Report *Renewing Local Government in the Shires* makes the point that there is a long history of attempts to identify ideal minimum and maximum sizes for local authorities. Instead its preference was for authorities to be based on natural communities and reflecting people's choices. This is even truer today, particularly at the most local level of government.

The Parish Council believes that the current set up reflects the natural communities with the 5 distinct areas of the parish having their own identity, but grouped together to provide a cohesive group with a rural view, that has a large enough electorate already to be in a good position to develop and run its own local services.

80. The general rule should be that the parish is based on an area which reflects community identity and interest and which is of a size which is

viable as an administrative unit of administration. This is generally because of the representative nature of parish councils and the need for them to reflect closely the identity of their communities. It is desirable that any recommendations should be for parishes or groups of parishes with a population of a sufficient size to adequately represent their communities and to justify the establishment of a parish council in each. Nevertheless as previously noted, it is recognized that there are enormous variations in the sizes of parishes, although most parishes are below 12,000 in population.

The number of electors in Melksham Without is 6,484 and in Melksham Town 11,405². As the population of the Town is therefore already above the average 12,000 there should not be a need to create a much bigger Council with a much larger than average population. As per point 23 above, the Parish Council does not believe that one, new, bigger Council will improve local democracy, in fact it argues the opposite; that this would mean that the council would no longer closely reflect the identity of its communities.

81. A parish council should be in a position to provide some basic services and many larger parishes will be able to offer much more to their local communities.

The parish council feels strongly that it is already well placed to provide services to its community, is large enough with an electorate of 6,484 and precept for 2015/16 of £166,423.59; and does not need to join with the Town Council to achieve this.

82. There may be cases where larger parishes would best suit the needs of the area. These might include places where the division of a cohesive area would not reflect the sense of community that needs to lie behind all parishes; or places where there were no recognizable smaller communities.

Melksham Without parish council believes that it already has very recognizable smaller communities, for example, this is reflected by the annual entries into the CPRE Best Kept Village competition where individual entries are made for Shaw, Whitley, Beanacre, Berryfield and Bowerhill. The new East of Melksham housing estate has its separate identity and the Parish Council have recognized that this may better fit within the town boundary.

² As per Jim Waite, Elections Officer in Feb 2014

83. As far as boundaries between parishes are concerned, these should reflect the “no man’s land” between communities represented by areas of low population or barriers such as rivers, roads or railways. They need to be, and be likely to remain, easily identifiable.

AND

85. A review of parish boundaries is an opportunity to put in place strong boundaries, tied to firm ground detail, and remove anomalous parish boundaries.

The 3 small schemes proposed by Melksham Without parish council, all request a boundary review to reflect the physical features on the ground. With the request for the boundary review at Seend to use the canal as the boundary; the request for Broughton Gifford to use the river and the request for the former George Ward school site to use the A365 and Dunch Lane. It also concedes that the boundary to the east of Melksham would be better served by the eastern distributor road.

The boundary between Melksham and Melksham Without is already secured by a natural rural buffer and the A350/A365 Western Way.

90. If a principal council chooses to establish a parish council, or if an existing parish whose boundaries are being changed has a parish council, the principal authority must consult on, and put in place the necessary electoral arrangements for that parish.

What would this look like for a newly created council? How can residents make an accurate judgement on the benefits of a new single council if they are not aware on what warding or representation would be proposed for such a new parish?

114. In some cases, it may be preferable to group together parishes so as to allow a common parish council to be formed. Degrouping may offer the reverse possibilities perhaps where local communities have expanded. Such proposals are worth considering and may avoid the need for substantive changes to parish boundaries, the creation of new parishes or the abolition of very small parishes, where, despite their size, they still reflect community interests. It would be inappropriate for it to be used to build artificially large units under single parish councils.

Melksham Without Parish Council believes that this would be an artificially large unit if both the town and parish council were dissolved and a new

council created. The parish and town councils are large enough in their own right to exist and the parish council sees little benefit in them being dissolved and a new one created.

125. About 90% of the geographical area of England is covered by a parish, and this is mostly in rural and semi-rural areas. So, most populated rural areas already have a structure of local government that includes parishes and many of these have been in existence for hundreds of years. It is desirable that any changes do not upset historic traditions but do reflect changes that have happened over time, such as population shift or additional development, which may have led to a different community identity.

