

Appendix 5(a) Responses received on proposals for the civil parishes of Matlock and South Darley

We consider the inclusion of Oker and Snitterton into the new Matlock West ward to be a ridiculous idea. There seems to be no rational behind it.

1. Oker and Snitterton are physically separated from the built-up area of Matlock by open country and a river.
2. The whole of South Darley parish looks to Wensley, Cross Green and Darley Bridge for a school, church, village hall, reading room and pub.
3. The expansion of the Matlock Spa development will never extend up to Snitterton. It will always be separated by open country. Were the development to encroach into South Darley parish, a small change to the boundary would be easy to achieve to keep it within Matlock.
4. If one of the reasons for change is to equalise population sizes in the various wards, this will not work. Matlock will continue to grow rapidly. The population of Oker and Snitterton is small and unlikely to have any real influence on the size of the proposed Matlock West ward.

Therefore, the whole of South Darley should be kept within the Bonsall and Winster ward.

We oppose the proposed change.

I wish to add my support to Proposal One for Snitterton to stay in South Darley ward

support proposal 1.

I enclose my representation supporting the proposed change to the parish boundary between South Darley and Matlock and the proposed approach to the Local Government Boundary Commission.

1. South Darley/Matlock Parish Boundary

I strongly support the District Council's proposal to revise the boundary between South Darley Parish and Matlock Town such that the area of new housing at Cawdor Quarry will be entirely within Matlock and that Oker and Snitterton will remain within South Darley. My reasons for supporting this proposal were given in my representation dated 12th July to the first consultation.

2. Request to Local Government Boundary Commission

I also strongly support the District Council's proposal to request the Local Government Boundary Commission to make a corresponding alteration to the Matlock West and Bonsall & Winster wards. As a resident of Snitterton, I strongly object to the recommendation of the Local Government Boundary Commission to split South Darley Parish into two separate District Council wards. As noted in my previous submission, South Darley is a long-standing rural parish with a distinct shared identity. The parish at present forms part of the Winster & South Darley ward, which consists of a coherent rural area, the residents of which have generally felt that their concerns are well represented on the District Council. 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. In their draft Recommendations of February 2021, the Commission stated that they *“did not consider the grouping of South Darley, in whole or in part, with Matlock All Saints to be desirable. Not only would this group one rural community of 584 electors with an urban community of 4,607, but the Peak District National Park covers about two-thirds of the former, creating potential issues relating to effective and convenient local government.”* It therefore came as a great surprise when the final recommendations cut South Darley in half, placing Oker and Snitterton in Matlock West.

Under the currently proposed arrangement, Oker and Snitterton would be subsumed into the bulk of Matlock town in the Matlock West ward. The needs of these two hamlets, containing about 50 houses, would probably be swamped by the differing needs of the urban area. If it goes ahead, the LGBC’s current proposal will require the Parish Council to discuss matters of concern with four District Councillors: one from Bonsall & Winster and three from Matlock West. A most unsatisfactory arrangement. It is clear that the LGBC’s proposal contravenes two of the three main criteria: *“ensuring that the recommendations reflect community interests”*; and *“providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.”* Thus, it appears that the only reason was *“equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.”* The small number of electors in Oker and Snitterton cannot make a significant difference to the electors per councillor and such a difference is certainly not worth the detrimental effects of cutting South Darley Parish in two. I therefore urge the District Council to request the Local Government Boundary Commission to make an alteration to Matlock West and Bonsall & Winster wards such that the boundary between them follows the revised boundary at Cawdor Quarry and Oker and Snitterton form part of Bonsall & Winster.

I recently received a letter concerning the community governance review consultation for Matlock West. I am a resident of Oker and I am strongly in favour of including Oker in the Bonsall and Winster ward. Our area is rural and so it seems more appropriate to be joined to a rural ward in which our local needs are likely to be in the majority.

Derbyshire Dales Community Governance Review – consultation response

Context: South Darley parish comprises three rural wards: Darley Bridge; Oker & Snitterton; Wensley. It lies within the Derbyshire Dales District and two thirds of the parish lies within the Peak District National Park. In the east, the parish extends towards the boundary with Matlock Town parish. Just outside Matlock lie two former quarries which are now being developed. The large-scale planned development of new homes on the quarry site straddles the two parishes.

Proposal 1:

I strongly support the proposed adjustment of parish boundaries, so that the area to be covered in the future by the large number of new homes in the quarry developments in Matlock is located in Matlock parish and the hamlets of Oker and Snitterton remain within their existing South Darley rural parish.

