

A Proposal for a New
Well Hill Parish Council/Meeting

by

Well Hill Residents Association

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Summary

Well Hill is located in the northern part of the Parish of Shoreham. Crockenhill Parish is to the north, Eynsford to the east, London Borough of Bromley to the west. It is in Sevenoaks District Council's Crockenhill and Well Hill Ward.

Well Hill has a separate and distinct identity to the main villages (Shoreham and Badgers Mount) in Shoreham Parish.

It does not have a strong community connection with either Shoreham or Badgers Mount. Its strongest connection with another community is to Chelsfield Village which, unlike both Shoreham and Badger Mount, is within easy walking distance.

It is, therefore, proposed that there is the constitution of a new parish by the separation of the Well Hill Hundreds Ward of Shoreham Parish. This is desirable having regard to the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and to secure effective and convenient local government.

Introduction

Parish Councils have two main roles: community representation and local administration. For both purposes it is desirable that a parish should reflect a small, distinctive and recognisable community of interest, with its own sense of identity. The feeling of local community and the wishes of local inhabitants are the primary considerations.

Well Hill is a small, distinctive and recognisable community of interest, with its own sense of identity.

Well Hill has its own Mission Church. When it was built more than 100 years ago, it was part of Shoreham Ecclesiastical Parish. In 1936 the Lord Bishop of Rochester reviewed the parochial circumstances of the various parishes in this Diocese from the spiritual, administrative, and geographical standpoints. It was felt that Well Hill, three miles from Shoreham Parish Church, could be much more effectively administered by being transferred to Chelsfield, one mile distant.

The M25 is a psychological barrier that lassoes Well Hill into London. It was not so long ago that the properties on the west side of Pump Lane were in the Greater London area. Several residents who moved into their houses in the Greater London area now find themselves in Sevenoaks District.

Less than four years ago the boundary commission created a new Well Hill Hundreds Ward and split it away from Shoreham and moved it to Crockenhill for District Council elections.

Local Support

In the last two years, three surveys of residents views have been obtained. In all cases there has NOT been a majority support for the status quo - that is, Well Hill staying as part of Shoreham Parish Council. Each survey took a slightly different approach and the results are summarised below. The basic question was “would your community be better served by staying as part of Shoreham Parish Council, being part of a different parish council or becoming a separate parish council?” The survey by Shoreham Parish Council did not give the option of being part of a different parish council.

The Well Hill Residents’ Association survey allowed each adult in a household to respond. Therefore, these results reflect the views of adults in the Well Hill Hundreds Ward. In addition, other results from the same survey were compared to the 2001 Census and, using standard statistical methods, it was found that the respondents were a representative sample of the whole population.

The Shoreham Parish Plan Group survey only permitted a single response per household so it is not obvious if the results can be directly compared to Well Hill Residents’ Association results. Other results from the Shoreham Parish Plan Group survey were compared to the 2001 Census and it was found that the households were a representative sample of the whole population but not as good a sample as the Well Hill Residents’ Associations sample.

The Shoreham Parish Council survey was sent to registered electors and could be compared to neither the Well Hill Residents’ Association results nor the Shoreham Parish Plan Group’s results. As this was the only question asked, it was not possible to compare Shoreham Parish Council’s sample to the 2001 Census to ascertain if it was a representative sample of the whole population.

Organisation	Date	Respondents	Stay with Shoreham Parish Council	Become Part of Another Parish Council	A New Well Hill Parish Council
Well Hill Residents’ Association	Late 2003	Adult	34%	14%	51%
Shoreham Parish Plan Group	Early 2004	Household	40%	28%	33%
Shoreham Parish Council	Late 2004	Registered Elector	50%	(not an option)	50%

Local Facilities

Almost all local facilities to Well Hill are NOT located within Shoreham Parish. Without exception, the nearest facilities to Well Hill are not the nearest facilities to Shoreham Village. For example, the closest library to Well Hill is Orpington, whereas the closest library to Shoreham is Otford. In most cases there are several facilities of the same type that are closer to Well Hill than the same facility in Shoreham. For example, there are three Post Offices that are closer to Well Hill than the one in Shoreham Village.

There are few reasons for Well Hill residents to venture to Shoreham Village and mingle with Shoreham residents as the facilities that are local to Well Hill are not as local to Shoreham Village and vice versa. It is unlikely that Well Hill residents will use the same local facilities as Shoreham residents. For this reason Well Hill cannot be seen to be part of the Shoreham community.

