

Should Peaslake have its own Parish Council?

Information Sheet

1. Introduction

1.1. Item 24.52 of the agenda for the Full Council Meeting on 4 July 2024 stated:

“**Peaslake** - Having heard the voices of the Peaslake residents at the last full council meeting, Councillor M Keeble would like to propose that the Shere Parish Council explore the feasibility of the Peaslake Ward forming its own Parish Council. This would involve a Guildford Borough Council consultation of all the Peaslake residents at the appropriate time if it was to go ahead ([Ward Map Appendix 1](#)).” A copy of the Ward Map is attached.

1.2. At the Full Council Meeting on 4 July 2024, the following was agreed: “Members of the public had their chance to comment and councillors debated the item. It was agreed that the council would neither support nor oppose the proposal at this time. It was felt at the meeting, that any demand for a Peaslake Parish Council should come from the residents (not Shere Parish Council) and could be made directly to Guildford Borough Council. Part of any review would include a public consultation. Peaslake Councillors G Reffo and T Florent will report this to residents.” (See draft minutes) It was also agreed that Councillors G Reffo and T Florent would submit a list of questions to the Clerk, and that she would answer those she could and refer the rest to Guildford Borough Council (GBC) for them to answer.

1.3. Councillors G Reffo and T Florent prepared a list of questions which were sent to the Clerk at Shere Parish Council and to Guildford Borough Council. This was designed to understand the mechanics and implications of a “community governance review” – the formal name of or the process by which a separate Parish Council can be created.

1.4. Please find attached:

- the questions addressed to and answers provided by each of Shere Parish Council and Guildford Borough Council, and
- a map of the Shere parish wards - the “Peaslake ward” is the South West Ward.

2. Summary

The position can be summarised as follows.

2.1. The civil Parish of Shere is the largest in area in the Borough of Guildford. It serves the villages of Shere, Gomshall, Holmbury St. Mary, Peaslake and also a large part of Abinger Hammer (excluding the village centre). It has a total population of approximately 3,500.

2.2. As at 1 August 2024, there were 865 local government electors in the Peaslake ward and 3,029 in Shere Parish Council as a whole.

- 2.3. A community governance review (“**Review**”) can be triggered by petition addressed to Guildford Borough Council (GBC) and signed by 228 local government electors.
- 2.4. Any Review would be carried out by GBC (not by Shere Parish Council) and it would have to be concluded within 12 months of GBC receiving the petition.
- 2.5. In carrying out its review, GBC would (among other things):
- consult the local government electors in the parish of Shere,
 - have regard to the need to secure that community governance for the area under review (1) reflects the identities and interests of the local community in that area, and (2) is effective and convenient, and
 - take into account any representations received in connection with the review.
- 2.6. If at the end of its review GBC were to decide to establish a new parish and a new parish council for Peaslake:
- This would create a new parish for local governance purposes only; the ecclesiastic parish would be unaffected.
 - All property, rights and liabilities of Shere Parish Council which relate to the Peaslake area would transfer to the new parish council. This would include land situated in Peaslake and all contracts that relate exclusively to the Peaslake area.
 - Assets and liabilities which relate to the Shere parish as a whole would be split by agreement between Shere Parish Council and the new parish council. Any dispute would be resolved by arbitration.
- 2.7. The Shere Parish Council Asset Register lists the following assets as Peaslake assets:
- Car park, Pond Lane
 - Peaslake Farm, Ewhurst Road
 - War Memorial & surround, Peaslake Lane
 - Defibrillator, Peaslake
 - Play equipment, Peaslake
 - Telephone kiosk, Pursers Lane
 - Village sign, Peaslake
 - Cyclist wooden sign, Millenium trail, off Mackies Hill
 - Bus shelters at Burrows Cross, Lenten Close, Crest Hill and village centre
 - Notice boards at Crest Hill Bus Stop and village centre
 - Benches and seats in village centre, Pursers Lane, play area, field adjacent to play area, Plaws Hill and Lest We Forget bench
 - Three planters in the village centre
 - Grit bins in Hoe Lane, Walking Bottom and Lenten Close
 - Bins at the bus stop in the village centre
 - Vehicle activated sign, Peaslake

2.8. There are also a number of leases, licences or other contracts that relate to Peaslake alone. They are:

- The stream and bank at Ewhurst Road – Licence granted by local residents to SPC (until 2056)
- The skudges and Field (by the playground) – Lease granted by Guildford Diocese to SPC (until 2036)
- Peaslake Farm Fields:
 - Various wayleaves granted by SPC to B4SH
 - Lease granted by SPC to Coverwood Farm (until 2049)
- Pursers Lane Phone Kiosk – Contract adopted by SPC in March 2023

2.9. The precept (i.e. the amount of money that a parish or town council receives from council tax payers in their area to fund their operations) is currently set for Shere Parish as a whole. The precept for Shere Parish as a whole is:

2021-2022 £140,240
2022-2023 £162,028
2023-2024 £178,822
2024-2025 (current year) £209,397

There are no separate figures for Peaslake but Guildford Borough Council are working on preparing an estimated precept for Peaslake.

3. What next?

3.1. Please take the time to read this note and its attachment carefully and consider whether or not you think it would be a good thing for Peaslake to have its own parish and its own parish council.

3.2. If you have any questions about this note, its attachment or community governance reviews more generally, please contact either:

- Councillor Gerry Reffo at gerry.reffo@shereparishcouncil.gov.uk or
- Councillor Tania Florent at tania.florent@shereparishcouncil.gov.uk