

Malvern Hills District Council

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Organisation Name: Malvern Hills District Council and Little Malvern and Welland Parish Council

Comment text:

I am a member of Malvern Hills District Council and of Little Malvern and Welland Parish Council and am making this representation for myself, not expressing the views of either body. As an Independent member of the District Council and as Chair of the Council's policy group on Governance I am aware of the Independent Councillors' submission to The Commission, a copy of which is included in the attached file for reference. In general, I am supportive of the broad thrust of that submission but the attached file proposes some variations related to the rural wards in my area. Mick Davies 7th September 2021

Uploaded Documents:

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BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW

Comments from Mick Davies – MHDC Member for Morton Ward. 2021 09 07

Context

These representations are made in the context of the Independent Councillors' Submission dated 23/06/2021, a copy of which is appended here.

Principal Concern

The proposal to combine Malvern Wells and Morton in a single ward with two members may be arithmetically tidy but it does create a deal of anxiety about the cohesion and integrity of two communities that are, and have been for many years, geographically and culturally remote.

The distinctions are obvious in the topographical and meteorological sense with elevation, climate differences, disparate concerns with drainage and flooding and the influence that differing landscape character designations have on the everyday lives and outlooks of residents.

It is also true that the reasons for the original creation of Malvern South, now Malvern Wells, continue to be valid in a parish with strong urban associations. Residents there relate much more closely with Great Malvern than do those from the lowland parishes of Welland, Castlemorton and Birtsmorton who connect much more readily with facilities and towns to the south and west.

I have not detected any active community relationship between Morton and Malvern Wells but maybe my antennae don't extend too far up hill. My own informal soundings of the Malvern Wells population indicate that they too feel no relationship between two areas.

My antennae, and direct conversations with thoughtful and engaged members of the Morton communities, do confirm that constituents have a strong preference for the accountability delivered by a single member who they alone elect to represent them alone. Joint members elected by a larger and less cohesive constituency clearly compromises that preference. Residents in rural Castlemorton particularly feel their democratic position threatened by the prospect of two ward members being elected by a numerically dominant urban electorate.

Welland, with its boom in housing in recent years, may be less sensitive to that threat but nevertheless its residents consider themselves rural. The first paragraph in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan Vision reads: "By 2041 Welland will be a thriving rural village. Its relationship to the open countryside and the Malvern Hills is integral to its unique and special charm."

Where circumstances absolutely preclude a single member constituency it may be expedient to default to multiple members but complying with arbitrary arithmetic guidelines is not a good reason for such a compromise.

Alternative proposal

Given the concerns expressed above I propose the following amendments to the Independent Councillors' Submission.

- Retain the current Morton ward as a single member ward but add Little Malvern.
- Retain the current Longdon ward as is.
- Retain the current Malvern Wells ward, less Little Malvern, as a single member ward.

This will result in the table modified thus....(Changes in RED)

Name of Ward	Cllrs	Electorate 2027	Variance 2027 Average = 2256 Electors	Parish/ Town Council(s)
Baldwin	1	2195	-3%	Astley; Holt; Shrawley; Little Witley
Broadheath & Hallow	2	4447	-1%	Broadwas & Cotheridge; Grimley; Hallow; Lower Broadheath
Kempsey	2	4751	5%	Kempsey; Severn Stoke & Croome D'Abitot
Leigh & Rushwick	2	4780	6%	Alfrick & Lulsley; Leigh & Bransford; Rushwick; Suckley
Lindridge	1	2259	0%	Bayton; Knighton-on-Teme; Lindridge; Mamble; Pensax; Stockton-on-Teme
Longdon	1	2096 1755	-7% -22%	Berrow; Birtsmorton ; Bushley; Eldersfield; Longdon, Queenhill & Holdfast; Pendock
Martley & Teme Valley	2	4647	3%	Abberley; Clifton-Upon-Teme; Great Witley & Hillhampton; Kenswick & Wichenford; Knightwick & Doddenham (but see Exceptional Case section below); Lower Sapey; Martley; The Shelsleys
Morton	1	2062	-8.6%	Birtsmorton Castlemorton Little Malvern Welland
Powick & Hanley	2	4719	5%	Guarlford; Hanley Castle; Madresfield; Powick
Tenbury	2	4182	-7%	Eastham; Hanley; Rochford; Stanford with Orleton; Stoke Bliss, Kyre & Bockleton; Tenbury
Upton & Ripple	2	4306	-5%	Earls Croome; Hill Croome; Ripple; Ripple (HG); Upton upon Severn
Wells & Morton	2 1	4520 2699	0% +19.6%	Castlemorton ; Malvern Wells; Welland

