

Shropshire

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Organisation Name: Condover Parish Council (Representative of parish/town council)

Comment text:

Related subject: Burnell Ward

Condover Parish Council has considered the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) proposals for Burnell ward, Shropshire. The proposal is to amend the existing Burnell ward to become Burnell and Bayston Hill. Burnell is a predominantly rural ward, having strong affiliation and commonality with South Shropshire. Bayston Hill is Shrewsbury orientated, with an urban-facing community. Although parts of Burnell are close to Shrewsbury, urban-focussed policies and priorities do not properly reflect the priorities of constituents living in this rural hinterland.

The Parish Council does not support the findings of the LGBC report. It would be more appropriate and fitting to affiliate Bayston Hill with the new urban Otley and Raebrook wards, and to leave Burnell as it is, rural-facing within South Shropshire.

The Parish Council believes the LGBC findings place too much weight on population numbers and do not pay enough regard to geography, identity, and the spread of the population in rural areas. The Parish Council is not convinced the proposed boundary change would comply with definitions of good representative electoral quality. Town wards by their nature will dominate, priorities such as infrastructure will be taken up by them and this would leave less focus on rural wards. Rural constituencies have specific infrastructure and service access issues which can require different solutions to those in urban areas. In the context of urban policy planning, rural priorities would be less visible.

From an administrative perspective, it would not be cost or time efficient for local authority councillors to endeavour to properly represent two very distinct constituencies, or to give effective support to parish councils when the local interests are so diverse. The Parish Council would argue that the Bayston Hill position would be more easily and sensibly resolved by joining with another town ward to make a viable two-member ward

instead. Condover Parish Council recommend that new Otley and Reabrook which are lowish in numbers be joined with Bayston Hill. Why link an urban ward to a rural one when a neighbouring urban division would fit? Burnell and Bayston Hill are different wards altogether.

The current Burnell ward is due to move to the South Shropshire constituency. Burnell ward is a much better fit for Condover Parish Council as a rural constituency. At a time when Parish Councils are being asked to be more autonomous and find ways to help relieve some of the burden from the local authority budget, it is believed that the effective local autonomy already created will be lost and that funding opportunities will be swallowed up by the urban parish and town councils.

Condover Parish Council therefore proposes that Brunell ward be left as it is and that the Bayston Hill and Otley and Reabrook wards are joined to form a new, larger Shrewsbury-facing urban ward.

Attached Documents:

None attached