

October 2023

Dear Resident,

Teignbridge District Council has recently received a petition signed by over 50% of Dunchideock's electorate, requesting that we conduct a Community Governance Review (CGR) to consider the following:

**To abolish the Dunchideock Parish Council and replace it with an informal community forum.**

In order to dissolve an existing parish council, the principal council (Teignbridge) must provide evidence that this is in response to "justified, clear and sustained local support" from the area's inhabitants. Teignbridge District Council will therefore conduct a CGR for Dunchideock and this letter is to make you aware of this and ask you to give consideration as to what you want for your parish before the formal consultation process begins.

One point to bear in mind when considering the available options is that the guidance we are obliged to take account of, issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government with the Local Boundary Commission for England, states:

*" ..... the government expects to see a trend in the creation of parishes and parish councils, rather than their abolition, and believes it is doubtful that the abolition of a parish council could be justified as the most appropriate course of action in response to a particular contentious issue in the area".*

Although residents are free to set up whatever informal groups they wish to, a civil parish must have some form of governance arrangements in place, i.e. it could become a parish meeting requiring a resident of the parish to become its Chairman. Along with the Proper Officer of the district council, the Chairman of the parish meeting would be the body corporate and known as "the parish trustees". Parish meetings are local government bodies or public authorities for a number of statutory purposes, so are subject to various Acts of Parliament such as the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in the same way as a parish council. Therefore, abolition of a parish council does not mean that the parish will necessarily cease to receive complaints or information requests. The key difference is that they will need to be dealt with by the Chairman of the parish meeting as opposed to a paid clerk. Parish meetings may also set a council tax precept.

Parish governance arrangements can be complex, so we have set up a dedicated page on our website for the Dunchideock Community Governance Review, which can be found at [www.teignbridge.gov.uk/parishofdunchideockcgr](http://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/parishofdunchideockcgr)

Once the CGR commences and as it progresses, you will be able to keep up to date by continuing to visit this page.

Enclosed with this letter you will find a document outlining the benefits of having a functioning parish council, as perceived by government in the guidance they have made available. You may wish to consider and refer to this if you decide to submit a comment during the initial consultation stage. This is your parish, so we would urge you to fully participate in the process so that your views are heard.

If the parish council is abolished there is no guarantee that it would be reinstated in its current form in the future. If another CGR was subsequently requested to reinstate the parish council, other forms of governance may be considered such as merging the parish with a neighbouring small parish to form a larger new parish, or grouping it with other small parishes under a common parish council.

Printed below is the timetable for the review and you will find details on how to contribute to each stage of the review on the dedicated web page.

Yours faithfully

The Community Governance Review Team  
Teignbridge District Council

### Community Governance Review Timetable

Details	Dates
Commencement of CGR – Terms of Reference published	16 October 2023
Initial consultation stage	19 October 2023 – 15 December 2023
Draft recommendations prepared	18 December 2023 – 23 February 2024
Draft recommendations published	26 February 2024
Consultation on draft recommendations	27 February 2024 – 30 April 2024
Final recommendations prepared	1 May 2024 – 28 June 2024
Final recommendations published	1 July 2024
Final recommendations considered and decided by full Council	By 30 August 2024
Conclusion of CGR	By 30 August 2024