

Response from Youlgrave Parish Council

Youlgrave Parish Council **OBJECTS** to the proposed abolition of Lathkill & Bradford Ward and the proposal to instead amalgamate Youlgrave into Bakewell Ward.

Our response is guided by the three key criteria underlying the review: (i) equality of representation; (ii) reflecting community interests and identities; and (iii) providing for effective and convenient local government.

We believe there is compelling evidence to suggest that Youlgrave, together with neighbouring village communities, should continue to form a Ward of its own and not become part of Bakewell:

1. Youlgrave is a locally distinct village that shares little in common with the town of Bakewell. Youlgrave, together with Alport and Middleton (and the rural hamlets of Smerrill and Harthill), are closely connected village communities in the Bradford Valley that share the same everyday services, the same monthly community magazine, the same vicar, the same bus service, are connected by one single road and valley bottom path, and so on.
2. The children at Youlgrave School/Nursery/Girlguiding unit, patients at Youlgrave Surgery, worshippers at Youlgrave's church and chapels, customers at Youlgrave's pubs, shops and garage - these almost all come from Youlgrave and its surrounding villages and farming communities, not Bakewell.
3. Historically and politically Youlgrave has been separate from Bakewell. Indeed, Youlgrave residents have returned an independent village-based District Councillor for over 30 continuous years - unique within the Derbyshire Dales. This is a clear statement of local identity and a desire for specific representation. Instead, Bakewell is and has always been a political party Ward, so that Youlgrave would likely lose its much-valued independent voice under the proposals.
4. Youlgrave does not have the same focus as a busy town like Bakewell - the volume of visitors and traffic, parking restrictions, large retail presence and civic issues, etc. Instead, Youlgrave's issues are specifically village in scale and nature - the future of the village school, surgery, two shops, bus route, farming and quarry interests, and so on. In other words, Youlgrave's priorities are all at a parish level, not town.
5. Bakewell is, for the core Peak District, not just a large town but its only town, with arguably a national identity, and as such it should have distinct and separate representation that does not confuse town and village, or allow one to be subservient over the other.

Our proposal:

6. Youlgrave should continue to form a rural Ward made up of neighbouring villages closely linked by common identity, interests and geography and not be subsumed by Bakewell.
7. Keeping neighbouring villages together in this way will promote effective and convenient local government because residents will have a District Councillor who understands and represents the interests of small rural communities - not a busy and political town.

8. The Ward should cover:
 - Youlgrave, Alport, Middleton & Smerrill and Harthill (all part of the same Bradford Valley community). We note that currently the Boundary Commission's proposals are for Middleton & Smerrill to be placed in Bonsall & Winster Ward, but for the reasons given above and notwithstanding the views of Middleton & Smerrill Parish Council we feel it more appropriate for it to be with Youlgrave and the other Bradford Valley communities.
 - Monyash and Over Haddon (connected to Alport and Youlgrave via Lathkill Dale and the important thoroughfare of Long Rake - indeed Over Haddon is in sight of Youlgrave and villagers/visitors walk from one to the other every day).
9. Based on DDDC's electoral forecasting for 2026, it would give the following figures:
 - Youlgrave (including Alport) 875
 - Middleton & Smerrill 119
 - Harthill 46
 - Monyash 268
 - Over Haddon 205
10. If these villages were combined it would give a total of 1,513 electors. Bakewell Ward becomes a 2 District Councillor Ward as per the original LBC recommendations.
11. However, by adding Stanton in Peak (285) and Birchover (284) - both of which are part of the same United CofE Benefice as Youlgrave - the total comes to 1,822, which is similar in numbers to other proposed Wards with single councillors. This leaves South Darley with Winster and Bonsall.
12. Alternatively, adding nearby villages like Sheldon (62) and Ashford in the Water (380) makes a grand total of 1,955, which again is similar in numbers to other proposed Wards with single councillors and removes other villages from Bakewell Ward's town priorities.
13. A further alternative would be to add more distant historical connections by the inclusion of Gratton 14 (same CofE parish) and Elton 323, both parishes provide the headwaters of our River Bradford, totalling 1850 electors and even adding Winster 457 giving a grand total of 2307 which would allow the Stanton Ward to incorporate Bonsall as another area traditionally associated with quarrying.

In conclusion this parish sees no benefit in the breakup of like-minded rural communities and considers that the reconnection of Over Haddon with the existing Lathkill and Bradford Ward the optimal representation - with the addition of other bordering rural communities to satisfy electoral numbers and reduction of the Town's 3 Councillors to 2 the natural choice if maintaining the overall numbers is necessary – though it considers community values of greater importance than head count.

Youlgrave Parish Council
March 2021