

Issue No.	7. Moreton Hall Area of Bury St Edmunds
Area or Properties Under Review	The review will look at the proposal of Cllr Beckwith to create an entirely new parish of Moreton Hall (by removing these properties from existing parished areas).
Parishes	Bury St Edmunds Great Barton (subject to issue 4) Rushbrooke with Rougham (subject to issues 4, 6 and 8)
Borough Ward	Moreton Hall Eastgate Rougham (subject to issues 4, 6 and 8) Great Barton (subject to issue 4)
County Divisions	Eastgate and Moreton Hall Thingoe South (subject to issues 4, 6 and 8) Thingoe North (subject to issue 4)
Method of Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter to Parish and Town Councils • Emails to elected representatives (Borough, County and MP) • Email to Residents' and Community Associations (including Moreton Hall Residents' and Community Associations) • Letters/emails to other stakeholders (see Appendix C) • Online questionnaire available for respondents to use
Projected electorate, warding arrangements and consequential impacts	<p>The Autumn 2015 electorate of Bury St Edmunds Parish was 30,757 (18,932 properties), and its Moreton Hall Ward had 5,472 electors (3,318 properties). Inclusion of the Vision 2031 growth site could increase this further. If this issue is progressed, a more detailed five year electorate forecast will be prepared during phase 2 of the review relating to any recommendation made.</p> <p>See Issue 26 for commentary and advice on dealing with consequential impacts. On the basis of the approach suggested under Issue 26 for dealing with parish electoral arrangements:</p> <p>(a) If a new parish is proposed as the final recommendation for the review, then draft electoral arrangements will be needed to test through consultation. The minimum council size would be five councillors, but a consultation proposal of, say, 11 might be sensible to test opinion (which would be consistent with several other large parishes in the Borough). Similarly, a proposal that the boundary of the new parish be coterminous with whatever emerges from the CGR as the new Moreton Hall Ward of the Town Council (and isn't divided into wards of its own) could also be tested through consultation, and revised at the final stage of the process.</p> <p>(b) If no new parish is proposed, the outcome of issues 4, 6 and 8 would determine the new electoral arrangements for Moreton Hall.</p>
Analysis	<p><i>This issue needs to be considered alongside issues 4,6 and 8.</i></p> <p>The County Councillor for Moreton Hall (Cllr Beckwith) supports the proposal to create a new parish council. Bury St Edmunds Town Council has opposed the proposal, as has a neighbouring parish council and other elected representatives for a neighbouring ward and division. The very small number of local electors responding to the consultation are split fairly evenly on whether creating a new parish council would be appropriate.</p>

Under the CGR rules, the Council must make a recommendation (for consultation in phase 2) as to whether or not to establish a new parish council, and this could change in the light of responses received.

Summary of comments received during Phase 1

A. Cllr Trevor Beckwith (Eastgate and Moreton Hall Division) – Proposer of CGR

Cllr Beckwith feels that the best option is still to create an entirely new parish council to represent this specific area. Reasons cited:

- Reflect patterns of everyday life for those living and working in the area, building upon what new and existing communities have in common.
- Create a strong sense of community identity.
- Give easy access to good quality local services for new and existing residents.

Supporting comments: "The population of Moreton Hall is four times bigger than the borough's third town (Clare) and should have greater formal control over its own affairs. I anticipate that, irrespective of local opinion, SEBC will allocate the 500 new dwellings from Vision 2031 to the Moreton Hall ward, increasing the population beyond what is acceptable representation for even a three-member BC ward. Any division of the ward will not be acceptable if the only consideration is elector totals. Moreton Hall has a clearly defined boundary (A14 to the west and south, railway to the north and Lady Miriam Way to the east). The only exception to maintaining that boundary should be consultation with residents of The Bartons as to whether they consider themselves residents of Moreton Hall or Eastgate wards. My preference is that they remain in Moreton Hall but they should decide. The mistakes in the town centre, where boundaries were drawn inappropriately just to balance numbers, must not be repeated."

