



Community Governance Review South Darley Parish

Dear Sirs,

South Darley Parish Council wishes to make the following representation concerning parish boundary and warding arrangements for the parish, following the decision of the Local Government Boundary Commission to include the South Darley Parish ward of Oker and Snitterton within the District Council ward of Matlock West. The representations relate to:

1. Whether Oker and Snitterton should be transferred to Matlock Town, taking account of the proposed development at Cawdor Quarry;
2. The warding arrangements for South Darley Parish, and
3. The numbers of parish councillors.

1. Oker and Snitterton

There appears to be three possible solutions for Oker and Snitterton ward:

- a) Transfer Oker and Snitterton from South Darley Parish to Matlock Town;
- b) Leave Oker and Snitterton, with existing boundaries, in South Darley Parish, and
- c) Leave Oker and Snitterton within South Darley Parish but revise the boundary at Cawdor Quarry.

South Darley Parish is a long-standing rural parish with a distinct shared identity. It covers the four small rural settlements of Darley Bridge, Oker, Snitterton and Wensley which share common facilities such as parish church, primary school and village hall, and forming a coherent rural area. To hive off two of the four settlements of South Darley and place them under a different representative jurisdiction flies in the face of an established common identity and shared history. Oker and Snitterton would be split off from the rest of South Darley and be subsumed into the bulk of Matlock Town. The needs of these two hamlets, containing about 50 houses, would be swamped by the differing needs of the urban area.

Furthermore, It should be noted that about half of Oker and Snitterton ward lies within the Peak District National Park and is thus subject to Peak Park planning rules. From a planning perspective, it would make sense to keep this together with the rest of South Darley Parish (around two-thirds of which lies in the Peak Park) rather than to move it to an essentially urban parish which has no Peak Park territory.

In a recent poll of South Darley residents' opinions of the Boundary Commission's decision to include Oker and Snitterton within the new Matlock West DDC ward, 118 of the 121 respondents strongly objected to the decision.

It would, therefore, be wrong to transfer the ward of Oker and Snitterton to Matlock Town.

To leave Oker and Snitterton as a ward of South Darley Parish, with its existing boundaries, would not be acceptable when the development of Cawdor Quarry progresses. Some 230 of the properties in the new development would lie within the parish, which would add about 550 residents to an existing parish population of just over 700.

In accordance with the Local Plan, there will be no direct vehicular access from the new development into the parish. The new development will form a coherent whole with common needs and would be expected to identify with the town of Matlock rather than the surrounding rural villages. To split the development

arbitrarily in two, with half forming part of Matlock Town and half part of South Darley Parish would be contrary to common sense.

It would, therefore, be wrong to leave the ward of Oker and Snitterton, with its existing boundaries, in South Darley Parish.

The third alternative is to leave Oker and Snitterton within South Darley Parish, but to revise the boundary between South Darley and Matlock such that the whole of the new development at Cawdor Quarry lies within Matlock Town. The boundary should be redrawn to skirt around the development, as indicated on the enclosed plan. No existing properties (other than the derelict Permanite plant) would be affected by this change.

We therefore strongly urge that this third alternative be adopted.

2. Warding Arrangements for South Darley Parish

Since one of the wards of South Darley Parish is to come within Matlock West while the other two wards will be part of Bonsall and Winster, it is necessary for the parish to remain warded.

Because South Darley consists of a group of small villages, it is logical to divide the parish into wards which approximate to these. The various councillors can, to a degree, concentrate on particular needs of their wards: they are likely to live within their wards and be well known to the residents. It also gives residents the confidence that their part of the parish is not being neglected.

3. Number of Councillors

The present complement of eight councillors would appear to be about the correct number for a parish of this size. There are sufficient councillors to provide a variety of skills, interests and enthusiasms to enable the council to function effectively and efficiently.

With fewer councillors there would be the danger of too much falling onto one or two individuals. With many more, the discussions would be in danger of becoming too protracted and there would be the need to form numerous committees and sub-committees.

Cllrs Haymes, Wallbank, Fuller, Glasson, Higham, Judson, Wayman and Wilks.

South Darley Parish Councillors