

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 20 NOVEMBER 2012
title: WISWELL PARISH COUNCIL – DIVISION OF COUNCIL
submitted by: MARSHAL SCOTT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: DEBBIE NUTTALL, SOLICITOR

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To consider the results of the 2012 consultation on whether to divide the Wiswell Parish into two separate parishes (thereby creating a new parish for Barrow) and to determine whether the Wiswell Parish should be so divided

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – Better community governance should facilitate community cohesion and local involvement in local decision-making. This, in turn, should help to make people's lives safer and healthier and enhance the local environment.
- Corporate Priorities – Improved community governance is linked to the Council's vision of ensuring that the Ribble Valley has vital and vibrant villages, meeting the needs of residents, in that it should help to empower those residents. Promotion of community cohesion and encouragement of involvement in community participation are also key priorities of the Ribble Valley Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2013.
- Other Considerations – the (borough) Council has a discretionary power to conduct a community review (part of which can consider the creation of new parishes) for any parish council in its area. The Council decided to exercise this discretion again in respect of Wiswell in June 2012.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the "2007 Act"), and the 51-page statutory guidance produced under section 100 of this, must be followed whenever the Borough Council is considering making changes to parish councils within its area.

2.2 These set out the procedure for undertaking and giving effect to recommendations made in community governance reviews ("CGRs"), and on making recommendations about electoral arrangements.

2.3 Members may recall that, at its meeting in 24 March 2009, this committee agreed, given the then already long-standing history to this matter, to a community governance review being carried out in order to consider whether to divide the Parish of Wiswell. The results of this consultation were reported to Committee on 16 November 2010 and a decision was sought as to which one of two possible recommendations, the Committee wished to adopt.

2.4 Rather than adopting either of the two recommendations, after some discussion, the November 2010 committee decided to set up a working group to try to understand the

issues/problems and decided that a further report be brought to a later Committee. A meeting was set up on 11 January 2011. The Council's Solicitor understands that at this meeting the Parish Council decided to continue to operate under the umbrella of one Parish Council but with appropriate division of duties, funds and responsibilities in certain areas. There was no formal report back to Committee, although officers had understood that the new system was working reasonably well.

2.5 Following a request from the Wiswell Parish Council that this Council "proceed with the division" in March of this year, the Council's Solicitor brought another report to this Committee, in June, seeking their decision as to how to proceed. This report explained that another CGR was a pre-requisite to taking steps to change the parish arrangements in respect of Wiswell.

2.6 Committee decided that this Council should undertake a CGR, without any need for a valid Community Governance petition. The Council's Solicitor then commenced work on this.

3. THE FIVE YEAR FORECAST

3.1 The Guidance provides that five-year electoral forecasts should be carried out before a review is commenced.

3.2 The Council's Solicitor carried out a five-year forecast in June 2012.

3.3 The results of this were published on the consultation website and are available upon request. Its key conclusions can be summarised as follows:

"Limited data is available on Wiswell Parish, and even less on the Parish wards of Wiswell and Barrow.

However, the vast majority of the data that is available suggests that: changes are likely to take place to the ward of Barrow; and it is probable that Barrow will continue to increase in size as new developments are completed.

If the increase to Barrow ward occurred (and it has already begun), it will inevitably have an effect on Barrow and may well further exacerbate the "identity" divide raised by the Wiswell Parish Council between the parish wards of Barrow and Wiswell.

This forecast does not therefore suggest that it would be inappropriate to divide the current Parish of Wiswell, along current parish ward lines, into two separate parishes of Wiswell and Barrow.

If anything it suggests that any changes in electorate size that may occur would result in the Barrow ward further increasing (substantially) in size as a result of new developments."

4 CONSULTATION ON COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

4.1 Given that this was the second consultation in as many years the Council had undertaken on this issue, the Council's officers were mindful of cost. The Council's Solicitor was also mindful of the conclusions of the previous review and of criticisms made by Wiswell residents about some aspects of how this was carried out. She liaised in advance with the Parish Council, via its clerk, in relation to the proposed scope of the consultation. The Parish Council kindly offered the practical support of its councillors.

- 4.2 Section 93 of the 2007 Act requires the Council to consult local government electors for the Wiswell Parish and any other person or body it considers to have an interest in the review. A letter was therefore sent by post to all residents in Wiswell Parish based on the Council's Electoral Roll/Council tax data (this also included some businesses) together with one paper response form. A copy of the letter and the hard copy response form is at **Appendix 1**. One paper response only per household was sent in order to keep postage costs down, but also because tailoring the number of forms to individuals per household would have taken considerably longer and required the use of detailed occupier data.
- 4.3 Information on the review was also placed on the Wiswell Parish Notice Board. For the last few days of the consultation period the Council's home page referenced the review and included a link to the consultation documents.
- 4.4 The parish councillors were active in the parish, collecting forms, distributing additional ones and answering questions.
- 4.5 The Council's Solicitor used lessons learned from the 2010 review to keep the questionnaire as simple as possible. She also expressly drew residents attention to the following in her letter to residents:
- 4.5.1 the strong desire of many Wiswell ward residents for Wiswell to have its own Parish and the likelihood that, unless Barrow residents objected, the views of these Wiswell ward residents might prevail; and
- 4.5.2 the fact that each form received would be classed as a response from one person only.
- 4.6 As the letter to residents explained, consultation documents and response forms were also made available online.
- 4.7 Paper copies of the response forms and information on the CGR (as set out at **Appendix 2**) were made available at main reception, directly from the Council's Solicitor, or from Parish Councillors. A few copies were also sent to Whalley Library.
- 4.8 Forms could be submitted online, given to parish councillors or submitted to the Council's Solicitor.
- 4.9 All responses returned directly, or by Parish councillors on behalf of their residents were considered. One response, received on 17 October, was not considered because it was too late.
- 4.10 The terms of reference of the review, as explained in the online information, were as follows:

"The area under review is the current Parish of Wiswell, including the current wards of Wiswell and Barrow. The review will consider whether the Parish of Wiswell should be divided to create a new Parish of Barrow and a smaller Parish of Wiswell. It will also consider, in respect of each Parish: (i) its name; (ii) whether it should have a Parish Council; (iii) what the electoral arrangements should be. Consideration will also be given to where the boundary between the wards/parishes should lie."

4.11 Numerous residents emailed or called the Council's Solicitor with queries or concerns. Some residents were contacted directly when they returned one form purportedly on behalf of more than one person.

5 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

5.1 As the Guidance explains:

“... the 2007 Act places a duty on principal authorities to have regard to the need to secure that any community governance for the area under review reflects the identities and interests of the local community in that area, and that it is effective and convenient.”

5.2 The Parish Council has voted unanimously in favour of proceeding with a complete division of the Parish Council. It was their March 2012 letter, asking that the Parish be split, which led to the current CGR. The Parish Council has recently affirmed that it is keen for the Parish to be split (October 2012 letter). These letters are included as **Appendix 3**.

5.3 The views of Lancashire County Council were sought on the consultation as required by section 79(3) of the 2007 Act. Their response is included as **Appendix 4**. They believe that the Parish should be split.

5.4 The Council's Principal Policy and Performance Officer has produced a report of electors responses to the consultation. This is appended as **Appendix 5**. It includes comments made by respondents to the consultation and an analysis of the results. The following points are noteworthy:

5.4.1 237 residents took part in the survey (An increase on the 82 participants in 2010, although, in this earlier consultation, some residents allegedly did not realise that each person, rather than each household, had to respond);

5.4.2 The majority of respondents (80.6%) agreed that Wiswell Parish should be split;

5.4.3 100% of the respondents from Wiswell ward were in favour of changes, compared to 28.6% of the respondents from Barrow.

