



Hollinswood and Randlay Parish Council



Chairman: [REDACTED]

Clerk: [REDACTED]

Formal Submission to The Boundary Review Committee regarding the Community Governance Review Phase 2.

As previously supplied on the 2nd of July 2025: -

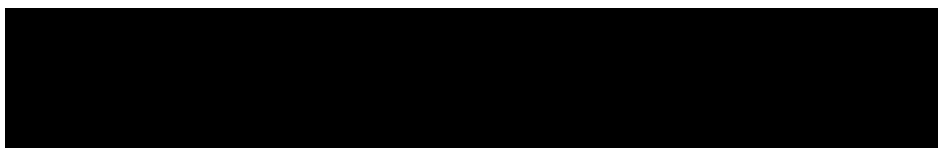
“At the full council meeting on Monday 19th, Hollinswood & Randlay Parish Council formally resolved to OPPOSE the Telford & Wrekin recommendation which is to merge our Parish Council with Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council. There was a lengthy debate about the proposal which Councillors believe will create a parish council which is too large and will result in communities losing their identities. There was further concern regarding the reduction in number of Parish Councillors and the change of name of the council – both of which bring into question local representation and democracy.

The Parish Council strongly urges everyone in both parishes to respond to the consultation – the Telford & Wrekin Council Boundary Review Committee confirmed, at its meeting, that the final decision will be based on the public opinions collected through this consultation process. Please let them know your view on the recommendation.”

This outlined the Parish Councils’ position on the proposal to merge this Parish with Stirchley and Brookside Parish Council.

The following is a detailed explanation as to why the position of the Parish remains to oppose this one option. As no other options had been included in this consultation it is taken that either this proposal would be taken forward or the current status quo would remain.

- As evidenced by the slips filled out by residents that attended our drop-in sessions and completed a slip, an overwhelming majority is opposed to this merger. 99.5% of our Parish residents oppose, 76.9% of residents in Stirchley and Brookside Parish are opposed too. There is NO evidence to suggest that residents of either area are of the view that this is in their interests or would benefit the wider communities.
- Having taken time to talk to residents in large numbers, there is little to no appetite for the proposals as there are no clear links between the two parish areas.
- Residents believe that their community identity would be lost – The Nedge name does not convey in any way the historical characteristics or localness of the areas.
- Many residents expressed concerns that there is no similarity between the needs of the residents or area of Brookside and Hollinswood or vice versa.
- The distance from Stafford Park to Brookside, for example, is immense and staff / councillors would find it a challenge to represent all the communities being brought together by this recommendation.





Having taken time to study the Guidance on community governance reviews published in March 2010, we feel that the following sections would be relevant and appropriate to highlight.

Section 2

15. – There has been limited, if any, new builds on the edge of each of current Parish areas – The Hem being the current largest increase in housing in the area. As we previously suggested, this should be placed within one Parish boundary, but this does not equate nor justify a merging of parishes.

19. – 23. – These points make it abundantly clear that residents views are the driving force behind any changes proposed. Point 23. clearly states that it is local peoples views that should tailor the principal council's view. Having seen the responses to phase 1 this proposal does not meet this criteria.

33. – The consultation should consider views received but this needs to secure and reflect the identities and interest of the community and is effective and convenient. The proposal does not meet this requirement.

34. – This states that the principal local authority should consult with the parish council. It is accepted that some wider consultation has taken place, but not directly with this Parish Council even though it would be dramatically affected by this change. The Parish Council is not aware that either of the two primary schools in its area have been directly contacted nor any of the health bodies who are directly involved in the Parish. This is not a correct use of this process.

Section 3

Substantively, points 46-48 refers to how any proposed changes would provide a more cohesive, attractive and economically vibrant community – nothing in the document issued for phase 2 expands or explains the benefits. Even the submission in phase 1 does not offer any ideas of why this would benefit the community as outlined. Community cohesion is central to this whole concept. As shown by the numbers against this proposal it is clear this would have the complete opposite effect.

52. – The two bullet points identified clearly outline why a proposal should be considered – neither are met by this proposal of a merger

The identities and interests of local communities – 55-61. Nothing about this proposal factor in the majority views of the residents. Identities, place, distinctive and recognisable communities with a sense of identity – The Nedge Parish proposal does NOT meet these criteria. It is worth highlighting point 61. specifically, as this reinforces that the proposed merger is not a correct outcome, as in it is the opposite of what is suggested. Again, nothing in the proposal document argues that these factors would be met.



65. – As it is widely accepted and has been noted during this process Hollinswood and Randlay Parish Council is already achieving these initiatives; a merger would significantly weaken the wider ability of a larger parish to meet the needs of its residents across such a diverse and large area.

70. – If this proposal were to be forced upon the residents of the parish, trust would be lost in the principal authority to act fairly.

74. – Community cohesion along with the identity and interests of the local community. This proposal does not correctly explain how this is being achieved. If anything, the opposite could be argued. This specifically states that “It would be difficult to think of a situation in which a principal council could make a decision to create a parish and a parish council which reflects community identities and interests in the areas and at the same time threatens community cohesion.” As stated, there is no evidence that this merger would achieve this point.

80. – This proposal would create a parish that could be considered too large and covering too many different identities, which again is opposite to what this process should achieve.

81. – This point refers to the fact that bigger is not always better and that as the current parish councils supply and are able to offer services to their local communities, this proposal does not explain how expanding the parish would improve things for the residents. Ultimately, that is key in this process, in that what and how this would be viewed by residents, and what improvements would occur in a larger parish.

84. – This specifically relates to this proposal – “In many cases a boundary change between existing parishes, or parishes and unparished areas, will be sufficient to ensure that parish arrangements reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government.”. Our previous submissions to alter the boundaries meet these criteria whereas this proposed merger clearly DOES NOT meet these criteria. As no evidence within the phase 2 documentation explains why this merger should happen, which is explicitly against these criteria, the proposal should not proceed.

The section “Recommendations and decisions on the outcome of a community governance reviews” has two pertinent points.

95. & 96.

Taken together these clearly outline how the principal council should ensure that the representations received should be supported by evidence allowing the arrangement to meet the 2007 Act. Nothing that the parish council has seen or been able to gather could support the principal councils suggested merger. As most respondents are opposed to any form of merger, with a small minority who did, provides insufficient supporting views for the merger.

100. – This section relates to a decision being made to merge (or not merge). It is difficult, having seen the responses to phase 1 and now with the level of responses from the parish opposed to this current recommendation, to understand how the principal council could



justify the reasons behind this proposal. This could imply a forced merger would not be supported by the 2007 Act. Although the principal council would be required to make available a document setting out the reasons for the decision taken (both in the case of the recommendation proceeding or not), from all the evidence available, there is insufficient support for the proposal from local residents. This would sadly imply that a decision to merge will have been made by the principal council against the wishes of the residents and parish councils.

Within section 4

114. – This relates to the enlarging or splitting of parish council areas. Community interests are key. The final two sentences are key to the proposed merge “Grouping or de-grouping needs to be compatible with the retention of community interest. It would be inappropriate it to be used to build artificially large units under a single parish council.” Although as noted elsewhere within the guidance there is not one size fits all nor a suggested size, but most parish councils have a **population** of less than 12,000. This proposed merger would not, from all the evidence seen, meet this statement. The electoral numbers of 11,324 is a different calculation and would clearly suggest a population of well over the 12,000 figure.

137. – Within this paragraph it states very clearly what sets parish councils apart from other kinds of governance. The inference of this is that it would be clearly incorrect of the principal council to impose a decision on the area unless it is fully evidenced at the review stage, which would allow residents to understand the reasons why a merger could or would benefit them. Nothing in the pack allows that level of informed decision making to support the merger, so the only logical conclusion would be to not support the merger.



Conclusion

Hollinswood and Randlay Parish Council has opposed this merger from its first mention and continues to do so.

This stance was formed from a considered and well discussed process, based on community involvement, experience and knowledge of our local area. The Council has not just decided that this would be rejected out-of-hand. The proposal was and has been evaluated based on what is best for the residents, who are represented by the Councillors, taking time to discuss with them and then considerable effort to review all evidence. They also considered the suggested reasons for the merger and concluded: -

- The proposed merger would not make the Parish co-terminous with The Nedge borough boundary – as there would still be two wards within the one new parish.
- There has been minimal movement in the boundaries – the Ward boundaries have had movement but not the parish boundaries. The existing Parishes do reflect the local community and there is clear demarcation between the areas. These are both hard and soft geographical.
- Using the A442 as a common transport link is a false statement – the road is a 60mph dual carriage way linking Hortonwood to Sutton Hill. Each of the areas within the two parishes have a clear and identifiable road network, the A442 would not be something residents would even consider as a link between the five areas.

The Parish Council has and will continue to offer its assistance to Telford and Wrekin in support of any minor changes to the boundaries to remove the few anomalies that do currently exist and would welcome the opportunity to discuss these ideas with the Boundary Review Committee to assist in regard to these minor changes (Arundel Close, The Hem and Station Quarter).

Finally, [REDACTED] wishes to make clear that its working relationship with Telford and Wrekin has, in its view, always been a positive and supportive partnership, with its residents' best interests at its core. It is of course hoped that this will continue for many years to come.

However, in this specific instance, it is unable to and cannot support this proposal and continues to oppose the recommendation on behalf of the residents.

