

## **Comments on the draft recommendations for Kendal and Oxenholme during stage three of the Community Governance Review**

### **Emma Kersh, address not provided**

I am writing to express my view on the proposed boundary changes. I do not support the view that there should be a change of parish boundary as proposed by the Oxenholme Residents Group.

### **Steve Paton, resident of Kendal Parish**

I fully support the submission for Oxenholme to have its own Parish Council

The village has grown up around the railway, and has its own unique identity.

We have formed a village residents group, that is very active and engaged with residents and have raised over £2000 in the last 6 months through various events to contribute towards community projects.

We have started to address issues within the village, including initiating a speedwatch campaign, requesting a parking survey, tidying up a derelict piece of land, and will shortly be placing planters on this piece of ground, and installing planters at each end of Helmside Road, we have also presenting a list of items for CCC for future budgeting to improve the roads and pavements throughout the village, this includes various safety measures to be implemented throughout the village including:

- requesting reduction in the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph from The Station Inn down to the station
- requesting a pelican crossing across the A65 to ensure our elderly residents and school children can safely cross this busy road.

We would also like to see a reduction of the speed limit to 30mph along the A65 as it passes through Oxenholme

I believe that the interests of the Village would be better served by a Parish council and strongly support the submission and look forward to the day when Oxenholme has its own village hall and social space that will further engender the community spirit within the village. I fully support the submission for Oxenholme to have its own Parish Council and recommend that this is taken forward.

### **J. Christine Moore, address not provided**

Thank you for your letter on 26th April regarding the possibility of Oxenholme becoming a new parish in its own right. I do not think this is a viable proposition. We are too small and have no central hub or community assets as has our neighbouring parish of Natland.

**Name withheld at respondent's request, resident of Kendal Parish**

My comment is as follows, I see no reason to alter the boundaries and create a new parish council, no reasoning has been put forward to us to support this change.

There is no church, school or village meeting centre in Oxenholme to enable community cohesion or engagement, the village has nothing to distinguish itself and a new parish council would involve increase on costs to operate.

I believe the area is sufficiently supported by the arrangements for local governance, regarding planning and services.

**P J McGrath, resident of Kendal Parish**

I have lived in the same house on Bleaswood Road for over twenty years, and in that time I have never thought of Oxenholme as a "village" (as in the Residents Group's title). To my knowledge, the community facilities are; a filling station at one end, a pub at the other, a Post Office/shop and a playground in the middle, and the railway station that still bears 'Oxenholme' in its name. The entire area is about two miles in length, and barely half in width. Twenty years ago there was more of a 'green gap' between it and Kendal, but even so, you wouldn't have to be a geographical pedant to realise it was perhaps a hamlet, or a somewhat detached suburb of Kendal. No doubt that when most of the residents worked on the railway there was a sense of community, but that was a long time ago, and now the concerns and activities of the residents are rarely confined to the proposed area. In the past I did attend some meetings of a former residents group, but frankly there wasn't much to talk about. Unless there comes a sudden, unifying, threat to Oxenholme, then attendance will always be so poor as to render the proposed council unrepresentative of its voters. On the other hand, as a voter in Kendal Parish I was glad of the opportunity to vote on the New Road car park issue, as to me that was part of my locality as much as parts of Oxenholme. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

**Trevor and Christin Cotton, residents of Kendal Parish**

As residents of Oxenholme since 1969 we have long felt that we get nothing from Kendal Town Council. The formation of the Oxenholme Village Residents Group and encouragement from Natland residents have made us feel that it would be a good move to support the OVRG in their proposal to establish our own Parish Council.

We do not feel that we have ever really been considered of any importance to any of the local councils. Our representative on Cumbria CC and on SLDC South Lakeland District Council (same person) has done nothing for us over a considerable number of years.

We would like to think that we would get better response to problems in our community from people who live amongst us.

**Ann Burgess, resident of Kendal Parish**

I support the submission by Oxenholme residents group to become a parish in its own right.

I support the submission by Oxenholme Residents Group to have a Parish council for Oxenholme [separate comment from the same resident].

**Steve Warner, Secretary to the Oxenholme Village Resident's Group**

Further to your letter dated 26/4/19 I am responding with my view on the subject of Community Governance.

I have lived in Oxenholme for over 25 years and have raised a number of issues over the years via the current channels i.e. Town Council, SLDC and CCC. Additional matters have been raised with our local MP (currently Tim Farron) and other interested organisations including the various rail authorities, Highways authority etc.

It is my view and this is shared by many others that the existing process has left us with a piecemeal and scattergun approach to resolving the issues we have raised resulting in inaction and a legacy of continuing problems which include the poor state of footpaths and roads (some of which do not even provide the most basic of widths for parents with prams or for those using wheelchairs etc. Over the years the dramatic growth of the use of the West Coast and Windermere line railway has led to parking and speeding problems through the village. Oxenholme station doubled its parking area but is very expensive (£12 a day midweek) and this has led to the creation of additional parking sites through local businesses and more recently at Oxenholme House. To date the current governance arrangements have not satisfactorily addressed our village issues. We feel particularly let down at County Council level with little serious representation made on our behalf for many years.

Pre the more recently improved social media and communication channels we had a village committee that had limited success in improving some needs (signage, some residents parking). Villagers also worked hard to improve the community playground where a grant was awarded on top of local fundraising.

