

Liberal Democrat Amendment – Revised Appendix 1

# **PUTTING TORBAY COMMUNITIES FIRST**



*Tor Bay: Looking north from Brixham to Paignton (top centre) and Torquay (top right)*

# *Report and Recommendations for Consideration by the Local Government Boundary Commission Review of the Torbay Unitary Authority 2017*

## **Primary Objectives of This Submission**

- To review the current ward boundaries within the Torbay Unitary Authority area with a view to ensuring an equitable number of voters per councillor.
- To comply with the principles set out in Torbay Council' News Release “PR7595” which was published on 21 June 2017
- To determine, insofar as is practical, contiguous ward boundaries that suit historical and local community interests within the three towns that comprise the Torbay Unitary Authority area, avoiding at all stages enclaves, exclaves and what has come to be known colloquially as “doughnutting”.
- To ensure that any amendments to existing ward boundaries also take into consideration the geography and topographic nature unique to the Torbay area.
- To ensure that any necessary revisions to existing boundaries are cost-effective and do not bring about a disproportionate financial burden to the local population.

## **Introduction: Current Status and Problems**

In the distant past, Torbay Council comprised twelve wards, each of which returned three members. This format aligned well with wards for twelve Torbay councillors representing the borough at County Council level, but this aspect became less important with the advent of Unitary Status on 1 April 1998. It is considered that a return to this “twelve ward” system is **not** particularly desirable – primarily because (as arguably happened in the past), the resultant ward boundaries would be disproportionately in situ to match an ideal number of electors, rather than reflect the topography of Torbay or the very specific needs and interests of individual communities within the area.

The current boundaries in Torbay (*See Appendices 1a-1c*) provide for thirty-six councillors who represent fifteen wards – six wards returning three members and nine wards returning two members. The prevailing distribution of two and three member wards is evenly spread pro-rata with the local population across the three town conurbations of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham.

The current electorate of the Torbay Unitary Authority area is calculated to be 99,602. This electorate is expected to rise to 103,406 by the year 2023 – an increase of nearly 4% that will therefore result in all councillors being unavoidably expected to deal with more constituents and issues in future than they do at present. With this in mind, and in the interests of fairness to all councillors of whatever political persuasion (or indeed none at all), it is considered highly desirable that any redrawing of the wards’ boundaries should seek, wherever possible, to squeeze even further the 5% tolerance (as suggested by the Local Government Boundary Commission) in the ratio of councillors to voter numbers – on the strict understanding that any such amendments do not compromise the overriding principles set out above in this submission as “Primary Objectives”.

The tolerance ranges are illustrated by way of the following table:

		<b>2023 Tolerance Range (+/-5%)</b>
<b>2023 Projected Voters Per Councillor</b>	<b>2,872</b>	<b>2,728 to 3,016 Voters</b>
<b>Ideal Number of Voters in a Two-Member Ward</b>	<b>5,745</b>	<b>5,458 to 6,032 Voters</b>
<b>Ideal Number of Voters in a Three-Member Ward</b>	<b>8,617</b>	<b>8,186 to 9,048 Voters</b>

Since the last Local Government Boundary Commission review was undertaken and the current Torbay ward boundaries created in time for the 2003 Borough Elections, there has been a substantial change of land usage in two particular areas, viz:

- i. Substantial additional housing has been constructed on hitherto undeveloped land in the vicinity known as The Willows on the periphery of Torquay, with the prospect of further similar development of this area in both the short and medium term.
- ii. In Paignton, hitherto undeveloped land to the west of the A3022 Torbay ring-road has been used been for housing, and further property in this vicinity used previously for commercial or industrial purposes has in part been similarly redeveloped to meet the increase in demand for residential dwellings.

The expansion of housing stock in these two locations has inextricably resulted in a notable disparity between the number of electors per councillors in the wards where these developments have taken place, namely in the Blatchcombe ward in Paignton and in the Shiphay-with-The Willows ward in Torquay. As a result, the shortfall in voter representation by the year 2023 is projected to be a staggering 35% in respect of Shiphay-with-The Willows and 11% in respect of Blatchcombe – two distinct aberrations which obviously require urgent rectification.

Since the last Local Government Boundary Commission review in 2001, the economic situation in Torbay has altered very considerably indeed. Whereas both health and social services, and tourism and the associated leisure industry remain the leading sectors for local employment in terms of numbers, outlets for this are primarily concentrated for both historical and geographical reasons in only about half a dozen of the current wards. Long before the start of the national economic downturn following the global financial crisis in 2007, Nortel Networks (previously the area's largest private sector employer which had engaged over 5,000 workers on higher than average wages in the late 1990's) had ceased to trade locally. The cessation of employment opportunities, etc. at Nortel Networks and the resultant loss of its financial input into the local economy was an extremely severe blow to the region, and one from which arguably the Torbay area has still not recovered.

By any measure or index, Torbay remains today one of the most socially deprived areas in the entire country. Factors having a direct influence on this are reflected in the area's problems associated with the following:

- A widespread low-wage economy, one which is all too often over-reliant on a casual workforce.
- A higher than average proportion of retired and otherwise economically inactive people.
- Increasing homelessness, aggravated by both a lack of affordable housing **and** a high ratio of property prices to local levels of earnings.
- Higher than average levels of long-term unemployment and/or benefit dependency.
- Higher than average levels of personal debt.
- A lower than average percentage of degree qualified persons of working age.
- Higher than average levels of diabetes and obesity, together with social problems associated with alcohol, substance and drug abuse.

Such social problems have been exacerbated by very substantial cuts to both benefits and local government services, which in part have been forced upon the local authority and other relevant bodies by central government. Bearing these factors in mind when contemplating any alterations to the ward boundaries, it is considered to be most undesirable for a disproportionate burden of such social ills to become concentrated in just one or two wards where they inevitably could become the sole responsibility of a very small number of councillors. With this in mind, after very careful deliberation, and taking into consideration numerous other pertinent factors such as the concentration of tourist, retail and other commercial interests in Torbay's three town centres, it is to be proposed and believed to be essential that each of three towns should have a three-member ward at its heart.

It is worth noting also that two current wards in Torquay (Watcombe and Ellacombe) are both projected to be some 13% short of voters by the year 2023. It is arguably no co-incidence that these particular wards suffer in part from some of the worst social deprivation in the region and, with little hard evidence on the ground to support the notion of any widespread depopulation in these neighbourhoods, it is very likely that such deviances from the 2023 figure of 2,872 voters per councillor are the result wholly or in part from a sizeable proportion of the potential electorate now failing to engage fully in the newly introduced system of individual voter registration – a suggestion strongly re-inforced by high levels of late voter registration in the period immediately preceding both the 2016 EU Referendum and the 2017 General Election. Quite simply, whilst previously voter registration was instigated by the head of each household, many potential voters are today simply not registering at all. Indeed, with no major expansion of the housing stock in either Watcombe or Ellacombe wards in recent times, it might well be safe to assume that as a result of such non-registration for electoral purposes, the actual populations in both these wards is in fact higher than the officially recorded figures.

A specific and somewhat unique problem clearly also arises in relation to Brixham where the expected electorate by the year 2023 for the town's two current largely urban wards is 13,552 – a total which inextricably does not fit comfortably with the expected ratio of one councillor to every 2,872 voters. Whilst the predicted 2023 electorate for the St. Mary's-with-Summercombe ward is perfectly in line with the number of voters for a two-member ward, there is patently going to be an insufficient number of voters to justify the second division as a three-member ward (as is currently fulfilled by the Berry Head-with-Furzeham ward) if it were to be based solely upon the urban area of Brixham – unless further residents are imported from the geographical area currently containing the neighbouring Churston-with-Galmpton ward. Any proposals to move the electorate in the other direction (i.e. from the current Berry Head-with-Furzeham ward into the Churston-with-Galmpton ward) would clearly discriminate against Brixham generally in that not only would it then be the only major town of the three which comprise Torbay not to have at least one three-member ward, it would no longer have a three-member ward at its heart.

There are additional aspects unique to the Brixham end of the Torbay that are worthy of note. Historically, Brixham comprised two separate communities with a marshy lane to connect them. So-called "Fishtown" was centred on the harbour area where those who relied on fishing and seafaring were resident, while a mile away on top of hills to the south of the harbour was so-called "Cowntown" where the community was primarily based on agriculture. The terms "Fishtown" and "Cowntown" are still used affectionately to this day, even at meetings of Brixham Town Council. The friendly rivalry and various traditions appertaining to the differing origins of these two separate communities are also still very much in evidence with such annual events as the well patronised Cowntown Carnival and the famous Brixham Trawler Race, both of which are held each summer. In more recent times, Brixham has also hosted a popular

annual Pirate Festival. To some extent, the historical customs and origins of the two distinct communities are still reflected today in the two wards that are currently based on Brixham (with Berry Head-with-Furzeham for “Fishtown” and St. Mary's-with-Summercombe for “Cowtown”), and their idiosyncrasies have been borne in mind when undertaking this review of Torbay’s ward boundaries.

## Proposals for Amendments

In order to achieve the final amendments being proposed in this report, the following principles peculiar to Torbay have been deployed:

- a) In essence, two separate sets of amendments have been drafted – one covering exclusively the southern end of the Unitary Authority Area of Torbay, and one exclusively for the northern element of the Unitary Authority Area dealing solely with Torquay. In other words, the concept of any single ward being formed partly from Torquay and partly from Paignton has been not contemplated, nor indeed would this even be considered desirable.
- b) Details for individual wards have been examined in a geographical order, starting from one extremity and working towards the other – as opposed to starting centrally and working outwards therefrom, or starting from those wards where the 2023 projections look as though they will be producing the most awry deviancies from the Local Government Boundary Commission tolerance figure of 5%.
- c) A target number of voters of **2,872** per councillor (which equates with **5,745** and **8,617** respectively for two-member and three-member wards).

The detailed amendments being suggested for each (current) individual ward are as set out on the following pages, together with justification for the proposals in question.

### **N.B.**

- i. Summary sheets detailing the actual numbers involved in the movement of voters between wards (where this is considered both appropriate and necessary to reach an equitable distribution of the electorate) are summarised per Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.*
- ii. The alphabetical/numerical references in the following notes (for example “J1”, “J2”, etc.) correspond with references quoted for the number of electors per Appendix 2 and Appendix 3*

### **St. Mary's-with-Summercombe**

With a projected 2023 electorate of **5,741** no amendments in the make-up of this ward are currently considered necessary. It would seem totally illogical to disturb the status quo of a ward on the extremity of the Unitary Authority area that has an almost perfect match for a two-member ward, the boundaries of which correspond well with the historical Brixham community of “Cowtown”.

### **Berry Head-with-Furzeham**

This ward encompasses the heart of Brixham and its famous fishing port. The history of Brixham goes back over 1,000 years and its role as a fishing port is even mentioned in the Domesday Book. Unlike many other ports across the UK, the Brixham fishing industry is largely based on sustainable stocks and has therefore thrived in recent years – so much so that it now returns the highest value catch in England and has a world class reputation for quality.



