

# Community Governance Review.

Chideock Parish Council has for many years been trying to get the parish boundary changed.

There are 3 anomalies:

- Top of Quarr Hill, south side of A35 – first house going eastbound is Turnpike Cottage which is in Chideock Parish but logically should be in Symondsbury
- Ryall Road – first house on western side after Carter's Lane – Hit n Miss / Hazel Bower / Hazyview is in Chideock parish but logically should be in Char Valley
- Venn Farm, Warmstall Farm and North End Farm are in North Chideock but, because the river forms the parish boundary at that point, they are in Symondsbury Parish – however they can only be accessed from Chideock

From the information given below, the first things which must be done by Chideock Parish Council is to seek the views of Char Valley and Symondsbury Parish Councils about the above proposals.

The Clerk requests Approval to start this process.

## **Information from DAPTC.**

We have been asked by Dorset Council to share the following information with all our members. This email follows up one issued by Dorset Council on the same topic, and we are keen to ensure you haven't missed this important announcement as CGRs happen once every 10/15 years.

## **Introduction**

Over the past few months Dorset Council have received a number of queries from parish councils asking how they can change their governance arrangements, all of which can be considered as part of a Community Governance Review (CGR).

The CGR will include looking at all of the following subjects:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes (grouping or de-grouping parishes)
- Increasing or decreasing the number of Councillors
- Creating ward boundaries or changing existing Warding arrangements
- Changes to parish names
- Correcting minor boundary anomalies.
- Changing a parish council into a parish meeting

## **The Process**

The responsibility of undertaking a Community Governance Review falls to the principal council (Dorset Council in this case) and can be triggered in a number of ways including a request from a parish, a community petition or, as in this case, at the principal council's volition. As a principal council, Dorset Council are required to undertake a review of governance arrangements of all parishes every 10-15 years, and as a number of tentative enquiries have been made, now seems the right time to carry out a council-wide review. The various predecessor councils had undertaken reviews but, for some, this was many years ago so now seems the right time to undertake this piece of work.

The legislation that covers Community Governance Reviews requires any Review to be completed within 12 months of Dorset Council publishing its Terms of Reference which is the document that sets the process running. It's a very tight timescale so Dorset Council want to put you on notice that they propose to "formally" start this piece of work in July this year.

Please note, any changes to governance arrangements agreed as part of the Review cannot take effect until the next scheduled elections in May 2024.

The process that Dorset Council will follow will be:

- Publication of Terms of reference that sets out what will be covered – in this case it will be a review of all parishes that sit within the Dorset Council area (July 2021).
- Public consultation for 12 weeks seeking proposals/initial submissions.(5 August to 28 October 2021)
- Consideration of consultation responses and preparation of draft recommendations. (to be agreed at Full Council - December 2021)
- Public consultation on draft recommendations. (20 December 2021 – 28 February 2022)
- Consideration of further responses and then publication of final recommendations. (to be agreed at Full Council – April 2022)

### **Considerations**

When preparing any submissions, Dorset Council recommend that you take into account the considerations that they will need to apply that are set out in the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) Guidance - a link to the Guidance can be found here. The considerations include:

- The need to secure that community governance within the area under review:
  - reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area.
  - is effective and convenient.
- The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.
- The impact on electorate size of future development within the next 5 years.

Dorset Council will be able to assist by providing street lists with elector numbers and they will also be able to provide figures for projected future developments. Dorset Council are currently looking at options for mapping facilities and will advise in due course if we are able to provide any assistance with this.

Any changes will be set out in a Reorganisation Order – the Order will include a detailed map of any boundary changes with any changes taking effect at the next scheduled elections i.e., May 2024.

Obviously, if your parish is content that the governance arrangements are working well then you do not need to make any submission.

What Dorset Council are recommending to Parishes prior to the formal start of the process: Whilst the process will not start formally until July, Dorset Council recommends that parish councils start talking with their parish at an early stage. Whilst the 12-week consultation period may sound like a long time, this will pass very quickly.

It is important that any submissions you make to Dorset Council must achieve electoral equality – i.e., each Councillor will represent roughly the same number of electors.

If parishes are proposing changes, Dorset Council will ask that you provide information about how this will ensure community cohesion e.g., what are the links within the community that leads you to recommend that certain areas should be linked together e.g., in the same ward or parish.

If parishes are seeking a change to the boundaries of the parish, Dorset Council suggests that you start talking to the other parishes affected. Decisions are much more straight forward if there is community agreement, rather than aggressively pursuing a change in boundaries with neighbouring parishes.

Dorset Council asks that queries are kept to a minimum between March 2021 and 11 May 2021 as the Legal and Democratic Services Team will be busy administering the Police and Crime Commission election, and a number of parish by-elections and Neighbourhood Plan referenda. However, they will be happy to help outside of this period. If, in the unlikely event that the May 2021 election should be postponed, Dorset Council will advise you of a revised timetable once they are in a position to produce this.

If you have any queries in respect of the proposal, please do not hesitate to contact the Legal and Democratic Services Team at [cgr@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:cgr@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)