5.4.4 Only 63 of the 595 electors in the Barrow ward responded. The Barrow ward therefore remains under-represented. Compared to the 2010 consultation (where only 7 Barrow residents responded), there was, however, a better take-up this year.

5.4.5 The Wiswell ward was well-represented. 173 of the 256 electors in the Wiswell ward responded. All were in favour of changes.

5.4.6 Of the 63 Barrow residents who responded, 45 were against a split, 18 were in favour.

5.4.7 In respect of the other questions, the majority of respondents agreed that if Wiswell Parish were split:

5.4.7.1 the Wiswell ward should have a parish council and this should be called Wiswell Parish;

5.4.7.2 the Barrow ward should have a parish council and this should be called Barrow Council;

5.4.7.3 the electoral arrangements outlined in the questionnaire were appropriate (although the comments suggested that some people misunderstood the proposal);

5.5 Members are referred to the comments in the Report itself at **Appendix 5**.

5.6 Some commentators expressed the view that if people did not respond to the survey, the status quo should prevail. One commentator noted that “a less loaded survey of opinion would be a good idea” and another asked: “Do we have to keep having votes until the minority prevail?”

- 5.7 More than one person suggested that the A59 bypass should be the boundary between two separate parishes, rather than the existing ward boundary. The ward boundary appears to follow an old river course rather than the bypass.
- 5.8 It is probable that the majority of respondents in favour of a split had also signed the petition discussed below. For the reasons explained below, members should also consider the views expressed in this petition before making a decision on Parish arrangements.
- 5.9 The Council's Principal Policy and Performance Officer notes that the data presented in her report is "less than robust" due to the numbers responding. The Guidance does not provide a "minimum threshold" of how many responses are required from a consultation, once the decision has been taken to carry out a review. For a public petition to trigger a community governance review, by way of comparator, the 2007 Act provides that the petition must be signed by the requisite number of local electors in order to be valid. There are three thresholds, the first two of which are: (a) for an area with less than 500 local electors, the petition must be signed by at least 50% of them; and (b) for an area with between 500 and 2,500 local electors, the petition must be signed by at least 250 of them. As the Guidance explains: "... in areas with smaller numbers of electors, this means that a handful of electors cannot initiate a review against the wishes of the majority of their fellow electors. The thresholds therefore help to ensure that the local democratic process is properly maintained."
- 5.10 The above thresholds do not, however, apply to the review itself: had they done so, they would not have been met. Given that the Wiswell Parish as a whole had 851 electors as at 1 December 2011, 237 electors (i.e. the number responding to this review) does not fall far short of the 250 electors whose support would have been required had the Council required a public petition. Given also that this is the second consultation in as many years, the Council's Solicitor considers that enough responses have been received, and, more importantly, enough people were aware of the issues and had an opportunity to respond, for this consultation to be robust.

6 PETITION

- 6.1 On 28 September 2012 a petition on behalf of Wiswell Residents was submitted to the Council. The cover letter accompanying this and the words of the petition itself are self-explanatory. These are included at **Appendix 6**. The covering letter explained that the petition has been submitted at this stage: "... to emphasis the degree of support for the division. The petition includes around 223 signatures from the electorate of 256."
- 6.2 As members are aware, the Council has a petition scheme. This provides that petitions signed by at least ten residents of the borough will be referred to the next meeting of the committee which deals with the subject matter of the petition. Given that the subject matter of the petition deals with the same subject matter as this report, this committee was considered to be the appropriate committee to consider it.
- 6.3 Moreover, given the petition organiser's comment that: "all the points from section two of the petition are still entirely valid and we would ask you to take these into account in the current review if they have not already been raised", the points raised by the petitioners should be considered by members, together with all the other consultation responses, when making their decision on the CGR.

6.4 Members are referred to Appendix 6 for the full wording of the petition. In summary, it stresses that the two villages are geographically separate and historically different and that the villages have very different problems. It also highlights the frustration felt by Parish Councillors and their continuing desire for a separation of the villages.

6.5 The Council's petition scheme also provides that petitions will be published on the Council's website. This report and its appendices will be available on the Council's website, as is usual with open reports. The Council's Solicitor will also ensure that a reference is made to the petition on the petition's part of the Council's website.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 In deciding what recommendations to make, the Borough Council must try to ensure that "community governance" (i.e. parish, or other similar arrangements) "reflects the identities and interests" of the communities living in Wiswell and Barrow and "is effective and convenient". It must also take account of any representations received.

7.2 Sections 87, 88, 89 and 90 of the 2007 Act provide that a CGR must make certain recommendations in certain circumstances.

7.3 In deciding what recommendations to make, the principal council must also take into account any other arrangements that have already been made, or that could be made, for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in respect of the area under review. .

7.4 Taking into account the results of the consultation, the Council's Solicitor recommends that the Parish be split. This accords with the wishes of the Parish Council, the County Council and the majority of the respondents.

7.5 Comments from the consultees, particularly the views of the existing Parish Council, suggest that splitting the parish would promote community cohesion. Existing parish councillors are frustrated by the diverse interests which they represent and previous parish councillors have resigned over this issue.

7.6 There is already a strong community group in Wiswell, as evidenced by the petition. The "housing question" is already a cohesive issue for Barrow residents. The interests of the two villages appear to be diverse and the divide looks likely to grow.

7.7 The Council's Solicitor has produced some draft recommendations, were members minded to recommend the split. These are attached at **Appendix 7**. (It remains open to Committee to decide not to split the Parish. In this case, the Council's Solicitor would propose that the OPTION 1 recommendations, from Appendix F of her report of 16 November 2010 to this Committee should be used.) In either case, members are requested to provide reasons for their decision. Such reasons may refer to this report and its recommendations. The Council's Solicitor has included reasons with the Appendix 7 recommendations.

8 NEXT STEPS

8.1 Once this committee has made its recommendations, the Council is obliged to publish these and to inform consultees. It should also publish the reasons for its decision.

- 8.2 The Council must complete its CGR, including any consequential recommendations to the Electoral Commission, within 12 months of the start of the review.
- 8.3 If the Council decided to split the Parish, it would have to make a reorganisation order to implement its recommendations. The Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 and the Local Government Finance (New Parishes)(England) Regulations 2008 would have to be considered and complied with. The model order would be used as the starting point for drafting the order.
- 8.4 The Council's recommendations as to any related alterations to the boundaries of the electoral areas of this Council/the County Council would have to be made to the Local Government Boundaries Commission (although my initial understanding is that there would not be any).
- 8.5 The current Wiswell Parish's property would have to be divided.
- 8.6 The reorganisation order would come into force on 1 April following the date on which it is made. Whilst efforts would be made to make the order before April 2013, it may be that an April 2014 start date is more realistic.
- 8.7 Election arrangements would come into force at the first elections to the parish council following the reorganisation order. Members may wish to consider whether to make interim arrangements for the period between 1 April and the first elections. The next parish elections would ordinarily take place in May 2015 although there is provision, if necessary, to truncate the term of office of existing parish councillors and to hold earlier parish elections for the period up until May 2015. Should members decide to divide the Parish, they could decide upon these, and other issues arising, at a subsequent committee.

9 RISK ASSESSMENT

9.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources –splitting the parish will require work by the Council's legal, finance and council tax department. Aside from liaising with the existing parish council to devise and draft the reorganisation order, and dealing with the attendant publicity, the creation of a new parish would require, for example: council tax data to be reinput/changed; electoral registers to be changed; precepts etc. to be set. Depending on the timing, additional elections might have to be held.
- Technical, Environment and Legal – As discussed above, the reorganisation order would need to be drafted and implemented; properties would have to be divided and financial arrangements understood and made.
- Political – community governance should reflect the identities and interests of the local community in the Wiswell area, and be effective and convenient. Given the long history to this matter and the risk of "consultation fatigue", a firm decision should be made as soon as possible.
- Reputation – As above.
- Equality/diversity – The Guidance recommends that community cohesion is key and that this is about local communities where people feel they have a stake in the

society and local area in which they live by having the opportunity to influence decisions affecting their lives.