Apart from the new development to the east of Melksham, which has its own boundary review proposed, the parish council sees no need to change the current boundaries to dissolve Melksham Without Parish Council which has been in existence since 1894.

127. In rural areas, the Government wants to encourage the involvement of local people in developing their community and having a part to play in shaping the decisions that affect them. A parish can be a useful and democratic means of achieving this.

The parish council strongly believes that this is what they currently achieve for the rural and semi-rural separate communities that it represents in Melksham Without. Any proposal to dissolve the parish council and set up a new one with the town would detract from the statement above in point 127 rather than enhance it.

147. The purpose of a review undertaken by a principal council is likely primarily to concern the administrative boundaries or a new or existing parish. However, in addition to these primary concerns, principal authorities will also need to consider the governance of new or altered parishes. The principal council must have regard to the need for community governance within the area under review to reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area, to ensure that the governance is effective and convenient.

Points 148 - 176 cover Electoral Arrangements such as

- a) Ordinary year of elections
- b) Council size
- c) Parish warding

The guidance states that any *Governance Review* should cover *Electoral Arrangements*, and yet none of these have been proposed and therefore not consulted on for the proposal for the creation of a new council covering *Melksham and Melksham Without*.

Melksham Without Parish Council
12th October 2015

This page is intentionally left blank

Extract of email from Mr P Davis 11 November 2015

Dear Sirs,

I understand you will shortly be asked to consider a proposal by Melksham Town Council, to amalgamate the authorities of Melksham Without Parish Council and Melksham Town Council into one authority. I write to request you consider the following points before making such a decision.

Melksham Town Council administers and controls the centre of the community, but Melksham Without Parish Council, which really should be classified as a miniature District Council, administers eight communities that are situated on the peripheral boundary of the town, making up of a total of 7.5 thousand people.

These varying in size communities are - Bowerhill, Berryfield, Beanacre, Shaw, Whitley, Redstocks, Outmarsh, and Sandridge, plus the continuing to expand new development East of Melksham.

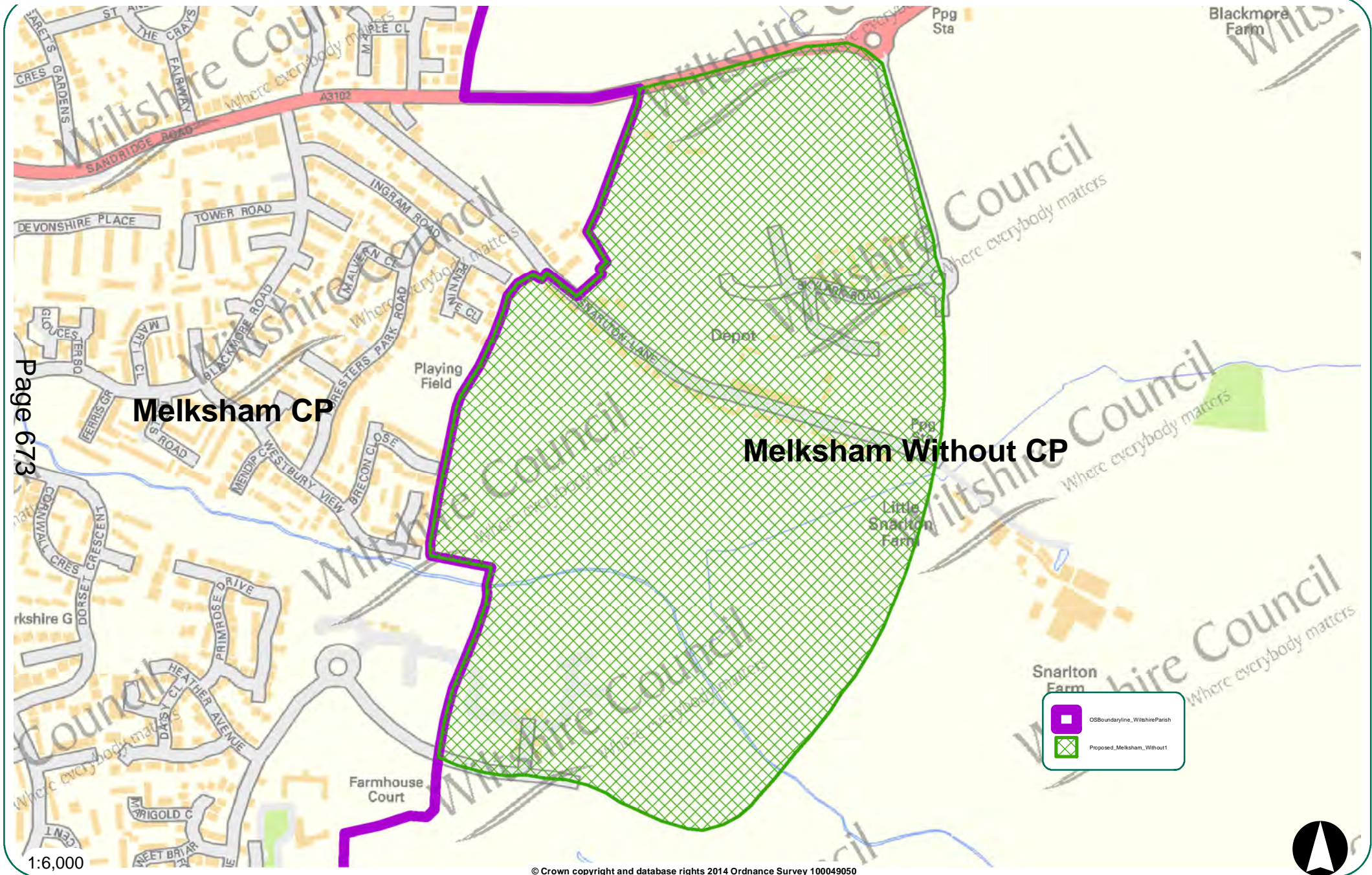
As somebody who has vast experience in serving on Parish, Town, District and the County Council authorities, I am apprehensive that should this application be successful, the communities outside of the town centre of Melksham may not continue to enjoy the level of local authority support they at present experience, due to funding, and other priorities being directed towards the town centre.

