

# Shropshire

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## Comment text:

**Related subject:** The south of the county (my definition)

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As proposed there are three divisions which will span two parliamentary constituencies, namely:

- Chirbury & Worthen (South Shropshire and Shrewsbury) by including Westbury, currently in Shrewsbury & Atcham constituency.
- Burnell & Bayston Hill (South Shropshire and Shrewsbury) by including Bayston Hill, currently in Shrewsbury & Atcham constituency.
- Shifnal Rural (South Shropshire and Wrekin) by including Stockton, Sutton Maddock and Beckbury, currently in Ludlow constituency.

Further comments will cover alternative proposals, but the prospect of a Shropshire Councillor having to address two MPs (and vice versa), possibly of differing political allegiance, on a matter of concern is not conducive to clear or consistent representation. All other issues apart, and with all due respect to current and any future MPs, if a Councillor's constituent's concern is in the "minority" part of the division, the MP may not be particularly motivated to become involved. In my experience councilors and MPs best represent their constituents by working together. For this reason, I believe that the arrangements proposed for these three divisions are not desirable.

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It is my understanding that the Boundary Commission as a matter of principle, does not encourage electoral “doughnuts”. Yet, here, the proposed Shifnal Rural envelopes Albrighton and the colocated Shifnal North and Shifnal South - a double-doughnut. That this also straddles two parliamentary constituencies renders the electorate (for whom I have the highest regard) likely to be confused as to who is representing them local and nationally. It would be far better if the four divisions were split along geographical lines. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the geography to offer further suggestions other than that they should avoid crossing parliamentary constituency boundaries.

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Whilst the current Alveley & Claverley division encompasses communities with little in common both culturally and economically, the proposed change to Bridgnorth Rural appears to be change for change’s sake (other than electoral numbers) and does not address the commonality issue. Communities on the northern side of the parliamentary and District council boundary with Wyre Forest have very little synergy with communities north and south of the A458 in Low Town Bridgnorth.

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The proposals for this two-member division fail on just about every level. The only conceivable link between them are the A49 trunk road and the Shrewsbury-Hereford railway line, which has no stations or halts within the proposed division. The A49 is frequently impeded or blocked due to traffic accidents which push motorists well away from the proposed division. There are virtually no community, cultural or economical links between the large village of Bayston Hill and the almost exclusively small rural communities in the proposed remains of the Burnell division. Bayston Hill looks to Shrewsbury for its amenities. Whilst Dorrington and Condover residents may also look to Shrewsbury (as do those from all over the county and farther afield), they do not look to Bayston Hill. They are as likely to gravitate south towards Church Stretton as northwards. One suggestion that Bayston Hill might be better served as a two-member division incorporating the growing area in Shrewsbury alongside Oteley Road seems to make more sense. Or a large single member division. Both of these suggestions probably make better sense than the existing cumbersome and dysfunctional three-member Bayston Hill, Sutton and Column division which crosses the A5. On balance, an over-sized Bayston Hill division is preferable to any alternative suggested by LGBCE or any other representation of which I’m aware. It is a self-contained community with shops, pubs, a school, a doctors’ surgery and a dentist. It also has the advantage over many Shropshire divisions of being comparatively compact. And keeping Burnell and Bayston Hill separate means that the proposed division does not span two Parliamentary constituencies.

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Ever since Much Wenlock division was established, to include the Broseley Wood ward, it has been an uncomfortable relationship. Broseley Wood looks to Broseley for its services, shopping, church, social and cultural ties. To that extent I support Broseley Wood ward joining the otherwards - Broseley West and Broseley East in the Broseley division.

I note that at para 104 of the proposals there is the assertion that the “parish boundary would still mean that electors on Bridge Road, Spout Lane and neighbouring areas, who might reasonably consider themselves to live in Broseley, would not be included in a Broseley division.” This is

misleading - only four properties with frontages to Bridge Road are in Broseley Wood ward, the remainder being in Barrow parish, and therefore in the proposed Much Wenlock division. Spout Lane and “neighbouring areas” have always been in Barrow parish and the draft proposals don’t change that.

That Jackfield, with fewer than 200 electors in 2028 should be carved out of Broseley and placed in Much Wenlock strikes me as presenting the same dissatisfaction as has existed these past fourteen years as regards Broseley Wood, but on a slightly small scale. On this basis I am sceptical that providing good electoral quality actually represents a better outcome for the electors of Broseley.

Easthope, Shipton & Stanton Long Parish Council have expressed the view that they wish to remain in the Much Wenlock division and my oral submission to the 2018 parliamentary hearing in Shrewsbury about the synergy between the Corvedale and Much Wenlock found favour with the commissioners. For the most part, shopping, worship, education, professional services etc, in Much Wenlock serve these communities.

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## Attached Documents:

*None attached*