10 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 10.1 receive this report;
- 10.2 adopt the recommendations at Appendix 7;
- 10.3 agree the reasons at Appendix 7; and
- 10.4 authorise the Council's Solicitor to draft a Reorganisation order, liaise with the Boundary Commission and other officers, and carry out any work necessary to implement the recommendations.

DEBBIE NUTTALL,
SOLICITOR

MARSHAL SCOTT,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Material from P Timson's and D Nuttall's files on Wiswell/Barrow.

For further information please ask for Debbie Nuttall extension 4403

REF: Debbie Nuttall/P&F/20th Nov 2012

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

please ask for: DEBBIE NUTTALL
direct line: 01200 414403
e-mail: debbie.nuttall@ribblevalley.gov.uk
my ref: DLN/Parish Councils/Wiswell
your ref:
date: 29 August 2012

Council Offices
Church Walk
CLITHEROE
Lancashire BB7 2RA

Switchboard: 01200 425111
Fax: 01200 414488
www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

Dear Resident,

A REVIEW OF PARISH ARRANGEMENTS FOR WISWELL AND BARROW

I wrote to residents two years ago concerning the above matter. Few residents from the Barrow ward responded to that consultation, and the few who did, didn't favour a split. Almost all of the Wiswell residents who responded were in favour of a split.

Wiswell Parish Council subsequently agreed to try a committee system (rather than the Parish being formally split). This has not worked and the Parish Council has now asked this Council to consider establishing a separate parish council for Barrow.

This Council has therefore agreed to carry out another "Community Governance Review" in respect of Wiswell Parish i.e. Barrow and Wiswell (legislation doesn't permit us to rely on the results of the last review).

This Council is keen to ensure that arrangements reflect the identities and interests of your communities, that governance is effective and convenient and that any changes reflect what you, the residents want. **Your view as a resident of Wiswell and Barrow is paramount. The Council is consulting you to seek this.**

Whilst the Council has an open mind on whether the parish arrangements are changed or not, it recognises the strong desire amongst many Wiswell ward residents for Wiswell ward to have its own Parish, separate from Barrow. If these residents again overwhelmingly favour a split, unless Barrow residents provide feedback and object, (and subject to any other factors arising), it is probable that this Council will decide to split the Parish.

Consultation documents and response forms are available online at:

http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/info/200214/have_your_say/347/consultation_and_customer_satisfaction/5

A paper response form is also enclosed with this letter. As each form will be classed as a response from **one person only**, if more than one person in your household wishes their voice to be heard, each of them should please fill in and submit a separate form.

Paper copies of the consultation packs/copy forms are available from: (i) myself; (ii) Council Offices reception; or (iii) your parish clerk or councillors (whose details are displayed on your parish notice boards). **Forms can be completed and submitted online, or paper ones completed and submitted to: (i) your parish councillors, or (ii) myself at the above address.** The Council needs to receive your form by Friday 28th September 2012.

I look forward to hearing from you and am grateful for your time and feedback.

Yours faithfully

Debbie Nuttall,
SOLICITOR

Wiswell Community Governance Review

Please complete the questions below, ticking yes or no as appropriate, and make any comments in the boxes provided.

Q1 Should Wiswell Parish Council be split to form separate parishes for Wiswell and Barrow

Yes.....

No.....

Comment

Q2 If the existing Parish of Wiswell were split, should the Wiswell ward still have a Parish Council?

Yes.....

No.....

Comment

Q3 Should the Wiswell Parish Council continue to be called Wiswell Parish?

Yes.....

No.....

Comment

Q4 If the existing Parish of Wiswell were split, should the Barrow ward have a Parish Council?

Yes.....

No.....

Comment

Q5 If the existing Parish of Wiswell were split, and a new Parish for Barrow formed, should the new Barrow Parish be called Barrow Parish?

Yes.....

No.....

Comment

Q6 If the existing Parish of Wiswell were split to form two Parishes, do you agree that the electoral arrangements for each of the new Parishes should be as follows:

- Ordinary elections of councillors to be held every four years, commencing May 2013.
- Five councillors be elected to the Parish Council.
- The Parish will not be divided into wards for the purposes of electing Parish councillors?

Yes.....

No.....

Comment

Q7 If you have any suggestions on any of the following matters, please use the box below: alternative names; the number; boundaries and names of wards within Parishes; how many councillors should be elected for each ward (5 is the minimum); or other parish matters?

The consultation stage of this Community Governance Review is an open public consultation. In the interests of openness and transparency the Council will make available for public inspection copies of all representations it receives and takes into account, including your name and address. We ask for your contact details so that we can come back to you for clarification if required. We may also use this information to contact you for feedback on the proposals we develop following this initial stage of the consultation. Please provide your details below:

Q8 Your name? (Mandatory)

Q9 Your full address? (Mandatory)

Q10 Contact telephone number/email? (optional)

Q11 Please indicate if you are a resident of:

Wiswell ward.....

Barrow ward.....

Neither.....

Don't know.....

Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback.

Please ensure that your completed response is submitted to the Council no later than 28th September 2012 in order for it to be considered.

Community Governance Review: Should Barrow have its own Parish Council?

Wiswell Parish Council has asked Ribble Valley Borough Council to again consider dividing the Parish of Wiswell into two parishes to form a new parish of Barrow and leave a smaller, amended, parish of Wiswell. At present Barrow forms part of Wiswell Parish and is represented by Wiswell Parish Council.

A 2010 consultation on this issue was inconclusive: whilst those residents of Wiswell who responded seemed in favour of a split, few residents from Barrow responded, and, those who did, were against a split.

This Council is keen to ensure that any governance arrangements reflect the identities and interests of communities in the Wiswell/Barrow area and that “community governance” in these areas is effective and convenient.

This Council understands that residents in the Wiswell ward would prefer to have their own separate Parish and that the Wiswell Parish Council supports this. This Council has no objection to facilitating this, provided that the residents of Barrow are in agreement/do not object. This Council is therefore seeking the views of interested persons on community governance in Wiswell. In particular, views are sought on whether Wiswell Parish should be divided or changed. The consultation is aimed principally at the residents of Wiswell Parish (i.e. **residents of Wiswell and Barrow**), although views from other groups or individuals are welcomed and will be considered.

The information below is provided to assist you in expressing your views as part of this consultation. Each consultation response (whether electronic or hard copy) will be treated as a response from one person. If there is more than one person in your household, each person will need to complete a response if they want their view to be counted.

Please ensure your response is received by the Council no later than Friday 28 September 2012 by:

- Using the online consultation response tool at:
http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/info/200214/have_your_say/347/consultation_and_custom_er_satisfaction/5
- Handing your responses into one of your parish councillors or your parish clerk (whose details are on your parish notice board) who will pass them onto this Council;
- Posting them, or giving them into the office of Ribble Valley Borough Council, Council Offices, Church Walk, Clitheroe, BB7 2RA, marked for the attention of Debbie Nuttall;

If you have any questions about this consultation, please contact Debbie Nuttall on 01200 414403 (Monday–Wednesday pm), or at debbie.nuttall@ribblevalley.gov.uk.

Background

The Parish of Wiswell comprises the villages of Barrow and Wiswell and the surrounding areas.

For electoral purposes the parish is divided into two wards: the Barrow Ward and the Wiswell Ward. On the electoral register on 1 December 2011 there were 595 electors in the Barrow ward and 256 electors in the Wiswell ward.

The boundary between the two wards was fixed in 1951. The fixing of the boundary pre-dates the building of the A59 bypass. Both follow the same general line but are not identical. Park Farm, for example, is situated in the Barrow ward even though it is on the "Wiswell" side of the bypass.

