

Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley Parish Council

Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting Monday 26 June 2023 at 7.30pm Pitchford Village Hall

MINUTES

- 23.6.1** The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and explained the proceedings.
- 23.6.2** **Present:** Cllr P Harrison – Chair, Cllr C Culliss, Cllr G Ball, Cllr A Hotchkiss, Cllr K Faulkner, Cllr T Johnson, Cllr R Morgan. Mrs A Morris – Clerk.
Apologies: Cllr J Long, Cllr G Davies
- 23.6.3** **Declarations of Pecuniary Interest:** There were no declarations of interest made.
- 23.6.4** **Public Session:** There were no members of the public in attendance.
- 23.6.5** **Parish Clerk:** The Council noted the Clerk's return from Maternity Leave and the return to the Clerk of all duties and responsibilities which had been delegated to the Chair in her absence.
- 23.6.6** **Boundary Commission Draft Recommendations Consultation:** The Council agreed unanimously that it does not support the recommendations of the Boundary Commission to merge Burnell with Bayston Hill to form a single two councillor ward and its strong preference is for Burnell ward to remain as it is currently. The Council discussed the response to the consultation drafted by the Chair and amended and agreed the final wording of the response. The Council agreed unanimously to the response wording. See Appendix 1.
Action: Clerk to send response to Boundary Commission consultation, and add text to the Community Facebook page and the noticeboard to encourage residents to respond to the consultation.

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Appendix 1

Local Council Boundary Changes – Burnell Ward

In the current review it was determined that Burnell ward is projected to remain within the 10% tolerance for voter numbers (approximately 8% over). Therefore, the Parish Council's first suggestion is that there should be no change to Burnell ward.

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 as:

- Burnell and Bayston Hill are very different in character with Burnell consisting of small, fairly isolated rural parishes and Bayston Hill essentially an outer suburb of Shrewsbury. Residents have very different needs and concerns and combining them will risk the rural population not being properly served.
- 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 also be noted that the Burnell section would cover approximately 80% of the geographical area of the new ward.
- The remainder of Burnell ward could find itself represented by two Councillors who live in Bayston Hill and may not be focussed on or understand the needs of the residents of Burnell ward.

(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)

- Current Boundary Commission proposals will place Burnell and Bayston Hill in different parliamentary constituencies which will lead to additional confusion regarding representation. Note also that these parliamentary boundaries have only recently been reviewed and further changes would only lead to more confusion.
- The two areas also fall under different dioceses (Hereford and Litchfield)

As the LGBC do not seem particularly fixed on this approach and has specifically requested alternatives to be put forward (note that in a review of the 62 published residents contributions, we were unable to find any specific support for combining Burnell and Bayston Hill), the Parish Council would strongly prefer no changes be made to the existing Burnell Ward, as it is projected to continue to meet the required tolerance.

The issue with Bayston Hill would seem to be better resolved by combining with Oteley and Reabrook creating a 2 member suburban ward.

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.