

# Community of St Arvans

ST ARVANS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Clerk: Judith Bolton

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14 Grange Park  
St Arvans  
Chepstow  
NP16 6EA  
20 February 2014

To: Electoral Registration  
MCC

The Rhadyr.

Usk

NP15 1GA

Cc: John Pearson

Dear Sirs,

**Reference Draft Report on Review Of Communities & Electoral Arrangements:  
Proposals Affecting St Arvans**

St Arvans Community Council wishes to express its surprise and dismay at the proposed changes to its boundaries. It is also disappointed that Chepstow Town Council failed to communicate with SACC before formally making the proposal.

The reason given by CTC for the proposed change is to align the name of the Racecourse with that of the town. This is counter to the historical links between St Arvans and the Racecourse estate which date back over 200 years, and forms no obvious geographical benefits to CTC.

In the opinion of SACC, the nominal link between the town and the Racecourse appears to be of no value or interest to visitors to the Racecourse and of little interest to residents of Chepstow. Day to day issues with the Racecourse e.g. traffic management, management of the football field, maintenance of the boundary wall/footpath, litter, noise etc. are primarily of interest to residents of St Arvans. To that end, such issues are currently dealt with very satisfactorily by SACC which has an excellent working relationship with the Management team at the Racecourse.

All boundary changes have a substantial cost attached. At this point when MCC are struggling to meet major cost-savings, it seems perverse that such costs might be added for an unnecessary change.

SACC therefore urges very strongly that MCC reconsiders the proposed change to transfer responsibility for the Racecourse to CTC.

After due consideration to the other proposed changes, SACC considers that Tintern should be consulted on whether it wishes to retain the existing boundaries to the north of St Arvans. SACC will accept either way. However, it is understood that several residents, currently in the Tintern Ward, feel that their area would fit more naturally with St Arvans because of road links. To the south, there appears to be little reasoning behind the proposed changes additional to those associated with the Racecourse.

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SACC's position on the number of Councillors remains as outlined in a previous submission i.e. that it wishes the numbers to remain at 8 and not reduced to 7.

SACC looks forward to meeting the working Group on 28<sup>th</sup> January to discuss the draft proposals. Meanwhile it would be grateful if members of the Group could read the attached document which explains the Community Council's concerns more fully and will aid discussion on the night.

Yours faithfully  
Judith Bolton clerk SACC

## **Attachment 1**

### **St. Arvans Community Council Comments on the Draft Review of County Electoral Arrangements for the County of Monmouthshire**

#### 1) Proposed Transfer of Chepstow Racecourse to Chepstow Town Council

a) Historically, the land which now comprises Chepstow Racecourse and the surrounding land were originally owned by residents of St. Arvans.

Piercefield House and its land were purchased by Nathaniel Wells in 1802. He was a Church Warden of St. Arvans Church for 40 years and several of his family are buried there.

The Clay family bought Piercefield House and its land in 1861. They were involved with the management of the Racecourse, following its formation after the 1st World War until it was sold to the present owners. The family have been actively involved in the Village and have owned a number of other local properties including what is now Oak Grove Stud Farm.

b) This "Old Family" link was responsible for making an arrangement, many years ago, to allow residents of St. Arvans to use a piece of the Racecourse land for recreational purposes e.g. football and cricket. This arrangement is still honoured by the present owners, so that the field alongside the St. Arvans Village Hall is owned by the Racecourse but is managed on a daily basis by the Community Council on behalf of the residents of the Village. The arrangement is always a topic for review on the agenda of the regular meetings between Community Councillors and Racecourse Management. In the last year, for example, there have been four meetings which covered this topic along with a number of environmental and road traffic issues.

The Community Council would not wish to try to manage its relationship with Racecourse Management through a third party nor would it want to have to go to Chepstow Town Council to seek permission to carry its managerial responsibilities for activities on the field.

c) Whenever there is an event of any kind at the Racecourse, there is a risk of a wholly negative impact on the residents of the St. Arvans Ward caused by road traffic and pedestrian congestion around the Course at the beginning and end of proceedings. Complaints from residents occur frequently and are dealt with quickly and efficiently as a result of the close working relationship developed by the regular liaison meetings between Councillors and Racecourse Management. SACC would not wish to lose this relationship whatever the outcome of this review.

Chepstow Town Council could have a similar relationship with Racecourse Management without incurring the cost of boundary change.

## Community of St Arvans

d) As well as liaison over operational issues, SACC also keep a careful eye on the cycle/footpath, which runs along the outer wall of the Racecourse, to ensure that the Clerk of the Course keeps the route clear of obstruction from plant growth e.g. brambles. This is an area requiring regular attention and, if neglected, can result in numerous vociferous complaints.

e) The proposal to give the Racecourse land to Chepstow Town Council brings them into the heart of St. Arvans.

f) SACC consider that there has been no beneficial case made to change the boundary in this way and that it is simply change for change sake. Chepstow Town Council has no obvious claim on the Racecourse other than its name. A good relationship could be had and Chepstow could achieve all its aims without the need for boundary change and the significant cost implications which go with it. In a time of stringent cost cutting in local government, how can the County Council justify spending on these unnecessary changes?