*The town of Brixham: “Fishtown” to the left and centre, with “Cowtown” on the right*

As already alluded to, the 2023 projected electorate for this ward totalling **7,811** requires the importation of about 800 voters from Churston-with-Galmpton ward so as to retain at least one three-member ward at the Brixham end of the Torbay Unitary Area. On the basis that the St. Mary's-with-Summercombe ward is to remain unaltered (see above), the 800 shortfall in voters can only therefore be imported from the present Churston-with-Galmpton ward, because this is the only other ward with which the Berry Head-with-Furzeham ward has a contiguous border. The electorate currently resident within the bounds of village of Galmpton, when merged with the Berry Head-with-Furzeham ward, would provide an ideal number of voters to bring about the electoral base required for a three-member ward.

Merging Galmpton with what is at present a Brixham-only ward would actually unify many communal interests. For instance, it should not be overlooked either that all addresses within the village of Galmpton already bear the Brixham-based postcode of “TQ5” and Brixham is recognised by Royal Mail as the nominated postal town for the village of Galmpton.

Both Galmpton and Brixham also share interests in the future of the marine engineering industry, with a boatyard on Galmpton Creek of the River Dart and the fishing industry in Brixham. Both communities also interact education-wise at both a primary and secondary school level.

- J1** Import the current GD Polling District in the Churston-with-Galmpton ward (essentially the village of Galmpton, plus the area of the Lupton Estate, the hamlet of Alston, Kennels Lane, Barn Copse and Laywell Road), plus the three-sided unpopulated tract of land in Polling District GE bounded by the A3022, Copythorne Road and the lane linking the two (as per Note **G2** below).
- J2** Re-align the boundary between the Polling Districts GD and GE from its current position to one which runs firstly the course of Copythorne Road in Brixham as far as the lane linking this with the A3022, and then both along this lane and the A3022 itself as far as the junction with Bridge Road in Churston.
- J3** Ensure, however, that any re-alignments exclude the transfer those voters who actually live in the vicinity of Churston Ferrers along both sides of the main A3022 itself – such voters are best served by remaining within the current of Polling District GE, because they clearly have a communal interest in both Churston and Churston Ferrers rather than in Galmpton or Brixham.

### **Churston-with-Galmpton**

With a projected total of **5,646** voters by the year 2023, this ward will need boosting numbers-wise if, as proposed above, it sheds voters in the current Polling District GD to the current Berry Head-with-Furzeham ward.



This could be readily resolved and compensated by the inclusion of an almost identical number of voters currently resident in the IB Polling District which is at present forms part of the existing Goodrington-with-Roselands ward. Such an incorporation of the Polling District IB within the majority of the existing Churston-with-Galmpton ward would firstly unify the two major “sub-conurbations” in the southern half of Torbay (Goodrington and Churston) which both share many features such as a common coastline and access to the main A379 arterial road. Secondly, such a transfer would ensure that the residential areas centred on Elberry and Broadsands in Churston would retain their links to the historical church and village of Churston Ferrers.

Goodrington and Churston also have common issues relating to public transport such as the No.12 and No.120 bus services which are essential to the large numbers of retired people currently living along these routes. Goodrington and Churston have also been linked historically since the building of the railway in the nineteenth century. It should also not be overlooked either that current the polling station for Polling District GA is already situated anyway within the present Goodrington-with-Roselands Polling District IB.

The importation of Goodrington-with-Roselands Polling District IB into the prevailing Churston-with-Galmpton ward area would additionally bring about a natural geographical boundary between the rump of the current Goodrington-with-Roselands ward. The Polling District IB has always been to some extent isolated from the rest of that ward by virtue of the wide breadth of Clennon Valley, Clennon Gorge and the elevated natural contours of Clennon Hill.

Any transfer of the electorate within Polling District IB is also be an ideal opportunity to absorb within Polling District IB the tract of land at present within Polling District IC (and slither of ID) located to the *east* of the railway line. This area encompasses the neighbourhood’s premier open space (Young’s Park) as well as the entire length of the Goodrington coastline, such a transfer ensuring that both are then conjoined within the conurbation in IB. Simultaneously, the entire length of the Goodrington seafront area would be located within a single accountable zone, rather than arbitrarily divided between two separate wards. No voters would be affected by such a simple re-alignment as this tract of land is totally uninhabited.

**G1** Import the present Goodrington-with-Roselands Polling District IB, plus the small uninhabited area of IC and ID located to the east of the railway line alluded to above (as per Note **I2** below).

**G2** Export the GD Polling District to the current Berry Head-with-Furzeham ward (as per Note **J1** above).

### **Goodrington-with-Roselands**

It is estimated that the current boundaries of this ward will produce an electoral base of **5,842** by the year 2023. However, notwithstanding the loss of the Polling District IB (as alluded to above) to unify the “sub-conurbations” of Goodrington with Churston, there is also a very strong case for exporting certain streets which have never had any material connection with the local concept of what constitutes “Goodrington”, let alone “Roselands”.

For instance, in the current Polling District ID, the residents of the York Road and Elsdale Road vicinity have always considered themselves to be part of the St. Michael's community which is almost exclusively located at present within the current Roundham-with-Hyde ward. Indeed, residents of the York Road neighbourhood are regular attendees at meetings convened by the St. Michael's Residents Association. The residential area of St. Michael's in Paignton is essentially one stretch of highway running through a natural valley to the west of the town centre. It was overwhelmingly constructed at the same time and comprises St. Michael's Road and Hayes Road with a plethora of streets akin to a ribcage off this of which York Road is just one example.



*Looking south across Clennon Valley, a natural geographical feature separating Goodrington (top right) from Paignton*

The residents living at the far western end of Hayes Road (currently in Polling District ID) have also historically always associated themselves strongly with the St. Michael's community and have little or no affinity at all with either Goodrington or Roselands. Exporting these residents too from the Polling District ID would also re-unite the St. Michael's area with the Hayes School, an establishment whose pupils overwhelmingly inhabit the wider St. Michael's area.

In a similar vein, the voters resident in the lower end of the Fisher Street neighbourhood have never had any affinity with either Goodrington or Roselands, with residents here invariably using churches, schools, medical centres, etc. in the town centre rather than either Goodrington or Roselands.

Any transfer of the voters from the aforementioned areas will necessitate an influx of voters to bring any reconstituted boundaries into line with a population expected of a two-member ward. This is most easily achieved by the inward transfer of the adjoining Roundham-with-Hyde ward Polling District RC, itself a neighbourhood which has little in common with the rest of the current Roundham-with-Hyde ward which is very orientated towards Paignton Town Centre and its commercial interests. The Polling District RC does, however, have far more in common with Polling Districts IA, IC and ID in that (just like Polling District RC itself) they are all overwhelmingly residential areas with a higher than average percentage of retired persons.

One final point is that with central Goodrington itself no longer part of this proposed redrawn ward, a name-change for any revamped ward will be necessary.

- I1** Import the Polling District RC from what is at present the Roundham-with-Hyde ward (as per Note **R1** below).
- I2** Transfer the Polling District IB (plus the small uninhabited area of IC and ID located to the east of the railway line alluded to at note **G1**) to the area currently covered by the Churston-with-Galmpton ward area (as per Note **G1** above).
- I3** Re-align the border of what is currently the Goodrington-with-Roselands Polling District IC, so that the electorate of York Road, Sparks Barn Road, The Riviera, Elmsleigh Road and Elmsleigh Park are absorbed into what is currently the Roundham-with-Hyde Polling District RD, ensuring that all properties in Batson Gardens and the entire length of Fisher Street would also be relocated within what is at present the Roundham-with-Hyde Polling District RD (as per Note **R3** below).
- I4** Re-align the border of what is currently the Goodrington-with-Roselands Polling District ID, so that the electorate within the rectangle bounded by Hayes Road (on two sides), The Hayes School and Totnes Road (including Nos.141-147) is exported to what is at present the Roundham-with-Hyde Polling District RD (as per Note **R2** below).
- I5** Re-align the border of what is currently the Goodrington-with-Roselands Polling District ID, so that the electorate within Broadlands Road, Footlands Road and Elsdale Road are also exported to what is at present the Roundham-with-Hyde Polling District RD (as per Note **R4** below).
- I6** Transfer the somewhat isolated property known as “Whitley Lodge” (187, Totnes Road) – located at the former entrance to Paignton Zoo, internally within the current Goodrington-with-Roselands ward from Polling District ID to Polling District IA.

## **Roundham-with-Hyde**

At present, Paignton is the only one of the three major conurbations in Torbay that does not currently have a three-member ward at its heart. A combination of commercial and retail interests, a vibrant harbour, an increase in the population during the tourist season and a plethora of social problems associated with town centres generally, all point to the need for a three-member ward to spread the resultant workload equitably among elected councillors.

It is predicted that the electorate of the current Roundham-with-Hyde ward by the year 2023 will be just **5,760**. Therefore, in order to accommodate a third councillor in the ward in which the town centre is currently located (i.e. Roundham-with-Hyde), it is proposed to reduce the status of a three-member Preston ward (where the social and commercial pressures are very obviously considerably less) to a two-member ward.

It is believed that this can be achieved both effectively and seamlessly by combining those areas containing the bulk of the tourist and retail elements of the current Preston ward (largely sited in that ward's eastern section) to what is at present the Roundham-with-Hyde ward. The creation of such a three-member ward for Paignton town centre and its immediate environs will also bring other communal benefits, in that both the current Roundham-with-Hyde ward and the area of lower Preston to be merged with this have a common interest in the two main commuter routes and arterial roads linking Torquay and Paignton town centres, i.e. the A3022 and the B3021. There are also common public transport concerns relating to both 'bus and rail travel, the latter being particularly important for the tourist sector and for the commercial viability of any future town centre developments.



*Looking north, the railway from Torquay cuts through the geographical plateau containing Paignton town centre*

Paignton town centre faces unique problems that will need resolving in the coming years – the regeneration of both Victoria Square and Station Square, the future of both the Crossways Shopping Centre and the Grade II listed Oldway Mansion, as well as the prospect of a restructure of local schools (the Parkfield and Mayfield sites) are all unavoidably interwoven and therefore best served from a single point of accountability.

Also located in the heart of the ward is the Victorian-era Palace Theatre, the long-term viability of which has recently been the subject of much controversy. Apart from theatrical productions, the Palace Theatre complex is also used by The Robert Owen Foundation (a charity that works with people with learning disabilities), the local youth theatre group Torbay Acting Factory and other local community groups.

Such an expansion of the redrawn ward along the lines proposed, absorbing the wider tourist related and business interests that are already inextricably linked commercially to the town centre, would sit very conveniently with the commercial interests of local community partnerships whose expertise is concentrated

primarily on all matters affecting the town centre, rather than the peripheral residential areas of Preston Down, Shorton Valley, etc. that are currently located in the western and elevated western side of the Preston ward.

A three-member ward along the lines proposed would also ensure that (as with the proposals for the Goodrington coastline alluded to in this report) the entire Paignton seafront area from Hollicombe Head to the harbour would be located within a single accountable zone, rather than being arbitrarily divided between two separate wards. It would also re-unite the Anglican Christ Church (at present the building itself is within the Roundham-with-Hyde ward) with much of its historical parish boundary currently located in what is the FD Polling District of the Preston ward from which it draws much of its congregation.

