

Submission for the Bracknell Forest Community Governance Review



Warfield Parish Council
May 2022

Contact

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Warfield Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to participate in the 2022 Community Governance Review for the Bracknell Forest area.
- 1.2 Warfield as a civil parish was established in 1894. The boundary of the parish has been amended over time, particularly through the creation of the new town of Bracknell, which incorporated the southern part of the parish. The two most recent changes to the parish have occurred because of changes made The Local Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) and its predecessor through reviews of electoral arrangements in 2001-2 and 2020.
- 1.3 The 2001 review created the current composition of Warfield Parish Council, 13 councillors representing four wards: Whitegrove (seven members), Quelm (three members), Warfield Park (two members) and St Michaels (one member).
- 1.4 The 2020 review as implemented comprises of 13 councillors representing six wards: Garth North (one member), Warfield East (one member), St Michaels (two members), Warfield Park (one member), Whitegrove (six members) and Quelm (two members).
- 1.5 The parish council recognises the work and effort made by the LGBCE in preparing their recommendations. The primary focus of this work was on electoral arrangements at unitary level, and this has unfortunately resulted in revised electoral arrangements for the parish council that are not fully optimised. We therefore submit proposals to the review to provide enhanced opportunities for residents to be better represented and for elected members to support their electorate.
- 1.6 The submission of the parish council is broken down into three representations.
- 1.7 Representation 1, concerned with the boundary of the parish. This representation proposes corrections to existing errors on the drawn parish boundary and the movement of areas in to and out of the parish to deliver better representative opportunities for members and residents.
- 1.8 Representation 2, concerned with warding arrangements within the parish.
- 1.9 Representation 3, concerned with the number of councillors on Warfield Parish Council and reflects on changes to the electorate since 2001 through to 2027.
- 1.10 The Community Governance Review provides an opportunity to review arrangements within Warfield which continues to grow and change. This growth and change will continue into the future and this submission is based upon this continued growth, thus ensuring arrangements made will be valid beyond the 2023 electoral cycle.
- 1.11 The parish council would like to express their thanks to the Electoral Services team at Bracknell Forest Council for their support and advice in relation to the Community Governance Review.
- 1.12 The parish council will be happy to provide any additional information or clarification to the review body as they consider governance arrangements.