### 2) Other Boundary Change Proposals

a) The map presented for the new boundary makes no effort to show the before and after situation to highlight the changes. The attached map (attachment 2) attempts to do this. The current situation shows the St. Arvans Ward as a sensibly shaped piece of the overall jigsaw. The new proposal takes away not only the Racecourse but a further tranche of land to the southern end of the current ward and replaces it with a strangely defined chunk of forest and narrow country lanes; presumably the old parish of Penterry.

SACC can see no necessity to change the boundary at the southern end of the current ward and wonder what lies behind that proposal?

At the northern end, SACC believe that Tintern should decide whether it wishes to retain the existing boundaries or not and that it will accept the outcome of that consideration whichever way it goes.

### 3) Councillor Numbers

a) SACC operates with a monthly Council Meeting supported by 5 Advisory Groups. The Advisory Groups are made up of a few of the councillors and meet normally once a month before the Council Meeting. Each councillor is typically a member of 2 or 3 Advisory Groups. The role of the Advisory Group is to research topics in their area of interest and present proposals for ratification at each full Council Meeting. The Advisory Groups cover, Finance, Environment and Recreation, Highways, Planning and Communications and Community Engagement. This latter Group has only recently been formed and has driven the implementation of the Council's first web site, [www.starvanscouncil.co.uk](http://www.starvanscouncil.co.uk).

The web site has a full description of how the Council operates and the implementation project itself shows how much work is put in by individual councillors to fulfil their duties as part of the Advisory Groups.

b) SACC currently has an establishment of 8 councillors and they are fully utilised, given their voluntary and part time involvement, to cover the activities described above. The

## **Community of St Arvans**

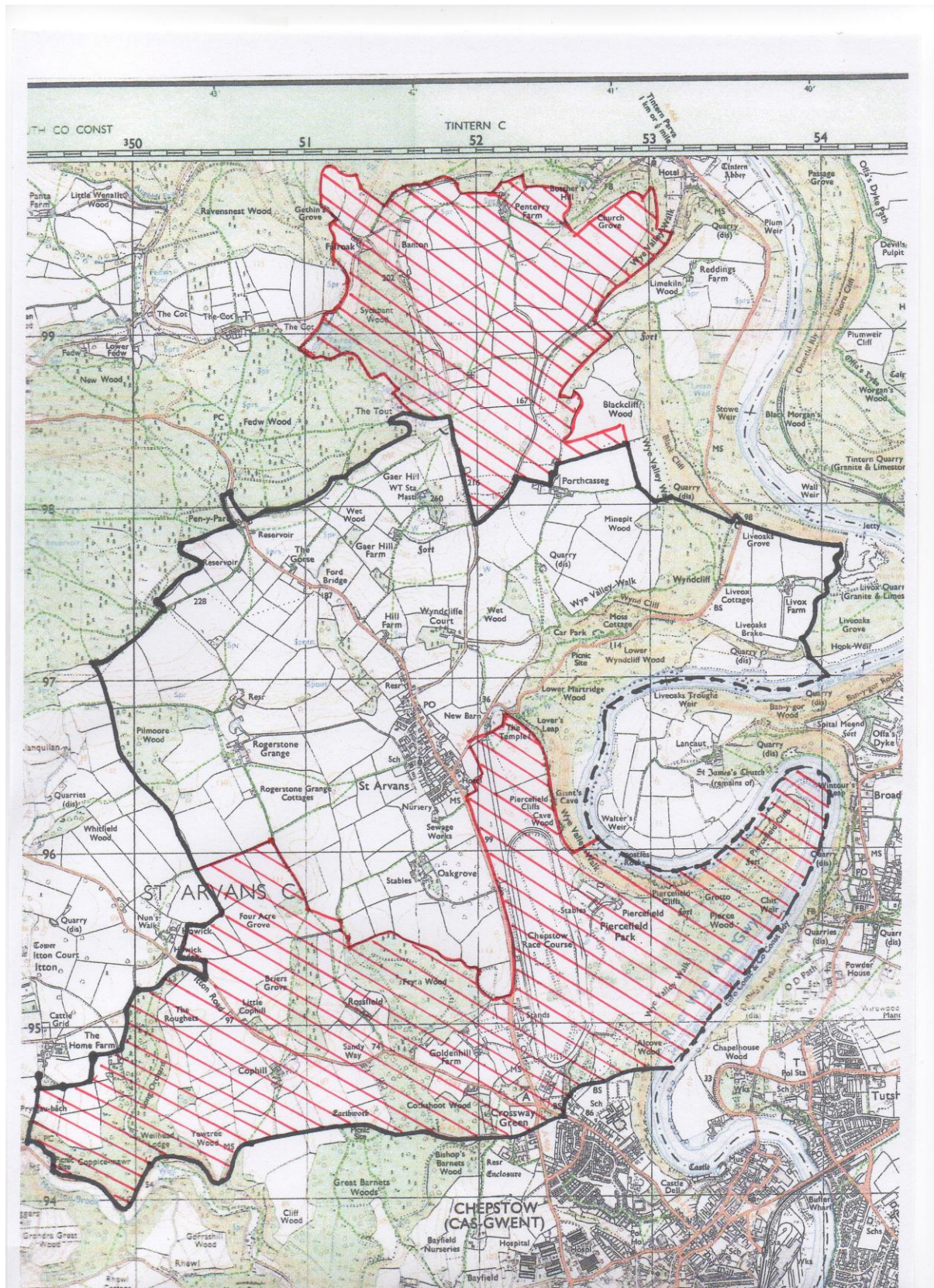
Council would like to see this number retained because activity levels are expected to increase rather than to decline.

c) As all councillors are volunteers and tend not to claim expenses for their activities, there is little cost involved to the residents by having a number in excess of the norm. Having 8 rather than 7 councillors may cost a little in additional training and may incur more cost in the event of an election being required but this is not a large penalty when compared with the working benefits described above.

d) The Council has recently experienced the resignation of two councillors. Advisory Group work has continued but has required the remaining councillors to shoulder a much greater burden. Thankfully, due process has been followed, and two new councillors will be joining the Council in February.



