

## Wychavon District Council

### Personal Details:

**Name:** Cllr Tony Rowley

**E-mail:**

**Postcode:**

**Organisation Name:** Wychavon District Council - Fladbury Ward

### Comment text:

I am the Wychavon District Councillor for the Fladbury Ward. I have been a District Councillor since 2015 having previously been a Pershore Town Councillor. I live in Pensham which is a small rural hamlet within the jurisdiction of Pershore Town. Wick parish has a distinct rural identity. It has a unique and independent community spirit which is complimented by the other rural parishes within the ward. It is not dominated by the other parishes within the ward. It is very much a self-help community, has an active parish council and many other community groups. Wick is separated from Pershore Town by the River Avon and the extensive river meadows. There is clear distinction between the landscape of the town and the river meadows and extensive agricultural land of Wick parish. The Fladbury Ward comprises of Wick, Crophorne, Fladbury, Charlton and Bricklehampton. All the parishes are rural communities lying within the Avon valley. The parishes whilst maintaining individual distinction relate to each other. They face the same challenges, common to rural communities within a major river valley. These challenges are rural crime, extraneous traffic, limited river crossings, fly tipping etc. These tend to be predominantly rural challenges. Despite individual characteristics the ward parishes work well together and pool resources to face major issues. A recent example being the consortium of parish councils making representation in respect of the minerals local plan. Collectively the parish councils were able to put forward a case at the EIP. There have been many issues whereby the collective approach of the parish councils has been effective, eg relating to rural crime, speeding and the promotion of rural cycling networks. Community transport schemes and active travel plans are being promoted through collaboration of the Fladbury Ward PCs. From a personal viewpoint I have first-hand experience of a small rural community being dominated by a town I live in Pensham which is within the jurisdiction of Pershore town. For years Pensham has not been adequately represented by Pershore at Town or District Council level. Not only is it dominated by the town it is the forgotten part of the town. An example of the lack of recognition being the Pershore Town Plan which failed to include Pensham on any of the maps and not featured in the text. As far as the Plan was concerned Pensham was not part of the town. Lack of representation and investment in Pensham led to the residents forming the Pensham Community Trust and acquired a village field to create a community focal point. Pensham like Wick is very much a self-help community. I fear that Wick would be like Pensham and become the lesser part of the town within the Ward. Pershore is currently a 3-member ward and in my opinion 3-member wards should be avoided. Having been a District Councillor for Pershore I do not believe such wards are effective and lead to uncertainty within the electorate with areas left unrepresented. However, if the Commission persists on Pershore remaining a 3-member ward and to achieve equality of representation I feel a much better fit would be to combine, Pinvin PC with Pershore. Wick should remain with Fladbury. The Combertons are part of the Bredon Hill AONB and should be grouped with the neighbouring parishes in Bredon in a 1- or 2-member ward. Pinvin immediately abuts Pershore and there is no separation of the urban linear development. The Railway Station straggles both jurisdictions – the railway line being the existing boundary. In addition the recent construction of the Northern Link Road brings the communities closer. The remainder of the Pinvin Ward could be labelled Throckmorton and Peopleton or the Lenches could be added to achieve equality of representation. Finally, the timing of the further draft proposals is unfortunate and unfair to the Wick community. Such a fundamental change in the ward boundary affecting the community has not been well received. There is a feeling of backs to the wall in view of the process and deadline for the consultation being so close to the final report and the May 2023 elections. There appears little time in the process to change the further draft proposals even though Wick residents totally oppose being part of the Pershore ward. There was no indication of a fundamental change at the draft proposals stage. This does indicate a last-minute approach to the process. I recently attended the PC meeting and there was unanimous objection to the proposals to include Wick in the Pershore Ward. The residents' preference was to remain in the Fladbury Ward.

### **Uploaded Documents:**

None Uploaded