

**Local Government
Boundary Commission
For England
Report No. 583**

Review of Electoral Arrangements

DISTRICT OF SOUTH

HEREFORDSHIRE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 583

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

CHAIRMAN Mr G J Ellerton

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN Mr J G Powell

Members Mr K F J Ennals

 Mr G R Prentice

 Mrs H R V Sarkany

TO THE RT HON DAVID WADDINGTON MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT

PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE
DISTRICT OF SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE IN THE COUNTY OF HEREFORD AND
WORCESTER

Background

1. The present electoral arrangements for the District of South Herefordshire date from 3 May 1979, when the District of South Herefordshire (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1977, giving effect to the proposals contained in our Report No 163, came into force.

2. In 1982, South Herefordshire District Council undertook a review of the parish pattern of its district. Having considered the District Council's parish review report, we decided to modify certain of its recommendations. During our consideration of the parish review, we had noted that the district as a whole suffered generally from inequalities of representation. We also recognised that our modifications to the parish review would leave the two district wards affected (which were already under-represented) with a poorer standard of representation. We decided therefore that the problem of poor representation across the district generally, and also the electoral consequences of our parish review modifications, should be dealt with by means of a further electoral review as soon as possible after the conclusion of the parish review. A letter announcing our final recommendations was sent to the Department of the Environment on 23 January 1987, and the South Herefordshire (Parishes) Order, implementing them, came into effect on 1 April 1988.

3. We announced our intention to undertake a further electoral review of the District of South Herefordshire in a letter, dated 12 January 1988, to the District Council. Copies of our letter were also sent for information to Hereford and Worcester County Council, all the Parish Councils in the district, the Member of Parliament for the constituency concerned, local newspapers circulating in the district, local television and radio stations, and the local government press. The start of the review was also announced by public notice and advertised in the local press.

4. We asked the District Council to prepare a draft scheme for new electoral arrangements and to publish it by 19 April 1988, allowing a six week period for public comment before submitting it to us by 1 June 1988.

The District Council's Draft Scheme

5. The present electoral arrangements for the district provide for 30 one-member wards, a two-member ward, and a three-member ward, giving a council of 35 members. The draft scheme, which was based on current (1988) and forecast 1993 electorate figures, provided for 33 wards - three returning three councillors and 30 returning one councillor, which would give a council size of 39. Nineteen of the wards in the draft scheme were coterminous with the existing wards (Broad Oak, Burghill, Burmarsh, Dinedor Hill, Dinmore Hill, Doward, Garron, Golden Valley, Gorsley, Kingsthorpe, Merbach, Munstone, Penyard, Ross-on-Wye East, Ross-on-Wye West, Thinghill, Tram Inn, Whitfield and Witton). The District Council also forwarded to us copies of all the correspondence it had received in response to the publication of the scheme.

6. The District Council had said that a large housing development was taking place in its proposed Clehonger East ward, and that this ward should therefore have two councillors. Subsequently, the Council revised its forecast

increase in the electorate of this ward and recommended that it should return three councillors. We noted, however, that the District Council had allocated three councillors to the ward on the basis of an electorate forecast for 1995. Having regard to the provisions of Schedule 11 of the Local Government Act 1972, which precludes us from taking into account electoral forecasts for a period exceeding five years from the date of our consideration, we considered that the number of councillors for the proposed Clehonger East ward should be two.

7. We recognised that the Council's draft scheme represented a substantial overall improvement on the present arrangements. We recognised also that it involved a small increase in the size of the council but it would not, even so, be out of line with the size of other district councils with similar populations and we noted, moreover, that there had been a relatively rapid rise in the electorate in South Herefordshire since our last review. However, bearing in mind the priority accorded to electoral equality in Schedule 11 of the 1972 Act, we were inclined to the view that it should be possible to achieve further improvements in equality, by (a) combining some urban and rural wards (such as Burmarsh with Thinghill and Doward with Walford), and (b) allowing an extra councillor for the proposed Ross-on-Wye wards which, taken together, appeared to us to warrant seven members rather than the six allocated under the draft scheme.

8. We therefore sought the District Council's views on these suggestions. The Council accepted our view that Clehonger East ward should have two councillors, and that the two Ross-on-Wye wards should have seven councillors in all. It suggested a revised Ross-on-Wye West ward with three members, and a four-member Ross-on-Wye East ward. The District Council added that it had also considered the option of combining urban and rural wards, as we had suggested, but that it could not recommend the combination of Burmarsh with Thinghill and Doward with Walford, given the difference in affinities of

these wards. It commented that the residents of urban Burmarsh had little in common with those of rural Thinghill. Moreover, urban Doward and rural Walford are divided by the River Wye, and are linked only by a minor road across a narrow bridge. The river is recognised locally as the natural boundary between these wards.

9. Ordnance Survey suggested a minor adjustment to the southern part of the proposed boundary between the revised Ross-on-Wye wards, to follow the existing boundary between the Parishes of Ross-on-Wye and Ross Rural. This seemed suitable to us and, as it did not affect any properties, we were minded to accept it.

10. We considered that, under the revised scheme, the Ross-on-Wye wards would have a considerably improved standard of representation. As the District Council was in favour of the revisions, we decided to adopt them as our draft proposals, subject to the amendment suggested by Ordnance Survey. As regards the possible amalgamation of Burmarsh Ward with Thinghill and Doward with Walford, we were persuaded that the absence of any affinity between the wards concerned would make it undesirable to make draft proposals to combine them despite the improvement in electoral equality which would have resulted.

11. Apart from the revised Clehonger East and Ross-on-Wye wards, our draft proposals were therefore based essentially on the District Council's draft scheme; they provided for one two-member, one three-member, one four-member and 30 one-member wards, giving a council size of 39. A letter, giving details of our draft proposals, was published on 31 August 1989. Copies were sent to everyone who had received our consultation letter. Notices were also inserted in the local press, announcing that the draft proposals had been published and could be inspected at the District Council's offices. Comments were invited by the 26 October 1989.

Response to Draft Proposals

12. We received three representations concerning our draft proposals; from Clehonger Parish Council, Ewyas Harold Group Parish Council and a parish councillor representing the Parish of Rowlstone (which is part of Ewyas Harold Group Parish). Clehonger Parish Council was concerned that the two-member Clehonger East ward might have difficulties over elections (as the District Council has elections by thirds). Ewyas Harold Group Parish Council and the parish councillor requested that the Parishes of Rowlstone and Llancillo should be in the Pontrilas ward rather than the Olchon ward (where the District Council's scheme and our draft proposals had placed them), on the grounds that these two Parishes had much closer affinity with other Parishes in Pontrilas ward.

13. Having considered these representations, we concluded that our draft proposals as they stood were largely acceptable locally. It did not appear to us that the two-member Clehonger East ward would create any insurmountable difficulties, even though the District Council holds elections by thirds. On the other hand we saw considerable merit in the arguments put forward from Ewyas Harold, stressing the close links between that area and the Pontrilas ward in which it is at present located. Even though we recognised that it would mean foregoing a marginal improvement in the standard of representation, we concluded on balance that these strong local ties should be respected. We therefore withdraw that part of our draft proposals.

Our Final Proposals

14. As required by section 60 of the 1972 Act, we have considered the representations made to us. The terms of the Act require us to have regard to changes in the number or distribution of local government electors over the next five years and, on that basis, we are satisfied that, with the small amendment in paragraph 13 above, our draft proposals

provide an acceptably even standard of representation for the district. We have therefore decided to confirm them as final.

15. Details of our final proposals are set out in Schedule 1 to this report. A small-scale map, illustrating the proposed ward boundaries, is also included.

Publication

16. In accordance with Section 60(5)(b) of the 1972 Act, a copy of this report, together with a map suitable for display, is being sent to South Herefordshire District Council and will be available for inspection at the Council's main offices. Copies of this report are also being sent to all those persons or bodies who received our consultation letter.

LS

SIGNED: G J Ellerton (Chairman)

J G Powell (Deputy Chairman)

K F J Ennals

G R Prentice

Helen Sarkany

S T GARRISH
Secretary

11 January 1990

SCHEDULE 1

Memorandum of the proposed wards of South Herefordshire
District

Ward Name	Comprising	No of Cllrs
Backbury	Parishes of Dormington, Hampton Bishop, Mordiford, Stoke Edith and Weston Beggard	1
Broad Oak	Parishes of Garway, Llanrothal, Orcop, St Weonards and Welsh Newton.	1
Burghill	Parish of Burghill	1
Burmarsh	Parishes of Marden and Sutton	1
Clehonger East	East Ward of Clehonger Parish	2
Clehonger West	West Ward of Clehonger Parish	1
Credenhill	Parish of Credenhill	1
Dinedor Hill	Parishes of Dinedor and Lower Bullingham	1
Dinmore Hill	Parishes of Dinmore, Moreton- on-Lugg and Wellington	1
Doward	Parishes of Ganarew, Goodrich, Welsh Bicknor and Whitchurch	1
Fownhope	Parishes of Brockhampton and Fownhope	1
Garron	Parishes of Llangarron and Marstow	1

Golden Valley	Parishes of Abbeydore, Bacton, Peterchurch, St Margarets, Turnastone and Vowchurch	1
Gorsley	Parishes of Aston Ingham and Linton	1
Hagley	Parishes of Bartestree and Lugwardine	1
Harewood End	Parishes of Harewood, Hentland, Llandinabo, Llanwarne, Pencoyd and Tretire with Michaelchurch	1
Hollington	Parishes of Ballingham, Bolstone, Holme Lacy, Kings Caple and Little Dewchurch	1
Kingsthorpe	Parishes of Aconbury, Callow, Grafton, Little Birch and Much Birch	1
Merbach	Parishes of Bredwardine, Clifford, Cusop and Dorstone	1
Munstone	Parishes of Holmer and Pipe and Lyde	1
Olchon	Parishes of Craswall, Llanveynoe, Longtown, Michaelchurch Escley, Newton and Walterstone	1

Oldgore	Parishes of Brampton Abbotts, Foy, How Caple, Sollers Hope Upton Bishop and Yatton	1
Penyard	Parishes of Hope Mansell, Lea and Weston-under- Penyard	1
Pontrilas	Parishes of Dulas, Ewyas Harold, Kenderchurch, Kentchurch and Kilpeck, Llancillo and Rowlstone	1
Ross-on-Wye East	Ross-on-Wye East Ward and Parish of Ross Rural	4
Ross-on-Wye West	Ross-on-Wye West Ward	3
Stoney Street	Parishes of Eaton Bishop, Madley and Tyberton	1
Swainshill	Parishes of Breinton, Kenchester and Stretton Sugwas	1
Thinghill	Parishes of Preston Wynne, West Hide and Withington	1
Tram Inn	Parishes of Allensmore, Dewsall, Haywood and Much Dewchurch	1
Walford	Parish of Walford	1
Whitfield	Parishes of Kingstone, St Devereux, Thruyton, Treville and Wormbridge	1

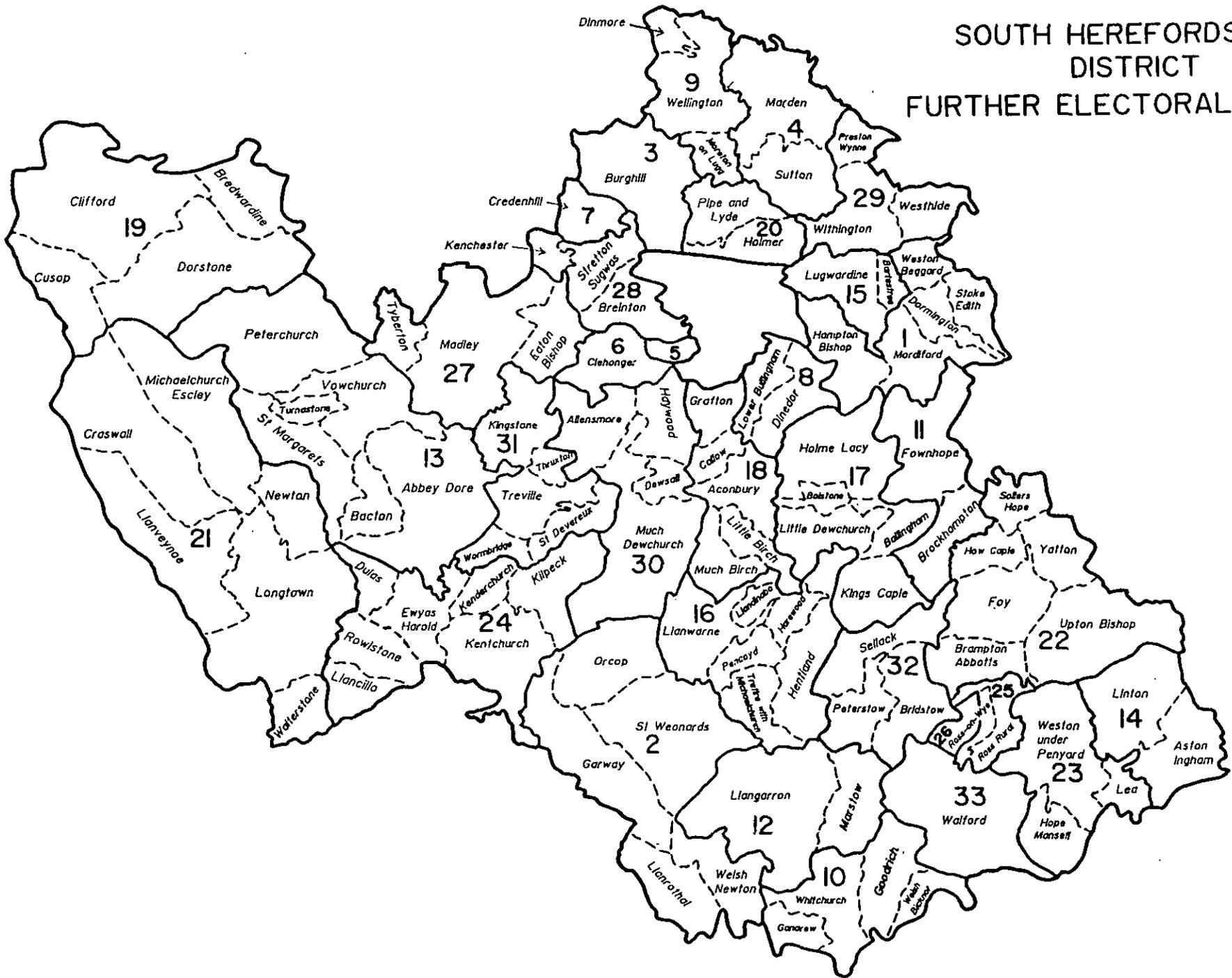
Wilton

Parishes of
Bridstow,
Peterstow and
Sellack

1

39

SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT
FURTHER ELECTORAL REVIEW



THE PROPOSED WARDS OF SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT

1. BACKBURY
2. BROAD OAK
3. BURGHILL
4. BURMARSH
5. CLEHONGER EAST
6. CLEHONGER WEST
7. CREDENHILL
8. DINEDOR HILL
9. DINMORE HILL
10. DOWARD
11. FOWNHOPE
12. GARRON
13. GOLDEN VALLEY
14. GORSLEY
15. HAGLEY
16. HAREWOOD END
17. HOLLINGTON
18. KINGSTHORNE
19. MERBACH
20. MUNSTONE
21. OLCHON
22. OLD GORE
23. PENYARD
24. PONTRILAS
25. ROSS-ON-WYE EAST
26. ROSS-ON-WYE WEST
27. STONEY STREET
28. SWAINSHILL
29. THING HILL
30. TRAM INN
31. WHITFIELD
32. WILTON
33. WALFORD

