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**From:** Trish Mullins <trish.mullins@lqhworcs-parish.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 20 March 2022 07:38  
**To:** reviews  
**Subject:** BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW - MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL  
**Attachments:** Response to Boundary Commission proposals LQH.pdf

**Categories:** [REDACTED]

Dear Sir/Madam

I have tried to upload this document as a response to the Commission's Review as a download but have been unable to do so. It is very discouraging that systems do not work correctly. I am therefore emailing the response to you.

This is the response of the Longdon, Queenhill and Holdfast Parish Council.

Many thanks

Trish Mullins (Cllr)

## **Response of the Longdon, Queenhill and Holdfast Parish Council to the Boundary Commission Proposals for Malvern Hills District Council Wards**

New boundaries are being proposed for council wards in Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) with a review conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission.

The aim is to ensure that councillors will represent about the same number of electors, and that ward arrangements will help the MHDC work effectively. It is proposed there should be 31 councillors, with 13 single-councillor wards, six two- councillor wards, and two three-councillor wards.

The Longdon, Queenhill and Holdfast Parish Council considered the Commission's proposal to revise the MHDC Ward boundaries at its meeting on 7 March 2022. The Commission is asked to take note of the following comments: –

The proposal to transfer Queenhill and Holdfast Parish Councils to Ripple Ward cannot be supported for the following reasons: –

1. The Parish Council of Longdon was amalgamated with that for Queenhill and Holdfast some time ago and a single Parish Council now represents all three villages and the surrounding areas. It is not clear whether this amalgamation has been taken into account in the Commission's proposals.
2. If Queenhill and Holdfast are moved from Longdon Ward to Ripple Ward, this will present an anomaly in that, while parish matters for the three villages and their environs will be dealt with by Longdon, Queenhill and Holdfast Parish Council, district issues will be split. District matters relating to Longdon will remain with Longdon Ward, while Queenhill and Holdfast district matters would be dealt with by Ripple Ward. This will cause chaos and confusion, not only to Councillors, but also to parishioners.
3. Queenhill and Holdfast are small, totally rural areas that fit well with the rest of the present Parish Council area both in their requirements and geographically. The parishes of Longdon, Queenhill and Holdfast represents a long-standing community with a history of working together and are part of the same parochial church benefice.

4. The draft recommendations lack an understanding of the local area. It is not clear whether the Boundary Commission has visited the local area before shaping its recommendations. This is clearly illustrated by a lack of understanding about the boundaries between areas:
  - The boundaries between Longdon, Queenhill and Holdfast are contiguous. Indeed, the southern boundary is very close to the village of Longdon and includes houses in Yardbridge that many consider to be part of Longdon. Moving Yardbridge to a separate Ward from Longdon would be entirely artificial – the two are consecutive areas, separately only by a narrow brook;
  - While the boundary between Queenhill and Holdfast may appear contiguous with Ripple Ward, it is critical to note that the eastern boundary of the Queenhill and Holdfast parish is, in fact, the River Severn which provides a natural barrier across which there is no immediate crossing. By road, it is estimated that a round trip between Queenhill and Ripple would be 12 miles. There is, therefore, a considerable geographical distance between these areas.
5. At the current time, the District Councillor for the Longdon Ward regularly attends the Longdon, Queenhill and Holdfast Parish Council meetings. Should the parish council area be divided between two Wards, it is not clear how this would be administered. It is possible that the attendance of two District Councillors would be required at Parish Council meetings. The administration of Parish Council and District Council matters will entail liaison between Parish and District Councillors and cause considerable additional work for Council Clerks of both authorities thus placing an increasing burden on Councillors who themselves are volunteers.
6. The Parish Council notes that the changes proposed for District Council representation will result in an increase in the workload of the District Councillor. However, for the recommended new Longdon Ward, this is not solely due to the increase in “headcount”. The recommended new Ward would cover a significantly larger area than at present. The increase in workload for District Councillors having to travel across large distances and working in sparsely populated rural areas should not be underestimated.
7. The Parish Council appreciates the aspiration to ensure that councillors will represent approximately the same number of electors and that the addition of Castlemorton and Birtsmorton to the Longdon Ward may

help to achieve this. What is not so clear is the rationale for moving Queenhill and Holdfast parish areas out of the Ward. The population of this rural area is not large and the net change in numbers seems insufficient to offset the challenges and difficulties such a move would cause. The Parish Council urges that the recommendations should not be driven by head count alone (to do so would be to reduce residents merely to numbers on a spreadsheet). The recommendations should seek to ensure the optimum representation for the residents of Queenhill and Holdfast.

8. In carrying out the review, the Parish Council noted that the Commission had three main considerations:
  - Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents;
  - Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity;
  - Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

The Parish Council agreed that the last two of these tests had not been met in any way by the Commission's recommendations.