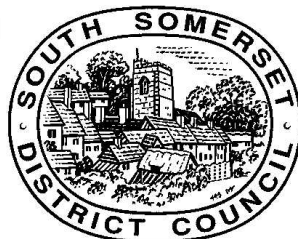


Why is South Somerset District Council carrying out this review?

This Community Governance Review is being undertaken in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Since 13 February 2008, district councils, unitary county councils and London borough councils ('principal councils') have had responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews and have been able to decide whether to give effect to recommendations made in those reviews. In making that decision, principal councils need to take account of the views of local people.

South Somerset District Council
Council Offices
Brympton Way
YEOVIL BA20 2HT
Tel: 01935 462462
Fax: 01935 462100
www.southsomerset.gov.uk



August 2014

Lopen Parish Council Community Governance Review

Proposed increase from five to seven
parish councillors on the Parish Council

LOPEN

South Somerset District Council would like to know your views on whether the number of parish councillors on Lopen Parish Council should increase from five to seven.

South Somerset District Council would like to know your views on whether the number of parish councillors on Lopen Parish Council should increase from five to seven.

Lopen Parish Council has formally asked South Somerset District Council to conduct / hold a consultation (Community Governance Review) of all the people registered to vote and local interest groups within the parish.

This information leaflet and questionnaire is being delivered to all households in the parish of Lopen so that public opinion is taken fully into account when South Somerset District Council look at the options over the coming months.

Please take time to read this leaflet. It is important that you complete your full details – including name, address and signature – to ensure that your view on this can be taken into account.

You should return this questionnaire by **15th September 2014**.

For further information see: www.southsomerset.gov.uk/commgov

Lopen Parish Council proposal:

The proposal of Lopen Parish Council is that the review should consider increasing the number of parish councillors on Lopen Parish Council from five to seven. In their request, the Parish Council state a number of reasons for wishing to increase the number of parish councillors including:

- Apart from relatively brief casual vacancy periods (mainly due to house moving) the Council has maintained a full quota of members since 2007
- Applications to fill a recent casual vacancy was oversubscribed
- The National Association of Local Councils promotes a minimum Council size of 7 irrespective of the local population size
- A larger pool of Councillors is more likely to represent a more accurate local view
- With only 5 members and a quorum of three, it can be difficult to arrange a quorate meeting especially during the holiday seasons
- Quite often members live close to each other and this can cause difficulties maintaining a quorum when common interests are involved.
- More workload is being passed on to Parish Councils and “many hands make light work”

Please complete & return this questionnaire.

Please indicate if you agree or object to the proposal that the number of parish councillors should be increased from five to seven.

Yes ☐ I agree – there should be seven parish councillors in the future

No ☐ I object – there should continue to be five parish councillors.

We can only consider the views of people who will be affected by this proposal. Please include your name, address, postcode and signature in any response or your comments will not be taken into account.

Full name:.....

Address:.....

Postcode:.....Signature:.....

Please provide any other comments you would like South Somerset District Council to consider with regard to the proposed increase in the number of parish councillors. (All responses will be available for public inspection upon request.)

.....
.....
.....

Please return all responses in the reply-paid envelope enclosed or in an envelope marked for the attention of:

Angela Cox, Lead Officer Community Governance Review,
South Somerset District Council, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT
Or Email: angela.cox@southsomerset.gov.uk

**The closing date for all responses is
Monday 15th September 2014.**



Further information

Further, more detailed, information can be obtained from the following:
<http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/councillors-and-democracy/parish-and-town-councils/community-governance-review/>

Your comments and views are vital to this review. You can let us have your comments by completing and returning the attached questionnaire, or by writing to:

Angela Cox
Lead Officer Community Governance Review,
South Somerset District Council
Brympton Way
Yeovil
BA20 2HT

Alternatively by email to:
angela.cox@southsomerset.gov.uk

It is important that you include your address as only representations from residents and local interest groups of Lopen can be considered.

Why are we consulting you?

South Somerset District Council has to undertake a review relating to the proposals to increase the number of councillors on Lopen Parish Council as a valid request has been made by the Parish Council to do so. The enclosed map shows the area affected being that of the existing boundary of Lopen Parish Council. The area has an electorate of 203 people.

The aim of this review is to look at the most suitable arrangements for representing the people of the parish and to decide whether an increase in the number of parish councillors would be the best means of:

- Representing the interests and identities of local people
- Providing a range of local government services

South Somerset District Council, once we receive your views, will consider the results of the consultation exercise and will publish a set of proposals in late summer 2014. There will be a further opportunity to comment on these draft proposals.

If agreed, when will it take effect?

If the majority of responses from local people of the parish are in favour of the proposal, then South Somerset District Council will notify the Electoral Commission of the new arrangements. The change would take effect from the next local election in May 2015.

