



Responses Received to Bridgend County Borough Council Electoral Arrangement Review



Bridgend 001 – Clerk to Brackla Community Council via E-Mail – Brackla, Coychurch Lower:

Good Afternoon

Following the recent Electoral Arrangement review of all Town and Community Councils across Bridgend County Borough, please see the below feedback from Brackla Community Council:

At its recent Full Council Meeting, Brackla Community Council considered Bridgend CBC's proposals for a review of electoral arrangements within the county borough, with particular attention paid to the proposed merger of Brackla CC and Coychurch Lower CC.

It is the view of Brackla CC that the disadvantages of the proposed merger far outweigh any perceived advantages.

Our current Chairperson, Cllr Eugene Caparros (who is also the current Chairperson at Coychurch Lower CC) commented that the residents of Coychurch Lower are also opposed to the proposed merger.

Although geographical neighbours, it is felt that Brackla and Coychurch Lower are two disparate communities.

With regard to BCBC's proposed minimum Community Council size of 5,000 electors, it is felt that this is an extremely arbitrary figure and one which is inflexible and penalises smaller Councils.

In terms of the new community ward boundary proposals for Brackla, it is felt that the naming and constitution of the proposed 7 new wards is confusing.

Should the proposed merger between Brackla CC & Coychurch Lower CC go ahead (against the will of both Community Councils), Councillors commented that there is a distinct lack of clarity regarding:

- The new Council inheriting the Williams Memorial Hall
- Staffing implications of the merger
- Would Brackla CC simply inherit Coychurch Lower CC's precept?
- Would Brackla CC inherit Coychurch Lower's CAT plans?
- Would two Councillors on the newly-merged Council be sufficient to meet the needs of the Coychurch Lower residents?

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Bridgend 002 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Brackla, Coity Higher:

I like that the 8x are back in Brackla, and with the potential of development on the Brackla north Estate and all the amenities being in Brackla I think it's a fair move

Bridgend 003 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Coychurch Lower, Brackla, Bridgend Town, Coychurch Higher:

I strongly disagree with the proposals for Coychurch Lower and Coychurch Higher wards. With the adopting of 5000 electors as a minimum for a community council it becomes obvious that the authors of this report have adopted a bigger is better approach. The changes to the Coychurch Lower ward (moving residents of Waterton and Brocastle into Bridgend Town on the basis of the presence of the industrial/retail estates) can be seen as a deliberate attempt to reduce the electorate and this make the ward less sustainable. There is a disturbing trend here to absorb smaller mainly rural/semi-rural community councils into larger urban communities. This will disenfranchise the residents in the smaller communities as they will never have sufficient votes on the new councils to have enough influence to action the needs of their distinctly different communities. This takes the decision making for the smaller community both physically and psychologically further from the residents rather than bringing democracy closer to the people (as claimed in the consultation document). If the aim is to reduce the number of community councils why not merge similar communities even if they don't add up to the "magic" number of 5000. Eg, Coychurch Lower and Coychurch Higher are both rural/semi-rural and both have councils that are the sole trustee for a village hall. Both of these councils have worked hard of the years for and with, their residents to improve their environments, obtain funding for community projects and create community cohesion and identity through shared activities. Much, if not all, of this could be lost by being swallowed up by a much larger urban community. This could create a sense of being forgotten or ignored rather than inclusion amongst the residents, in particular, for older residents and those who would have difficulty getting to the venue of the new council's meetings. Communities are much more than numbers on a spreadsheet. This review is based on numbers of electors. The report does not take into account the socio-economic demographic or cultural distinctiveness of communities "on the ground". From the county borough councils view it may make some sense to reduce the number of community councils but not necessarily financially. In the case of Coychurch Lower the councillors forgo their entitled payment as they are motivated to volunteer to do something for their community. So reducing 7 to 2 councillors would not have an impact. It is this personal involvement in the community where they live that is at risk of being lost. On another notes, one of the main differences between these small communities' councils and the larger urban ones is the amount of part politics and possible confrontation. In Coychurch Lower 5 of the 6 current councillors (and all previous councillors) have no political affiliation (official party or "independent"). They are a team of volunteers focussed solely on providing service to the residents in the Coychurch Lower ward where discussion and consensus is preferred. The residents value this and will not easily engage with a council with a different ethos.

Bridgend 004 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

Coychurch must not be linked to Brackla. It's a completely separate community which is run very well. No payment is made to councillors. The process is democratic to elect them and becomes not attested when no one else comes forward.

