

From: Newent Town Council [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 November 2017 15:55
To: reviews
Subject: Electoral Review of Forest of Dean District Council
Attachments: Boundary Review Submission - 3.11.17.docx

Dear Sirs

Attached is the Newent Town Council submission put forward for Stage 4

The Town Council are aware that not all of the numbers add up; however, feel strongly that in our parish, community cohesion should be paramount and so recommend three separate wards:

A two member ward called Newent Town, that now includes urban areas that used to be in Oxenhall and Newent North East but feel very aligned to the town itself, as situated in the heart of the town.

A one member ward called Rural Newent North East and Oxenhall (retaining the close villages of Oxenhall, Kilcot and Gorsley) and to include the parishes of Pauntley and Upleadon as both are also close neighbours that use the town for amenities.

The final one member ward called Rural Newent South West and Tibberton, to retain Tibberton because Tibberton has very strong links with Taynton and Newent.

The Council hopes that you will take into consideration our views based on our local knowledge of the parish and its residents when making your final decision.

Kind regards

Katherine Noble
Town Clerk

Newent Town Council
1st Floor
Newent Community Centre
Ross Road
Newent
GL18 1BD
Tel: 01531 820638
Email: [REDACTED]

www.newenttowncouncil.org.uk

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Newent Town Council submission to the Forest of Dean District Council Boundary Review at Stage 4

Introduction

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) are undertaking an electoral review of the Forest of Dean district. The LGBCE has finished its consultation on the size of the Council and warding patterns; and have recommended that the Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC) should have 38 members in the future. The criteria are equality of representation, community cohesion and effective and convenient local government; with 1,762 electors per Councillor.

Using maps, electoral data and local knowledge; the Newent Town Council Boundary Review Working Group (with a councillor from each ward) had meetings to consider the proposed ward boundaries; bearing in mind the above criteria. It identified key communities within the parish, as well as any man-made or natural barriers such as major roads, that acted as recognisable boundaries between communities. The Working Group used their local knowledge of communities within the parish to best reflect the community identities, needs and interests of the area, whilst trying to ensure the proposals would deliver as much electoral equality as possible.

The Newent Town Council Boundary Review Working Group feel that encompassing the entire parish of Newent in to one ward, will mean the rural parts of Newent, that have different needs compared to central (urban) Newent Town, will not be catered for effectively. This will mean there will be a democratic deficit because the majority of the population of the parish are based in central (urban) Newent Town.

Multi member wards

The Newent Town Council understand the fact that urban Newent has different needs to rural Newent; and so, a multi member ward is the preferred choice in meeting the three statutory criteria for central Newent, as it deals more effectively with the community identity and people feel more aligned to it. There is also the growth in the population to consider.

In the rural wards, single member wards are more effective because they reflect community identities, are close to the existing boundaries and will allow the peoples vote in these rural wards to be more effective for them, than if they were in a three-member ward.

Newent Town Council does have experience of the Newent Central ward working effectively as a District Council and Newent Town Council ward. The proposal includes central (urban) Newent Town as the only multi member ward. This is recommended because it is in an area where the overall geographical size of the

ward remains as an acceptable size and will still be within the 10% variance allowance with 2 members.

It is with these considerations in mind that the Newent Town Councils is submitting; based on 3 wards, comprising of 2 single member wards and 1 dual member ward.

Variations

This proposal falls under the 10% variance for equality of representation in the two rural wards, but Newent Town council feels that the variance would be acceptable and has set out the reasons for this within its summary of proposed warding arrangements.

Submission

The geographical and demographic layout of Newent parish lends itself to this proposal due to its rural nature and the combination of much less densely populated large rural areas and the more highly populated although smaller urban area.

At present the urban areas of Lakeside, The Butts, The Crofts, Cleeve Estate and Gloucester Street all situated in the centre of the town, are currently in rural Oxenhall and Newent North East. They are geographically in the town and the residents feel strongly that they are towns people.

Oxenhall, Kilcot and Gorsley are closer to Newent Town than to Dymock; Oxenhall is up Horsefair Lane which is in Newent and these villages use the local Newent amenities.

Tibberton is far more aligned to Newent and to its close neighbour Taynton and not aligned to Longhope and Huntley. Again, Newent is their preferred choice for amenities.

To include the parishes of Pauntley and Upleadon to rural Newent North East would increase community cohesion as both are aligned to the rest of the rural ward of Newent North East and both also use Newent Town.

The submission was ratified by Full Council on 13th November

The table below provides a summary of proposed warding arrangements and the figures to support the proposals.

Proposed Warding arrangements

Proposed Name	No of Cllrs	Current Electorate under new proposals	Variance	Reasons
Newent Town	2	3,726	Within 10%	Newent Town should stay, as it currently is but as documented above Newent Town should have Lakeside, the Butts, Crofts, Gloucester Street and Cleeve Estate included which will increase the ward total from 3,350 to 3,726. with 2 District councillors still able to look after it effectively, as it does presently. This will ensure electoral equality, reflect community identities and more importantly be a recognisable boundary for the electorate of this ward.
Rural Newent North East and Oxenhall	1	1,448	Under the 10% variance based on the new warding pattern	Rural Oxenhall and Newent North East should lose Lakeside, the Butts, Crofts, Gloucester Street and Cleeve Estate to Newent Town because it is felt due to the geographical area, that these estates should be reunited with the town. To include the parishes of Pauntley and Upleadon to rural Newent North East and Oxenhall would increase community cohesion, as both are aligned to the rest of the rural ward of Newent North East and Oxenhall and both use Newent Town; We have allowed for a variance in this ward due to the new Ross Road housing development which would bring this ward more in line with the 10% variance for the 1 councillor proposed.

Rural Newent South West and Tibberton	1	1,412	Under the 10% variance.	The rural Newent South West and Tibberton Ward should remain, as it currently is, with the same number of electors (1,412) and the 1 councillor as there is now, looking after it. Newent Town Council believes the variance is allowed in this case because the proposal states there should be no change to the boundaries as Tibberton and Taynton are close neighbours and shouldn't be split. The proposal is for this ward to remain as it is.
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Parish Warding arrangements

Because of the changes to the Newent Forest of Dean District Council boundaries, we propose the following changes for the Newent Town Council boundaries.

Newent Town

Newent Town should stay, as it currently is but as documented above should have Lakeside, the Butts, Crofts, Gloucester Street and Cleeve Estate included which will increase the ward total from 3,350 to 3,726. With 10 Town councillors looking after it because of the extra streets.

Newent North East

Newent North East should lose Lakeside, the Butts, Crofts, Gloucester Street and Cleeve Estate and cover the Ross Road the section of Bradfords Lane it already has, Malswick, Three Ashes Lane Botloes Green the Scar and Strawberry Hill with 2 Councillors looking after it

Newent South West

Newent South West should stay as it is and cover Cliffords Mesne, its section of Bradfords Lane, the end of Culver Street and the end of Watery Lane with 1 Councillor as it has now.