

Response by Conington Parish Council to HDC re proposed Community Governance Review

Background:

The chairman of Glatton Parish Council/Glatton Neighbourhood Plan committee came to Conington Parish Council (CPC) in November 2022, as Glatton village began to prepare their Neighbourhood Plan (NP) to ask CPC its permission to include part of Conington Parish within the scope of their Neighbourhood Plan.

The aim of this seems to be, if understood correctly, simply to shield the area south of Glatton from encroachment by Sawtry (as that village is developing so fast, this is a perceived danger).

Geography:

The area immediately south of Glatton is in Conington Parish. This is a historical fact and is understood from historians that the Parish Boundaries were drawn so to enable trade and the amenity of access to Whittlesey Mere (before the drainage of the fens took place). The area with which Glatton is concerned is the part of Conington Parish which lies west of the A1M and south of Glatton, bordering Sawtry to the south and the A1M to the east. Glatton, Stilton, Denton & Caldecote and Sawtry Parishes also extend both east and west of the A1M - it's not just Conington which is divided.

There is a dwelling - Roundhill Farm, with associated barns and sheds- in the area concerned, the rest is grade 3 agricultural land and contains the historic Conington Round Hill, the site of a moated medieval house.

Process:

Conington PC considered the idea put forward (to allow Glatton NPC to include part of Conington parish in its NP) at some length, having met with the Chairman of Glatton PC and listened carefully to his arguments.

The first response to him was made in November 2022 and the answer was that CPC preferred to maintain control over any planning applications in that area and not be tied down to any set course of action which might be implied by inclusion in the NP.

CPC preferred to respect the historical boundaries and maintain the status quo. That being said, the general principle of protecting Glatton from unwelcome encroachment was not at all dismissed but it was felt that in some circumstances the NP could be a hindrance to proper consideration of any application, perhaps one that could in fact be beneficial or desirable in the location.

Following this the Chairman made further overtures to Conington Parish Council pointing out the CIL premium implication, which CPC was aware of, and to ensure the matter was debated fully a separate Council meeting was held, in November 2023. The same conclusion was reached. (No members of the public have attended nor expressed an opinion for or against).

CPC does completely understand the concept of the NP, it also understands the financial implication of enhancement of CIL should any planning be approved (although development of course is exactly what GPC/GNP say they are trying to avoid) and CPC still prefers to operate independently without constraint and not to disturb the historical boundary.

CPC feels quite disappointed that Glatton Parish Council seem now to be exploring expanding their actual Parish to cover this land, rather than just have the NP committee include it in the NP - not trusting Conington to make an informed and competent decision on any planning application there which might be made in future and not respecting the decision that CPC has made. This seems to be a wholly unnecessary action

Conington Parish Council feels that to ask HDC to undertake a time consuming CGR is wasteful of resources particularly only to satisfy one parish for one reason. If a CGR were to be considered necessary then this ought to include all the surrounding parishes bisected by the A1M and not be carried out piecemeal.

Janice Osborn
Clerk to Conington Parish Council
01487 831451