



WOLVERLEY AND COOKLEY PARISH COUNCIL  
(Worcestershire)  
Clerk: Mrs B J Drew, M.AAT

12<sup>th</sup> June 2014

District Ward Changes-P.C.

Dear Members of the Boundary Commission,

Tel: 

**REF: ELECTORAL REVIEW OF WYRE FOREST: DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS.**

My Council have received your initial proposals for Wyre Forest District Ward changes and are very alarmed that you seem to be more or less agreeing with the proposals of the District Council itself . Your proposal, in the Councils opinion, would result in an undemocratic situation with inadequate representation in the "Wyre Forest Rural" ward and particularly in our Parish of Wolverley and Cookley.

Our Rural areas would have even less representation in District Council than they have at present, a situation that already heavily favours the Urban areas in debate.

My Council believe that the principal of the "numbers game" is flawed in that it takes no account of the geographical area to be covered, the nature of the area, democratic representation or local knowledge of the Representative. Indeed, it seems that no-one knows at present how the proposed Councillors would be elected in the new " Wyre Forest Rural" ward, where they will reside or how they will be allocated across this huge area.

My Council wish to confirm that they stand by their original submission, attached, and ask you to take a wider vision and take into account the obvious flaws in the current proposal, if real democratic and effective representation is to be achieved for Rural areas and small active communities.

The current wards of Wolverley and Cookley include many tourist attractions that bring with it many unusual problems for its Representative and it will be simply impossible for the proposed 3 Councillors to cope with the demand placed upon them. Furthermore, both Wolverley and Cookley are not far short of the preferred number of residents per Councillor, both communities are growing with new building and my Council can see no major reason why the current representation cannot be retained. Indeed, rather than reducing the representation from Rural areas the savings should come from the Urban areas, thus also improving the balance of power in the District Council, an issue that has existed for many years.

My Council implore you to seriously re-consider your initial proposal and take into account the special situation that some Rural areas such as Wolverley and Cookley have to deal with. Surely this

proposal cannot be justified, with all of its implications, simply to save a few thousand pounds on Councillors allowances and associated expenses.

My Council sincerely hope that you understand their problem and do all you can to redress the balance.

Yours faithfully

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Mrs B J Drew.

Mrs B J Drew

Clerk to Wolverley & Cookley Parish Council

## REVISED SUBMISSION TO THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION.

Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council believe that our District Council are in favour of creating a “three Member Ward” policy throughout the District and propose that Wolverley and Cookley should be joined with an already large geographical area including Churchill to Chaddesley extending to the borders of Spennells.

Whilst we appreciate that there may be financial savings to be made in this way and it can give good representation in **Urban** areas, Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council believe that this is a most unsatisfactory situation in **Rural** areas, where the number of voters may fall a little short of the ideal, but a very large geographical area has to be covered. Bearing this in mind the Parish Council believes that Wolverley and Cookley should remain as a “two Member” ward having a total registered electorate of nearly 4000 plus zoned development at the Lea Castle site in Cookley and affordable housing in Wolverley amounting to at least 50 extra dwellings. This can be further justified because of its very special situation in relation to tourism and holiday accommodation, both of which give rise to greater demands on its representation than is normally the case. If we can refer to your document (delivering electoral equality for local voters) where you state that electoral equality is the ideal yet you recognise that this is unlikely to be exactly achieved and this is the situation we now find ourselves in.

This quite large Parish community, having a very long history dating back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, is bounded largely by the A449 and A442 roads and supports two Primary Schools and one High School. It embraces many tourist attractions including the Kingsford Forest Park, the very popular and busy Bodenham Arboretum, the Staffordshire/Worcestershire Canal, the World War Two underground factory and Cold War seat of regional government and is dissected by the very popular Worcestershire Way that begins in the North-East of the Parish and ends in Malvern Hills.

Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council firmly believe that to be most effective a District Councillor should have an intimate knowledge of the needs of the area and its communities and that the District Council’s proposals simply cannot meet this qualification. Indeed, it is perfectly possible that the three elected Members for the new Ward to be proposed by the District Council, ranging from Wolverley to Spennells, could all reside at the opposite end of this huge geographical area. If this should happen then the Parish of Wolverley and Cookley would surely be poorly represented.

Furthermore, since there would be at least 4 Parish Councils included in this large area proposed by the District Council it would leave the District Councillors having to attend too many Parish Council meetings every month in addition to their District Council duties, thus diminishing the quality of the relationship between the Parish and District Councils.

Finally, we do hope that you can agree that to regard the outlying Parishes to be the same as the urban parts of the district is to misunderstand the differences between them and leaves the rural areas relatively under –represented and we respectfully ask you to allow Wolverley and Cookley to become a 2 Member Ward in its own right.