

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

### **Mr Steven Blacow, resident of Natland Parish**

I am a resident of 'The Beeches' housing estate, which currently belongs to Natland Parish Council. I firmly do not support the proposal to move the Kendal Town boundary to include the 'The Beeches' housing estate. I do not see what benefit and improvement of services it would bring. Natland Parish Council has a great focus on addressing the needs and services of it's current parish members and I would very much like for that to continue.

### **Mr P Ball, resident of Kendal Parish**

I feel that everything should be left as it is ,there are not enough residents in Oxenholme who would be be prepared to form a parish council also the number of properties is too small. Having lived in Oxenholme for 50 years I do not feel it is a viable thing.

### **Phil and Mary Livesey, residents of Natland Parish**

As long standing residents of Natland Mill Beck Lane, we strongly oppose the proposal to move the Parish boundary to include us and the Beeches estate within the Kendal Town Council area. Our three children all attended St. Marks in Natland and we have always taken part in village activities. Our Lane has always been historically linked with Natland, as is evident from it's name.

### **'The Occupiers', property in Natland Parish**

Further to your letter dated 10th May 2019, I object to the proposed changes in the development plan to include the Beeches in the Stonecross Ward of Kendal for the following reasons:-

I and my family consider ourselves to support Natland village;

- We attend St. Mark's church;
- Our son attends St. Mark's C of E school in Natland;
- We use the village hall facilities for family functions etc;
- We use the post office and shop at Natland.

As a family we identify ourselves more with our current Natland ward than Stonecross Ward, Kendal.

Finally your letter did not explain the reasons for the proposed change and other than to align the boundaries of the ward to the development plan which in our view is weak. There is no real benefit to those affected by the change. We are also disappointed to see that the council's precious resources are being wasted on such a meaningless exercise.

### **Jean Heseltine, resident of Natland Parish**

I am a resident of The Beeches. I bought my house 4 years ago knowing that I would be living in the Parish of Natland. In the four years that I have lived here I feel I have become an involved and active member of Natland community. I am a member of Natland and Oxenholme WI; I have served for 18 months on the Natland and Oxenholme Village Hall

Committee; I use Natland Post Office and tea shop; I have been involved with some activities of St Mark's Church.

The children living on this estate are in the catchment area for the village school and local children are members of the Brownies.

I can see no advantage to being in being part of the Stonecross ward.

**Gemma Blackburn, resident of Natland Parish**

We live on The Beeches new build estate and are currently part of Natland council. It has been proposed we be included in Kendal council. We would much prefer to stay within Natland council owing to the fact we have strong community links with Natland. Our children attend the school and preschool in Natland, we benefit from the free bus service in place for children, we attend the church and events at the village hall and utilise the Post office/ shop/ coffee shop. We have friends in the village. We are also keen that the connection between the Beeches and Natland is not severed as we would like to see development of a right of way/ footpath/ cycle way along the roadside between the two. We recommend the Beeches remain in Natland council.

**David and Natalie Forsythe, residents of Natland Parish**

Following our letter received by you we would like to suggest we are retained within Natland parish please as opposed to be part of kendal parish as shown on the community governance review plan (stage 1) included in the letter dated 10th May.

**Katherine Williamson, address not provided**

We object strongly to the proposed boundary change to bring The Beeches into Kendal town.

The Beeches is in Natland school catchment - not a Kendal school catchment area.

When you search for a brownie pack it automatically highlights 1st Natland Brownies for this postcode.

We currently vote at Natland village hall - within walking distance if it was safe.

We come under Natland church area also.

If you look by postcard for WI to join it sign posts Natland by postcode again.

Everything points to The Beeches being part of Natland village and we associate with being Natland residents rather than Kendal residents.

You have also failed to mention that this land grab by the town council will result in a higher council tax bill for those of us living on The Beeches.

I also note that you have not included the residents of helm lodge in this land grab - why not as it leaves them as a small pinnacle, which means there is another reason for the proposed boundary change and from what I can see the only reason for the (land grab) boundary change is to try and build an industrial estate opposite The Beeches entrance - which I will be voicing objections to.

In summary we are residents of Natland not Kendal and wish to remain residents of Natland.

**Geoff Thompson, address not given**

I am well represented by the current arrangement and have no wish to change.

**P and D Ashton, residents of Natland Parish**

We have lived within the Beeches development for just over three years and would like to make a few points;

We have been happy that our interests have been met within Natland Parish.

We have been able to attend meetings there for example the Annual Parish Meeting and have felt included in the community. We always make sure we vote in elections and have found the polling station in Natland Village Hall very convenient.

The parish institutions for example the church and school always include this area in their publicity as does the Parish Council.

