

3249. → Jo  
Marche.



APPENDIX A



## BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL

6<sup>th</sup> October 2015

Mr Clive Wright  
Chief Executive  
Chief Executive's Office  
Shropshire Council.  
Shirehall  
Abbey Foregate  
Shrewsbury  
Shropshire  
SY2 6ND

Dear Clive,

### Re: Community Governance Review

At the meeting of Bridgnorth Town Council held on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2015 the Council

**RESOLVED:** that in light of recent and anticipated future developments, Bridgnorth Town Council submits to Shropshire Council a request that it conducts a Community Governance Review and examines whether the Parishes of Bridgnorth and Tasley should be merged in time for implementation at the local elections in May 2017.

We also enclose a copy of the report circulated to Councillors for the agenda item on Boundaries on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

We look forward to hearing from you and are very willing to meet with you to discuss this request for a Community Governance Review further.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Wilson  
BAHons AIH MIPM  
Town Clerk

Encl: Copy of report circulated to Bridgnorth Town Councillors

cc. Cllr. Keith Barrow Leader Shropshire Council  
Cllr. J. Hurst-Knight  
Cllr. C. Lea  
Cllr. W Parr  
Cllr L. Winwood  
Tasley Parish Council

College House, St Leonard's Close, Bridgnorth, Shropshire WV16 4EJ

Telephone: (01746) 762231

Email: [townclerk@bridgnorthtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@bridgnorthtowncouncil.gov.uk) Website: [www.bridgnorthtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.bridgnorthtowncouncil.gov.uk)

Town Clerk: Anne Wilson BA Hons AIH MIPM

## **Bridgnorth Town Boundaries – Community Governance Review**

Bridgnorth Town Council established a working party to consider the appropriateness of the Town's Boundaries in February 2015. This was prompted by the emerging SAMDev (Site Allocations and Management of Development) plan, which was submitted for examination by the planning inspectorate on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014. The SAMDev plan sets out land which will be allocated for development in Shropshire, broadly up to 2026; it also defines the role of the various types of settlement in Shropshire, and their proposed development boundaries. The examination is continuing, and SAMDev is likely to be adopted in Autumn 2015/ early 2016. Within SAMDev, it is proposed that future development in Shropshire is focussed on Shrewsbury, the Market Towns, and Key Centres. Smaller settlements (designated Community Hubs and Clusters) will see much more limited development. Bridgnorth is defined as a Market Town and is to be a focus for development.

The working party considered whether the proposals contained in SAMDev indicated a need to reconsider the boundaries between the Town of Bridgnorth and surrounding parishes, and concluding that this merits consideration in the case of Tasley parish.

The parish of Tasley adjoins and lies to the north west of Bridgnorth. Until the 1970s the only significant settlement in that parish were the few houses along two roads, Church Lane and Wenlock Road, and both of these roads are connected directly to the boundary of Bridgnorth. There is no clearly identifiable centre to the village or hamlet of Tasley, but it is said to lie 1.5 miles from the centre of Bridgnorth.

From 1974, the Borough of Bridgnorth ceased to exist, and the Town Council was no longer responsible for planning matters in the town. All planning decisions were then made by Bridgnorth District Council, and after the latter's demise in March, 2010, all planning decisions have been made by the Unitary Authority, Shropshire Council.

From the 1950s onwards, a significant number of new houses have been built within the town of Bridgnorth, mainly on housing estates. Much of this development has been on land beyond Innage Lane and Victoria Road, to the north and west of the town, finally reaching the town boundary when houses on Hook farm Road were built.

In the late 1980s, there was further development in this area, when the estate of Tasley Park was built off Hook Farm Road. However, the land on which Tasley Park was built lay in the parish of Tasley, though there was no known clearly defined natural feature to delineate the boundary; it was just the next field. There was no actual connection of Tasley Park housing estate with any other part of Tasley; the only way to enter or leave Tasley Park was and still is via Hook Farm Road and other roads in Bridgnorth.

In 2006 Bridgnorth District Council adopted The Bridgnorth District Local Plan 1996 -2011. The biggest area allocated for housing – Policy BRID 1 – was a site of 10 hectares between Wenlock Road and the A458 for an estimated 300 houses. Even though this area lies exclusively within the parish of Tasley, all reference to this area in this extensive document is to Bridgnorth, and there is no mention of Tasley. The houses have now been built, and the estate is referred to as Wenlock Rise.

## Response of Tasley Parish Council to the Request from Bridgnorth Town Council for a Community Governance Review

Bridgnorth Town Council has requested Shropshire Council to conduct a Community Governance Review with a view to Bridgnorth Town Council and Tasley Parish Council being merged in to one council. This request is not supported by Tasley Parish Council.