To equalise numbers of voters across wards on a fair and rational basis, it is proposed to import from the current Goodrington-with-Roselands Polling District ID the residents of the York Road and Elsdale Road areas who have always thought of themselves as part of the adjoining St. Michael's community which is at present almost exclusively located within the current Roundham-with-Hyde ward. The residential area that is St. Michael's in Paignton is essentially one stretch of highway (running parallel with the main A385 to Totnes) through a natural valley to the west of the town centre, comprising St. Michael's Road and Hayes Road with a plethora of streets akin to a ribcage off this of which York Road is just one example. Residents of the York Road neighbourhood are also regular attendees at meetings convened by the St. Michael's Residents Association. In a similar vein, the residents at the far western end of Hayes Road (also in Polling District ID at present) have historically always associated themselves likewise very strongly with the St. Michael's community and have no affinity whatsoever with either Goodrington or Roselands. Importing these residents from the Polling District ID would also bring the entire the St. Michael's area under one umbrella and re-unite it with the Hayes School, an establishment whose pupils are drawn overwhelmingly from the wider St. Michael's area.

It is proposed also that the electorate of Rossall Drive, Nursery Close, The Gurneys, Manor Terrace and Higher Manor Terrace (currently resident within the Clifton-with-Maidenway Polling District CD) be transferred into the new three-member ward. Not only do the voters here also largely associate themselves with the long established St. Michael's community, but these streets are only accessible from that element of the Totnes Road in Paignton that is already sited within the Polling District RD.

Purely as a "tidying-up" exercise it is also proposed to transfer out the few remaining voters (currently just 13 in number) within the Polling District RD who live at "Torbay View" in Colley End Park and in Winner Hill Road; both these streets are already overwhelmingly located in the Clifton-with-Maidenway ward. One final proposal is to redraw a small section of the prevailing boundary between the existing RB and RC Polling Districts, to ensure that Paignton Harbour itself falls within what is at present the Polling District RB. This would not involve any transfer of the voters on Roundham Road or Sands Road (who would remain within what is presently Polling District RC), but it would nevertheless still guarantee that the interests of the Paignton Harbour (both commercially and leisure-wise) are aligned with other business and tourist interests in the town (including the associated and adjoining Esplanade area), rather than being isolated in what is an otherwise proposed to be a largely residential ward.

- R1** Export the Polling District RC to what is currently the Goodrington-with-Roselands ward, at the same time redrawing a small section of the boundary between the existing RB and RC Polling Districts, to ensure that Paignton Harbour itself falls within what is at present RB (as per Note **I1** above).
- R2** Import the electorate in Goodrington-with-Roselands Polling District ID residing within the rectangle bounded by Hayes Road (on two sides), The Hayes School and Totnes Road, plus those living at Nos.141-147, Totnes Road (as per Note **I4** above).
- R3** Transfer in all voters in Batson Gardens, York Road, York Gardens, Sparks Barn Road, Fisher Street, The Riviera, Elmsleigh Park and Elmsleigh Road who are at present resident in the Goodrington-with-Roselands Polling District IC (as per Note **I3** above).
- R4** Transfer in all voters in Broadlands Road, Footlands Road and Elsdale Road who are at present resident in the Goodrington-with-Roselands Polling District IC (as per Note **I5** above).
- R5** Transfer in from the Clifton-with-Maidenway ward the residents of Rossall Drive, Nursery Close, The Gurneys, Manor Terrace and Higher Manor Terrace (as per Note **C2** below).
- R6** Export any remaining voters currently within the Polling District RD who live in Winner Hill Road and Colley End Park (as per Note **C3** below).
- R7** Transfer in all the residents of Preston ward Polling District FB, **excluding** those living in Cockington Lane and on the northern (even numbered residences) side of Langdon Road (as per Note **F1** below).
- R8** Re-align the boundary to absorb within the new three-member ward all the electorate of Polling District FD resident in Oldway Road, Kingshurst Drive and all roads to the south and east thereof, excluding the persons resident in Upper Manor Road and Manor crescent (as per Note **F2** below).
- R9** Transfer in also the electorate at present residing within Preston ward Polling District FD in Coombe Road south of its junction with Langdon Road, as well as all the voters of Washington Close and Durham Close as these streets are only accessible from Coombe Road (as per Note **F3** below).

### **Clifton-with-Maidenway**

Clifton-with-Maidenway is a compact and overwhelmingly residential two-member ward with a projected 2023 electorate of **5,486** centred on the hilly areas lying to the west of Paignton Town Centre. Although this figure sits within the tolerance level recommended by Local Government Boundary Commission, Clifton-with-Maidenway is ideally located to absorb a proportion of the predicted excess number of voters living in the neighbouring ward of Blatchcombe.

With this in mind, and in order to ensure a primary route of access between the northern and southern sections of the Blatchcombe ward, it is proposed that the current boundary between the Clifton-with-Maidenway polling district CD and the Blatchcombe polling district AD be moved westwards to the A380 Kings Ash Road. This would transfer all the electorate of polling district AD to Clifton-with-Maidenway, except those residents on the western side of this road (even numbers 96-172 Kings Ash Road inclusive) who would remain within the Blatchcombe ward.

In the past, the Polling District AD area formed part of the long defunct Coverdale ward, which was largely superseded by the neighbourhood now covered by the Clifton-with-Maidenway ward. Clifton-with-Maidenway is a natural home for the bulk of Polling District AD, because much of the Waterleat area that it covers forms part of the same residential development as the Primley Park area with which it shares the very same elevated hill. The inclusion of the bulk of Polling District AD area would also correspond with a natural topographical ward boundary along the Kings Ash Road and the valley through which this runs from Kings Ash Cross as far as Tweenaway Cross. It would also bring into Clifton-with-Maidenway responsibility for a senior school (Paignton Community & Sports Academy) where the parents of many pupils are voters resident in Clifton-with-Maidenway.

However, the inclusion of the Polling District AD within Clifton-with-Maidenway would, by itself, create an electoral base well outside the suggested Local Government Boundary Commission tolerance level of 5%. Therefore to compensate the inclusion of Polling District AD, it is proposed, inter alia, that the residents of Rossall Drive, Nursery Close, The Gurneys, Manor Terrace and Higher Manor Terrace all be transferred from the Clifton-with-Maidenway ward CD to the area currently containing the Roundham-with-Hyde Polling District RD. Not only does the electorate of these five roads already closely associate itself with the nearby St. Michael's community, these streets (all incidentally culs-de-sac) are only accessible from that element of the Totnes Road already sited with the Polling District RD. In other words, geographically (due to the nature of the hill on which Primley Park stands), they are presently somewhat isolated from the rest of the Clifton-with-Maidenway ward.

In order to create an optimum equalisation of voter numbers across not just the Clifton-with-Maidenway ward but the other wards adjoining this, it is further proposed to export to the Preston Ward, the voters currently in Polling District CC who live at the very top end of Southfield Avenue (including Anthea Road and Miranda Road) and in Shorton Road (plus Westhill Road and Westhill Crescent). It will also require the transfer of the element of Barcombe Road in the CC polling district as vehicular access to this is only possible from Shorton Road. This proposed transfer on the periphery of Polling District CC would unify the lower end of Shorton Road with the rest of that street's residents who live at present within the Preston ward.

The transfer involving the top of Southfield Avenue will also resolve the anomaly whereby, unlike the rest of the street, five properties in Dolphin Crescent currently find themselves in the Clifton-with-Maidenway ward.

Purely as a "tidying-up" exercise, it is also proposed to import the few remaining voters (currently just 13 in number) within the Polling District RD who live in Winner Hill Road and "Torbay View" in Colley End Park; both these streets are already overwhelmingly located in the Clifton-with-Maidenway ward. In a



similar vein, the voters resident at Nos.154 and 156 Marldon Road (TQ3 3ND) can be moved to the Blatchcombe ward where all other Marldon Road voters in that area are currently registered.

- C1** Re-align the current boundary between Clifton-with-Maidenway Polling District CD and Blatchcombe Polling District AD westwards to the A380 Kings Ash Road, transferring all the electorate of polling district AD to Clifton-with-Maidenway, except those residents on the western side of this road (even numbers 96-172 Kings Ash Road inclusive) who would remain within the Blatchcombe ward (as per Note **A1** below).
- C2** Export the residents of Rossall Drive, Nursery Close, The Gurneys, Manor Terrace and Higher Manor Terrace from Polling District CD to what is currently Roundham-with-Hyde Polling District RD (as per Note **R5** above).
- C3** Import any remaining voters currently within the Polling District RD who live in Winner Hill Road and Colley End Park (as per Note **R6** above).
- C4** Transfer to the Preston ward all those residents in Westhill Road and Westhill Crescent, together with all those voters living in Shorton Road and Barcombe Road who currently live in Polling District CC (as per Note **F4** below).
- C5** Transfer to the Preston ward all residents in Miranda Road and Anthea Road, as well as those in Southfield Avenue living north of the junction with Lammas Lane (i.e. even numbers 108 upwards and odd numbers 123 upwards), simultaneously transferring to the current Preston ward the electorate resident in Dolphin Crescent at (even numbers) 90-94 and (odd numbers) 93-95 (as per Note **F5** below).
- C6** Transfer from the Clifton-with-Maidenway Polling District CD to the prevailing area covered by Blatchcombe Polling District AD all those voters who are currently resident at the following six properties near the junction of Totnes Road with Waterleat Road: (all in TQ3 3SB) 190 Totnes Road, Stable Mews Cottage, Peacock Lodge, Primley Woods Cottage and Primley House; and (in TQ3 3UQ) The Ridings (as per Note **A3** below).
- C7** Export to the Blatchcombe ward the voters resident at Nos.154 and 156 Marldon Road TQ3 3ND (as per Note **A2** below).

### **Blatchcombe Ward**

As a result of increased housing development, primarily along the A3022 Brixham Road corridor, the electorate of the Blatchcombe ward is forecast to grow by nearly 20% from its current level of 8,009 to one of **9,557** by the year 2023. Such a level places the voter capacity at twice the tolerance level even for a three-member ward. In simple terms, it has to shed voters and the logical solution is to transfer some voters to the adjoining Clifton-with-Maidenway ward.

Whilst the Blatchcombe ward itself contains large numbers of residential properties, it does also contain two areas classified as being within the 20% most deprived in England, and has nearly one in five of its current population living in social housing. The ward is unique among those in the Paignton area as it also has large swathes of sparsely populated land on the western fringes of Torbay widely used for agriculture, and encompasses rural hamlets such as those of Blagdon and Yalberton. Areas within the Blatchcombe ward are widely considered to be the most important location for current and future employment prospects in Paignton. The Blatchcombe ward is home to a substantial commercial sector comprising light industry including the Yalberton industrial estate and the Torbay Business Park. It is also home to camping sites important to the tourism sector and the South Devon College, a further education college that provides a wide variety of courses and is, in its own right, a major employer for the wider Torbay area.

To achieve an optimum number of voters in the least disruptive manner, it is proposed to export the bulk of the current Blatchcombe Polling District AD to the adjoining Clifton-with-Maidenway ward. As well as revising the electoral base for the Blatchcombe ward to a level equating with the near perfect figure recommended by the Local Government Boundary Commission for a three-member ward in the Torbay Unitary Authority area, a re-alignment of the ward's boundary in this fashion would additionally match a natural topographical boundary along the Kings Ash Road and the valley through which this runs from as far as Tweenaway Cross.

