

Telford & Wrekin Council Community Governance Review 2025

I totally disagree with the Community Governance Review (CGR) recommendation to divide the existing excellent Donnington & Muxton Parish so that Muxton becomes a parish in its own right. My reasons are as follows:

Unintended Consequences:

In describing the purposes of the Community Governance Review (CGR), it is claimed that *“The review cannot change the amount of money that a parish council raises through your council tax (known as ‘precept’)”*.

Whilst this may be true in the strict legal sense, the statement ignores the fact that changes in a parish size or structure may result in a change to the precept. By way of example, splitting an existing parish into two stand-alone parishes may require one of the new parishes to find, and staff, council offices. So, for the same number of residents in the two communities, we now have two sets of council offices and staff. That is, costs of offices and staff have doubled. When Lilleshall went solo from the Donnington & Lilleshall Parish their precept more than doubled.

The country is in the grip of a cost of living crisis. It is surely irresponsible not to include the possible costs from any proposals of the CGR as one of the key factors in assessing changes to the Borough’s parishes?

Objection to the CGR proposal for a new Muxton parish:

An independent Muxton Parish will start with neither council offices nor staff. Added to which, there will be fewer residents (than the existing combined parish) to pay for new parish offices and staff. Hence, the proposal to separate Muxton from the Donnington & Muxton Parish will result in an increase in parish precept costs to residents of Muxton.

The existing parish has a long history of supporting its residents. Thirty years ago, when it included Lilleshall, it played a key role in the residents’ success at stopping proposed opencast mining in a field between Muxton and Lilleshall.

More recently it gave invaluable support to Muxton residents to persuade the Local Planning Team to modify the draft Plan by removing some elements of the allocated development land along Wellington Road.

The Council had its quality recognized by being awarded Gold standard – the highest possible – in the Local Council Award Scheme.

It makes no sense to disband a winning team when there are no obvious benefits from a stand-alone Muxton parish.

This worse-for-Muxton position is not inevitable: there are sensible alternative options.

Option One: Keep the existing Gold Standard Donnington & Muxton parish.

This has the advantage of existing offices and staff; hence no disruption costs.

Parish	Electors April 2025	Seats	Electors Per Seat	Plus Local Plan Extra Houses
Muxton	3831	5	766	400
Donnington	6027	8	753	0
Total	9858	13	758	400

St Georges (6029 electors) can be combined with Red Hill (468 electors) to form a combined parish of 6497 electors. There are no extra 'central function' costs of offices and staff because these already exist within St Georges. Again, no disruption costs.

Option Two: Combine Muxton and Lilleshall to form a new parish.

Lilleshall already has council offices and the services of a clerk. Provided the current part-time clerk is amenable to extra working hours, Muxton's additional workload would be easily absorbed. The resultant parish would yield a reduction in precept cost to Lilleshall residents. Although Muxton's residents would face a higher than at present precept, it would be less than under the proposed stand-alone parish position.

Muxton and Lilleshall share a desire that the 'Lilleshall Gap' is retained. In a joint new parish they will be stronger to resist the relentless creep of urbanisation.

This combination of localities anticipates the development outlined in the draft Local Plan. The Plan has 2700 dwellings destined for land northeast of Muxton. Most of these dwellings are located in the parish of Lilleshall.

Parish	Electors April 2025	Seats	Electors Per Seat	Plus Local Plan extra Houses
Muxton	3831	5	766	400
Lilleshall	1115	7	159	2300
Total	4946	12	412	2700

Conclusion:

The proposed stand-alone Muxton parish:

- 1 does not make financial sense
- 2 ignores the impact of the draft Local Plan
- 3 offers not a single benefit to residents

And finally: although five seats are proposed in the CGR for a stand-alone Muxton (clearly nonsense) it is pointless to suggest an alternative number when the proposal for Muxton is not acceptable.