

The Wokingham Borough Coat of Arms

The Wokingham Borough Coat of Arms, designed by H Tomlinson, MA FHS, was granted to the former Wokingham Rural Borough Council by Letters Patent dated March 12, 1962 under the hands and seals of the Kings of Arms and by virtue of a warrant of the Earl Marshal on behalf of the Crown. The right to bear and use the coat of arms was transferred to Wokingham District Council by the Local Authorities (Armorial Bearings) Order 1976. Wokingham District Council was granted 'Borough' status in March 2007, becoming Wokingham Borough Council.

Interpretation of the Arms

The shield combines the principal topographical and historical features of the Borough. The main surface of the shield indicates the former, while the latter are represented in the top portion or "chief". Three white waves and two green ones, each resembling an initial W, suggest the undulating farmlands and rich woodlands enclosed by the Thames, Loddon and Blackwater rivers. The royal stag's head, similar to that in the arms of Windsor and that of the complete stag in the arms of Berkshire and Wokingham, refers to the situation of large parts of the Borough in the ancient Royal Forest of Windsor.

In the chief, the pastoral staves refer to the Sees of Winchester and Salisbury; the former held the whole of the Hundred of Wargrave and the Bishop of Salisbury had a palace at Sonning. The mitre refers to the mitred Abbey of Abingdon which has links with the Borough over a thousand years old, and to the ancient Saxon bishopric said to have existed at Sonning. The background is red, as is the upper part of the arms of Reading University, whose site is within the area at Earley.

Above the shield is the closed helm proper to civic arms, with its decorative mantling or tournament cloak in the basic colour of the shield, green and white. Upon the helm stands the crest, the base of which is the special type designed for Rural Borough Councils and consisting of wheatears and acorns alternately, representing agriculture and natural beauty. The acorn is especially appropriate to the Borough centred on Wokingham, whose emblem was an acorn long before the present arms (also based on the acorn) were granted.

Out of the coronet rises a grassy mound on which stands a Royal lion from the arms of the Royal County of Berkshire, holding an oar. The lion refers to various royal and national associations with the Borough, including the world-famous Royal Regatta of Henley, which takes place within the Borough and to which the oar refers.

The motto Unum E Pluribus ("One made out of many") refers to the union of the various parishes in one rural Borough. It is a variant of the motto of the USA whose first President, George Washington, was descended in the maternal line from the family of Ball of Arborfield.

