



Thriving communities in balance
with the natural environment

Community Governance Review - Arne Parish Council

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

Terms of Reference

Published 8 August 2016

1. Introduction

1.1 What is a community governance review?

A community governance review is a review of the whole or part of the Council's area to consider one or more of the following:

- creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
- the naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
- the electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election council size; the number of councillors to be elected to council and parish warding); and,
- grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.

A community governance review is required to take into account:

- the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

If the Council is satisfied that the recommendations from a community governance review would ensure that community governance within the area under review will reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area; and is effective and convenient, the Council makes a community governance order.

1.2 Why is the Council carrying out this community governance review?

The Council has received a community governance application from Arne Parish Council to increase the membership of the Parish Council from 7 to 8 ([see Appendix 1](#))

1.3 Scope of the review

The review will specifically consider the number of Parish Councillors on Arne Parish to ensure representation remains appropriate for the parish.

2. Consultation

2.1 How the Council proposes to conduct consultations during the Review?

Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals, the Council must consult local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body (including a local authority) which appears to the Council to have an interest in the review. The Council will therefore:

- publish a notice and these terms of reference on the Council's website (<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/>) and arrange for copies to be available for public inspection at Westport House, Worgret Road, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 4PP during normal office hours;
- send a copy of the notice and these terms of reference to the Parish Clerk and to the Dorset Association of Town and Parish Councils;
- seek to arrange for the notice to be published on the Arne Parish Council website and notice board; and
- send a copy of the notice and these terms of reference to Dorset County Council.

Before making any recommendations the Council will take account of any representations received. The Council will publish its recommendations as soon as practicable and take such steps as it considers sufficient to ensure that persons who may be interested in the community governance review are informed of the recommendations and the reasons behind them.

The Council will notify each consultee and any other persons or bodies who have made written representations of the outcome of the review.

3. Timetable for the community governance review

3.1 The Council has to complete a community governance review within twelve months from the day on which the Council publishes the terms of reference. A community governance review is concluded on the day on which the Council publishes the recommendations made by the community governance review.

3.2 Table 1 sets out the timetable for the review.

| Action | Timetable | Outline of Action |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Start Date | 8 August 2016 | Council publishes the terms of reference |
| Consultation | Two month period starting with publication of terms of reference | Council invites representations from interested parties on the application |
| Draft proposals are prepared | By 18 November 2016 | Draft proposals to be considered by Audit and Governance Committee on 6 December 2016 |

| Action | Timetable | Outline of Action |
|---|---|--|
| Draft proposals are published | By 12 December 2016 | Council publishes draft proposals |
| Consultation | Two month period starting with publication of draft proposals | Council invites representations from interested parties on the draft proposals |
| Final recommendations are prepared | By 17 February 2017 | Results of consultation considered by Audit and Governance Committee on 28 February 2017 and final recommendations made to Council |
| Final recommendations are published and considered by Council | 21 March 2017 | The Council meet to consider final recommendations and decide on the extent to which the Council will give effect to them |
| Order made | | Council makes and publishes the community governance order |
| Order takes effect | | Depending on the outcome and recommendations Parish Council fills vacancy |

Table 1: timetable for the community governance review

4. Background information

4.1 The Local Government Act 1972 provides that any parish council must have at least five councillors. No maximum number is prescribed.

4.2 The present structure of Arne Parish Council is set out in Table 2.

| Number of councillors | Number of Electors for each councillor |
|-----------------------|--|
| 7 | 161 |

Table 2: present structure

4.3 When considering the number of councillors to be elected for a parish the Council must have regard to the number of local government electors for the parish and any change to that number that is likely to occur within five years of the date on which these terms of reference are published. As at that date, the number of registered electors for the parish of Arne was 1125.

4.4 Joint guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in 2010 provides further information on community governance reviews and the factors influencing size and membership of parish councils (click [here](#) to access the guidance). On size, the guidance says:

154. In practice, there is a wide variation of council size between parish councils. That variation appears to be influenced by population. Research by the Aston Business School Parish and Town Councils in England (HMSO, 1992), found that the typical parish council representing less than 500 people had between five and eight councillors; those between 501 and 2,500 had six to 12 councillors; and those between 2,501 and 10,000 had nine to 16 councillors. Most parish councils with a population of between 10,001 and 20,000 had between 13 and 27 councillors, while almost all councils representing a population of over 20,000 had between 13 and 31 councillors.

155. The LGBCE has no reason to believe that this pattern of council size to population has altered significantly since the research was conducted. Although not an exact match, it broadly reflects the council size range set out in the National Association of Local Councils Circular 1126; the Circular suggested that the minimum number of councillors for any parish should be seven and the maximum 25.

