

# Snettisham Parish Council

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Response to consultation over amalgamation of  
Fire & Rescue Service under the Office of PCC.

To OPCC via email

Dear Sir,

A majority of my Councillors have asked me to write protesting against the proposals for the OPCC to take control of the Fire and Rescue Service in Norfolk.

We have read with interest the NCC response to this proposal and would agree with their points; we do not always do so, but this document is clear and cogent. In particular, we note their comments about protecting the service by sharing funding across a much larger budget as NCC is able to, and the relatively smaller reduction in the Service's budget compared to other local authority cuts. This follows our concerns, and those of other parishes, when cuts were proposed two years ago.

Further we are well aware of the costs – always hidden – when a reorganisation takes place; in general, we oppose such changes unless there is a crystal-clear case, and one which is well-supported by all, or most, of those involved; neither applies here. The only support for this comes from the OPCC itself.

Co-operation between services is the way ahead – this does not require amalgamation, but recognition of how groups can work together most effectively, and when things are best done by separate organisations. It has been suggested by many that this will introduce, in the fulness of time, another layer of management, to co-ordinate things which are already being done without this additional cost.

Coming to local matters.

We have recently had two large fires on the Coastal Park, which were attended by many engines. We understand that the Heacham tender is likely to be lost, and this would have caused inevitable serious consequences. The replacement of this by a 4x4, as proposed, is simply unacceptable – a reduction in service was unacceptable two years ago, as acknowledged by NCC at that time, and nothing has changed for the better since then<sup>1</sup>.



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Additionally, should the tender go, the need for staff would, and this would clearly result in an inferior response.

We face increased levels of flooding, both coastal and from the drains, and the population of the area is increasing rapidly. We know from the preparation of our Neighbourhood Plan research that the provision of infrastructure to support this growth is always top of the list of local concerns. Mention has also been made of the higher proportion of elderly and infirm residents, some with dementia, and the consequent increased risks and issues. Nothing must be done which makes our facilities poorer; on the contrary, people actually expect, and deserve, an improvement.

Since this consultation has become more widely known publicly, we have received representations from a number of concerned residents demanding that we act to prevent this. Clearly, we also have to take those views into account.

In conclusion, Council wishes its strong opposition to this process to be included in the responses to the consultation, believing that it will not produce the benefits stated (marginal though they are in any case), has massive risks to us locally and county-wide, and is, quite simply, unnecessary.

We would urge the relevant authorities to reconsider, and withdraw the proposals.

With kind regards

By email

Simon Bower  
Parish Clerk  
9/8/2018

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<sup>i</sup> At the time of the last consultation "Re-imagining Norfolk" I wrote as follows:

"The closure of Heacham Fire Station is opposed by a large majority of the Parish. It is clear that the number of calls responded to has increased considerably over recent years. The stated proximity of other resources is not encouraging – Hunstanton currently has three large housing developments proposed or approved, and that will mean their average response time will increase; given there are no plans to improve the A149 this will be busier. In fact there will be increasing interruptions to traffic flow; even if only currently proposed development is permitted, there will be several additional junctions and considerably more traffic. As a major part of the fire service activities relates to RTAs, this is especially concerning.

Given our position, Snettisham has to be concerned at any restriction to flood preparedness. Any reductions to specialist water and flooding resources would be resisted by Council, especially given that local residents will already be providing the funding for flood protection..."

