



Middleton St George Parish Council

Councillor Doris Jones BEM
Chairman Middleton St George Parish Council

38 The Oaklands Middleton One Row

Darlington DL2 1BD

Dear Catherine,

Community Governance Revue: Middleton St George Council.

Members of Middleton St George have discussed this issue and are strongly of the view that the Parish Council Boundary would be more effective and agreeable with the residents of Middleton St George if the ward was represented by one parish, that being the parish of Middleton St George.

As a parish MSG provide, pay for and maintain all of the recreation facilities in the village which are shared by residents living in both parishes, the only exception to this is that Low Dinsdale Parish Council own 25% of the playground and contribute 25% of the running costs except for the insurance which MSG pays.

MSG Parish council employ the grounds man for grass cutting and hedge trimming in all of the recreation areas and take full responsibility to arrange repairs of any of the village equipment and the Insurance for repairs and public liability also organising weekly, monthly half yearly and the ROSPA annual health and safety inspections. We meet on a monthly basis, whereas Low Dinsdale only meets bi-monthly giving them only 6 meetings a year.

MSG Parish Council is leading on the village Neighbourhood Development Plan and has taken the responsibility of employing the Planning Consultants MD2 to lead us and the village on this.

We feel it is only fair to also point out that most residents living in the Low Dinsdale Parish area are not aware that their parish council is Low Dinsdale; consequently they attend our parish meeting with their concerns and do not feel this is in their best interest as they pay council tax to live in Middleton St George. As one resident complained to us that the difference between the provisions of services causes a minority of residents to be at a disadvantage compared to the parish service provided to the majority of residents.

We sincerely hope you consider our application favourably in the best interest of the whole of the residents living in the ward area of Middleton St George.

Yours sincerely

Doris Jones

Chairman of Middleton St George Parish Council

Low Dinsdale Parish Council

Helen J Crute
Clerk of the Council

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Community Governance Review

Response to invitation from Darlington Borough Council to provide formal submission to the Review from Low Dinsdale Parish Council

1. This submission contributes to the first stage of the Principal Authority's consultation following its decision to hold a Community Governance Review. Low Dinsdale Parish Council's preference is to retain Low Dinsdale parish in its existing form, with its existing boundaries, and enquiries seem to indicate that there is no reason in principle why a parish cannot straddle two electoral wards. Low Dinsdale parish reflects a rural environment and community and the Parish Council has done its utmost to retain this over many years.
2. If the Principal Authority's review comes to a different conclusion, then this Council submits that any new arrangements for the parishes of Low Dinsdale and Middleton St George should involve the creation of a totally new parish, suitably named to reflect the recognition historically of both names¹. A parish council elected for such a newly designated parish area would, therefore, be representative of the whole community and the varying characters of the different parts of the parish.
3. In making this proposal, it is assumed that the Principal Authority would make arrangements for the transfer of assets belonging to each Council to the new Council. It is also assumed that arrangements would be made for the continued governance of, what in 2015, has become Low Dinsdale South ward of Low Dinsdale Parish. No information has been forthcoming at this stage as to whether electors in Low Dinsdale South would prefer to become a Parish Meeting (with or without Sockburn Parish Meeting) or become part of Neasham Parish. We suggest that if the latter option were taken, it has some implications for the transfer of assets to ensure that Low Dinsdale South is not disadvantaged.
4. It follows from the above submission that Low Dinsdale Parish Council would consider as wholly unacceptable the abolition of Low Dinsdale Parish, with the affairs of its Council being subsumed into Middleton St George Parish Council.

Low Dinsdale Parish Council believes that the creation of a totally new parish would ensure that the whole population of the village of Middleton St George is well represented, and that past differences between the two parish councils will no longer pose difficulties.

¹ eg Middleton St George & Dinsdale Parish Council