With this in mind, and in order to ensure a primary route of access between the northern and southern sections of the Blatchcombe ward, it is proposed that the current boundary that separates the Clifton-with-Maidenway polling district CD and the Blatchcombe polling district AD simply be moved westwards to the A380 Kings Ash Road. This would transfer all the electorate of polling district AD to the Clifton-with-Maidenway ward, except those residents living on the western side of this road (even numbers 96-172 Kings Ash Road inclusive) who would remain within the Blatchcombe ward.

With such a large and diverse mix within its boundaries, it is certainly considered appropriate for Blatchcombe to remain a three-member ward, with the only major amendment required being the need to export Polling District AD to Clifton-with-Maidenway as a means of equalising voter numbers. There is also the minor issues interacting with the Clifton-with-Maidenway ward regarding the voters resident at Nos. 154 and 156 Marlton Road and the small number of properties near the junction of Totnes Road with Waterleat Road – both aspects having already being alluded to under the Clifton-with-Maidenway section of this report.

- A1** Re-align the current boundary between Clifton-with-Maidenway Polling District CD and the Blatchcombe Polling District AD westwards to the A380 Kings Ash Road, transferring all the electorate of polling district AD to Clifton-with-Maidenway, except those residents on the western side of this road (even numbers 96-172 Kings Ash Road inclusive) who would remain within the Blatchcombe ward (as per Note **C1** above).
- A2** Import from the Clifton-with-Maidenway ward the voters resident at Nos.154 and 156 Marlton Road (as per Note **C7** above).

**A3** Transfer from the Clifton-with-Maidenway Polling District CD to the prevailing area covered by the Blatchcombe Polling District AD those voters who are resident at the following six properties near the junction of Totnes Road with Waterleat Road: (all in TQ3 3SB) 190 Totnes Road, Stable Mews Cottage, Peacock Lodge, Primley Woods Cottage and Primley House; and (in TQ3 3UQ) The Ridings (as per Note **C6** above).

## **Preston**

The current Preston ward is projected to have an electoral base of **8,173** by the year 2023, a figure well short of that required for a three-member ward in the Torbay Unitary Authority area in accordance with the ideal figures recommended by the Local Government Boundary Commission. Rather than endeavour to import voters from outside the Preston area with which they have little or no affinity, it is proposed instead to export part of the electoral base for Preston and reduce its status to that of a two-member ward. To achieve a reduction in voters to somewhere within the Local Government Boundary Commission tolerance figure, it is therefore proposed that the current Preston ward export a number of voters who currently reside resident in its eastern Polling Districts (to what is at present the Roundham-with-Hyde ward), but to compensate the resultant shortfall arising by acquiring a smaller number of residents from the Clifton-with-Maidenway Polling District CC.

As it stands, the Preston ward falls into two very distinct areas. Firstly, the neighbourhoods in the ward's western sector are almost exclusively residential in nature, with a larger than average proportion of people of retirement age. In contrast, the Preston ward's eastern sector is far less sedate and contains a wide variety of commercial interests, many of which are directly associated with the tourist industry. Topographically, the western half of the Preston ward is sited primarily on high ground, whereas the eastern end of the ward lies primarily on the same level plateau that runs north to south and into Paignton town centre. Clearly, various issues affecting the residents and commercial interests of the eastern sector of the Preston ward have far more in common with the residents and commercial interests of the current Roundham-with-Hyde ward than they do with those in the Preston ward's western Polling Districts, say, those living in the Shorton and Dolphin Court neighbourhoods or at the top of Preston Down.



*Looking west, the current Preston Ward, with Shorton and Preston Down on the high ground*

The proposed creation of a three-member ward encompassing both the eastern end of the current Preston ward and Paignton town centre will also bring other communal benefits. For instance, both the current Roundham-with-Hyde ward and the area of lower Preston to be merged with this have a common interest in the two main commuter routes and arterial roads linking Torquay with Paignton town centres, namely the A3022 and the B3021.

There are also common transport issues relating to both 'bus and rail travel, rail being particularly important for the tourist industry and for the commercial viability of any future town centre developments. Town centre regeneration, the future of the Grade II listed Oldway Mansion and the likely prospect of a restructure of local schools (the Parkfield and Mayfield sites) are all unavoidably interwoven and therefore best served from a single point of accountability.

A three-member ward along the lines proposed would also ensure that (as with the proposals for the Goodrington coastline alluded to in this report) the entire Paignton and Preston seafront areas would be located within a single accountable zone, rather than arbitrarily divided between two separate wards. It would also re-unite the Anglican Christ Church (at present the building itself is within the Roundham-with-Hyde ward) with much of its historical parish boundary currently located in what is currently the FD Polling District of the Preston ward from which it draws much of its congregation.

On the revised Preston ward side of the new boundary, all the residents of the Shorton Road would also all be represented in a single ward and re-united with both Shorton Valley Road and the historical setting of the Shorton Farm which dates back to at least the mid-sixteenth century.

To maintain a contiguous route between the Preston Down (FA) and the Shorton/Dolphin Court (FC) elements of the ward, the northern side (i.e. the even numbered properties) in Langdon Road would not be exported.

- F1** Export the Preston ward Polling District FB, excluding those voters in Cockington Lane and those living on the northern (even numbered residences) on Langdon Road (as per Note **R7** above).
- F2** Re-align the boundary of the Preston Polling District FD to export to what is currently the Roundham-with-Hyde ward all the electorate of the Preston Polling District FD resident in Oldway Road, Kingshurst Drive and all roads to the south and east thereof, excluding those persons resident in Upper Manor Road and Manor crescent (as per Note **R8** above).
- F3** Transfer out also the electorate at present residing within the Preston ward Polling District FD in Coombe Road south of its junction with Langdon Road, as well as all the voters of Washington Close and Durham Close (as per Note **R9** above).
- F4** Transfer to the Preston ward from the Clifton-with-Maidenway ward all the electorate in Westhill Road and Westhill Crescent, together with all those voters in the living in Shorton Road and Barcombe Road who currently live in Polling District CC (as per Note **C4** above).
- F5** Transfer to the Preston ward all residents in Miranda Road and Anthea Road, as well as those in Southfield Avenue living north of the junction with Lamma Lane (i.e. even numbers 108 upwards and odd numbers 123 upwards), simultaneously transferring to Preston also the electorate resident in Dolphin Crescent at (even numbers) 90-94 and (odd numbers) 93-95 (as per Note **C5** above).

## **Watcombe**

With a projected electorate of just **4,982** by the year 2023, the long-established community and primarily residential area encompassing the Watcombe ward will need to absorb voters from at least one of its neighbours.

It is proposed that one effective and seamless way of assisting the necessary degree of parity will be to import the predicted 2023 electoral base of 625 voters living in Polling District HA in the adjoining St. Marychurch ward. It is also proposed that the current boundary between the prevailing HA and HB Polling Districts of St. Marychurch be moved slightly southwards to run the length of Easterfield Lane and then due east to meet the sea just south of the coastal point known locally as “Smugglers’ Hole”. This revision would also necessitate the transfer of a small number of residents living on Teignmouth Road to the north of the junction with Easterfield Lane. It is well worth noting that during the last review undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission in 2001, it was also at one time proposed to unite the HA area with that of the present Watcombe ward. Nor should it be overlooked either that, unlike the majority of the St. Marychurch ward, Polling District HA is not strongly geared towards the tourist industry.

Such proposals will link the current Watcombe ward with its spiritual origins – the actual area from which it takes its name – the Watcombe Valley that leads down to Watcombe Beach, together with Watcombe Heights and Watcombe Beach Road. The popular and aptly named “Watcombe Scout Camp”, located at the top of Easterfield Lane, would also be sited in the Watcombe ward upon the re-alignment of the prevailing boundary between the two HA and HB Polling Districts of the St. Marychurch ward.

Furthermore, the “King George V Playing Fields” (traditionally associated with Watcombe rather than St. Marychurch) will fall within the boundaries of the Watcombe ward, whilst the course and clubhouse of Torquay Golf Club (long associated with St. Marychurch rather than Watcombe) will remain within the boundary of the St. Marychurch Polling District HB. The hitherto undeveloped land which comprises both the “King George V Playing Fields” and Torquay Golf Club also offers a clear and natural geographical division between the Watcombe Valley and the Petitor area of St. Marychurch.

Notwithstanding the proposed transfer of the Polling District HA into the Watcombe ward, to ensure equilibrium in numbers of voters in other neighbouring wards, (namely Shipway-with-The Willows and Tormohun) further amendments will be required to its boundaries. In order to achieve this, it is therefore firstly proposed to transfer to the current Tormohun ward all the electorate of Polling District WD, except for the residents of Horace Road. This will bring about cohesion for the electorate in Hele, who currently find their community divided in two. The residents of Horace Road have traditionally associated themselves more closely with the nearby Barton neighbourhood, most of whom are already situated within the prevailing Watcombe ward.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the local community partnership for this area of Torbay is styled as the “Barton & Watcombe Community Partnership” and the proposed amendments in this report assist in bringing these two close-knit communities under a single point of reference and electoral accountability.

It is further proposed that all the residents living in Lummaton Place, Grasmere Close, Bigbury Way, Pavor Road and Fore Street, Barton (as opposed to the similarly named Fore Street in St. Marychurch itself), as well as those living at 386-400 Teignmouth Road (TQ1 4SW) be transferred to the Watcombe ward. Such a move would unify all the residents living along the entire length of the historical route that is Fore Street Barton – and the roads leading off this, into one single ward.



*King George V Playing Fields, with Torquay Golf Club a natural boundary between Watcombe and St. Marychurch*

The other major amendment considered necessary is the re-alignment of the prevailing boundary between the Shiphay-with-The Willows Polling District TA and the Watcombe ward so that the latter takes responsibility for Beechfield Avenue, Beechfield Place, Orchid Way, Willowfield Road, the entire length of Barton Hill Road and all minor roads streaming from this with the revised boundary running along Barton Hill Way to the junction of Browns Bridge Road and then in a north-easterly direction as necessary. This move will re-unite both the Barton Hill Academy and the adjoining St. Martin’s Anglican Church with the historical element of Barton that is already located within the Watcombe ward to the east of Barton Hill Road.

Finally, the review of the ward's boundaries also offers up an ideal opportunity to resolve the anomalies whereby the property known as "Suntor" on Great Hill Road (TQ2 8JS) and No.21 Lawn Close (TQ2 8JZ) both find currently themselves in the Shiphay-with-The Willows Polling District TA, whereas as all other properties in both these streets are located in the Watcombe Polling District WA.

Similarly, it is proposed to transfer into the Watcombe ward the two nearby properties also on Kingskerswell Road in Shiphay-with-The Willows Polling District TA known as "Chalfont" and "Viewpoint" (both have the postcode TQ2 8JT).

