

Shropshire

Personal Details:

Name: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Postcode: [REDACTED]
Organisation Name: (Member of the public)

Comment text:

Related subject: Burnell / Bishops Castle - Church Pulverbatch

Church Pulverbatch should not be included in the Bishops Castle ward.

The consultation document shows that Edgton Parish Council have been vocal about their enthusiasm to be aligned with similar rural parishes with common interest and to be effectively represented. Unfortunately, in order to make the mathematics of the process neater, Church Pulverbatch Parish's interests have been sacrificed. The new proposal to include Church Pulverbatch in the Bishop's Castle division will split parishes which share common rural interests and make it harder for the parishioners to be effectively represented. It seems that the population of Edgton Parish Council are valued more highly than the community of Church Pulverbatch; the importance of finding community with "common rural interests" and being "effectively" represented is equally important to both communities and should be treated with equity.

Church Pulverbatch is a thriving rural community. The village hall has a programme of activities bringing together all parts of the local population, of all generations and demographics. The village pub will soon reopen under new ownership, offering even more opportunities for community integration and a base for well-established community initiatives such as regular litter-picks and road safety activity. Throughout the pandemic, neighbours came together to look after each other and look after their local community, which has continued to date in a hugely supportive, close-knit cooperative neighbourhood. A very active group maintain and improve the local scheduled ancient monument and surrounding common land, known locally as the Knapp and Wokken. The parish is very rural and deeply embedded in the agricultural sector. Links exist between Church Pulverbatch and Longden through the catchment primary school and nursery which offers families an extended community network across the two parishes, and with Pontesbury as the catchment secondary school. The local GP is in Pontesbury. A regular bus service runs into

Shrewsbury. A mobile library service comes weekly from Shrewsbury Library. Anyone looking to do their weekly supermarket shop would go to Shrewsbury. There are simply no established links whatsoever with Bishops Castle. The community of Church Pulverbatch has no more in common with Bishops Castle than, for example, Ludlow or Telford. This means that Church Pulverbatch will not be grouped in “parishes which share common rural interests” (point 73) if it is enveloped by Bishops Castle. The inclusion in that ward would be meaningless for Church Pulverbatch.

Furthermore, Bishops Castle is not only very separate from Church Pulverbatch in terms of experience and community – it is also geographically distant. Any representation from Bishop’s Castle is likely to fail the very point raised in point 73 of the report, specifically that “any significant geographic expansion might make it hard to represent the division effectively”. Our local representative is deeply embedded in the local community, with a profound understanding of the population and local area. He has proven himself to be a hard-working and dedicated public servant. It would simply not be possible for this sincere and substantial commitment to local values and aspirations to be replicated by representation from further afield. Moreover, it is unlikely that a parish like Church Pulverbatch would be able to attract any focus within a busy ward focused on a larger conurbation such as Bishops Castle, with the risk that the community’s challenges and opportunities would be left unexplored.

Church Pulverbatch is a very special place with a unique character worth preserving and enhancing. Simply moving the parish into Bishops Castle in an act of administrative convenience with no regard to its community would be ineffective, ill-judged and wholly unjust. Please reconsider this proposal.

Attached Documents:

None attached