The long-standing, on-going and future-oriented identity of this rural parish lies with the four rural settlements working together (we share South Darley Parish Council, South Darley Village Hall, South Darley parish church; South Darley Village Hall, South Darley Primary School and many other facilities and joint activities) and there is only a limited identification

with the urban area of Matlock. Indeed the only vehicular access to the new development is in and out of Matlock, with only pedestrian access to Oker and Snitterton.

Residents in new housing developments in the Oker and Snitterton Ward of the parish of South Darley will surely consider themselves to live in Matlock but at the same time the residents of Oker and Snitterton clearly consider themselves to live in and identify with the rural parish of South Darley.

It should be noted that about half of the rural 'Oker and Snitterton' ward of South Darley Parish lies within the Peak District National Park and is thus subject to Peak Park planning rules. From a planning perspective, I believe that 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.

Proposal 2

I strongly support the putting forward of an alteration order to include the remainder of Oker and Snitterton in the Bonsall & Winster Ward along with the rest of the Parish of South Darley

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England's review of the District Council's electoral arrangements appropriately placed the two parish wards which comprise the villages of Darley Bridge and Wensley in the rural district ward of Bonsall and Winster. However, the rural ward of the hamlets of Oker and Snitterton which is mostly in the Peak Park has been unjustifiably separated off from the rest of South Darley Parish and located in Matlock West (formerly Matlock All Saints) urban district ward.

There are many substantive, cultural, logistic and democratic reasons why it does not make sense to locate the two small rural hamlets in with urban Matlock West, against community wishes. This was clearly reflected in a survey undertaken by South Darley Parish Council whereby very many residents of Oker and Snitterton (and a large number in South Darley as a whole) responded stating that they would have strongly objected to splitting the parish across district boundaries and thus to Oker and Snitterton hamlets being part of Matlock West if they had been aware of this recommendation. Well over a hundred questionnaires were returned and the results are that 97% would have Strongly Objected 2% would have Objected and 1% would have Supported. These responses were often accompanied by detailed explanation for residents' strong objection.

It is worth considering why neither residents nor local representative bodies such as the South Darley parish and Derbyshire Dales district councils felt the need to comment in the final round of consultation on the splitting off of two rural hamlets to an urban ward. They were dissuaded in responding for two central reasons:

- a) The entirely satisfactory proposal in the New Draft Recommendations consultation in August 2021 was as follows:
We noted that many of the submissions we received provided evidence on the relationships between various parishes which reinforced the existing ward boundaries of Lathkill & Bradford, Stanton, and Winster & South Darley. However, as none of these wards would have good electoral variances under the proposed council size, we have instead proposed to combine them in a single two-councillor Youlgrave ward (para. 51, page 13)
- b) There had in any case been clear reassurance in the previous Draft Recommendations report in February 2021 ([tinyurl.com/5n7wvawjw](https://www.tinyurl.com/5n7wvawjw)) that the Boundary Commission's position was that it:

did not consider the grouping of South Darley, in whole or in part, with Matlock All Saints to be desirable. Not only would this group one rural community of 584 electors with an urban community of 4,607, but the Peak District National Park covers about two-thirds of the former, creating potential issues relating to effective and convenient local government. (para. 52, page 14)

At this point, from both sets of Draft Recommendations, it was apparent that the Commission had a clear and settled view (across both sets of draft recommendations) on the appropriate location of South Darley (as a rural parish largely comprising the Peak Park) alongside other rural parishes located within the Peak Park. This, and the separation from urban Matlock, can be clearly seen in the map in the New Draft Recommendations (tinyurl.com/mrxn6whk).

South Darley Parish Council and the residents of South Darley were therefore reassured that both the integrity of the parish and its links with neighbouring rural parishes had been underlined in the reports and been taken account of in the draft recommendations. They were thus effectively dissuaded from bringing forward any further evidence to support what was already a settled recommendation or indeed to bring evidence countering a recommendation which did not and never had existed, indeed whose basis had earlier been publicly ruled out by the Boundary Commission as not meeting the criterion of 'Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government'.

When the Final Recommendations (tinyurl.com/mr4chrxb) were published in January 2022, residents were understandably shocked to see that a *volte face* had taken place: while the villages of Darley Bridge and Wensley had been located in the rural district ward of Bonsall & Winster, the parish ward of the rural hamlets of Oker and Snitterton was now in Matlock West (formerly Matlock All Saints) urban district ward.

