Community Governance Review

Let's have a quick chat about what's being suggested for Barkham Parish and the Arborfield Garrison SDL. To be honest, it's pretty good that all the new houses are being grouped together in a newly shaped Barkham Parish, while the older ones at the edge of the SDL stay with Arborfield and Newland. This way, the newcomers can really get stuck in around the new District Centre, and the folks who've been in Arborfield and Newland for a while can keep doing their own thing.

The boundaries between the new and old homes are actually really clear, which helps a lot. Take Map F as an example—the homes you're suggesting should move into Barkham are in Nightingale Fields, and they just fit naturally with the rest of the SDL. There are loads of paths and roads joining everything up. But the older houses by Tyler Avenue are a different kettle of fish—there aren't any paths or roads connecting them to the new bits, so keeping them out makes perfect sense.

Things get a bit muddled in Map G though. Here, 12 homes in Parcel K are treated differently from the other new SDL homes—they don't end up in Barkham Parish like you'd expect. Plus, the community centre for the SDL (and even Barkham Parish Council's office!) lands in Arborfield and Newland, alongside parts of the sports facilities meant for SDL residents. Most people using the centre and sports bits are from the SDL, so it just seems logical to have them in Barkham as well.

It's the same story with Map E. The West Court SANG—built by Cala Homes and Crest Nicholson—ends up in Finchampstead, but it would make more sense for it to be in the new Barkham Parish, since that's where most of the people who'll use it actually live.

If you're not thrilled with the current suggestions, there's an easy fix: the main idea works, it just needs a little tweak to clear up these odd bits. For Map G, the boundary should go along Sheerlands Road to Whitehall Drive, then follow the edge of the sports fields and head north to Biggs Lane, before carrying on with your recommended line. (There's even an approved plan for the sports area showing the boundary—just stick to the left and top edges in red.)

So, if you put all the new homes and their facilities in Barkham Parish and leave the older houses at the edge of the SDL in Arborfield and Newland, everyone keeps their own community spirit. Same thing with the West Court SANG—put it with the SDL residents in Barkham. Fixing these bits will mean local governance actually matches what people want and need, and that's a win for everyone.

Private: Information that contains a small amount of sensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but doesn't require to be sent via secure methods.