

Worcestershire

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

Comment text:

Please find attached the comment from our Parish in respect of the above review.

As we wish to object to the proposal being made in respect of our County Divisional area, and the effect on our parish, we would appreciate your kind acknowledgment of this important email, and safe receipt of our comment, in which we have suggested alternatives to the boundary reviews being proposed.

Attached Documents:

- proposed-comment-to-boundary-commission-re-electoral-review-rev-b_0.pdf



KIDDERMINSTER FOREIGN PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: *Mrs E. Whitehouse*

Boundary Commission for Electoral Review of Worcestershire County Council

This Parish Council would **object** to the Boundary Commissions Review, and Proposals relating to this parish for the following reasons:

- The Parish Council are in the process of requesting Wyre Forest District Council for a Community Governance Review, (CGR) to move the parish boundary, and in effect, to take out of this parish the new development at Low Habberley of some 120 houses, currently being constructed. The Parish Council feel that this development is incongruous with the rest of the Parish of Kidderminster Foreign which is essentially rural in nature, and the residents of this new development would feel more akin with the neighbouring town of Kidderminster. We will be requesting that the Community Governance Review put this development, up to its new boundary hedgerow at the northern edge into the Kidderminster Town Area.
- Once effected, this CGR will have an effect on the projected 2029 numbers for the parish of Kidderminster Foreign in the Boundary Commission County Divisional Report, with a high percentage of electorate being taken out of the parish as a whole, meaning that there may now be no necessity for it to be warded, to which the Parish wish to **strongly object**. The Parish Council wish to retain the whole parish as one entity, without warding, and divisional split, and retain the current status with 7 parish councillors representing one entire rural parish in one County Ward Division and one County Councillor.
- The essential problem for the county voting districts is that the forecast numbers for the 'Bewdley' district are low (-12%). In order to boost these numbers, the Boundary Commission has to move some voters from the adjacent district of 'Cookley Wolverley & Wribbenhall' into the 'Bewdley' district.
- In order to do this, the Boundary Commission have suggested splitting Kidderminster Foreign into two wards, with one of these being allocated to 'Bewdley' district and the other to remain with 'Cookley, Wolverley & Wribbenhall'. This solves the numbers problem, but generates significant issues for Kidderminster Foreign, in that our small parish will have two County Councillors, each representing different parts of our parish.
- Our alternative suggestion to resolve the numbers problem is to move the existing ward boundary between 'Bewdley East' and 'Bewdley Wribbenhall'. This would add the residential part of Bewdley that is on the east side of the river to the 'Bewdley East' ward. 'Bewdley Wribbenhall' ward then becomes simply 'Wribbenhall'. The boundary between the two wards would move from the River Severn to the Severn Valley Railway line and A456. The fact that the numbers in 'Bewdley East' ward have increased will give the 'Bewdley' district the additional numbers it needs for the county voting.
- The solution has the additional benefits of uniting the areas of Bewdley East town and simultaneously providing Wribbenhall with its own ward. No new wards need to be created – just a movement of a ward boundary. The attached map shows the proposed move – the current ward boundary is the red line, the revised boundary is blue.

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- When the Community Governance Review is completed by District, (and we see no reason why this could not take place quite quickly, as all parties concerned seem to think it a reasonable request, and to make sense in respect of governance), we would respectfully suggest that the Commission also considers taking this housing development out of the Cookley, Wolverley and Wribbenhall Division (which is also essentially rural in nature) and add the new electoral numbers from the Low Habberley development into the St. Barnabas Division of Kidderminster, which for 2029 is projected at a dangerously low -10% variance. Not only do we feel that this would sit more comfortably with the nature of the areas represented, but it would also help projected electoral County Divisional variance numbers and be in congruity with the neighbouring Ferndale and Habberley estates of Kidderminster. We feel that therefore we should draw the Commission's attention to this suggestion, whilst the Community Governance Review is being sought, since this will affect the County Divisional boundary and projected numbers of not only Cookley, Wolverley and Wribbenhall, but also St. Barnabas if our recommendations are upheld whilst County Divisional wards are being reviewed.
- Also, this reduction in projected numbers for 2029 for the parish plus the solutions to this outlined above should negate the necessity to ward the parish, with numbers to boost bordering Divisional sections being sought more appropriately from elsewhere.



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Bewdley Town Council Wards

E. Whitehouse
 Clerk and RFO
 Kidderminster Foreign Parish Council

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