In setting district council ward boundaries, key considerations are to have regard to the importance of electoral equality and to:

the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and in particular

- (i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable, and
- (ii) the desirability of not breaking local ties when fixing boundaries, the need to secure effective and convenient local government.

In order to reflect the identities and interests of the community in South Darley, it is important to retain the local ties between the hamlets of Oker and Snitterton and the rest of their South Darley rural parish and keep the easily identifiable boundary by locating the two small rural hamlets of Oker and Snitterton (with much Peak Park planning territory) in with an urban Matlock ward, in line with community wishes.

The Boundary Commission itself recognises that “the grouping of South Darley, in whole or in part, with Matlock All Saints [... would be] creating potential issues relating to effective and convenient local government.” The rationale being two-fold: “Not only would this group one rural community of 584 electors with an urban community of 4,607, but the Peak District National Park covers about two-thirds of the former”. A third argument in favour of locating Oker and Snitterton in the same ward as the rest of the parish council is that otherwise South Darley Parish Council will need to discuss matters of concern with two different districts: rural Bonsall & Winster and urban Matlock West and be represented by four District councillors across these, rather than one councillor in one rural Bonsall and Winster district.

In terms of the criterion of electoral equality, to move the 142 residents of Oker and Snitterton (2026 projection) from Matlock West to Bonsall & Winster, would result in an acceptable 10% negative variance for Matlock West (noting of course that this deficit will be

gradually reduced as new homes are built in the former quarries), and a 16% positive electoral variance for Bonsall & Winster.

It is clear from current and historic practice that the Boundary Commission seeks to do its very best to maintain a variance of no more than 10%. It even reports on how many wards do and do not meet this criterion in each District review report. Indeed, 10% seems a reasonable variance target (NB a target, not a limit) to set subject to the other two criteria of the Local Democracy Act of 2009 also being met.

However, it is clear from the Local Democracy act that the none of the three criteria takes precedence, i.e. the number criterion must be balanced against the other two:

- b) the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities
- c) the need to secure effective and convenient local government

Where a recommendation is clearly recognised to fail on both of these criteria, a degree of flexibility must come into play (as indeed it has on other rare occasions in previous district reviews) to allow the other two key criteria to be met.

It is worth noting the Boundary Commission's own criteria for instituting a electoral review define a electoral inequality as being a variance of 30%. One of two reasons for intervention is

- a) If one ward has an electorate of +/-30% from the average electorate for the authority
- or
- b) If 30% of all wards have an electorate of +/-10% from the average electorate for the authority.

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/how-reviews-work>

To place South Darley in its entirety in the rural district ward of Bonsall and Winster, would not cause the 10% variance to be exceeded in respect of Matlock West (-10%) and would only result in a 16% positive variance in the case of Bonsall and Winster. This would result in a district with just 1 ward over the arbitrary 10% (but justifiably so in order to meet the other two criteria).

To view this in terms of the intervention criteria limits, this would neither exceed a) (no wards in Derbyshire Dales over 30%) nor b) (under 5% of wards in Derbyshire Dales of more than 10%).

I responded to the initial consultation and I am very supportive indeed of the new proposals – to move the boundary between South Darley Parish and Matlock Town Council to the edge of the Cawdor Quarry development as set out in the map, and to then request that the Boundary Commission consider moving the (now reduced) parish ward of Oker and Snitterton into the District Council Ward of Bonsall and Winster.

Thank you for being to responsive to the initial consultation – I thoroughly endorse your new recommendations

Thank you for the information about the Community Governance Review Consultation - Matlock West.

I would like the Parish boundary to alter so that the new housing development in the former quarries near Matlock (Matlock Spa) fall within the civil parish of Matlock, with the existing communities of Oker and Snitterton remaining in the civil parish of South Darley.

I would also like the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to make the related Alteration Order to include Oker and Snitterton in the Bonsall and Winster Ward.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposals for the above ward as a result of the Derbyshire Dales (Electoral Changes) Order 2022.

Frankly my wife and I were dismayed at the proposal to move Oker into a Matlock Ward. Such a change would sever the long standing link between the Church and Secular Parishes. All our connections, church, school, social events are with the existing parish. In this sense we have no connection with Matlock and it is almost certain that in any move to place us in a Matlock ward would be to our detriment, as any decisions made would almost certainly favour the town of Matlock.

We can understand that to place the new development in the old Cawdor Quarry in a Matlock ward would be a logical move. The residents are new and, given their location, are likely to relate to the town. For us it seems that the boundaries were drawn to make the numbers fit nicely. Set against that the populations of Oker and Snitterton are not high and there does not seem to be a compelling argument to make the change. Please leave us as we are.

