



worcestershire county council

Review Officer (Worcester)
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
PO Box 133
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18 May 2023

Dear Local Government Boundary Commission.

I wish to make a contribution to the May 2023 "Further Draft Recommendations" report into the new electoral arrangements for Worcester City and to formally express severe concerns over the proposed changes to electoral boundaries in the Southwest of Worcester as set out in the May 2023 report. I'm particularly concerned about the proposed changes to the existing ward of St John and Bedwardine and wish to formally oppose these in favour of the proposals put forward in November 2022.

Dines Green has been an integral part of the St John's Ward since it was moved within the city boundary. Originally a small agricultural hamlet, the new housing accommodated residents who were moved during the slum clearance in the Tybridge area of St John's during the 1950's. Historically the community has significant links to St John's and should not be isolated from the rest of the community. Indeed, many Dines Green residents when they retire move back into sheltered housing in the St Clements Close area of St John's which preserves the link between the communities. Many residents have never lived anywhere other than in the current St John's Ward. Continuity of representation is therefore important.

A natural boundary of Bransford Road exists to the south, incorporating parts of Bedwardine Ward as suggested is illogical. People living south of Bransford Road have no association in educational, social, or economic terms with people living in St John's, they are two separate communities.

One of the unifying factors which has a strong local identity, for the people of the current St John's ward, is the Laugherne Brook and its nature reserve. We have no fewer than five bridges which bring the residents together, people work rest and play on both sides of the brook and cross it several time a day. The vitally important Laugherne Brook Nature reserve would be separated by the new proposals, using it as a new boundary would cut through Coles Meadow and Meco Alley, equally the new Meco Memorial Nature Park is enjoyed by residents on both side of the brook. It is important that the brook does not become a barrier in any way, using it a boundary would divide the community and would

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damage integration, culture and community activity. It's very important that representatives of the community are the same Councillors for both sides of the brook.

The Number 30 bus Route is one of the most popular, well used and profitable services in the entire Worcester Bus network. It links Dines Green with St John's, consequently, shows a demonstrable community linkage between residential amenity and community services. The Green Hub in Dines Green is the only community Centre serving the west of Worcester. It's used by residents from across the current St John's ward and is used as a polling station, it brings people together, separating it from St John's would be a disaster.

The St John's Library provides outreach work in Dines Green, many of its users, especially elderly residents from Dines Green, travel using the number 30 bus to the library, go shopping in St John's and then return home. It is the same community.

Historically, when Owen Glendower retreated from the Battle of Woodbury Hill, he travelled through St John's and Dines Green and torched both communities, treating them as one of the same. So, this link can be demonstrated as far back as the Middle Ages!

Laugherne Road and Comer Road are often used as commuter links for those travelling between Dines Green and St John's, with links to roads and footpaths, it's impossible for residents of Dines Green to reach the city centre without going through St John's, they use busses, walking and cycling routes and cars, often stopping in St John's for services.

Dines Green Churches are linked to the St John in Bedwardine Church and St Clements Church, all currently in the same St John's Ward, congregations regularly visit each other, share clergy, and have joint worship, this cements the community together. All places of worship are in the same ward, serving one community. Equally, Bromyard Road Methodist Church and Our Lady Queen of Peace Roman Catholic Church, all also located within the St John's ward; their locations are symbolic of a unified community.

I hope this letter has shown that St John's as it currently exists, is one community, any attempt to separate it or divide it would be a mistake and would harm community relationships and would damage community engagement. I urge you to reject this proposal and return to the original suggestion of not making any proposals for change west of the river.

Kind regards


Richard Udall
County Councillor 