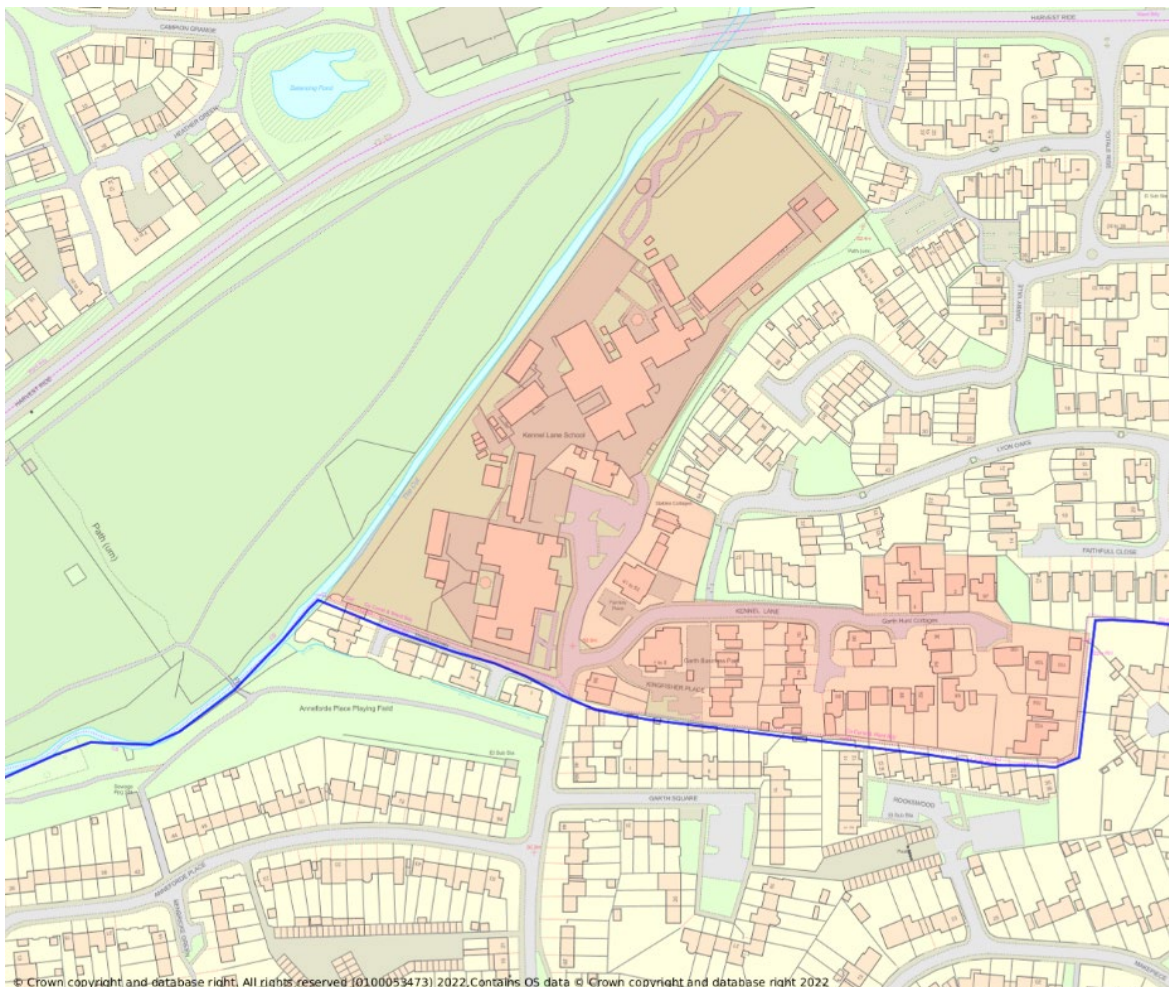
2.0 Representation 1 - Parish Boundary

Overview

- 2.1 Warfield Parish Council's proposal for the redrawing of the parish boundary have three purposes. The first, is to address an issue occurring from the creation of a new ward by LGBCE. The second, to improve local government representation around the existing boundary the parish, particularly on the southern boundary with Bracknell Town. The third purpose is to make corrections to the boundary that have arisen over the years, where electors of the parish are geographically located outside of the parish.

Garth North

- 2.2 The LGBCE 2020 review created a new ward of Garth North in the parish. The ward, as proposed will have 140 electors. The parish council recognises that a ward of this size is not practical for electoral purposes and effective local government representation.
- 2.3 The area of Garth North is isolated from the rest of the parish of Warfield. Most of Kennel Lane falls within the area of Bracknell Town. The area around Kennel Lane School and Kingfisher Place do not have direct vehicular access to the parish and are joined only by a pedestrian footpath. There are 49 properties in this area.



Map 1: showing the area around Kennel Lane School with the existing parish boundary shown in blue.

- 2.4 Elen Place was constructed in the last 10 years and comprises of 28 properties. It was built as part of the Warfield SPD area. It along with neighbouring properties on Binfield Road are separated from Warfield by The Cut. The nearest recreational space for this area is the Bracknell Town Council facility at Jocks Lane.



