

Appendices: 1



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

2nd November 2015

Agenda Status: Public

Directorate: Chief Executive Office

Report Title	Request for change of name of parish
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Council to consider a request made by Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor Parish Council to change the name of the parish to "Wootton" so that the Parish Council would be known as Wootton Parish Council.

2. Recommendations

Council is recommended to:

- 2.1 consider the request made by Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor Parish Council to change their name to Wootton Parish Council and agree to changing the name of the parish from Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor to Wootton; and
- 2.2 authorise the Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer to take any action necessary to effect this change of name of parish, including the notification and publication of the change as required by law.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 In 2012 Northampton Borough Council carried out a community governance review pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The community governance review process resulted in the Council making a formal Reorganisation Order; *The Northampton Borough Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2013*.

3.1.2 The Reorganisation Order abolished the former parish of Wootton and East Hunsbury and dissolved its Parish Council. It also created the two new parishes and Parish Councils of:

- Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor; and
- East Hunsbury.

It was in effect a split of the former Wootton and East Hunsbury Parish Council into two new Parish Councils, which took effect from the May 2015 elections.

3.1.3 The Reorganisation Order provided that the name of one of the new parishes would be “Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor” and that the Parish Council would therefore be known as “Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor Parish Council”.

3.1.4 Since being established in May 2015, Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor Parish Council has decided that it wishes to change its name to Wootton Parish Council, which requires the name of the parish to be changed.

3.1.5 The name of a ‘parish’ refers to the name of the geographical area concerned and can be changed independently of a community governance review. Section 14(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 states that a parish council goes by the name “The Parish Council” with the addition of the name of the particular parish.

3.1.6 Section 75(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 states:

At the request of the parish council or, where there is no parish council, at the request of the parish meeting, the council of the district in which the parish is situated may change the name of the parish.

3.1.7 Therefore, it is necessary for Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor Parish Council to make a request to Northampton Borough Council as the relevant district council, to change the name of the parish.

3.1.8 The Parish Clerk sent a formal letter of request to the Chief Executive dated 12th October 2015. This letter is at Appendix 1. The letter includes an extract from the June 2015 minutes of the Parish Council containing the resolution of the Parish Council to change its name. While this resolution is not framed as a request to the district council to change the name of the parish, the intention of the Parish Council is clear and the Chief Executive has therefore accepted this June 2015 resolution together with the Clerk’s recent letter as a formal request from the Parish Council to the Borough Council to change the parish name.

3.1.9 The Parish Clerk has advised the Borough Council of some of the reasons for the request to change the parish name as summarised below:

- a) The current parish name of Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor implies that there are three distinct communities within the

parish, whereas it is considered that there is just one community, (and there is a concern that the current name could be divisive). It has been noted that this point was recognised when Northampton Borough Council considered the electoral arrangements for the parish (and for East Hunsbury parish) in December 2012 because the report considered stated that, as, **“there is no clear division of the community within the two areas**, it is not recommended that either area be warded”. This recommendation was accepted by Full Council.

- b) The name of Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor, is considered to be too cumbersome. This has created some practical issues. For example, it is too long to fit in the space for the parish name on the Council Tax demand.

3.1.10 “Wootton” is the historical name of the parish that served the village. The legislation does not require a consultation to take place on the change of name. The Parish Council have advised that the public have been made aware of the request through use of the public noticeboards within the parish area and via an article in a recent edition of Link Magazine. Wootton Heritage Organisation were also informed of the request by the Parish Council.

3.1.11 There is at least one other Wootton Parish Council in England (in Bedfordshire). However, this does not prevent the name of Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor parish from being changed to Wootton parish. There are other examples of Parish Councils in England that share the same name.

3.1.12 On the basis that the Parish Council voted unanimously in favour of changing the name of the Parish Council and for the reasons set out in paragraph 3.1.9 and 3.1.10, it is recommended that Full Council agree to the request to change the name of the parish from Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor, to Wootton.

3.1.13 Section 75(2) of the Local Government Act requires that notice of any change of name made under section 75:

(a) *shall be sent by the district council concerned to the Secretary of State, to the Director General of the Ordnance Survey and to the Registrar General; and*

(b) *shall be published by the district council in the parish and elsewhere in such manner as they consider appropriate.*

3.1.15 It is therefore recommended that Full Council authorises the Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer to take all steps necessary to effect the change of name of the parish including notifying the bodies listed in paragraph 3.1.14 above and publishing the change of name in the parish and elsewhere in an appropriate manner.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 The report does not have any policy implications.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 The resource implications arising from this report, if the change of parish name is agreed by Full Council, are the officer time required to ensure that correct notification of the change is provided to the relevant external bodies and any cost associated with publishing the change in the parish area, in accordance with statutory requirements.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 The legal considerations are set out in the body of the report.

4.3.2 Further, in relation to the consequence of the change of the parish name, section 75(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 states that:

“A change of name made in pursuance of this section shall not affect any rights or obligations of any parish or of any council, authority or person, or render defective any legal proceedings; and any legal proceedings may be commenced or continued as if there had been no change of name”.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 There are no direct equality considerations arising directly from this report.

4.5 Other Implications

4.5.1 None.

5. Background Papers

5.1 None.

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