What does a Parish Council do?

Parish Councils are democratically elected bodies that have statutory powers which can include the provision of allotments, bus shelters, support for local crime prevention initiatives, cemeteries, play areas and open spaces.

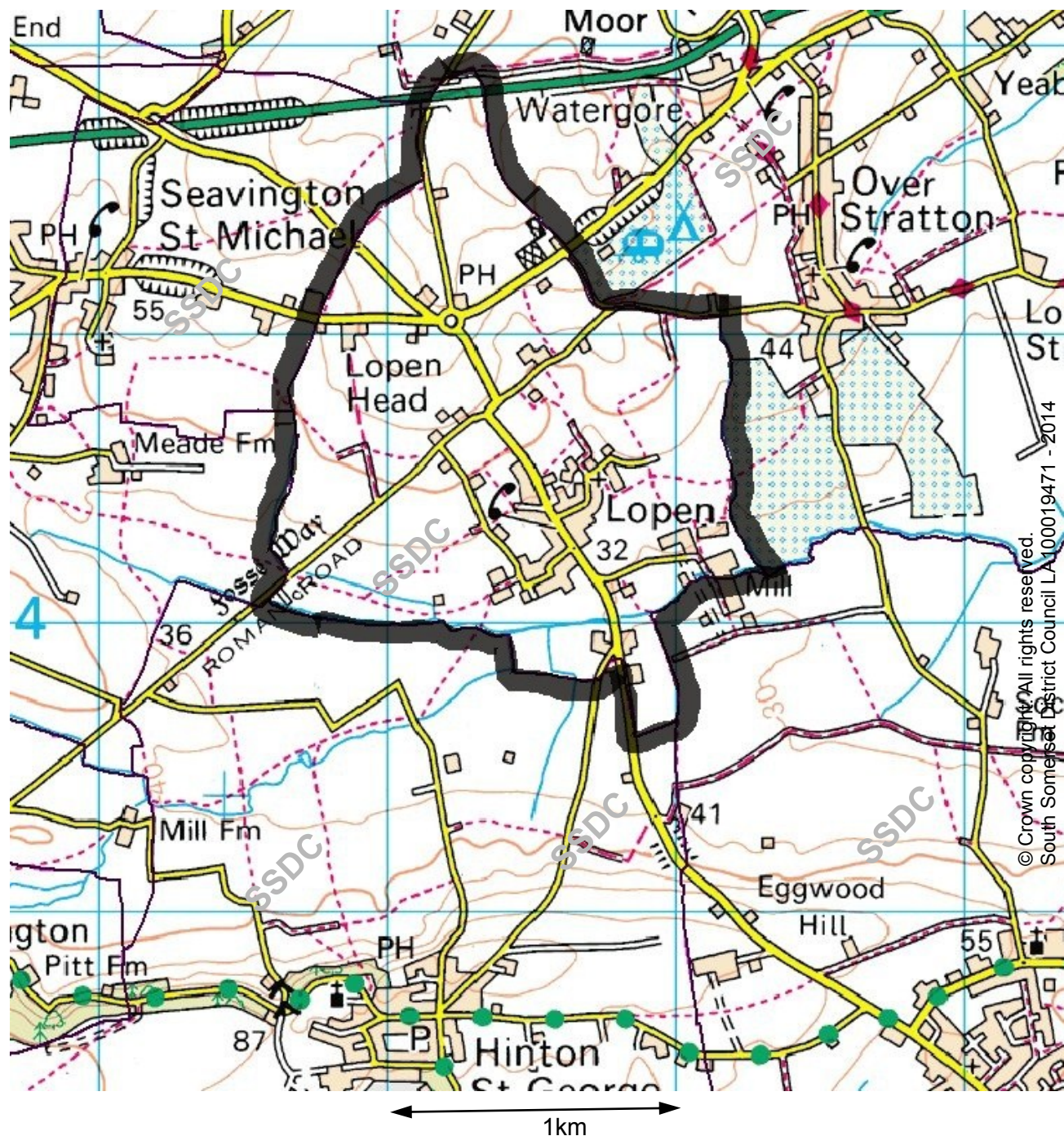
They are also often involved in the provision and maintenance of community transport schemes, sport and recreation facilities and tourism. For Lopen Parish Council, the main activities include: Providing a focus for representing local issues and identity, highways liaison and traffic calming, rights of way, planning, responsibility for closed churchyard, local health and wellbeing initiatives and support for the community website, local newsletter and local events.

The proposed increase in the number of parish councillors will not have any additional impact upon your Council Tax.

Map of the parish boundary.

The boundary of Lopen Parish Council is indicated by the bold line.

Only residents within this area will be consulted on the proposals.



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