

The Review Officer (Oxford)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
1st floor, Windsor House
50 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0TL

2nd December 2018

Dear Sir,

Re: Local Government Boundary Commission for England's review of Oxford City Council's ward boundaries November 2018

Friends of Iffley Village, an all-volunteer organization supported by more than 400 annual subscriptions, was set up in the 1950s to conserve the essential character of Iffley for the benefit of its residents, businesses and visitors and to monitor and guide plans proposed for the future of the Village, and to foster community spirit. Its Committee and many members are strongly opposed to the Boundary Commission's proposed changes to Council wards.

About 90% of Iffley would be split from Rose Hill to join Donnington dividing Iffley along the N-S arm of Iffley Turn, through the E-W arm of Iffley Turn and E end of Tree Lane. This arbitrary line, about 100-200 m west of the long-established and universally accepted civic boundaries, also cuts across the Conservation Area and St Mary's Parish. The Iffley Turn 'triangle', the houses opposite it on Henley Avenue, Anne Greenwood Close including the historic Denton House, Iffley Nursing Home, West View, Stone Quarry Lane, the E. end of Tree Lane would be divorced from the rest of Iffley Village. Residents of these areas regard themselves as part of Iffley so placing them in a separate ward is irrational and potentially very damaging to the sense of local cohesion in which Iffley people take much pride and derive much benefit.

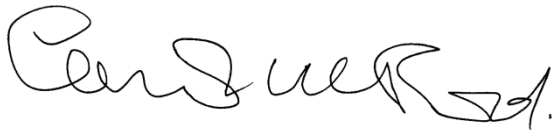
Iffley has been a distinct entity for at least a thousand years, with its architecturally distinguished Church of St Mary and economically important Thames management schemes since before 1200. Its long-established eastern boundaries are the junction of Iffley Turn and Church Cowley Road, marked by a 17th century milestone (image below), and the adjoining ancient path (still much used) between it and Tree Lane, which is part of the mediaeval route between Iffley and Cowley St. James. Following extensive development of the surrounding land from the mid-19th Century, Iffley was incorporated into Oxford City in 1928. Much of Iffley Village was declared a Conservation Area in 1969, extended to include areas to the north-east in 1985.



Iffley was represented by its own Councillors for many years until Rose Hill & Iffley Ward was created in 2001. The parish of St Mary's, centred on the Church at the far S end of Iffley near to Rose Hill, is bounded by the River, the Ring Road, the main road (Iffley Road/Henley Avenue) and Boundary Brook. These administrative associations between Iffley and Rose Hill have fostered several productive community and charity projects, to the mutual benefit of both areas. Many are actively supported by local schools and Councillors, and separation into different Wards would hinder their future development, to the detriment of all.

The proposed borders of Iffley (and those of other areas, particularly the Cowley and Temple Cowley Wards) are not 'based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries' and do not 'reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links', thus violating two key aims of your own Guidelines dated June 2018. The statement in paragraph 4 of the Summary that Rose Hill will be among three wards that will stay the same is evidently false and the adjacent map names the ward 'Donnington' when it should at least show 'Donnington & Iffley'. While Friends of Iffley Village is generally in favour of 'electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of voters', it believes that this objective should not take precedence over the immense damage to Iffley's social cohesion and strong sense of its own history and identity that dividing the Village between two wards would promote. For these reasons, we are strongly opposed to the scheme.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Pond', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Caroline Pond
Chairman, Friends of Iffley Village
12 Bay Tree Close, Iffley OX4 4DT