

Community of Monmouth

Current Community Format

1. The current community arrangements in Monmouth consist of five wards, Dixton with Osbaston, Town, Drybridge, Overmonnow and Wyesham. The community has a total electorate of 7994 and is represented by 16 community councillors. The electorate per ward and number of councillors is as follows:

Community Ward	Electorate	Number of Councillors
Dixton with Osbaston	1902	4
Town	588	1
Drybridge	2051	3
Overmonnow	1774	4
Wyesham	1679	4

Natural Boundaries / Key Features

2. The working group considered natural boundaries within the community of Monmouth to be the River Wye and River Monnow, the A40 and the A466.

Electorate Forecast

3. There are a number of proposals within the community of Monmouth that will increase in the electorate of the existing community. An additional 39 properties are to be built in the Dixton with Osbaston ward, 12 properties within the Town ward, 52 properties in the Wyesham ward and 84 properties in the Drybridge ward.
- 3.1. The community of Monmouth also contains proposals within the Councils LDP that would significantly alter the electorate within the community. An additional 35 properties are proposed within the Wyesham ward and 370 properties are proposed within the Drybridge ward.

Representations Received

4. Monmouth Town Council submitted a representation proposing that the boundary of Dixton with Osbaston is amended to follow the River Monnow rather than Osbaston Road as well as recommending another community councillor for the Drybridge ward. They also recommended reviewing the County Council ward of Drybridge and Town as Overmonnow and Town may be a more suitable combination.

Recommendations

External Boundaries

5. The working group identified two areas for amendment in relation to the external boundary of the community of Monmouth. The first amendment is in the Rockfield Studios area at the north of the community adjoining the Rockfield and St Maughans ward of the Llangattock Vibon Avel Community. The group queried why the boundary extended so north of the urban area of Drybridge and identified Ancre Hill Lane as being an easily identifiable feature that separates Monmouth from Llangattock Vibon Avel. The amendment would also ensure that Rockfield Studios is located within the Rockfield and St Maughans ward which its names is closer associated with. It is proposed that the new boundary will run north of Croft Y Bwla and Ancre Hill Lane and join up with the River Monnow and follow the existing boundary for Dixton with Osbaston.
- 5.1. The second amendment is to the southern boundary between the Monmouth and Mitchel Troy communities near Troy House. Whilst the group accept that the current boundary between the two communities which follows the River Trothy is a natural, easily identifiable boundary, it does not provide convenient local government for Troy House given its close association with the Monmouth Community by falling within the Mitchel Troy Community. It is therefore proposed that the boundary is amended to leave the River Trothy near the edge of Troy Park Wood and rejoin the river near the garden centre to include Troy House in the community of Monmouth.

Internal Boundaries

- 5.2. A number of changes have been made to the internal boundaries of the community of Monmouth. When reviewing the community, it was clear that the current distribution of electors between the wards is unbalanced and will only worsen due to the proposed housing developments within the community. When reviewing the community, it was identified that the following proposals could be put forward which are in line with the Terms of Reference for this review whilst addressing the variance in electorate.

Dixton with Osbaston

- 5.3. Two areas were identified for amendment within the Dixton with Osbaston ward, the area of Forge Lane and the area of the southern boundary that divides Dixton with Osbaston and Town ward near the A40.

In the Forge Lane area, the current boundary between Dixton with Osbaston follows the roads Monk Street, The Parade and Osbaston Road. The current boundary intersects properties on either side of these roads between two different wards, and currently County Council wards, and includes all properties associated with Forge Road, as well as Osbaston school, in the Town ward of the community even though these are separated from the rest of the Town ward by the River Monnow. In addition, one of the criteria set out in the Terms of Reference for this review is to amend any instances of boundaries intersecting roads as it causes confusion for the electorate and does not provide for easy and convenient local government. It is therefore

proposed that the boundary in this area is amended to follow the River Monnow with the boundary leaving Osbaston Road at the bridge adjoining Osbaston Road and the Pavilion where it will then follow the River Monnow northwards. This will ensure that the area north of the Monnow River, i.e on the Osbaston side of the river, is included in the Dixton with Osbaston ward.