When Tasley Parish Council was created in 1979, Bridgnorth Town Council suggested that the parish be included in Bridgnorth. Tasley Parish Council replied that the people of Tasley had voted for their own local council with a turnout of over 50% and they declined the request by the Town Council. This demonstrates that the Town Council, even at a time when Tasley was a much smaller community, have always resented the existence of the Parish Council.

It also demonstrates that Tasley has a strong community identity which still persists today. In 1990 the new dwellings at Tasley Park were occupied and residents feel that they have been successfully integrated in to the Tasley village community.

Many of the residents of the new estate at Wenlock Rise refer to themselves as living in Tasley and in fact the estate is simply called "Tasley" locally. The parish has an active community life of its own, centered around the Church and the Village Hall, which frequently hosts well attended "Flicks in the Sticks" and other functions.

There was a community governance review carried out in 2011, in response to the creation of the new housing development at Wenlock Rise which resulted in 2 extra council seats being created for Tasley Parish Council. These seats were filled at the 2013 elections and the Council has a full complement of 7 councillors.

The Council has a good record of working with and on behalf of the local community. The Council were recently thanked by residents opposed to the creation of a large solar farm in a visually prominent location. The Council worked with residents to formulate comments objecting to the scheme which formed the basis of the reasons for which Shropshire Council refused the application and which have recently been upheld on appeal.

The Council also worked well with the community on formulating responses to SAMDEV and members of the Parish Council were applauded at a public meeting where the proposals were discussed.

The Parish Council have also shown that they can effectively work together with the Town Council and with other councils and other agencies on matters of common interest, without the two Councils having to be combined.

This was again the case when SAMDEV was being considered. The Town Council met with Tasley and with Astley Abbots Parish Council and all three councils agreed on a common view on the number of new dwellings they would like to see proposed for the Bridgnorth area and on other matters in the Plan.

Both Tasley and the Town Council were involved in the creation of a new footpath to join the Clee View Road estate in Bridgnorth with the Tasley Amenity Land. Tasley Parish Council secured a grant to cover the cost of the materials and BTC workforce constructed the path, which has proved a great benefit to residents in both communities.

Tasley Parish Council play a very active role in the Bridgnorth West and Tasley Partnership, where representatives of the Parish Council, Bridgnorth Town Council and Shropshire Council work together with the various providers of social housing in the area and with the Police. This partnership has achieved much in resolving the issues presented by all the new social housing at Wenlock Rise and

on the established estates in the West of Bridgnorth Town. One of their most significant achievements was the adoption of a good neighbour agreement which all housing providers sign and require their tenants to sign and adhere to.

All of the above shows that convenient and effective local governance exists in Tasley and will continue to do so. There is no evidence at all to suggest that a merger between the Town Council and the Parish Council would lead to any improvement in this respect.

As far as the new development proposed for Tasley in SAMDEV, is concerned, surely if a further review of Tasley is to be carried out it should be delayed until the new properties are built and occupied so that the substantial number of new residents and businesses can have a say on how and by whom the area is governed.

The point made by the Town Council regarding the people of Tasley using services they provide but not paying towards them applies to other parishes surrounding the town and to residents of the West Midlands who frequently visit the town. Like the residents of Tasley, they contribute towards the economy of the town by spending their money there and so do have a positive benefit.

The Town Council charge for services such as the Castle Hall and the cemetery and so having more people in Tasley would result in higher revenue for the Town Council if they use these services. Indeed, in the case of the cemetery, residents of Tasley and other parishes have to pay more than the residents of the Town. Other services, like the upkeep of historic buildings such as the Market Hall and the upkeep of open spaces, bus shelters and streetlights would not cost significantly more if a greater number of people were to use them.

It is also the case that people of Bridgnorth use some services in Tasley, such as the Village Hall. Although the Hall is run by an independent management committee, the building was upgraded in recent years with the help of a substantial donation from Tasley Parish Council. Organizations such as the Bridgnorth Community Choir choose to use the Hall, which provides a valuable facility to both communities.

As mentioned previously, many residents of the Town also use the amenity land at Tasley which is maintained by the Parish Council.

Tasley Parish Council do not see any need for a governance review in Tasley for the foreseeable future. They regard the request for a review put forward by the Town Council as what in business terms would be called a hostile takeover bid, motivated by that Council for one reason only - to boost their revenues from the existing and proposed new development in Tasley.

The Town Council have given no indication as to how this extra revenue would be spent to the benefit of the people of Tasley. The Parish Council fear that it would be used to fund the proposed visitor centre at Severn park or for other purposes in the town which would have little impact on Tasley.

The request for a community governance review is unnecessary, unwelcome and ill founded. It will simply distract Shropshire Council and the two local councils from concentrating on the really important challenges which face all of local government in the coming months and years.

Bill Griffiths [tasleyclerk@gmail.com](mailto:tasleyclerk@gmail.com)

Clerk to Tasley Parish Council