A map showing the parish of Wiswell and its two wards is on page 5.

The parish is represented by Wiswell Parish Council. This is made up of eight elected councillors (four for each ward), elected every four years.

Wiswell Parish Council has asked this Council to consider dividing Wiswell Parish into two parishes: Barrow and Wiswell. At present Barrow is represented by the Wiswell Parish Council. Some residents of Wiswell ward feel keenly that they should have their own Parish Council, separate to that of Barrow. This issue has been under consideration for some years now.

Wiswell Parish Council feels there is little community interest between the settlements of Wiswell and Barrow. They are geographically separate and have separate identities and cultures. Barrow has grown over the last ten years and is continuing to grow. It has a younger community, a school, play areas and bus services. It is beside a busy main road and contains a large site for development. Wiswell, in contrast, has had little recent development. It remains a rural quiet village. The Parish Council feels that the A59 would provide a natural boundary between the two wards.

This Council has no objection to creating a separate parish council for Barrow along ward lines, provided the residents of Wiswell and Barrow want this.

Parish councils and their powers

Parish councils are the most local level of elected local government. They represent the interests of a particular community and are statutory bodies. They act as a sounding board for local opinion and have important rights of consultation. The range of services and amenities that parish councils provide varies enormously.

Parish councillors are elected for a four-year term (or co-opted for the remainder). An individual member has no statutory authority on his/her own. The power of the parish council comes from the majority of councillors acting together. Legislation specifies that each parish council must have at least five parish councillors; there is no maximum number.

Parish councils are funded principally by an annual precept. Every year a parish council is required to estimate its expenditure for the forthcoming year. It then 'precepts' the amount required from the Borough Council. The combined cost of having separate parish councils for Barrow and Wiswell will likely be greater than at present, although, in the context of the overall level of tax, any such increase may be relatively small.

Legal considerations and statutory guidance

Ribble Valley Borough Council has responsibility for undertaking Community Governance Reviews. The purpose of a Community Governance Review (a "Review") is to provide a mechanism whereby the boundaries of areas served by

Parish Councils and their related electoral arrangements can be amended, where appropriate.

The Borough Council has agreed to carry out another Review in relation to the area of Wiswell. When the last review was carried out in 2010, many Wiswell residents favoured a split, but the few Barrow residents who responded didn't.

As the Parish Council and some residents of Wiswell are still keen that the Parish be divided, this Council has agreed to carry out a further review. This Council is considering division of the Parish along ward lines. However, before it makes any firm decisions on this, it wants to give residents an opportunity to share their views. **The terms of reference of this Review** are (like those of the 2010 review), as follows:

The area under review is the current Parish of Wiswell, including the current wards of Wiswell and Barrow. The review will consider whether the Parish of Wiswell should be divided to create a new Parish of Barrow and a smaller Parish of Wiswell.

It will also consider, in respect of each Parish: (i) its name; (ii) whether it should have a Parish Council; (iii) what the electoral arrangements should be.

Consideration will also be given to where the boundary between the wards/parishes should lie.

Other suggested amendments to the existing governance arrangements will also be considered.

The Department for Communities and Local Government ("DCLG") and the Electoral Commission have produced guidance on community governance reviews ("the Guidance"). This is available online and will be borne in mind whilst carrying out this review. The black comments include some suggestions. Your views on these would be welcomed.

Boundaries: With regard to parish and ward boundaries, the Guidance states: "It is desirable that parish boundaries are readily identifiable by permanent features e.g. watercourses, major roads or railway lines. Whatever boundaries are selected they need to be, and likely to remain, easily identifiable." **The most logical boundary might be the ward boundaries.**

Five-year forecast: **The results of this are available on our website. It shows that Barrow ward (but not Wiswell ward) is growing.**

Council size and warding: The Guidance explains that: "In considering the issue of parish council size each area should be considered on its own merits having regard to its historical picture, population, geography and the pattern of communities." **Division along roughly ward lines appears sensible given the community identities.**

Names of Parish wards: The Guidance explains: "In considering the names of parish wards, thought should be given to existing local or historic places so that, where appropriate, these are reflected." **Barrow Parish Council and Wiswell Parish Council are the current proposals.**

The number of parish councillors to be elected for parish wards: The Guidance provides: "If it is proposed that a parish should be warded, consideration should be given to the levels of representation between each ward i.e. the number of parish

councillors to be elected for each ward and the number of electors they represent.” **5**
councillors for each Parish.

Ordinary year of election: “New or revised parish electoral arrangements come into force at ordinary parish elections, rather than at parish by-elections, so they usually have to wait until the next scheduled parish elections.”

Parish names and alternative styles for parishes: “The ‘name’ of a parish refers to the geographical name of the area concerned, whereas its status or ‘style’ allows for that area to be known as a town, community, neighbourhood or village, rather than as a parish ... the review must make recommendations as to whether the geographical name of the parish should be changed, but it may not make any recommendations for the parish about alternative style.”

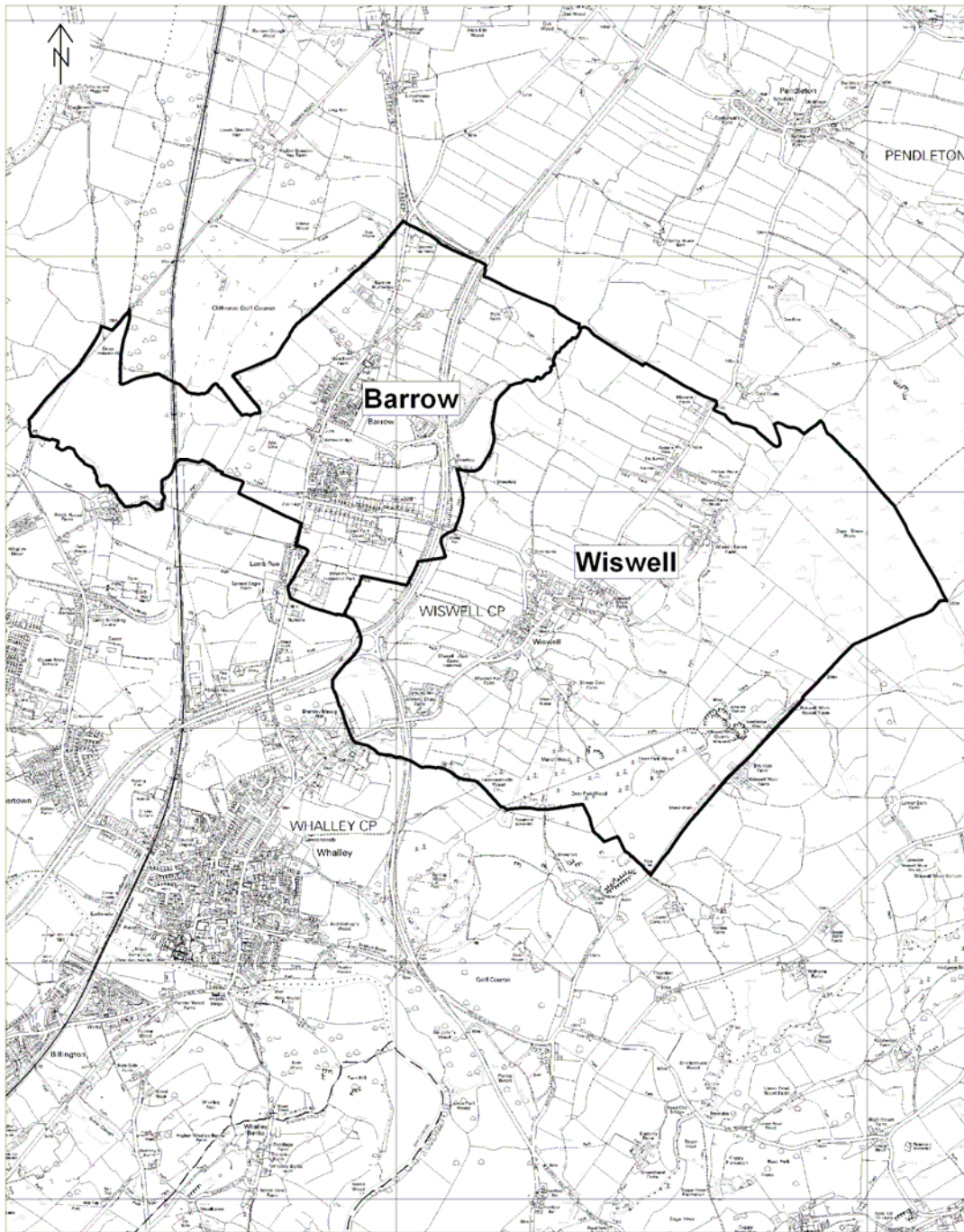
Recommendations and decisions on the outcome of the Community Governance Review