A comprehensive list of useful facilities is given in Appendix A and the distance from Well Hill. The distance figures were obtained from <http://www.upmystreet.com/> or by direct measurement. The table shows the location of facilities that are closest to Well Hill and the distance to them. It also shows the location of the facility closest to Shoreham Village and the distance of the facility from Well Hill.

Looking at the example of post offices, the Shoreham Post Office is 2.4 miles from Well Hill. Yet, there are three Post Offices (Goddington, Chelsfield and Ramsden) that are closer to Well Hill than the one in Shoreham.

With Well Hill being about two and a half miles from Shoreham, and less than three miles from Orpington, it is not surprising that most facilities used by Well Hill are in the Orpington area.

To put the distance between Well Hill and Shoreham into perspective, the distance between Well Hill¹ and Shoreham Village Hall is about 50 metres longer than the distance from the car park at the front of Sevenoaks District Council offices in Argyle Road to the Dunbrick Recycling Centre.

Whereas Shoreham will tend to use facilities in Shoreham, Otford and Sevenoaks, Well Hill residents use facilities in Chelsfield, Orpington and Swanley.

¹measured from the fork in the road known as Well Hill and where the Parish noticeboard is located

Local Survey

In late 2003 the Well Hill Residents' Association (WHRA) organised a questionnaire to find out the views of residents on many issues. The results are available on the web at <http://www.whra.org.uk/cgi-bin/whra/qresults.cgi> and some of these specific results lead to the conclusion that an independent Well Hill Parish Council would be in the best interests of residents.

What is the Local School?

The question asked was "How many children do you send to the following Primary schools? "

Only half the primary age children in Well Hill attend the Shoreham Parish school. A third attend the closest school to Well Hill which is just inside the London Borough of Bromley. We feel that if more residents were aware that they do not have to have their children educated in a KCC-funded school, most of the children from Well Hill would, in fact, attend Chelsfield Primary School. Chelsfield Primary School is within walking distance of Well Hill, whereas Shoreham Primary School is not.

Place of Work

The question asked was "Where is your main place of work, school or college?"

40% of residents spend the day time to the north (Dartford), the west (London) or in Well Hill whereas Shoreham Village is to the south east of Well Hill. This gives Well Hill residents more of a London/Dartford affinity than a Shoreham affinity.

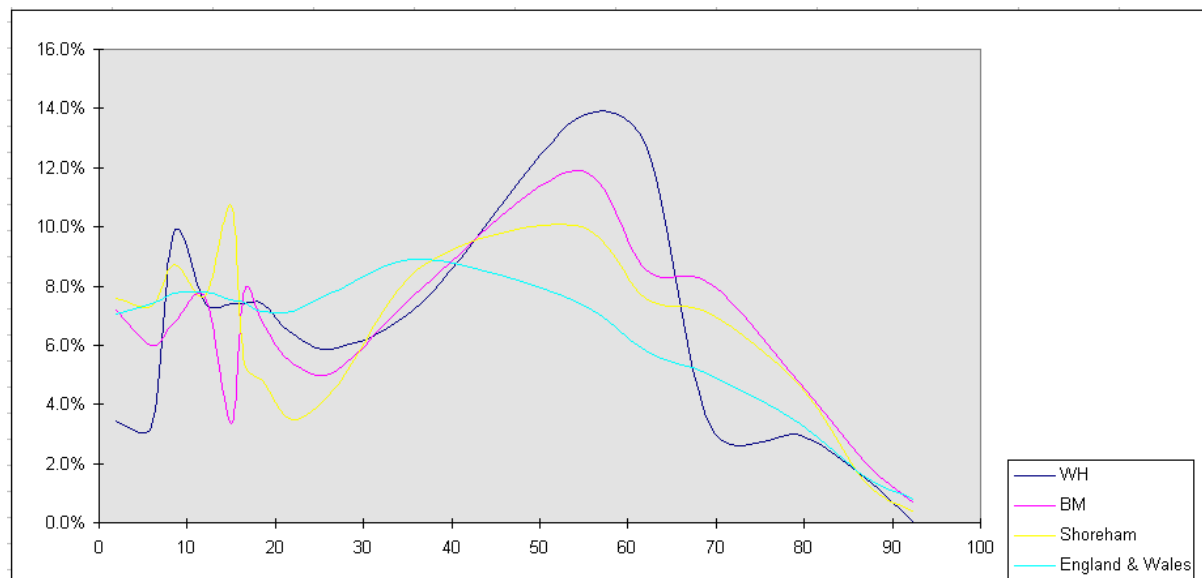
Place of Worship

The question asked was "How often do you use the following?"

