

Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley
Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting
Pitchford Village Hall. Monday 26 June 2023 at 7.30pm

All Councillors are hereby summoned to attend an Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting which will be held at Pitchford Village Hall on Monday 26 June 2023 at 7.30pm.

Members of the public are welcome and those who wish to speak on a specific matter are advised to contact their local Councillor or the Clerk, in writing, prior to the meeting. This will enable adequate provision to be made in the meeting agenda.

Clerk: Anna Morris
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AGENDA

- 23.6.1 Chairman's Welcome**
- 23.6.2 Present & Apologies**
- 23.6.3 Declarations of Pecuniary Interest**
- 23.6.4 Public Session**
- 23.6.5 Parish Clerk** - Council to note return of Clerk from Maternity Leave and return of all delegated responsibilities to Clerk/RFO.
- 23.6.6 Boundary Commission Draft Recommendations Consultation** – Council to discuss and agree response to consultation on recommended changes to Shropshire Council electoral boundaries including Burnell ward. Proposed changes may be viewed at: <https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2022/11/have-your-say-on-a-new-political-map-for-shropshire-council/>. Councillor Harrison has drafted a response for consideration. **See Appendix 1.**

Signed: _____

Date: 20 June 2023_____

Clerk and RFO

Appendix 1 – Draft Response to Boundary Commission Recommendations

Local Council Boundary Changes – Burnell Ward

The Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) have been carrying out a review of boundaries ahead of the elections in 2025. The review looked ahead to 2028. Draft proposals have been prepared and are available on the Shropshire Council website: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/shropshire>

Reviews are carried out periodically as populations change to try to ensure that people are properly represented at local council level; with each councillor essentially representing the same number of voters (within a tolerance of plus or minus 10%). Numbers are adjusted by moving parishes (and voters) from one ward to another.

In the current review it was determined that Burnell ward is projected to remain within the 10% tolerance for voter numbers (approximately 8% over). However, to address an issue with Bayston Hill, Column and Sutton which are predicted to have 15% over the number of voters for its 2 councillor ward the LGBC are proposing to:

- Take All Stretton/Smethcott/Woolstaton PC and Pulverbatch PC from Burnell and add them to Bishops Castle.
- Take Cardington PC from Burnell and add it to Corvedale.
- Add the remaining voters from Burnell and also Cound Parish to the 2 Bayston Hill Parishes thereby creating a new 2 member ward of Burnell and Bayston Hill.

This proposal seems to be unreasonable for a number of reasons, particularly:

- Burnell and Bayston Hill are very different in character with Burnell consisting of small, fairly isolated rural parishes and Bayston Hill essentially a suburb of Shrewsbury. Residents have very different needs and concerns and combining them will risk neither group being properly served. Cound will find itself in a similar situation to Burnell.
- The new ward will comprise almost 60% Bayston Hill residents giving concerns that this may well lead to the specific needs of the remainder of the current Burnell ward and Cound taking second place and being overlooked.

(It should be noted that the remainder of Burnell plus Cound will have sufficient voters to be within the -10% margin, seemingly continuing to justify separate representation)

- Burnell and Bayston Hill are in different parliamentary constituencies which will lead to additional confusion regarding representation.
- Adding Cardington to Corvedale will make this a very large 11 parish ward.

However, the LGBC do not seem particularly fixed on this approach and specifically requests alternatives to be put forward. They also cite residents' suggestions in their report but, although a review of the 62 residents published contributions does show concerns regarding Bayston Hill and a suggestion to adjust Burnell by moving some parishes to Bishops Castle, allowing some Severn Valley parishes to be accepted to relieve numbers there, joining with Bayston Hill does not seem to be suggested. In considering alternatives the LGBC state that combining parishes with different characters is preferable to imposing boundaries between similar parishes where no natural boundary exists. This surely cannot hold true where one of the disparate groups is considerably larger than another and also effectively separated geographically.

It would seem that communities would be much better served, with similar parishes combined by the following option which will provide even voter numbers per councillor:

- Bayston Hill should be joined with Otley and Reabrook, which would create a 2 member town ward that is within the tolerance. Why link a town ward with a rural ward when surely linking 2 town wards would be better?
- Corvedale could take Cardington thereby coming within the tolerance.
- Bishops Castle should take All Stretton/Smethcott/Woolstaston thereby coming within tolerance.
- Burnell could take Cound from Severn Valley (helping the issue of Severn Valley being too large in 2028) and retain Pulverbatch, as well Conover, Acton Burnell and Leebotwood/Longnor. This would be within the tolerance.

The Parish Council feels strongly that the LGBC should be urged to revise their recommendations so as to maintain the overall shared rural nature of Burnell ward, possibly opting for the above alternative to resolving the Bayston Hill issue rather than the current proposal. It is suggested that those who feel the same should respond to the consultation which runs until July 10th. This can be done via the website at: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/shropshire/feedback>