In relation to a Review, this Council must make recommendations as to: (i) whether a new parish or any new parishes should be constituted; (ii) whether existing parishes should or should not be abolished or whether the area of existing parishes should be altered; and (iii) what the electoral arrangements for new or existing parishes, which are to have parish councils, should be. It may also make recommendations concerning: (i) the grouping or degrouping of parishes; or (ii) making related alterations to the boundaries its own electoral areas.

In deciding what recommendations to make we must have regard to the need to secure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient.

In making its recommendations Ribble Valley Borough Council will consider the information it has received in the form of residents’ responses and representations from other interested persons, and also use its own knowledge of the local area.

Map showing Wiswell and Barrow wards



Parish wards of Barrow and Wiswell, within parish of Wiswell

Scale: NTS

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21 August 2012

WISWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman - Councillor J H Strong

Kemple View
Pendleton Road
Wiswell
Clitheroe
Lancashire BB7 9BZ
Tel: 01254 823257

Email: parish,council@wiswell.plus.com

Mr Marshal Scott
Chief Executive
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 2RA

21st March 2012

Dear Mr Scott

Division of Wiswell Parish Council

At the Parish Council meeting on 12th March 2012, Members discussed the current system of committees in operation for the villages of Barrow and Wiswell. It was agreed that the system was impractical and not in the interests of either village. Following the discussion, Members voted unanimously in favour of proceeding with a complete division of the Parish Council.

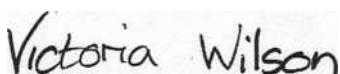
The Parish Council requests that RVBC now proceeds with the division.

Would you kindly advise the Parish Council what action is necessary and provide an estimate of the timeframe involved.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely



Mrs Victoria Wilson Clerk to
the Parish Council

WISWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman - Councillor J H Strong

Kemple View
Pendleton Road
Wiswell
Clitheroe
Lancashire BB7 9BZ
Tel: 01254 823257

Email: parish.council@wiswell.plus.com

Mrs Debbie Nuttall
Solicitor
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 2RA

23rd October 2012

Dear Debbie

Proposed Division of Wiswell Parish

The Parish Council understands that the proposed division of Wiswell Parish will be discussed at the next meeting of Ribble Valley Borough Council's Policy & Finance Committee in November 2012.

The views of Wiswell Parish Council have not changed since discussions began over ten years ago and they are in favour of a formal split between the villages of Wiswell and Barrow.

Yours sincerely

Victoria Wilson

Mrs Victoria Wilson Clerk to
the Parish Council

From: Debbie Nuttall
Sent: 12 November 2012 15:41
To: Liz Lucas
Subject: appendix 4, P&F 20 Nov, Wiswell

Good morning Debbie,

Re: Your email below

I'm afraid the relevant Members of the council haven't filled out your electronic questionnaire but they have responded on this issue. The general consensus view is that the parish should be split.

Thank you

Cath Rawcliffe

Democratic Services Officer
County Secretary and Solicitor's Group
Lancashire County Council
Tel: 01772 533380
www.lancashire.gov.uk

From: Debbie Nuttall [mailto:Debbie.Nuttall@ribblevalley.gov.uk]
Sent: 03 September 2012 10:38
To: Rawcliffe, Cath
Subject: RE: Wiswell Parish Community Governance Review

Thanks very much Cath.

The electronic questionnaire and details of the review are available at:
http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/info/200214/have_your_say/347/consultation_and_customer_satisfaction/5

I look forward to hearing from you in due course with County Council Members' views.

Many thanks

Best regards

Debbie

Debbie Nuttall
SOLICITOR,

Ribble Valley Borough Council

01200 414403 (Monday to Wednesday lunchtime)

From: Rawcliffe, Cath [mailto:Cath.Rawcliffe@lancashire.gov.uk]
Sent: 30 August 2012 08:50
To: Debbie Nuttall
Subject: FW: Wiswell Parish Community Governance Review

Dear Debbie,

Thank you for your email below. I am currently consulting the appropriate Members of the County Council on the proposals and will get back to you with the Council's views as soon as possible.



REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE WISWELL COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Of the 237 residents who took part in the survey, 73% were from Wiswell and 26.6% were from Barrow.
- The 173 Wiswell respondents represent 67.6% of the 256 electors in the Wiswell ward. The 63 Barrow respondents represent 10.6% of the 595 electors in the Barrow ward. Only 27.8% of the total electors for the Wiswell Parish responded to the consultation exercise.
- With a margin of error of +/-5.41%, and given that nationally a margin of error of +/- 3% is considered acceptable, the data presented here is less than robust.
- All of those who participated in the survey were responding as an individual rather than on behalf of an organisation.
- The overall response shows that the majority of the respondents (80.6%) agree that Wiswell Parish should be split to form separate Parishes for Wiswell and Barrow.
- The majority of the comments at Question 1 agree that Wiswell and Barrow represent two different communities and have different interests. Barrow residents, however, seem to disagree with this view.
- 100% of the 173 Wiswell respondents are in favour of changes compared to 28.6% of the 63 Barrow respondents.
- 90.6% of the respondents who agree that there should be a split come from Wiswell.

Implications

This is the second Community Governance Review in respect of the Wiswell Parish in the last three years. There has been an improved take-up in this review in comparison to the 2010 survey.

However, as shown in the following 'Respondent Profile' section the results are not entirely robust and despite best efforts to publicise the consultation to all residents, and issuing an invitation to all residents to take part in the survey, the respondents only represent a small proportion of the overall electorate in the Wiswell Parish (27.8%). The Barrow ward remains under-represented whereas the Wiswell ward was particularly well-represented with 67.6% response rate.

Were this the first consultation on this issue the Council would have to exercise a degree of caution before using the results to support any actions taken to progress the splitting of the Wiswell Parish. However, this is not the first consultation.

The results of this review should be considered against the backdrop of the long-running history on this issue. Indeed, when letters were circulated to residents as part of this review, the Council's Solicitor expressly noted that the Council recognised the strong desire amongst many Wiswell ward residents for Wiswell to have its own Parish separate from Barrow. She noted that if such residents again overwhelmingly favoured a split then, unless Barrow residents provided feedback and objected, it was probable that the Council would decide to split the Parish.

Comparison to 2010 Review

- Of the 82 residents who took part in the 2010 survey, 91.5% were from Wiswell and only 8.5% were Barrow.
- The 75 Wiswell respondents represented 28.4% of the 264 electors in the Wiswell ward. The 7 Barrow respondents represented 1.2% of the 564 electors in the Barrow ward.

