

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL
Parish Council Office
New Green Avenue
Thurston IP31 3TG
Tel: 01359 232854



e-mail: info@thurstonparishcouncil.gov.uk
website: <http://thurston.suffolk.cloud>

The following paper was submitted by the Clerk to the Parish Council at its meeting of 5th May 2022

Agenda Item 8b: To note that Mid Suffolk District Council are carrying out a Community Governance Review of Parishes, Town Councils and Unparished areas. The deadline for submissions to the first stage of the review is Friday 27 May 2022.

Council to consider submissions to be made – See Page 2

Background Information:

Mid Suffolk District Council are carrying out a Community Governance Review of Parishes, Town Councils and Unparished areas. A copy of the Notice of Review has been sent to the Clerk and has been uploaded onto the Noticeboards and Website.

The Terms of Reference are outlined below:

What Is A Community Governance Review:

It is a statutory process to review the whole of the district to consider one or more of the following:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing Parishes;
- The naming of Parishes and the style of new Parishes;
- The electoral arrangements for Parishes (the ordinary year of election; council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and Parish warding), and
- Grouping new or existing Parishes under a common Parish Council or de-grouping existing Parishes

The first stage of the review process will be a consultation, the District Council will be inviting residents and other interested persons or organisations to submit their views.

How to take part in the review

Should you wish to make a written submission to the review you can do this by letter to:
Community Governance Review
Electoral Services
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils
Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
Ipswich IP1 2BX

Or by email to elections@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

The deadline for submissions to the first phase of the consultation is **27 May 2022**

The Parish Council is regarded as an interested party and the opportunity should be taken to consider whether there are any benefits in changing the parish boundaries and/or changes in electoral arrangements e.g. the numbers of Councillors for each parish.

Questions to consider at meeting of 4th May 2022 to allow the Clerk as Proper Officer to formulate a response to MSDC by the submission deadline:

1. Should the boundaries of Thurston Parish remain unchanged?
2. Should the number of Councillors stay as is (11) or should the council request an increase from 11 to 13 to accommodate current and future population growth?

The principal argument offered to support the proposed increase of parish council seats by two can be summarised as follows:

- Two extra parish councillors will help manage work arising from future population growth
- An increase would encourage people to stand who have new ideas and thinking for the parish to consider
- There would be fairer voting within the council as there would be a more representative view of the community and that having an uneven number of councillors would make voting simpler
- Increasing the number of councillors will aid in debate, experience and knowledge of the council and make for a better decision-making process and democratic accountability.
- It will help with the important issues in the community

For comparison below are the numbers of Councillors in other large parishes:

- Melton - 15
- East Bergholt - 13
- Capel St Mary - 12
- Lavenham - 11
- Long Melford – 13
- Rushmere St Andrew – 15
- Elmswell - 11

Officer's recommendation is to request no change to the boundaries, and for the reasons outlined above, to request consideration of an increase in Council size from 11 Councillors to 13 Councillors.

Points to note:

Council size is the term used to describe the number of councillors to be elected to the whole council. The 1972 Act, as amended, specifies that each parish council must have at least five councillors; there is no maximum number.

The Government's guidance also states that 'each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities' and therefore the Council is prepared to pay particular attention to existing levels of representation, the broad pattern of existing council sizes which have stood the test of time and the take-up of seats at elections in its consideration of this matter.