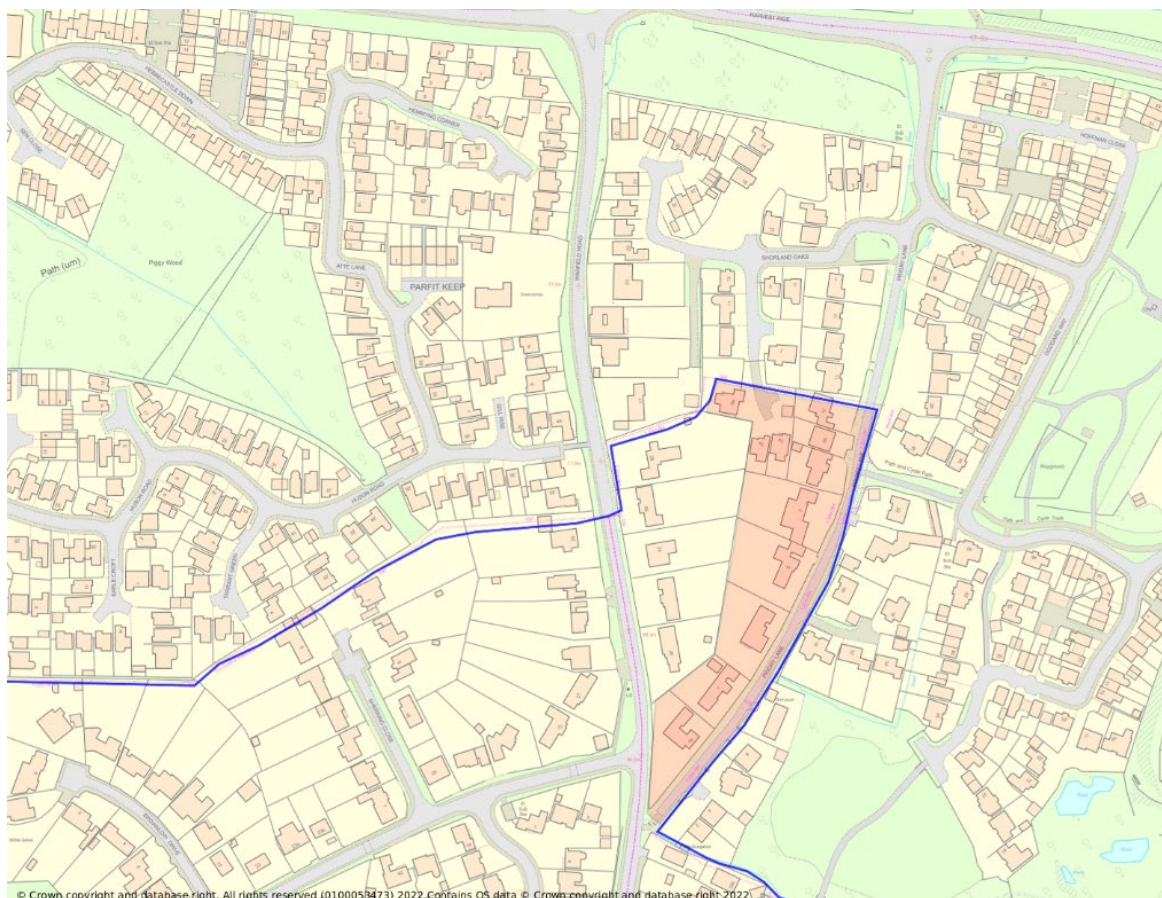
Map2: showing Elen Place and surrounding properties. The existing parish boundary is shown in blue.

- 2.5 The Cut would appear to form a suitable natural boundary for a revised parish boundary. The treatment of the councillor seat is covered in representation 3.

Priory Lane and Shorland Oaks

- 2.6 The parish boundary between Warfield and Bracknell Town runs along Priory Lane and through Shorland Oaks. Priory Lane is one of the historic lanes of Warfield. Vehicle access to the area is through Warfield, so most residents will access services in the parish.
- 2.7 There are 11 properties that currently sit within Bracknell Town. This includes three properties in the Shorland Oaks cul-de-sac, where their neighbours vote in Warfield. This is a mapping anomaly created at some point in the past.
- 2.8 Issues arising with Priory Lane are reported to Warfield Parish Council and moving all of Priority Lane and Shorland Oaks into the parish would provide clearer democratic and local government support.
- 2.9 A check of the boundaries suggest that any change would not have an impact on proposed parliamentary boundary changes and at borough level affect the new