Bridgend 005 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

Excellent plan to merge Coychurch Lower with Brackla. Over recent years Coychurch lower have been an utter disgrace especially in connection to the ruination of our playing field. Hopefully when merged with Brackla we, the taxpayer, will benefit from the economies of scale that as a very small CC we cannot get on our own. More importantly I hope the new CC will benefit more professionally run

Bridgend 006 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I do not want Coychurch lower to end up under brackla. If this is to go ahead, is the council tax going to reduce? Why should I save my hard earned money and pay the money I do to live in Coychurch (my decision) for it to be swallowed up by brackla. You're taking the mick out of all Coychurch residents. It's time to fight back against your behaviour.

Bridgend 007 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

Do not agree that Coychurch should merge with brackla. Will loose community identity and power which is the appeal of the village. It will put people off living here. We already have a historic effective community council this will upset the supportive balance in the village which would be a huge set back.

Bridgend 008 – Member of Public via Online Survey - General:

Your map appears incorrect for the house numbers in Briary Way.

Bridgend 009 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

My wife and I are residents of Coychurch and have read and studied the draft proposals for the above and would like to have recorded our observation and disagreements to these proposals.

As background, we are residents of Coychurch and have been so for 40 plus years, I [REDACTED] have served on the Community Council and the Villagers Association have been a Trustee of the Williams Memorial Hall.

Whilst we understand the proposals were drawn up taking into account the Aston Business School guidelines, these were published in 1992, some 23 years ago and are therefore not up to date in today's modern society.

We understand that economy of scale strategies in both financial and in administrative processes, however that is not the case in ALL circumstances, and, without doubt, that applies to the proposed amalgamation of Coychurch Community Council with Brackla.

Our first concern rest on the fact that both communities are totally different in many aspects. Brackla is a large housing estate, whilst Coychurch, a village of long standing, a village with a village community, which through the Community Council supports itself. It is separated from Brackla by a main road and a railway line and as such there are two separate communities.

Also, the current democratic differences are evident, in that the Brackla Community Council is very much politically driven whilst the Coychurch Community Council is run on a totally nonpolitical basis, allowing the interests of the village to be the main driving point to delivery, as opposed to the political alignment in Brackla.

The suggested structure of the proposed Brackla Community Council weighs heavily in favour of the residents of Wards in Brackla. The twelve / two split in elected members will undoubtedly result in the precepts paid by the villagers of Coychurch being spent in Brackla to the detriment of Coychurch, due to the overtly bias split of 12 councillors to Brackla to 2 for Coychurch.

The Williams Memorial Hall will no doubt be the first casualty of this as the Coychurch Community Councillors ensure the survival of this very popular and fully used facility. The Councillors are Trustees of the Hall and without them in place the management responsibilities would be lost. Without ringfencing the money paid by residents of Coychurch via the precept, funding will be lost in the political malaise of the proposed new Council i.e. subsidising Brackla residents.

The recent asset transfer of the Coychurch children's park is another area of financial concern as are the many other services provided by the Coychurch Community Council e.g. supporting the youth club, over 60 club and other community groups as well as being very closely involved with the St, Crallo's Church (known as the Cathedral of the Vale).

Should the proposals go ahead the current ongoing asset transfer of the playing field from BCBC to Coychurch Community Council must now be in doubt, as any such decision should be made by the proposed new administration. Again, I suggest that the funding for this area will be very problematic due to the proposed arrangements.

I am keen to understand your definition of urban and rural. In note 12 on page 6 of the document you state the Council CONSIDERS the areas listed in that paragraph to be more urban, can this be explained in much greater detail and provide the definitive definition used in this statement as the residents in all those areas would consider themselves to be living in a rural community and not an urban area.

Further the document says, 'The Council considers' I take this to mean the Council has already discussed this and the proposals supplied to us are therefore only a means to satisfy consultation requirements on an issue already agreed, and not an issue for discussions with Coychurch residents.

I do not see how the alignment of those area with Bridgend Town will have benefits other than equalling numbers as opposed to considering the like for like benefits for residents.

As for the proposed changes which will affect other areas, I will allow them to pass comment themselves.

It is our opinion the proposed changes to nothing to add benefit to the residents of any of the areas throughout the County of Bridgend. It is clearly on a numbers game bases, as I have said, on outdated academic research.

At a time when the County Council is struggling to deliver services due to the financial constraints on it budget, we are amazed that these proposals, which will provide the Council with no financial gain, but will require enormous expenditure, is being considered.

We are therefore registering out objections to these proposals in the strongest possible manner.

