

Changing Liskeard's Boundaries to fit the town

Liskeard Town Council has voted to submit a Community Governance Review to Cornwall Council which, if agreed, would review the boundaries of the town for the first time in 35 years.

Since the boundaries were last reviewed, the built-up area of Liskeard has extended beyond the parish boundary in several places. It is likely that this will continue, and planning permission has already been granted for further housing and employment land beyond the boundary.

As requested by Cornwall Council, Liskeard Town Council has done what it can to work with neighbouring councils and to consult directly with affected residents and businesses to find a workable solution which aligns the boundaries with the actual situation on the ground and provides some future proofing, while minimising the impact on existing residents.

Not changing the boundaries would mean aggravating the existing unsatisfactory situation where:

- Buildings and facilities commonly considered to be part of Liskeard, like the Liskeard Tavern, Liskeard B&M and units on the Moorswater industrial estate are in fact in other parishes.
- Local planning, such as the recent Liskeard Neighbourhood Plan, cannot cover areas which are part of or next to the existing built up area.
- Although its Neighbourhood Plan, which was approved by 91.5% of those voting, is committed to supporting the vitality and viability of the Town Centre, Liskeard does not have an effective voice in planning decisions on the edge of town because the premises are beyond or even on the parish boundary.
- Planning permission has been granted for a large housing development next to the built-up area, whose residents will look to Liskeard for services, but they would vote and pay their council tax in Menheniot.

Liskeard Town Council agreed to talk to neighbouring parishes to find common-sense solutions to this, with the following results:

Dobwalls and Trewidland boundary

The key areas here are the Moorswater Industrial Estate, goods railway line and sewage works.

Representatives of Liskeard Town Council met with Dobwalls and Trewidland Parish Council three times for constructive negotiations, as well as writing to residents and businesses affected. No objections were received, and one business responded positively to the proposal.

As a result of the discussions, the proposed new boundary was altered several times, including moving it so that only one home rather than 17 was affected.

Both Dobwalls and Trewidland Parish Council and Liskeard Town Council have now voted to accept the proposed revised boundary and put it forward as a joint proposal to the Community Governance Review.

Menheniot boundary

The key areas here are the Bubble Site, including Liskeard Argos and Liskeard B&M, Liskeard Tavern, and areas with planning permission for housing and employment at Ten creek Farm and identified as employment land at Bolitho farm, as well as adjacent land in the same ownership.

Liskeard's development boundary, as shown in the emerging Menheniot Neighbourhood Plan, is the land with a red dashed border on the map and covers the existing built up area and the areas identified for housing and employment.

Representatives of Liskeard Town Council have attended three meetings with Menheniot Parish Council, one of which was the Menheniot Annual Meeting. The Town Council has written to residents and businesses within the proposed boundary change area.

Unfortunately, Menheniot Parish Council had made a resolution on 17 January 2019 to decline the offer of a governance review soon after the first request for initial interest was made and was therefore not willing to enter negotiations. The item was however, discussed at Menheniot's Annual Parish Meeting on 9 May 2019, but the minutes are not yet available, and they have been unable to provide Liskeard Town Council with contact details of people who attended their Annual Meeting as agreed, to enable direct contact with them over their concerns.

Menheniot Parish Council has also refused to provide Liskeard Town Council with the results or even the questions and methodology of their own survey of residents.

In the absence of this, Liskeard Town Council has done its best to respond to the points raised. The first plan it put forward would have meant 34 homes moving into Liskeard. After several amendments to accommodate Menheniot resident feedback, the proposed boundary has now been redrawn to include only 8 homes. This means that three households which objected to the previously proposed boundary and asked to stay in Menheniot would do so. Of the 8 homes, one household has responded to the consultation letters to say that they oppose the proposed change, while one has said they support it.

Liskeard Town Council would have preferred to have jointly agreed a new boundary, as it has done with Dobwalls and Trewidland. However, as this has not been possible it has agreed to put forward a proposal to Cornwall Council which takes account of local views as much as possible and enables effective planning for services and development.

The following addresses some of the concerns raised in Menheniot, and incorrect information which has circulated:

- **Council Tax** - The council tax for a band D property would increase from £1771.73 to £1880.45 (an extra £2.09 per week) based on the 2019/20 figures.
- **The right to be buried** with ancestors in Menheniot - According to the church authorities, religious and council parishes are quite different and there will be no effect on marriages and burials.
- Primary school **children who want to attend Menheniot school** – The allocation of primary school places is not linked to parish boundaries, but primary school designated areas. The area subject to the proposed boundary change is already located in the Liskeard designated area, however children within the boundaries of Liskeard attend village schools.
- **Administrative problems for existing farms** which are crossed by a parish boundary. Farms currently have holdings in more than one parish and that will still be the case if the boundary changes. In response to feedback from local farmers, changes have been made to keep holdings together as far as possible and ensure the farmhouse is in the same parish as the majority of the holding.
- **Parish Council Precept** – The movement of 8 residential properties from the Menheniot parish to Liskeard Town Council would reduce their parish precept by £258.88 pa (based on the 2019/20 figures for a band D property). A reduction of 1.29% of their overall precept.