

Community Governance Review

1. From around the 1960s, Bridgnorth Town Council (BTC) ceased to be a borough council and became a parish council. Within the last couple of decades, the principal councils, initially Bridgnorth District Council until March 2009 and from April 2009 Shropshire Council, have approved plans to expand the town of Bridgnorth specifically and extensively by housing and other developments in the neighbouring parish of Tasley.
2. It would be logical to include such developments within the current town of Bridgnorth, and this can only be achieved by changing the boundaries of the town. The alternative is to allow the creation of another town which is attached to Bridgnorth Town, with no discernible boundary between the two.
3. The only organisation that has the authority to make any changes to BTC's boundaries is Shropshire Council(SC), and this is done by via a process known as Community Governance Review (CGR),
4. In 2015 and again in 2018, BTC asked SC to undertake a CGR of Bridgnorth Town's parish boundaries. On both occasions, SC turned down these requests.
5. There is another way to make SC undertake a CGR, and for BTC this can be done by a petition signed by at least 7.5 % of the electorate. Such a petition was submitted at the end of 2018, and SC undertook a CGR. SC decided not to change any boundaries, and this was reported at their Council Meeting held on 27/02/20 . However, in one of their statements made in July 2019, SC agreed (i.e., conceded) that there is no obvious boundary between Bridgnorth and Tasley.
6. Also, at SC's 27/02/20 Council Meeting, there was another agenda item titled Shropshire Community Governance Reviews. This included:
 - a. Recommended that preparatory work is undertaken with a view to submitting draft Terms of Reference for consideration by Council in 2021 for CGRs including areas to be transferred from one parish to another and considering wider governance issues including umbers of councillors and warding/division arrangements.
 - b. That the existing CGR Working Group oversee the preparation of the draft Terms of Reference.
 - c. Contacting town and parish councils, obtaining views of SC Members and a rolling programme of reviews would need to be manged.
7. In 2020, many people were aware, and it was acknowledged by leaders in SC, that many of the town councils in Shropshire had similar boundary issues as BTC, and that this would require a sizeable number of reviews to be undertaken, probably over a period of years. Some of these leaders did indicate that Bridgnorth would be given priority when considering timetabling CGRs.
8. As the population of Tasley Parish increases, it could become increasingly difficult to include Tasley within Bridgnorth.
9. SC's current website has a small item about CGRs. It mentions five reasons why a CGR may be undertaken, but there is no mention of changing parish boundaries. It also states that a CGR must be completed within a year of commencement. This is incorrect; any CGR must be completed within one year of SC receiving a request. The website also states that currently there are no CGRs being undertaken.