- W1** Import the Polling District HA from the St. Marychurch ward into the Watcombe ward (as per Note **H1** below).
- W2** Re-align the prevailing boundary between the St. Marychurch ward Polling Districts HA and HB, so that the boundary then runs the full length of Easterfield Lane from its junction with Teignmouth Road and subsequently due east to meet the sea just south of the coastal point known locally as "Smugglers' Hole" – a move which will simultaneously transfer certain properties located on Teignmouth Road from the St. Marychurch ward into the Watcombe ward, namely (TQ1 4SP) Sovereign Mews and the even numbered (TQ1 4SL) 432-442 Teignmouth Road (as per Note **H2** below).
- W3** Import into Watcombe ward Polling District WA from the current Shiphay-with-The Willows Polling District TA the property known as "Suntor" (TQ2 8JS) situated on Great Hill Road and No.21 Lawn Close (TQ2 8JZ), together with those properties known as "Chalfont" and "Viewpoint" on Kingskerswell Road (both have the postcode TQ2 8JT) (as per Note **T4** below).
- W4** Transfer to the current Tormohun ward, all the electorate of Polling District WD, except for the residents of Horace Road (as per Note **L6** below).
- W5** Import into the Watcombe ward from the St. Marychurch ward the following streets: Lummaton Place, Grasmere Close, Bigbury Way, Pavor Road and Fore Street, Barton (as opposed to the similarly named Fore Street in St. Marychurch itself), as well as those voters living at 386-400 Teignmouth Road (TQ1 4SW). Such a move would unify all the residents living along the entire length of the historical route that is Fore Street Barton – and the roads leading off this, into one single ward (as per Note **H4** below).
- W6** Re-align the boundary between the Shiphay-with-The Willows Polling District TA and the Watcombe ward so that the latter takes responsibility for Beechfield Avenue, Beechfield Place, Orchid Way, Willowfield Road, the entire length of Barton Hill Road and all minor roads streaming from this with the revised boundary running along from the junction of Barton Hill Way with Barton Hill Road as far as the junction with Browns Bridge Road and then in a north-easterly direction as necessary to the west of the property known as "Chalfont" on Kingskerswell road (as per Note **T1** below).



## **St. Marychurch**

The St. Marychurch ward is currently represented by three councillors on Torbay Council and its current boundaries are forecast to contain **8,689** voters by the year 2023. The ward is primarily centred on St. Marychurch itself and Babbacombe (two inextricably interwoven sub-conurbations of Torquay) which have extensive commercial reliance on both local and tourist trade, and also encompasses the area of Plainmoor which is both retail and residential in nature. Both St. Marychurch and Babbacombe have their own vibrant community identities and a proud history very distinct from that of, say, Torquay town centre. The fact that St. Marychurch and Babbacombe are so interdependent and geographically fused means that, under current circumstances, the resultant electoral base is always likely to lend itself very strongly to a three-member ward, a fact additionally re-inforced by widespread commercial interests and connections with the tourist industry. Major tourist attractions in the ward include Babbacombe Model Village, Babbacombe Cliff Railway and the Bygones Museum.

It is proposed firstly to export Polling District HA (alluded to within the Watcombe section of this report) to the current Watcombe ward. It should not be overlooked that, unlike most of the St. Marychurch ward, the Polling District HA is not particularly geared towards the tourist industry and is to some extent geographically separated from the rest of the ward. The hitherto undeveloped land which comprises both the “King George V Playing Fields” and Torquay Golf Club additionally offers a very clear and natural geographical division between the Watcombe Valley and the Petitor area of St. Marychurch. It is well worth noting that the last 2001 review undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission also originally proposed to unite the HA area with that of the present Watcombe ward.

Therefore, to assist in bringing the St. Marychurch ward back into line with an electoral base to that expected of a three-member ward, it is further proposed to import from the Ellacombe Polling District DB the electorate of both Quinta Road and Quinta Close, as well as those few residents who live in Reddenhill Road between its junction with Warbro Road and its junction with Windsor Road, many of whom both shop and attend church in nearby Babbacombe. The overwhelming majority of Reddenhill Road residents already live within the boundaries of the St. Marychurch ward and the re-alignment of the boundary between the Ellacombe and St. Marychurch wards in the fashion proposed will also result in All Saints Babbacombe Primary School falling within the ward for the area after which it is named and where the parents of many pupils are resident.

To assist further in a reduction of the disparity that currently exists in neighbouring wards, it is also proposed that the following roads be exported from the Polling District HB to the area currently covered by the Watcombe ward: Lummaton Place, Grasmere Close, Bigbury Way, Pavor Road and Fore Street, Barton (as opposed to the similarly named Fore Street in St. Marychurch itself), as well as the electorate living at 386-400 Teignmouth Road (TQ1 4SW). Such a move would unify all the residents living along the entire length of the historical route that is Fore Street Barton (and the roads leading off this) into a single ward.

Finally, the current review of the Torbay area's ward boundaries also offers up an ideal opportunity to resolve the anomaly whereby Enfield Road (TQ1 3RS), a street only accessible from Reddenhill Road in Polling District HF, currently finds itself in Polling District HD.

- H1** Export the Polling District HA in its entirety from the St. Marychurch ward to the Watcombe ward (as per Note **W1** above).
- H2** Re-align the prevailing boundary between the St. Marychurch ward Polling Districts HA and HB, so that the boundary then runs the full length of Easterfield Lane from its junction with Teignmouth Road and subsequently due east to meet the sea just south of the coastal point known locally as "Smugglers' Hole" – a move which will simultaneously transfer certain properties located on Teignmouth Road from the St. Marychurch ward into the Watcombe ward, namely (TQ1 4SP) Sovereign Mews and the even numbered (TQ1 4SL) 432-442 Teignmouth Road (as per Note **W2** above).
- H3** Transfer in from the Ellacombe ward Polling District DB both Quinta Road and Quinta Close, as well as those residents who live in Reddenhill Road between its junctions with Warbro Road and with Windsor Road (as per Note **D3** below).
- H4** Export to the Watcombe ward from the St. Marychurch Polling District HB the following streets: Lummaton Place, Grasmere Close, Bigbury Way, Pavor Road and Fore Street, Barton (as opposed to the similarly named Fore Street in St. Marychurch itself), as well as the voters living at 386-400 Teignmouth Road (TQ1 4SW) (as per Note **W5** above).
- H5** Transfer (internally within the St. Marychurch ward) the voters of Enfield Road (TQ1 3RS) from Polling District HD to Polling District HF.

## **Wellswood**

With a projected total number of **6,482** voters by the year 2023, the Wellswood ward is facing a scenario whereby (without boundary amendment) by the year 2023 it will have 13% more voters than the ideal total for a two-member ward, a figure that is quite untenable. The basic mathematics between retaining this as a two-member ward or expanding it to become a three-member ward clearly leans towards the former option. Not only would it be extremely disruptive for both the existing Wellswood ward and its neighbours to create a three-member ward, it would require the transfer of three times as many people (some 2,135 existing voters) as it would to reduce the current Wellswood ward electoral base just marginally to reach a total in keeping with the tolerances set down by the Local Government Boundary Commission for a two-member ward.

Importing voters into Wellswood is not particularly feasible when it is bound on two sides out of four by the coastline, and otherwise primarily by the existing Ellacombe and St. Marychurch wards, both of which are very tight-knit communities in their own right with their very own distinctive characteristics, history and identity. Given their own very unique communities, neither the voters of the Ellacombe nor the St. Marychurch ward readily associate themselves with Wellswood and, for example, the inhabitants of neither will regularly shop in Wellswood. Notwithstanding the fact that retail boutique outlets in Wellswood are far more expensive than an average high street, the people in St. Marychurch have their very prosperous shopping precinct, the Waitrose superstore in Plainmoor and popular parades of shops in Babbacombe. Ellacombe has few shops, but its residents are in any event largely within very easy reach of the town centre and naturally shop here or in Plainmoor, not Wellswood.



*The boutique shops of Ilsham Road, Wellswood*

The difficult prospect of expanding Wellswood to become a three-member ward is also a question of the natural geography. Wellswood is very distinctly separated from Ellacombe by the Warberry Copse, a nature reserve and the highest point above sea-level in Torquay. The northern extremity of the elevated ridge upon which the Warberry Copse stands runs from the cutting that separates it from Walls Hill (through which runs the A379) and this is also the natural topographical boundary between Wellswood and the Babbacombe end of the St. Marychurch ward. In essence, the communities on the northern side of the ridge are cut off from those on the Wellswood side.

There is only one feasible way road-wise over the top of the ridge on which the Warberry Copse is situated, namely Windsor Road. However, even this is not a particularly wide road, it winds from side to side and in many places it does not have paved footpaths on both sides. Windsor Road sustains just one lane of traffic in each direction and, with numerous parked vehicles along various stretches, the route does not particularly lend itself to being a major link over the summit of the Warberry Copse between the Wellswood and Ellacombe wards. Yet further evidence of a total lack of any particular cohesion between the Ellacombe and Wellswood wards is the fact that, in living memory, no direct public transport link is known to have operated between the two communities by way of Windsor Road over the Warberry Copse. The fact that no operator (be it a major player such as Stagecoach or a minor local minibus company) has ever come forward to operate such a service clearly implies that no public demand for such a link between the two communities actually exists.

To resolve the question of Wellswood, it is therefore proposed to retain this as a two-member ward and reduce its excess electoral base by shaving off some of the streets located on its western fringes. These would be transferred primarily to the Ellacombe ward, but also to a lesser extent to the current Tormohun ward. The particular streets which have been selected for this purpose are essentially places where the residents themselves are very close to the town centre and outside what would be considered to be either Wellswood or Ilsham, and all are located within the boundary of the historical parish of Tormohun. In the case of the transfer to Tormohun, it is proposed to export from the Polling District MD the current electorate of Trinity Hill, Park Lane and that stretch of Parkhill Road lying between its junction with Torwood Street and its junction with Beacon Hill.

It is proposed to transfer also from the Wellswood Polling District MC to the current Tormohun ward the electorate of The Terrace, Montpellier Road, South Hill Road, Marion View, Museum Road, Torwood Street and that section of Babbacombe Road (i.e. TQ1 IHQ, 531 to 551 odd numbers) lying between the junction with Torwood Gardens Road and the junction with Museum Road. Both these tranches envisaged as being transferred to the Tormohun ward have strong links (both residentially and commercially) with the town centre, particularly in relation to the tourist industry, Torquay Harbour and the anticipated regeneration of lower parts of Torwood Street.

The streets proposed for transfer to the existing Ellacombe ward also fall into two separate tranches, the first of which is a small area of the Wellswood ward Polling District MB. The streets in question are Rosehill Road, Rosehill Close (where an anomaly exists in any event as some properties here already come under the Ellacombe ward DB), Ben Venue Close, plus that part of Middle Warberry Road north and east from the junction with Upper Braddons Hill Road. In other words, all residents living on the northern side of Middle Warberry Road eastwards from the property known as “Teneriffe” and on the southern side eastwards from the property known as “Mixbury” would remain within what is presently the Wellswood ward.

The second tranche scheduled for transfer to the existing Ellacombe ward encompasses the residential Braddons area that is linked directly to the topography of Ellacombe standing on an extension of the same geological ridge that includes the Warberry Copse which separates Ellacombe from Wellswood. As with Ellacombe itself, the Braddons area is situated up from the town centre and its position high above Torquay Harbour is a reminder that this area of Torquay historically housed the fishing and seafaring communities of the town.