B. Bury St Edmunds Town Council

"The electorate of Moreton Hall consider that they live in and identify first and foremost with the community of Bury St Edmunds and look to it for most of their significant facilities as do the other residential developments of the Town. They have a hub area around Lawson Place; many of the other residential developments have shops, post office, GP surgery and community centre but that does not create a cohesive community of itself, these are facilities and arguably there is no tangible community of the whole of Moreton Hall. It would not be in the Moreton Hall electorate's interest to create a separate parish – Bury St Edmunds Town Council's precept is one of the lowest in the Borough of St Edmundsbury – the range is between £5 – and over £100; given the size of electorate and taking an arguably conservative figure, say £15 per band D household, the precept for the existing ward of Moreton Hall would dictate that the audit, transparency, etc., requirements will be for "larger" local councils, i.e. with an income of £25,000 plus – the same level of compliance as applies to Bury St Edmunds Town Council. Moreton Hall is served by three ward councillors on the Bury St Edmunds Town Council – a separate parish will have a minimum of 5 councillors and perhaps more with the attendant electoral costs.

If Moreton Hall was separately parished it would follow that the new housing site comes at least partly within that parish. This is something which is contrary to how the developer, Taylor Wimpey views its development of the site – they have always seen Moreton Hall as being part of Bury St Edmunds and this next phase of expansion as being the same. It is a relevant consideration that Moreton Hall electorate, including the growth site electorate, would be part of a large development which is clearly the outer edges of Bury St Edmunds and yet not included.

Separate parishing of Moreton Hall would also have an unfair impact on the rest of the Parish of Bury St Edmunds – much of what the Town Council does is of general benefit to

all of the residents of Bury – enhancement of cultural and sporting facilities and offerings of the Town, activities for the Town’s school children, provision of allotments for anyone who lives in Bury, supporting events which all Bury people can partake of – the Olympic Torch celebrations, the cycle race events, Magna Carta celebrations, art works and a significant annual grant to enable continuance of Bury’s floral displays provided by Bury in Bloom. Grants are made to help preserve and sustain or enhance some aspect of the Town’s significant buildings from the Quaker Meeting House to the Athenaeum and most recently for the Guildhall. Significant grants have also been made to support the sporting facilities of the Town – the Victory Ground Sports pavilion, the Bury Skate Park and recently a playground refurbishment on the Priors Estate – such support for playground facilities is considered wherever they are in Town as and when they need refurbishment. Additionally community grants and locality monies are available to any of the Town’s community groups.

The continuation of partnership working and devolution

Bury St Edmunds Town Council is well placed to take roles and the provision of services which make sense as community governance evolves from either of these two possibilities. The creation of a new parishes or the expanding of what are typical village parishes will result in dissipated local governance which will be more costly for the electorate and difficult to administer by the principal council, whereas the Town Council is better placed to assist.

C. Local electors

Eleven local electors with “IP32 7” (i.e. Moreton Hall) postcodes made direct responses during the consultation in relation to this issue.

(a) **Six** of the electors favoured no change to the current arrangements i.e. Moreton Hall remains part of Bury St Edmunds parish (and represented by the Town Council) for the following reasons:

- Give easy access to good quality local services for new and existing residents (cited by 5)
- Create a strong sense of community identity (cited by 4)
- Reflect patterns of everyday life for those living and working in the area, building upon what new and existing communities have in common (cited by 4).
- Generate interest in parish affairs and improve participation in elections, local organisations and community activities (cited by 2)

Supporting their preferences, these respondents commented:

- *"A separate parish council would be a duplication of effort and an unnecessary extra financial burden and create an extra layer of bureaucracy."*
- *"Moreton hall should remain part of the Parish of Bury St Edmunds town council. Residents on Moreton Hall benefit from all that the Town has to offer and their identity lies with the town. They are not a village with the special requirements that that involves. The boundary should be changed such that the school and the new homes are within overall parish of Bury St Edmunds Town council. The homes and School are all marketed as being on Moreton Hall and their identity will be as a part of Moreton hall, they will not have any affinity or identity with the village of Rougham which will be several miles away the other side of the A14. The school has been planned for many years, paid for by Section 106 from Moreton hall Developments. We have seen how ludicrous the current boundary is when it put 5 houses in Rougham, whose neighbours were in Moreton Hall."*