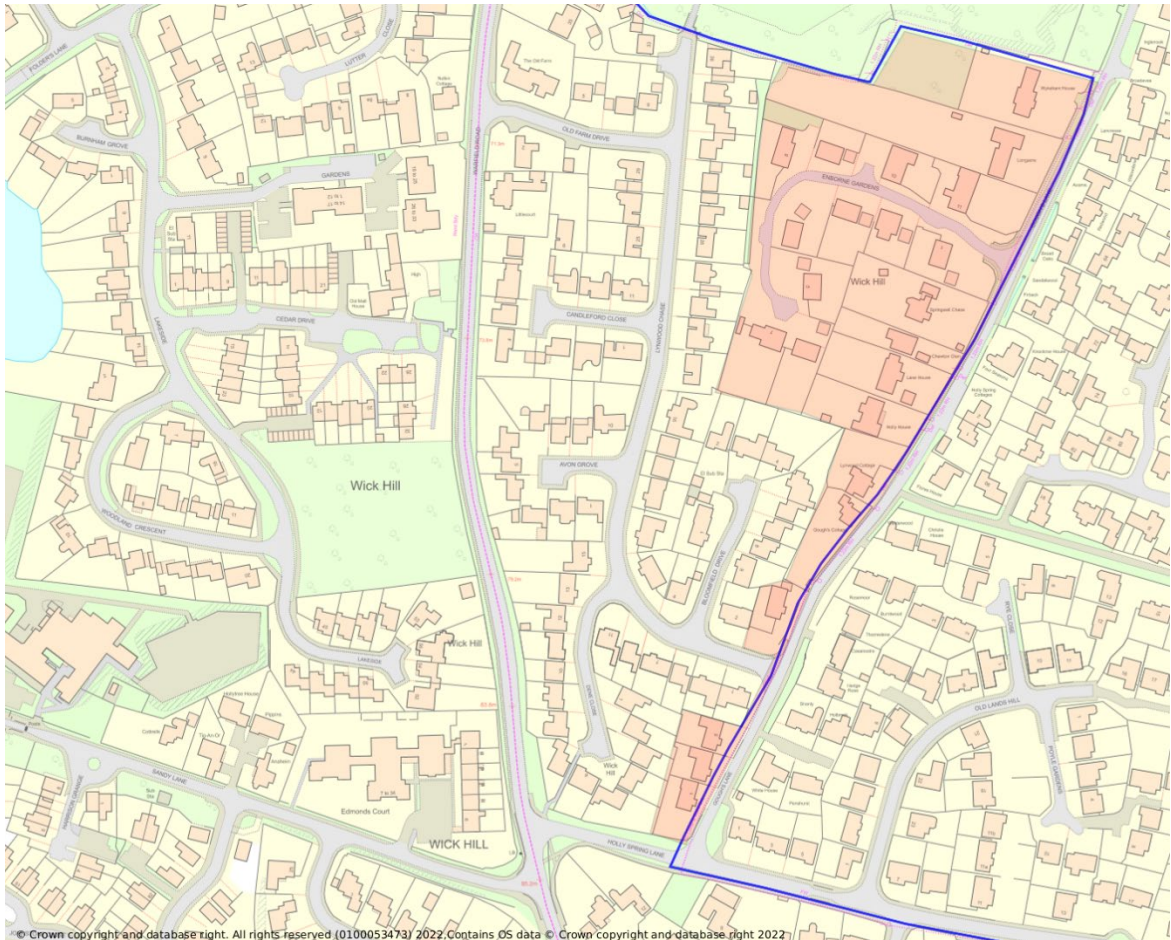
Priestwood and Garth and can be incorporated into either the Binfield North & Warfield West or Whitegrove wards at borough level.



Map 3: showing the area of Priory Lane and Shorland Oaks, with the existing boundary shown in blue.

Gough's Lane and Enborne Gardens

- 2.10 The majority of dwellings in Gough's Lane and located in Warfield Parish. Enborne Gardens is accessed from Gough's Lane. The proposal of the parish council would see all the properties in Gough's Lane and Enborne Gardens move into the parish.
- 2.11 The parish council believe this will deliver more consistent local government representation in the area as issues arising in the area are usually reported to Warfield Parish Council.
- 2.12 A check of the proposed boundary changes at parliamentary level does not suggest any issues but would result in a minor change at borough ward level.



Map 4: showing the area of Gough's Lane and Enborne Gardens. The existing parish boundary is shown in blue.

Brockhill

- 2.13 Brockhill is a hamlet located on the B3022 Bracknell Road and is predominately situated in Winkfield Parish. Three properties in the hamlet sit within Warfield.
- 2.14 For the purposes of consistent representation, the parish council would recommend the redrawing of the parish boundary to incorporate Brockhill Farm Cottages into Winkfield.
- 2.15 Map 5, showing Brockhill is displayed on the following page.

Cocks Lane

- 2.16 The Nook is a property adjacent to other properties on Cocks Lane that sit within Warfield.
- 2.17 For the purposes of consistent representation, it would be considered appropriate for this property to move into Warfield.
- 2.18 Map 6, showing The Nook and Cocks Lane is displayed on the following page.



