

# St. Gluvias Parish Council

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24<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Cllr Malcom Brown

## **RE: Community Governance Review**

### **Further submission from St Gluvias Parish Council**

With reference to the above please find the further representation from St Gluvias Parish Council which I sincerely hope will be considered by CC before any final decisions are made.

The Parish Council considers the issue of boundary amendments to be an important one and has set out below our reasoning for this.

The Parish Council has also considered its request in the context of the national guidance on Community Governance Reviews, and the advice set out in the Briefings provided by Cornwall Council.

As a reminder, the current position of CC is to 'not support our previous request to amend the boundary in the area around Kennall Vale Woods but remain open to alternative options.'

In the time since this decision my Parish have reflected upon the scope and purpose of its previous request and have now proposed an amendment to our previous request such that the request relates to just the Kennall Vale Woods that comprises the publicly accessible Nature Reserve, as well as some adjacent agricultural land. This is much reduced in scope, and more accurately reflects the purpose of our request.

I am pleased to report that the only relevant landowner of the Woods affected by this change, and the Cornwall Wildlife Trust who manage the Reserve are both supportive of this request.

This amendment reflects our Parish Council's genuine intention to look for improvements and solutions to the challenges caused by increased visitor pressure into the Reserve, as well as highlight that the Woods is on the doorstep of Ponsanooth and is widely cherished by the community.

Very importantly, the Reserve is only physically accessible from Ponsanooth and not Stithians, which lends credence to our view that the Woods ought to be incorporated within our Parish.

Since the Council's previous decision, the Parish Council has engaged with the local community, seeking opinion on their relationship with the Woods. The vast majority of people we have spoken to in Ponsanooth have actually remarked that they thought the Woods was already in our Parish given it is so close to the village and regularly visited by friends and family of the village. Some people we have spoken to have said they

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are aware of volunteers who until recently used to manage the Woods (the Friends of Kennall Vale) who lived in Ponsanooth. Mention has been made also that Kennall Vale Primary School are able to walk their school children the short distance (a few hundred metres) into the Woods from the School to hold Forest School classes.

The well-being of Ponsanooth is therefore intrinsically linked to the Woods who seek value from its beauty and use the trail to foster a healthier lifestyle in a Parish which is relatively poorly served by accessible countryside.

The Parish Council have met Stithians Parish twice now (following their first response which was to decline any meeting). The request from our Parish contrasts markedly with the position of Stithians Parish Council which regrettably has not changed their opposition in any way to our proposal. We are, respectfully, surprised with the depth of this opposition given they recognise the reasonableness of our request. Having discussed with them their opposition seems to be more based on past decisions and conversations made by personalities, rather than embrace the time for new conversations look to any solutions to the current challenges experienced in the Woods. I have attached the response of Stithians Parish Council to this representation for your information.

When considering our request against the key principles to the Community Governance Review the following comments and observations are made:

## The identities and interests of local communities

As established above, due to their historic and natural beauty as well as proximity, the Woods are highly cherished by the residents of Ponsanooth and wider community. They are literally on the doorstep of the Village and it is closely linked to the wellbeing of Ponsanooth and its wider community. This has become clear in the public we have engaged with and who are hopefully making representations to you. The Parish Council is in no doubt that the identity of our area is bolstered by the presence of the Woods. This can be seen for example in the tree symbols on the School logo, and the fact the World Heritage Site for this area only includes the Kennall Vale Woods and the urban centre of Ponsanooth. For these reasons we believe that there is a clear case for the inclusion of the Woods within our Parish as it forms part of the identity of the local community.

## Effective and convenient local government

This is a particular area of significance to the Parish. The Parish believes that the day to day management of the Woods would be greatly improved if it were to be included within our Parish boundaries. We know from experience that the Woods are becoming increasingly busy from an increase in visitors. The Woods are not publicly advertised, however the increase in visitor numbers proves that the Woods are very popular even without publicity. It is inevitable however, that given the trails within the Woods which can be very challenging especially around the ruins and leats, that incidents do occur caused by accidents or other mishaps. Emergency vehicles have had to attend to incidents, trees have blown over in high winds blocking pathways and entrances, and even the system of leats have been intentionally diverted on occasion, causing significant damage to the Woods itself and downstream in properties in Ponsanooth.

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All these incidents and occurrences are reported to our Parish Council, however we are not able to properly respond to these situations as we are not the local Council responsible for providing services in this area. This is a matter of acute frustration as often the public attend our Parish meetings to report concerns, but we are effectively powerless to get solutions when we have to forward concerns to the neighbouring Parish. This is clearly inconveniencing the public as well as the parish Council. We would for example like to be able to enter into partnership working with the Cornwall Wildlife Trust and landowner to enhance the trails and provide information.

Parking is a particular source of concern to our Parish as often visitors park on roadsides and drives in Ponsanooth, and we would like to better manage that with the help of the landowner and Trust and potentially lead to the provision of off-site physical parking measures. To be frank, it would be more effective to achieve this if we were the same Parish Council that provides the 'course' of the pressure.

## Historical Boundaries

Mention has been made that the Parish boundaries in the area are historically long established, inferring any changes are unwelcome due to a historical significance. In actual fact the local parish boundaries have moved westwards over the years, coinciding with the expansion of Ponsanooth, to better reflect service provision and population increase. The attached maps which trace the boundaries from the earliest record in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century through to the current boundary provision show this. The current request continues this natural pattern as Ponsanooth continues to grow and it becomes necessary to incorporate additional land as the Village has become 'hemmed in' by the existing boundary. This is a logical westward expansion.

## Response from Stithians Parish Council

Our Parish has considered the formal response from Stithians Parish Council. Essentially the response from Stithians is quite disappointing in that there has been no change to their position. They state that the Woods are an asset for their Parish, although any problems such as parking ought to be addressed by our Parish. Respectfully we consider this to be an inadequate response to the current problems experienced in the area. Rather tellingly the response does not provide any solutions to the pressures in the area. It is difficult to perceive how Stithians can provide effective solutions to the problem, when they cannot physically (and legally) access the Woods! Of course, St Gluvias would very much like to work with Stithians on any projects they have, although we are not aware of any current projects.

The current boundary at the Woods not only marks the separation of two Parishes, but also two Electoral Divisions and even two separate Community Network Areas! This cannot represent good governance when trying to provide effective services at the Woods for the wider community.

## Other matters

Of course, this boundary amendment request does not solely include the Woods but seeks to complement the amendment already approved by the Community Governance Review Panel, which now includes a limited number of houses that straggle the existing

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boundaries of Stithians and Perranarworthal. The effect of both these requests would be to provide a modest amendment that wraps around the Ponsanooth area and would enable much more effective services to be provided for its residents. The request also includes a very modest parcel of land to the rear of Ponsanooth to incorporate the only other access into the Village other than the A393 and Commercial Hill.

## Conclusion

The above provides an explanation as to why the Parish Council holds dear its request to amend the boundaries so that they complement existing approved amendments and to include the publicly accessible part of the Woods. The Community Governance Review has sought to demonstrate the significance of the Woods to the community of Ponsanooth. The Parish believes its reduced area provides a reasonable compromise and would ensure that it can continue to provide the best services it can in response to the increasing pressures of visitor numbers.

This request has the full support of the Ward Member Cllr Peter Williams.

Yours faithfully

Marilyn Ferris  
Chair, St Gluvias Parish Council.  
CC Cllr Peter Williams

Enc.