

TIDBURY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

**Clerk: Mrs Charlotte Kirby
PO Box 17622
Birmingham
B13 3PR
11th September 2019**

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F.A.O. Deborah Merry
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Council House
Manor Square
Solihull
B91 3QB

Dear Ms Merry,

Request for Parish Council Community Governance Review

Tidbury Green Parish Councillors would like to request that Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, undertake a Community Governance review to increase the number of Parish Councillors from five to six.

Tidbury Green Parish Council was formed in 2009, following a Community Governance Review undertaken by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council. This was in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, when under the Reorganisation Order, the existing Hockley Heath Parish Council which included Tidbury Green was abolished and four new parish councils formed of which Tidbury Green Parish Council was one.

Since this point the Parish Council have always had five Councillors. However given the growth in homes and Parishioner's and the increased demands that the Parish Council has observed, the Parish Council are finding it increasingly difficult to fulfil their roles, with only five Councillors.

Please see below specific reasons why we are requesting that the number of Parish Councillors are increased from five to six.

- The Population of Tidbury Green has grown over recent years and the demographics of the area are also changing. This is predominately due to the two existing developments (Tidbury Heights and Regency Fields), which will result in the number of homes increasing by over 100%, compared to recent years. Five Councillors is no longer felt sufficient to deal with this significant increase.
- More homes and increased Parishioners inevitably results in increased workloads for the Parish Council. With the new homes already developed in the area, we have already observed increases in workloads, in the form of additional queries, increased planning applications, greater communication commitments, just to mention a few. There are still a significant number of homes which will be developed in Tidbury Green, so workloads are only going to grow in the near future.
- The Parish Council needs to increase its numbers to allow the workload to be spread over a larger base and to ensure that councillors have the time to effectively respond to the issues and concerns of the community that they represent.
- Existing Councillors all work full time and it is becoming increasingly difficult to arrange Parish Council meetings, whereby a sufficient number of councillors will be available to attend, in order to achieve a quorum. Over the last several months no meeting has taken place on the original date that it was scheduled, as we have been unable to reach the required level of available Councillors to attend, in order to achieve a quorum. Consequently meetings have had to be delayed and alternative arrangements have had to be made. This takes time and puts further pressures on the existing resource and makes it difficult for the Parish Council to plan and operate efficiently.

Based on the 2018/19 Register data, supplied by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, the electorate was 880 and due to development we know that this number has and will continue to grow.

Referring to the Communities and local Government - The Government Boundary Commission Guidance on Local Community Governance Review it states that "The 1972 Act, as amended, specifies that each Parish Council must have at least five councillors and there is no maximum number". It goes on to state that "Research by the Aston Business School Parish and Town Councils in England (HMSO, 1992), found that the typical Parish Council representing less than 500 people had between five and eight councillors and those between 501 and 2,500 had six to 12 councillors.

The LGBCE has no reason to believe that this pattern of council size to population has altered significantly since the research was conducted. Although not an exact match, it broadly reflects the council size range set out in the National Association of Local Councils Circular 1126; the Circular suggested that the minimum number of councillors for any parish should be seven and the maximum 25". Considering this information Tidbury Green parish Council is operating with the bear minimum number of Parish Councillors and even with increasing the number of Councillors to six, we believe that we are remaining at a level that would be considered more than acceptable, based on the above information.

Seven candidates were nominated for the May 2019 Parish Council elections and two candidates have been nominated for the recent Parish Councillor vacancy. Based on this we are confident that we would receive sufficient interest to successfully fill the one vacancy

The Parish Council hope that you will give full consideration to our request as we truly believe that this increase is required in order to provide the level of support that we need to offer our community and to deliver the objectives and benefits that we wish to achieve.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charlotte Kirby', written in a cursive style.

Charlotte Kirby
Clerk to Tidbury Green Parish Council