

# **Proposal for a Community Governance Review for Colyford**

## **1. The Proposal**

- 1.1. We are submitting a petition to East Devon District Council to carry out a Community Governance Review with the purpose of constituting a Parish Council for Colyford under the section 80 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("the Act").<sup>1</sup> We request that the new Parish Council shall be called Colyford Village Council.**
- 1.2. In accordance with s80 (3) of the Act, the petition has been signed by 249 electors, which is significantly above the threshold of 187 required by the Act. There are currently approximately 733 local government electors on the electoral roll for the Colyford village petition area.**
- 1.3. In accordance with s80 (4) of the Act, we attach a map (Appendix 1) to define the area to which the review is to relate.**

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/pdfs/ukpga\\_20070028\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/pdfs/ukpga_20070028_en.pdf)

## 2. Background Policy relating to Parish Councils

2.1. Recent governments have spoken of the importance of parish and town councils. The 2006 local government white paper, *Strong and prosperous communities*, stated:

“We will make it clear that there will be a presumption in favour of the setting up of parish councils so that local authorities will be expected to grant communities’ requests to set up new parish councils, except where there are good reasons not to, and that existing parish councils are not to be abolished against the wishes of local people.”<sup>2</sup>

2.2. The Act gives residents the right to petition for the formation of parish councils and has devolved the decision-making on such matters from central government to local authorities. We are therefore submitting our petition to East Devon District Council, the relevant decision making local authority. Guidance on Community Governance Reviews was published in March 2010 (“the Guidance”).<sup>3</sup>

2.3. The government’s intentions are to make the process for obtaining a community governance review even easier. On 11 December 2014 a legislative reform order was laid before parliament, which will lower the threshold of signatures required and speed the decision making process by the local authority.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> DCLG, *Strong and prosperous communities*, 2006, p43

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.lgbce.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/10387/community-governance-review-guidance.pdf](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/10387/community-governance-review-guidance.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> The Legislative Reform (Community Governance Reviews) Order 2014

- It's own church, St Michaels Chapel of Ease with an active church community.
  - Two busy pubs well used by locals and visitors alike, which attracts many people into the village.
  - A state of the art cycle shop which, together with the cafe within it, attracts visitors in great numbers who are following the SusTrans Route 2 cycle route or just touring the area.
  - Two tram stops on the Seaton to Colyton Tramway, one in the village and the other currently under construction in the Seaton Wetlands Wildlife Reserve close to Colyford Common well used by visitors and residents.
  - A well supported Residents' Association which works to represent the interests of village residents, and was instrumental in protecting several attacks by developers on the Green Wedges between settlements and has been instrumental in keeping the village tidy and presentable.
- d) Colyford is currently part of Colyton Parish and is served by Colyton Parish Council. The Parish Council has 13 Councillors.
- e) It is difficult for Colyton Parish Council to meet all the needs of a parish when it has Colyford village as a major peripheral settlement close to it and it is inevitable that the focus of the Parish Council will be on the facilities and needs of Colyton town, rather than those of Colyford. This will become even more marked because Colyton has planning permission for over 70 new dwellings on the old Ceramtec site, which is in the process of being built. This will bring new challenges and priorities. It means that the Parish Council must inevitably focus even more on the town's residents and their needs and less on those of the peripheral settlements like Colyford. It is therefore better to have two separate governance systems which recognise the separate community identities, so that each can prioritise. The workload for Colyton Parish Council will be decreased.
- f) It is important for community cohesion for both Colyton and for Colyford that each community should have a clear governance structure that represents its own identities and interests.
- g) Community cohesion will be enhanced for Colyford by having its own village council. A village council could influence the quality of planning, improving amenities and public open spaces and improving the quality of life for Colyford residents. Increasing a sense of local identity will make an important contribution to community cohesion.
- h) A village council for Colyford would bring together people with a shared future vision, working together to enhance our community, and increasing a sense of involvement. Residents will feel they have a stake in their community and a chance to influence decisions affecting their lives.



- i) During this campaign for a village council, local residents have come forward to express an interest in becoming a village councillor for Colyford. They can identify with their community and its needs and interests. In general they do not wish to be involved in Colyton Parish Council as it has a different identity that is not so relevant for them.
- j) The attempt to create a village council in Colyford has met with widespread and whole-hearted support from residents. The will of the people is evident and should be respected. The influence of the Localism Agenda is important, and support in the Act and the Guidance states that the feeling of the local community and the wishes of local inhabitants are the primary considerations.