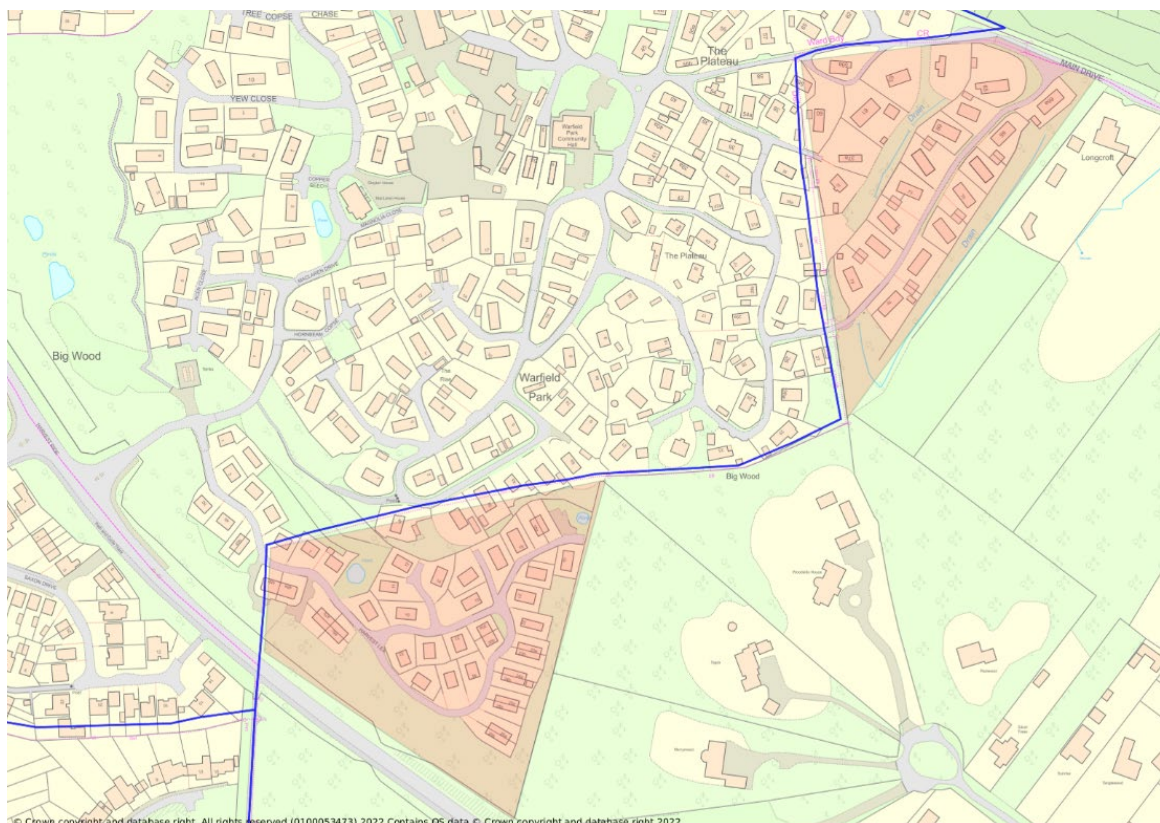
Map 5: showing Brockhill Cottages and the hamlet of Brockhill. The parish boundary is shown in blue.



Map 6: showing The Nook, Cocks Lane and the parish boundary in blue.

Mapping inconsistencies

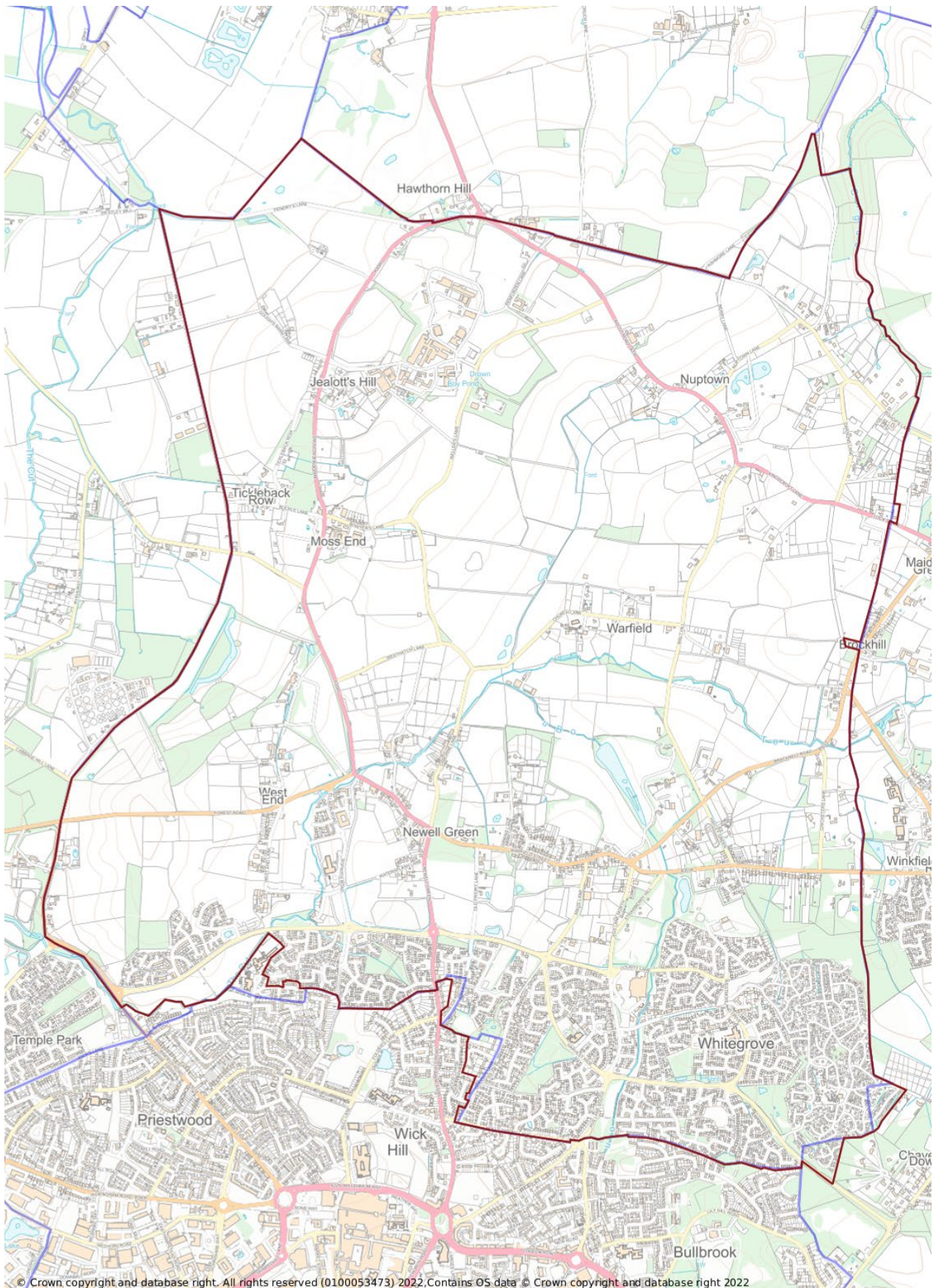
- 2.19 In preparing this submission the parish council prepared proposals that properties in Warfield Park located in Winkfield should be incorporated into Warfield. During the preparatory work it was identified that the properties were already included on the electoral roll for Warfield. This information was shared with Electoral Services who had also spotted this anomaly.
- 2.20 For clarity, the boundary should be redrawn to show these properties in Warfield. The areas affected are Harvest Lea and parts of The Plateau.