I appreciate there is a continuous drive towards reducing costs and modernising administrations, but in this particular instance, I respectfully request you do not support this proposal, to allow Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council to amalgamate, but continue to permit them to administer the areas to which they are best suited.

Regards Peter Davis

This page is intentionally left blank

Area A9 - Melksham and Melksham Without Map 1
Snarlton Lane and Thyme Road Area

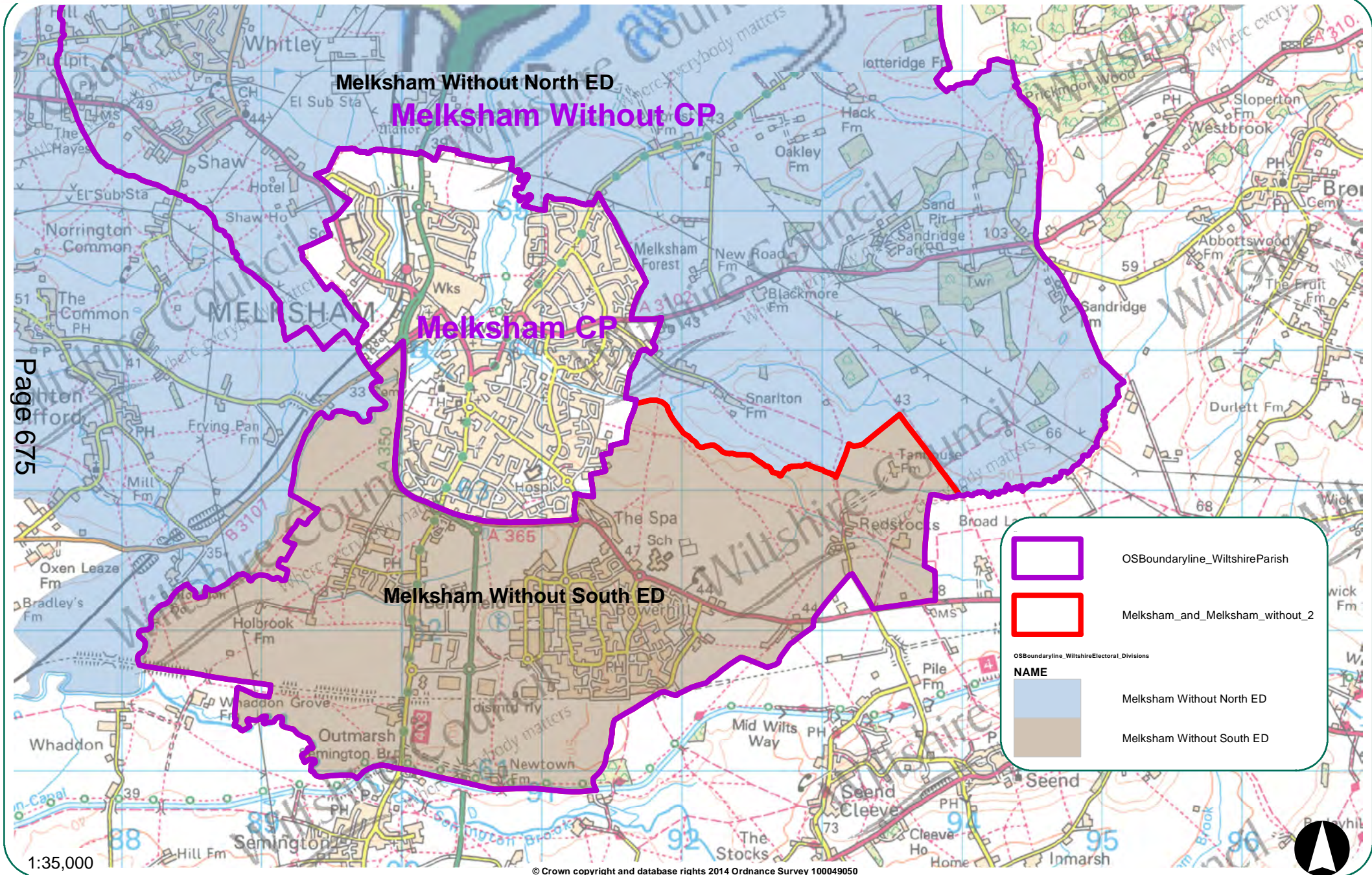


Melksham CP

Melksham Without CP

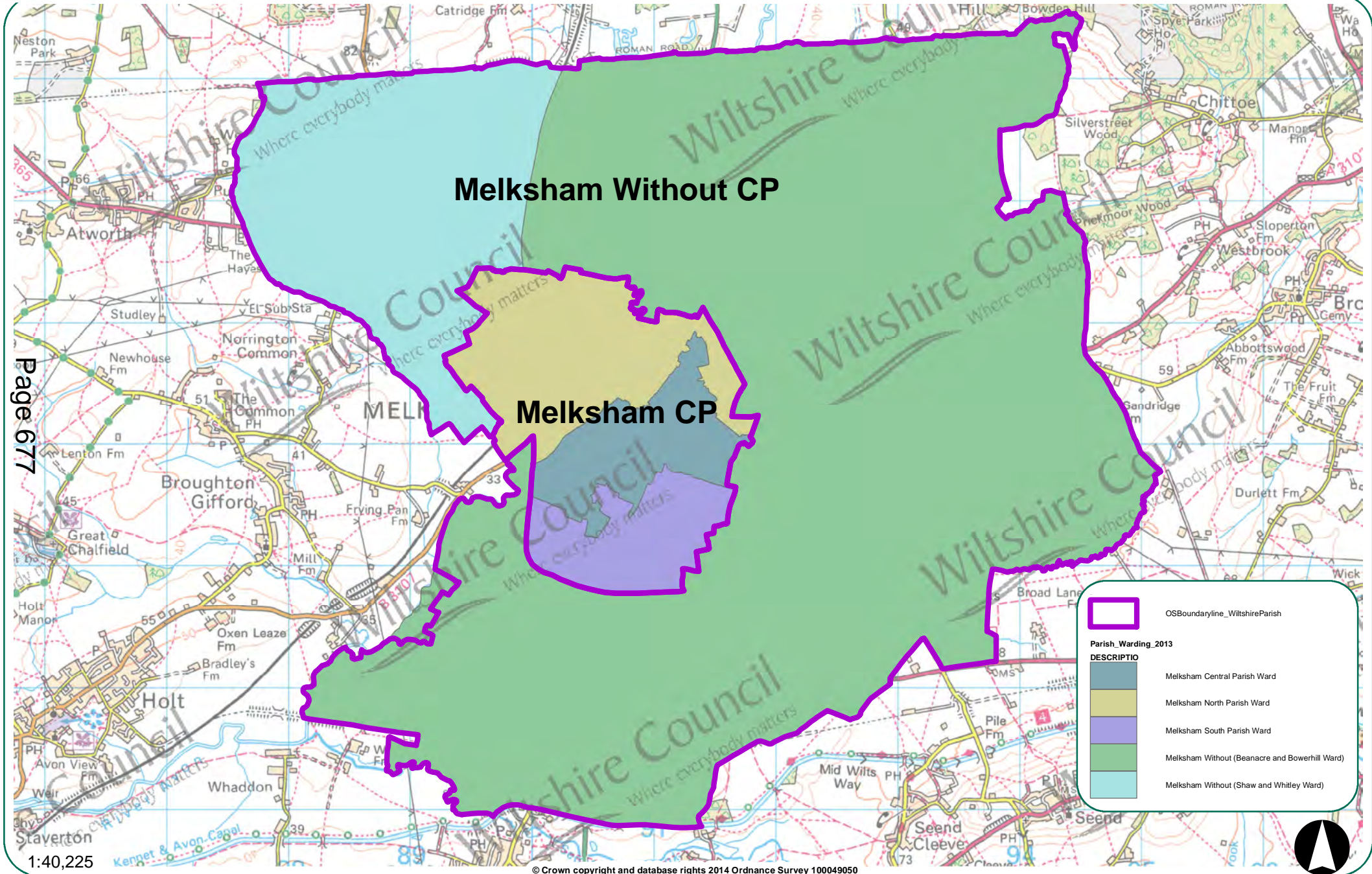
This page is intentionally left blank

Area A9 - Melksham and Melksham Without Area
Proposed Parish Ward Boundary
(in line with Unitary Division Boundary) Map 5