- 5.4. A similar scenario occurs at the southern end of Dixton with Osbaston where the boundary separating this ward with Town intersects a number of streets including Bridge Street, St James Street and Whitecross Street. The group propose that a more suitable boundary for this area which will be in line with the Terms of Reference for this review, would be to extend the Town ward up to the Dixton Roundabout with the new boundary following the rear of the properties on Dixton Road and The Parade with the new boundary adjoining the existing Dixton with Osbaston boundary at the intersection of The Parade and Osbaston Road.

Town

- 5.5. As mentioned in 5.2 above, there is a large imbalance in electorate between the wards of the community of Monmouth with the Town ward significantly lower than the other wards, mostly in part due to a smaller number of residential properties in the ward within the Town Centre area. Whilst the working group understand that less electors doesn't result in less workload within a town centre area, they do feel that there is scope to increase the electorate within the Town ward whilst complying with the Terms of Reference and ensuring that the boundaries lead to effective and convenient local government.

As mentioned in 5.4 above, it already proposed to extend the town ward within the Dixton area to incorporate the area around St James Square and Dixton Road in to the Town ward.

The current Town ward extends above the Monnow River incorporating the area around the Territorial Army Site and Pavillion as well as previously mentioned, Forge Lane. The group believe that the River acts as a natural boundary between this area and the town centre and as such should not be included in the same ward. It is therefore proposed that the new boundary of the Town ward follows the Monnow River with the area north of the river incorporated into the Drybridge ward.

It is also proposed to extend the southern boundary of the Town ward to incorporate the area south of the Monnow River to the rear of the properties at Clawdd Du. Whilst this proposal crosses the River which has been used as a boundary in other areas of the community, this area includes the old and new Monnow Bridge which provide strong links between the two areas. The Town ward will also include the area around Bridges Community Centre and Drybridge Park as well as the houses north of Wonastow Road up to the industrial estate.

Drybridge

- 5.6. The northern boundary of the Drybridge ward, which is also the external community boundary has been amended as stated in 5. above. Also see 5.5 above regarding amendments to the Town ward which effect the Drybridge ward.

The current Drybridge ward has an electorate of 2051 and has proposed developments within the ward that will increase the electorate to 2219. In addition to this, proposed in the LDP between the Drybridge and the Overmonnow ward at Wonsatow Road is additional development of 350 properties which could increase the electorate in the ward to approximately 2919. In comparison to the electorate of other wards in the community the potential difference in electorate is too great and needs to be addressed. Additionally, in the Terms of Reference for the review, it states that where possible the group will prepare proposals that will include whole development sites within a single ward to ensure that the proposed boundaries are future proof and do not lead to confusion amongst the electorate should these developments go ahead. Currently the boundary for the proposed site is split between Overmonnow and Drybridge wards so requires amendment. To that end the southern boundary of the Drybridge ward near the Singleton Court Business Park has been amended to incorporate the proposed site of the Wonastow Road development contained in the LDP in to the Overmonnow ward.

Overmonnow

- 5.7. See sections 5.1, 5.5 and 5.6 above regarding amendments to the Overmonnow ward.

Wyesham

- 5.8. The working group reviewed the existing arrangements for the Wyesham ward and recommend that the boundaries remain unchanged.

Proposed Community and Community Ward Names

8. The working group propose no changes to the community and community ward names in Monmouth but welcome recommendations as to suitable alternatives.

Proposed Electoral Arrangements

9. The working group consider the Monmouth community to fall within the urban category for elector/councillor ratio resulting in an ideal ratio of 500 electors per councillor. The above changes to the community boundaries will result in the following electoral arrangements for the community.

Community Ward	Electorate	Number of Councillors
Dixton with Osbaston	1762	4
Town	1676	3
Drybridge	1889	4
Overmonnow	1802	4
Wyesham	1853	4

Working Group Individual Member Comments

8. All members of the working group approved the proposals for the community of Monmouth.

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