Bridgend 010 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I am concerned and opposed to to the proposal to change the boundary of the Coychurch Community council and its possible merger with Brackla to form a Brackla Community Council.

As a resident of Coychurch for over 40 years, Coychurch has successfully retained a rural, village community ethos and has a very different approach to the more urban Brackla. I foresee the probability of the erosion of our culture and priorities as we would have a much lesser voice – 2 against 14 – with Brackla.

To create boundaries based arbitrarily on population size is not taking into the account the different values and cultures of communities.

I sincerely hope that the council will reconsider its propsal and the possible damage to communities that these changes would incur.

Bridgend 011 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I would like to register my opposition to the proposal to merge Coychurch with Brackla.

Coychurch is geographically separate from Brackla and has a completely different dynamic. I would therefore like to object to the proposal to merge the two communities.

Bridgend 012 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla, Bridgend Town:

On Tuesday 11th February I attended the Coychurch public council meeting regarding the above subject [Changes to Community and Town Council Ward Boundaries]. Having been a resident of Coychurch since 2000, that being a short time compared to many of the Coychurch residents, it was quite evident at the night of the meeting that all those attended disagreed with the draft proposal.

As you are aware, the proposal reduces the number of councillors for Coychurch lower from 7 to 2 and to place Coychurch within the Brackla ward which has an unchanged number of councillors being 12 in total. Obviously, this is due to the size policy you intend to adopt. This puts Coychurch lower into an exceptionally low and an unfair minority which I believe will not improve the level of local government in the area.

The villagers are extremely happy with the work that the local councillors carry out, as they have done over many years helping to keep a sense of community, something of which will be lost if your proposal goes ahead. I also disagree with the council's proposal to move Waterton and Brocastle placing them as urban when they are obviously rural communities more attached to Coychurch than the large urban area of Bridgend.

Furthermore, if moving the boundaries to the M4 motorway then why not include the new housing site, which is near the Mercedes dealership on the Coychurch lower side of the M4.

One person in the meeting suggested adjoining Coychurch and Coity. If that were to happen to also include Coychurch Higher that would substantially increase the number of electors achieving an established ward with historic relevance.

Also discussed in the meeting was the future of the Williams Memorial Hall, a place where several organisations meet and community events can be held. It would be a backward step and a huge loss to our community should we lose this important building/meeting place.

Finally, The village of Coychurch has a historic background encompassing Saint Crallo's church which dates back to the 13th century together with some older properties dotted within the community not like the much younger community of Brackla and I find the proposal totally unacceptable.

Bridgend 013 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I attended the Coychurch Public Council Meeting on Tuesday evening 11th February at the Williams Memorial Hall.

As a resident of Coychurch Lower, I am very passionate about retaining the identity of this very people focused village and ensuring that we get the balance right of this situation.

Reading through your proposal it certainly does NOT reflect or bode well for this village as our representation from our current 7 Councillors to 2, where our voice is silenced amongst the 14 in the proposal. I also know that this community is a close knit community with villagers moving and living here for their lifetime or many years and this is an inherent difference to Brackla. There are also several members of the same family's living within the village community, of which I am one, and moved here to be close to family.

Appreciative of the new ward number required to be a minimum of 5000. Is this really necessary within Coychurch? The council has been established and worked very well together with their members to keep the feel of a "traditional" village for the people who have chosen to live in it. If I wanted to be in a newer larger housing estate I would have bought a property in Brackla. I wanted to live in traditional village with a Parish Church, Local shop, village pubs, community centre being the memorial hall, Play park and field for everyone now the field have been upgraded all within walking distance, Coychurch. I feel that if we were to merge with Brackla that the sense of "Community" would be lost completely as we would have very little voice of "our people" within the village for what is important to us who live in it. I feel very strongly about keeping this village with its own identity.

It is a very disturbing and unacceptable proposal put forward by BCBC.

The villagers expressed at our meeting, which was well attended, and had a single voice about this proposal. NO we do not want this to go ahead and feel that all that what the Community Council achieve here is in the residents interest and this will be gone.

Also an alarming comment to hear was about the potential lack of future of the Williams Memorial Hall. If this went ahead, it would absolutely crush the community activities and spirit.

I hope the feedback from our representative councillor at the meeting has reflected these views that we want to keep our unique identity of Coychurch.

Bridgend 014 – Member of Public via E-Mail – General:

What's the basis for the number of councillors ie Coychurch merge with Brackla? Population?

Bridgend 015 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I am writing to formally express my concerns regarding the council boundary changes.