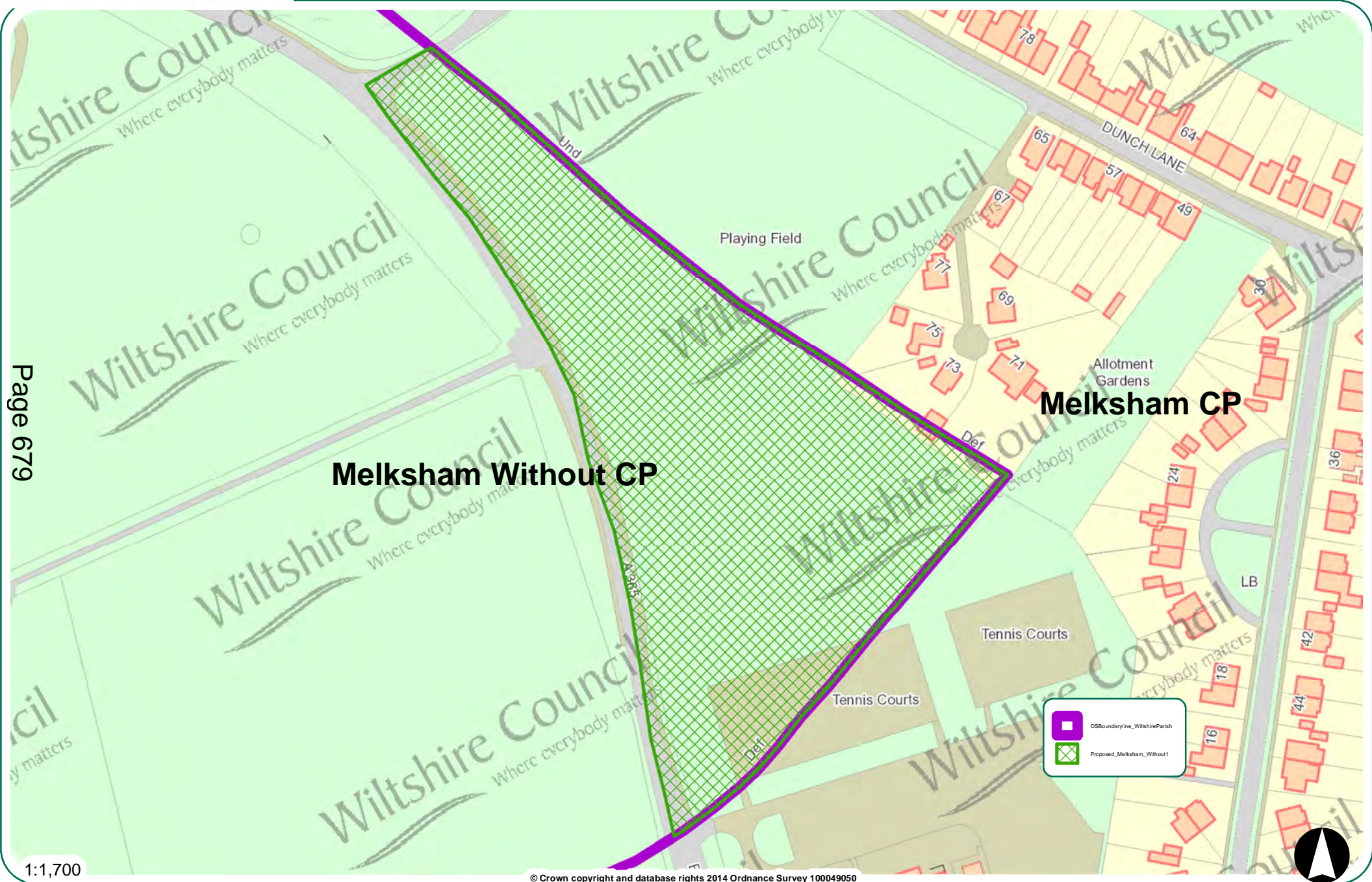


This page is intentionally left blank

Area A9 - Melksham and Melksham Without Map 6
Melksham and Melksham Without Parishes
and Parish Ward Boundaries



This page is intentionally left blank



Melksham Without CP

Melksham CP

Legend:

- OSBoundaryline_WiltshireParish
- Proposed_Melksham_Without1

This page is intentionally left blank

George Ward School, Melksham

Persimmon Homes (Wessex)
Persimmon House, Tetbury Hill
Malmesbury, Wiltshire, SN16 9JR

