Response to CGR consultation – Cllr Catherine Glover

I live in Spencers Wood South, the tiny parish ward that is, today and as proposed in the future, the area of Shinfield Parish that is in Wokingham Constituency. (I am also a borough councillor for Spencers Wood and Swallowfield.)

Parish Warding

It is regrettable that the parish is split across two constituencies but without changing the parish boundary, which no one wants, we cannot do anything about that at present.

What I find difficult to accept is that a tiny parish ward is the only way in which Electoral Services can guard against ballot papers getting mixed up etc in the event of parish council elections coinciding with borough or parliamentary elections. Multiple polling districts, polling stations, ballot boxes, and the colour of ballot papers could be used to ensure that the right votes for the right seats get to the right counts.

I would very much have liked to see Grazeley combined with Three Mile Cross, and Spencers Wood split into North and South along Hyde End Road, *ignoring both Basingstoke Road and the constituency boundary*. In the other borough ward, Shinfield, I would also have split Shinfield Village into East and West, along Hyde End Road and Hollow Lane.

The Parish Council went in a different direction, asking for 'no wards'. But see below.

Number of Councillors

Shinfield Parish is now large enough for 24 parish councillors; 18 is the number requested by the Parish Council. Out of that 18, the draft CGR has 1 representing Spencers Wood South. This is a reduction from the current situation, in which we have 2 parish councillors representing Spencers Wood South. While I acknowledge that electors in this ward are probably over-represented today, a ward with only one seat, while the other wards have many seats, would make elections unbalanced and unfair.

Today, Spencers Wood South, with its 2 parish councillors, is one of five parish wards, with 2, 3, 3, and 5 parish councillors (total 15). This seems reasonably balanced.

The Draft CGR proposes three parish wards with 1, 7 and 10 councillors. This is completely unbalanced.

I understand that the Parish Council have now made a submission that they wish to stick with the five wards proposed by the LGBCE review (excluding Shinfield NE which is moving to Earley Town). I support the Parish Council (though I regret that we could not have split the parish into 6 wards, as above).

I would like to see a more balanced distribution of seats, with the parish councillors split as follows:

Shinfield North	4
Shinfield Village	6
Grazeley	2
Spencers Wood & 3MX	4
Spencers Wood South	2
Total	18

I have attached diagrams and maps to show

1) What we have today in the Shinfield part of Spencers Wood and Swallowfield
2) Hypothetical ward boundaries: what I would ideally have recommended.

1) This is what we have today

Sp Wd = Spencers Wood; 3MX = Three Mile Cross
SpWd&Sw = Spencers Wood and Swallowfield

Polling Place A (Three Mile Cross)

SBE ballot box
Grazeley Parish Councillor
SpWd&Sw Borough Councillor
E&W Constituency MP

SDE2b ballot box
Sp Wd&3MX Parish Councillor
SpWd&Sw Borough Councillor
E&W Constituency MP

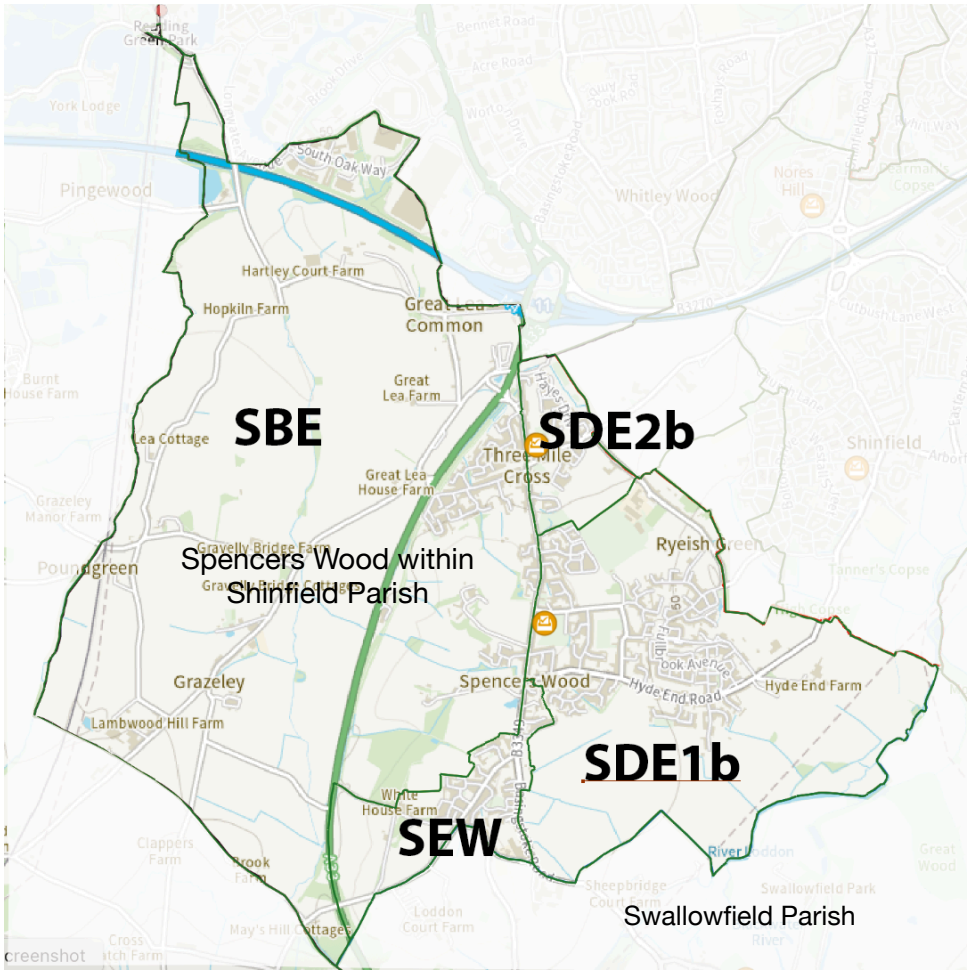
Polling Place B (Spencers Wood)

