
CREATION OF UPPER SAXONDALE PARISH

UPPER SAXONDALE PETITION

This petition recommends the creation of the parish of Upper Saxondale in the borough of Rushcliffe, Nottinghamshire. This will:

- ensure that Upper Saxondale electors are effectively represented at parish level
- ensure that the parish precept is spent for the benefit of the Upper Saxondale community
- ensure a sustainable future for the maintenance and protection of the environment and facilities at Upper Saxondale

About Upper Saxondale

Upper Saxondale is a conservation area situated on a site of thirty hectares. It sits between two main trunk roads, the A52 and the A46, which intersect at nearby Saxondale roundabout.

In the late 19th century Nottinghamshire County Council built a psychiatric hospital on the site, which opened in 1899 and eventually closed in 1988. After some years a developer, David Wilson Homes (DWH), bought the site for redevelopment as residential accommodation. The housing development commenced in 1996 and was completed in 2002.

Uniquely within the borough of Rushcliffe, the village is a mix of a small number of houses originally built to accommodate hospital staff, conversions of Victorian hospital buildings which are set around the established parkland, and new-build houses. It is surrounded by open space including a nature reserve, orchard and fields. Within the area there are 326 homes, a church and a commercial building which includes a restaurant, a wellbeing studio and office space. There is also a play park, a modern brick-built community hall with three adjacent tennis courts and an independent bowling club with green and clubhouse.

The parkland adjacent to the conversions has been retained by DWH, who are liable to maintain and ultimately transfer it under a s106 agreement with Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC). Other land was originally retained by DWH but then transferred to Upper Saxondale Residents Association (see below) for a nominal consideration. This includes the community hall, tennis courts, nature reserve, orchard, and the site of the play park.

Current parish boundary

At present Upper Saxondale is partly within the parish of Radcliffe-on-Trent and partly within the parish of Cropwell Butler, so the boundary between the parishes cuts Upper Saxondale in two. This boundary is shown on the map on page 4. Of the 326 houses and 659 electors in Upper Saxondale, 259 houses and 531 electors are in Radcliffe-on-Trent parish, and 67 houses and 128 electors are in Cropwell Butler parish.

This boundary was established before Upper Saxondale was developed and is anomalous in current circumstances. The solution recommended by this petition is the creation of a separate Upper Saxondale parish.

Ward boundary review

Upper Saxondale is also split between the wards of Radcliffe-on-Trent and Cropwell, with the boundary between the wards following the parish boundary. Again, this is anomalous in current circumstances and USRACic (see below) has made a submission to the ongoing Rushcliffe ward boundary review, to propose that the boundary should be moved so that Upper Saxondale is entirely within one ward. The proposal is that Upper Saxondale should be in the Cropwell ward, given that the Radcliffe-on-Trent ward mainly comprises the larger, more built-up, village of Radcliffe-on-Trent itself, whereas the Cropwell ward comprises a number of villages of broadly comparable size to Upper Saxondale.

Upper Saxondale Residents Association (USRA)

Upper Saxondale Residents Association (USRA) was formed following the development of housing at Upper Saxondale around 20 years ago. When DWH transferred the land and assets to USRA, they were initially held by USRA trustees. It was subsequently felt that a more robust arrangement was needed and USRA therefore became USRAcic, a community interest company. USRAcic not only owns and manages the village hall, tennis courts and other assets, it also organises community activities such as children's parties, carols around the Christmas tree and a local 'Saxonbury' festival.

The existence of USRAcic is a strong indication of the real sense of community identity and engagement at Upper Saxondale, and of the willingness of residents to participate in voluntary activities to support their community. Membership of USRAcic is open to all Upper Saxondale residents, who are asked to pay a membership subscription of £5 per household per month. However given that this funding is not secure, there is a concern that if USRAcic were at some point to be unable to maintain assets such as the village hall and other land, the unique environment at Upper Saxondale could suffer as a result.

Current parish budget and services

Taking the current position for the Radcliffe-on-Trent and Cropwell Butler parishes in turn.

Radcliffe-on-Trent:

- has 3,256 houses and 6,592 electors, of which (as above) 259 houses and 531 electors are in Upper Saxondale
- has an annual budget of £306,529 and a band D tax rate £94.14
- has 18 parish councillors
- provides services specifically in Upper Saxondale to maintain the play park, a flower planter and two dog-mess bins, and posts parish updates on one notice board.

Cropwell Butler:

- has 338 houses and 555 electors, of which (as above) 67 houses and 128 electors are in Upper Saxondale
- has an annual budget of £12,420 and a band D tax rate £36.77
- has 6 parish councillors
- provides services specifically in Upper Saxondale to maintain one dog-mess bin.

Rationale for a new Upper Saxondale parish

Upper Saxondale is one integral community, with its own identity and sense of place. Upper Saxondale residents describe themselves as coming from Upper Saxondale, not from Radcliffe-on-Trent or from Cropwell Butler. The role and activities of USRAcic, mentioned above, are a very clear indication of this sense of identity and of the preparedness of the residents of Upper Saxondale to handle its local affairs responsibly.

Amongst other indications are the Upper Saxondale website (which has been recently refreshed and updated by volunteer residents) and the Upper Saxondale Facebook page (also managed by Upper Saxondale volunteers).