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I would also like the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to make the related alteration order to include the remainder of Oker and Snitterton in the Bonsall and Winster Ward.

I am pleased that you will consider my original response on the vexed proposals (for the villages of Oker and Snitterton) for the Boundaries changes. For the sake of clarity, we reaffirm our support and approval that the villages of Oker and Snitterton should be retained in the South Darley Parish and the developments in the former quarries would be in the civil parish of Matlock.

I would like to comment and express my views on the Derbyshire Dales community governance review regarding the parish of South Darley. I have lived in Wensley for 22 years and I am a Parish Councillor for South Darley.

I fully support proposal one to change the boundaries of the Parish so that the new housing development would be part of Matlock and that Oker and Snitterton would remain within the South Darley parish.

I would request under Proposal two that the Derbyshire Dales District Council asks the local government boundary commission to consider making an alteration order to incorporate Oker and Snitterton in the Bonsall & Winster (District) ward with the rest of the parish of South Darley.

1. South Darley/Matlock Parish Boundary

I strongly support the District Council's proposal to revise the boundary between South Darley Parish and Matlock Town such that the area of new housing at Cawdor Quarry will be entirely within Matlock and that Oker and Snitterton will remain within South Darley.

My reasons for supporting this proposal were given in my representation dated 12th July to the first consultation.

Request to Local Government Boundary Commission

I also strongly support the District Council's proposal to request the Local Government Boundary Commission to make a corresponding alteration to the Matlock West and Bonsall & Winster wards.

As a resident of Snitterton, I strongly object to the recommendation of the Local Government Boundary Commission to split South Darley Parish into two separate District Council wards.

As noted in my previous submission, South Darley is a long-standing rural parish with a distinct shared identity. The parish at present forms part of the Winster & South Darley ward, which consists of a coherent rural area, the residents of which have generally felt that their concerns are well represented on the District Council. 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.

Under the currently proposed arrangement, Oker and Snitterton would be subsumed into the bulk of Matlock town in the Matlock West ward. The needs of these two hamlets, containing about 50 houses, would probably be swamped by the differing needs of the urban area.

I therefore urge the District Council to request the Local Government Boundary Commission to make an alteration to Matlock West and Bonsall & Winster wards such that the boundary between them follows the revised boundary at Cawdor Quarry and Oker and Snitterton form part of Bonsall & Winster.

I refer to your communication by post of 3 August inviting views in connection with the proposed district and parish boundary changes affecting South Darley.

As a resident of South Darley parish, I oppose any changes that would harm the identity of the settlements of Snitterton and Oker by being hived off and subsumed within the urban district ward of Matlock West. These settlements have close and long established social and cultural links with the companion rural communities of Darley Bridge, Cross Green and Wensley and as such (with the exception of the Matlock Spa development), should remain an integral part of South Darley parish when the district ward of Bonsall and Wensley is created. By way of elaboration, I offer the following reasoning behind my views on this matter:

It is important for the proposed boundary changes to take into account and:

- preserve the longstanding shared cultural and cohesive identity of the rural communities that form South Darley parish and whose interests would continue to be effectively, conveniently and best served by their parish council
- avoid the administrative problems that would arise when attempting to balance the differing and competing needs of the rural communities of Snitterton and Oker if amalgamated with, and under the jurisdiction of, the urban-centric town council of Matlock West
- ensure that the interests of the 400+ households in the new Matlock Spa development are capable of being effectively and appropriately served by the Matlock urban authority, unfettered by the needs of rural community members
- avoid the undermining of the rural identity of Snitterton and Oker, substantial portions of which lie within the Peak District National Park, due to being merged with, and dominated by, Matlock town council ... an outlier of the national park

I recognise the logic of incorporating the Matlock Spa development of 400+ modern dwellings, apartments and commercial units within the urban district ward of Matlock West and I would recommend that an appropriate and simple adjustment be made to the boundary at the western end of the development site.

On the matter of a likely approach being made by the District Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission to make a Related Alteration Order to adjust the district ward boundary so that Snitterton and Oker are part of Bonsall and Winster ward, and for Matlock Spa to form part of Matlock West ... this is a proposal that I would strongly support and which the Council should pursue with vigour.

For the reasons expressed above and in order to preserve the cohesive identity of all existing communities that form South Darley parish, I consider it important for a review to be conducted of the proposed boundary changes and for the district and parish ward boundaries to be made coterminous ... to my mind, what should be a logical and achievable solution. Attached is my marked up plan indicating the coterminous boundaries that would preserve the integrity of the whole of the existing parish of South Darley within the proposed district ward of Bonsall and Wensley.