- Only 9.9% of the total electors for the Wiswell Parish responded to the consultation exercise.
- With a margin of error of +/-10.28%, and given that nationally a margin of error of +/- 3% is considered acceptable, the data presented was less than robust.
- The majority of the respondents agreed that Wiswell and Barrow represented two different communities and had different interests. Barrow residents disagreed with this view.
- The majority of respondents (91.4%) disagree that no changes should be made ie they were in favour of changes being made to the existing position.
- 98.7% of the 75 Wiswell respondents were in favour of changes compared to 0% of the 7 Barrow respondents.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Background to the research

The survey has been designed to inform the Wiswell and Barrow Community Governance Review.

A letter was sent to every household informing them of the review. A full set of supporting documentation and background papers was made available to all respondents.

Methodologies used

A letter was sent to every household in the Wiswell Parish area. The letter invited residents to take part in a survey which was designed to gauge the appetite for change to current parish boundaries, to electoral arrangements and a split of the parish.

Residents were given the option of completing the survey electronically or by filling out a paper version of the survey. They could request further paper copies to be sent to them or could pick copies up from the council offices, parish councillors or the library in Whalley.

Completed questionnaires started being returned at the beginning of September 2012 and residents were given until 28th September to take part.

A total of 237 questionnaires were returned, equating to a response rate of only 27.8%¹. This included 41 electronic responses (which represents 17.3% of all responses).

Robustness of the data

How well the sample represents the population surveyed is gauged by two important statistics – the survey's margin of error and confidence level. For example, this survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 5.41% at a 95 percent level of confidence. This means that if the survey was conducted 100 times, the data would be within 5.41 percentage points above or below the percentage reported in 95 of the 100 surveys (see figure 1.1 below). Given that nationally, a margin of error of +/- 3% is considered acceptable, the data presented here is less than robust. If more people had responded to the consultation the margin of error percentage would be more acceptable.

Figure 1.1: Margins of error at 95% confidence

Survey Sample Size	Margin of Error Percent
473	+/- 3.00%
400	+/- 3.57%
300	+/- 4.56%
237	+/- 5.41%
200	+/- 6.06%
100	+/- 9.21%

¹ Based on 851 residents in Wiswell Parish on the electoral roll

Respondent Profile

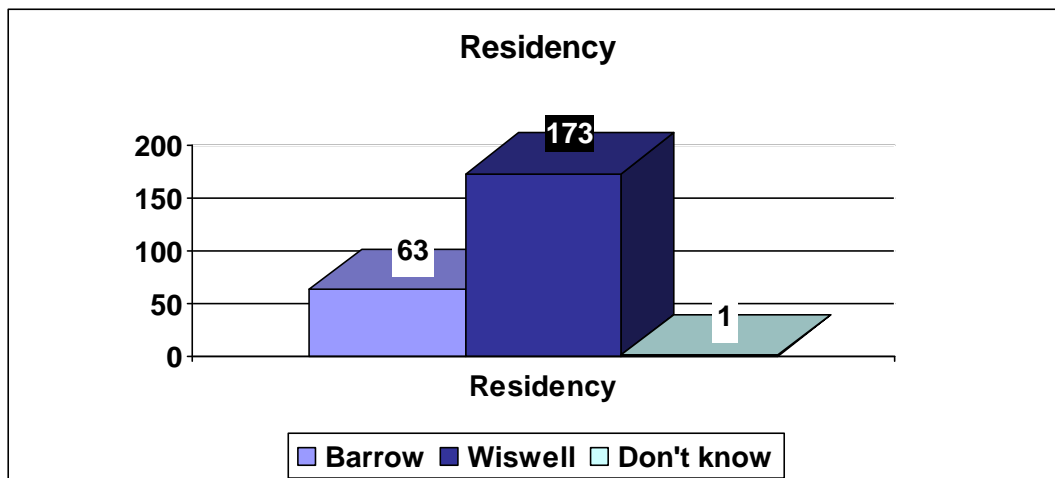
Residency

Of the 237 residents who took part in the survey, 73% were from Wiswell and 26.6% were Barrow. This compares to a population split of the two areas of Wiswell and Barrow in the parish of 30% to 70%.² In effect this means that the residents of Barrow are under-represented in the findings. For this reason all responses to the survey have been split to show a breakdown of responses from each area.

Figure 1.2: Residency

	Number of respondents	% of respondents	% of the electors in the ward
Wiswell Parish	237	27.8%	
Wiswell ward	173	73%	67.6%
Barrow ward	63	26.6%	10.6%
Neither	0	0%	
I don't know	1	0.4%	

Figure 1.3: Residency chart



Individual/Organisation

All of those who participated in the survey were responding as an individual rather than on behalf of an organisation.

² Electoral Register which came into force 1 December 2011 – 256 electors in Wiswell and 595 electors in Barrow

MAIN REPORT

Should Wiswell Parish Council be split to form separate parishes for Wiswell and Barrow?

Figure 2.1: Question one – one or two parishes?

Should Wiswell Parish Council be split to form separate parishes for Wiswell and Barrow		Agree	Disagree
All respondents	237	80.6% (191)	19.4% (46)
Resident of Wiswell Ward	173	90.6% (173)	0% (0)
Resident of Barrow Ward	63	9.4% (18)	97.8% (45)
Don't Know	1	0% (0)	2.2% (1)

- The response shows that the majority of the respondents (80.6%) agree that Wiswell Parish should be split to form separate Parishes for Wiswell and Barrow.
- 90.6% of the respondents who agree that there should be a split come from Wiswell.
- 97.8% of the respondents who disagree that there should be a split come from Barrow.
- 100% of the 173 Wiswell respondents are in favour of changes compared to 28.6% of the 63 Barrow respondents.

Comments

Several comments were made. The majority agree that Wiswell and Barrow represent two different communities and have different interests. Barrow residents, however, seem to disagree with this view. Some examples are as below:

Different Communities?

- Wiswell is a small village with an active community who are willing to tackle most things that need attention. Barrow is a much bigger community with other requirements, the two villages are as different as chalk and cheese, they need their own identity.
- The two have nothing in common, Barrow is larger, they have a School, Church, Play Ground and Playing Fields, Wiswell have none of the above.
- The Parishes have only been included together for ease of administration and are in reality very different to one another and as such should be divided as I feel this would certainly increase the feeling of community within the two separated parishes.
- Have only voted yes in this option because this is what residents if Wiswell appear to want. In reality whilst Barrow and Wiswell are two very different villages with different needs in some instances they do need each others support.
- The needs and concerns of Wiswell and Barrow are vastly different and would benefit from being dealt with separately.
- No - because this idea is not representative of a community. It would make Wiswell an elitist and segregated from the rest of the community.
- The split is now long over due and is the way forward to provide the best services to both villages.
- Combined will have greater say then two smaller parishes.

- Parishes shouldn't be split - there is more strength in numbers. Particularly with onslaught of building applications and a united parish is better than separate.
- The two villages are too closely linked in distance and in impact from planning and development issues to opposite as two entries. 'United we stand, divided we fall' - would be a good enough reason to remain a single entity. We are also too small to have separate councils.

At What Cost?

- During this time of recession and so-called curbs on public spending further financial burdens should not be placed on council tax payers for such an unnecessary change.
- Two separate councils would be a total waste of money.
- The two villages have traditional links and individually are too small to warrant two lots of councillors.
- A costly and unnecessary scheme.
- The two parishes will always be closely connected and I see no reason to go to the expense of changing things in the present economic climate.
- Additional cost provides no benefits.
- In time of cut backs one council is sufficient.
- Additional costs for the administration of two parishes.
- The cost of creating separate parish council could not be justified now or in the future. Small parishes struggle become very parochial and partial.

If the existing Parish of Wiswell were split, should the Wiswell ward still have a Parish Council?

Figure 2.2: Question two – if split should Wiswell have a Parish Council?