Last year during the summer of 2018 we formed the Oxenholme Village Residents Group and formed a committee (volunteers) which consists of a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and a further 4 members (7 in total). I must stress these are villagers who have devoted time and resources to try and improve a range of areas causing concern. We have a dedicated website and Facebook page which we use to impart and seek information. Additionally we have issued a newsletter to all residents to update them on progress. We regularly engage with our councillors and we have had 14 villagers trained by the police to operate the speed gun for our community traffic initiative.

We have raised over £2000 through fundraising and grant awards with the goal of installing planters with ' Welcome to Oxenholme please drive carefully ' signs, improving the waste ground area (flower beds, planters etc.). We want to further develop this as a community garden. We have carried out our own independent parking review which we hope will be considered by SLDC once their own survey findings are published. We have a significant goal of providing 2 solar powered Speed Information Devices (SIDs) as an education/deterrent to those motorists speeding through our village. We will need a major funding / grant award campaign to achieve this.

Our existing governance processes are not ideal as we do not have any formal influence or access to funding unlike our neighbouring village Natland which houses the school, church and village hall in all of which we have common interests. Many Oxenholme residents attend these facilities. Natland Parish Council clearly only serves the Natland boundaries. Oxenholme has to go cap in hand elsewhere and does not have the same formal status enjoyed by Natland.

My plea therefore is for your review to formally recognise our village needs and look at 3 outcome options:-

Give us formal Parish Council status, If not expand Natland PC to include Oxenholme (existing set up with committee vacancies avoiding duplication, costs, need for too much additional expertise).

In the absence of either of these formally recognise the serious inadequacies of the existing governance arrangements in resolving our problems and needs and take steps to ensure there is a change that improves this so that Oxenholme Villagers have some hope and faith that the health, safety, welfare and living conditions for our community will not be neglected further and that current and future generations of villagers see sustainable improvements in conditions across the village.

Oxenholme has a long and proud history as a railway village and has suffered as a result of it being a gateway to Kendal, the railway station, quarries and more recently the many new housing estates rising up in the area. It deserves to be treated better than it has and this is an opportunity to do so.

**Kit and Sylvia Horsfall, resident of Kendal Parish**

Further to your letter of the 25th April 2019 as residents of Rochester Gardens (9) since September 2018 we would like to comment on the proposal of the Oxenholme Village Residents' Group for the formation of a new parish council.

We both think that this would be a good thing putting any future discussions or decisions relating to Oxenholme in the hands of people actually living here.

Although we have only been here for a few months we only moved from Sedgwick where we had lived for over 25 years. We feel that the priorities of a rural village like Natland are very far removed from those of Oxenholme being on the edge of a large Town.

From our experience of living in a small village we recall that the things concerning residents there were things like the lack of a regular bus service and the constant threat of losing the little service that there was, the lack of footpaths and street lighting and the amount of traffic using the village main street as a rat run, the percentage of elderly residents as a result of the lack of any low cost housing for younger people and the need to travel whether for shopping, entertainment or to visit a doctor or dentist.

Whilst we think that not all of this would apply to Natland we feel sure that some of the above do apply especially the bus service which is the same as in Sedgwick.

Oxenholme, we feel by comparison, will have other concerns relating to parking, speeding along Helmside Road, disturbances due to the railway station especially when buses are substituted for trains and increase in traffic not only as a result of the development at Rochester Gardens but also by the proposed development on the opposite side of the road.

Oxenholme has a great bus service, reasonably priced taxis into town and a wide footpath/cyclepath to safely walk or ride into Kendal if required and none of which apply to Natland.

We feel that the two communities do have very different priorities and identities and, as such, require different representation.

As mentioned above, we have only lived here a short while but, based on our experience of living in Sedgwick compared to here, we see life very differently and that is why we would like to support the local Residents' Group in their proposal.

**Jean Robinson, resident of Old Hutton & Holmescales Parish**

I strongly believe Oxenholme should become a parish in its own right. It has a strong sense of community, and is still physically separate from the parish of Kendal.

**Mrs M Wilson, resident of Kendal Parish**

I have been a resident of Oxenholme for the past 40 years, we have had little if no response from our district/cumbria county council representative regarding issues that have been brought to her attention. The way forward is to have our own parish with someone who would represent residents of Oxenholme with a personal interest in the community. In my opinion money has been spent where it hasn't been needed i.e. footpath from Oxenholme station to the foot of The Helm where people can't pass without one getting off the pavement. Pavements in the village/Burton Road end of the village are a disgrace and should have been repaired years ago, hopefully with our own parish reps. these issues would be addressed.

**Excerpt from Natland Parish Council's stage three response, concerning Oxenholme**

'...there is also merit in the idea that the thus enlarged community of Oxenholme would be better served by having its own parish council.

NPC has long recognised that Oxenholme is a community, separated from Kendal's built up area, with links to Natland through its church (in the same ecclesiastical parish), primary school (shared catchment area) and village hall (the Natland and Oxenholme Village Hall). But they are distinct communities and should not be merged.

Following a democratic process involving a general meeting of residents, the citizens of Oxenholme have recently established the Oxenholme Village Residents Group with Terms of Reference and a schedule of regular committee and residents' meetings. The existence of such an association indicates the potential for creating a parish council for Oxenholme that would better serve the needs of its electors. It would be closer to its community, have more councillors to identify, represent and meet its needs, and not have to compete for attention and resources with other communities within Kendal's vast urban population.

That would provide more effective and convenient governance for Oxenholme, reflecting its interests and identity...

Natland Parish Council requests South Lakeland District Council to seriously consider the feasibility and desirability of establishing a separate civil parish of Oxenholme as part of the current Community Governance Review...'