Upper Saxondale is separate and distinct from the neighbouring communities of Radcliffe-on-Trent and Cropwell Butler, both geographically and in other ways.

Firstly, with regard to Radcliffe-on-Trent:

- Upper Saxondale is separated from Radcliffe-on-Trent by the A52 trunk road and by green-belt fields, as shown on map 2 on page 5.
- Upper Saxondale has a very different sense of place to Radcliffe-on-Trent. Upper Saxondale has a rural feel compared to the more urban feel of Radcliffe-on-Trent.
- Radcliffe-on-Trent is a relatively large built-up area, which is increasing in size with additional house-building both in progress and planned.
- Radcliffe-on-Trent's focus is the central area in Radcliffe-on-Trent village, with its shops, eating places, surgery etc, whereas Upper Saxondale is outside and separate from this area.
- Upper Saxondale residents use services in Cropwell Bishop and Bingham as much as those in Radcliffe-on-Trent.
- Upper Saxondale has its own community hall which is the focus for residents' activities.

Secondly, with regard to Cropwell Butler:

- Cropwell Butler parish is centred on Cropwell Butler village. As shown on map 2 on page 5, Upper Saxondale is separated from Cropwell Butler village by the A46 (a major dual carriageway trunk road), and by green belt fields.
- Cropwell Butler is a long-established self-contained village with its own identity.
- Upper Saxondale has no need to make use of the Cropwell Butler village hall.
- Upper Saxondale has little or no affinity with Cropwell Butler, and there is no particular reason for residents of one to visit the other. They each have their own different sense of place and their own community facilities.

In summary, Upper Saxondale has evolved from a hospital with a few ancillary houses to a reasonably sized residential community, built on both sides of the existing parish boundary. The community has matured over the last 20 or so years and has developed its own identity. The next step in this evolution is the creation of the parish of Upper Saxondale.

Budget and services to be provided by Upper Saxondale Parish Council (USPC)

- Upper Saxondale Parish Council (USPC) will manage and maintain the community hall, tennis courts, nature reserve, and orchard. It is anticipated that these assets will be transferred to USPC by USRAcic.
- USPC will organise community activities, as USRAcic currently does.
- USPC will manage and maintain the play park, all dog-mess bins, litter bins and notice boards, and consider aspects of crime prevention.
- It is possible that the parkland may be transferred by DWH to USPC rather than to RBC, under the s106 agreement.
- The budget for USPC will be driven by the cost of its services, however it is anticipated at this stage that the tax rate could be similar to the current Cropwell Butler rate and less than the current Radcliffe-on-Trent rate.
- There will also be no need for an additional USRAcic membership subscription, as it is anticipated that all USRAcic's assets will be transferred to USPC and that USRAcic will be wound up.
- It is anticipated that there will be seven or so Upper Saxondale parish councillors. We expect that some or all current USRAcic directors will stand for election, in order to provide continuity of direction and leadership.

Other benefits of an Upper Saxondale parish

Finally, there are a number of other benefits for residents of the creation of an Upper Saxondale parish. It will provide a voice for Upper Saxondale in wider borough and county discussions. Upper Saxondale will also be consulted on applications for planning permission in the parish.

Most importantly, it will ensure robust governance and a sustainable future for the maintenance of the environment and facilities at Upper Saxondale.

Boundaries of Upper Saxondale parish

Map 1 on page 4 and the text below describe the proposed boundaries of the new parish. The intention is that the whole of Upper Saxondale should be within the parish. The boundaries could of course be drawn somewhat differently and still achieve that aim; for example the eastern boundary could follow the route of the 'new' A46 rather than the old road. The boundaries may also have to align with any changes resulting from the ward boundary review.

The neighbouring parishes will continue to be called Radcliffe-on-Trent and Cropwell Butler.

Extent of proposed Upper Saxondale parish

The blue line on map 1 shows the proposed boundary of Upper Saxondale parish. The orange line shows the present boundary of the Cropwell Butler and Radcliffe-on-Trent parishes, with the broken orange line showing where this boundary runs through Upper Saxondale. The boundary between the Cropwell Butler and Radcliffe-on-Trent parishes is also the ward boundary between the Cropwell and Radcliffe-on-Trent wards, and we are separately proposing that Upper Saxondale should move wholly into the Cropwell ward, with the new ward boundary shown by the purple line on the map.

The western boundary of the proposed new parish will be coincident with the proposed new ward boundary. Starting from the junction of the A52 and Saxondale Drive, the proposed northern and eastern parish boundary will initially follow the present boundary of the Cropwell Butler parish eastwards along the old A52 to the Shell roundabout, then south along the old A46. The boundary will then continue along the old A46 to the junction with Henson Lane, and run north-west along Henson Lane. It will then run south-west along the boundary between the fields on one side and the orchard and nature reserve on the other side, meeting the western boundary at the corner of the nature reserve.



KEY
 Blue = Proposed Parish Boundary
 Orange = Current Parish Boundary
 (The broken line running through the middle of the village denotes Cropwell Butler parish to the east and Radcliffe-on-Trent parish to the west).

Map 1 Showing Current and Proposed Parish Boundaries



Map 2 - Overview of Upper Saxondale and Surrounding Villages (Google Satellite Image)