Of the churches, the local Well Hill church is the most popular, closely followed by Chelsfield Church. Other churches are more popular than either Shoreham or Crockenhill churches. Well Hill is not within Shoreham Ecclesiastical Parish. Chelsfield church is the local church used by Well Hill residents for christenings, marriages and, sadly, burials.

Age Distribution from 2001 Census

There is a clear difference in the age make-up of Well Hill when compared to Shoreham and Badgers Mount. The following graph has been constructed from data publicly available from the 2001 Census.



The dark blue line representing Well Hill shows a marked deviation from the yellow line representing Shoreham. Well Hill has lesser proportion of school age and pre school aged children and a significantly lower proportion of those in the 65-75 age group (3.2% for Well Hill, 7.1% for Shoreham and 8.1% for Badger Mount). Having a significant difference in the demographic makeup of the wards of Shoreham Parish can indicate distinctive and separate recognisable communities.

Conclusion

The Well Hill Residents' Association believe that there are compelling reasons why a new Parish Council would be in the best interests of the residents of the Well Hill area.

The Church recognised that Well Hill should not be part of Shoreham Ecclesiastical Parish 70 years ago. Four years ago the boundary commission moved Well Hill out of Shoreham for District Council elections.

We believe that the time is now right for Well Hill to become independent. Making the split from Shoreham Civil Parish would complete the split started 70 years earlier when Well Hill became part of Chelsfield Ecclesiastical Parish and continued in 2003 with the District Council elections.

Appendix A

Comparison of Well Hill and Shoreham Village

This table compares the distance of many facilities from Well Hill.

The first column names the facility.

The next two columns list one or more locations of that facility in order of its distance from Well Hill and the distance of the facility from Well Hill by the quickest route.

The next column lists a single location of the facility that is closest to Shoreham Village. The last column shows the distance of that facility from Well Hill (not Shoreham). For example Shoreham Village Hall is no distance at all from Shoreham Village but is 2.5 miles from Well Hill. The nearest bank to Shoreham Village is in Otford and that bank is 3.4 miles from Well Hill.

	Well Hill		Shoreham	
Post Code	BR		TN	
Telephone Exchange	Knockholt		Otford	
Facility	Nearest to Well Hill	Distance From Well Hill (miles)	Nearest to Shoreham	Distance From Well Hill (miles)
Library	Chelsfield Village (mobile)	1.0	Otford	3.1
	Orpington	2.7		
Village Hall	Chelsfield Village	1.0	Shoreham	2.5
Church	Well Hill	0.0	Shoreham	2.8
Post Office	Goddington	1.8	Shoreham	2.4
	Chelsfield	1.9		
	Ramsden	2.0		
Bank	Orpington	2.7	Otford	3.4
	Swanley	3.3		
Pharmacy	Chelsfield	1.9	Otford	3.2
	Ramsden	2.0		
	Green Street Green	2.5		
	Orpington	2.7		
Doctor	Chelsfield	1.9	Otford	3.2
	Green Street Green	2.5		

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Hospital (NHS)	Farnborough	4.0		
	Sidcup	5.0		
Dentist	Chelsfield	1.9	Otford	3.4
	Green Street Green	2.5		
	Orpington	2.7		
	Swanley	3.3		
Optician	Orpington	2.7	Sevenoaks	5.9
	Sidcup	5.5		
	Chislehurst	5.7		
	Hayes	5.8		
Primary School	Chelsfield Village	1.0	Shoreham	2.6
	Halstead	1.6		
	Goddington	1.7		
Local Shop	Goddington	1.7	Shoreham	2.5
Railway Station	Knockholt	0.8	Shoreham	3.1
	Chelsfield	1.9		
	Orpington	2.7		
Bus Stop	Chelsfield Village	0.8	Shoreham	2.4
Town served by nearest bus stop	Orpington	2.7	Sevenoaks	5.9
Petrol Station	Goddington	1.8	Otford/Bat and Ball	4.2
	Pratts Bottom	1.8		
	Green Street Green	2.5		
	Knockholt	2.6		
	Swanley	3.3		
Supermarket	Green Street Green	2.5	Otford/Bat and Ball	4.2
	Orpington	2.7		
	Swanley	3.3		