My family and now myself have lived in the village since the 1800. We have been active community members participating in many activities to improve and create the identity, reputation and surroundings of our beautiful village.

I am extremely concerned regarding the proposals in that it will seriously impact on the historical identity of our village. We have a school and church historically named in recognition of who we are.

There is an active community council and it is absolutely inevitable that our village voice will be lost.

Large councils with a small minority from the village will significant impact on ability to influence decisions.

Most importantly the village hall has a very strong history. It was left in trust to the village for the village people.

Hence its important to ensure that history is protected and maintained into the future. People on the council who have no connection or history or passion for the village are unlikely to have its best interests at heart.

My grandchildren will be going to the school and my 4 children are actively looking to come back to live in the village. Maintaining its unique voice, identity, history is vital and as such I strongly feel these proposals aim to achieve the opposite of its intention.

Thank you for considering my points.

Bridgend 016 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I am writing to express my strong objection to the proposed merger of Coychurch Community Council with Brackla Community Council. This merger would be highly detrimental to Coychurch Lower and its residents for several key reasons.

Firstly, the proposed council structure is unfair. With only two councillors representing Coychurch out of a total of 14, our community's voice would be significantly weakened. Such an imbalance would make it difficult for Coychurch residents to have any meaning influence on decisions that directly impact them.

Secondly, this merger risks the loss of Coychurch's distinct village identity. Our community has a rich history and a strong sense of belonging, which would be undermined if we were absorbed into a much larger area. The character of Coychurch is important to those who live here, and merging councils would threaten what makes our village unique.

Furthermore, Coychurch residents would have little control over local decisions affecting their area. With so few representatives, key matters such as planning, infrastructure, and local services could be decided without properly addressing our village's specific needs. It is vital that our community retains the ability to influence the policies that shape its future.

For these reasons, I strongly urge that this merger be reconsidered. Keeping Coychurch Community Council independent is essential to ensuring fair representation, maintaining our village identity, and protecting the interests of local residents.

Thank you for considering this objection. I look forward to your response.

Bridgend 017 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I am writing to oppose the draft proposals for the changes of the ward of Coychurch. In the meeting I attending it said that BCBC was proposing that Coychurch Lower would join and become part of Brackla. I oppose this because for multiple reasons:

- As a family with small children we have recently chosen to buy a house in a stable village community. With a very special community feel. Brackla as I'm sure you will agree is a much larger estate and not the close knit community feel etc. of Coychurch
- As stated in your document that BCBC would ensure that Communities continue to reflect local identities, which would definitely not be the case if Coychurch and Brackla were to join as a community. I feel Coychurch would lose its identity as a small village community, where we all look out for one another.
- With the councillors in Brackla being a larger number and Coychurch having much fewer representatives, there would be no hope for anything Coychurch wanted or suggested being carried out, as the councillors for Coychurch would be out numbered.
- A village like Coychurch and a large housing estate like Brackla have absolutely nothing in common. I feel it would be detrimental to the village of Coychurch and its residence if these proposals are enforced.

So on the grounds mentioned above I am against these changes.

Bridgend 018 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I am writing to formally object to the proposed merger of Coychurch Community Council with Brackla Community Council.

This merger raises significant concerns that I believe will negatively impact Coychurch Lower and it's residents.

Under the proposed arrangements out of 14 councillors only 2 will represent Coychurch. This is extremely unfair and will result in our village have a minority voice. This severely limiting our ability to influence that directly affect our community such as planning, infrastructure etc. Such an imbalance undermines the principles of fair representation and fair governance.

This merger threatens the unique identity of Coychurch village. Coychurch has a long history, strong community ties, a distinct character that would be at risk of being overshadowed by a much larger Brackla Community.

Therefore, as a person who moved from Brackla to Coychurch I strongly oppose the merger and urge the decision makers to reconsider. Preserving an independent Coychurch Community Council to protect the village identity and safeguard the interests of residents.

I also believe that if a merger has to go ahead due to financial reasons villages should be merged not a village and housing estate which have different values.

Bridgend 019 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I am writing to oppose the draft proposals for the changes of the ward of Coychurch. In the meeting I attended it said that BCBC was proposing that Coychurch Lower would join and become part of Brackla. I oppose this because:

- We chose to buy a house in a stable village community. Brackla as I'm sure you will agree has a large turnover of families moving in and out of the area, as families grow and people move on.
- As you said in your document that BCBC would ensure that Communities continue to reflect local identities, which would definitely not be the case if Coychurch and Brackla were to join as a community.
- With the councillors in Brackla being something like 12 in number and Coychurch having 2 representatives, there would be no hope for anything Coychurch wanted or suggested being carried out, as the councillors for Coychurch would be far out numbered.
- A village like Coychurch and a large modern housing estate like Brackla have absolutely nothing in common.

