

## Appendix A

No	Area or Properties Under Review	Parishes Directly Affected	Matter covered by final recommendation
2	Mildenhall Parish	Mildenhall	Whether or not (and how) the existing Parish of Mildenhall should be divided to create two parishes, each with its own parish council: a smaller Parish of Mildenhall and a new Parish of West Row.
<b>Final Recommendation for Consultation</b>			
<b>That there be no change to the current arrangements i.e. Mildenhall Parish stays as it is and a new parish for West Row is <u>not</u> created.</b>			
<b>Background Information for Recommendation</b>			
<p>The proposal to include this matter in the CGR was made by the West Row Action Group which felt that West Row should have its own parish council in order to provide it with its own representation and to reflect its separate community identity.</p> <p>The reason for the CGR recommendation above is that the District Council felt that, given the significance of the change involved for all electors of Mildenhall Parish, it needed evidence of widespread local support to justify creating a new parish for West Row. Therefore, it agreed that it should be the 'status quo' position that is tested in the final stage of the review.</p> <p>However, in consulting on such a final recommendation, the Council made it clear to respondents what the alternative option and implications would be, since the Council can change its recommendation in the light of evidence received i.e. if support is expressed for a separate parish.</p> <p>The District Council's final recommendation for consultation would see West Row village and surrounding area (including Isleham Marina) remain within the existing Mildenhall Parish, and continue to be served by Mildenhall Parish Council. The area would continue to have its own West Row Ward within the Parish, with its own parish councillors. More information on the Parish Council can be found at: <a href="http://mildenhall.onesuffolk.net/">http://mildenhall.onesuffolk.net/</a> .</p> <p>The alternative option, as suggested by the Action Group, would be to create an entirely new and separate Parish for the West Row area, served by its own parish council. This would reduce the area of the current Mildenhall Parish, and therefore the proposal affects all electors in it.</p> <p><u>Electorate Information</u></p> <p>If a West Row Parish were to be created, its electorate would depend on its agreed boundaries (see next section). Furthermore, producing a five year electorate forecast ahead of adoption of a new Local Plan is not easy and any estimate must therefore be treated with caution ahead of determination of the relevant planning processes. Nonetheless, to assist respondents, <b>and as guidance only</b>, an indicative five year estimate of the electorate of the existing</p>			

Parish of Mildenhall<sup>1</sup> would be:

<b>Mildenhall Parish Ward(s)</b>	<b>Electorate forecast for 2022</b>
Great Heath and Market	6240
West Row	1502

#### Alternative Option

If the recommendation is changed, and a new parish council is formed, then the District Council will need to determine:

- (a) the name of the new parish council;
- (b) the new parish boundary;
- (c) the number of councillors;
- (d) whether the new parish will be warded; and
- (e) an implementation date and election timetable thereafter (see covering report).

The minimum size of any new parish council for West Row would be 5 councillors, but 9 councillors would be consistent with several other large parishes in the District e.g. Exning with 1554 electors. By comparison, Mildenhall Parish Council currently comprises 15 councillors to represent the three wards of the Parish (and just under 7000 electors). Three of these parish councillors represent the West Row Ward (with the other two wards having six councillors each).

The boundary of any new parish would need to reflect a common community identity and support convenient and effective local government. Boundaries should also, where possible, be linked to recognisable ground features, particularly those which form natural boundaries themselves. The simplest way to create a new West Row Parish would be to use the three existing Mildenhall parish wards as 'building blocks'. This is because these are well-established and understood. This also avoids consequential changes to existing district or county arrangements. On this basis, a new West Row Parish could be formed entirely from the current West Row Ward of Mildenhall Parish. This would mean that any new parish councillors for West Row represented exactly the same area as the three existing Mildenhall parish councillors from the West Row Ward.

#### **Summary of Consultation**

As set out in detail in the next section, opinion remains divided, albeit a large majority of the electors who responded to the consultation opposed the recommendation, and wished to see it changed so that a new parish council is formed. The Council must therefore decide if it now has enough evidence, in relation to the criteria for CGRs and local opinion, to justify a change to the current parish boundary.

