

Terms of reference – Community Governance Review of St Albans Parish Council

Introduction

Gedling Borough Council is carrying out a Community Governance Review (CGR) in the Parish of St. Albans in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The Council is required to have regard for the government guidance on CGR's and this guidance has been considered in drawing up these terms of reference.

Why are we carrying out a CGR in the parish of St Albans?

Gedling Borough Council has received a valid petition asking for the formation of a separate Parish Council for the Bestwood Lodge and Deer Park area of the parish. The petition contained 211 signatures from people indicating that they were electors of the parish. At that time of receipt of the CGR, the parish of St. Albans had 2438 local electors (based on the 1 April 2024 electoral register). Following checking of the petition it was established that it contained 211 valid signatures for the purposes of a CGR.

The petition proposes the formation of a separate parish council for the Bestwood Lodge and Deer Park area which should keep the name of St Albans Parish council and suggests a 40/60 financial split with the wording as set out below:

“Residents from the Bestwood Lodge and Deer Park Drive area are calling upon Gedling Borough Council to conduct a Community Governance Review. The purpose would be to establish a separate parish council for the immediate area.

The community recognise the distinct and different needs and aspirations living in a historic and rural country park to that of our more urban neighbours. Our residents feel that a more locally representative body would be best placed to act in the best interests of the residents and community as a whole.

Recommendation 1:

The following addresses would form part of the new parish council area due to its historic links to the Duke of St Albans, Bestwood Country park and the Emmanuel Church:

Gaunts Hill (NG5 8NF):

*Beauclark House, NG5 8NE, Bestwood Lodge Stables, NG5 8ND,
Orchard Cottage, NG5 8NF, Park House, NG5 8NF,
The Bothy Gaunts Hill, NG5 8NF The Briary, NG5 8NF
Woodside Lodge, Woodside Liveries, NG5 8NE,
Warren House, NG5 8NF, Park House, NG5 8NJ.*

Bestwood Lodge:

*Church View Close, NG5 9QP, Woodchurch Road, NG5 8NJ,
Cedar Tree Road, NG5 8NN, Pavilion Road, NG5 8NL,
Old Lodge, NG5 8NE, Heathcotes (Arnold), Redhill Farm, NG5 8NE,
Robin Hood Road, NG5 8NP Nell Gwyn Crescent, NG5 8NQ.
Bestwood Lodge Hotel, NG5 8NE,
Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Bestwood lodge, NG5 8PD.*

Deer Park:

*Deer Park Drive, NG5 8SA, Deer Park Drive NG5 8SF,
Roebuck Close, NG5 8RZ, Tree View Close, NG5 8SP,
Larch Road, NG5 8SB, Moss Close, NG5 8SD,
Bullins Close, NG5 8SE.*

Recommendation 2:

New council will retain the name 'St. Albans Parish Council'. The origins of the Saint Albans Parish Council can be traced back to the descendants of the landowners, the Duke of St Albans, and have a significant historical connection dating back to King Charles II. The Bestwood Lodge and Deer Park are located within the immediate area where this heritage is rooted in the rich and storied history of the area.

The name of the parish council is vital in our role in preserving the cultural heritage and maintaining the integrity of the parish. Today, under the proposed new establishment, the new council seeks to uphold this legacy while addressing the current challenges and improving governance practices.

Recommendation 3:

The financial reserves held by the current council should be split between the two emerging parish councils on a 40/60% rate. The new council in the Bestwood Lodge and Deer Park area would seek 40% of any relevant financial fund.

Previous financial assistance given to the Warren area of the parish has failed to recognise and support those residents living in the Bestwood Lodge and Deer Park area. The new council would be seeking some equitable settlement that would recognise the disparity of previous funding. This settlement would assist in delivering a key ambition in the form of a capital project for the community of the new parish."

What is a CGR?

The CGR is the process used to consider whether the existing parish council should be in any way modified. There are several options with regards to the outcome of the review depending on the results of the consultation. The review could recommend to Council that:

- a) There should be no change to the existing arrangements; or
- b) There should be changes to the electoral arrangements for the parish or an alteration to the number of seats; or
- c) The existing parish council should be abolished; or
- d) A Parish council should be established for one or both of the existing parish areas, and if so, the boundary, names, and the electoral arrangements for each, ie how many councillors on each and the election cycle; or

- e) An 'alternative style' for one or both of the areas should be established, eg. parish, neighbourhood, community, or village meeting.

There are two stages to the review: the first stage will gather opinions on whether St. Albans Parish Council should be divided into separate parishes for the area; the second stage will be the Council's recommendations on the way forward which the public will be able to comment on.

Who carries out the review?

Gedling Borough Council is responsible for conducting the review. A decision on whether or not to change or replace the existing Parish Council will be taken by Gedling Borough Councillors at a meeting of Full Council in July 2025.

What area is being reviewed?

