

Mansfield, Simon

From: Church Aston Parish Council <churchaston@gmail.com>
Sent: 23 July 2021 15:03
To: Rutherford, Tom
Cc: reviews; [REDACTED]
Subject: Consultation Response to LGBCe Electoral Review of Telford & Wrekin Borough
Attachments: LGBCe - Consultation Response (draft v.6).pdf; LGBC Appendix 2 (final).pdf

Dear Mr Rutherford,

Please find attached (2 documents) a consultation response submitted on behalf of Church Aston PC in respect of the electoral review of Telford & Wrekin Borough.

If you require an explanation of any point please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Mike Atherton
Clerk to Church Aston Parish Council
Tel: [REDACTED]
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Fao: Mr Tom Rutherford
LGBCE Review Manager
reviews@lgbce.org.uk
tom.rutherford@lgbce.org.uk



23rd July 2021

Dear Mr Rutherford,

Ref: Electoral Review of Telford & Wrekin (Stage 2 – Warding)

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to Stage 2 of the electoral review of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin.

As you know, Church Aston PC has followed Stage 1 (sizing) of the review with great interest. We fully support findings of the LGBCE to retain the total number of Borough Councillors at 54 for a range of reasons including advances in technology and communications, improved reporting arrangements, and an evolving commissioning role for local government with less emphasis on direct provision of services.

In responding to Stage 2 (warding) of the review we have had regard to the 3 governing criteria of the LGBCE.

Additionally, we have tried to set out our views in the context of a growing borough – noting that whilst Telford is a regional growth point there has also been substantial housing growth over the past 5 years in and around the market town of Newport. The ripple effect for electoral wards emanating from growth in Telford will need to achieve equilibrium when it meets a similar effect from Newport.

It is with this latter point in mind that our substantive comments focus on balancing the impact in electoral terms of housing growth within the Newport wards and with growth in neighbouring wards, and specifically the Church Aston & Lilleshall ward.

Criteria 1 – Electoral Equality

We fully endorse in principle the LGBCE recommendations to increase the average number of electors per Councillor from the current 2,454 to ~2,719 by 2027.

We are aware of the final published copy of the T&WC electorate pro-forma - revised 03 (Spreadsheet) as reported to the Council's Boundary Review Committee on 3/6/21, which has been posted on the LGBCE website.

Michael Atherton
Clerk to Church Aston Parish Council
c/o [REDACTED]

However, insofar as Newport and neighbouring wards are concerned, the above spreadsheet appears to include only housing developments that were committed at the start of the electoral review and specifically appear to exclude (or significantly under-state) proposals to develop ~350 new homes on land to the west of Station Road, Newport (which is primarily in the Parish of Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote. These are shown incorrectly on the T&WC electorate pro-forma as within Newport Town Council South {Polling District WNS}).

We have therefore carried out our own assessment which is attached at **Appendix 1**.

If the Polling District WNV (132 electors) and the Bloor Homes development of 60 houses, equivalent to 110+ voters, (shown as the area bounded in pale blue on **Appendix 2**) are built into the Church Aston Parish figures for 2027, then Church Aston & Lilleshall Borough Ward would have 2719 electors (the same as the forecast Borough-wide ward average).

We acknowledge that our calculations must also work for the Newport electoral wards, especially Newport (S&E). **Appendix 1** shows that the Newport (S&E) ward will have 5,249 electors (2,625 voters per ward Cllr) by 2027. However, we contend that the T&WC figures are understated particularly in relation to the latest layout for the Bloor Homes development site located to the west of Station Road where 184 homes are planned alongside a 70 place extra-care development.

Given that Bloor Homes are in advanced discussions with T&WC planners and they intend submitting a planning application for this site in July / August 2021, it is highly likely that the development will be complete, or at least substantially built-out, by 2027 with circa 440 new voters.

The above Bloor Homes development will increase the number of voters in Newport (S&E) to 2,845 per ward Councillor or about 4.6% over the LGBCE target average which is within the LGBCE stated 'plus or minus 10% maximum variance'.

In addition, there are several new housing development sites already emerging including an extension to the Plough Lane site (Gallier's development), completion of the Royal Victoria Hotel apartments, land to the east of Station Road, and a number of infill sites that will further increase the total number of electors in Newport (N&W) and Newport (S&E) wards.

There will, of course, be scope to re-align the ward boundary between Newport (N&W) and Newport (S&E) wards to address any internal imbalance, and to reallocate excess voters across the 4 Newport borough Councillors.

Criteria 2 – Community Interests & Identity

The Church Aston & Lilleshall Ward is made up primarily of three parishes (Lilleshall Parish, Church Aston Parish and Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote Parish). Church Aston & Lilleshall are well-populated villages with rural surroundings whereas Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote is more sparsely populated.

Michael Atherton
Clerk to Church Aston Parish Council
c/o [REDACTED]

The village of Church Aston dates from the 10th century (pre-Norman, and pre-Newport) and has a distinct centre with St. Andrew's Church, Church Aston Infants' School, a Village Hall and a Church Hall providing a focus for the current day community.

St. Andrew's Church draws its congregation primarily from the communities of Church Aston and neighbouring Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote. Similarly, the village hall located in Church Aston village is aptly named *Church and Chetwynd Aston Village Hall*.

Whilst a large majority of electors from Church Aston village currently vote in the Church Aston & Lilleshall ward, a small number of Church Aston Parishioners (WNV electoral roll) vote in the Newport (S&E) ward – see **Appendix 2**.

We contend that significant housing growth in Newport, especially to the south of the town, has created an opportunity to achieve the target figures of electors in both Newport (N&W) and Newport (S&E) wards – providing an opportunity to correct the WNV anomaly by returning these 132 electors back into the Church Aston & Lilleshall ward.