No comments have been received to disagree with the suggestion (in the

<sup>1</sup> This estimate reflects the current assessment of the five year supply of housing land in Forest Heath which was published in November 2016 and is available on the Council's website as part of the background papers for the Local Plan consultation. This indicative estimate also reflects the current impact of USVF residents on the electoral registers for Mildenhall Parish. The estimate is therefore subject to the completion of the relevant planning processes and future changes at both airbases.

background information for the consultation pack) that any new parish could be coterminous with Mildenhall Parish Council's existing West Row Ward, with 9 councillors.

## **Responses During Consultation**

As well as correspondence to elected representatives, community organisations and other stakeholders in the Parish, this issue was publicised by the Council on its website, through social media and via a press release. The Council also created an online response form which explained the two options available, with background information for each. Local publicity was also provided by those advocating the change.

In this context, responses received were as follows.

### **A. Mildenhall Parish Council**

The formal response of the Parish Council is as follows:

#### **Community Governance Review- Formal Consultation**

Mildenhall Parish Council debated the subject at their full council meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017. Below is the collective response:

*Mildenhall Parish Council has considered the proposal by some West Row Parishioners that there should be a separate Parish Council serving West Row.*

*The Council was of the mind that this is a decision for the residents of West Row and would not want to oppose or prevent such a move if it were demonstrably the will of a majority.*

*In the discussions, concern was expressed that some of the material promoting separation had given misleading information - for example about street lighting and cemetery provision - and the MPC would hope that every effort would be made to correct any misapprehensions.*

The Parish Council has subsequently clarified, in light of the above, that it looks after the majority of street lights in West Row (with the County Council maintaining the rest), and pointed out that its role on planning applications is advisory to the district council, as a consultee, not the decision-taker. The cemetery is addressed in other consultation responses received, summarised below.

In addition to the Parish Council's formal response, a personal letter has been received from one of the existing parish councillors, which is included in section E below, as per the reporting protocol.

### **B. West Row Action Group**

The submission of the Group is as follows:



### **SUBMISSION FROM WEST ROW ACTION GROUP**

The 'West Row Action Group' was founded in response to a planning application submitted to Forest Heath District Council by The Waters Family, Pidgeon Developments and Suffolk County Council. The application was for a housing development that we feel threatens the very nature of our rural agricultural village.

In our struggle to defend our community against this threat, some of the problems about how we are represented have become part of what we have had to deal with. Villagers attended Mildenhall Parish in order to enlist our parishes support and take the first official step in opposing the application. This meeting was much more than a disappointment to the villagers it highlighted the point that there is a gulf between the village of West Row and Mildenhall Parish. As communities, we have little in common and as things are set up our representation is so small that we are effectively just a subordinate part of another towns parish. On returning to West Row, we decided that not only regarding this application but for the very practical reason that an urban community cannot be expected to legislate for the needs of what is a diverse rural community. We need to take control of our own affairs.

We know that West Row is a natural large rural parish and for just the practical reason of how to run a parish that includes the community in an active sense this is common sense.

Looking at the proposed parish, you will see that this is exactly what you would expect of a large rural parish. A village, with a large village hall, primary school, pre-school, shops, churches, chapels and a scattered rural community. If this process is about community cohesion it would be hard to find an instance where creating a parish would have a more positive role is sustaining a community.

There are many negatives we could point to in our history with Mildenhall Parish, their name being used to define our treasure! But this is about a rural active community asking for its identity and something that we can promote in a positive sense.

In the local plan consultation, village of the year and our resistance to the developers we have already proved that there is a community here with a real passion for our village and surrounding community. The situation regarding our parish representation we maintain is unsustainable and this review is probably our best chance to tidy things up and create a rural parish for our community and let Mildenhall have its town council.

We hope that you will see this logic of this change and the positive advantages of this rural agricultural parish.