For this second tranche to be transferred from the Wellswood ward to the Ellacombe ward, it is proposed that the existing boundary of the Wellswood ward Polling District MC be redrawn so that it runs along the unpopulated element of Upper Braddons Hill Road as far as the junction with Lower Warberry Road and from there in a south-easterly direction as far as Braddons Hill Road West between Woodside Drive and Hunsdon Road. The boundary would then veer to the west so as to take in all other streets to the north and west of this redrawn boundary, namely: the balance of Warberry Road West not already located within the Ellacombe ward, the inhabited element of Upper Braddons Hill Road, Woodside Drive, Hillesdon Road, Braddons Street, Palatine Close, Grafton Road, Grafton Terrace, the balance of Alpine Road not already in the Ellacombe ward, and finally all properties in Braddons Hill Road East westwards from its junction with Upper Braddons Hill Road.

With particular regard to Braddons Hill Road East, all properties up to and including No.38 on the northern (even numbered side) and No.53 on the southern (odd numbered side) would move from Wellswood to the Ellacombe ward, whilst all properties to the east of this (No.58 upwards on the northern side and No.55 upwards on the southern side) would remain within what is currently Polling District MC.

- M1** Export from the Wellswood Polling District MD the current electorate of Trinity Hill, Park Lane and that stretch of Parkhill Road lying between its junction with Torwood Street and its junction with Beacon Hill (as per Note **L2** below).
- M2** Transfer from the Wellswood Polling District MC to the current Tormohun ward the electorate of The Terrace, Montpellier Road, Torwood Street, Marion View, South Hill Road, Museum Road, and that section of Babbacombe Road (i.e. TQ1 IHQ, 531 to 551 odd numbers) between its junction with Torwood Gardens Road and its junction with Museum Road (as per Note **L1** below).
- M3** Transfer from the Wellswood Polling District MB to the current Ellacombe ward the electorate of Rosehill Road, Rosehill Close, Ben Venue Close, plus that part of Middle Warberry Road north and east from its junction with Upper Braddons Hill Road, ensuring as well that all residents living on the northern side of Middle Warberry Road eastwards from the property known as “Teneriffe” and on the southern side eastwards from the property known as “Mixbury” would remain within what is presently the Wellswood ward (as per Note **D1** below).
- M4** Transfer from the Wellswood Polling District MC to the current Ellacombe ward the electorate of the balance of Warberry Road West not already lying within the Ellacombe ward, the inhabited element of Upper Braddons Hill Road, Woodside Drive, Hillesdon Road, Braddons Street, Palatine Close, Grafton Road, Grafton Terrace, the balance of Alpine Road not already in the Ellacombe ward, and finally the electorate of all properties in Braddons Hill Road East westwards from its junction with Upper Braddons Hill Road (as per Note **D2** below).

## **Ellacombe**

The boundaries forming the current Ellacombe ward are forecast to encompass **5,004** voters by the year 2023, a figure slightly fewer than the optimum quoted by the Local Government Boundary Commission. However, as the ward's boundaries tie in very much with both the existing community and the Ellacombe Parish boundary, it is proposed that, rather than seek to divide up the district, it would be far more logical to import a net number of voters from the adjoining wards, whilst simultaneously using this review as an ideal opportunity to redress voter imbalances in those adjoining wards.

As with certain other districts of Torquay, the district of Ellacombe has a proud and distinct history of its own, which has given rise over time to its very own community. Nestled in what was originally the Combe of Ellacombe containing Ellacombe Farm, the area has developed as a single close-knit community since the mid nineteenth century. In essence, Ellacombe is bounded on three sides by hills and on one side by the town centre. The ward is very compact and primarily residential in nature.



*The Ellacombe Valley, with the Warberry Copse separating this from Wellswood*

However, as with parts of the neighbouring Tormohun ward, certain sections of Ellacombe have historically suffered from a wide range of social ills. Even today it has a significantly higher proportion of children eligible for free school meals, lower rates of achievement levels at GCSE than the Torbay or England average, higher than average levels of long-term unemployment and/or benefit dependency, together with various social problems directly linked to alcohol, substance and drug abuse.

Ellacombe is very distinctly separated from Wellswood by the Warberry Copse, a nature reserve and the highest point above sea-level in Torquay. In effect, the communities living in Ellacombe to the north of this geological ridge are virtually isolated from those on the Wellswood side. Over the top of the ridge, there is only one feasible way road-wise – namely Windsor Road. However, even this is not a particularly wide stretch of public road as in many places it does not have pavements on both sides and it winds from side to side. Furthermore, as Windsor Road can only sustain one lane of traffic in each direction, with numerous parked vehicles along various stretches, the route does not particularly lend itself to being a major link between over the summit of the ridge where the Warberry Copse is located.

However, exporting large numbers of Ellacombe voters to other wards such as Wellswood would not appear to be either a fair solution or a pragmatic option. Notwithstanding the physical barrier of the Warberry Copse, the voters of Ellacombe share little in common community-wise with those of the neighbouring ward of Wellswood. Given their own very unique communities, voters of the Ellacombe area have never readily associated themselves with the Wellswood district and, for example, they do not habitually shop in the retail boutiques of Wellswood. Ellacombe has few shops, but its people are in any event largely within very easy reach of the town centre and shop naturally here or in Plainmoor, not Wellswood.

Further evidence of a total lack of any cohesion between Ellacombe and Wellswood is the fact that, in living memory, no direct public transport link is known to have ever operated between the two communities by way of Windsor Road over the Warberry Copse. The fact that no operator (be it a major player such as Stagecoach or a minor local minibus company) has ever operated such a service clearly implies that no public demand for such a link between these two communities actually exists. This is in very stark contrast to 'bus services linking Ellacombe with the town centre, Plainmoor and St. Marychurch of which three an hour run on weekdays and two an hour on Sundays.

To redress the current shortfall in the number of voters living in Ellacombe, and as a means of assisting neighbouring wards redress their own imbalances, it is firstly proposed that the Ellacombe ward absorb part of the Wellswood Polling Districts MC, primarily those streets comprising the Braddons area of Torquay which is linked directly to the topography of Ellacombe as it stands on an extension of the same ridge that separates Ellacombe from Wellswood. It is worth noting also that part of the historical Braddons area already falls within the boundaries of the Ellacombe ward and the proposal being put forward in this report re-unites the community into one single unit of responsibility. As with the wider Ellacombe area, the Braddons area lies high above the town centre and its position up above Torquay Harbour represents that elevated area of Torquay that historically housed the fishing and seafaring communities of the town. The area to be imported from Wellswood Polling District MC to the Ellacombe ward comprises the electorate of the balance of Warberry Road West not already lying within the Ellacombe ward, the inhabited element of Upper Braddons Hill Road, Woodside Drive, Hillesdon Road, Grafton Road, Grafton Terrace, Braddons Street, Palatine Close, the balance of voters in Alpine Road not already in the Ellacombe ward, and the voters of all properties in Braddons Hill Road East westwards from its junction with Upper Braddons Hill Road.

It is also proposed to import from the Wellswood Polling District MB the voters living in Rosehill Road, Rosehill Close, Ben Venue Close, plus that part of Middle Warberry Road north and east from the junction with Upper Braddons Hill Road, whilst ensuring also that all residents living on the northern side of Middle Warberry Road eastwards from the property known as “Teneriffe” and on the southern side eastwards from the property known as “Mixbury” remain within what is presently the Wellswood ward.

Amendments to the boundaries of the current Ellacombe ward are also proposed for other areas bordering the ward. Firstly it is proposed to export from the Ellacombe Polling District DB to the St. Marychurch ward the residents of both Quinta Road and Quinta Close, as well as those few residents who live in Reddenhill Road between its junction of Warbro Road and Windsor Road, many of whom shop and attend church in nearby Babbacombe. The majority of residents in Reddenhill Road already live with the boundaries of the St. Marychurch ward and the re-alignment of the boundary between the Ellacombe and St. Marychurch wards in this fashion will also result in All Saints Babbacombe Primary School falling within the ward for the area after which it is named and where the parents of many pupils are resident.

It is proposed also to import to the Ellacombe ward a number of voters currently resident in the Tormohun ward at present in the Polling District LC lying to the south of Upton Hill and to the east of Lymington Road. In essence, the western boundary of the Ellacombe ward will be re-aligned to take in those voters resident in the following locations: Sunbury Hill, Thurlow Road, Thurlow Hill, Lower Thurlow Road, Thurlow Park and Furzehill Road. Similarly, this will also re-allocate the voters of St. Marychurch Road between the junction of Ash Hill Road and Upton Hill. The transfer will then bring all the residents of Ash Hill Road within one ward – the prevailing boundary currently slices the street in half and the residents are split between the Ellacombe and Tormohun wards. The area covered by this transfer is largely a geological plateau on the same plateau as other properties in the western fringes of the Ellacombe ward Polling District DA. From a topographical viewpoint the curve that comprises Lymington Road and Upton Hill forms a natural route at the foot of hill on the district being exported from Tormohun Polling District LC to the Ellacombe ward.

Finally, primarily as “tidying-up exercises”, it is also proposed to transfer from the Tormohun Polling District LC to the Ellacombe Polling District DC all the residents of the Bronshill Flats (TQ1 3HE) on Bronshill Road, thus re-uniting the electorate here with all fellow-residents in their road. In a similar vein, it is also proposed to import from the Tormohun Polling District LB to the Ellacombe Polling District DA the small number of residents living in St. Marychurch Road between Castle Circus and the junction of Ash Hill Road.

**D1** Transfer from the Wellswood Polling District MB to the current Ellacombe ward the electorate of Rosehill Road, Rosehill Close, Ben Venue Close, as well as that part of Middle Warberry Road lying north and east from its junction with Upper Braddons Hill Road, ensuring also that all residents living on the northern side of Middle Warberry Road eastwards from the property known as “Teneriffe” and on the southern side eastwards from the property known as “Mixbury” would remain within what is presently the Wellswood ward (as per Note **M3** above).



- D2** Transfer from the Wellswood Polling District MC to the current Ellacombe ward the electorate of the balance of Warberry Road West not already lying within the Ellacombe ward, the inhabited element of Upper Braddons Hill Road, Woodside Drive, Hillesdon Road, Braddons Street, Grafton Road, Grafton Terrace, Palatine Close, the balance of Alpine Road not already in the Ellacombe ward, and finally the residents of all properties in Braddons Hill Road East westwards from its junction with Upper Braddons Hill Road (as per Note **M4** above).
- D3** Transfer out from the Ellacombe Polling District DB to the St. Marychurch ward Quinta Road and Quinta Close, as well as those residents who live in Reddenhill Road between its junction of Warbro Road and Windsor Road (as per Note **H3** above).
- D4** Re-align the western boundary of the Ellacombe Polling District DA so as to import from the Tormohun Polling District LC the voters resident in the following locations: Sunbury Hill, Thurlow Road, Thurlow Hill, Lower Thurlow Road, Thurlow Park, Furzehill Road, along with all the residents of St. Marychurch Road living between its junction with Ash Hill Road and its junction with Upton Hill (as per Note **L3** below).
- D5** Re-align the current border separating the Tormohun Polling District LB from the Ellacombe Polling District DA, so as to import into the Ellacombe ward from the Tormohun ward the electorate who currently reside on St. Marychurch Road between Castle Circus and its junction with Ash Hill Road (as per Note **L4** below).
- D6** Transfer from the Tormohun Polling District LC to the prevailing Ellacombe Polling District DC the residents of the Hatfield Flats (TQ1 3HE) on Bronshill Road (as per Note **L5** below).

