

Submission

For the reasons outlined below I believe the following:

- Buckshaw Village is distinctive and should become a separate entity to Euxton, with its governance/electoral arrangements chosen by its own residents
- The new electoral arrangements for Euxton Village should be new Parish Council elections across the whole Village in May 2012, to deliver a Village that is “well run with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership”.
- The cash reserves and other assets of Euxton Parish Council should be split between the new Buckshaw ‘Parish’ (or similar organisation) and the rump Euxton one in proportion to their populations.

Background

In determining its Terms of Reference for the Buckshaw Village Community Governance Review (CGR) Chorley Borough Council (CBC) has taken account of guidance issued by Dept for Communities & Local Government, and the Local Govt Boundary Commission (‘Guidance on community governance reviews’). These 3 bodies (DCLG, LGBC and CBC) all consider specifically the following aspects:

- consider CGR “in reaction to specific or local new issues”
- a community should be “well run with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership”, enabling “inclusive, active and effective participation by individuals”
- “The views of local communities and inhabitants are of central importance”
- “One aspect of that is strong and accountable local government and leadership”
- “the wishes of local inhabitants are the primary considerations”
- boundaries “should reflect the “no-man’s land” between communities represented by areas of low population or barriers such as rivers, roads or railways. They need to be, and be likely to remain, easily identifiable.
- “a principal council must make recommendations as to what the electoral arrangements for new or existing parishes, which are to have parish councils, should be”

In addition, CBC has specifically stated:

- “Chorley Council has received a recent request from a resident of Buckshaw Village for the creation of a Parish Council for the Buckshaw Village area” (bold emphasis is mine)
- “Consequently this Review will look at all options for future parish governance arrangements. This will include “Any other arrangements which come out of the consultation process for the review and receive significant support” (bold emphasis is CBC’s)

Thoughts

- If one resident can trigger a CGR than a single residents' views are equally important
- Buckshaw is quite different to the rest of Euxton, with a different and distinctive character
 - It is brand new
 - It's residents tend to be younger than those of Euxton
- Its eventual development will dwarf Euxton and change the distinctiveness of Euxton
- Buckshaw should be separate to Euxton, with dividing line along Leyland-Chorley railway: a well-defined 'barrier'
- Changes in electoral arrangements should consider following:
 - Euxton currently does not have 'inclusive participation' (Chairman of Euxton Parish Council (EPC) refuses to meet residents, and debate with Council is not permitted)
 - EPC is not 'accountable' to residents as it refuses to explain its decisions and actions
- Perhaps in response to new local issues residents of Euxton have begun to press for "inclusive, active and effective participation", as evidenced by:
 - the regular attendance at EPC meetings of more than 30 residents
 - the 200 attendees at a Parish Meeting in 2010, and
 - the recent calling by residents of 2 Parish Bye-elections (with more than one resident willing to stand in each case)
- One of the issues that has galvanised residents is the excessive Precept charge by Euxton Parish Council. For 2011/12 this amounted to £45,000 above what was required to prudently 'run' the Village and was passed only on the Chairman's casting vote. These extra sums now total over £150,000 of allocated reserves and have been paid by all residents of the current Parish.
- There has been some discussion about whether the assets of the current Euxton parish would be retained by a 'new' Euxton Parish or split between the new parishes of Euxton and Buckshaw Village. Having paid their Precept for many years it would seem iniquitous that residents of Buckshaw should not benefit from those payments when assets are split. Naturally, fixed assets (like a Community Centre) cannot be split but liquid assets, like cash reserves (earmarked or not), could and should be split in proportion to the new parishes (or whatever arrangement comes from the Review).

This principle of splitting fixed and current assets was adopted by Bath & NW Somerset in its CGR of North Radstock in May 2010 and in a similar CGR at Aylesbury vale DC at the same time. It is also likely to be adopted in the ongoing Ribble Valley CGR. It is the obvious and fair solution to the matter.

Carole Cook
12 Briar Ave
Euxton, PR7 6BG