

## Community Governance Review - T&W Council

Dear sir/madam

I am writing to object to the proposed boundary changes to Edgmond by combining with Chetwynd Parish.

Edgmond is a large rural parish which is served by an active and efficient parish council. Chetwynd is, reportedly, one of the largest parishes in England but is sparsely populated.

Combining Edgmond and Chetwynd parishes will create an enormous parish which will do little or nothing for the communities they serve but will create an enormous amount of extra work for the VOLUNTEER councillors.

According to parish council rules meeting must last no longer than two hours unless there are extenuating reasons. Currently parish council meetings in Edgmond go perilously close to this time frame, and do, on occasions, go beyond it. It is my opinion that a parish council meeting which properly represents both parishes will not be properly completed within a two hour time frame if issues are to be properly debated. This, obviously, means that councillors will be spending a great deal more of their voluntary time debating matters for both parishes.

The T&W Community Governance Review comments in several places that merging parishes will help to create the most appropriate community identity. It also makes reference to promoting community cohesion. I fail to understand how making parish councils larger will promote community cohesion. If anything, merging parishes will help to cause division.

The Review further states that boundary changes will be reflective of the identities and interests of the community, be effective and convenient. I must question how combining two large parishes can possibly develop community cohesion. I fail to understand how combining two large parishes can result in a parish council that is effective and it will be far from convenient to try to do so. Community identity will be diluted under the development of even larger parishes and will be divisive and difficult to administer. We all know that establishing a large committee to solve a problem is far too unwieldy and issues are more easily resolved with smaller committees.

As, it is claimed, T&W council recognises that the development of strong, sustainable communities it should recognise that creating new, larger parishes will lead to a more difficult and time consuming administration which is, after all, run by a VOLUNTEER force of parish councillors.

Volunteers cannot be expected to apply more of their VOLUNTARY time to administering larger and more unwieldy organisations.

Creating larger parishes will lead to division especially when assets of one parish may be greater than the assets of another.

If developing larger parishes in the Edgmond area is deemed necessary then it would be more sensible to combine Chetwynd with Cherrington and Tibberton. The reasons for this are that activities in Tibberton are attended by people from Chetwynd and Cherrington and children from these parishes attend Tibberton primary school.

My final point revolves around comments that, currently, many parishes do not hold elections and are dependent upon the cooption of councillors, if they can find sufficient volunteers. It must, therefore, be clear that cooption takes place where there are insufficient numbers of candidates to force an election. I fail to understand the logic behind your statements indicating that combining parishes would somehow automatically create a new cohort of residents, who currently not want to become parish councillors, to suddenly come forward for election to a post that is going to demand a larger time commitment.

I contend that residents interested in becoming parish councillors would have done so already. Combining parish councils will hardly encourage more residents to come forward.

