



# Boxley

## PARISH COUNCIL

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**Chairman:** Cllr Vic Davies

**Clerk:** Daniela Baylis

**Assistant Clerk Finance:** Lissi Watts

**Admin/Bookings:** Heidi Pearson

Dear Residents

Households in Grove Green and Weaving have received through their letter boxes, what is in my opinion, a misleading leaflet from local Independent Borough Councillor Vanessa Jones.

It states “at a recent Maidstone Borough Council meeting, Councillors voted not to consult with Grove Green & Weaving residents about how your area is governed”. The meeting was of the Democratic and General Purposes Committee on the 21 June 2023 and the section mis-referred to was regarding the Community Governance Review (Parishes) Stage 2 Consultation. The Stage 1 Consultation was carried out in October 2022 with proposals from this being put forward for the Stage 2 Consultation. The purpose of the meeting on the 21 June 2023 was to determine which of the proposals to put forward for public consultation.

Here is an extract from the draft minutes of that meeting

*The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager presented the report and identified the parish boundary changes in each proposal to go to Stage 2 consultation. It was emphasised that the decision for the Committee would be to take these proposals to Stage 2 consultation, not to determine whether the proposals would go ahead at this stage, and that the Committee would consider the outcome of the consultation in September before full Council would make the final decision on whether to adopt the outcome of the review.*

*The Committee supported the majority of the proposals to go through to Stage 2 consultation and identified those for further discussion. In particular the Committee expressed concern on proposal 3d with the future of Grove Green if it became unparished as a result of a Stage 2 consultation, which the Committee felt should be avoided. There were concerns that it was a significant proposal that had not arisen from Stage 1 consultation and that there were significant benefits to the area of being part of Boxley Parish. However some members of the Committee felt that the question should still be asked of residents as to whether they wished to remain part of Boxley Parish, form their own parish or become unparished. On balance the Committee determined not to go ahead with proposal 3d in the Stage 2 consultation.*

*The Committee also considered a petition to abolish Tovil parish council under proposal 10a. A petition containing 87 signatures to remove Tovil Parish Council had been submitted and the Committee considered this alongside the factors set out in the report and determined not to take the proposal forward.*

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The list of proposals set out at Appendix A be approved, with the removal of Proposal 3d – Consider Grove Green element of Boxley Parish, for Stage 2 consultation.

Members at this meeting, across all political parties decided by democratic vote to put forward Agenda proposal 2.14: *This proposal would determine the nature of treatment of adjoining proposals for the area around Orchard Drive (proposal 3a) and Thurnham (proposal 9a). It is therefore recommended that this is taken to stage 2 consultation and residents, particularly in Grove Green are encouraged to respond to the specific proposal with a targeted consultation.* This is standard practice in meetings of this kind. Cllr Jones thinks that her fellow Councillors acted undemocratically. This shows a complete lack of respect for both the democratic process and her fellow Councillors.

Boxley Parish Council were not consulted on the proposals put forward for the meeting but made a statement to the Committee asking for the Parish to remain the same. A copy of this statement is on our website and can be obtained from the parish office.

Cllr Jones then goes on to try and gain your support by mentioning your Council Tax commitments. You as residents of Boxley Parish pay £68.11 per year towards the running of your Parish Council. Residents of Bredhurst Parish of which Cllr Jones is Chair pay a considerably more at £151.96 per year. It is easy to see who is getting better value for their money. The Statement referred to above details a lot of the services the Parish Council provides for residents that would be lost if you were unparished, not to mention the benefits of being a rural parish.

Please do complete the survey, but you will find it is a targeted survey and I suspect only the views of residents affected by the proposed changes will be taken into account. You could also add into the additional comments section that you would like to remain a part of Boxley Parish as we would not want to lose you.

Vic Davies

Chairman  
Boxley Parish Council