

From [REDACTED]

For the attention of the Boundary Review Committee

THE PROPOSED MERGER OF ERCALL MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL WITH WATERS UPTON PARISH COUNCIL

Of all the proposals contained in the recommendations, this proposed merger of these long-established, extremely effective rural parishes was not only the most surprising, but also the most unexpected by both Parish Council and residents.

I would like to draw your attention to Chapter 3, Paragraph 87 of the Local Government Boundary Commission Advice which specifically covers this proposal and protects functioning existing parish councils from grouping or de-grouping. I believe that the principal authority would be disregarding the Act and Advice if the recommendation was to be approved.

As this had not been mentioned previously, in either the 2023 or first phase of the 2025 consultations, whoever or wherever this suggestion came from must demonstrate that they have little idea or understanding of rural communities and it appears to residents that they do not recognise the value that they provide to their respective communities. I have been asked, does TWC realise the financial contributions, input and support offered to the principal authority over many years?

It is questioned, does it respect their history, identity, interest or viability – or more importantly, the effectiveness of the governance that is provided by both local councils?

The explanation in the document containing this recommendation is seen by many as derogatory as it states

“this proposal would allow for the parish council to remain a viable council capable of providing services to its residents whilst maintaining community identity and proposed warding arrangements will support effective community governance and provide good representation across the community”

Actually, residents strongly believe that this merger will have the opposite effect!

The statement alone supports my earlier assertion that there is no understanding by whoever of what rural communities and rural governance is actually about. This is not about the precept.

This element is considered extremely carefully by a body of volunteers, who live, work and employ from their community in which they were elected to serve.

They have, without question, an intimate understanding of their communities and the locality, the infrastructure and needs and how important community engagement is in providing good governance and effective, good value service delivery. Each council encourages diversity in its representation.

The proposed Warding arrangements have not even considered this or recognised other villages or hamlets that make up both parishes. The two communities are split by the A442 from Waters Upton to Sandyford, Cold Hatton. Both parishes produced local neighbourhood plans – which represent each of the communities and their views.

If we are to break down the population figures, and they are similar across both parishes, the revised Local Plan actually identifies greater growth in Waters Upton than High Erroll or the Erroll Magna Parish.

Both parishes have achieved significant investment and this has been possible by close community engagement and respect for the knowledge and views of the local residents. The upcoming completion of the resurfacing and inclusion of a crossing on Shrewsbury Road is a good example and Ercall Magna Parish Council is contribution £25,000 to TWC for the scheme – this is significant. Similarly, the residents of Waters Upton Parish raised by fund-raising and contributions £30,000 to buy the Village Green as part of a Section 106 agreement – this is community participation at its best. It is feared that community engagement and participation will become less and diluted, this could be due to the distance and logistics of travel across the Parish, over an increased size and local residents have shared their concerns about having to travel such a distance to attend parish council meetings – both councils have good community attendance at meetings and involve local residents in decision-making. There is no evening public transport to assist in these journeys or to attend parish events when held in the various villages.

My conclusion, and that of many local residents, is that this recommendation is neither understandable or workable. I believe that this is in direct opposition to what a Community Governance Review (according to the White Paper, 2007 Act and the Boundary Commission guidance) was intended to provide:

- Protection of community identity
- An assurance that the communities interests are understood and delivered
- Cohesive communities
- Communities that are effectively engaged and participate in decision making
- Sustainable communities

At present, these two parish councils have demonstrated historically excellent governance, community understanding and interests, community engagement and both have retained their important individual identities.

I therefore respectfully ask that the BRC does not accept this recommendation and allows these two parish councils to carry on the good work independently, in the knowledge that they will come together when in the best interests of the residents for such projects as the speed on the A442 which runs through both.

Having retained the two Parishes of Ercall Magna and Waters Upton independently, I would echo the recommendation from the Parishes in that Ercall Magna be warded further to enable Ellerdine and Rowton to have representation so, taking on board a request to reduce the number of councillors, I would support the following:

ERCALL MAGNA		
• Poynton & Roden	2	Councillors
• High Ercall & Walton	5	Councillors
• Ellerdine & Rowton	3	Councillors
WATERS UPTON		
• Waters Upton	5	Councillors

Many thanks for considering my comments.

Kind regards

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