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### VILLAGE AND FEN-WEST ROW

WEST ROW VILLAGE IS SITUATED ON THE EDGE OF THE FENS AMIDST SOME OF THE BEST AGRICULTURAL LAND IN EAST ANGLIA.

JUST INSIDE THE SUFFOLK BORDER, IT IS SOME 2 MILES FROM MILDENHALL, 15 MILES FROM BURY ST. EDMUNDS AND 25 MILES FROM CAMBRIDGE. IT IS SEPARATED FROM ITS NEIGHBOURING VILLAGE OF BECK ROW BY THE U.S.A.F. BASE - R.A.F. MILDENHALL

THE VILLAGE IS SOMEWHAT CUT OFF FROM THE MAIN ROAD SYSTEM AND IS VERY MUCH A RURAL COMMUNITY, MANY OF ITS OLD FAMILIES HAVING DEEP LINKS WITH THE PAST.

ITS WINDING, TWISTING ROADS ARE A FEATURE OF THE VILLAGE WHILE THE ROADS INTO THE FEN, MAINLY FARM TRACKS, ARE KNOWN AS DROVES.

### Map of the area

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Shortly afterwards the website was added to The National Archives' UK Government Web Archive.

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### VILLAGE LIFE - WEST ROW

"WE ARE VERY HAPPY LIVING HERE"

THIS IS THE RESPONSE ONE GETS FROM THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THIS AREA. IT IS A QUIET, FRIENDLY PLACE, WELL AWAY FROM THE MAIN HIGHWAYS BUT NOT CUT OFF FROM CIVILISATION. THERE IS A GREAT FEELING OF COMMUNITY HERE AND A PRIDE IN BELONGING. MANY OF THE FAMILIES HAVE STRONG TIES WITH THE AREA AND GO BACK FOR MANY GENERATIONS, AND THERE IS A SPIRIT OF DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE. PRESSED TO ANSWER THE QUESTION "WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES OF LIVING HERE?" MOST WILL REPLY THAT THE AEROPLANES ARE NOISY BUT YOU GET USED TO THEM AND ANYWAY THEY BRING JOBS!

CLASS 8, GREAT HEATH C.P.SCHOOL,  
MILDENHALL, SUFFOLK.

JULY 1985

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### MILDENHALL TREASURE-WEST ROW

NO SURVEY OF WEST ROW WOULD BE COMPLETE WITHOUT A REFERENCE TO THE MILDENHALL TREASURE WHICH IS HOUSED IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

IT WAS FOUND IN 1942 AT WEST ROW IN A FIELD BETWEEN WESTON DITCH AND THE GREEN. IT CONSISTS OF 34 PIECES OF VERY HIGH QUALITY SILVERWARE AND WAS PROBABLY BURIED BY ITS ROMAN OWNERS IN TROUBLED TIMES TOWARDS THE END OF THE ROMAN OCCUPATION.

THE TREASURE WAS UNEARTHED AFTER DEEP-PLOUGHING WHICH WAS INTRODUCED DURING THE WAR. IT WAS NOT UNTIL 4 YEARS AFTER ITS DISCOVERY THAT ITS VALUE WAS REALISED BY THE TWO MEN WHO FOUND IT.

DECLARED TREASURE TROVE BY AN INQUEST AT MILDENHALL IN 1946, IT WAS PUT ON PUBLIC DISPLAY THE SAME YEAR.

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### LOCAL ISSUES - WEST ROW

PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH PLANNING AND HOUSING ARE THE USUAL ISSUES WHICH LOCAL COUNCILLORS HAVE TO TACKLE ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE THEY REPRESENT. IN PARTICULAR, NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS ARE VIEWED WITH A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CONCERN, LEST THEY SPOIL THE QUIET ATMOSPHERE OF THE VILLAGE.

IN THE PAST, VILLAGERS HAVE CAMPAIGNED FOR A 30m.p.h. SPEED LIMIT, A CENTRAL WHITE LINE ON THE ROAD TO MILDENHALL, AND THE RESHAPING OF A DANGEROUS ROAD JUNCTION. ALL HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL.

