

8th July 2022

Dear Sir

Boundary Review

Kimpton Parish Council considered the opportunity of providing input into the electoral review for North Hertfordshire at our meeting held on Wednesday 22nd June and agreed the following comments.

Electoral Representation and Equality

We strongly believe that the parish of Kimpton should continue to be one ward with one member representing the needs of our community. Kimpton Parish Council came into existence in 1894 and has continued to serve the population within the same area since that time.

The parish of Kimpton is located at the southern tip of North Hertfordshire and contains the village of Kimpton, a hamlet of Peters Green and a housing area of Blackmore End. Thus, the parish of Kimpton is already complex in geography and boundary with borders to St Albans City and District Council, Welwyn/Hatfield Borough Council and Luton Borough Council. We would not wish to add further complications relating to a change in ward boundary.

Although the data presented the electoral division for Kimpton shows a lower number of voters than the average ward for the district, we are minded that further housing developments are planned for the parish before 2028, which are not included within the local plan. Kimpton Parish Council is actively working with CDA and English Rural Housing Association for the building of more affordable housing in the parish. This is essential to maintain a vibrant and active community.

However, we acknowledge that the legal criteria within which the Boundary Commission must conduct an electoral review is that all wards within the administrative area of North Hertfordshire should leave each councillor representing roughly the same number of electors as other councillors within the district. Although the Full Register dated 1 February 2022 for Polling District FN shows electorate of 1815, the electoral data 2028 projection indicates that the electorate will be 1810. We are perplexed as to why a reduction in electors is predicted.

Should it be necessary to extend the ward to achieve electoral equality, we consider that any additional area should be of a comparable rural area with like-minded local issues and focus. Any increase in electoral numbers needs to be modest in order to maintain strong representation for our parish area.

Interests and Identity of Kimpton

Having a simple one member, one ward system enables the district member to gain intimate knowledge of the intricacies of the locality and of the people thereby improving the quality of our representation.

Strong sense of community. Kimpton is a vibrant village with a deep sense of community and social interaction www.kimptonpc.org.uk The parish council has served the population for nearly 120 years and is custodian of local land for the benefit of residents. We're fortunate to have many residents who come together to improve the quality of life and create positive change in our village. It is through the efforts and enthusiasm of volunteers that there are many regular community events and one-off projects throughout the year: Kimpton May Festival, Kimpton Art Show, Kimpton Folk Festival, Kimpton Autumn Show (with a Food and Beer Festival new for 2022), Kimpton Christmas Market to name but a few. These are supported by Kimpton Parish Council either through being the organisation body, by granting permission to use council land, by providing financial support or through active councillor involvement.

Welcome Pack. By personally visiting each new resident with a welcome pack, we encourage people to get involved in the parish by joining one of over 50 recreational groups and sporting clubs or by joining an event committee member or getting involved with a project such as Greening Kimpton. As time is a constraint for many working people, there are opportunities of helping out for a few hours such as being a steward at an event, by providing musical entertainment at functions or helping with a specific project such as the installation of new outdoor fitness equipment. During the pandemic we had over 80 volunteers as part of Kimpton Cares offering to get shopping, prescriptions or be a friendly ear to the vulnerable or lonely. There are numerous ways to help neighbours, make a difference to recreational, social and sporting activities and meet new friends. We are a village with a genuine care for our friends and neighbours and would not wish for this to be diluted by changing the boundary of the ward.

Care for each other

Message from Marion and Dud Ginn (Marion sadly died in June but this was written in Kimpton Parish Magazine Winter 2018 when Marion was showing early stages of dementia and Dud of losing his eyesight). *Marion and I would like to take the opportunity to thank all our neighbours, friends and fellow villagers for all their care, support and kindness through this difficult and stressful time of our lives. We appreciate all that you do for us and thank God for guiding us to Kimpton forty-four years ago. With love*

Schooling. Kimpton is served by an excellent pre-school and primary school enabling families to create firm foundations for their children and for making life-long relationships. Kimpton Christmas Market, conceived and organised by the parish council, is a fund raising event for the two educational establishments. There are strong links between the governors, parents and teaching staff and the community. For example, our tree planting for the Queens

Platinum Jubilee Green Canopy included the Eco Team from Kimpton Primary School <https://kimptonpc.org.uk/greening-kimpton/> and our volunteers of Kimpton Bench Working Party. We strive to create opportunities for inter-generational activities and events.

Kimpton Parish Magazine is free and delivered by hand to every household in the parish, online copies https://kimptonpc.org.uk/living-here/#kimpton_parish_magazine This keeps the residents up to date on all that is going on within the parish. Kimpton is friendly with our neighbouring parishes but does not have strong links with any.

Pubs. There are two excellent public houses in the parish; one in the village and one at Peters Green. Budgens has been extended in the village and serves a wide range of foods, drinks and other household items. The Post Office is located within Budgens and has extended opening hours. The shop owners are considerate to the needs of local customers and provide a home delivery service for the elderly and infirm.

Recreational facilities. A wide range of recreational facilities from allotments to outdoor fitness equipment are offered within the village with residents using Harpenden for further social, secondary schooling, shopping and recreational requirements. A third of our residents are patients at Bridge Cottage Surgery in Welwyn with the remaining residents accessing medical facilities located in Harpenden, Whitwell and Wheathampstead.

Scouts, Guides, Brownies and Rainbows. Kimpton 1st Scout Group has active groups of Beavers, Cubs and Scouts affiliated to Harpenden and Wheathampstead District Scouts. Kimpton 1st Guides, Kimpton 2nd Brownies and Kimpton 1st Rainbows cater for the needs of girl guiding.

Churches. We are served by our Priest-in-Charge, Rev Linda Williams, at our St Peter and St Paul Parish Church in Kimpton within the Diocese of St Albans. This is a dual role with St Lawrence, Ayot St Lawrence.

Rev Andrew Gale serves at the Baptist Church in Peters Green which is associated with Luton Central Baptist Church.

Neighbourhood Watch is active across the parish with its own network of volunteers and interface with the Community Policing Team from Hitchin.

Luton Airport. Due to our location Kimpton is affected by the proposals to expand Luton Airport and has campaigned against its expansion due to the following reasons:

- its non-compliance with Government Policy regarding community noise levels
- inadequate provision of public transport
- inadequate noise data and modelling
- unreliable forecast delivery and noise performance of new jets
- failure to comply with conditions attached to planning approval granted in 2013

We collaborate with neighbouring parish councils, North Herts Council and Hertfordshire County Council in making our voice heard.

Electoral Arrangements

Kimpton Parish Council has elections in the same year as the district councillor, latest in May 2022, thereby ensuring convenience and ease of public voting for both authorities. Having the same civic boundary is easy for electors to understand and operate within.

Conclusion

Currently the boundary of Kimpton Parish Council and the district ward are co-terminus providing clarity for voters and strong representation. This is our preferred option.

Yours sincerely,

CHelmn

Mrs C Helmn
Parish Clerk

c.c. Cllr Ralph Muncer, North Herts Council
Cllr Richard Thake, Hertfordshire County Council