156. In considering the issue of council size, the LGBCE is of the view that each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities. Nevertheless, having regard to the current powers of parish councils, it should consider the broad pattern of existing council sizes. This pattern appears to have stood the test of time and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, to have provided for effective and convenient local government.

157. Principal councils should also bear in mind that the conduct of parish council business does not usually require a large body of councillors. In addition, historically many parish councils, particularly smaller ones, have found difficulty in attracting sufficient candidates to stand for election. This has led to uncontested elections and/or a need to co-opt members in order to fill vacancies. However, a parish council's budget and planned or actual level of service provision may also be important factors in reaching conclusions on council size."

4.5 The National Association of Local Councils Circular 1126 recommends:

| Electors | Councillors | Electors | Councillors |
|-----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| Up to 900 | 7 | 10,400 | 17 |
| 1,400 | 8 | 11,900 | 18 |
| 2,000 | 9 | 13,500 | 19 |
| 2,700 | 10 | 15,200 | 20 |
| 3,500 | 11 | 17,000 | 21 |
| 4,400 | 12 | 18,900 | 22 |
| 5,400 | 13 | 20,900 | 23 |
| 6,500 | 14 | 23,000 | 24 |
| 7,700 | 15 | 45,000 | 25 |
| 9,000 | 16 | | |

4.6 Table 3 sets out recent election results for Arne Parish Council:

| Year | Vacant seats | Contested/Uncontested election | Co-opted |
|------|--------------|--------------------------------|----------|
| 2002 | 7 | Uncontested | |
| 2006 | 7 | Uncontested | 1 |
| 2010 | 7 | Uncontested | 3 |
| 2012 | 1 | Contested | |
| 2014 | 7 | Uncontested | 2 |

Table 3: elections

5. Making representations

5.1 If you want to make a written comment about the community governance review please send them to:

Community Governance Review
Democratic and Electoral Services
Purbeck District Council
Westport House
Worgret Road
Wareham
BH20 4PP

E-mail: electoralservices@purbeck-dc.gov.uk

5.2 Written comments must be received by 7 October 2016.

5.3 Should you require any further information or need clarification about the review, please contact Kirsty Riglar at the address above or by phone 01929 557221



Arne Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs Amanda Crocker
Rye Hill Farm, Rye Hill, Bere Regis, Wareham, Dorset BH20 7LQ
Tel: 01929 472327 E-mail: arneparishcouncil@gmail.com

David Fairbairn
Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer
Chief Executive's Department
Purbeck District Council
Westport House
Worgret Road
Wareham
BH20 4PP

16th April 2016

Dear David

Re: Request to increase the number of Parish Councillors (from 7 to 8)

Arne Parish Council currently has seven members and we wish to increase the number to eight.

Our electorate currently exceeds 1,339 residents and we note that the 'guidelines' for the number of members provides for 6-12 members to represent an electorate of this size (501-2,500).

The reasons for this request are as follows:

1. The Parish Council needs to increase its numbers to allow the workload to be spread over a larger base and to ensure that councillors have the time to involve themselves in the detail of the various issues, rather than merely carrying out an overview role.
2. The Parish Council is in the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan, setting up a Flood Resilience Group, developing an Emergency Response Plan and redrafting the Allotments Tenancy Agreement. All this on top of the usual Parish Council business of reviewing planning applications, considering the myriad of consultation documents that are put before us each month and overseeing the general day to day activities and queries of a rural parish. With only seven members it means all councillors are required to sit on numerous committees.
3. Most of our members are retired, several with family outside the UK, and it is not unusual for more than one member to be away at any one time. Some recent meetings have been reduced to four members plus the Clerk.
4. Arne is a largely rural parish and, with only seven members, it is difficult to reach and engage those residents that reside in the more remote areas. Having more members would enable councillors to better represent local opinions and views.

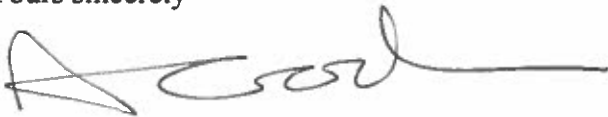
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5. Parish Councillors, as you know, are all unpaid volunteers and those in Arne have never claimed expenses. With the workload ever increasing, the pressure on each individual councillor continues to grow and it becomes more and more difficult to encourage new councillors, especially those in work, who see the role as taking up an excessive amount of their time.

We are in the fortunate position where a couple of residents have expressed an interest in taking on the role should an additional councillor be permitted and the Parish Council would very much welcome their contribution.

I look forward to hearing from you and would welcome any comments you may have.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amanda Crocker', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Amanda Crocker
Clerk to Arne Parish Council