# Community of St Arvans



# Community of St Arvans

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to express my concern at the proposed boundary changes in St Arvans, with specific reference to the transfer of the Racecourse to Chepstow Town Council.

The Working Group appears to have accepted Chepstows' argument for the change without considering the merits or otherwise of the proposal.

Chepstow's proposal makes no geographical or demographic sense. Indeed, the "new" boundary projects very uncomfortably into the heart of St Arvans, and there are very few residents affected. The main reason appear to be to align the name of the Racecourse with that of the town

With a very long history binding St Arvans and the Racecourse estate, the change can only be viewed as a "land-grab" and which will have costs attached that should be avoided at a time when MCC is struggling to stay within budget.

Activities at the Racecourse have little or no effect on the residents of Chepstow, whereas they do affect the residents of St Arvans e.g. traffic management, the management of the football field, management of the footpath/cycleway alongside the Racecourse wall. The Community Council deals with all these issues in an efficient manner and it is difficult to see how this good relationship would remain if jurisdiction passed to CTC which has but a peripheral interest with the business of the Racecourse on a day to day basis.

I therefore implore the Group to re-visit the proposal which I know has upset many St Arvans residents, particularly the older residents who have lived in the village for many years.

As far as the other changes are concerned, residents of some of the dispersed cottages to the north will want to take the opportunity to be moved into St Arvans. The village is their natural centre of gravity and most of their journeys involve travelling through the village.

Yours faithfully,

Alan Bolton  
14 Grange Park  
St Arvans

# Community of St Arvans

Dear Sir,

I write in connection with the above change of Boundary application. I have examined the proposal and I know the site well. I wish to object strongly to the change of Boundary in this location.

I see no valid reason for this to take place. I am deeply concerned that Chepstow Town Council already have proved to be lagging when it comes to the clean up process after events being held at the racecourse. (This being in the area that is under Chepstow control) I have detailed below a few of my recent observations.

A trail of litter - On various occasions - Beer cups(full and empty) leading from the entrance all the way into Chepstow town centre.  
Certain Pubs overcrowded.

I would also like to point out that the traffic control seems and should be under control around the Racecourse, I say should because we all know of the massive changes that took place to rectify this. So on that reason alone I would state that there should be no case for Chepstow Town council to interfere with this.

My big concern is the History of Piercefield/St Arvans. I myself have various books that hold reference to the link. There is also the many paintings that link St Arvans to this beautiful estate.

Furthermore I cannot see any major benefits that can justify this change happening.

I would also like to calculate the cost of the Proposals of this change and also the cost of this taking place. I would like to get your permission in making these costings public as I am deeply concerned that I myself and other locals are regonising that times are hard and money must be saved not wasted.

kind regards,

Allison



# Community of St Arvans

Dear Sir

## **REPRESENTATIONS RE PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGES - ST ARVANS**

I accept that the County Council has a duty to review minor council arrangements from time to time, primarily to ensure that any significant changes in electorate numbers through housing development etc. since the last review are taken into account. However, the proposals for St Arvans appear to be tinkering for the sake of it.

Dealing with the Racecourse first, the Piercefield Estate on which it is situated has been linked with St Arvans for over 200 years. The Community Council has forged strong links with the Racecourse management and work closely with them regarding a range of issues associated with their business, including minimising potential disturbance caused by noise and a range of traffic issues, as well as management of their boundary walls and the village football field. These matters affect St Arvans residents, not those of Chepstow. Just because it is known as Chepstow Racecourse is no sound reason to pass this rural land to the Town Council.

Secondly, while the transfer of Penterry Ward makes sense in that the authors have rightly identified that those residents tend to look towards St Arvans rather than Tintern, the decision to exclude The Cot does not appear to make sense. Furthermore, the reasons stated for the proposed loss of the area in the south-west along the B4293 leading to a small reduction in the electorate appear to have little substance.

Finally, these proposed changes will have substantial costs associated with them - at a time of financial constraint for the County Council the proposals are poorly conceived, unwelcome and unnecessary.

Andrew Ker  
18, Laurel Park, St Arvans



## **Community of St Arvans**

Dear Sir / Madam

I fully support the proposed boundary changes, reasons why have been mailed to you by my husband.

I fully support the reduction in number of SACC councillors from 8 to 7.

I would like to propose, in the current climate of saving taxpayers money, that we reduce the number further. Chepstow has its varying wards, so St Arvans should just become a ward under Chepstow Town Council as we don't have any schools, facilities etc that require a separate community council with its associated costs.

