

## **Review of Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) Ward Boundaries**

As members in the Northern part of MHDC, we wish to support the ward boundary submission of the Conservative Group with special reference to those wards in our area.

### **Number of councillors per ward**

In principle we support the continuation of single member wards as a default position where practical. The current such arrangement helps build a closer relationship between Councillors , local residents and Parish Councils and helps ensure that when there is a clear point of contact. Each elected councillor is fully up to date with a full geographic knowledge and all relevant aspects of their ward and rightly accepts responsibility to deal with them. Multi member wards can also result in an uneven spread of workload between those living in different parts or alternatively create duplication of effort. Whilst in some cases this may be unavoidable due to the constraints in the review criteria, there seems little benefit unless necessary. We have not seen any evidence put forward as to why changing the current position would be beneficial.

In particular , we are aware of a proposal for a two member Martley and Teme Valley Ward (including two large parishes located outside of such description). Such a ward would be a combination of many diverse communities , with seven Parish Councils , three County Councillors, have a ten mile journey in length and have two councillors covering one sixth of the square mileage area of the District. This would not help social cohesion and add substantially both to the current workload and travelling. It is understood that there is opposition amongst Parish Councils for such a change.

### **Specific ward changes**

In respect of specific ward changes proposed by the Conservative Group we have the following detailed comments.

#### **Baldwin Ward**

Addition of Little Witley

Little Witley already has close links with the Church in Shrawley and parts of that village also currently have addresses describing them as being part of Little Witley and are commonly assumed to be so.

#### **Woodbury Ward**

Addition of The Shelsleys

Prior to the last boundary review these villages were part of the Woodbury Ward and their inclusion would be a return to the original position when the current Malvern Hills District was first put in place. By nature of their close location , together with Pensax they are in the same catchment area for local businesses in retailing, service provision and pubs. The whole of the proposed ward would also be in the same secondary school catchment area.

### **Martley Ward**

Addition of Broadwas , Cotheridge, Knightwick and Doddenham.

There is currently a single neighbourhood plan in place covering Martley and Doddenham. All the villages share the same benefice with Martley.

### **Tenbury Ward**

Due to the size of Tenbury Town it seems the only option is to create a two member ward to arrive at the required numbers per councillor. The villages proposed for inclusion gravitate towards Tenbury as the local centre for their services and shopping.

### **Lindridge Ward**

The inclusion of Eastham to arrive at the required numbers is suggested due to the bridge crossing the Teme providing a link to the remainder of the ward directly from the A443.

### **Broadheath Ward**

Combining Broadheath and Rushwick would link two communities with much in common, facing substantial expansion in terms of housing and having a direct boundary with the city of Worcester. As a result there are common issues facing each.

### **Hallow Ward**

### **Addition of Wichenford**

In order to arrive at the required number , it would seem a logical step to include Wichenford with Kenswick.

David Chambers    Broadheath Ward

Pam Cumming      Baldwin Ward

Paul Cumming Woodbury Ward

Barbara Jones-Williams Martley Ward