If the existing Parish of Wiswell were split, should the Wiswell ward still have a Parish Council		Agree	Disagree
All respondents	223	88.3% (197)	11.7% (26)
Resident of Wiswell Ward	173	87.8% (173)	0% (0)
Resident of Barrow Ward	63	12.2% (24)	96.2% (25)
Don't Know	1	0% (0)	3.8% (1)

- 88.3% agree that if the existing Parish of Wiswell were split, the Wiswell ward should still have a Parish Council.

Comments

Several comments were made as below:

- It is important that both parishes have a representation.
- The size of Wiswell would not merit the amount of money used to continue with a parish council as they are small and have no amenities.
- It is too small to form a Parish Council so would need to merge with another one.
- Yes I think they should even though there is a relatively small population.
- They can decide for themselves.

- There is already a very active community group in Wiswell acting as an extension of the formal Parish Council.
- Not necessary - snobbery issues here?
- There would be insufficient business for a Parish Council.

Should the Wiswell Parish Council continue to be called Wiswell Parish?

Figure 2.3: Question three – should Wiswell Parish continue to be called Wiswell Parish

Should the Wiswell Parish Council continue to be called Wiswell Parish		Agree	Disagree
All respondents	219	90.4% (198)	9.6% (21)
Residents of Wiswell Ward	173	86.9% (172)	0% (0)
Residents of Barrow Ward	63	13.1% (26)	95.2% (20)
Don't Know Ward	1	0% (0)	4.8% (1)

- 90.4% of respondents agree that Wiswell Parish Council should continue to be called Wiswell Parish Council.

Comments

Several comments were made as below:

- Should be Wiswell and Barrow Parish Council.
- Call it Wiswell with Barrow if things stay as they are.
- It should be called the Wiswell/Barrow Parish.
- If it is not split it should be called Barrow and Wiswell Parish. If split should be called 'Barrow Parish' and 'Wiswell Parish' (possibly joint with another Parish).
- No, it is not a parish there is no church or chapel.

If the existing Parish of Wiswell were split, should the Barrow ward have a Parish Council?

Figure 2.3: Question four – if split, should Barrow have a Parish Council

If the existing Parish of Wiswell were split, should the Barrow ward have a Parish Council		Agree	Disagree
All respondents	218	99.1% (216)	0.9% (0)
Residents of Wiswell Ward	165	76.4% (165)	0% (0)
Residents of Barrow Ward	52	23.1% (50)	100% (2)
Don't Know Ward	1	0% (0)	4.8% (1)

- 99.1% of respondents agree that if the existing Parish of Wiswell were split, Barrow ward should have a Parish Council.

Comments

Several comments were made as below:

- We need a parish council as Barrow is rapidly becoming a large village and if planning applications are passed we will double in size over the next few years, therefore we will need our own parish council to help make decisions on what should happen in Barrow.
- The increase in property numbers certainly warrants one.
- That is for the residents of Barrow to decide. I am a resident of Wiswell.
- Combined with Whalley if not Wiswell as will soon all be one.
- The chairman to be elected from residents in Barrow.
- It is needed to give a voice to Barrow residents in the face of inappropriate development.
- Population of Barrow is growing and must have representation.

If the existing Parish of Wiswell were split and a new Parish for Barrow formed, should the new Barrow Parish be called Barrow Parish?

Figure 2.3: Question five – should Wiswell Parish continue to be called Wiswell Parish

If the existing Parish of Wiswell were split and a new Parish for Barrow formed, should the new Barrow Parish be called Barrow Parish		Agree	Disagree
All respondents	219	98.2% (215)	1.8% (4)
Residents of Wiswell Ward	167	77.7% (167)	0% (0)
Residents of Barrow Ward	51	21.9% (47)	100% (4)
Don't Know Ward	1	0.5% (1)	0% (0)

- 98.2% of respondents agree that if a new Parish for Barrow is formed it should be called Barrow Parish.

Comments

Several comments were made as below:

- Should be called Barrow with Wiswell.
- Definitely.
- Probably - they can call it whatever they wish!
- Name would be irrelevant.
- It is becoming the dominant ward of the existing Parish.

If the existing Parish of Wiswell were split to form two Parishes, do you agree with the electoral arrangements outlined?

The following arrangements were outlined:

- Ordinary elections of councillors to be held every four years, commencing May 2013.
- Five councillors be elected to the Parish Council.
- The Parish will not be divided into wards for the purposes of electing Parish councillors?

Figure 2.3: Question six – should Wiswell Parish continue to be called Wiswell Parish

If the existing Parish of Wiswell were split to form two Parishes, do you agree with the electoral arrangements outlined		Agree	Disagree
All respondents	212	96.7% (205)	3.3% (7)
Residents of Wiswell Ward	165	79.0% (162)	42.9% (3)
Residents of Barrow Ward	46	20.5% (42)	57.1% (4)
Don't Know Ward	1	0.5% (1)	0% (0)

- 96.7% of respondents agree with the electoral arrangements outlined.

Comments

Many respondents seemed confused by this question as shown by some of the comments that were made as below:

- No, each parish should elect it's own troupe of councillors.
- Except that I believe a newly formed Barrow Parish Council should have six Parish Councillors.
- Sounds reasonable.
- Cllrs should be residents in the Parish they represent.
- I don't understand how the Parish (separate) Councillors can be elected if the wards are not divided!
- Only people in Wiswell ward should be on Wiswell Parish Council. Should be 5 Wiswell residents of ward in council parish.
- We do not recognise a Wiswell Parish.
- Not sure but there would surely need to be elections at some time.
- Best most effective solutions.
- Not clear what this means. Barrow and Wiswell Parishes would need separate representation. What is meant by 'the Parish council' above?
- 5 councillors is sufficient for a parish council.
- Five elected Councillors would be an adequate number to cover Barrow with Wiswell PC.

Further suggestions and comments on any of the following matters: alternative names; the number; boundaries and names of wards within Parishes; how many councillors should be elected for each ward (5 is the minimum); or other parish matters?

Comments

Several comments were made in this section as below:

- If the people of Wiswell want to change its name I have no objection, if people do not respond to this survey then the status quo should prevail. Everyone who could vote should have received a paper vote delivered to their address, this did not occur!
- I do not see any need for a change. My address is Barrow but I am led to believe my house stands just over the boundary in Wiswell, so which parish would I live in? As far as I am concerned it does not matter and we should all be united in our efforts to prevent Barrow/Whalley/Billington being overpopulated and congested even more with lots of proposed housing developments in the pipeline. Should they all be approved, the time will come when Whalley and Wiswell will no longer be sought after areas, property prices will plummet and everyone will be eager to leave this once beautiful area. I will be answering don't know to Q 11 (which ward do I live in?)
- A less loaded survey of opinion would be a good idea.
- I am very much in favour of splitting the Parish. I believe that a Parish Council should serve the immediate locality and the wards of Barrow and Wiswell have little in common. A split should be viewed favourably, as an opportunity for each ward to become more focused on the issues that concern them. Perhaps, it could be made clear to those opposing a split that it would have a minimal effect on their Council Tax charges. Also, I wonder if the boundary between Whalley and Barrow could be reviewed as part of this exercise? Perhaps the A59 bridge could form the boundary.
- With the growing population perhaps more than 5 Parish Councillors should be an option for Barrow Ward.
- The major problem is of course getting people to be Cllrs. Perhaps a survey to ask why would be interested?
- There could be a simplification of the boundary between the 2 wards along the A59 but this is probably not economically justified. It is sad and disappointing that this matter remains unresolved since 1998 when the residents of Barrow requested a separation of Barrow and Wiswell; we do hope that the current review will lead to a final solution which will be implemented as expeditiously as possible. It had been previously understood that the subject had been resolved in 2004, with fine-tuning in January 2005, and before new legislation provided some sort of reason for the delay and failure by RVBC to proceed. I do hope that the numerical response this time is no less than last time but I am sure you will understand that many electors are not fully aware of the subtleties that make a 2nd review necessary. There is a strong community spirit currently in Wiswell with a small group of volunteers supporting the PC in its work and taking initiatives to improve the environment particularly where some agencies are no longer able to due to economic constraints.
- Only Wiswell ward residents should be on Wiswell Parish Council - 5 on Parish Council of Wiswell.
- 5 residents of Wiswell ward should be on Wiswell Parish Council. Should be separate from Barrow.
- Only people in Wiswell ward should be on Wiswell Parish Council. 5 residents.
- Parish should remain as it is.
- The Parish should remain as it is. If the people of Barrow do not respond then the status quo should prevail. May I say if the people who live in the village of Wiswell wish to change the name of the village I have no objection.