Yours faithfully  
Mrs M Hatcher

## Community of St Arvans

Dear Sir,

I have the following comments to make on behalf of my wife and I.

I would like to propose that our property is included in the area which is proposed to come under the control of Chepstow Town Council.

We live in Mistletoe Cottage NP16 6HE, which were the old workers cottages of Piercefield House, and we own the wall along our boundary with Piercefield Park and one of the temple gates.

If Piercefield House and all it's land is to become part of Chepstow Town Council it makes sense that we do too, as one half of Temple Gates would be under Chepstow Town Council and the other under ours in St Arvans. I'd like to propose that the actual A466 becomes the boundary to include our property and the property next door, which is also outside of the village boundary.

St Arvans Community Council have in their actions, failed to protect this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Times have changed, there are no facilities any longer in St Arvans, we only use the facilities of Chepstow. St Arvans is just a satellite commuter village for Chepstow, I don't see the need for a separate Community Council here.

Chris & Michelle Hatcher

# Community of St Arvans

To; Electoral Register  
Monmouthshire County Council  
The Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP151GA

Mistletoe Cottage  
St Arvans  
Chepstow  
Monmouthshire  
NP166HE

**18th February 2014**

**Re; St Arvans/Chepstow boundary change**

Dear Sir/Madam

We are writing today to confirm our e-mail and the points we raised at the public meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

If you agree to move the boundary of Chepstow Racecourse and the grounds of Piercefield Park, from St Arvans to Chepstow, could the boundary of this include our property at NP16 6HE and be moved up to the A466. We overlook the Racecourse and Grounds, our property was part of the Estate and we own one of the Temple gates and the wall around our property is part of the boundary of the Parkland. It would not make sense to split these up. It would also make sense to include the St. Arvans playing field which is owned by the Racecourse.

At the meeting we pointed out St Arvans Community Council (SACC) no longer manage this, much to the chastisement of the Councillors there. We did not want to argue. However the facts are these:

The race course allowed St Arvans Villagers use of the grounds, however the villagers can no longer enjoy this amenity when the football club is training or having matches there. The playing fields are managed by the Chepstow Garden City Football Club, see (<http://www.gardencityjfc.com>) who maintain the grounds (I believe MCC cut the grass on contract), organise the games and training, and developed the cricket pavilion into its Club House.

They were the ones who applied for permission for the shipping container recently.(DC/2013/00854) SACC did not declare any interest in the fields when they dealt with the planning application.

No objection was raised by the SACC despite the intensification of use, the extra cars and lack of parking and increased noise: the shipping container in an AONB against the backdrop of the SACC Conservation area and the Grade 1 listed Parkland of Piercefield House. Claims by the SACC they manage the field are exaggerated , they didn't even know who owned the goals, and these were not up to modern safety standards so Chepstow Garden City football Club (CGCFC) replaced them.

Despite claims that they have a special working relationship with the Race course, the racecourse General Manager did not know about this application or the football club. They are considering charging a nominal rent to CGCFC bypassing SACC altogether.

The vast majority of the players come from outside of the village mostly from Chepstow. There are according to the SACC 8 players from the village, (they said there was only 1 when they applied for permission in July 2013) who have joined CGCFC, but not all will play at St Arvans, as it's age based where they do play. See <http://www.gardencityjfc.com/>

## Community of St Arvans

We noted SACC members used the historic links of the village as a means for the Piercefield Park and Chepstow race Course to stay within the control of SACC.

The SACC by its actions has demonstrated it has no interest in protecting the Historic Parkland of Piercefield House, the Racecourse, or the open countryside nor the Wye Valley AONB that the grounds are situated in. We can provide proof of this if required, having won 2 Judicial Reviews.

In reality why does St Arvans need a Community Council?

All of the councillors live on modern housing estates , which could be any part of Chepstow. All the facilities used by the villagers: the shopping, schools, library, police , doctors and Leisure are in Chepstow.

Why not make the whole of St Arvans a ward of Chepstow?

What is left for them to do?, A children's play area (very little used), a village hall (it has a separate management) which just leaves dog bins and grass cutting?

They do not reflect local opinion, we proved this when we went around getting a statement signed for the first Judicial Review. Almost no one knew what was going on and almost all disagreed with the SACC stance.

We even asked the youngsters in the village what they wanted, they all wanted a skate ramp. But SACC didn't want to know.

Mr Vickers raised that ageism as a block to joining SACC, in fact it's the members blocking others from joining, only "the right sort of person" meaning from their own housing estates, appear to be co-opted the majority are from Laurel and Grange Park: and then only those prepared to join "the collective viewpoint"

We for instance, despite being very politically active, have never been asked to join.

We have tried to canvass individual councillors, but none will speak to us except as a collective. Quotes from Mr Vickers the current chairman.

*"You will no doubt have had the chance to read the latest instalment and note that the latest ploy is to try to divide us."*

And: *"You will note that all Councillors were circulated bar Alan. Divide and conquer at its best!! I did not reply and I am not aware of any other responses."* Please note this was a complaint about Mr Alan Bolton, hence his exclusion.

This Community Council is too small, it is infected with the worse sort of small minded pettiness and prejudice, it's simply not needed.

Please note no one turned up at the meeting except councillors or ex councillors to support the Council, the villagers do not support this community Council. We turned up to oppose it. Due to all of the above we would urge the council that the boundary is altered and that the St Arvans Community Council be dissolved.