MANY LOCAL FARMERS VIEW WITH CONCERN DETERIORATING ROAD SURFACES, ESPECIALLY IN THE FENS, WHILE IN THE VILLAGE ITSELF SOME PEOPLE, NOTABLY THE ELDERLY, REGRET THE ALMOST COMPLETE LACK OF PAVEMENTS BORDERING THE ROADS.

### C. Local Electors

By the close of consultation, 39 individual local residents had submitted comments. This represents around 3% of the current electorate of the West Row parish ward of Mildenhall Parish. The proposal affects the whole Parish, and its current electorate is just under 7000 electors.

Most respondents identified themselves as local residents or 'villagers' and four also indicated that, as well as being residents, they were members of West Row Action Group (3) or West Row Football Club (1).

Five respondents submitted more than one online response form. Where this occurred, they are counted only once in the statistics, and their recorded preference (if it differed) is taken to be the last one submitted before the deadline. However, all text comments made during the consultation are recorded below for completeness.

The map at the end of this report shows how comments were distributed evenly in West Row when plotted by post-code (please note that the dots on the map indicate the centre of a post-code, not a specific property).

**36 (92.3%)** of the respondents did not support the recommendation and wanted a parish council to be established. This represents the opinion of around 3% of the current electorate of West Row parish ward. Where provided, the comments of those against the recommendation were as follows (verbatim):

*We desperately need to be represented with our own Parish Council to make our voice heard & help to secure growth in our village amongst other issues.*

*It betrays democracy and self-determination of the people within their own village. Smaller councils exist and therefore should be their own elected chamber with tax raising powers to meet the needs of its facilities. I also want Mildenhall to have Independence with a Mayor. But a mayor with no political affiliation but truly representative of Mildenhall as social inclusion has been destroyed by the wealth of political groups and evidence is supported by county election turnout in 2017. Time to bring changes to promote democracy for all villages and not a political agenda that parishes have become by the failings to include non-party members as chair or committee chairs.*

*West Row deserves a voice of its own.*

*Wording of the recommendation is a bit misleading I nearly voted against WR becoming its own Parish Council Would suggest that the votes are checked against the narrative\*. I think we in WR can and deserve to be independent - we are thriving and active.*

(\*FHDC response: This check has been carried out as a matter of course because the legislation requires consultation to be framed around a definite recommendation. For reference, the two choices offered online were:

- I support this recommendation - West Row should continue to be represented by Mildenhall Parish Council
- I do not support this recommendation - West Row should have its own parish/parish council)

*It is not in the best interests of residents.*

*I am 80 years old and feel that it is high time West Row was allowed to*

*make her own decisions.*

*We as a village do not have independence to the larger town of Mildenhall, therefore we as a village aren't not receiving an independent consideration over the town. I have been a resident of this village 36 years of my 42 living years. We do not have a funded playground area as in Mildenhall. Services are not stretched to our village with due consideration that it needs. The recent social media public mocking made by members of our local council towards other pro-active West Row potential councillors also promotes the view that West Row is a village mocked by the whole of the Mildenhall Parish/Forest Heath District Council. I'm aware I do not fully understand the control nor the powers that be within our Parish/council and whose roles are responsible for appointed services within our community. The fact that the recommendation is already to NOT recommend West Row to have its own Parish, given by this notice, highlights to me the allocation of giving West Row its own Parish shows there is a concern within the Mildenhall Parish that there will be monies lost to themselves to be allocated to West Row as its own Parish. Seeing the published figures of allocation of monies...this will result in Mildenhall Parish losing significant funding. Funding I believe a separate Parish of West Row would allocate more productively and effectively to its OWN village. Over time, using the monies more wisely, and in benefit to West Row directly will show our residents the village is for them.*

*West Row is West Row. It is not Mildenhall and does not need to be represented by that group. Especially when their decisions do not always reflect the thoughts of those living here in the village. Let us govern ourselves.*