- *Moreton Hall is part of the town and thereby identifies with Bury St Edmunds Town Council. To create a separate parish is unnecessary and just another tier of local government. If one area of the Town chose to become a parish then it might promote others to go down that route, and this would be far more costly, and would adversely affect the prospects and wellbeing of our Town Centre."*

(b) **Five*** of the electors favoured the creation of a new parish for Moreton Hall for the following reasons:

- Give easy access to good quality local services for new and existing residents (cited by 3)
- Create a strong sense of community identity (cited by 3)
- Improve the capacity of a parish council to deliver better services and to represent the community's interests effectively (cited by 3)
- Reflect patterns of everyday life for those living and working in the area, building upon what new and existing communities have in common (cited by 1).
- Generate interest in parish affairs and improve participation in elections, local organisations and community activities (cited by 1)

Supporting their preferences, these respondents commented:

- *"We need to create our own identity, by having this large area 'Moreton Hall' we need to have our own Parish council, that would have a greater say in all matters local to concern us. Like the purchase of the Flying Fortress pub by Greene King which has been boarded up for over 18 months, a total waste. We need to encourage parents to leave cars at home and allow children to walk to school in their immediate area. Building a new flyover at great expense will not ease traffic chaos in the town, just improve the road quality to Rougham. We need to have more say in our own area by people who live in Moreton Hall"*
- *"I would wish that the boundary for Moreton Hall and Rushbrooke be moved so that my house is within Moreton Hall." (This comment is from a resident of Primack Road so this comment would also apply to issue 8).*

* *In addition, there were three electors (plus one local councillor) who supported a new parish council for Moreton Hall as part of their response to issue 4 (where their comments are recorded). Two of these three did not respond to issue 7, so it might be more accurate to record the total number of electors who advised the Council that they supported a new parish council during phase 1 as **seven**.*

(c) Although, at the time of writing this report, the Moreton Hall Residents' Association had not responded directly, its co-chairman was quoted in an East Anglian Daily Times article (18.9.15 - *"Growing estate may get its own parish council"*) as saying: "Personally I think it would be great for the estate. It would give us more formal representation; we are the size of a village already and still expanding."

D. Rushbrooke with Rougham Parish Council

The Rushbrooke with Rougham Parish Council approved the following Resolution on 26th October 2015: "Moreton Hall Ward should remain part of the Bury St Edmunds Town Council and not become a separate Parish." This submission was co-signed by the Borough and County Councillors, Cllrs Mildmay-White and Clements (see below).

E. Cllr Sara Mildmay-White (Rougham Ward)

Supports the Rushbrooke with Rougham Parish Council submission and advocates no change to the current arrangements i.e. Moreton Hall remains part of Bury St Edmunds

parish for the following reasons:

- Reflect patterns of everyday life for those living and working in the area, building upon what new and existing communities have in common.
- Create a strong sense of community identity.

She also commented: "If Moreton Hall were to be parished the whole of Bury St Edmunds would need to be too. I believe this would lead to a fragmentation of the town, difficulties over individual parish precepts on a street by street basis, confusion on wider strategic consultations and decisions. A strong town council is best placed to serve all the residents of Bury St Edmunds."

F. Cllr Terry Clements (Horringer and Whelnetham Ward and Thingoe South Division)

Supports the Rushbrooke with Rougham Parish Council submission.

G. Cllr David Nettleton (Risbygate Ward and Tower Division)

Ask Moreton Hall residents. Reason: "Simply relying on website contributions is passive not active. First define 'Moreton Hall' then write to 10% of residents to explain the proposal and provide voting slip and prepaid return envelope."

Map

The existing boundary of the Borough and Town Councils' Moreton Hall Ward is shown below for information only (not reflecting possible changes under issues 4, 6 and 8). A suggested boundary will be required to test through consultation if a recommendation to create a new parish council is approved.