Chris & Michelle Hatcher

# **Community of St Arvans**

Dear Judith,

Congratulations on the new website

We are happy for you to add our email address as above to your communication list.

## **ST ARVANS BOUNDARY**

We have noticed the discussions being held re the Racecourse location etc, seems an unnecessary change and fail to see how to do so would improve the “Chepstownness” of the Racecourse!!

A separate issue is that when proceeding from Devauden to St.Arvens the ST.ARVANS roadside sign is positioned down the hill towards St.Arvens thus leaving at least 8 properties with St.Arvens addresses outside of this area.

The sign should ideally be replaced to accommodate these properties probably between the turn off to The Cot and Penyparc.

Kind regards

Terry and Alison Wood



# Community of St Arvans

Dear Sir

As residents and rate payers living in St. Arvans, we would like to register our strong objections to the recent proposal by Monmouth Town Council to alter the boundaries of St. Arvans CC and transfer responsibility for a large area, including the Race Course and parts of the Piercefield Estate, to Chepstow Town Council. We understand that this proposal would include reducing the number of councillors at St Arvans.

In our view all the members of St Arvans Community Council work hard and do an excellent job consulting with, and representing the interests of, residents in our area. They are also an important link between residents and the County Council and, when allowed to do so, play a vital role in trying to ensure accountable and responsible local democracy.

We are concerned that this proposal appears to have been included in your draft plan without any significant consultation with the residents of St. Arvans, who are the ones who will be most directly affected by it.

The area in question is historically and geographically closely connected to the village and includes a number of important amenities such as the memorial hall, football field and public footpaths which are important to village life. There are also important safety implications, such as the amount of traffic using the road on race days, the maintenance of the boundary wall, and speed limits in the area, which most directly affect residents of the village. In our view St. Arvans CC is best able to manage these issues, given its good record of liaising closely with local people.

We are also concerned that this proposal, if implemented, would have a cost, which would not be justifiable at a time of financial restraint for local government. In summary it is our view, and the view of many other residents, that there appear to be many good reasons why this proposal should not go through, and not one good reason why it should.

If you are aware of one we would be interested to hear it. We would be grateful if this consultation could be brought to the attention of the working party dealing with the matter.

Yours faithfully

John and Sheena Banfield.

# Community of St Arvans

Dear Judith

Please note my and my husband's objection to the proposed boundary change of Chepstow Racecourse.

We believe that it is nonsense to change the boundary for the purpose that this would align the racecourse with Chepstow - this is already the case. What evidence is there that people believe otherwise?

If something is not broken, why go to the unnecessary cost of fixing it? Our Council Tax is one of the highest in Wales and I understand there are to be cuts in all areas of Local Government, so fail to see how boundary amendments are high on the Council's list of priorities.

I would suggest the Review of Communities and Electoral Arrangements Committee leave the current St Arvans/Chepstow boundaries as they are.

Please note that I am happy for our email address to be added to the email distribution list.

Best regards  
Rachel Kellar

# Community of St Arvans

Dear Sirs

With regards to the proposal that is incorporated in the review of Communities and Electoral Arrangements that has been published, we would like to state our objections specifically to the point where the Racecourse and Piercefield Park is proposed to be removed to St Arvans and joined with Chepstow.

We believe that the historical links with St Arvans and the Racecourse date back many hundreds of years and we see no reason for change?

On top of this, we understand that there is a cost implication to change the boundaries. In view of the Governments well publicised cuts on spending – we believe that this would be a waste of tax payer money at this time for an unnecessary renaming. It leads us to wonder what alternate plan is in hand.

As much of the traffic management, football field management and maintenance are of primary interest to St Arvans, we feel that again a transfer to Chepstow is questionable and unnecessary.

We would be very upset to think that Chepstow would be in control of the field after such a long history of the village using it for local events and would feel uneasy as to what the benefits of name change would be.

We trust that you will consider our objections and the feelings of the local people.

Yours faithfully

Mr & Mrs Stephen Pattison  
St Arvans

# Community of St Arvans

Dear sir/madam,

I am writing to register my representation regarding the St arvans boundary proposal specifically concerning the racecourse and piercefield estate. As a St arvans resident I am immediately impacted by the management of events at the racecourse so would be understandably concerned if the village voice is removed from these. Any access to the village is directly impacted by the racecourse events and noise and traffic can be heard clearly in the village. The piercefield estate and racecourse has formed an integral part of St arvans since conception and form part of daily life for the villagers. These form an integral part of the village character and should therefore be maintained within the village jurisdiction.

For these reasons I disagree with the proposal to relocate the electoral boundaries of St arvans with respect to the racecourse and piercefield estate.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Matthews  
5 rogerstone grange barns  
St arvans  
Np166eu

# Community of St Arvans

Dear Sir or Madam

The new, proposed community boundaries have been brought to my attention and I wish to register my thoughts on the boundary between St. Arvans Ward and Itton. As shown on your interactive map



the boundary is drawn so that The Tout is included within the Itton Ward rather than St. Arvans and I have to point out that this makes neither geographical nor sociological sense. The Tout is served solely by the road ("Piccadilly Lane") running from St. Arvans to Fair oak Farm and those living there are very much part of the Penterry community based around the ridge along which the road runs. I would suggest that their interests are much more likely to be aligned with those of St. Arvans rather than Itton and that electoral divisions should reflect this. Please ensure that the boundary is re-drawn to take account of the situation as it exists on the ground.

