

Bishopstone Group – Community Governance Review

Herefordshire Council is conducting seven targeted community governance reviews over the coming year. I am writing to provide you with information on a Community Governance Review that will be happening in the Bishopstone Group Parish. Community governance reviews provide the opportunity for principal councils, in this instance, Herefordshire Council, to review and make changes to community governance within their areas. A central purpose of any community governance review is to ensure that local parish governance arrangements reflect local identities and ensure parish councils can work effectively as the first tier of local government.

It can be helpful to undertake community governance reviews in circumstances such as where there have been changes in population, or in reaction to specific or local new issues. A community governance review looks at the whole or part of an area to consider:

- The creation, merger, alteration or abolition of parishes
- The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes
- The electoral arrangements for parishes, such as the ordinary year of election, council size, wards, and numbers of councillors
- The grouping or de-grouping of parishes

The Bishopstone group parish has put forward its interest in taking part in a community governance review on the basis that a number of properties appear to be affected by a boundary anomaly in the east of the parish lying close to the Stretton Sugwas parish border.

As part of the community governance review Herefordshire Council is consulting on whether the houses within this boundary anomaly share a stronger local community and geographic connection with the parish of Stretton Sugwas than with the Bishopstone group parish. Options that will be considered could be to move the boundary lines between Bishopstone group and Stretton Sugwas. This would have the effect of moving the properties on the north side of the A438 at Sugwas Pool, Swainshill, and Sugwas from the Bishopstone Group Parish governance arrangements into the Stretton Sugwas Parish. In addition, if this change were to take place, it would require a ward boundary change. Bishopstone group parish lies within Stoney Street ward; Stretton Sugwas lies within Creden Hill ward.

No decisions have yet been taken. Herefordshire Council is currently consulting residents in the parishes affected to inform any future proposals. Furthermore, the review will not automatically mean there will be changes. It will, however, see if there is a case for change and what solutions are the right ones to pursue with each individual parish.

The consultation can be found on the council's website and will be running from 12 February to 23 March. Please see: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/bishopstonecgr

Paper copies of the consultation can be made available on request by emailing CGR@herefordshire.gov.uk We would be very interested in receiving your views on the community governance review.