

Little Budworth Parish Council's response to the Local Government Boundary Commissions review of the Tarporley Ward boundary in Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC).

Dear Mr Carlsson-Hyslop,

The Little Budworth Parish Council is writing to oppose the proposal for Little Budworth to leave the Tarporley Ward and, instead, to combine with Over (Winsford) and Whitegate. The following points detail why this proposal, to move Wards, is not appropriate but also provides some alternative suggestions. The Parish Council has also addressed the proposal to reduce the number of CWAC Councillors from 75 to 69.

Reasons why moving Little Budworth from the Tarporley Ward to a Ward combined with Over (Winsford) and Whitegate is not a viable option:

- Little Budworth needs to remain within a Ward that reflects the experiences of rural communities and must be represented by a Councillor who understands these needs are very different from urban areas like Over, Winsford. As a Ward Councillor is supposed to:
 - Represent the Ward's interests by providing a voice for all sectors of the community
 - Be a community champion, providing leadership
 - Be visible and recognisable within the community
 - Represent the individual constituents and local organisations, undertaking case work if required
 - Encourage community participation in council decision making
 - Make decisions and oversee council performance
 - Represent the council on local, regional and national bodies and partnerships.It is essential that Little Budworth's Ward Councillor continues to represent similar communities and has experience of the issues without rural/urban conflicting views.
- Little Budworth has very similar needs to the other rural communities of Eaton and Rushton and Utkinton and Cotebrook within the Tarporley Ward. The Parish Councils for all of these communities deal with similar issues such as speeding traffic on narrow lanes and the lack of public transport. These matters are different from problems experienced in urban areas like Over, Winsford. Therefore, Little Budworth needs to remain combined with the other rural communities, that are dealing with similar issues, in the Tarporley Ward. This reduces the workload and associated time for the Ward Councillor and helps provide an effective and convenient local government for all the residents.
- The parishes of the local communities in the Tarporley Ward have regular inter-parish meetings to discuss the issues being experienced and how they have been dealt with. This important interaction would be lost if Little Budworth were not to remain in the Tarporley Ward.

- Tarporley provides the main services for the residents of Little Budworth. These include doctor's surgeries, the Tarporley Hospital, the pharmacy, two opticians, a petrol station, an MOT centre/garage, a vet, a fire station, a dentist and the local, public library based in Tarporley High School. The area of Over, Winsford does not have these facilities.
- Eaton, one of the neighbouring villages to Little Budworth, provides numerous opportunities for local residents to interact at the Jessie Hughes village hall (named after the wife of the Rector of Tarporley). These activities include art groups, gardening clubs, film nights (Flicks in the Sticks) and exercise classes, amongst others. This provides both friendship and support for local residents in all the rural communities within the Tarporley Ward. This is especially important with the reduction of facilities such as social and support services. Once again, these opportunities are not provided anywhere in Over, Winsford.
- The children and young people of Little Budworth all attend schools within the catchment area of the Tarporley Ward (Eaton Primary School, Tarporley CE Primary School, Tarporley High School). The schools have transport specifically organised to collect the children of Little Budworth. The very young children of Little Budworth also attend the playgroup in Cotebrook. Over cannot provide these schooling options and Little Budworth is not within any catchment areas for schools in the wider Winsford area.
- Little Budworth Neighbourhood Watch is linked to the Tarporley area and includes Tarporley, Eaton and Rushton and Utkinton and Cotebrook. We share the same local police officer, Philip Monks, who understands the types of crime rural areas experience. It is important that these small communities can continue to work closely within the same Ward to prevent crime. This example again reflects how closely the interests and identities of Little Budworth and the other rural communities in the Tarporley Ward are aligned.
- The postal addresses of all properties in Little Budworth include Tarporley in the address and a Tarporley postcode.
- All post for residents of Little Budworth is organised at the Tarporley sorting office and not Over, which does not have a sorting office.
- The boundary of the Tarporley Ward currently mirrors exactly the Little Budworth parish boundary to the north of the village. This is an identifiable border and represents the extent of the community. It also provides the building blocks and electoral divisions for the north of the Tarporley Ward and is another example of how the boundaries of the parish and the Tarporley Ward, around Little Budworth, are clearly identifiable.
- The Little Budworth Parish Council is very active and performs roles such as assessing planning applications. Therefore, the Ward Councillor's workload is reduced because the Parish Council takes on some of the required roles. This in turns means although the Tarporley Ward, as it currently stands, may be above the electorate variance required this does not reflect the overall workload of the Ward Councillor.

- The Little Budworth Parish Council understands that the proposal to move Little Budworth from the Tarporley Ward to combine with Over, Winsford and Whitegate is based on the electorate numbers of the Wards. Tarporley has undergone great change in terms of the number of new build houses over the last couple of years. However, Over continues to experience a similar expansion and therefore the current population figures are not a true reflection of the increasing numbers in Over. In line with the reviews criteria, it is necessary to consider how these developments might affect the number of electorates in each Ward over the next 5 years, from the end of the review.
- The electoral review states '*We also aim to ensure that the pattern of wards reflects the interests and identities of local communities as well as promoting effective local government*' and therefore it is essential that Little Budworth remains part of the Tarporley Ward where these aims can be effectively met.

Alternatives to the proposed Ward change

- Little Budworth Parish Council has the below suggested alternatives to Little Budworth moving Wards:
 - o The Tarporley Ward could have 2 councillors as some of the other Wards currently do. As Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC) holds whole-council elections every 4 years this alternative would still meet the statutory criteria. It would also promote an effective and convenient local government.
 - o The Tarporley Ward could remain exactly as it is. If reducing the total number of CWAC Councillors by 6, is required, then the number of Wards will also need to reduce meaning the electorate number for each will need to increase. As the electorate number for Tarporley is already higher than other Wards it will be in line with these changes.

Reducing the number of Ward Councillors

- The Parish Council agrees with both the comments from The Conservative Group submission and those of Councillor Jones, in response to the consultation, that the changes driven by the current periods of reduction in spend and services require increased oversight and scrutiny from Councillors. This may be slightly counter balanced by the reduction in the number of committee meetings etc. that each Councillor is expected to attend. However, if the number of CWAC Councillors is cut down, as proposed in this review, each individual Councillor's workload will once again significantly increase. This seems to be at odds with the aim of the review, which is to manage the workload of each CWAC Councillor and ensure they are not overburdened.
- The Parish Council is uncertain why if the proposal is to reduce the number of CWAC Councillors, and therefore presumably number of Wards, the review has proposed a new Ward combining Little Budworth, Over and Whitegate. Perhaps the Boundaries Commission review could provide more clarity around this point?

The Little Budworth Parish Council trusts the review committee will carefully consider all the points raised above and agree that Little Budworth should remain within the Tarporley Ward.

Yours sincerely

The Chair and all committee members/councillors of Little Budworth Parish Council