Map 7: showing Harvest Lea and parts of the Plateau being located outside of the drawn parish boundary.

Revised map

- 2.21 The revised map of the parish (map 8) if the changes proposed were implemented is shown on the following page.



Map 8: showing the proposed parish boundary in red. The existing boundary is shown in blue.

3.0 Representation 2 – Warding Arrangements

Overview

- 3.1 The parish council has noted the revised warding arrangements developed by LGBCE. The parish council has two proposed changes. The first would be removing Garth North as outlined in representation 1, the second is to merge two small wards, into one larger ward.

Quelm

- 3.2 The parish council has no proposed changes to the ward as set by the LGBCE except for the boundary change to the south outlined in representation 1.

St Michaels

- 3.3 The parish council has no proposed changes to the ward as set by the LGBCE. Proposals for changes to the councillor numbers for this ward are set out in representation 2.

Warfield East and Warfield Park

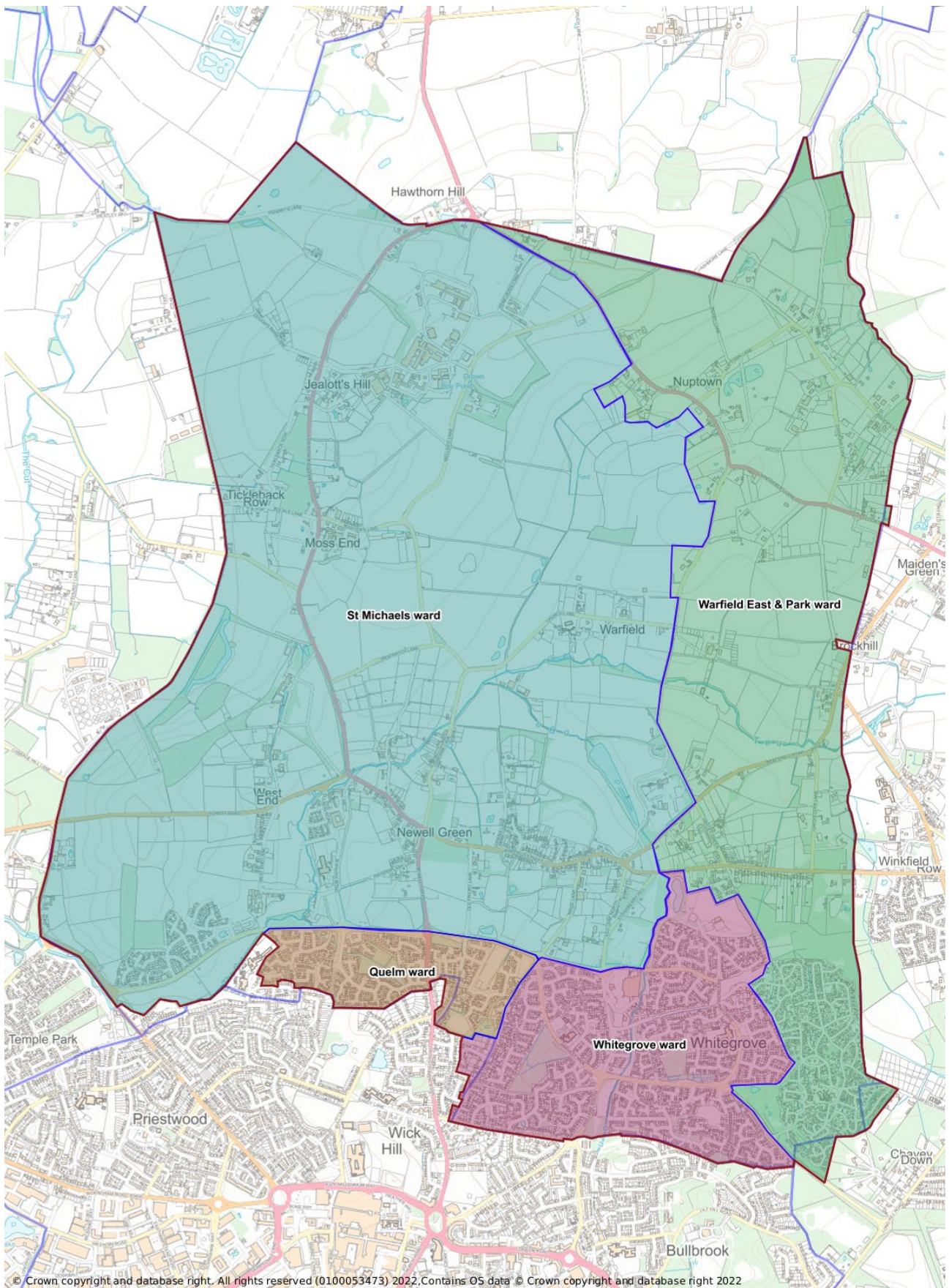
- 3.4 Under the current electoral arrangements, the newly created Warfield East and Warfield Park wards are served by one combined ward, Warfield Park.
- 3.5 The parish council note that LGBCE have created two single member wards. The parish council takes the view that electors in these two wards would have greater democratic access by the merger of these two wards, into one larger ward, as per the current electoral arrangements.
- 3.6 The new Warfield East & Park ward would have two councillors, removing the disadvantages of single member wards. More detail on this is set out in representation 3.

Whitegrove

- 3.7 The parish council has no proposed changes to the ward as set by the LGBCE except for the boundary change to the south outlined in representation 1.

Map of warding arrangements

- 3.8 Map 9, showing the proposed ward arrangements can be found on the following page.



Map 9: showing the proposed warding arrangements outlined in this submission

4.0 Representation 3 – Number of Elected Members

Overview

- 4.1 The current number of elected members resulted from the 2001 electoral review and was confirmed in the 2020 review. The parish council submits that the number of councillors should be increased to reflect the changes that have taken place in the electorate since 2001 and are still to take place through to 2027.
- 4.2 The parish council has considered the steps it would take to deliver the required candidates to fill vacancies in future election cycles. These are included in this submission.

Electorate numbers and forecasts

- 4.3 The electorate of Warfield at the time of the 2001 review was 6,556 to be represented by 13 councillors. The 2020 review has a current electorate of 8,829, forecast to increase to 12,481 by 2027, an almost doubling over time.
- 4.4 The parish council is confident that the electorate changes forecast to 2027 will occur as build out of homes included in the 2012 Warfield SPD area continue to be delivered. Based upon the LGBCE proposals the ratio of councillors to electors are:

2001	2020	2027
1: 504	1:679	1:960

- 4.5 The ratio figures reflect the position at parish level. The ratio at parish ward level delivers widely varied figures, based upon the 2020 LGBCE proposals:

Ward	Councillors	current electorate	Current ratio	Current variance	2027 electorate	Forecast ratio	Forecast variance
Garth North	1	140	1:140	-79.4%	126	1:126	-86.9%
Quelm	2	1,563	1:782	+15.1%	1,709	1:855	-11.0%
St Michaels	2	1,672	1:836	+23.1%	4,680	1:2,340	+143.7%
Warfield East	1	322	1:322	-52.3%	353	1:353	-63.2%
Warfield Park	1	697	1:697	+2.6%	889	1:889	-7.4%
Whitegrove	6	4,435	1:739	+8.8%	4,724	1:787	-18.0%
Totals	13	8,829	1:679		12,481	1:960	

- 4.6 These ratio figures show a disparity in representation that is neither good for the community or its elected representatives. Of particular concern is a ratio of 1:2,340 forecast for St Michaels ward by 2027.