So on the grounds mentioned above and I'm sure many more I am against these changes.

Bridgend 020 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I am writing to voice my objections to the proposed boundary changes relating to abolishing Coychurch Lower Community Council. I am very concerned that there will be a loss of village identity, as well as Coychurch not being represented fairly on the new Brackla Community Council, as many of the councillors would have no links to Coychurch. For these reasons I would not want this change to go ahead as proposed.

I hope this feedback may be of help and look forward to the continued representation of Coychurch in its current form, which I am very happy with.

Bridgend 021 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

With regard to abolishing Coychurch Lower Community council, I would like to ask the reasoning behind this proposal? If the merger does go ahead why call it Brackla community council? We do exist in Coychurch & being represented by ten non-residents will totally devalue our existence. I totally disagree with this proposal.

Bridgend 022 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I am writing to formally object to the proposed merger of Coychurch Community Council with Brackla Community Council. I believe this decision would be highly detrimental to Coychurch Lower and its residents for the following reasons.

Firstly, the proposed council structure is deeply unbalanced. Coychurch would only have two representatives out of a total of 14 councillors, leaving our community with an unreasonably small voice in decision-making. This lack of fair representation means that the interests of Coychurch residents could easily be overshadowed.

Additionally, this merger threatens the unique identity of Coychurch. Our village has a strong sense of community and a distinct heritage that would be at risk if we were absorbed into a much larger area. Losing our independent council would inevitably weaken the local character and sense of belonging that residents value.

Furthermore, with so few representatives, Coychurch residents would have little influence over key decisions affecting their area. Matters such as local planning, services, and infrastructure would likely be decided with little regard for the specific needs of our community. The residents of Coychurch should have a meaningful say in the issues that impact their daily lives.

For these reasons, I strongly oppose the merger and urge those responsible to reconsider. Maintaining an independent Coychurch Community Council is essential to ensuring fair representation, preserving our village's identity, and protecting the interests of its residents.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Bridgend 023 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I am contacting regarding the proposed plans to abolish Coychurch Lower Community Council.

We have been advised that the plans are to merge into Brackla's Community Council leaving only 14 Community councillors, with just two members for Coychurch.

We are absolutely shocked at the suggested that Coychurch should not have voices in these matters. I'd ask how you intend to hear the voices of those in Coychurch, whom I might add have vastly different needs to that of Brackla, with just two members.

My partner and I moved to Coychurch to be part of Coychurch and can't help but feel that this is the first step in trying to phase us into Brackla; a heavily built-up landscape in stark contrast.

Coychurch is its own identity with its own people and should be treated thusly.

Our deepest concern here is that we will suddenly have an inability to influence decisions that pertain to, or affect, Coychurch lower.

I am appalled that this proposal has been made without first asking those of us that live here what our thoughts to the matter are. Thus, I am drawing to the conclusion of the above; if our voices don't count enough to vote for or against this matter, then surely our voices don't matter enough to influence decisions that could impact our beautiful village.

A step in stripping from Coychurch its sense of Community indeed.

I would urge you to at least bring this proposal to a vote before planning to progress any further.

I'd say kind regards, but I have none to give on this matter.

Bridgend 024 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla, Bridgend Town:

Introduction:

I am resident in the Coychurch Lower Ward and have lived here for 12 years. I moved from Cardiff to the village following my retirement from South Wales Police where I served as an Officer. My last posting was as the [REDACTED], and this is when my fondness for Coychurch began and why I chose to settle here.

Since moving here in 2013, I have been actively involved in village life, serving in various roles namely, Treasurer of the Coychurch Garden Society, Chairperson of the over 50's Community Café, Committee Member on the Williams Memorial Hall (WMH) Fundraising group. I have also attended and assisted with many village events, School Carnivals, Part in the Coychurch Playing Fields, Craft Fayres, Social gatherings held at the WMH.

Public Meeting:

On Tuesday 12th February 2025, I attended a public meeting held by my local Community Council to discuss Bridgend County Borough Council's (BCBC) proposed changes to Community Councils and ward boundaries.

The document circulated at the meeting was that which is published on BCBC's website titled, **“Review of the Community Arrangements of the County of Bridgend – Draft Proposals – January 2025”**.

