



IDMISTON PARISH COUNCIL  
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10<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Dear Sir

**Re: Draft Boundary Recommendations for South and South East Wiltshire**

Idmiston Parish Council strongly objects to the draft boundary recommendations that were first brought to our attention by our unitary councillor Mike Hewitt on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Prior to this, Idmiston Parish Council had been informed that the Parish would be unaffected by any ward boundary changes.

The recommendations split the Idmiston Parish across two wards that will see part of our Parish being included in a proposed *Winterslow and Upper Bourne Valley Ward* and the other part included in a proposed *Old Sarum and Lower Bourne Valley Ward*. In addition, this split would mean the Idmiston Parish reporting to both the *Amesbury Area Board* and the *Southern Area Board*. Having two unitary councillors and two area boards is an unsatisfactory and unworkable option for the parish and would pose significant challenges for the Parish Council.

We are also concerned that the Boundary Commission has not alerted us to the four week consultation period for their new plan – instead, as stated above, we have learnt of this consultation through our Unitary Councillor who has been provided scant additional detail.

The short consultation period – which is in the middle of a holiday period – is inadequate to conduct any written consultation or hold a public meeting with parishioners.

Our concerns are:

1. The Bourne Valley (Cholderton, Newton Toney, Allington, Boscombe, Idmiston, Porton and Gomeldon) are all closely linked along the A338 and have strong Community ties. We have been linked for many years and to split any part of this community is both unnecessary and a negative issue.
2. Splitting a parish across unitary councillors and area boards is unworkable as it prevents a consistency of approach and agreement across a single parish.
3. The Idmiston Parish Council was an early adopter of Neighbourhood Planning and the second parish in south Wiltshire to adopt a “made” Neighbourhood Plan (referendum April 2017). The ward boundary changes have significant impact on this core Government planning policy as management would be across two area boards with conflicting planning requirements.
4. The proposal to include part of our parish with Winterslow and Firsdon (south of the A30 and close to Salisbury) is not workable as access to *Southern Area Board* meetings would be via the non-adopted MOD range road. This route can be closed by

the MOD at any given opportunity and any alternative route to Firsdown and Winterslow then becomes a considerable distance.

5. Idmiston Parish Council has long supported the *Amesbury Area Board*. We know the elected Councillors and are aware of the Board's aspirations and how they work with our Parish. We have no wish or need to work across multiple Area Boards nor been provided with information around any advantages. We do not know the Councillors on the *Southern Area Board* and know nothing about their future local plans or issues. We wish to remain within the *Amesbury Area Board* and only the *Amesbury Area Board* where we will best maintain support for the local community.
6. The Idmiston Parish hosts significant employment with Public Health England (PHE), Porton Biopharma, DSTL and the Wiltshire Science Park – all at Porton Down. These important employers need to maintain a close relationship with one Parish Council in one ward particularly with regards emergency planning / evacuation. The Idmiston Parish is also closely linked with Boscombe Down (Qinetiq) in neighbouring Allington and Boscombe Parish (within the Bourne Valley).
7. It feels the draft proposal of combining Firsdown with Winterslow makes eminent sense through both location and scale. It appears the reaction to a Firsdown objection has resulted in an unacceptable split of the thriving Idmiston Parish, current Bourne Valley Ward / alliances and brings an unworkable proposal for a single parish to be split and report across multiple Unitary Councillors and Area Boards.

The Idmiston Parish Council considers the draft boundary recommendations to be poorly thought through creating an unworkable split parish solution to balance numbers within ward boundaries. This would be a serious backward step to our community and life within.

At the Idmiston Parish Council meeting (Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019), the councillors unanimously voted to retain the current alliance with The Bourne Valley, maintain our reporting to the *Amesbury Area Board* and that the Idmiston Parish is NOT fractured in two !

Yours faithfully

Andrew Oliver

Chair, Idmiston Parish Council

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