

12 December 2022

**Subject: Community Governance Review – Great
Wolford and Little Wolford**

Lead Officer: David Dalby
Contact on 01789 260228

Lead Member: Councillor C Kettle

Summary

This report relates to a Community Governance Review that has been undertaken at the request of Great Wolford Parish Council and Little Wolford Parish Meeting. The request was that they be merged and a Joint Parish Council be established. Terms of Reference have been agreed and the Council has consulted with all key stakeholders. Final recommendations are now made to Council.

Recommendations

- (1) That Great Wolford Parish Council and Little Wolford Parish Meeting be merged and be named The Wolfords Joint Parish Council; and**
 - (2) That the Head of Law and Governance be authorised to execute the Reorganisation Order made under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.**
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1 Background/Information

- 1.1 For some time, Great Wolford and Little Wolford have been considering the feasibility of merging into one joint parish. At meetings in March 2022, both agreed to recommend to Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) that it undertake a Community Governance Review to achieve this. Currently, Great Wolford has five parish councillors.
 - 1.2 The Audit and Standards Committee considered the initial report on 10 October 2022 and Council agreed to commence the Community Governance Review on 17 October 2022 on the following basis:
 - that Little Wolford Parish Meeting and Great Wolford Parish Council be merged to form a Joint Parish Council;
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- that the new Joint Parish Council be named The Wolfords Joint Parish Council;
- that the number of parish councillors remain at five; and
- that the changes come into effect from the Parish Council Elections in May 2023.

2 Consultation

2.1 In accordance with the regulations, all key stakeholders have been consulted, including:

- all residents of Great Wolford and Little Wolford;
- the Parish Council and Parish Meeting;
- the SDC Ward Member;
- the County Councillor for the Division;
- Warwickshire County Council; and
- The Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC).

2.2 Eleven consultation responses have been received, nine of which supported the proposal and two that did not support the proposal.

2.3 The responses that were not supportive voiced their concern about governance issues and the fact that, in the past, many of the Parish Councillors had been co-opted rather than elected. This is an issue many parish councils face if parish elections are not contested. In this particular instance, the obvious answer is in the hands of local people i.e. for six candidates to nominate themselves in order for an election to take place.

2.4 There were also calls for representation on the new Joint Parish Council to be from both villages. Again, this is in the hands of local people from each village to put themselves forward for election to ensure this representation.

3 The Reorganisation Order

3.1 To implement the change, the Council is required to adopt a Reorganisation Order made under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. If the recommendations of this Community Governance Review are approved, the Order will be prepared in the New Year with a view to the new arrangements coming into effect at the quadrennial elections in May 2023.

4 Options available to the Council

4.1 To approve the Community Governance Review. This is the preferred option.

4.2 To reject the Community Governance Review. There is no evidence to support such an outcome.

4.3 To request more information before making a decision.

5 Evidence Base

5.1 The Council has a responsibility to ensure good governance in the area and, when approached by a Parish Council to make new arrangements to ensure this, it should consider such requests.

6 Consultation and Members' Comments

6.1 The Portfolio Holder has been consulted on this report and has no comments.

7 Implications of the proposal

7.1 *Legal/Human Rights Implications*

7.1.1 If the final recommendations for the Community Governance Review are approved, a Reorganisation Order would have to be produced.

7.2 *Financial*

7.2.1 If Council decides to agree the final recommendations, there will be a small amount of officer time involved.

7.3 *Council Plan*

7.3.1 The consideration of the request for a Community Governance Review supports the Council's aim of putting residents and the community centre stage.

7.4 *Environmental/Climate Change Implications*

7.4.1 None.

7.5 *Analysis of the effects on Equality*

7.5.1 None

7.6 *Data Protection*

7.6.1 There are no data protection issues.

7.7 *Health and Wellbeing*

No implications

8 Risk Assessment

8.1 The consultation exercise has helped determine whether any issues arise out of the proposals.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 This report recommends to Council that the final recommendations of the Community Governance Review for Great Wolford and Little Wolford be approved.

Phil Grafton

HEAD OF GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY

Background papers:

Request from Great Wolford Parish Council and Little Wolford Parish Meeting.

Consultation responses.

Report Information Sheet

Please complete and submit to Democratic Services with report

Committee / Date	12 December 2022
Title of report	Community Governance Review – Great Wolford and Little Wolford

Consultee	Date	Name
Ward Members(s)	25/11/2022	CLlr Whalley-Hoggins
Committee Chair	25/11/2022	CLlr E Fitter
Financial Services		
Legal Services	25/11/2022	Sue Mullins
Other Services		
Chief Executive (if applicable)		
Respective Head of Service	25/11/2022	Phil Grafton
Other organisations		

Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	Final decision by Council
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	No
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	No