I have studied this document at length and whilst I intend to outline my opposition to the proposals, the document lacks clarity on several issues.

Further Clarity:

Chapter 1

Point 1 – BCBC proposing these changes to, **“.....facilitate effective & convenient local government across the principal council area”**

Clarity Required: This statement tends to suggest that the current arrangements are NOT effective or convenient. Why are they not effective? Convenient for who, BCBC or the community? What does this statement actually mean?

Point 4 – **“.....in producing a scheme of community arrangements the Council must have regard to a number of issues contained in the legislation”**

Clarity Required: What legislation are BCBC referring to?

Point 4 – The scheme proposed to places an emphasis on **“.....ensuring community councils are sufficient in size to support the principal authority's aspirations for the future.....”**

Clarity Required: What are the principal authority's aspirations for the future which necessitate these changes?

View of Coychurch Village:

My perception of Coychurch Village is that it is a semi-rural area, surrounded by farmland. Whilst we are fortunate to have families resident here, there is no getting away from the fact that there is an aging demographic that have either lived here all their lives or retired here, like myself. This village CANNOT be described as having a transient community, and it is that very fact that generates truly tangible community spirit.

This community spirit was never more apparent than during the COVID pandemic, when every street had a dedicated 'street warden'. Their responsibility was to patrol their respective street twice daily and check for displays of red or green cards in resident windows. A red card would indicate the occupant needed some assistance which could range from essential shopping to prescription medication. In my lifetime, never have I experienced such a community feel.

At the heart of the village is the Williams Memorial Hall, left to the community by the Williams Family over 100 years ago. This hall is so important to the community and whilst the Coychurch Lower Community Council is the sole trustee, residents' involvement in raising funds to assist with its maintenance is ongoing, thus emphasising its importance.

View of Brackla:

Whilst I accept my view of Brackla is limited, my perception is that this is a large residential housing estate, consisting of privately owned & social housing, but most definitely, not a village.

In 2011, Brackla made up almost a quarter of the population of the Bridgend area.

The 2021 census highlighted that of the total population, only 18% of Brackla Ward was composed of residents aged 65+. In stark contrast, Coychurch residents 65+ more than double that of Brackla at 37% of its total population.

Coychurch Lower Community Council:

Aside from the chairperson, Coychurch Lower Community Council comprises of non-political individuals, resident in the village. This has always been the case to my knowledge. They have no political motives / interference or bias but instead are personally invested in improving the village of Coychurch.

Whilst I appreciate any councillor would argue their motives for entering public services are for the betterment of the community they serve, when you represent a political party, there will always be the risk that decisions will be made that support party views and not necessarily the community. This DOES NOT happen in Coychurch.

As a result of this independence, the community & councillors have achieved great success within the village, for example:

- Complete refurbishment of the children's playing park – using grant funding obtained by our Community Council
- Fundraising for repairs to the WMH – no assistance from BCBC
- Display of Christmas Lights throughout the village and Waterton
- Village competitions – Best front Garden / Best dressed house (Queens Jubilee)
- Community Council led beacon lighting for D-Day Celebrations / Queens Jubilee / Kings Coronation

Brackla Community Council:

This council *has* far greater political representation with over 50% of the named councillors on their website, being members of the Welsh Labour Party. Brackla Community Council is coloured by political affiliations and there is the possibility that decisions could be made that priorities party interests over the welfare of local communities.

Summary of Opposing Views re BCBC's Proposals:

I have outlined below the reasons why I strongly oppose a merger of Coychurch Lower with Brackla to form one Community Council.

1. Unfair Representation

The proposed community council affords Coychurch only 2 councillor seats. Whilst mathematically that may be accurate, in reality it will mean Coychurch will ALWAYS be a minority voice, hindering our ability to influence decisions about our own village. This has the very real potential to adversely affect any allocation of funds to our village & ultimately result in a poor quality of service. It also fails to **'retain the identity'** of Coychurch, something BCBC claims it intends to do.

2. No Affiliation with Brackla

For some reason, BCBC feels that Coychurch Village is more aligned to Brackla than any other ward. This could not be further from the truth.

Both Community Councils are run completely differently, Coychurch heavily weighed as Independent of political influence, whilst Brackla is the complete opposite.

The demographic makeup of each area is completely different as highlighted previously in my report. Coychurch is arguably a semi-rural area, Brackla is most definitely an urban area.

The railway line forms a natural boundary dividing both wards.