We are unsure of the reasons for changing the parish boundary for the Beeches and Natland Beck area (which is historically part of Natland Parish) but not for Helm Lodge.

If the reasons for the change are to do with alignment of the development plan areas this seems unnecessary as with the recent planning proposal for Natland Mill Beck Lane both Natland and Kendal Parishes we're consulted and represented as part of the process.

**Audrey Howe, address not provided**

I totally disagree with this proposal.

I strongly believe Natland Mill Beck Lane should remain in Natland parish.

We are part of the village community and have no affinity to Stonecross / Kendal parish.

Natland Mill Beck Lane should retain its village status.

**Christine Thompson, Resident of Natland Parish**

We live on the Beeches estate at 1 Wintergreen Close and wish to remain part of Natland parish. We shop at Natland post office, attend events at the village hall and have grandchildren attending St Marks school. We are happy with the way Natland parish council operates, keeps us informed and represents our local interests. We find that Natland Mill Beck lane makes a natural boundary and we identify with Natland village not with Stonecross, please do not go through with the proposed change. We wish to continue within Natland parish.

**Neil, Margaret J and Barry Seddon, Natland Residents**

As a resident of The Beeches South of Natland Mill Beck Lane we (three residents of 10 Wintergreen Lane) are firmly opposed to any annexation into Kendal of land south of Natland Beck, for the reasons given below;

Natland Beck is the existing natural boundary between Natland and Kendal civil parishes. As a new resident to the area, the appeal of being a resident of a local small parish rather than Kendal was of importance when moving to the area. The boundary should NOT be aligned with the town's new development boundary as defined in the Local Plan. The Beck and lane are the natural boundary and preserving this and the natural green corridor is of importance to the residents of The Beeches and Natland Parish.

Clarks and properties along Natland Road have been within both Natland's parish boundary and Kendal's development boundary for decades without any community significance so a change of boundary could only benefit Kendal and not our local parish of Natland who would lose significant funds.

Natland Parish Council is more than competent and capable of providing effective representation for its inhabitants like us who identify ourselves as being with the community of Natland.

We have a community website, an annual report and have regular invitations to participate democratically in parish affairs by attending the annual assembly of the Parish Meeting. These opportunities are not offered by Kendal Town Council, although it is a legal requirement.

We have significantly more councillors per head than if we were part of KTC.

Our properties are new to the area and do not straddle the existing boundary. We are well separated from it by a strip of distinctive semi-rural character with several dwellings and residents who have long associations with the community and village of Natland, with its church, village hall and primary school. We therefore wish to oppose any change to this boundary.

**Craig and Sue Beattie, address not provided**

We are writing to strongly object to the alteration of Natland Parish Boundaries so that The Beeches, properties on Natland Millbeck Lane and the small area of land at Watercreek would be part of Kendal Town Council. We are proud to be part of the Natland Town Council community and attend Natland Church, we also have a strong family history with Natland. Children from a number of families on The Beeches estate attend Natland School and it is an excellent community to be part of. We feel supported by the efficient and competent representation we have from Natland Town Council and I doubt we would receive this from Kendal Town Council.

We feel that this is another attempt to gain back door access for planning on Natland Millbeck Lane by a large development company.

**Graham Capper, resident of Natland**

I strongly object to the proposed changes to the town/parish boundaries as outlined in your recent communication.

You have failed in that communication to make any reasoned argument why myself, my neighbours or our wider community would benefit from the changes. I am therefore left to conclude that the benefits are all for the Council, probably to ease the passing of any future or current planning proposals.

I am perfectly happy with the performance and conduct of Natland Parish council and do not wish to be removed from their governance.

**Louise Dunn, resident of Natland**

I read with interest the letter I received dated 10th May 2019 in relation to the proposed changes to the town/parish boundaries which will directly affect my home. I strongly object to the proposed changes and I would like to register my views as follows:

Your letter indicates that the council must seek to ensure that any proposals reflect the identity and interests of the community in the area. I do not see how the proposed changes

do this. You do not provide any argument or rationale for how the changes would serve my interests as a member of the community. Indeed the Council would appear to be the sole beneficiary of any change, allowing it greater autonomy to drive forward the industrial development planned for the green field site to the west of Natland Road.

The changes to the boundary would also include the development of land currently being disputed with Oakmere Homes to the north of Natland Mill Beck Lane. This is a negative move from the perspective of those of us who oppose this development. Natland Parish Council have been strong supporters of the residents views and it is unclear whether Kendal Town Council would be such strong advocates for the community's views.

