

Herefordshire

Personal Details:

Name: Cllr Dan Hurcomb

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Organisation Name: (Councillor)

Comment text:

Related subject: Bircher Ward

I have represented the Bircher Ward since May 2023. The current size of the ward is over the average electorate however, I believe that the Ward should remain the same as it currently is.

Firstly, the size of the ward is manageable (it takes 20 minutes or less to travel from one end of the ward to another). There are 5 Parish Councils within the ward and these are manageable for any member.

Secondly, the Ward is made up of the following Parish Councils: Yarpole Group, Luston Group, Orleton, Richard's Castle and Kingsland. It would be unthinkable to separate the Parish Groups across different wards and any move to break these areas should be avoided. The parishes look to each other and share strong community links. These relationships are strong local ties mirrored in the infrastructure they share (including highways, water, sewage etc) and the rural nature of these communities. Whilst Leominster is close by they do not share the same affinity and attaching rural areas to Leominster would not be a positive development. Equally, Brimfield is also close by however the Shropshire boundary and the A49 at Wooferton is a natural boundary which should not be crossed.

Thirdly, the planned housing growth for the ward is low over the next 5-10 years because of local issues (including sewage capacity, flooding and the open countryside classification of many small villages and hamlets). Coupled with this is the Phosphate moratorium which has limited housing growth for years and no end is in sight.

Fourthly, the development planned for Leominster (Particularly Leominster West) is significant with over 1500 houses currently in the planning system for the Leo West and Leo South areas. This housing growth will make the Leominster Wards significantly larger and may even result in the electorate exceeding Bircher Ward.

Finally, Bircher Ward currently has the perfect geography with the Shropshire border, the Goggin (a hill between Richard's Castle and Leintal Earls), the River Lugg and the A49 all marking natural boundaries which clearly divide Bircher Ward from neighbouring wards and allow clear and logical boundaries which all residents can understand.

In short, I would strongly oppose any moves to change Bircher Ward and believe it should be protected in its current form.

Attached Documents:

None attached