

Rodington Parish Council Response to the Community Governance Review 2025

Rodington Parish Council strenuously objects to the proposal to combine Wrockwardine and Rodington Parish Councils.

Having reviewed the results of the previous consultation Rodington Parish Council notes the following:

- 48 responses were received from members of the public. 46 of these were strong objections to the proposals.
- Both Parish Councils object to the proposals

The Boundary Review Committee has not sufficiently explained any benefits from merging Wrockwardine and Rodington Parish Councils despite the clearly outlined objections received from residents. 31 responses received specifically mention Rodington Parish Council and the effective way that it meets the needs of its residents regarding local issues. The Review Commission does not seem to have taken these responses, as well as the concerns raised by Rodington Parish Council, into consideration, which prompts Rodington Parish Council to ask why the consultation has taken place at all. It is clear from the results of the consultation that there is an overwhelming, if not unanimous, opposition to the proposal and to go ahead with it makes a mockery of the process of consultation and local democracy.

There is no shared community identity between the two parishes proposed for merger. The current arrangements allow the Parish Council to focus on local issues and drive forward a number of initiatives in a cohesive community. Rodington Parish Council has achieved several awards for its work in the local area, which demonstrates how well the Council serves its local residents. Combining Rodington Parish Council with a community miles away will obviously dilute the focus on the priorities in the parish, the connection with our residents and the effective delivery of local services. This proposal goes against the prevailing direction of thought which advocates decentralizing decision making because local decision making is more nimble and more able to respond to local needs.

It is hard to see how, with fewer local councillors, the commitment to various projects could be maintained. With funds shared with other villages, there will be less commitment to the priorities of Rodington and Longdon-on-Tern. These are:

1. The management of playing fields and a cemetery contributes to the strenuous objection of Rodington Parish Council to this proposal. Rodington Parish Council invests heavily in the cemetery at Rodington, and this is a priority for residents of Rodington and Longdon. The cemetery requires ongoing maintenance which the Parish Council pays for. The Clerk is the Burials Officer for the Parish and significant hours are devoted to the cemetery. This would not be possible if one Clerk is working for both Parish Councils.
2. Rodington Parish Council also hosts an annual Christmas Fair which is attended by residents, the Mayor of Telford, and local schools. This is an important event for the Parish requiring sizeable financial outlay and a considerable proportion of the Clerk's hours. This event would no longer be able to take place if two Parish Councils amalgamated, as it would require a disproportionate distribution of funds.
3. Rodington has a Climate and Nature Strategy Group which is heavily supported by the Parish Council. This has contributed significantly to the development of Rodington Parish Council's approach to biodiversity and sustainability. These are gains that could easily be lost by merging with other parishes at this time due to budgetary pressures.

Practical considerations must also be considered, and the Parish Council has not had clarification on the following issues:

- The disruption and costs incurred by changeover.
- The role of the clerk and associated practical issues i.e. travelling to meetings across the county.

- The impact of increased hours for one clerk and possible job losses for other Clerks.
- The environmental cost of increased travel through the county.
- Above all, the lack of knowledge of Councillors making decisions about communities they do not know, impairing their ability to fairly represent its electorate.

Rodington Parish Council and its residents urge Telford and Wrekin to reconsider this proposal for the reasons detailed above. If Rodington Parish Council must be amalgamated with another, the Parishes of Ercall Magna or Waters Upton should be considered as viable alternatives as opposed to Wrockwardine.