When I purchased this property in 2016 I did so because of its proximity to the village of Natland and semi-rural nature of the development. As residents moved on to the development they were welcomed by Natland Parish who made an effort to promote the activities in the parish and the work of the parish council. The council has been active in seeking residents views and in supporting issues pertinent to our housing development. There is therefore no reason to change this arrangement and you provide no indication as to how being part of the Stonecross ward would be of benefit.

**Andrew Simon, address not provided.**

I would like to raise an objection to the proposed inclusion of my property on Wintergreen Lane into the Kendal parish. When I bought the property the fact that it was in the Natland parish was one of the key reasons I moved to the property. There is no need for the boundary to change, in fact Natland Mill Beck Lane is the ideal boundary. I as a resident of 6 Wintergreen Lane wish that the boundary stays as is and we remain part of the Natland Parish, as I see from you plan that the residents of Helme Lodge are being allowed to do. Again no logic to include one development but not the other. This is just a land grab, it's not being conducted in the best interests of the local residents.

Should SLDC decide to go ahead with the boundary chain against the will of the majority, we will be forced to take direct action to avert such a tragedy.

**Kevin Price, clerk to Natland Parish Council**

Natland Parish Council (NPC) welcomes the opportunity to improve community governance in South Lakeland District. This submission to Stage 3 (consultation) of the Review was agreed at its meeting on 24 May 2019.

NPC is content with its present status, boundaries and electoral arrangements, but is aware that Kendal Town Council (KTC) is requesting that its boundaries be extended to encroach on Natland in two broad areas - south of Natland Beck and south of Oxenholme - and that Helsington Parish Council has also submitted proposals that could affect Natland Parish.

**Land South of Natland Beck**

Natland Beck is the existing natural boundary between Natland and Kendal civil parishes.

There is a new housing development in this area ("The Beeches"). It does not straddle or sit alongside the existing boundary but is well separated from it by a strip of distinctive semi-rural character with several dwellings and their residents who have long associations with the community and village of Natland, with its church, village hall and primary school. Many residents of The Beeches will now be developing such connections.

KTC has argued that its boundary should be aligned with the town's new development boundary as defined in the recently adopted Local Plan. The DCLG/LGBCE guidance on community governance reviews contains many aspects that should be considered, but alignment with a notional development boundary is not amongst them.

Likewise KTC's request to annex an area of employment land on the west side of Natland Road has no relevance to community governance and would separate dwellings further down Watercrock Lane from the rest of Natland. The former K Shoes, now Clarks, properties along Natland Road have been within both Natland's parish boundary and Kendal's development boundary for decades without any community significance.

Natland Parish Council feels it is competent and capable of providing effective representation for all its inhabitants that identify with the community of Natland. It offers significantly more councillors per elector than KTC would, with an absence of the party politics which is inappropriate to local government at this level. NPC recently co-opted a resident of The Beeches to be a councillor. There is a community website and an annual report is delivered to every household with an invitation to participate democratically in parish affairs by attending the annual assembly of the Parish Meeting. That opportunity is not offered by KTC in any meaningful way, although it is a legal requirement.

The views of the affected inhabitants must be considered before any decision is taken about the annexation of land south of Natland Beck into Kendal.

### **Land South of Oxenholme**

The idea that the two areas of land allocated for housing immediately south of Oxenholme Village should form part of the community of Oxenholme rather than of Natland has merit in terms of community governance. They comprise the Rochester Gardens development straddling the Kendal/Natland boundary to the east of the A65, and land south of Fell Close, within Natland but contiguous with the Kendal boundary, with planning consent for much-needed extra-care housing. The transfer of Overdale can be accepted as correcting an anomaly. Any new boundary should be drawn tightly around those land allocations and not include the long-standing dwellings in Natland parish between the A65 and The Helm.

But 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.

### **Helsington proposals**

NPC notes SLDC's wish to hear views about Helsington Parish Council's proposals to transfer large areas to adjacent parishes.

NPC regards the River Kent as an appropriate and effective western boundary to the community of Natland. Residents further west, whether to the A6/A591 or to the new national park boundary, would have little or no connection with Natland and would not be well served by such a transfer.

The only residents of that part of Helsington parish lying east of the River Kent are the Wilson family of Larkrigg Hall Farm. Whenever the question of boundary change in that area has arisen, beginning with the implementation of the 1972 Local Government Act, NPC has sought their views. They have again recently confirmed that they regard themselves as part of the community of Helsington rather than of Natland, and NPC accepts that their views should be respected.

### **Conclusion**

Therefore Natland Parish Council:

- is firmly opposed to any annexation into Kendal of land south of Natland Beck, for the reasons given above;
- 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;
- has no wish to acquire that part of Helsington Parish lying east of the River Kent without the express consent of the affected residents;
- has no wish to acquire any part of Helsington Parish lying west of the River Kent in any circumstances.