

Parish Council Representation in the District of Uttlesford – Community Governance Review 2010-11

Parish	Cllrs	Wards	Ward reps	Electors Dec. 09	Electors Aug 10	Up to 700 electors	701-2,500 electors	2,500 + electors	Suggested no. of cllrs	Noms rc'd in 2007
Arkesden	5			291	288	Y			6 (+1)	5
Ashdon	7			673	678	Y			7	6 c
Aythorpe Roding	5			170	170	Y			6 (+1)	5
Barnston	9			739	745		Y		9	8 c
Berden	7			376	377	Y			7	9 e
Birchanger *1	9			904	967		Y		9	8 c
Broxted	7			373	386	Y			7	5 c
Chrishall	9			435	448	Y			7 (-2)	7 c
Clavering	11			972	980		Y		11	17 e
Debden	7			591	595	Y			7	5 c
Elmdon and Wenden Lofts *2	7	Duddenhoe End Elmdon Village Wenden Lofts	2 4 1	164 282 60	161 291 62	Y			7	2 3 c 1
Elsenham	11			1,894	1,916		Y		11	10 c
Farnham	7			316	325	Y			7	7
Felsted *3	11			2,328	2,346		Y		11	8 c
Flitch Green	9			1,279	1,301		Y		9	
Great Canfield	7			332	331	Y			7	10 e
Great Chesterford	9			1,143	1,159		Y		9	6 c
Great Dunmow *4	15	North South	6 9	2,808 3,804	2,867 3,857			Y	16 (+1)	5 c 8 c
Great Easton and Tilty	8	Duton Hill Tilty Village	3 1 4	257 71 411	260 67 421		Y		9 (+1)	3 1 4
Great Hallingbury	9			578	586	Y			8 (-1)	8 c
Hadstock	5			261	264	Y			6 (+1)	5

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Hatfield Broad Oak	9	Bush End Village	1 8	103 856	105 866		Y		9	1 7 c
Hatfield Heath	9			1,394	1,416		Y		9	9
Hempstead	7			339	340	Y			7	7
Henham	9			943	943		Y		9	5 c
High Easter	7			574	596	Y			7	6 c
High Roothing	7			368	377	Y			7	6 c
Langley	7			299	298	Y			7	7
Leaden Roding	5			476	474	Y			6 (+1)	3 c
Little Bardfield	5			211	214	Y			6 (+1)	4 c
Littlebury	9			655	662	Y			8 (-1)	8 c
Little Canfield *5	7			600	636	Y			8 (+1)	7
Little Chesterford	5			167	169	Y			6 (+1)	5
Little Dunmow	7			256	263	Y			7	
Little Easton	6			333	350	Y			6	5 c
Little Hallingbury	11			1,212	1,227		Y		11	11
Manuden	7			495	496	Y			7	6 c
Margaret Roding *6	5			132	135	Y			6 (+1)	4 c
Newport	11			1,803	1,828		Y		11	10 c
Quendon and Rickling	7			457	467	Y			7	8 e
Radwinter	7			472	473	Y			7	4 c
Saffron Walden *7	15	Audley Castle Shire	5 5 5	3,809 3,738 4,179	3,859 3,742 4,201			Y	16 (+1)	12 e 11 e 9 e
Sewards End *8	5			411	421	Y			6 (+1)	4 c

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Stansted Mountfitchet *9	15	North South	7 8	2,278 2,359	2,305 2,440			Y	15	10 e 12 e
Stebbing	9			1,026	1,032		Y		9	9
Takeley *10	11			2,261	2,345		Y		11	11
Thaxted	9			2,206	2,229		Y		11 (+2)	7 c
The Sampfords *11	9	Great Sampford Little Sampford	5 4	451 216	460 221	Y			9	6 e 4
Ugley	7			364	367	Y			7	7
Wendens Ambo	7			337	340	Y			7	5 c
White Roothing	5			251	249	Y			6 (+1)	4 c
Widdington	8			399	392	Y			8	2 #
Wimbish *12	7			1,323	1,267		Y		7	9 e

Notes: the parishes of Chickney, Lindsell, Strethall and Wicken Bonhunt all operate by parish meeting only and do not have elected parish councils. The current number of electors for each are: Chickney – 34; Lindsell – 216; Strethall – 20; Wicken Bonhunt – 186.

Under the current rules, none of these parishes are required to have parish councils; as part of the present review, it is at the Council's discretion whether to create a parish council at Lindsell and at Wicken Bonhunt as they both have more than 150 local government electors. Under the old rules, Lindsell would have been required to have a parish council but that is no longer the case. It is suggested that neither parish should be forced to have a parish council created unless it is the specific wish of the parish meeting.

*1 Birchanger – electoral arrangements cannot be considered or finalised until the outcome of the boundary review is known.