Notes on Alternative Proposal

- The proposal to include Little Malvern (37 electors) in Morton ward is consistent with there already being a joint Parish Council (Little Malvern and Welland) and that there is very little association between Little Malvern and Malvern Wells. Indeed, Little Malvern is not included in the emerging Malvern Wells Neighbourhood Development Plan. (Although it is not in the Welland Neighbourhood Plan either!)
- For Malvern Wells, the resulting +19.6% against average elector numbers is substantially above the target +/- 10% but in time that number will normalise. All of Malvern Wells is within the AONB where major development is proscribed so population growth will be impeded, a factor that may not have been considered in the ~6% population growth forecast from 2021 to 2027, equivalent to 150 new electors.
- In the Malvern Wells urban context it may be appropriate to marginally reduce the Malvern Wells ward electorate by redrawing the boundary or boundaries with other Malvern urban wards.
- Longdon would remain well below the average voter numbers but that may be an acceptable, exceptional deviation from the norm for this geographically extensive ward (61 km²) covering 7 parishes.
- Transferring Birtsmorton to the Longdon ward from Morton would reduce the Longdon shortfall to 11.5% and increase the Morton shortfall to 19.3%.
That may be an option but it seems that a c.20% shortfall somewhere is a consequence of addressing the Principal Concern set out above as it applies to these precious rural communities.

Conclusion

I am supportive of the Warding Pattern proposals set out in the Independent Councillors' Submission dated 23/06/2021 with the exceptions set out above and I am making this representation to the Boundary Commission for consideration.

Mick Davies

2021 09 07

Malvern Hills District Council – Boundary Commission Review 2021

Independent Councillors' Submission

Introduction & Principles

We are pleased to submit our group's proposals for re-ordering MHDC's wards. The following core principles have been used:

- A distinction is maintained between Malvern's urban wards and the rural wards, with one exception (Newland)
- Major rivers (Severn & Teme) form ward boundaries, except where there is a road bridge
- Parishes are not split between new wards, though one might be considered (Knightwick)
- Two member wards have been preferred as a standard across the District

These principles have been used to create 17 wards, 6 in Malvern Town (as now) and 11 in the rural parts of MHDC. The number of councillors splits 12 to Malvern Town and 19 to rural wards, very closely aligned to the split of electors between the two, as projected for 2027. The exact split would be 11.98 against 19.02, assuming Newland is deemed part of the Malvern Town area.

Any questions about this submission should be directed to Councillor Peter Whatley using the contact details available on MHDC's website.

Malvern Town area

We propose that six wards are maintained, each with two ward councillors. Other than the Malvern Hills themselves, there are no obvious boundary markers within the urban area. The railway line is currently used in part as a boundary, but it is a highly permeable barrier for most of its length.

Newland rural parish is proposed for incorporation into Malvern's urban area. This reflects both difficulty in placing it in a nearby rural area without causing an imbalance and the known proposals for extensive development in the parish that will, inevitably, cause it to become physically and logically part of the urban area.

For Malvern's urban area, the following changes are proposed:

<u>Ward Name</u>	<u>Changes</u>
Chase 2 councillors 4736 electors +5% variation	Yields properties to Priory Ward on: Avenue Road between current boundary and Barnards Green roundabout Beacon Grange (all) Cameron Close (all) Chestnut Court (all) Christ Church Road (all) Clarence Close (all) Court Gardens (all) Court Road (from No.7 to junction with St Andrews/ Thirlstaine Roads) Fraser Close (all) Manby Road (all) Percy Walton Close (all) Spencer Drive (all) St Andrews Close (all) St Andrews Road (No.1 to No 50/50a/50b)

	<p>Thorngrove Road (all)</p> <p>Woodshears Road (between current boundary and Court Road)</p>
<p>Dyson Perrins</p> <p>2 councillors</p> <p>4326 electors</p> <p>-4% variation</p>	Gains properties from Link Ward as described below
<p>Link</p> <p>2 councillors</p> <p>4736 electors</p> <p>+5% variation</p>	<p>Gains Newland parish from Powick</p> <p>Yields properties as follows:</p> <p>Dyson Perrins Ward:</p> <p>Albert Park Road (all between Somers Park Avenue and Queen's Road/ Quest Hills Road)</p> <p>Church Road (all west of railway line)</p> <p>Frederick Road (all)</p> <p>Howsell Road (Nos 40-56 & 39(exc)-61)</p> <p>Lower Quest Hills Road (all)</p> <p>Quest Hills Road (all)</p> <p>Priory:</p> <p>62/64 Moorlands Road. These properties are an electoral oddity, currently isolated from the rest of the road by the electoral boundary along the railway line.</p> <p>West:</p> <p>Alexandra Lane (all)</p> <p>Alexandra Mews (all)</p> <p>Alexandra Road (all)</p> <p>Albert Park Road (from Worcester Road to junction with Queen's Road/ Quest Hills Road)</p> <p>Albert Park Mews (all)</p> <p>Carlton Road (all)</p> <p>Highfield Road (No.1 only)</p> <p>Jenny Lind Grove (all)</p> <p>Laburnum Walk (all)</p> <p>Worcester Road (Nos 101-Morgan Court)</p>
<p>Pickersleigh</p> <p>2 councillors</p> <p>4798 electors</p> <p>+6% variation</p>	None
<p>Priory</p> <p>2 councillors</p> <p>4280 electors</p> <p>-5% variation</p>	Gains properties from Chase Ward as described above, plus 62/64 Moorlands Road from Link Ward as above
<p>West</p> <p>2 councillors</p> <p>4166 electors</p> <p>-8% variation</p>	Gains properties from Link Ward as described above