Following the latest letter dated 3rd August ;

I note that the letter requested further feedback on the latest proposal but I only commented previously on the proposal to merge with Matlock West.

So to confirm, I agree with the proposal to merge the remainder of Oker and Snitterton (ie excludes new building development at Matlock Spa) with Bonsall and Winster if it is not possible for the boundaries to remain as they are.

I also remain opposed to merging with Matlock West.

I can confirm that myself and [my wife] would like us to stay in the civil parish of South Darley.

Thank you for acknowledging receipt of my response to the South Darley Consultation - Proposal One Parish Boundary. Regarding Proposal Two - District Ward, I have to say that many of the reasons that I indicated in my support for changing the proposed boundaries so as to retain Oker and Snitterton within the civil parish of South Darley also apply to the

proposal to include the remainder of Oker and Snitterton in the Bonsall and Winster Ward with the rest of the Parish of South Darley.

Essentially Oker and Snitterton are rural parishes as are Bonsall and Winster. These villages have a common history with families historically being occupied in common rural activity namely in agriculture and mining and although many of its inhabitants now work in towns - Matlock, Chesterfield, Belper and Derby - they have chosen to live in these places because of the type of country life these villages afford. Many of the inhabitants have their young children at the various primary schools all of which have at various times participated in collective events.

The same can be said of the way in which the village halls and churches have both functioned and relied on audiences from these villages to provide and support celebratory events and respond to common localised problems and this has helped to reinforce a sense of collective identity. Whilst one may argue that many of these activities could still take place notwithstanding being placed in Matlock West, I think many people do respond to that intangible notion of identity as being derived from a sense of place and if people feel they have been 'shut out' that will ultimately turn our area into one of those dreaded dormitory suburbs.

Thank you for your ongoing communications regarding the ongoing concerns re the Boundary Commission's proposed changes.

As per my previous communications on this subject you already know I have strong views against the proposed "merging" of the Villages of Oker and Snitterton into Matlock West. I would like to add a further point to emphasise the differences between "South Darley" constituencies and "Matlock West".

Matlock West is referred to as an "urban" constituency, neither Oker nor Snitterton can be considered "urban", neither has a Pub, neither has a "Shop" and neither has a bus service serving the villages.

This ludicrous proposal by people who simply count numbers with no regard for the needs of the villages must be fought.

As a resident of Oker I am very much in favour of Proposal One that Oker and Snitterton remain in the civil parish of South Darley, whilst the new developments are incorporated into the Matlock parish.

I also prefer that Oker and Snitterton are included in the Bonsall & Winster ward with South Darley as per Proposal Two.

I am writing with regard to the proposed changes to the boundaries for South Darley i believe that the new Matlock Spa development should become part of the Parish of Matlock and Oker and Snitterton should remain part of the existing South Darley parish I also do not support the parish of South Darley changing in any way If you do a search on the internet for South Darley, you will get many results that show just how many places have South Darley in their name, from schools, to village halls, to trees on hills, to books on Amazon !

I wish to submit my view in relation to the South Darley Consultation.

I object to the Local Government Boundary Commission proposed changes placing Oker and Snitterton in the Urban Matlock West District Ward. This seems appropriate for the new housing developments which are urban fringe but inappropriate for Oker and Snitterton which has no direct relationship with the edge of town, being entirely rural.

I therefore wish to support Proposal One -and Parish Boundary and DDDC's suggestion to alter the order to include the remainder of Oker and Snitterton in the Bonsall & Winster (District) Ward along with the rest of the parish of South Darley.

Thank you for this opportunity to express views on the matter.

We fully support Proposal One (Parish Boundary) "to change the boundaries of the civil parishes of South Darley and Matlock so that the new housing developments in the former quarries near Matlock would be in the civil parish of Matlock with the existing communities of Oker and Snitterton remaining in the civil parish of South Darley"

I feel that to remove two small hamlets from a rural environment into what would effectively be an urban environment where different issues very often occur and don't always coincide. I feel the residents of these hamlets would feel isolated by this move as town councillors have different objectives and views to those of rural councillors. So please consider these views when making your decision.

I wish to give my support to PROPOSAL ONE of the SOUTH DARLEY CONSULTATION.

I feel that that the hamlets of Snitterton and Oker should still be included in the Parish of South Darley as otherwise I feel they would lose their identity