The area under review is the current Parish of St. Albans, which comprises of the area known locally as the Warren Hill area which is a densely populated urban area. The parish is made up of Borough polling district GA3 which is part of the Bestwood St Albans ward and is part of the Gedling Parliamentary constituency.

This parish was made in July 2017 after undergoing a CGR which concluded to recommend a split from the previously named Bestwood St Albans Parish Council which encompassed the Bestwood Village area. The change saw the below recommendations implemented:

- Two new parishes and parish councils were created to replace the previous parish of Bestwood St Albans
- The parishes were named Bestwood Village and St Albans respectively
- The parishes were not warded
- The number of parish councillors was agreed to be 7 for Bestwood Village and 9 for St Albans
- The boundaries of the new parishes were as below



- Elections were held in May 2018 for the new parish councils, with further elections held the year after to return the parish councils to the appropriate cycle of elections for all other Gedling parishes.

In proposing any new parish arrangement for St. Albans, the Council is not bound by the area referred to in the petition, but the scope of the review can only extend to the Gedling Borough Council administrative area.

As part of the review the Council has to provide the number of electors in the area. If the Council recommends that a Parish Council/Councils should be set up, this information will be used to decide on the electoral arrangements, e.g. how many councillors on each parish council.

The Council has used the Register of electors of 1 April 2024 in providing the existing electorate figures which are:

Area	Current electors	Number of Parish Councillors	Ratio of electors to Councillors	Estimated electors in 2030
St Albans	2438	9	1:270	2550

Who will we consult?

A full consultation process will form part of the review to take full account of the views of local people. The Act requires the Council to consult the local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body who has an interest in the review and to take the representations that are received into account.

The Council will also identify any other person or body who it feels may have an interest in the review and contact them inviting them to submit their views at both stages of consultation. These will include:

- Ward members
- Tenants and residents' associations
- Local groups and societies
- Schools and colleges
- Members of Parliament
- Nottinghamshire Association of Local Councils
- Local political parties
- The police
- Current parish council members
- Adjoining parish councils

The Council will also be pleased to receive comments from any other person or body that wishes to make representations; any such person that makes representations during the initial invitation to submit proposals will be invited to make comments in respect of the draft proposals.

As required by Section 79(3) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Borough Council will notify Nottinghamshire County Council that a review is to be undertaken, provide them with a copy of the terms of reference for the review and will consult them on the matters under review.

We will consult with the above participants in the following ways:

- Online surveys
- Personal letter
- Publishing details on our website
- Press releases and social media
- Ward member group meetings
- Email to relevant contacts

The Council intends to clearly publish all decisions taken and the reasons for taking those decisions and will work towards the Government's view that "Community Governance Reviews should be conducted transparently so that local people and other stakeholders who may have an interest are made aware of the outcome of the decisions taken on them and the reasons behind these decisions."

With this in mind a cross-party group of Councillors will be convened to consider the responses to both stages of the consultation. The views of this group will be considered before recommendations are made to the meeting of Council in July 2025.

What matters will the review focus on?

The recommendations made in a CGR have two main objectives:

- 1) To improve community engagement and better local democracy; and
- 2) More effective and convenient delivery of local services.

The review must ensure that community governance within the area under review reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient. It must also consider any existing arrangements such as community or resident's associations or neighbourhood councils.

It may be the case that some or all of the area would be better served by other forms of community governance. The 2007 act states "In deciding what recommendations to make... the principal council must take into account any other arrangements ... that have already been made or could be made for the purposes of community representation or community engagements in respect of the area under review." Alternatives to a Parish Council include Community Associations, Residents'/Tenants Associations and Neighbourhood Forums.

The Council is anxious to ensure that electors should be able to identify clearly with the parish in which they are resident because it considers that this sense of identify and community lends strength and legitimacy to the parish structure, creates a common interest in parish affairs, encourages participation in elections to the parish council, leads to representative and accountable government, engenders visionary leadership and generates a strong, inclusive community with a sense of civic values, responsibility and pride.

Timetable for the review

Publication of this terms of reference formally begins the review, and the review must be completed within twelve months.

Action	Timescale
Terms of reference presented to Council	17 October 2024
Publish Terms of Reference	28 October 2024
Initial Consultation period	28 October 2024 – 6 January 2025
Prepare draft proposals	By 21 February 2025
Consultation on draft proposals	21 February – 2 May 2025
Deadline for submissions	2 May 2025
Prepare final proposals	2 May – 27 May 2025
Report to Council	4 June 2025
If required: Organisation of Community Governance Order	After June 2025 council meeting

How to submit your views

You can submit your views by

Going to: www.gedling.gov.uk/haveyoursay

Writing to:

Community Governance Review (Elections)
Gedling Borough Council
Civic Centre
Arnot Hill Park
Arnold Nottingham
NG5 6LU

Emailing: elections@gedling.gov.uk

When will the review begin?

The review will begin on 28 October 2024.