



Dear Resident

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM PUCKLECHURCH PARISH COUNCIL – PLEASE READ**

### **Community Governance Review Consultation – Emersons Green**

**By the time you read this you may have received a leaflet regarding a proposal to create a new parish for Emersons Green. Pucklechurch Parish Council believes that the information that has been circulated is not clear about what this may or may not mean for Pucklechurch as a parish.**

**At an extra-ordinary full parish council meeting held on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2012, Councillors agreed to formally ask South Gloucestershire Council to withdraw the consultation in its current format.**

**Please consider your response to the leaflet in light of this as well as the information given below.**

It should be noted that South Gloucestershire Council did not consult with the Parish Council in advance of circulating the specific information it has supplied nor in the framing of the consultation. Councillors have taken advice on the validity of the current process and believe there are a number of flaws which need to be addressed. In order to resolve this situation Pucklechurch Parish Council has expressed its willingness to work in collaboration with South Gloucestershire Council, as well as our neighbouring parishes, in order to ensure that residents receive enough detailed information so as to be able to make an informed decision or comments on the proposal.

The Parish Council will communicate South Gloucestershire Council's response to their request for the withdrawal of the leaflet as soon as possible. In the meantime several residents have asked the Parish Council for more information and Councillors would like to draw your attention to the following observations:

1. The new parish of Emersons Green would be formed by combining two areas of land that are currently parts of Pucklechurch and Mangotsfield thereby reducing both in size.
2. The area of Pucklechurch parish which would become part of Emersons Green parish is currently earmarked for 2550 new houses and other facilities around Lyde Green Common and sits at the side of the Science Park – this is the Emersons Green East development. A small number of residential properties that are currently situated in Pucklechurch Parish would therefore be situated in the new parish.
3. Should the boundary remain unchanged the residential element of the Emersons Green East development would sit almost entirely within the current boundary of Pucklechurch parish.
4. Should a new parish be created it has been suggested that assets and resources relevant to both Pucklechurch and Mangotsfield could be transferred to the new parish. The information supplied does not make proper reference to what these might be.

5. It has not been made clear to residents what would happen to council tax contributions and the information that has been given is potentially misleading.

Pucklechurch Parish Council feels that particular reference should have been made to the parish council precept which is a tax charged on each property in a parish. It is used to fund all the activities that the parish council undertakes for the benefit of the community. The precept is collected on behalf of the parish council by South Gloucestershire Council at the same time as council tax payments. It follows therefore if a new parish is created the precept from all properties in the new parish (including some of that which would have been collected for Pucklechurch) would be a resource available to the new parish council. Should the boundaries remain the same however, Pucklechurch Parish Council would continue to receive the precept levied on all the residential properties in the current parish as well as the 2550 new properties planned for Emerson's Green East. To put this into context there are currently around 1250 residential properties in Pucklechurch.

It is important to realise that no change to the boundary would potentially mean a huge increase in the financial resource available to the Parish Council. However it has yet to be made clear what community facilities, outdoor spaces etc. it would potentially be responsible for once the Emersons Green East development is completed. The current level at which the precept is set pays reference to the needs of the current community and it follows that those needs would be greater with a bigger community and more facilities.

6. To date it has never been made clear what the proposal would mean for the make-up of Pucklechurch Parish Council itself. We can only assume that if the boundary remains the same, the resulting increase in our population once Emerson's Green East is completed would necessitate a larger council with more responsibilities OR a much higher elector to councillor ratio. If the boundary remains the same, the level of work the Council undertakes would almost certainly increase - its focus of attention may also have to shift to accommodate the needs of a much larger community with a greater density of population centred at Emersons Green East. Balancing the needs of a residential area physically separated from Pucklechurch itself would be challenging for both councillors and residents especially with reference to fostering local cohesion and the retention of community identity.

Councillors are aware that many households have not received a copy of the leaflet or, given its title, may have discarded it without realising it related to the future of Pucklechurch. If you wish to see a copy, make representations about its content or respond to it please contact:

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<https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/consult.ti/EmersonsgreenCGR/consultationHome>