



## Chilworth2gether

Dear Councillors Wright, Palmer and Billington,

### **A new, single Parish Council for Chilworth**

I am writing to you as a resident of Chilworth and a representative of the Community Group, Chilworth2gether. Following local interest, Chilworth2gether agreed to act as facilitator to collect the requisite number of signatures from residents in the Parish of St Martha and from the Chilworth Ward of the Parish Council of Shalford, requesting of GBC a Review of the Parish Boundaries.

Both David and James were involved with the consultation process in Chilworth Village. As such, each of you will be aware that the objective for requesting a Review was clear and defined. – we want Chilworth to have its own independent voice and a new, single Parish Council. We want Chilworth to be recognised as a separate entity, with separate views, consistent with all the other villages in the Tillingbourne Valley.

**Signatures were collected with a view to achieving a single, new Parish Council for Chilworth. We did not collect signatures to request dissolution of the Parish Councils in favour of creating a new one including Shalford and Peasmarsh.**

We have now learnt that the Terms of reference for the Review, which are being prepared for the Guildford Borough Council meeting to be held on December 9, have been significantly extended in direct contradiction of the purpose of our Proposal to Council.

When we undertook our consultation in line with guidelines, we were not aware that the Council Executive could intervene in such way and would welcome confirmation from you that they have observed protocol : a third option, totally irrelevant to the intention of the original request, is being inserted by GBC executive, providing an option for a new and enlarged single Parish Council that submerges St Martha with Chilworth in a new Parish Council that also represents the views of Shalford and Peaslake.

John Armstrong confirmed today that informal talks with the executive led to them adding this third option, He also advised me that you three councillors were consulted and agreed to this extension to the Terms of Reference.

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**In agreeing to the expansion of the remit in this way, we believe you have ignored Chilworth electorates' wishes, and worse, have opened the door for a outcome that runs absolutely counter to what has been requested. St Martha residents, in particular, who may have agreed that a Chilworth Parish Council would strengthen representation for them, may now find that they find themselves on the outer fringe of a new enlarged Parish Council that is supposed to reconcile and represent the views of four communities! There is likely to be a backlash.**

We cannot see how this option is consistent with this Government's commitment to community involvement and local decision making. Rather, in our view, this first example of localism in Guildford, involving the constitution of a Parish Council, is being entirely thwarted by the intervention of the Executive of the Council (and with your support), before the process has even got started.

It may also be worth noting that as facilitator and presenter of the Proposal to GBC, Chilworth2gether, has not even been informed of this proposal, making a significant change to the Terms of Reference.

It doesn't appear to us to be a very democratic process thus far.

Chilworth2gether is writing to all three Councillors, to respectfully request that you reconsider your position and ensure that this third option, of a single enlarged Parish Council, is removed from the agenda item as inappropriate and irrelevant to Chilworth's proposal.

Should Shalford Parish Council wish to enlarge its boundaries, then it would be for them to orchestrate their own campaign, and collect 500 or more signatures from residents affected. We don't believe this is something they are considering. **A Single, enlarged Parish Council, whatever its merits, is a different agenda entirely, and should not be conflated with, or hijack, Chilworth's own, singular representation to GBC.**

We will need to alert our signatories to this unexpected turn of events very soon, as they should have the opportunity to make their own representations at local and higher levels of government if they wish. We hope, that with your intervention, it will not be necessary to escalate our concerns, and you will ensure the proposition put to the Council on December 9 solely addresses the Chilworth proposal.

We would very much welcome your thoughts and reaction.

With thanks,

**Maggie Scott,**

**On behalf of Chilworth2gether**

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