*I do not believe that the Mildenhall Parish, as is, fairly represents issues within West Row due to the heavy bias of councillors in the Mildenhall area. The expense of the central employees is way beyond what a normal village council would be expected to underwrite. With any new initiatives, eg LED street lighting, Mildenhall always comes first it seems. We never have a breakdown of receipts and expenditure based on the areas of Mildenhall and West Row. This level of clarity would aid this decision.*

*I believe West Row has grown over the years into a thriving community, that needs to have its own specific representation not lumped into Mildenhall, I have been a resident for over 40 years and have seen how my village has changed, and I think we should be able to have our own individual say in local matters.*

*West Row needs its own, local, representation, and a Parish Precept based on taking care of West Row, not Mildenhall's, needs. It is obvious that, with small number of residents in West Row, their needs and wishes will be subservient to those of the greater populace of Mildenhall. Also, the Parish Precept paid by residents of West Row should be the far smaller amount actually needed for West Row, not for the more expensive upkeep of Mildenhall.*

*I fully support West Row having its own parish council. We are a proactive,*

*progressive village who need councillors who understand the issues faced by the village. At the moment our representatives are outnumbered and as such we have no voice on Mildenhall parish council.*

*As a growing community I and many people I speak to think its time like many villages to have our own parishes so that we can have more say in the future of our lovely village. And with so many organisations in our village we help to make them grow with our own funds e.g. allotments. Mildenhall takes 4, 000 pounds a year or more and not a penny spent on improvements.*

*I believe the interests of our village would be better met by people who are interested in the maintenance and improvement of our rural way of life. I believe the growth of the village is better served by those who live here and understand it. I do not feel representatives at local government level have viewed the village as a lone entity but always as a suburb of Mildenhall. We do not feel this way. Those who have ably supported our views on the parish council are often undermined and looked down upon by those who do not or no longer live here yet serve ours and Mildenhall's interests.*

*In view of the fact that West Row is a substantial rural community with both village and fen dwellings, shops, a church ,chapels and village and church halls. It is not practical for us to be a ward of what is an urban town council. There is very little that we have in common with Mildenhall and our interests often conflict. Only being able to send three councillors to a much larger council at Mildenhall means that our community is constantly out voted. In order for our community to thrive and have a sense of its own identity and for the practical reason that a council needs to be in its own community things cannot remain as they are.*

*West Row only has three Parish Councillors as against seven for Mildenhall and are therefore consistently out voted by Mildenhall. West Row is a happy, settled and picturesque community which is constantly dictated to by the urban requirements of the larger town of Mildenhall and eventually by Bury St Edmunds if the latest proposals for BSE to take over full control of Forest Heath District Council goes ahead. West Suffolk Council are already dictating planning requirements on West Row that are for city developments not suited to village life so if the takeover goes ahead West Row "Village" will eventually disappear completely. So the only way we can preserve our village identity and way of life is to have our own Parish Council that will make decision in the best interests of West Row.*

*West Row has an active community, one which warrants being able to prove its importance and independence from Mildenhall, much like many other small villages around this town. There are active groups, organisations and people all willing to prove that this community can be responsible for certain local government issues itself.*

*West Row is a growing vibrant community village in and of itself. It is logical that it should have the ability to directly answer for and be responsible for aspects directly relating to its existence.*

*West Row Action Group are committed to ensuring the nature of our village is not dominated by large housing development and the input as a 'Stand Alone' Parish Council is vital as part of this process.*

*I no longer feel my views are best supported by those representatives on Mildenhall parish council. I also feel as a village we can self-govern our own issues and parish needs. As a unique rural village with an extensive history and thriving community, I feel our interests are often viewed as Mildenhall interests, and not those of a village with little interest in joining together as a suburb of the town that governs us.*

*West Row village has a long history with her residents playing a strong part in all local happenings. The best people to make decisions on behalf of the villagers are the villagers themselves. It is not through a hatred of the town parish council that I make this objection but through a wish for the residents of West Row to be able to stand alone and make their own decisions about issues that relate to the village. You state\* that we do not have the experience to be able to run our own council but the same can be said of a country which hasn't stood alone since the early 70s but that hasn't stopped the voice of the people being heard. There are enough people in West Row with the skills needed for us to follow the example of Beck Row and build a successful council.*

