

Wychavon District Council

Personal Details:

Name: Mark Goodge

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Postcode: WR11 1BX

Organisation Name:

Comment text:

Attached is a submission to the boundary review for Wychavon District Council. Please note that, although I am a member of both Wychavon District Council and Evesham Town Council, this submission represents my personal opinion and does not necessarily coincide with that of either authority or of any other councillor.

Uploaded Documents:

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Submission to LGBCE review for Wychavon District Council

This submission is not an attempt to propose a full warding pattern for the entire district. It merely covers some salient points regarding ward boundaries in and around the town of Evesham.

Currently, outer ward boundaries follow the external boundaries of the parish of Evesham. While normally desirable, growth of the Evesham built-up area beyond the parish boundaries has created some anomalies.

In particular, the new development known as “The Orchards”, off Offenham Road, straddles the existing border between the parishes of Evesham and Aldington. This has led to a situation where a single street (Sunset Way) alternates between parishes, and hence wards, in the space of a few hundred yards. It also creates a situation where parts of the new developments are in a parish and ward that differ from the natural sense of community to which they belong. And finally, it has created a situation which breaks the principle that all parts of a ward should be accessible from each other by road without leaving the ward (paragraph 4.64 of your technical guidance). Bringing this development, together with The Parks and the developments off it, within the replacement for Bengeworth ward would make far more sense.

While not so egregious an example, the urban extent of Evesham has, for some time, extended northwards along Greenhill and Twyford Bank beyond the parish boundary.

Although not a residential area, and therefore not directly relevant as far as elector numbers are concerned, the new location of Evesham United Football Club and its associated grounds are outside the parish of Evesham and therefore in a non-Evesham ward. This is also less than ideal.

Recommendation: Outer ward boundaries should follow the residential and commercial extent of Evesham where this extends beyond the parish boundaries.

Currently, one ward (Bengeworth) crosses the River Avon. This has, for a long time, been a source of confusion to local residents, partly because the river forms a natural boundary that people would expect ward boundaries to adhere to, but also because the ward name refers specifically to the historic town of Bengeworth which is distinct from the historic town of Evesham on the other side of the river. For parts of Evesham town centre to be in Bengeworth ward is non-intuitive and contrary to local history.

As well as the River Avon, the River Isbourne also forms a natural boundary. Historically, it separates the towns of Great and Little Hampton, and is currently the location of a local planning policy strategic gap to preserve this separation. Ward boundaries currently follow the River Isbourne, which is generally correct. However, there is one residential property, Hampton Mill, which is on the west of the river and hence in Great Hampton ward but is only accessible by road from the east, crossing the river from Little Hampton ward. This, too, breaks the principle that all parts of a ward should be accessible by road without leaving the ward.

Recommendation: Ward boundaries should follow the centre line of the main channel of the River Avon, without exception. Ward boundaries within Evesham should follow the centre line of the River Isbourne, with the exception of Hampton Mill and its associated land. At Hampton Mill, the ward boundary should follow the western limit of the property.

The current names of Evesham wards are not always intuitive or meaningful. The ward currently named Little Hampton has approximately twice the number of residents than the ward named Great Hampton. While this does reflect the historic names of the locations, it is counter-intuitive to people who perceive the words “Great” and “Little” in relation to their descriptive meanings. In any case, the historic village of Little Hampton has been almost completely obliterated by subsequent development, and very few people feel any attachment to the name. It also creates the slightly odd situation that Evesham South is not the most southerly ward in residential terms – Little Hampton is, while Evesham South lies mostly to the east and north of Little Hampton. (There is a small part of Evesham South which extends into open countryside to the south of the town, but this is uninhabited).

The new names of wards for the southern part of Evesham will depend a lot on their boundaries, which I am not making proposals for. But, if the boundary between them remain broadly similar to the current wards, then I would suggest “Fairfield” for the current Little Hampton ward, and either “Four Pools” or “Brook” (named for Battleton Brook, which runs through it) for the current Evesham South ward. Great Hampton ward should be simply “Hampton”, to reflect current usage for the area covered by it.

The ward currently named Evesham North, while technically correct from a geographic perspective, covers the historic town centre of Evesham and, if the new boundary line is the river, the riverside meadows and parks as well as the residential areas to the north of the town. “Evesham Central” would be a better descriptive term here. But I would suggest “Evesham Abbey” as an alternative, as it covers the historic abbey grounds and associated lands.

Recommendation: Replace current ward names as follows:

- **Evesham North: Evesham Abbey or Evesham Central**
- **Evesham South: Four Pools or Brook**
- **Little Hampton: Fairfield**
- **Great Hampton: Hampton**

Mark Goodge
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