

Rossendale Borough Council

Personal Details:

Name:

E-mail:

Postcode:

Organisation Name:

Comment text:

We are residents of the Facit and Shawforth ward in Whitworth and are against losing the Shawforth section of the ward. From our understanding, it would appear that the proposal to encompass Shawforth within the Irwell boundary has come from our Lancashire County Councillor who does not live in Whitworth but in another part of Rossendale some 9.5 miles away. I am sure he understands the sense of community within our town but perhaps he doesn't experience it as we residents do. The four and a half mile stretch of main road which runs from Healey Corner in the south to Britannia stones in the north, demarcated at both ends by 'Welcome to Whitworth' signs, incorporates many facilities all residents utilise . Apart from shops, a medical centre, four primary and one secondary school, there is a museum, a sports centre and swimming pool, a Civic Centre, a library and beautiful Memorial Gardens with a cenotaph commemorating the lives of men from Whitworth, including Shawforth, lost in combat. These areas unite the people of the town and are used to hold celebrations and events such as Museum Open Days, regular children's activities at the library, Brass Band and Christmas concerts at the civic centre, Annual Sports' Week activities at the sports centre, a Skyline Walk which currently has an important pit stop in Shawforth and Armistice Day services at the Memorial Gardens. There are also events with great historical significance such as the annual Rushcart festival held in September when local traditions are maintained. Our town council's Tourism and Leisure Committee put a lot of time and effort into arranging this. If we lose Shawforth, we may well lose some of the councillors involved in promoting these special days. Primarily, these are times when the people of all of Whitworth come together as a homogenous group, enjoying events that we appreciate are organised by members of the community for members of the community. That is the way things work in Whitworth. In our ward, we feel very fortunate to be served by councillors who are also neighbours. They live amongst us, not miles away, and know and understand our issues. Should Shawforth be amalgamated with Irwell council, is there any guarantee under the new ruling that the residents will be as well represented as they currently are given that Shawforth, geographically, will be totally on the periphery of the new ward? We are also concerned about the allocation of places for pupils living in Shawforth at Whitworth Community High School. . Might they be disadvantaged if they come from Irwell rather than Whitworth? If that did turn out to be the case, their journey time to school would be doubled and their involvement in the local community would be diminished. Rossendale Borough Council states on its 'Have your say on council changes' page on its website, « Help us draw up a new pattern of wards that reflects local communities'. We already have one! If the emphasis is on developing a cohesive and supportive community with effective, caring councillors and a Town Clerk who has a finger on the pulse of the current wards, then we cannot understand the need for change, especially as it appears the number of electors over the newly stipulated mark is only 11%. It seems unfair that due to welcoming the building of two new housing estates in the central part of the town (Healey and Whitworth ward) and absorbing the extra population created there, the north side of the town should bear the brunt of the new proposals. We are the lucky ones: we will remain in the Whitworth ward and continue to feel we are part of an energetic, caring and ultimately thriving community. We hope our arguments will be taken into consideration and residents of Shawforth will feel as lucky as us when the decision is made next summer.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded