



Catshill & North Marlbrook Parish Council
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30th March 2013

Review Officer
Bromsgrove Review
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Dear Sirs

Electoral Review of Bromsgrove: Further Limited Consultation

Summary response : Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Council does not accept the proposals in the Further Limited Consultation.

Detail

These proposed further changes to the November 2012 draft recommendations include the abolition of the District Council's Woodvale ward and its existing communities being appended to the surrounding parishes.

The effect on this parish would be the addition of Bournheath village to your proposed Catshill South ward and the addition of the Wildmoor part of Bournheath parish on to your proposed Catshill North ward. This proposal is contrary to your aim of recognising a) existing communities and b) natural boundaries.

- a) The existing community of Catshill village is well defined. It is the area bordered by the A38 to the east, the M5 to the north and west and the M42 to the south. The community has grown from farming and nail-making. It is self-contained and easily identifiable with the many generations of families who have remained in the parish over the years accommodating the diversity that new development has brought.
- b) As noted above, there is a very clear and identifiable boundary around the village of Catshill; this is especially noticeable in the west of the parish. There is no nebulous drift from one village into another which happens in the east of the parish where Catshill easily blends into Marlbrook. Instead, when travelling in the west of the parish there is a very clear sense of moving in to and out of the village of Catshill due to the M5 motorway which acts as a very real barrier to community cohesion.

There is therefore no community relationship between Catshill and Bournheath. Children from Bournheath would attend Dodford or Fairfield First Schools rather than Catshill; children's social services for Bournheath are provided via Hagley rather than via Catshill's own centre, and PACT policing is covered via Sidemoor and Woodvale rather than via Catshill's Community Support Officers.

Contrary to the views put forward for the November consultation regarding the future ward names, following this further limited consultation the Parish Council members are keen to re-iterate they do not support the splitting of the village into two separate wards and therefore they are not prepared to provide views on the proposed ward names.

It is considered unfortunate that Bromsgrove District Council did not consult the parish councils on this issue before the LGBCE review started. This is further exacerbated by the lack of any information on this matter from any of the individual District Council members who cover this parish (there are four of them) despite the monthly opportunity to broach the subject at the Parish Council's meetings.

Your comments in the Further Limited Consultation resulting from the Parish Council's comments to your November recommendations are noted, however the Parish Council would like to repeat its request that the Catshill Village ward is retained as a whole ward represented by two district ward members.

Additionally the Parish Council does not agree with the internal parish ward boundaries that see a Catshill Village ward and a Barley Mow Ward which are seen as false boundaries imposed unilaterally from outside rather than welcomed by those most affected.

With regard to the electorate information, your Further Limited Consultation recommendations would see an increase in electorate for the proposed Catshill South ward to +7% variance from average, compared to the -4% recommended in November. This is not considered an improvement.

It would appear that your revised proposals fail to deliver improved electoral equality for voters, ignore local community interests and identities and fall short of promoting effective and convenient local government.

For the reasons stated above this Parish Council does not support your recommendations.

Yours sincerely

Gill Lungley MILCM
Clerk to the Council