

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 January 2022 15:42
To: reviews
Subject: Guildford Borough Ward Boundary Review

Categories: Submissions, Nicole

Dear Sir or Madam

I have one suggestion relating to the above Guildford Ward Boundary consultation, affecting two wards. The suggestion relates largely to the naming of wards (and one small boundary adjustment) and not to other matters contained in the recommendations. These changes relate strongly to the second criterion of the review, viz. Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.

Friary Ward (proposed) – this should be re-named Stoke Ward (or maybe Stoke Park to recognise most people's current identification of the area). The historic medieval parish of Stoke juxta Guildford is centred on the parish church of St John the Divine on Stoke Road (commonly referred to as St John's Stoke - ref. www.stjohnstoke.com); this is within the proposed Friary Ward. The church setting comprises the traditional parish burial ground, Stoke Rectory, and the Stoke next Guildford war memorial, listing those of the parish of Stoke who died in the Great War. This is the historic core of the community of Stoke.

The area currently called 'Stoke Ward' was part of the historic parish but is largely comprised of modern (i.e. late 19th and 20th century) development and to all intents and purposes contains physically distinct communities from the community immediately adjacent the parish church – separated as they are by the A3 road and river Wey. As the other two Guildford town wards are named for their ecclesiastical parishes (Holy Trinity & Christchurch, and St Nicolas) it follows that this ward should also be named for its historic parish, the church of which is located within it (and not in the extant Stoke Ward).

Additionally, the name 'Stoke' occurs frequently and with historical longevity in what is to be called Friary Ward – Stoke Road is the spine road in the area connecting into the town centre of Guildford; Stoke Park, in which the historic Stoke Park Manor stood (on the site of the present Guildford College), is at the heart of the area; the Stoke Hotel is an ancient hostelry and listed building; Stoke Recreation Ground is bordered by many of the residential streets comprising the area; Stoke Fields is a well-used local pathway; Stoke Hospital are historic almshouses in the area; etc. The local shopping parade, as well as the Stoke PH, includes The Stoke Dry Cleaners, Stoke Cafe (recently re-branded as Lorenzo's), and Stoke Local (convenience store/off licence). The local representative residents organisation is called Stoke next Guildford Residents Association. Even the main road junction just to the north of the parish church is known as Stoke Crossroads. A comedy club is held regularly in the The Stoke PH called "You Must Be Stoking!"

All of the above would be in the new Friary ward. On the other hand, there would be no obvious link in place-names or in peoples' minds with Stoke in the retained 'Stoke' ward - I can only assume that it was an accident of history that led to this area being called Stoke ward as it was partly historically within the parish of Stoke but has been separate and distinct at least since the building of the Guildford by-pass in the 1970s. To the local community in what will be termed the Friary ward, there is a clear identification with the area as being Stoke, Stoke Road or Stoke Park if asked which part of Guildford they live in. I do not think this is true of the communities in the current Stoke Ward, who would say they live in Bellfields or Slyfield if asked.

One anomaly remaining if the proposed new ward boundaries were adopted would be the positioning of historic Stoke Mill outside the new 'Friary' Ward. The mill could be included within the new ward, if renamed Stoke ward, by the small

adjustment of the boundary between it and the northern ward to the natural boundary of the Wey Navigation rather than the artificial one of the A3. This would be consistent also with the present day ecclesiastical parish boundary of St John's Stoke. Only one residential property would be affected.

Conversely, 'Friary' in everyone's mind refers to the modern shopping centre in Guildford town centre (an enclosed shopping mall built in the 1980s). Notwithstanding its historical antecedents as a medieval monastic settlement until the Dissolution in 1538, and subsequent use of part of the site as a brewery (the Friary Mieux Brewery), few people (if any) would identify with the Friary as a place other than a retail destination. I have never heard anyone respond to the question: "which part of Guildford do you live in?", as "I live in Friary". People in Guildford 'go to the Friary', meaning they are going shopping or, if teenagers, to hang out in the food court. In short, this name confers no sense of meaning or identity to the area around it or to the people who live in the proposed Friary Ward.

Stoke Ward (existing) – Following from the above, the area that is currently called, and is proposed to remain, Stoke Ward comprises two distinct communities – Bellfields and Slyfield – lying either side of Woking Road to the north of the A3 and river Wey, that divides them from the historic, original centre of the parish of Stoke. It would be more appropriate, and give reinforcement to the identity of those communities, to rename this ward as Bellfields and Weyfield Ward. This would also be consistent with other newer Guildford expansion suburbs that have given their names to modern electoral wards - Burpham, Merrow, Westborough, Stoughton, Onslow, etc.

Best regards,

[REDACTED]

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