## **Tormohun**

The three-member ward of Tormohun lies at the heart is predicted to have an electoral base of **8,081** by the year 2023, a total marginally slightly outside the tolerance range expected by the Local Government Boundary Commission for the Unitary Authority of Torbay.

The Tormohun name derives from the medieval name for the ancient manor which once encompassed much of the area stretching from the coastline inland in the direction of the rising hills of Torquay. Given the manor's one-time location, it is not surprising that the area has now been all but superseded by Torquay town centre.

In essence, the current ward boundaries encompass the vibrant harbour and town centre, the seafront vicinity (where numerous hotels are sited to satisfy the demand of tourists visiting the town), the neighbourhood of Torre and part of the community of Hele Village. Generally speaking, the ward gently rises in altitude as it gradually stretches inland from the coastal area and town centre. In the northern end of the ward there is a geographical “Y” feature with the westerly fork accommodating both the main railway line and the A3022 (the main route to Torquay town centre from Newton Abbot), whilst the eastern fork accommodates the arterial Teignmouth Road. As a rough guide, the communities of Torre and Hele Village lie respectively on the junction of, and between, these two spurs.

The Tormohun ward is a mix of residential properties, hotels, shops, offices and other commercial interests. Tourists from both the UK and further afield are an all-round feature, though numbers increase far more substantially in the summer months than at other times. Foreign language students are also numerous and they contribute greatly to the economy of the town centre and the wider Torbay area. The Tormohun ward is the central hub where all major ‘bus routes converge, offering services both to nearby towns and to all the individual communities that make up the town of Torquay. The ward is also the home of the area’s vibrant night-economy with numerous restaurants, takeaways, bars and clubs satisfying the demands of locals and visitors alike.

However, the Tormohun ward faces a plethora of social problems common to innumerable town centres including higher than average levels of long-term unemployment and/or benefit dependency, increasing homelessness (aggravated by both a lack of affordable housing and a high ratio of property prices to local levels of earnings), higher than average levels of personal debt, higher than average levels of diabetes and obesity, as well as social problems directly associated with alcohol, substance and drug abuse.

Consequently, and as alluded in other places in this report, in order that the social ills created and the workload generated by these factors are not sole the responsibility of a very small number of councillors (of whatever political persuasion or indeed none at all), it is proposed that this ward (and indeed other town centre wards) be represented by three councillors. Given the number of projected voters for the year 2023, various amendments on the periphery of this ward are called for – as a means of bringing both Tormohun and its neighbouring wards to representation levels within the tolerance limits laid down by the Local Government Boundary Commission.

It is proposed to absorb from the Wellswood ward certain streets near the vicinity of Torquay Harbour which have little or no community connection with the highly residential ward of Wellswood, and are instead more closely associated with the economy of the town centre. The proposal involves the importation of two separate tranches from the Wellswood ward – firstly from Polling District MC the electorate of The Terrace, Montpellier Road, Marion View, Torwood Street, South Hill Road, Museum Road, and the section of Babbacombe Road lying between its junction with Torwood Gardens Road and its junction with Museum Road (i.e. TQ1 IHQ, 531 to 551 odd numbers); secondly from Polling District MD the voters of Trinity Hill, Park Lane and that stretch of Parkhill Road lying between its junction with Torwood Street and its junction with Beacon Hill.

It is further proposed that separate three tranches be transferred from the Tormohun ward to the Ellacombe ward. The first relates to the voters resident in the following locations of Tormohun Polling District LC: Sunbury Hill, Thurlow Road, Thurlow Hill, Lower Thurlow Road, Thurlow Park, Furzehill Road, along with all the residents of St. Marychurch Road living between the junction of Ash Hill Road and Upton Hill. These streets are overwhelmingly residential and form part of the same plateau geographically on which the western sector of the Ellacombe Polling District DA is located. As can be seen on any street map, the area in question is bounded by Lymington Road (not being proposed for transfer) which sweeps in a curve around the base of the plateau's promontory.

The second interaction with the Ellacombe ward relates to the small number of people living in Tormohun ward LB in St. Marychurch Road between Castle Circus and the junction of Ash Hill Road who can be re-united with other St. Marychurch Road residents formerly in Polling District LC which, it is being proposed, will be exported to the Ellacombe Polling District DA. The third and final transfer with Ellacombe simply relates to the small number of people living in Hatfield Flats (TQ1 3HE) on Bronshill Road. This proposed move will re-unite the voters living here with all the other residents of Bronshill Road who are already accounted for in Polling District DC.

On the far western fringe of the Tormohun ward it is proposed to import a number of voters from the current Cockington-with-Chelston ward. In this respect, it is proposed that boundary be re-aligned so that it more closely follows the course of the railway. In the stretch between Torquay and Torre railway stations, the railway line is located elevated on a high embankment and this topographically forms a natural boundary between the two different communities of Torre and Chelston. At present, there is something of an anomaly in that the residents of one side of Avenue Road are in the Tormohun ward, but their neighbours across the road find themselves in the Cockington-with-Chelston ward. It is therefore proposed to bring all the residents together within the Tormohun ward. This will also unavoidably necessitate the transfer of the residents living in the Crownhill Park area as the only vehicular access to this is via Avenue Road. The Crownhill area is also a largely self-contained micro-community in its own right. In support of this transfer, notwithstanding the fact that the residents of Avenue Road will be united in one ward, it is worth noting that Avenue Road contains many hotels, and the concerns of the voters here are far more closely allied to others in the Tormohun ward than those of the Cockington-with-Chelston ward. The proposed transfer will also bring the local Islamic centre (which has been operative since the 1970's) into the Tormohun ward where many of its worshippers work and live.

At the northern end of the Tormohun ward, the community of Hele finds itself divided straight down the middle and the responsibility of two separate wards. Sadly suffering from numerous social problems, all too often this neighbourhood is in the news for all the wrong reasons. However, as the Community Plan adopted by Torbay Council in 2011 put it, "***There is a strong sense of community in this area, even in the face of significant challenges and deprivation. The area proudly displays a Village sign and, whilst the built area does not look like a traditional village, the community is proud of its village roots***". With all this in mind, it is considered the best course of action for the entire community of Hele to be represented through a single of electoral accountability. Therefore, it is proposed as part of this report to bring the residents of Hele together in a single ward (i.e. Tormohun) by importing the entire electorate of the Watcombe ward Polling District WD – except for those residents in Horace Road who are more closely associated with the community in nearby Barton.

Finally, as a further means of bringing together the residents of the Hele community, it is proposed to import from the prevailing Shiphay-with-The Willows Polling District TA all the voters on Hele Road from its junction with Barton Hill Road and its junction with Riviera Way. The result of this transfer will finally bring all the residents of the B3199 Hele Road into one ward where the residents' concerns can be addressed by a single point of electoral contact.



*Hele Village – The proposals will reunify this in a single ward*

- L1** Import from the Polling District MD of Wellswood the current electorate of Trinity Hill, Park Lane and that stretch of Parkhill Road lying between its junction with Torwood Street and its junction with Beacon Hill (as per Note **M1** above).

- L2** Import from the Polling District MC of Wellswood the electorate of The Terrace, Montpellier Road, Marion View, Torwood Street, South Hill Road, Museum Road, and the section of Babbacombe Road (i.e. TQ1 IHQ, 531 to 551 odd numbers) that lies between its junction with Torwood Gardens Road and its junction with Museum Road (as per Note **M2** above).
- L3** Re-align the western boundary of the Tormohun Polling District LC so as to export to the Ellacombe Polling District DA the electorate resident in the following locations: Sunbury Hill, Thurlow Road, Thurlow Hill, Lower Thurlow Road, Thurlow Park, Furzehill Road, along with all the residents of St. Marychurch Road living between the junction of Ash Hill Road and Upton Hill (as per Note **D4** above).
- L4** Re-align the current border separating the Tormohun Polling District LB from the Ellacombe Polling District DA, to transfer into the Ellacombe ward from the Tormohun ward the residents on St. Marychurch Road between Castle Circus and the junction of Ash Hill Road (as per Note **D5** above).
- L5** Transfer from the Tormohun Polling District LC to the prevailing Ellacombe Polling District DC the residents of the Hatfield Flats (TQ1 3HE) on Bronshill Road (as per Note **D6** above).
- L6** Import into the Tormohun ward the entire electorate of the Watcombe ward Polling District WD – except for those residents in Horace Road (as per Note **W4** above).
- L7** Import from the prevailing Shiphay-with-The Willows Polling District TA all the voters on Hele Road living between its junction with Barton Hill Road and its junction with Riviera Way (as per Note **T5** below).
- L8** Import into the Tormohun ward from the Cockington-with-Chelston ward all residents living in Polling District BB to the east of the railway line and to the north of Old Mill Road, as well as the voters living at 64, Avenue Road (TQ2 5JZ). In a similar vein, import also all voters resident to the west of the railway line in Crownhill Park, Crownhill Rise and Crownhill Court, together with the residents of the properties off Rainbow Drive known as “Birdshaven” and “High View Lodge” (postcode TQ2 5LS) on the basis that all these properties only have vehicular access from the roads east of the railway (as per Note **B3** below).
- L9** Ensure, however, that when undertaking any re-alignment of the current boundary between the Cockington-with-Chelston Polling District BB and the Tormohun Polling District LB (as per Note **L8** above) the status quo remains for all other voters and areas at present south of Old Mill Road within the Polling District BB – including Cockington Primary School and the adjoining playing fields as these clearly have greater community connections with the Cockington-with-Chelston ward than with Tormohun.

## **Cockington-with-Chelston**

Current projections indicate that the Cockington-with-Chelston ward will have a voter base of **8,339** by the year 2023. Located almost exclusively to the west of the main railway line that Torbay with the outside world, the ward is primarily residential, although large tracts of land on its western side (albeit with just a handful of voters) are undeveloped and open countryside.

The southern element of the Cockington-with-Chelston ward includes the overwhelmingly residential area of Livermead which is situated on the sloping hills and plateau that together form a natural geographical boundary between Torquay and Paignton.

The Cockington-with-Chelston ward also incorporates the historical village of Cockington and the nearby Cockington Court which attract annually thousands of visitors from both home and abroad.

The area of Chelston itself essentially falls into two separate “sub-communities”. Firstly, there are the residential areas which expanded from the direction of the seafront and the railway during the Victorian period and, secondly, the residential areas which developed subsequently between the wars and since, such as the properties in Sherwell Valley.

Located directly to the north of the Cockington-with-Chelston ward is the Shiphay-with-The Willows ward, with which it currently has a lengthy contiguous border – and herein lies a major problem facing any review of Torbay’s ward boundaries. In simple terms, by the year 2023 the Cockington-with-Chelston ward will be short of the number of voters required for a three-member ward, but its immediate neighbour will have an eye-watering 35% more voters than that expected for its two-member status. The prevailing scenario is clearly not tenable and it is therefore proposed that, in conjunction with other boundary changes, an expanded Shiphay-with-The Willows ward would be better served by becoming a three-member ward, and that the Cockington-with-Chelston ward be reduced to the status of two members. Additional criteria for the creation of a three-member Shiphay-with-The Willows ward are further expanded upon in the specific section for that particular ward, but it is nevertheless worth mentioning that many Shiphay residents are currently living in the vicinity of the historical Shiphay Manor and yet fall within the boundaries of the existing the Cockington-with-Chelston ward.