*2 Elmdon and Wenden Lofts – electoral arrangements seem unnecessarily complicated for such a small parish. This is actually a grouped parish as Elmdon and Wenden Lofts are separate parishes. The parish council has always insisted on keeping a division between the settlements of Elmdon village and Duddenhoe End. This arrangement necessitates a further ward for Wenden Lofts as that settlement is a separate parish. The only way to reduce the number of wards to the seemingly sensible number of two is for the parishes of Elmdon and Wenden Lofts to be merged together as a single parish but the parish council has not been prepared to consider this option in previous years.

- *3 Felsted – it may be worth considering parish wards to grant separate representation to the collection of rural settlements east of the main village (as a separate polling district of Felsted east has existed for many years already); this can be suggested to the Parish Council
- *4 Great Dunmow – the balance between North and South wards may need examination as the North Ward is likely to continue to grow at a relatively faster rate due to the development at Woodlands Park. One possibility may be to increase the total representation of the parish to 16 members, or to adjust the existing scheme in some other agreed way.
- *5 Little Canfield – electoral arrangements cannot be considered or finalised until the outcome of the boundary review is known. In this case it will depend on whether any properties at Priors Green are transferred to Takeley; if not then consideration may need to be given to an increase in the overall number of parish councillors, and to whether separate wards will be needed.
- *6 Margaret Roding – as the parish has fewer than 150 electors and there is no realistic prospect of that number increasing to 150 or more, the Council must decide whether the parish should continue to have a parish council. That will clearly depend on how keen the parish is to continue to operate a parish council. Another option (for other small parishes too) might be to consider a grouping arrangement with one or more adjoining parishes (but that would depend on gaining the consent of both or all of the parishes concerned).
- *7 Saffron Walden – in 2007, the number of town councillors was reduced from 16 to 15 because of the creation of Swards End as a separate parish. The retiring town clerk told me that the TC would like to see the 16th member restored although no formal approach has ever been made. This could be achieved by granting the largest ward (Shire) a 6th councillor.
- *8 Swards End – the Parish Council has already requested the grant of an additional councillor, from five to six, and that would meet the Council's already agreed criteria (see below).
- *9 Stansted Mountfitchet – electoral arrangements cannot be considered or finalised until the outcome of the boundary review is known. It is probable that the present electoral scheme will have to be revised in some way whatever the outcome of the review.
- *10 Takeley – electoral arrangements cannot be considered or finalised until the outcome of the boundary review is known.
- *11 The Sampfords – as the Council has adopted a scheme to be used for warding reviews based upon principles of broad proportionality, each existing scheme should be examined with that in mind. At The Sampfords, the balance of councillors does not reflect the number of electors in Great and Little Sampford; this should be 6:3 rather than 5:4 as at present.
- *12 Wimbish – based on the total number of electors, the number of councillors should be either nine or ten. However, this does not take account of the large number of electors registered at Carver Barracks, the majority of whom are unlikely to be very much involved in parish affairs. The base electorate disregarding electors at the Barracks is probably around 570.

Further note: There are other parishes highlighted where the formula adopted indicates the number of parish councillors should be adjusted (e.g. Arkesden, Aythorpe Roding, Chrishall, Great Easton & Tilty, Gt Hallingbury, Hadstock, Lt Bardfield, Leaden Roding, Littlebury, Lt

Chesterford, Thaxted and White Roothing). This does not necessarily mean that changes should be imposed on parishes but they should be prepared to consider making changes and offer reasons why they are either required or not required.

The final column in the table shows the number of nominations received at the parish elections in 2007. It indicates that as many as 30 parishes were under-subscribed and had to co-opt further councillors to become fully subscribed. In the case of Widdington, the parish had to have a further election as it was not quorate. This level of under-subscription is clearly undesirable although it is difficult to think of an obvious remedy. The only logical solution might be for some of the smaller parishes to consider and accept entering into grouping arrangements, thus lessening the burden in individual parishes.

The Council's criteria for considering parish electoral arrangements (adopted in 2006):

- For parishes with up to 700 electors, there should be between six and eight councillors (although the statutory minimum of five will continue to be allowed where justified by local circumstances).
- For parishes with between 701 and 2,500 electors, there should be between nine and 12 councillors.
- For parishes with more than 2,500 electors, there should be between 13 and 16 councillors.
- Any parish wards (or separate parishes in grouped parish councils) fixed or altered as part of a review will be based upon principles of broad proportionality.

In further explanation of the first of these criteria, the Council's view is that it is likely to be difficult for small parishes to maintain effective administration with only the statutory minimum of five councillors. This is because meetings might not be able to take place where a quorum cannot be achieved as a result of illness, absence and/or resignations.

Please note that s93 of the LG&PIHA 2007 requires that community governance not only reflects the identities and interests of the community, but is effective and convenient.

Peter Snow
21/07/10