Bob Osborne

--

Dr. R. Osborne  
Penterry Cottage  
St. Arvans  
Chepstow  
NP16 6HQ  
Monmouthshire

01291 689761



## Community of St Arvans

Dear Sir,

With reference to the above report which I understand is still in draft stage. I would like to point out what I believe to be a breach in protocol and procedure.

The proposal to change the boundary of St Arvans Ward and include the Racecourse land in Chepstow Town rather than St Arvans, **WITHOUT INFORMING AND CONSULTING ALL INTERESTED PARTIES** is against the protocol and procedural requirements of Local Government.

My understanding is that no notification was given to St Arvans Community Council that this change was under consideration and therefore cannot be included in the draft report. I believe that the Representation of the People legislation requires notification to all concerned parties of any proposed change to the Representation of Communities in order to give the representatives of the Community the chance to consider their views and the effect both in the short and long term of any change on their community.

Yours, trusting in transparent democracy,  
Peter Ralph  
Fordwich Close  
St Arvans.

## Community of St Arvans

Dear Sir,

I have seen details of the proposal to alter the extent of St.Arvens, effectively making Piercefield park and the Racecourse part of Chepstow, and I have also discussed them with a number of my neighbours in the old village of St.Arvens. We are all of the same opinion: namely that the proposed change is very much against our interests, that is the interests of the present residents of St.Arvens, for the Park is very much our hinterland, something we daily use and enjoy. As such believe we need to retain such control over it as we presently have.

**We believe that under this proposal, our amenity is seriously under threat,** this not least because we are already hedged about and harried by notices when walking out in the direction of the Itton Road, this because of the new uses of the land in that direction. On that side of St.Arvens it is now not uncommon when out walking quite lawfully, to be accosted and accused of disturbing young horses. We don't want a further degradation.

Further to the foregoing, we believe removing the Piercefield lands would be quite wrong because to do so would deny a significant history. The land is the original home of the great house to which St.Arvens was effectively an estate village. Many of us in the old part of the parish live in what were estate cottages or estate-owned inns. For very many years, under the Clay family, it was very much a benevolent estate, valuing, employing, supporting, the village. We strongly believe that that historical connection should be fully respected.

Finally, we do have grave misgivings about the future exploitation of land adjacent to us, should this proposal go through. In this connection, we reluctantly have to point out that recent experience of developments connected with the staging and management of events at the Racecourse has been much less than happy. A major urbanisation of the A466 along past the racecourse has been put in place. Trees have been felled; are areas created. Instead of improvements in crowd control, control has been worsened. There now an absence of policing, punters smarm across the mainroad regardless of any crossing offered. As far as we are concerned, any beneficial effects are hard indeed to discern. In view of the increased threat, and present pressures from several sides, it adds insult to indicate that we would also have to manage with less councillors, this undoubtedly making us less able to respond to the very evident pressures.

Yours sincerely,     Professor Emeritus Michael Williams

## Community of St Arvans

Dear Mr Pearson,

Thank you for acknowledging receipt of my e-letter re St. Arvans. I would now like to add certain further comments.

Firstly, the administrative. Any problems generated by the running of events at the Racecourse should be attended to at the expense, and through the efforts of the Racecourse itself. They have already degraded the environment to significant degree, and it would be utterly wrong for the residents of St.Arvens to have to pay in any way to clear up after what are, after all, their profit-making events. In saying this, I include both direct (financial) cost to St.Arvens, and indirect 'cost' through losing the lands to another agency, such as Chesptow Town. The loss of the lands would be a grievous thing indeed, and should be strongly resisted. Local feeling on the matter is very considerable.

The strength of feeling is especially so because, as I mentioned before, historically the Park is part of the ancient parish of St.Arvens, and I stress the word 'ancient'. If you wish to follow up my assertion, see for instance the beginning pages of the popular, locally produced book authored by the late Joyce Edmonds. (This is one of several small books that exist about the locality). Mrs Edmonds refers to documents at least as far back as 1567, referring to the mansion as part of the parish and manor. But the connection is undoubtedly far, far older, very probably back to Welsh-speaking times (see below). Furthermore, the connection was not merely that of adjacence. The benevolent symbiotic relation between estate and parish of the last 150 years at the least, the time of the Clay family, is very evident both in oral accounts in Edmond's book, and in the accounts of some older present residents. It was a generous, supportive relation, including of the local school. Three generations of the Clays are buried in St.Arvens churchyard. And besides Piercefield, there are at least three further Clay houses within the parish, including Wyndcliffe Court, the fine residence on the top of the hill.