As a means of reducing the electorate falling within the bounds of the Cockington-with-Chelston ward, it is proposed that the Polling District BC be exported to an expanded Shiphay-with-The Willows ward, with the exception of those living in Sherwell Valley Road, Sherwell Lane and Weeksland Road. Sherwell Valley itself forms a geographical boundary as it sweeps along downwards following the contour of slopes on either side and the local community has always been more likely to be associated with the district of Chelston rather than any Shiphay-based community.



*Shiphay Manor ... but at present in the Cockington-with-Chelston ward*

It is additionally proposed that the electorate currently within the bounds of the Cockington-with-Chelston Polling District BD be transferred to an expanded Shiphay-with-The Willows ward, with the exception of those living in Sherwell Valley Road, Drake Avenue and Frobisher Green. With regard to those few registered voters with the post code TQ3 1SU and living in the rural outposts of the Stantor area of Polling District BD, it is proposed that they be transferred internally to Polling District BE by means of a re-aligned boundary stretching from Armada Park westwards to the Gallows Gate roundabout on the A380.

These two transfers will together re-unite the entire electorate of Shiphay Avenue and Marldon Road in Torquay, who are currently subjected to a boundary line running divisively through both as a means of separating the Cockington-with-Chelston ward from the Shiphay-with-The Willows ward. The voters here naturally associate themselves with Shiphay rather than Chelston, particularly as they live midway between the historical Shiphay Manor and the heart of modern-day Shiphay that is centred on the area around the St. John the Baptist church.

The third and final transfer of voters from the current Cockington-with-Chelston ward affects certain voters living in Polling District BB. In this respect, it is proposed that the electorate living in Polling District BB to the **east** of the railway line and to the north of Old Mill Road, as well as those at 64, Avenue Road (TQ2 5JZ) be transferred to the Tormohun ward. In a similar vein, it is proposed to export also all voters at present resident to the **west** of the railway line in Crownhill Park, Crownhill Rise and Crownhill Court, together with the residents of the two properties off Rainbow Drive known as “High View Lodge” and “Birdshaven” (postcode TQ2 5LS) on the basis that all these particular properties only have vehicular access from the roads lying east of the railway.

- B1** Export the Cockington-with-Chelston Polling District BC to the Shiphay-with-The Willows ward, with the exception of the voters currently resident in Sherwell Valley Road, Sherwell Lane and Weeksland Road (as per Note **T2** below).
- B2** Export the Cockington-with-Chelston Polling District BD to the Shiphay-with-The Willows ward, with the exception of the voters currently resident in Sherwell Valley Road, Drake Avenue and Frobisher Green (as per Note **T3** below).
- B3** Export to the Tormohun ward the voters living in the Cockington-with-Chelston Polling District BB to the east of the railway line and to the north of Old Mill Road, as well as those at 64, Avenue Road (TQ2 5JZ), together with all voters at present living to the west of the railway line in Crownhill Park, Crownhill Rise and Crownhill Court, together with the voters at the two properties (TQ2 5LS) known as “Birdshaven” and “High View Lodge” off Rainbow Drive (as per Note **L8** above).

### **Shiphay-with-The Willows**

The Shiphay-with-The Willows ward is projected to have an electorate of **7,784** by the year 2023, a figure that represents a staggering 35% excess of voters for what is currently a two-member ward. Of all the wards subject to review, Shiphay-with-The Willows is clearly the “elephant in the room”. The excess figure of 35% is clearly untenable and, as the expected 2023 electorate is much closer to that of a three-member ward than that for a two-member ward, it is proposed that, in conjunction with other boundary changes, an expanded Shiphay-with-The Willows ward can be better served by becoming a three-member ward, whilst the neighbouring Cockington-with-Chelston ward is to be reduced to the status of having two members instead of the current three.

The ward is a mixture of residential property and commercial premises, with housing varying from both pre-war development and post-war estates to modern expansion. The ward is home to out-of-town superstores and to Torbay Hospital which is a major employer in its own right for the wider South Devon area. Placing aside the existence of the hospital, the constituent factors that comprise this ward in many respects run parallel to the make-up of the Blatchcombe ward in Paignton which is already represented by three councillors.

As the name suggests, the Shiphay-with-The Willows ward is effectively two communities – the historical community of Shiphay, and the newer community of The Willows which has largely sprung up with modern development in the last twenty-five years. To satisfy the need for additional voters to bring this ward within the tolerances laid down by the Local Government Boundary Commission for three-member representation in Torbay, the most logical direction for the current ward’s expansion is southwards to the adjoining Cockington-with-Chelston ward which is in fact the location for the historical Shiphay Manor and where many of the residents will naturally associate themselves with the community of Shiphay, rather than with Chelston or the village of Cockington.



In a similar vein, however, many of the residents on the eastern fringes of the Shiphay-with-The Willows ward live on Barton Hill Road and will more readily associate themselves with the nearby historical Barton community, the spiritual home of which around Fore Street in Barton currently falls within the bounds of the Watcombe ward. It is therefore proposed that the residents here be transferred to the existing Watcombe ward. Such a move will re-unite St. Martin's church in Barton and the immediate neighbourhood with other Barton residents under a single point of electoral accountability.



*St. Martin's church, Barton and a cottage in Fore, Street, Barton (currently in the Shiphay-with-The Willows and Watcombe wards respectively)*

To bring about an electorate suitable in size for a three-member ward, it is proposed that by way of a boundaries re-alignment, the Shiphay-with-The Willows ward will absorb two tranches of areas currently within the Cockington-with-Chelston ward. The first of these is the electorate of Cockington-with-Chelston Polling District BC, except for those residents living in Sherwell Valley Road, Sherwell Lane and Weeksland Road, whilst the second tranche involves voters in Cockington-with-Chelston Polling District BD, with the exception of those residents living in Sherwell Valley Road, Drake Avenue and Frobisher Green.

Finally, as part of a "tidying-up exercise", it is proposed that the voters in the living at the property known as "Suntor" (TQ2 8JS) situated on Great Hill Road and No.21 Lawn Close (TQ2 8JZ), together with the two properties known as "Chalfont" and "Viewpoint" on Kingskerswell Road (both of which have the postcode TQ2 8JT) be transferred from the current Shiphay-with-The Willows Polling District TA to the Watcombe ward Polling District WA.

- T1** Re-align the boundary between the Shiphay-with-The Willows Polling District TA and the Watcombe ward so that the latter takes responsibility for Beechfield Avenue, Beechfield Place, Orchid Way, Willowfield Road, the entire length of Barton Hill Road and all minor roads streaming from this with the revised boundary running along from the junction of Barton Hill Way with Barton Hill Road as far as the junction with Browns Bridge Road and then in a north-easterly direction as necessary to the west of the property known as “Chalfont” on Kingskerswell road (as per Note **W6** above).
- T2** Import into the Shiphay-with-The Willows ward the Cockington-with-Chelston Polling District BC, with the exception of those residents living in Sherwell Valley Road, Sherwell Lane and Weeksland Road (as per Note **B1** above).
- T3** Import into the Shiphay-with-The Willows ward the Cockington-with-Chelston Polling District BD, with the exception of those residents living in Sherwell Valley Road, Drake Avenue and Frobisher Green (as per Note **B2** above).
- T4** Export to the Watcombe ward Polling District WA from the current Shiphay-with-The Willows Polling District TA the property known as “Suntor” (TQ2 8JS) situated on Great Hill Road **and** No.21 Lawn Close (TQ2 8JZ), together with those properties known as “Chalfont” and “Viewpoint” on Kingskerswell Road (both have the postcode TQ2 8JT) (as per Note **W3** above).
- T5** Export from the prevailing Shiphay-with-The Willows Polling District TA to the Tormohun ward the electorate living on Hele Road living between its junction with Barton Hill Road and its junction with Riviera Way (as per Note **L7** above).

\*\*\*\*\*

## Summary of Salient Points

As a result of the proposals in this report the following aspects will have been achieved:

- The Torbay Unitary Authority will continue to have thirty-six councillors who represent fifteen wards – six wards returning three members and nine wards returning two members. The ratio of two-member and three-member wards will be distributed on a fair and equitable basis between the three towns of Brixham, Paignton and Torquay.
- All wards will have an electoral base within the tolerance limits of 5% laid down by the Local Government Boundary Commission.
- All three major town centres will be represented by a three-member councillor ward, ensuring that the additional workload which these areas naturally generate will be more evenly distributed among a greater number of councillors. The borough's three functioning harbours will be directly associated within the same wards as other major tourist, retail and commercial interests.
- Areas that are generally more sedate or residential will largely be represented by two-member wards.
- The two major areas of both industrial and residential expansion in the medium and longer term (the Shiphay-with-The Willows and Blatchcombe wards) will also be represented by three members, enabling them to face any uncertainties with greater confidence.
- The widespread variations and idiosyncratic traditions of the different historical communities within Torbay will have been recognised and, in many instances, greatly enhanced.
- Boundaries will have been created that take into account the geography, local transport connections and topography unique to Torbay.
- No single street should find itself in a ward if it is only accessible vehicle-wise from a street or streets located in a different ward to its own.
- Previous aberrations of isolated properties will have been resolved.

<b>Ward</b>	<b>2023 Projection</b>											<b>New Total</b>	<b>Variance</b>
	<b>Berry Head- with-Furzeham</b>	<b>7,811</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>J1 1039</b>									<b>8,850</b>
<b>Blatchcombe</b>	<b>9,557</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>A1 849</b>	<b>A2 4</b>	<b>A3 N/A</b>							<b>8,712</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Churston-with- Galmpton</b>	<b>5,842</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>G1 1069</b>	<b>G2 1039</b>								<b>5,872</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Clifton-with- Maidenway</b>	<b>5,486</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>C1 849</b>	<b>C2 153</b>	<b>C3 13</b>	<b>C4 221</b>	<b>C5 203</b>	<b>C6 N/A</b>	<b>C7 4</b>			<b>5,767</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Goodrington- with-Roselands</b>	<b>5,946</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>I1 1471</b>	<b>I2 1069</b>	<b>I3 550</b>	<b>I4 65</b>	<b>I5 238</b>					<b>5,495</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Preston</b>	<b>8,173</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>F1 1713</b>	<b>F2 1088</b>	<b>F3 194</b>	<b>F4 221</b>	<b>F5 203</b>					<b>5,602</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Roundham-with- Hyde</b>	<b>5,760</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>R1 1471</b>	<b>R2 65</b>	<b>R3 550</b>	<b>R4 238</b>	<b>R5 153</b>	<b>R6 13</b>	<b>R7 1713</b>	<b>R8 1088</b>	<b>R9 194</b>	<b>8,277</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>St. Mary's-with- Summercombe</b>	<b>5,741</b>	<b>0%</b>										<b>5,741</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total :</b>	<b>54,316</b>											<b>54,316</b>	