- 4.7 The parish council proposes an increase of two councillors for 2023 taking the total from 13 to 15. The council believes this increase is achievable and will provide a better representative ratio.

Proposal

- 4.8 The following proposal is based upon the warding proposals outlined in representation 2 of this submission.
- 4.9 As a result of the warding proposal, the parish council would lose one seat from the Garth North ward if it is moved out of the parish. The parish council propose that this one seat, plus the two additional seats are allocated to the St Michaels ward, taking the representation from two councillors to five councillors. This would improve the member/elector ratio from 1:2,340 in 2027 to 1:936.
- 4.10 The proposed warding changes, councillors, electors, and ratios are shown below. While these figures exclude Garth North, they do not take account of electorate changes resulting from adjustments to the make-up of the Quelm and Whitegrove wards.

Ward	Councillors	current electorate	Current ratio	Current variance	2027 electorate	Forecast ratio	Forecast variance
Quelm	2	1,563	1:782	+34.9%	1,709	1:855	+3.7%
St Michaels	5	1,672	1:334	-42.3%	4,680	1:936	+13.6%
Warfield East and Park	2	1,019	1:510	-12.0%	1,242	1:621	-24.6%
Whitegrove	6	4,435	1:739	+27.6%	4,724	1:787	-4.4%
Totals	15	8,689	1:579		12,355	1:824	

- 4.11 Obtaining reasonable ratios is difficult with a small number of wards. In drawing up these proposals the parish council recognises that the ratios will change regularly in the next election cycle as new homes are delivered in Warfield, as this occurs the larger differences will equal out and, except for Warfield East and Park be within a +/- 15% variance by 2027, a tool used by the LGBCE when considering changes.
- 4.12 Warfield East & Park, by its electorate size will be outside of a 15% variance by 2027. If it were a one-member ward the ratio would be 1:1,242 which is a greater variance than proposed. It is likely that further development will take place in this ward between 2023 and 2027 that has not been factored into the numbers, so we would expect this variance to change closer to the overall ratio.

Single member wards

- 4.13 The parish council takes the view that single member wards should be avoided whenever possible. This is in the best interests of electors and their elected representatives.

- 4.14 When single member wards at borough level were proposed it was successfully argued that they were not conducive to effective and convenient local government and that this could potentially cause ineffective electoral representation. The parish council would reason that these circumstances could also be applied at the parish level.
- 4.15 For electors, having more than one representative gives options should a councillor be suffering from ill health or be absent for any reason. For the elected members it means being able to share workload and being able to support more activity or causes in their ward, as well as the reassurance that there is cover should a period of absence be required.

Recruitment of Councillors

- 4.16 Warfield Parish Council had sufficient candidates to fill all the available seats at the 2019 election and where vacancies have occurred since the election, has seen a good range of candidates come forward to fill seats.
- 4.17 The parish council is planning to begin a campaign to attract candidates from September 2022. The council will make of national resources but also develop its own to provide information on the parish council and the role of a parish councillor. Since the last election housing development has taken place at Woodhurst and in other areas of the parish which may well bring forward candidates with encouragement. The council will make use of existing members to promote the reasons they became a councillor and what the role entails and how they have made a difference in their community. The council will also develop a training programme for elected members and a mentoring scheme for newly elected members to ensure they receive the support needed.

5.0 Summary of points

- 5.1 The parish council proposals are made in the interests of delivering improved democratic representation and access in the parish of Warfield.
- 5.2 The proposals will benefit both electors and their representatives.
- 5.3 The changes to the parish boundary recognise the inconsistencies that have arisen out of the LGBCE report, particularly regarding the Garth North ward.
- 5.4 Parish wards would be based upon the LGBCE proposals, except for the outlined changes to the parish boundary.
- 5.5 The parish council proposes an increase of two councillors over its current allocation, to 15 councillors.
- 5.6 The parish council does not believe that single member wards are beneficial to the electorate within the ward, or the member elected to serve.
- 5.7 The amalgamation of the Warfield East and Warfield Park wards would create a two-member ward, which provides better democratic representation.
- 5.8 The Community Governance Review provides an opportunity to correct the parish boundary to reflect actual electoral arrangements.