

Reasons to keep SPC intact , from the Peaslake residents point of view:
There are many. Apologies for the length of this section. Please use any or all of these points to submit your view, or e mail the site to have other points added.

Please be sure to sign, date and include your address when writing in.

- Free car parking in Shere will cease for Peaslake residents, as they will be outside the Shere boundary.
- The cash uplift from the revenue (considerable) from the Shere Car park will cease, outside the boundary.
- The drop in centre, valuable to many, will no longer be available for Peaslake residents.
- Swimming pool , Shere: While membership will still be available, the preferential membership for all parish residents will be lost to Peaslake residents, so they will be at the back of the membership queue, if any places are left, each season.
- Funding: grants and loans- the smaller the parish, the less the chances and opportunities for getting funding, this would affect Shere, but even worse would affect Peaslake as it would be even smaller. So it's a good reason the whole parish stays intact.
- The 'community council' itself would be subsumed by any new parish council formation, this once informal and useful group, (it should return that!), free and open to all, will disappear. There will be no need for 2 groups, the new PC would take over, losing the informal nature of this group. Formed in 1948, it would be a pity to lose this now, for no real advantage or reason.
- Shere Parish Council currently consists of three wards: Holmbury parts of Abinger (3 councillors), Peaslake (4 councillors), and Shere (6 councillors), proportionate to population size. No single ward holds a majority, fostering a balanced decision-making environment where councillors are expected to consider the interests of the whole parish. If Peaslake were to form its own council, the remaining parish would comprise two wards, potentially creating an imbalance in representation. In smaller councils, there is also a greater risk that a well-organised group may significantly influence council direction, especially where electoral turnout is low.
- Economies of scale- a new Peaslake council would need a clerk, clerk training, pension, cover for absence, resources, councillors (probably 5 but could be more), a legal firm to be appointed, accountants appointed, audit, tenders to be put out for maintenance. Insurance, cost of equipment, speed cameras, disclosure by the councillors as regards their interests, public liability- the list goes on. (Any additions here welcome!) All of which is 'built in' now to the

current SPC, and splitting into 2 would increase the underlying costs for both parishes, which means less resource available to both parish councils. It's a lose/lose situation.

- **External Influence and Community Cohesion**
A smaller, independent council may face more challenges engaging with district and county-level authorities (or unitary authority that will replace them) or securing external funding. The restructuring would impact the long-standing shared identity of the current parish community.
- The broader context of all matters, eg planning, strategy, development, etc, would be drawn from a smaller pool of experience and knowledge, so again a lose/lose situation. The common good of the greater area, overall, would be diminished. . Expertise too would be narrowed, due to fewer councillors.
- **Cohesiveness:** One of the big factors to be considered by GBC, when assessing- This proposal has the effect of destroying cohesiveness, feeds the differences, which are few, often of a personal nature, rather than of a parish matter. This has been a cohesive defined parish since around the 1870's, with the parish council being formed in 1896. We do not have the right to destroy this heritage now.
- The decision to separate will be irreversible, there is no 'trial and test' to see how it goes, once it's done, it's done.
- The council tax rates may have to go up to cover the precepts, for 2 councils, rather than the one. This area is unclear, and will remain so until after a decision has been made.
- Despite the leaflet produced by the 'community council' making the case to leave give some figures which are speculative, unproven, some downright incorrect, and very misleading, the estimated costs could well be a lot more than they suggest there. With SPC, now, we know what we get, it's a certain known factor., it has worked for 131 years. Why risk this depth and wealth of experience? ?
- A separate council would also need to raise a precept sufficient to cover these costs, which may result in higher per-resident charges for both parishes due to the loss of shared efficiencies.
- **Shared Facilities** such as Tanyard Hall (the central Parish Office), public toilets, and Drop-In Centre and some transport arrangements currently serve the entire parish and are supported by the collective precept. A reduced precept base could place financial pressure on the remaining parish to maintain these services.

- Increased Administrative Costs of Establishing and running a new parish council would require additional spending on:
Staff salaries (Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer)
Office equipment, insurance, compliance, and audit
Website and digital access
Duplication of Core Costs, Rent, internet, and so on.
Separate councils would need to fund their own insurance, audit, administration, and other core operations, leading to potentially higher combined costs without corresponding improvements in service

A new council might struggle to get councillors to stand- it is already difficult to get anyone to take on organization of the village air, for example, no-one has offered to stand for the village hall, for years, many organizations in the village have had to close, eg the WI, the gardening club, maybe others too, all due to lack of support. At least 5 councillors and a clerk would be needed, as well as people to do the other roles, as already mentioned.

Access to Capital and Grants

A smaller independent parish may have reduced capacity to fund major capital projects or access grants previously available through Shere Parish Council.

Grant Funding to Local Organisations

Organisations within a newly formed Peaslake parish would no longer be eligible for grants or assistance administered by Shere Parish Council, including funding for capital projects using additional income above the precept e.g. Shere Car Park Income

Affordable and Low Cost housing for our young people, and the ‘Elephant in the Farm: ‘

- The farm has been vacant now for around 10 years. Little progress has been made on the affordable housing front. The young people of this village can no longer afford to live here, due to the high housing cost. Although the circumstances around the lack of movement here is complicated, and world events have not helped. However, the main blockage to any early progress was the PPG (Peaslake Protection Group) who set about blocking every move. The same people are going for the new Peaslake Council idea now, so if this does happen, nothing will even happen, of any use, on the farm.
- There is currently some glimmer of hope to get a new scheme going, now, but if this change comes in, all hope here will be lost. A survey of the village some years ago indicated that housing was favoured scheme, and the best use of the farm for village development, but if this change comes in, any new housing group will be scared off, and it will not happen.

- Also a big apparent issue is flooding, an independent report commissioned 10 years ago, indicates no additional flood risk due to a farm housing development, despite the current allegations flying around, all of which driven by the same group driving the new council idea. There is no evidence for this.
- **Ownership of the Farm:**
- The group driving for change states in their leaflet, that the farm will pass into Peaslake ownership once a new council is formed. This is false. At the time of writing this, 26th May 2025, there is no certainty this is the case. Shere Parish Council own the farm, and at this time, legal advice is being sought, but it is at this moment by no means a 'given.' The ownership, as understood, is covered by a specific covenant on ownership.

Note:

- When making your submission, bear in mind that the principal authority, GBC, assesses:
 - Community identity and interests
 - Governance effectiveness and convenience
 - Population size and viability of the proposed council
 - Public consultation is required before any changes are approved
 - Adjustments to existing boundaries
 - Reallocation of assets and precepts
- (Please address these issues especially in your letter, these are the key points GBC will address.)

Sign and date your letter, with your address too please.