

## Hinds, Alex

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**From:** Waller, Matthew  
**Sent:** 05 August 2013 09:04  
**To:** Hinds, Alex  
**Subject:** FW: Electoral review - Stratford upon Avon

-----Original Message-----

From: John Gittins [<mailto:john@coughton.plus.com>]  
Sent: 04 August 2013 22:17  
To: Reviews@  
Cc: [Maureen@coughton.plus.com](mailto:Maureen@coughton.plus.com); [len@coughton.plus.com](mailto:len@coughton.plus.com); Cherie King; Karen Parnell; Roy Piddington  
Subject: Electoral review - Stratford upon Avon

The Review Officer (Stratford-on-Avon)

Layden House 76-86

Turnmill Street

London

EC1M 5LG

Dear Sirs

Coughton Parish Council would like to comment on the current Electoral Review as follows. This is a collective view from elected parish councillors based on our understanding of local residents wishes.

It is inevitable that the proposed reduction in the number of District Councillors and the subsequent increase in the size of the wards, will result in many local mergers taking place. Coughton Parish Council, a small parish, is potentially caught between two large population centres - Alcester and Studley.

Our main concern is that a general reduction of this size could have a negative impact on local democracy:

1 The significant increase in the number of residents per elected member would result in many District Councillors becoming more remote and therefore less responsive to the interests of their electorate.

2 The diverse nature of this agricultural / working class / commuter area will be undermined as a result of larger rural areas being created.

Fewer elected members at District Council level would be less sensitive to the needs of specific sectors within their electoral ward.

Having acknowledged the inevitable, we understand Alcester's solution is for each District councillor to represent a section of the town area along with a geographically adjoining rural area. These would include Coughton, Arrow, Great Alne, etc. in the form of a ring around the town. As Coughton would be represented by an Alcester District Councillor we would inevitably have closer ties to Alcester. The view from Coughton Parish Council is to support this arrangement. It would represent a return to earlier links with Alcester when regular joint meetings were held, sharing local issues, and information. As long as the proposed arrangement ensures local accountability we have the opportunity to make this effective, for example in the development of the adjoining Alcester industrial estate.

For geographical and historical reasons alone, local residents have a greater affinity to Alcester, and this would be more acceptable than the interim links when Coughton had been "placed" with Studley, Henley, and Mappleborough Green.

In the wider context, the effectiveness of this review depends on empowering local people and ensuring local communities are represented at all levels. Every effort should be made to ensure this, particularly for the reasons mentioned earlier.

It is regrettable that mergers of this nature may influence the political make up of the District Council, but whilst the party political tag remains this will be inevitable.

Cllr. John Gittins

Chair

Coughton Parish Council