

# Menheniot Parish Council

Summary of its response to Liskeard Town Council's submission delivered by Cllr Eve Easterbrook at the Electoral Review Panel public meeting 23 September 2019.

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I'd like to start by thanking the panel for letting us respond publicly to the submission that Liskeard has made.

Throughout this 9 month process, councillors were clear that they would provide the panel with a submission that reflected the whole of the parish, and not just the councillors. And that where opinions were offered, they would be sourced and identified. Where we used numbers, they would be evidenced.

We relied on data, facts, statistics and evidence in our submission, and I want this panel to be clear where our conclusions have come from.

1 Throughout the document, Liskeard have made assumptions about 'residents' and speculated on how they behave now and in the future.

In their section 5.2 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraphs, they talk about the confusion they say exists in the minds of people who come shopping at The Bubble Retail Park. That 'they consider' it as being part of Liskeard and that there is an unspecified benefit to them if the boundary were to be moved.

In June, the parish council carried a survey of visitors to The Bubble. You have a copy as Appendix 2 of our submission which shows that most people don't know which parish they are in.

However, they don't care to know which parish they are in.

Neither do they feel it affects their shopping experience.

We reject Liskeard's unsubstantiated claims.

2 In section 5.4, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph they complain that some planning applications approved in Menheniot would adversely affect Liskeard.

We strongly refute this allegation.

In our submission (section 4.3) we set out the 4 most recent commercial decisions we have made that could impact on Liskeard. In three of them, we agreed with Liskeard.

The 4<sup>th</sup>, the Costa coffee shop is where we disagreed and our councillors supported the application, and although Liskeard town councillors were invited to put forward their point of view at our public meeting, they declined to attend or to comment. The minutes of that meeting show that Menheniot councillors took the Liskeard Neighbourhood Development Plan into account as part of their decision making.

3 In their section 6.7 and 6.8, the town council suggests that Menheniot councillors had predetermined not to consider any changes in the position they took at their January meeting (that is, not to support any changes in governance).

The original email launching this review was sent out on Christmas Eve last year, asking parish councils to 'flag up an interest' in the idea of a governance review, with the proviso that they were not definitely committing themselves to a position. The email also said that 'There will be further opportunities for your council to review its position'.

Menheniot councillors flagged up their interest as requested and made their decision at their January meeting. However, mindful that further investigations were needed, agreed to set up a Working Group to examine the proposals from Liskeard and to recommend a response.

At every meeting with the Liskeard town council, we reminded Liskeard representatives we were both bound by the same Standing Orders that can limit the scope for changing previous decisions.

However, once councillors had seen the results of the 'We are Menheniot' residents' survey, Cllr Easterbrook reminded Liskeard that because 92% of our electorate did not want to change the boundary, we would need a compelling and persuasive argument from Liskeard Town Council to put back to councillors and residents.

No such arguments were presented.

4 Liskeard also feel that they have been misled by Menheniot in the matter of data sharing. I raise this point here because they have submitted an entire paragraph (section 6.9) where they believe Menheniot agreed to share personal and sensitive information with them about attendance at the Annual Parish Meeting.

The Clerks redacted copy of the signing in sheet (that both the Clerk and then Mayor, Cllr Whitty completed), has a clear GDPR declaration that we do not pass this data onto anyone else.

Liskeard are mistaken in their belief that we would ever pass on information about our residents without their proper informed consent.

5 We note that Liskeard have consulted with a small cohort of people who would ultimately be directly affected by any change in the parish boundary. Menheniot Parish council works for all parts of its communities and has consulted widely across the parish.

Our concern has always been that however many or few people might be directly affected by a boundary change, there would an indirect impact on all our residents. Our own survey plots the responses from across the parish and we can evidence that almost 90% of responses came from the area outside of the original proposal from Liskeard.

We find Liskeard's approach to this entire consultation process as unacceptable and it has caused all of our resident's very real alarm and distress.