Waterton residents have family ties in the village & use Coychurch facilities. BCBC's proposal is to remove Waterton & Brocastle & merge it with Bridgend Town, again with no natural or existing affiliation.

3. Uncontested Seats

This has been cited as a reason for BCBC's proposals to enlarge the electorate numbers within wards to 5000+. BCBC have suggested that to have uncontested seats is '***an indication of a democratic deficit***' that could result in '***a lack of democracy***'.

The Oxford dictionary defines a demographic deficit as '***a perceived deficiency in the way a particular political arrangement works in practice against a benchmark as to how it is supposed to work in theory***'.

This democratic deficit could be interpreted in a number of ways:

- a) The seats were uncontested because the communities were happy with the current representation and it did not warrant change.
- b) A general apathy & mistrust from the public towards politics/communities resulting in a reluctance to 'get involved' or vote.

My own view is that BCBC's use of this issue as a reason to propose changes is flawed. The apathy that exists among the general public is an issue across the whole of Wales and England and CANNOT be attributed solely to Wales or indeed Coychurch Lower just because it has an electorate below 5000.

A merger of smaller Community Council wards WILL NOT solve this 'lack of interest'. In fact, there is a very real possibility it will make the situation worse, as big is most definitely not always beautiful. The public may be even less inclined to volunteer or put themselves forward for councillor seats, particularly for Coychurch, knowing they will be a minority voice.

Public engagement in Coychurch is achieved through personal knowledge of the Community Councillors and excellent use of the WMH, local shop & garage. To move from this to a larger Community Council, made up of 14 councillors, 12 of whom will be faceless individuals with no vested interest in Coychurch, has the potential to damage that 'democratic deficit' not repair it.

Recent General Elections have highlighted the lack of trust the public have in politics & more importantly politicians. BCBC has amplified that mistrust in this draft document which as I highlighted at the start of my report, lacks clarity and details of the principal authority's true aspirations & motives for these changes. As residents we are being asked to provide feedback from an ill-informed position, simply so that BCBC is able to say they consulted on our views.

4. Potential Loss of Williams Memorial Hall

As previously mentioned, this building is at the heart of Coychurch village. BCBC's proposal will see 12 Brackla community councillors appointed as trustees and only 2 representing Coychurch.

As trustees, they are supposed to manage the hall to the benefit of the community. There is nothing stopping 12 faceless individuals deciding that the WMH is no longer viable and disposing of it.

5. No benefits to proposed changes

Nowhere in BCBC's draft proposal document does it outline;

- a. Why the current ward structure is not working?
- b. Why the current ward structure is ineffective?
- c. Why the current ward structure is not convenient?
- d. Aside from giving each ward an electorate of over 5000, the benefits of these proposals are not apparent & certainly are not contained within the document.
- e. Democratic Deficit is likely to worsen with larger faceless community councils.
- f. The financial burden to make these changes will indirectly fall to the local taxpayer. For example, administrative costs & general rebranding costs.

In the absence of any real substance in BCBC's draft proposal, then surely the argument should be, 'if it isn't broken, don't fix it'.

I submit this report in opposition to BCBC's draft proposals to change Community Councils & ward boundaries.

Bridgend 025 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I have currently heard that Bridgend Council is planning to have both Coychurch and Brackla to work together for one community council. Not good.

I have to say that this is just NOT a good idea. We have always worked ourselves with no problems so do not need to work with Brackla, so why on earth think of doing this. I have heard that we will only be able to have two people whilst working with Brackla and they will have 12 people. This also is not right is it.

I am concerned that Brackla will have enough to discuss so won't have the best interests for Coychurch. So, how would we sort out our own affairs?

The idea of being together is just not a good idea and I would think the same for any other places in the same way.

I, and many other people I know in Coychurch, would be very pleased and grateful if you would decide not to do this. So please give more thoughts to this and get back to me.

Bridgend 026 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

As a long standing Coychurch resident I strongly oppose the village being placed with Brackla. Coychurch is a self contained area and many of the buildings pre-date Brackla by many years. Our current council members have the best interest of the village which will be lost forever in the new larger community. I note that it is proposed that the new area will have 14 councillors with only 2 being from Coychurch and as a result I feel, as do many others, that the best interests of the village will not be heard.

In addition I understand that the current council pays rent at the Memorial Hall and this will have a serious impact on the financial viability of the hall in the long term. Should it close this will have a impact on several groups who meet there throughout the week.

I would urge you to seriously the re-consider this proposal.

Bridgend 027 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I attended the Coychurch Public Council Meeting on Tuesday evening 11th February at the Williams Hall.