Rural Wards

We propose 11 wards as tabled below. A more detailed description of the new wards and underlying logic in their creation follows the table:

Name of Ward	Cllrs	Electorate 2027	Variance 2027	Parish/ Town Council(s)
Baldwin	1	2195	-3%	Astley; Holt; Shrawley; Little Witley
Broadheath & Hallow	2	4447	-1%	Broadwas & Cotheridge; Grimley; Hallow; Lower Broadheath
Kempsey	2	4751	5%	Kempsey; Severn Stoke & Croome D'Abitot
Leigh & Rushwick	2	4780	6%	Alfrick & Lulsley; Leigh & Bransford; Rushwick; Suckley
Lindridge	1	2259	0%	Bayton; Knighton-on-Teme; Lindridge; Mamble; Pensax; Stockton-on-Teme
Longdon	1	2096	-7%	Berrow; Birtsmorton; Bushley; Eldersfield; Longdon, Queenhill & Holdfast; Pendock
Martley & Teme Valley	2	4647	3%	Abberley; Clifton-Upon-Teme; Great Witley & Hillhampton; Kenswick & Wichenford; Knightwick & Doddenham (but see Exceptional Case section below); Lower Sapey; Martley; The Shelsleys
Powick & Hanley	2	4719	5%	Guarlford; Hanley Castle; Madresfield; Powick
Tenbury	2	4182	-7%	Eastham; Hanley; Rochford; Stanford with Orleton; Stoke Bliss, Kyre & Bockleton; Tenbury
Upton & Ripple	2	4306	-5%	Earls Croome; Hill Croome; Ripple; Ripple (HG); Upton upon Severn
Wells & Morton	2	4520	0%	Castlemorton; Malvern Wells; Welland

- Baldwin – the current ward plus Little Witley
- Broadheath & Hallow – existing Broadheath and Hallow wards combined, minus Rushwick.
- Kempsey – unchanged
- Leigh & Rushwick – The current Alfrick & Leigh ward, minus Knightwick & Doddenham parish, but plus Rushwick. The current ward is cross-Teme at Knightwick bridge: the proposed one at Bransford bridge. The new ward would better reflect the main local travel corridor for both car traffic and the limited bus service within the ward.
- Lindridge – the current ward, plus Pensax parish, the Teme forming the southern boundary
- Longdon – the current ward, plus Birtsmorton parish
- Martley & Teme Valley – Formed from the existing Martley ward, plus a majority of Woodbury ward and the eastern half of Teme Valley ward. The combined parish of Knightwick and Doddenham is also included from the current Alfrick & Leigh ward. Doddenham is a good fit, being north of the River Teme and resolving a complex ward

boundary that today splits the community at the summit of Ankerdine Hill. Knightwick is a debatable fit as outlined under the Exceptional Cases section. Although the new ward has a large geographic extent, the electorate is concentrated in a more limited area and the ward shape reflects main traffic arteries. There are two bridges across the Teme, connecting Martley directly to parishes south of the river.

- Powick & Hanley – the existing Powick ward, plus Hanley Castle parish, but minus Newland parish
- Tenbury – the existing ward, plus the western half of today's Teme Valley ward, the Teme forming the northern boundary.
- Upton & Ripple – the current Ripple ward, linked to the urban part of Upton-upon-Severn, a major crossing point of the Severn. There is an obvious linkage between communities either side of the Severn, with all major shopping and commercial facilities in Upton.
- Wells & Morton – the current Wells and Morton wards combined, but minus Birtsmorton.

Exceptional Case

Knightwick may be considered a potential exception to the core principles described.

Knightwick lies south of the River Teme and has a small population (2027 = 93 or 29% of the combined parish of Knightwick & Doddenham) that mainly lives close to the boundary with Suckley. The parish is considered by local councillors to be more closely aligned with Suckley for most purposes (shopping, worship, schooling) than parishes north of the Teme. Were Knightwick to form part of the new Leigh & Rushwick ward, that ward and the proposed Martley & Teme Valley ward would have the following characteristics:

Name of Ward	Cllrs	Electorate 2027	Variance 2027
Martley & Teme Valley (without Knightwick)	2	4554	1%
Leigh & Rushwick (with Knightwick)	2	4873	8%