
3rd February 2026

Mole Valley District Council: Community Governance Review Stage Two

BRA Chairman's Update

Residents need to reiterate to MVDC their comments for/against creating a Bookham parish council to ensure that their views are heard and acted upon.

We previously reported that on 13 January 2026, Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) voted "NO" to proposing a new Parish Council for Bookham. MVDC confirmed that the majority of respondents to its Stage One consultation felt that no change was required, and there was "no evidence to suggest there was a need for change". In the Bookhams, 0.99% of the electorate responded with only 0.21% supporting a Parish Council.

We now understand that that decision may not be as clear-cut as it seems. We had promised further updates, so, here we go...

MVDC's Stage 2 consultation is stated as four weeks, closing on 20 February 2026. However, many residents may receive the documents in the post only within three weeks or less of that date. With this very tight timescale:

- Residents in areas proposed for 'change' will receive an information leaflet and a ballot paper to vote for or against the parish council proposal.
- In the Bookhams, and other 'no change' areas, residents will receive a direct mailing advising how they can engage with the second stage consultation.

This begs some questions. The BRA's views on these three questions are:

1. *Is such a short timescale and very basic information from MVDC enough to make such an important decision?*

No. Some residents will know a lot about parish council legislation, powers and the services they can provide, the pros and cons. The majority will not, and 3 weeks is not long enough to 'get up to speed', or to engage in public debate.

2. *Is the 'vote' really a vote?*

It is not clear how the result of the 'vote' in 'change areas' will be evaluated by MVDC as such votes are only 'Advisory' upon MVDC not binding. Neither has a minimum response been set nor what scale of majority should be sought (if any).

3. *Is a further response to consultation seen as an equivalent to voting – 'vote early and vote often'?*

It is not clear whether submitting comments in 'no change areas', such as the Bookham, will be taken by MVDC as the equivalent of a vote, or taken as further indications for/against. MVDC does not say whether these comments will be added to those received at Stage One of the consultation or treated in isolation, or whether those repeating their comments for/against might create a false perception of a majority in Stage 2, as the potential for double counting comments from Stages 1 and 2 has also not been commented upon.

Therefore, we recommend that residents reiterate to MVDC their comments for/against creating a parish council for Bookham to ensure that their views are heard and acted upon.

The BRA has compiled a [Questions & Answers](#) document to help residents, under the headings of:

- What is the difference between a Residents Association and a Parish Council?
- What does the Bookham RA do now?
- What else could a Parish Council do?
- What might it cost?
- If we have a new Parish Council which takes on services previously provided by the District Council will the Council Taxes charged by the District Council or its successor reduce proportionally?
- Does a Parish Council have more statutory powers?
- How much of a Parish Council's budget is spent on staffing?
- Who will set the budgets for any new Parish Councils?
- Within the wards where there is a vote on setting up a Parish Council or changing the boundary, how many votes will be required for a change?
- Why the accelerated timetable?
- If nothing happens now in the Bookham, can there be another CGR later on?

Please make your views to MVDC clear. The clock is ticking.

Simon Edge – BRA Chairman

www.bookhamresidents.org.uk

Mole Valley District Council:

Email MVDC Community Governance Review

www.molevalley.gov.uk/cgr/