Tel: 01688 824721
Fax: 01688 826152

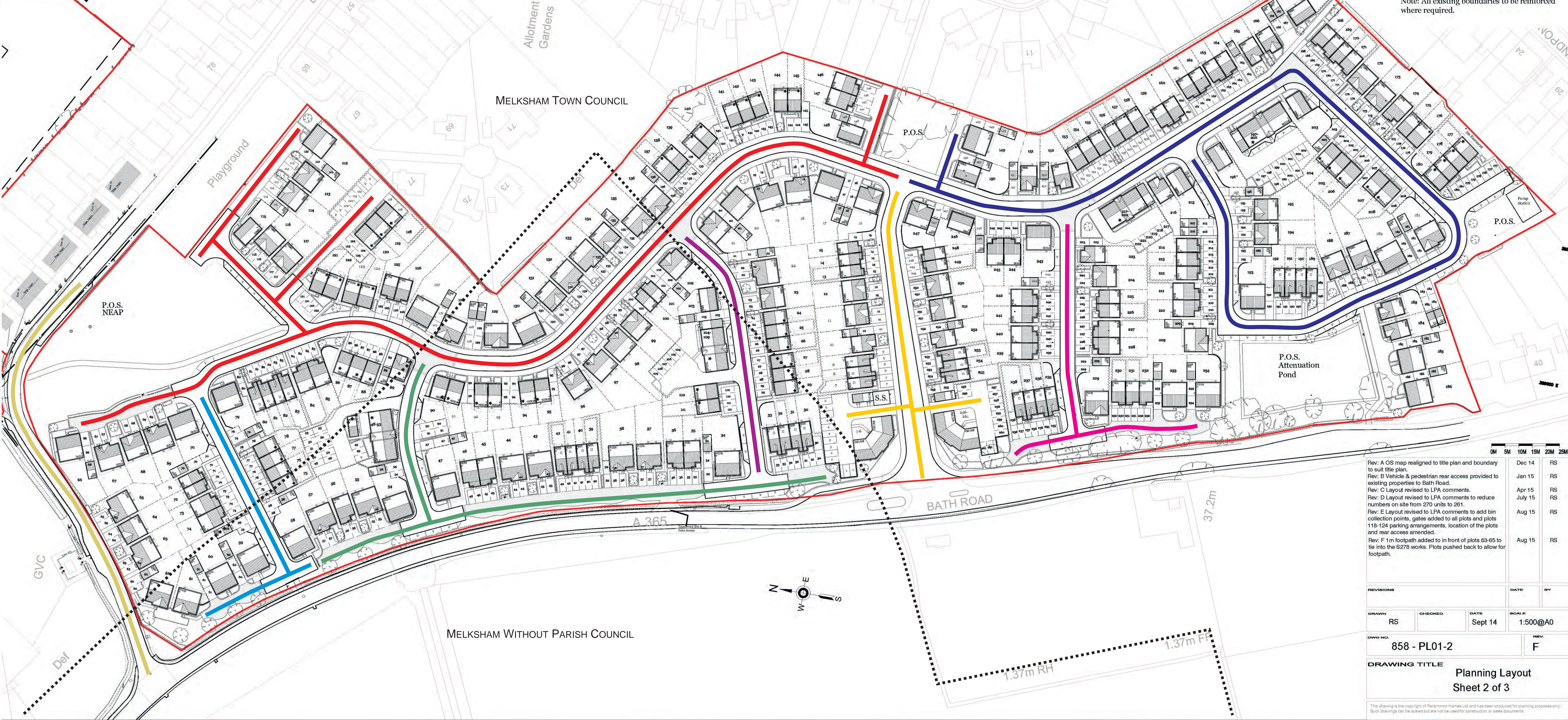
www.persimmonhomes.com

- KEY**
- 1.8m High Screen Wall
 - 1.8m High Closeboard Fence
 - 1.8m High Panel Fence
 - 1.2m High Post & Wire Fence
 - 1.8m High Hit & Miss Fence
 - Indicative Landscape Areas
 - Indicative Tree Positions
 - Affordable Housing
 - Timber Gate 1.8m High
 - Visitor Parking
 - Front Access Path 0.9m wide
 - Rear Access Path 0.6m wide
 - Patio area (HA only) 1.8m x 1.8m
 - Rumble Strip
 - Block Paving
 - Bin Collection Areas

Note: All existing boundaries to be reinforced where required.

No. Dwellings	Type	Area	Bedrooms	Total Area	Garage	Stories
PERSIMMON 2013 HOUSE TYPES						
4	Flat	598	2 bed flat	2392	parking	3
8	Flat	628	2 bed flat	3026	parking	3
11	Arwick	631	2 bed semi/ter	6941	parking	2
18	Harbury	761	2 bed + semi/ter	13698	parking	2
22	Rufford	870	2 bed + semi/det	19140	int	2
26	Souler	932	3 bed semi/ter	24232	parking	2.5
11	Wadfield	969	3 bed semi/det	10659	parking/det	2
9	Clayton	999	3 bed semi/det	8991	parking/det	2
22	Rosberry	1096	3 bed + det	24112	int	2
17	Warwick	1333	4 bed + det	22661	int	2
13	Corfe	1414	4 bed det	18382	det	2
22	Madigh	1574	4 bed det	34628	det	2
183				190860		
WESTBURY AFFORDABLE HOUSE TYPES						
12	WP 1210A	514	1 bed Flat	6168	parking	3
12	WP 1210B	531	2 bed Flat	7572	parking	3
37	WP2420A	803	2 bed semi/ter	29711	parking	2
17	WP 3520A	908	3 bed semi/ter	15436	parking	2
78				58887		
Total Sq Ft				249747		
Total M Sq				23202		
Total Dwellings				261		
NET Total approx site area (within red line)				6.20 ha		
				15.32 acres		
Approx dev't density (within red line)				16301 sq' to the acre		
				17 plots / acre		