To complete an understanding of the historical case, it should be realised that even the present-seeming separation between Park and village, namely the stone estate wall, arose only through a wish to obtain a turnpike road, about 1825. The wall kept the increasing road traffic from the Park. Until the Turnpike was built, the Park and the village ran seamlessly into each other. The wall however was no barrier to social interaction between the big house and the village. In the 1830s the cottage I live in was one of a short row built by the estate for gardeners, this under the regime of the then owner of Piercefield, Nathaniel Wells. These houses continued in the estates ownership until post World War 2. The 1830s houses were however only an expression in stone of a longer-held landed connection. Squirrel cottages, Devauden Road, built circa 1765, are

## **Community of St Arvans**

called thus in reference to the squirrel on the arms of Walters, early owners of Piercefield. John Walters of Piercefield was buried in St. Arvans church, 1590. For a full account of the history of the parish and its 'seat' of Piercefield, see Sir Joseph Bradney, A History of Monmouthshire, Volume 4, Part 1, page 36 onwards, which gives the full pedigree of Walters, back to before 1300.

Sincerely, Professor Michael Williams

P.s. I am sorry to be so late with this, but nevertheless hope you all, including if it comes to it, the Welsh assembly will see the historical case is made.. MW

# Community of St Arvans

Dear sir/madam

As a resident of St Arvans I write to voice my concerns regarding the proposed boundary changes.

I find it hard to understand why bringing the race course into Chepstow boundaries will in any way align the course with the town of Chepstow? As far as I am aware, and no doubt the whole of Wales, if not the UK, Chepstow race course has always been associated with the town of Chepstow. Irrespective as to whether it falls inside or outside the town boundary.

St Arvans has historical links with the course that dates back 200 years. As the closest village to the course it is in the best interest of the village to maintain control over the day to day issues with the course. It has worked well up to now. Why change it?  
I feel this would be a complete waste of Monmouthshire council/ tax payers money.

I fear there is an ulterior motive to the changes with the land being prime for real estate. If a council can change borders to accommodate housing I am sure they can change AONB's as well. Any future developments not only seriously damage what is one of the oldest and most famous AONB's in the country but also amount to a serious loss of local amenity for the residents of St Arvans, and also tourists who have been frequenting the area for centuries.

I urge you to reconsider this proposal.

Yours sincerely

Drew Wilson



# Community of St Arvans

14 Grange Park  
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Chepstow  
NP16 6EA  
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email [judith.bolton360@gmail.com](mailto:judith.bolton360@gmail.com)

To. Electoral Registration, MCC  
The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA  
Cc; Councillors Phil Hobson, Roger Harris and

Dear Sirs,

As clerk to St Arvans Community Council I have been central in the receipt and sending of documents pertaining to the Review of Communities and Electoral Arrangements that is taking place in Monmouthshire and, in my professional capacity, I attended the meeting at Usk on the 28<sup>th</sup>

First may I say thank you for the manner in which the three members of the working party listened to the contributions made and conducted the meeting generally. I felt immediately that visitors would be truly 'heard' and this was confirmed as the meeting progressed. It was a delight not to have to be on one's guard all the time as can sometimes be the case. I felt I could relax.

However, when I came away I realised that I should have a voice, not just as the clerk, but also as a resident, an ordinary member of the community. This is not easy because I have background information making it very difficult to be 'just' Judith Bolton and not a little of the clerk as well. But here goes.....

**As an ordinary resident** I am sure that I would feel that the two most important points from the proposals put forward;

## **a) The Racecourse**

I have an interest in the village and am a walking guide for MCC, I have learnt a considerable amount about local history. The village has been linked with the Piercefield Estate since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Documentary evidence shows that a mansion was part of the parish then. This link has continued with incumbents at Piercefield House having major influences on the village. Records show support by means of employment, housing, road building, charitable donations etc. Nathaniel Wells, who bought the house in 1802, was High Sheriff of Monmouthshire, a Justice of the Peace and churchwarden at St Arvans church. He held the last post for 40 years. Members of his family are buried there. He funded the building of the tower. Later on the Clay family maintained links between estate and village

**This is not a heritage to be destroyed lightly.**

Chepstow would like the racecourse and park in its boundary because it has the name Chepstow and enquiries for the racecourse may be made through the Council. This is not a relevant argument. The racecourse has an excellent web site. Anyone wanting to know anything about the racecourse is unlikely to ring the Council and the name of course implies that it is near the town but it doesn't mean it has to be part of the town.

## Community of St Arvans

Most of the traffic arriving for events comes from the motorway. In the past, on Welsh Grand National days, the town centre was a disaster before and after the event because of diverted traffic. However, after a meeting with the racecourse, St Arvans Community Council informed residents before the 2013 event of a change to the plan. Traffic flow on the A466 was to be controlled manually at the hospital lights with no diversions. Buses from the station went around the town centre by way of Larkfield roundabout.

I have heard no moans about traffic problems that day other than a few minor ones that any large event may give e.g. jaywalking by pedestrians.

**As a resident of St Arvans and driver** I can list the problems that can result from this & events at the racecourse:

- Dumping of cars on the A4666 by latecomers who don't want to miss a race.
- Litter after events. This can be in the evening or first thing in the morning after special 'nights'. Plastic drinks containers can be abandoned in large numbers!
- Coaches dropping off visitors at the entrance instead of in the car park, reducing the A466 to single traffic.
- Marshalls with insufficient training causing hold ups for cars on the A466 at the pedestrian crossing by the entrance.

These are St Arvans problems not those for the town.

