

Fenland District Council

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Comment text:

Further to the previous submission by Parson Drove Parish Council we write again to confirm our opposition to the proposed boundary changes to the wards of Fenland District Council (FDC). We have been provided with a copy of Wisbech St Mary Parish Council's objection and fully support the points made. Parson Drove Parish Council are opposed to the proposed break – up of the existing Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary ward and have grave concerns as to the impact this will have, particularly for the village of Murrow and the Parishioners who will be affected. Parson Drove Parish Council are extremely disappointed that our previous comments have not been taken on board and the LGBCE are proposing to take forward the FDC proposal, which was not consulted on prior to submission. It appears that the LGBCE has favoured the views of Wisbech Town Council, which is resulting in the need to drastically change the existing ward boundaries, just to meet the electoral equality criteria, but disregarding the other criteria on community identity and good local governance. We question why you have taken Wisbech Town Council views on another municipal area i.e., Leverington Parish without obtaining the view of Leverington Parish Council? The Parish Council believe a 41-member FDC ward scheme should be considered as this will allow the rural warding scheme, that currently works and is effective can be maintained. This would comply with the LGBCE criteria regarding electoral variance. This would then allow the warding arrangements for the Towns of Chatteris and Whittlesey to be amended to count for future growth. The proposed warding scheme does not respect the current community cohesion and identity across the Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary ward. There is a strong sense of community across the villages of Murrow and Parson Drove, where many residents and community groups operate. With the villages being approx. a mile apart there is a high level of interaction between the communities. This also includes a high proportion of family connections. Many residents of Murrow also use the facilities in Parson Drove such as the Church, Graveyard, Post Office, Pubs, and shop. There are also a number of children that attend the primary schools in the next village due to proximity. There is a considerable proportion of the population in Murrow who live within the Parish boundary of Parson Drove, as highlighted by the previous submission. The examples of community groups are contained in the submission by Wisbech St Mary Parish Council, which Parson Drove Parish Council fully endorse. However, for completeness the examples are:

- Royal British Legion branch covers Parson Drove and Murrow, who organise Remembrance Sunday ceremonies and poppy appeal collection across the two villages.
- Murrow Book Café has a large cross over of residents from both villages
- Parochial Church Council covers Parson Drove and Murrow, Murrow residents are buried in the churchyard at Parson Drove
- Community Speed Watch operates across both Parishes
- Street Pride Groups co-operate closely across the Parishes, helping at events in different villages.
- The John Bends Charities operate across the Parishes
- Village Hall Committees work closely together co-ordinating events. Parson Drove Village Hall has a coffee morning where residents of Parson Drove and Murrow meet.
- Friends of the Cage have volunteers from Parson Drove and Murrow
- Village Voices magazine predominantly cover the Parishes of Wisbech St Mary and Parson Drove
- Parson Drove Car Show has volunteers that are from both Parishes.
- We would like to add that the Doctors Surgery and Pharmacy are located in Parson Drove which serves many residents in the Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary ward

Parson Drove Parish Council also consider that the new ward will lead to poor local government outcomes. The road connections across the proposed ward are poor and there is a lack of public transport that travels across the area. The new ward would have poor road connections leading to it taking considerable time to travel across. This is in direct contrast to the existing ward which has a good network of roads across it. There is also a better provision of public transport across the existing ward of Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary. As per the previous submission there is close working relationship between Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary Parish Councils which has been fostered over a long period of time. By adopting the new proposed ward this will jeopardise this arrangement and envisage over time the relationship will

diminish. This relationship has been facilitated by District Cllrs for many years. It should also be noted that Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary ward has been identified as an area of multiple deprivation in the past due to rural isolation, poor health outcomes and education. If the split of the existing ward occurs there is a danger that the area may not receive additional support normally allocated to these wards, as the issues may be diluted from a statistical reporting perspective, if combined with better performing areas. This would also lead to poor local government outcomes, as the issues will still exist, but not receive the required support. We would like to reiterate the examples of projects between the Parish Councils • Many Local Highways Initiative schemes submitted to the County Council to provide better infrastructure and road safety improvements. • A drain side walkway between the villages of Parson Drove and Murrow is progressing to facilitate a safe walking environment between the villages. It is envisaged that many residents of Murrow will use the walkway to access facilities in Parson Drove. • Citizen Advice Bureau outreach sessions have been jointly funded • Contribution to the maintenance of Parson Drove Churchyard which is also used by Murrow residents • Parish Councillor Training Sessions covering both Parish Councils • Streetlighting agreements and research • Admin support between the two Parish Councils sharing knowledge • Information sharing on various projects and schemes such as bin replacements, street lighting, grass cutting, etc.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded