

# **Wyre Forest District Council Proposed Changes to Ward Boundaries**

## **Submission to the Local Authority Boundary Commission**

### **Ref: Current Habberley and Blakebrook Ward**

As one of the district councillors for the above ward I dissent from the official submission of the council. It should be noted that the official submission was not a unanimous decision.

Whilst accepting, but disagreeing, with the reduction in the number of Wyre Forest District Councillors from 42 to 33, I would suggest that 34 would be a more appropriate number given that change was arrived at by another council decision that was not unanimous.

The current Habberley and Blakebrook Ward is a well established and cohesive ward with distinct boundaries, although it could be argued that, perhaps, having the boundary set at Greatfield Road would be more geographically acceptable in that all roads off Bewdley Hill, except Sutton Park Road, would then be included making a more logical geographic area.

Habberley and Blakebrook Ward contains a wide range of housing, including the largely social housing of Habberley Estate. It is served by St John's Primary School and Baxter College 11 – 18 secondary school. Both schools have a wide range of intake and continue to improve in performance and desirability. The Knoll private school is also located within the ward. There are also 3 units of sheltered accommodation and 4 nursing homes serving the needs of elderly people. This is in addition to bungalows and flats largely occupied by the elderly.

A well attended nursery is located within the current ward.

There is a limited range of well used shops and amenities located within the ward and most parts of the ward are on bus routes into Kidderminster Town Centre and the adjacent towns of Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn. Thus I can see no justification in totally dismembering the ward to accommodate boundary changes that would not have the same cohesive community structure as the present Habberley and Blakebrook even allowing for the above suggested boundary change from Bewdley Hill to Greatfield Road.

The churches of our Lady and St Pius and St John the Baptist are well established within the Ward and both have thriving congregations. Both churches offer a wide range of community activities, eg Rainbows, Brownies, luncheon clubs, coffee mornings and other "get together" functions

Looking at the official council submission there is a rather large range of variances with respect to the resident : councillor ratio within the proposed changes. I find this most unsatisfactory and not in the best interests of both the Wyre Forest residents and the Council. I would much rather see a tighter range of variances. Further I would like to see a greater emphasis on the community structure of each ward as well as geographic boundaries. The official submission is entirely focused on relative numbers, as an example Blakebrook is clearly included in to make up numbers in the proposed new ward, thus removing any form of cohesiveness and paying scant regard to community and, indeed, geography.

I do hope that you agree with me that the existing ward of Habberley and Blakebrook together with a possible boundary extension to Greatfield Road represents a true community based, well established ward and I respectfully ask you to allow this ward proposal to be an acceptable alternative to that submitted in the council's general proposal.

Cllr Barry McFarland  
Habberley and Blakebrook