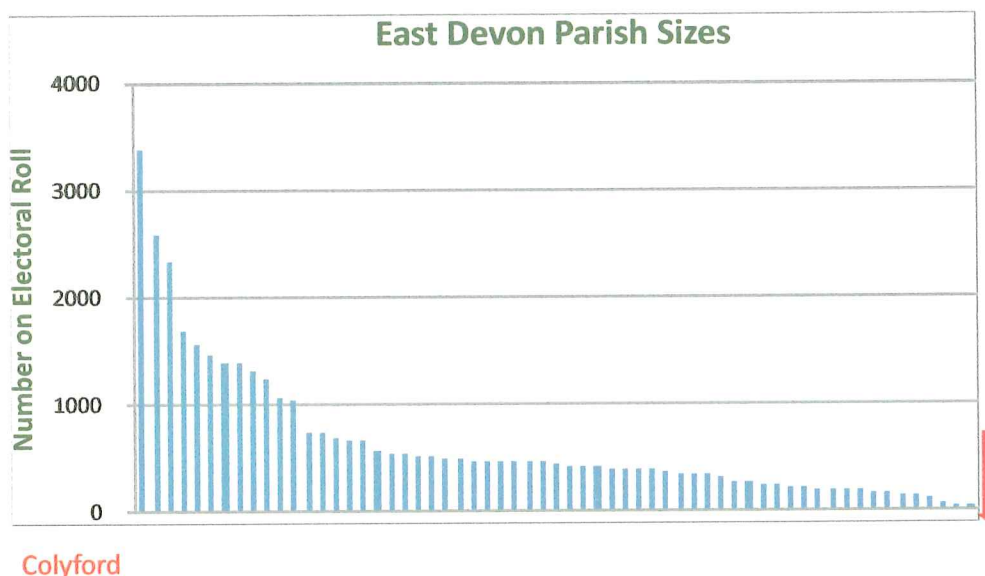
### **3.3. Effective and convenient local government**

- a) The most effective and convenient local government is for local people to have a say in the way the village is managed. For Colyford residents, this means a local council in Colyford rather than in Colyton.
- b) It is not convenient for Colyford residents to have to travel to Colyton to attend local council meetings. Council services, such as inspecting plans for planning applications, would be provided much more effectively locally in Colyford. Accessibility would be improved with a Colyford village council.
- c) Colyford residents should make decisions on Colyford matters. At present, because of our minority representation on Colyton Parish Council, the few Colyford based councillors can easily be outvoted. This can lead to a sense of disenfranchisement for Colyford residents.
- d) Colyton town has a multitude of issues to consider, as discussed above in 3.2 e), which are not always relevant to Colyford, and this leaves even less time for Colyford issues to be considered. It is more efficient and effective for each community to deal with its own issues.
- e) With its own village council, money raised through the precept from Colyford residents would be spent locally and there would be accountability. Priorities would be decided by Colyford residents.
- f) With the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy ("CIL"), 15% (or 25% once a Neighbourhood Plan is in place) would come straight to a Colyford village council. Money which is triggered by development in Colyford would be spent in Colyford, rather than in the wider Colyton parish.

### **3.4. Size, population and boundaries of a local community**

- a) Size, population and boundaries of a local community are linked to aspects of both the principal criteria identified in s93 of the Act, but perhaps more specifically to community governance being effective and convenient.

- b) The Guidance advises that a parish's population is one of the influential factors that local authorities should take into account when carrying out a community governance review.
- c) We believe Colyford is the largest village in East Devon that does not have its own parish council.



- d) There are a large number of parishes smaller than Colyford that have their own parish council or parish meeting. Some of these are significantly smaller than Colyford and have efficient parish councils that meet the needs of their residents, e.g. Aylesbeare, Rockbeare.
- e) A village of Colyford's size needs its own representation. This would bring it into line with other similar sized villages in East Devon which have their own parish council. Newton Poppleford, Whimble, Feniton and Uplyme are all similar sized villages with effective parish councils.
- f) A village of Colyford's size with the number of residents we have means that a village council is the most effective way to meet the needs of our community. Our own village council could represent the community's interests better and increase community cohesion.
- g) There are no other 1st Tier councils in East Devon that have a settlement the size of Colyford included in their area. For example Honiton Town Council is surrounded by 8 small parish councils or parish meetings: Gittisham (465), Buckerell (189), Awliscombe (390), Combe Raleigh (186), Luppitt (359), Monkton (141), Offwell (334), Farway (206).
- h) The boundary of the present Colyford village, which we propose to be the boundary of Colyford Village Council, has been reviewed by several local people with a deep knowledge of the history of the village and is considered to form the best natural boundary for the settlement.



#### **4. Community Engagement**

We have engaged with the community extensively throughout this process. The Residents' Association held a meeting with its members where the proposal was discussed. This indicated there was a large degree of support for forming a new village council.

Subsequently, the Resident's Association delivered a leaflet to every household in Colyford explaining the advantages and disadvantages of forming our own separate council together with a projected budget based on similar sized existing parish councils. This was followed by holding two public open meetings for all villagers, where discussion and a question and answer session were held and people were asked to decide whether they would like to support a petition for a Community Governance Review towards forming our own village council. Both of these meetings were very well attended. What has emerged from this consultation process is a very clear and consistent desire for change and a belief that Colyford should be able to determine the services it wishes to provide and to determine the precept it needs to raise in order to provide those services.

#### **5. Recommendation**

We have presented a petition with 249 signatures, significantly in excess of the 187 threshold required by the Act to trigger a Community Governance Review.

The community of Colyford has thus clearly expressed their wish for a village council to be set up, and this should be given considerable weight.

We have shown that Colyford has its own identity and sense of place, and that community cohesion will be enhanced by having its own village council.

We have shown that a village council for Colyford will be effective and convenient, and will provide strong and accountable local government and community leadership.

We therefore respectfully request that East Devon District Council exercise their powers under the Act and undertake a Community Governance Review and recommend the formation of a village council for Colyford.

## APPENDIX 1

COLYFORD BOUNDARY MAP (Border in Orange)