*(\*FHDC response: this was not stated by FHDC in any of its review materials; FHDC's only position has been to seek evidence of public support for or against the recommendation and provide supporting background information to assist consultees.)*

**Three (7.7%)** of the respondents supported the recommendation (i.e. not creating a new parish council). One made the following comment:

*It adds an unnecessary local authority and will not give local people any more say on things like planning, which is what WRAG is really concerned about.*

#### **D. Local Organisations**

The Council wrote to the local churches, school and other organisations as part of the consultation, and received the following response from the West Row Baptist Church:

*"Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal to create a new local government Parish for West Row.*

*On behalf of West Row Baptist Church (Chapel), I would like to say that the proposal to create a separate Parish for West Row would be very welcome indeed and we would like to vote for it.*

*You may or may not know, the Baptist Church is a Christian, Independent, Baptist denomination, Church. It is run solely by the active Church Members and has no interference from any overarching body. We*

*are affiliated to the FIEC (Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches) but they are there purely to give advice when requested.*

*We are pleased to say that our Church has a thriving congregation and Membership with an average weekly attendance (including mid-week clubs etc) of over 200 persons.*

*As the vast majority of those attending use a car, the number of cars using the Church parking area is around 20 plus for each weekday meeting and 35 plus for each Sunday service.*

*In 2000, the church gave notice to Forest Heath District Council and the Mildenhall Parish Council, that the existing graveyard would be closed when it reaches a certain marker. That marker has now been reached and the graveyard is now closed to all new graves. The reason for closing the graveyard was twofold:*

*1) to ensure there was sufficient space left to accommodate all the cars of those visiting the premises.*

*2) to ensure there remained sufficient space to accommodate tents, bouncy castles, Bar-B-Q and serving areas etc during village outreach days for families and young people.*

*We have asked on more than one occasion if Mildenhall Parish could provide a separate burial ground in West Row, all to no avail as their stock answer is: "We have a burial ground in Mildenhall".*

*If West Row had its own Local Government Parish, at least the members of the West Row Parish could decide if a separate community graveyard should be provided."*

## **E. Local elected representatives**

The following letter has been received from an existing Mildenhall parish councillor:

*I have been a parish councillor for the West Row ward of Mildenhall Parish Council for 38 years, so I know how much work there is in running a council.*

*West Row is large enough to be a parish council on its own, but finance is a huge issue. Mildenhall Parish Council pays for over 130 street lights in West Row, it also maintains the grass at the playing field and the Church Green, and the War Memorial. It pays for the children's play equipment to be inspected every month.*

*A parish clerk would have to be employed and possibly a new cemetery provided.*

*There is a lot of financial issues which should have been discussed.*

*So, in my opinion, West Row is better served staying in the parish of Mildenhall.*

In addition, the online response form was completed by a Lakenheath Parish Councillor, who opposed the recommendation, commenting:

*"As a strong believer in localism and the devolution of political power I think if enough people in West Row want to have their own council they should be allowed to have one."*

A response was also received from a Forest Heath District Councillor (representing a ward not affected by the proposal) supporting the recommendation and commenting:

*"There is a lack of a clear vision or reason for creating a new parish for West Row, that cannot be fulfilled under the present arrangement."*

### **Options for Councillors to Consider**

*To assist in the conduct of the meeting, draft motions for the various options are set out below, in no order of importance/preference:*

#### **A: Adopt Recommendation (status quo)**

That the final recommendation for Issue 2 (Mildenhall and West Row) be adopted as the outcome of this CGR, namely that there be no change to the current arrangements i.e. Mildenhall Parish stays as it is and a new parish for West Row is not created.

**Or**

#### **B: Amend the Recommendation (create new parish council)**

That, on the basis that [*insert reason for changing recommendation*], a new parish of West Row be created from the existing West Row parish ward of Mildenhall Parish, with the same boundary, and the Parish be served by a Parish Council with nine councillors and no wards.

