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13 July 2015

Dear Emma

**Application for Designation of a Neighbourhood Area**

Following several community meetings held jointly by The Knowle Society and Dorridge and District Residents Association, a group has been established by the villages of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath to work with the local community in the preparation and submission of a Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Localism Act 2011. Part of this process involves the designation of a Neighbourhood Area.

Please find attached our Application for Designation of a Neighbourhood Area.

Yours sincerely,

Bryan Hunt  
(Lead, Neighbourhood Plan and Council Liaison)

# APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE KNOWLE, DORRIDGE AND BENTLEY HEATH AS A NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

**TO:** Emma Tinsley - Principal Planning Officer, Policy and Spatial Planning  
Managed Growth Directorate, Solihull Metropolitan Council

**APPLICATION BY:** Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum

**CONTACT DETAILS:** Jane Aykroyd, Dave Wallis, Bryan Hunt – email: [chair@kdbh-np.org](mailto:chair@kdbh-np.org) ; all care of Arden Academy, Station Road, Knowle, Solihull B93 0PT website: [www.kdbh-np.org](http://www.kdbh-np.org)

## REASONS

The communities of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath lie within the Borough of Solihull in the West Midlands and are not governed by a Parish Council.

Following several community meetings held jointly by The Knowle Society and Dorridge and District Residents Association, a group has been established by the three villages to work with the local community in the preparation and submission of a Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Localism Act 2011. Part of this process involves the designation of a Neighbourhood Area.

## DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED AREA

The proposed Neighbourhood Area is shaded light blue on the map attached below. The Area lies south of Solihull town centre in the southern part of Solihull Borough. For clarity, in setting the proposed boundary, we have used a number of notable geographic landmarks.

- To the west, the M42 motorway runs through up to the north of the proposed Area, with a small extension at the northern tip to include part of the old Warwick Road and Ravenshaw Hall.
- To the east, the Grand Union Canal forms a physical boundary, following the canal south as far as Kixley Farm, diverting around the farm, before returning to the canal path.
- The eastern boundary leaves the canal after the bridge that crosses the A4141, diverting from there south west towards Norton Green and Darley Green.
- The southern tip encloses houses in Packwood, Packwood Towers and Packwood Gullet, going westwards until it reaches the A3400 at Box Trees Roundabout.
- The A3400 then provides a clear boundary linking back up to Junction 4 of the M42 motorway, thus completing the circumference.

## JUSTIFICATION

There are a number of reasons why our chosen proposed Area is both logical and desirable.

1. Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath are not covered by a Parish, but are surrounded on three sides by parishes – Barston and Chadwick End to the east, Hockley Heath to the west and Lapworth (in Warwick District) to the south. Lapworth Parish Council is also a designated Neighbourhood Area. This has been a primary consideration in defining the proposed Area, as a Neighbourhood Forum cannot cross existing Parish or Neighbourhood Area boundaries.

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2. Another important consideration is Ward boundaries. The proposed Neighbourhood Area includes all of the Knowle and the Dorridge and Hockley Heath Wards in so far as they do not overlap with surrounding Parish Council boundaries or other Ward boundaries. The southern boundary of the proposed Area is also the Solihull Borough boundary with Warwick district. The northern boundary is the Dorridge and Hockley Heath/ Knowle Ward boundaries with Blythe, St Alphege, Silhill and Bickenhill Wards.
3. Over time, the three villages have grown and spread, such that now most residents would find it difficult to define where one village stops and another starts, other than by postcode. Residents move regularly between the three villages in undertaking their day to day activities.
4. The villages share many common interests and community facilities:
  - o the railway station in Dorridge
  - o many of the local shops and services are shared
  - o local schools are shared across all the villages, irrespective of where one lives.
5. There are already strong links between the three communities. The two groups that currently represent the voice of the villages – the Knowle Society and the Dorridge and District Residents Association - work closely together with a joint remit covering the proposed Area.
6. For all these reasons, residents and local businesses across all three communities share similar pressures, needs and issues that will need to be addressed consistently and as a whole through the Neighbourhood Plan.
7. The proposed Area already has the broad consensus of local residents and businesses involved in Neighbourhood Planning consultation to date. When the decision was made to propose the chosen Neighbourhood Area, the Knowle Society and Dorridge and District Residents Association each held their own all day ‘drop in’ sessions for the local community to express an interest in Neighbourhood Planning and voice any concerns they may have. Every house in the area was leafleted inviting people to attend the drop in days and/or submit views. This was followed up by a combined meeting at Arden school, chaired by both residents groups, where the proposed Area was presented to a packed main hall. It was out of this meeting that the embryo of the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum was born, and the proposed Area ultimately adopted.

### **STATEMENT**

The application for designation of the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath (KDBH) Neighbourhood Area is being made by the KDBH Neighbourhood Forum. The KDBH Neighbourhood Forum is a relevant body for the purposes of Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in that it is an organisation which is capable of being designated as a Neighbourhood Forum. It is considered that the KDBH Neighbourhood Forum meets the requirements of 61(f) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in that:

- (a) It is established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the proposed KDBH Neighbourhood Area.

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- (b) Its membership is open to –
  - (i) Individuals who live in the Neighbourhood Area
  - (ii) Individuals who work there, and
  - (iii) Individuals who are elected members of the Council within the Neighbourhood Area.
- (c) Membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals who meet at least one of the above criteria.
- (d) It has a written constitution.

Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath already has a strong civic movement, resulting in a wide range of active associations. The proposed Neighbourhood Forum is not an attempt to supersede or to subvert these groups, but instead will act as an umbrella organisation, creating a Neighbourhood Plan that can join together the many diverse voices within Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath.

The Neighbourhood Plan will address the opportunities and issues that are of most importance to Forum Members across Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath, with an emphasis on the social, economic and environmental aspects of community life. The Plan will focus on shaping future development in a positive and constructive way, with the aim of encouraging relevant and appropriate development within Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath. The Plan will be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for Solihull Borough, which comprises the Solihull Local Plan 2013 and the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Plan 2014. So far as they are relevant, the Plan will also take into consideration various planning briefs that affect the area.

We have developed a written constitution - copy attached - which has been agreed by current Members of the proposed Forum. It is underpinned by a shared commitment from individuals to be accountable to each other and to the goals of the Forum. We are also keen to liaise with, and support, other adjoining Neighbourhood Forums to create a joined up approach to shared areas of interest that cross boundaries.

We continue to undertake a level of general communications, which has been successful to date in ensuring that the Forum includes representation from across the communities. The proposed Forum already has over 21 registered Members, each of whom has formally confirmed their wish to be a part of the Forum. Membership comprises individuals representing community groups, residents, small businesses, business associations, as well as an elected councillor, who all self-define themselves as being heavily associated with Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath.

We are preparing a more high profile communications campaign to grow the number of Members, which we will put into action as soon as we have received confirmation of our designation as a Neighbourhood Forum. As numbers grow, details are being held and tracked on a Membership database, maintained by our Membership Secretary.

An application for designation of the KDBH Neighbourhood Forum has been submitted to Solihull Council in conjunction with this Neighbourhood Area.

# APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE KNOWLE, DORRIDGE AND BENTLEY HEATH AS A NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

## APPENDIX 1 PROPOSED KNOWLE, DORRIDGE AND BENTLEY HEATH NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA MAP SHOWING BOUNDARIES