**As a cyclist and walker** I can point to the need for the cycle/footpath along the racecourse boundary wall to be kept clear of overhanging branches. It is a shared path, developed with money to encourage children from St Arvans to walk/cycle to school. A number in the village do and it is a delight to see. It is frequently used by village joggers because it avoids cars. Some runners use it on winter nights with head-torches

Every summer and autumn brambles falling over the wall need clearing by racecourse staff. Almost very year the Community Council notes in the parish magazine that it is talking to the racecourse about the overgrowth. The job gets done because there is good communication but prompting is needed.

These are problems for St Arvans, not Chepstow Town

No housing estates have been built, the demography has not changed. Why change the boundary?

**On the strength of the above comments, I cannot believe that there is sufficient evidence to warrant a move of the racecourse boundary as proposed.**

### **b) Number of Councillors**

**As a reader of the Parish magazine** I can assure you that our Community Council appears to be extremely busy. There is a great effort to ensure good communication and community involvement. This is the work of volunteers. An easy way to reduce work is to reduce community involvement. Don't get the questions/comments and you don't have to provide the answers/replies. In January the Council launched a web site. It is not just a council web site but a village one too. Here again, the Council could have cut corners.

It is worrying that fewer volunteers may mean cutting those corners. SACC works well with 8 councillors

# Community of St Arvans

## Final Points

I am sure this Review is a very difficult exercise for all taking part and I respect the time that those involved are committing. Some of the decisions that have to be made will, no doubt, be difficult. However, I hope change is not going to be recommended if there is no need. Along with many people in St Arvans, I can see no reason why Chepstow should be brought right into the heart of the village. The proposed boundary would be right next to the village hall and village shop and a few steps away from the Victorian fountain, considered by most to be the true centre of the village.

May I ask the working party to please consider leaving the boundary where it is and a Community Council comprising 8 members to continue its work for the community.

Thank you for your time

Yours sincerely,  
Judith Bolton

## **Community of St Arvans**

My husband and I vehemently object to the cavalier attitude adopted by Chepstow Town Council regarding proposed boundary changes. To make such proposals without due consultation with the persons concerned, i.e. St Arvans residents and their representatives, goes against the principles of democracy.

Cynthia Harris. 41 Laurel Park.

## Community of St Arvans

Posted by [CStott](#) January 17, 2014 at 13:10

Dear Sir, This proposal seems to be a waste of time, what is the practical point

St Arvans has historic links with the racecourse (we wait to see what the affect will be of the ownership of the woodland will be)

Day to day issues of this area of prime interest to St Arvans rather than Chepstow

It reduces the number of the electorate in the St Arvans community, which affects its individual voice

This proposal will cost money, and I presume already has. If the councils have enough to waste on such proposals, perhaps they could reduce our rates instead

This change will weaken the voice of St Arvans in its relations with the racecourse, highways etc, is unnecessary and costly

## Community of St Arvans

Posted by [AKer](#) January 27, 2014 at 12:20

I accept that the County Council has a duty to review minor council arrangements from time to time, primarily to ensure that any significant changes in electorate numbers through housing development etc. since the last review are taken into account. However, the proposals for St Arvans appear to be tinkering for the sake of it.

Dealing with the Racecourse first, the Piercefield Estate on which it is situated has been linked with St Arvans for over 200 years. The Community Council has forged strong links with the Racecourse management and work closely with them regarding a range of issues associated with their business, including minimising potential disturbance caused by noise and a range of traffic issues, as well as management of their boundary walls and the village football field. These matters affect St Arvans residents, not those of Chepstow. Just because it is known as Chepstow Racecourse is no sound reason to pass this rural land to the Town Council.

Secondly, while the transfer of Penterry Ward makes sense in that the authors have rightly identified that those residents tend to look towards St Arvans rather than Tintern, the decision to exclude The Cot does not appear to make sense. Furthermore, the reasons stated for the proposed loss of the area in the south-west along the B4293 leading to a small reduction in the electorate appear to have little substance.

Finally, these proposed changes will have substantial costs associated with them - at a time of financial constraint for the County Council the proposals are poorly conceived, unwelcome and unnecessary.

## Community of St Arvans

Posted by [jcanderton](#) January 30, 2014 at 22:18

I believe the proposed change of the boundary between St Arvans and Chepstow is unjustified.

St Arvans has a historical connection with Piercefield Park going back several hundred years and with the racecourse since its opening in 1926. The village football field is owned by the racecourse and the Community Council have worked with the racecourse management over many years. There has been no recent population shift or additional development in the area of the racecourse that would lead to a different community identity for that area. Therefore, under the terms of reference, there is no justification for making the change.

Most of the visitors to the races come from the M48 along the A466, skirting Chepstow. Few Chepstow residents are affected by the traffic and crowds entering and leaving the racecourse as few travel north along the A466. St Arvans residents and visitors are affected by this traffic to a much greater extent as all travel to the local market town (Chepstow) and larger business and shopping centres (Bristol and Cardiff) necessarily passes the racecourse.

St Arvans residents are also more affected by noise from concerts etc. held at the racecourse as there is a noise-absorbing belt of trees between the racecourse and Chepstow.

No justification is provided for the proposed changes to the west of the A466.

The suggested boundaries at the north end of the racecourse and to the west of the A466 follow no natural boundary such as a road and would not be easily identifiable as recommended in the terms of reference.

Such a change would result in Chepstow Town Council making decisions on issues which affect St Arvans residents more than Chepstow residents and is a wholly unnecessary expense.