Page 6/81



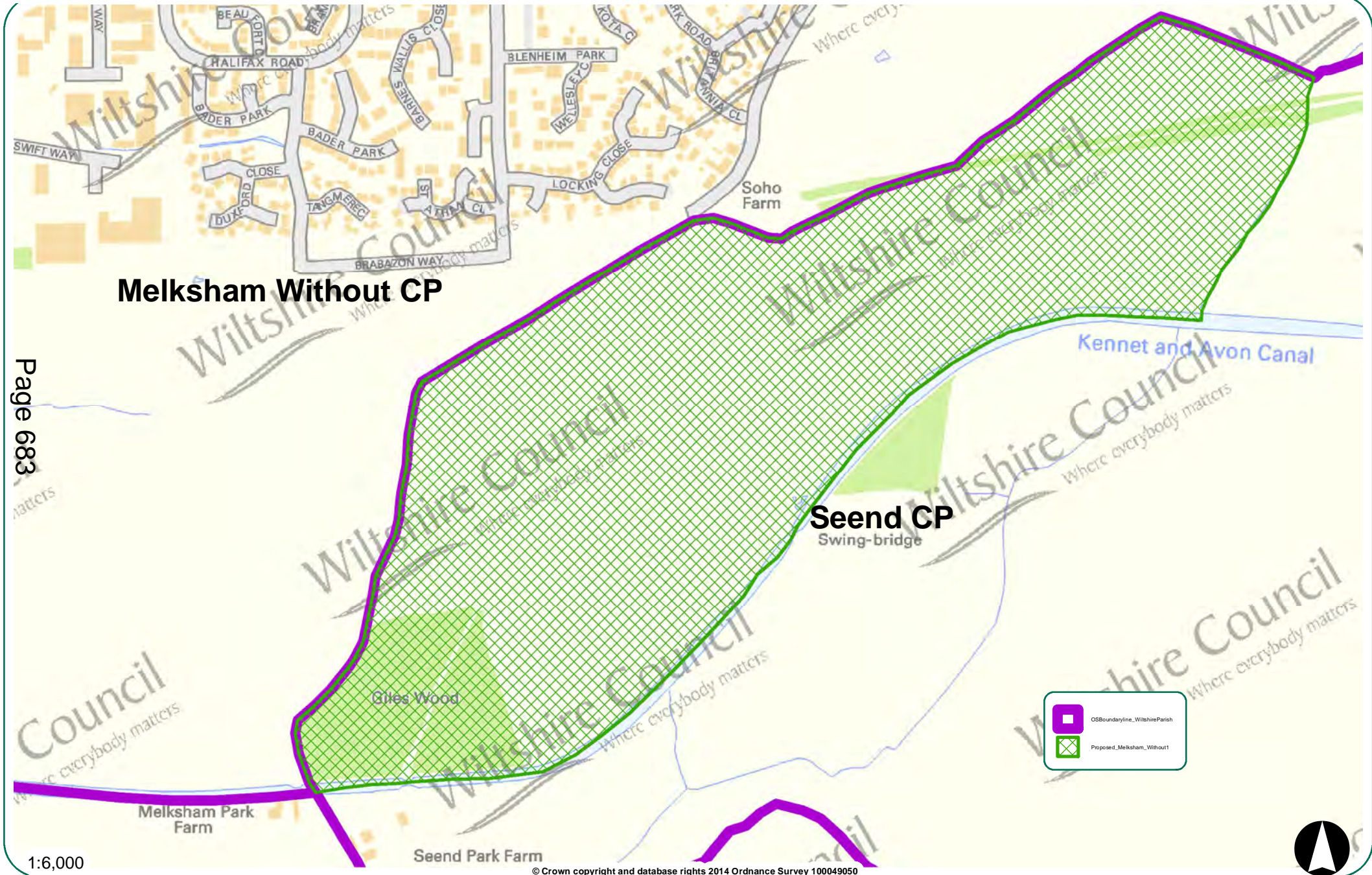
- NEW STREET REQUIRED
- NEW STREET REQUIRED
- NEW STREET REQUIRED
- NEW STREET REQUIRED
- NEW STREET REQUIRED
- NEW STREET REQUIRED
- EXISTING STREET - DUNCH LANE

REV	DESCRIPTION	DATE	BY
Rev: A	OS map realigned to title plan and boundary to suit title plan.	Dec 14	RS
Rev: B	Vehicle & pedestrian rear access provided to existing properties to Bath Road.	Jan 15	RS
Rev: C	Layout revised to LPA comments.	Apr 15	RS
Rev: D	Layout revised to LPA comments to reduce numbers on site from 270 units to 261.	July 15	RS
Rev: E	Layout revised to LPA comments to add bin collection points, gates added to all plots and plots 118-124 parking arrangements, location of the plots and rear access amended.	Aug 15	RS
Rev: F	1m footpath added to in front of plots 63-65 to tie into the S278 works. Plots pushed back to allow for footpath.	Aug 15	RS

REVISIONS	DATE	BY	
DRAWN	CHECKED	DATE	SCALE
RS		Sept 14	1:500@A0
DWG NO.	858 - PL01-2		F
DRAWING TITLE			
Planning Layout Sheet 2 of 3			

This drawing is the copyright of Persimmon Homes Ltd and has been produced for planning purposes only. Such drawings can be scaled but are not to be used for construction or sales documents.

This page is intentionally left blank



This page is intentionally left blank



Page 685

1:5,000

This page is intentionally left blank