SDE1b ballot box
Sp Wd&3MX Parish Councillor
SpWd&Sw Borough Councillor
E&W Constituency MP

Polling Place C (Swallowfield)

SEW ballot box
Sp Wd South Parish Councillor
SpWd&Sw Borough Councillor
Wokingham Constituency MP

SWW1 ballot box
Swallowfield Parish Councillor
SpWd&Sw Borough Councillor
Wokingham Constituency MP



2) Hypothetical ward boundaries

Sp Wd = Spencers Wood
SpWd&Sw = Spencers Wood and Swallowfield

Polling Place A

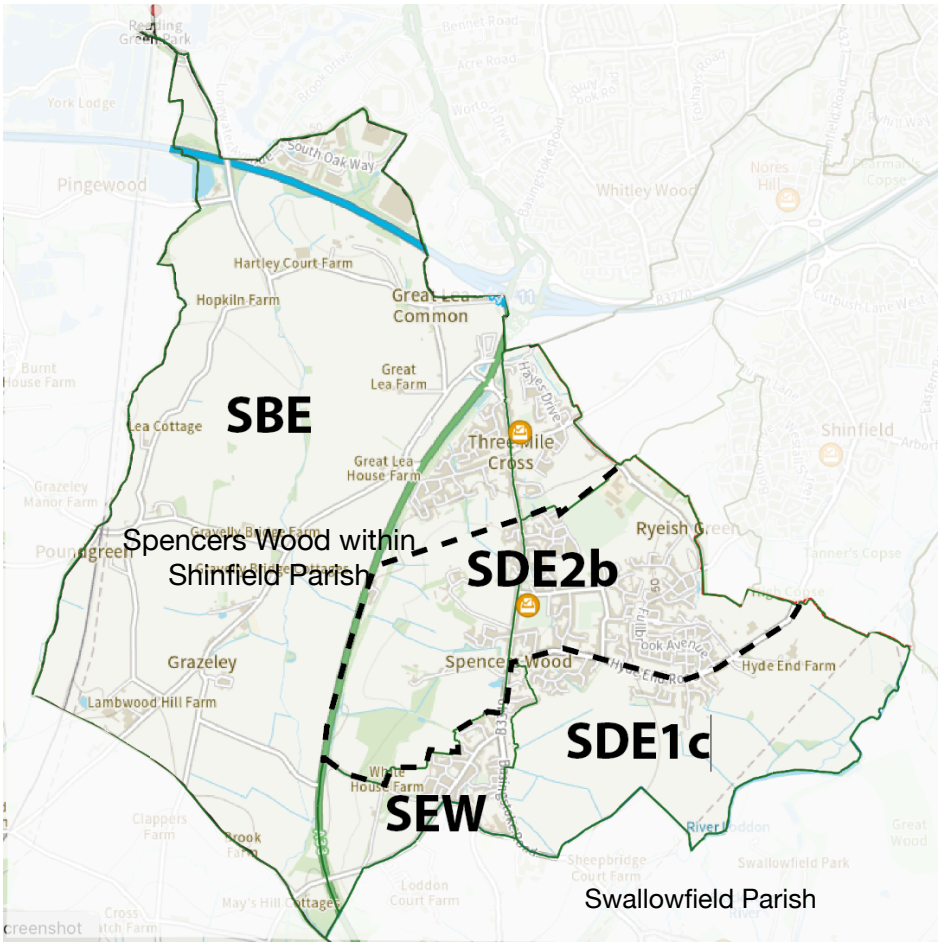
SBE ballot box
Three Mile Cross Parish Councillor
SpWd&Sw Borough Councillor
E&W Constituency MP

Polling Place B

SDE1c ballot box
Sp Wd South Parish Councillor
SpWd&Sw Borough Councillor
E&W Constituency MP

SDE2b ballot box
Sp Wd North Parish Councillor
SpWd&Sw Borough Councillor
E&W Constituency MP

Polling Place C

SEW ballot box
Sp Wd South Parish Councillor
SpWd&Sw Borough Councillor
Wokingham Constituency MP

SWW1 ballot box
Swallowfield Parish Councillor
SpWd&Sw Borough Councillor
Wokingham Constituency MP