The grounds for making this claim are that Church Aston parishioners living in Mulberry Close, Primrose Drive, Richmond Close and Nos 45 to 90 Wallshead Way (WNV) associate more strongly with Church Aston than Newport:-

- The polling station in Church Aston is geographically closer for even the most distant of these residents than their current polling station at Newport Bowling Club;
- Proximity of St. Andrew's Church, the Village Hall and the Church Hall are closer for all of these residents than alternative facilities in Newport;
- A very committed Church Aston Parish Councillor, who has recently retired due to ill-health, lives in the WNV catchment of Wallshead Way – both complicating and compromising lines of communications with former Parish Council colleagues, the Church Aston & Lilleshall ward Councillor and a Newport (S&E) ward Councillor who she and neighbours are required to vote for in a borough election;
- The longstanding Chairwoman of Church Aston Gardening & Horticultural Society resides in Richmond Close (WNV);
- The Chairman and his wife who are the driving force behind Church Aston Thursday Club (a popular organisation for older citizens) which is based in the Village Hall live in Oak Avenue – that's just beyond the Church Aston Parish boundary but clearly reflects an association with the village and its facilities;
- The Village Hall provides a facility for annual flu vaccines for local people and draws people from the village but also from adjacent parts of Newport (Brookside Avenue, Springfield Avenue, Oak Avenue, Juniper Close, etc.).

Criteria 3 – Effective Local Governance

Creating a coterminous boundary between the electoral ward and the parish area by returning the 132 electors (WNV) who currently vote for Newport Borough Cllrs back into the Church Aston & Lilleshall Ward makes sense because it removes an electoral anomaly both for residents and for the Borough Cllr representing them.

Michael Atherton

Clerk to Church Aston Parish Council

c/o

All of the above 132 electors live closer to the polling station ordinarily provided in the Village Hall or Church Hall than they do to their current polling station at Newport Bowls Club. This is particularly important because the 2011 census shows that Church Aston Parish has a proportionately older population with one in six people having a long-term limiting illness and 11% not having access to a car.

Whereas the Borough Councillor for Church Aston & Lilleshall regularly attends each of the three Parish Council meetings in his electoral ward, neither of the Borough Councillors for Newport (S&E) ward have attended meetings of Church Aston Parish Council for at least eight years i.e voters in WNV polling district are not properly represented by their Borough Councillor at Parish Council meetings at present.

Evidence supporting this *democratic flaw* can be observed by reference to the published minutes of Church Aston PC ([Minutes - Church Aston Parish Council \(churchaston-pc.gov.uk\)](http://churchaston-pc.gov.uk)) where there is no record of a Newport (S&E) Borough Councillor attending a Church Aston PC meeting since on-line records started.

In conclusion, Church Aston Parish Council believes there is a compelling case for returning WNV voters back into the Church Aston & Lilleshall electoral ward.

We also contend that the triangular piece of land shown edged in pale blue on **Appendix 2** should remain in the Church Aston & Lilleshall electoral ward in order to help balance out the effects of new developments in Newport (S&E) ward and Church Aston & Lilleshall ward.

Retention of the area of land referred to above is consistent with returning WNV voters back into the Church Aston & Lilleshall electoral ward.

Thank you again for the opportunity to input into the electoral review process.

Yours faithfully

Simon J Stacey (electronic)

Simon J Stacey
Chairman: Church Aston PC

Michael Atherton
Clerk to Church Aston Parish Council
c/o [REDACTED]

APPENDIX 1

Extract from T&W Electorate Pro-forma – revised (03) @ 3/6/21

	<i>Electors 2020</i> (% diff Boro av.)		<i>Electors 2027</i> (% diff Boro av.)	<i>Difference</i>
<i>Borough Wards</i>				
Church Aston & Lilleshall	2477	(+1%)	2577 (-5%)	100
Newport South & East	4507	(- 9%)	5249 (- 3%)	742
Borough wide average per ward	2464		2719	
<i>Parishes (Polling Districts)</i>				
CAPC (WCA)	941		990	49*
CA&WPC (WCC)	392		396	4#
Lilleshall (WCJ)	1144		1191	47
Total: Church Aston & Lilleshall Ward	2477		2577	100
Newport Town Council East (WNE)	2095		2183	88
Newport Town Council South (WNS) 654~	2208		2862	
CAPC (WNV) (3 cul de sacs)	123		132	9
CA&WPC (WSS) (Station Rd)	81		72	- 9?
Total: Newport South & East Ward	4507		5249	742

* This figure looks too low on the basis that Bloor Homes latest proposed site shows 60 houses (c110+ electors?) in CAPC 'triangle' between The Folly public bridle path and back of Mulberry/Oak/Richmond cul de sacs)

This figure looks too low as it is not showing any of the Bloor Homes development within CA&WPC area whereas latest site layout showing 184 houses and 70 extra care places (c 500+ electors)

~ Bulk of Bloor Homes development shown incorrectly as being within Newport Town Council South Ward, whereas only 57 houses (c114+ electors) shown on latest site layout (in the 'Round Field next to the Baddely's Wells pumping station)

Michael Atherton
Clerk to Church Aston Parish Council
 c/o [REDACTED]

NB

If we include Polling District WNV (132 electors) and the Bloor development of 60 houses (110+ electors) in figures for 2027, then Church Aston & Lilleshall Borough Ward would have 2719 electors (the same as the forecast Borough-wide ward average).

Michael Atherton
Clerk to Church Aston Parish Council
c/o [REDACTED]

Newport South and East Ward