- This is ridiculous and divisive. Wiswell is my Parish. If people of Barrow do not respond then the status quo should prevail. May I say if the people who live in the village of Wiswell wish to change the name of the village I have no objection.
- 5 members and chairperson living in area.
- I would expect that the boundary between the proposed split parishes would be (or remain as) the A59.
- Perhaps numbers of councillors should reflect the population in each parish. The boundary seems clear - the by-pass.
- 5 Wiswell - 7 Barrow to reflect size of communities.
- If the proposed building of over 500 houses goes ahead in Barrow, Wiswell will need to be split. Barrow will become a small town and no longer a village and Wiswell will have no say.
- Do we have to keep having votes until the minority prevail?
- If 5 is the minimum I would suggest the 7 be the more likely efficient number.
- I see no reason to split the 2. As a new resident to the area, I would be more in favour of uniting the 2 not separating them. i would like to see or hear a formulated argument.

Report author – Michelle Haworth

APPENDIX 6

Ms Debbie Nuttall
Solicitor
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Church Walk
Clitheroe BB7 2RA

Dear Ms Nuttall

Review of Parish Arrangements for Barrow and Wiswell

As you aware, the residents of Wiswell organised a petition in support of a separate Parish for Wiswell at the end of 2010 and this was competed in January 2011. The petition was not submitted to you at the time because the residents were subsequently assured that progress would be made and also that the Borough Council regretted that no progress had been made since the decision to divide in 2004. The petition was mentioned in the informal meeting (without minutes) held in January 2011 and also during the related meeting of the full Council.

We are now submitting the petition at this stage only to emphasis the degree of support for the division. The petition includes around 223 signatures from the electorate of 256.

Additionally, all the points from section two of the petition are still entirely valid and we would ask you to take these into account in the current review if they have not already been raised.

Finally, I would emphasise that many Wiswell residents are disappointed and even frustrated that this matter has taken so long to resolve, even since the progress made nearly two years ago. Indeed, there has been some reluctance to complete the latest forms with the legitimate question - Why should we have to do this again?

We sincerely hope that the current review will facilitate final implementation of the 2004 decision and we offer every encouragement for you to achieve this.

Yours sincerely

Alan F Schofield

On behalf of Wiswell Residents

cc Clerk to Wiswell Parish Council (letter)

From the Residents of Wiswell

PETITION TO RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

To create a new Parish Council for Barrow, resulting in the separation of Wiswell from Barrow

This petition is made because:

1. The decision to separate Barrow from Wiswell, as proposed by the villagers of Barrow, was taken by Ribble Valley Borough Council on 16 November 2004 and the RVBC Director of Legal Services was instructed to prepare the draft recommendations to The Secretary of State for the division of the Parish of Wiswell. The Legal Department failed to carry out the instructions with the result that the decision was never implemented. The separation should have taken place 6 years ago.

2. The reasons for separating the two Wards remain as they were in 2004.

- The two villages are geographically separate communities divided by the A59.
- The two villages are historically different. Wiswell is a very old Parish which has changed little in recent times. Barrow was built as a new village on land which was part of Wiswell Parish. Barrow has now grown into a very much larger village with much continuing development.
- The problems of the two villages are very different. Wiswell has remained a rural conservation area with many retired people, fewer children, no school, no playing fields and no public transport. It has little housing development and no community facilities. Barrow on the other hand is a growing community. It has many children, a busy school, playing fields and good public transport. It also has much housing, commercial and industrial development. Because the issues of the two villages are so dissimilar, the Parish Councillors representing Wiswell may not have the level of knowledge necessary to debate Barrow matters constructively, and vice-versa. Because the issues in Barrow are more numerous and more complicated than those of Wiswell, the majority of the time in Parish Council meetings is taken up by discussions on Barrow matters. This has been frustrating for the Councillors representing Wiswell leading to resignation and lack of interest from any new Councillors.
- Wiswell already has a group of active villagers who help to keep the village tidy and well maintained, discuss and progress village matters, and encourage a community spirit. This group could form the basis of an effective Wiswell Parish Council for Wiswell village.
- The existing Parish Council has asked continuously since 1998 for a separation of the villages, as demonstrated by the many, many letters from the Parish Council to RVBC asking why progress with the separation had not been made. The Parish Council is surely the group of people closest to these issues and they still wish the separation to continue, as confirmed in their latest letter dated 2 October 2010.

IN SHORT

The villagers of Wiswell believe that Wiswell is a distinct community separate from Barrow and that the two Wards should be separated as originally proposed by the villagers of Barrow and resolved by RVBC on the 16th November 2004. They looked at similar villages in the Ribble Valley, such as Pendleton with its own Parish Council and Parish facilities, and considered that Wiswell should be administered in a similar manner. This would be in line with Government policy that separate communities should have their own separate representation.

We the undersigned wish to petition Ribble Valley Borough Council to proceed with the separation of the Barrow and Wiswell Wards and the creation of a new Parish Council for Barrow.

SIGNATURE

NAME

ADDRES

RECOMMENDATIONS

Constitution of new parish (section 87 and 89)

1. A new parish should be established by separating the existing parish of Wiswell along parish ward boundaries (of Wiswell and Barrow), to form two parishes, a parish of Barrow and a parish of Wiswell.
2. The parish created from the former Barrow ward of Wiswell should be called Barrow.
3. It should have a parish council.
4. It should not have one of the alternative styles.
5. Electoral arrangements for the Barrow Parish Council should be as follows:
 - a. Ordinary elections of parish councillors will be held every four years commencing in May 2015;
 - b. Five parish councillors will be appointed to the Barrow Parish Council; and
 - c. The Barrow Parish Council will not be divided into wards for the purposes of electing parish councillors.

Existing parish under review (section 88 and 89)

6. The existing parish of Wiswell should be altered by separating the parish along parish ward boundaries to form two parishes, a parish of Barrow and a parish of Wiswell.
7. The parish created from the former Wiswell ward of Wiswell should continue to be called Wiswell.
8. This parish should continue to have a parish council.
9. Electoral arrangements for the Wiswell Parish Council should be as follows:
 - a. Ordinary elections of parish councillors will be held every four years commencing in May 2015;
 - b. Five parish councillors will be appointed to the Parish Council;
 - c. The Wiswell Parish Council will not be divided into wards for the purposes of electing parish councillors.

Recommendations which would require an order by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (section 92)

10. Any necessary related alterations should be made to the boundaries of the electoral areas of any affected principal council.

REASONS FOR DECISION

The Council's Policy and Finance Committee consider that splitting the existing Parish of Wiswell into two separate parishes will help to ensure that community governance within each of the Parishes is:

- reflective of the identities and interests of the now two separate communities existing in that area; and
- therefore more effective and convenient than the Parish arrangements that currently exist.

In reaching its decision, the Committee were mindful that:

- The current Wiswell Parish Council, the County Council and the majority of electors responding to the Community Governance Review consultation were in favour of the current Parish being divided;
- A large majority of the existing residents of Wiswell feel so strongly about this issue that they have submitted a petition to the Council asking for the creation of a new Parish Council for Barrow; and
- There has been a long history to this matter, with support for a split being evidenced for some years.