As a resident of Coychurch Lower, I am very passionate about retaining the identity of this very people focused village and ensuring that we get the balance right of this situation.

Reading through your proposal it certainly does NOT reflect or bode well for this village as our representation goes down to 2 Councillors from 7 currently and so straight away our voice is silenced amongst the 14 in the proposal.

Not only that, this community is close knit and static with villagers here for their lifetime or years and this is an inherent difference to Brackla.

I lived in Brackla myself for a short time and come from an open eyed view on this and it's not at all a disrespectful one to people in Brackla.

Appreciative of the new ward numbers required to be a minimum of 5000.

Coychurch as a whole would be 1838 and so why not join us with a part of Coity (excluding Parc Derwen) which is again a Brackla type area with us to get the Ward representation and to retain the village concept and values.

It's a very disturbing and unacceptable the proposal put forward by BCBC.

We asked at our meeting which was well attended and had a single voice about this, namely No we don't want this to go ahead and feel that all that the Community Council achieve here in the residents interest will be gone.

Also an alarming comment to hear was about the potential lack of future of the Williams Hall, if this went ahead it would absolutely crush the community activities and spirit.

I hope also you listen to the feedback from this meeting given to you from our representative councillor.

We ask that you also come to the next meeting so you can hear quite clearly the spirit of community relations here and reconsider what you're Proposing for Coychurch.

We want to keep our unique identity of Coychurch.

Bridgend 028 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I understand that there is a proposal to make a change to the Community Councillor for Coychurch and that Coychurch will be associated with Brackla. I am strongly opposed to this suggestion as there will be a much reduced possibility of required action to be taken on issues required for attention by Coychurch residents due to our smaller location and our much smaller village population as there will only be 2 Coychurch Community Councillors against 14 from Brackla.

My wife and I have lived in Coychurch for 40 years and the village Community Council has served the Coychurch village constantly and competently and the village public have been consulted on many major decisions that have been made.

The proposed new “Brackla Community Council” will be biased due to the far greater number of Brackla Councillors and some decisions may not, as a result, be beneficial to Coychurch residents.

Bridgend 029 – Member of Public via Letter – Coychurch Lower, Brackla, Bridgend Town:

My family and I have resided in Coychurch Lower Ward for over 60 years and have been extremely active and involved with village life. My father was a founder member of Coychurch Gardening Society, my husband was a former Chairman of the Community Council, a youth club leader for over 25 years, the chairperson of the Coychurch Villagers Association and with fellow village residents organised the village carnival, dances, Christmas children's parties and a Christmas lunch for the OAP's resident in the village; all these vents using the invaluable Williams Memorial Hall (WMH). I am a member of Coychurch W.E. which meet monthly and we assist in any fund raising events held to support the WMH. The WMH is currently used for several other activities e.g. the over 50's Café, dance classes. I attended the public meeting on 12/02/25 in the WMH held by my local Community Council to discuss BCBC proposed changes to Community Councils and ward boundaries. A document was distributed at the meeting and is identical to the BCBC's website "Review of the Community Arrangements of the County of Bridgend – Draft Proposals – January 2025". On studying the document I strongly oppose several proposals as follows:

POINT 1: BCBC proposing these changes to, "facilitate effective and convenient local government across the principal council area". Please clarify, as the above tends to infer that the current arrangements are NOT effective or convenient. Why are they NOT effective? Who are they convenient for, BCBC or the community? What in fact does this statement mean? **PLEASE CLARIFY.**

POINT 4: "in producing a scheme of community arrangements the Council must have regard to a number of issues contained in the legislation". What is the legislation that BCBC are referring to? The scheme proposed places an emphasis on "ensuring community councils are sufficient in size to support the principal authority's aspirations for the future." What are the principal authority's aspirations for the future that necessitate such changes? **PLEASE CLARIFY.**

My views on Coychurch Village:

I see Coychurch as a semi-rural area surrounded by farmland. We are fortunate to have families living here and many of the youngsters that attended the youth club years ago left school, worked away, married and moved back into the village to raise their children and to be close to their retired parents. Coychurch cannot be described as a transient community and this in turn generates true community spirit. And how apparent that spirit was during COVID when every street had a dedicated street warden who patrolled their street twice a day checking to see if a red or green card was displayed in the resident's window. A red card indicated that the occupant needed some help be it for needed shopping or collecting a prescription whatever. The late Queen's Jubilee was again clearly an indication of how the residents came together to celebrate this special occasion. The Williams Memorial was bequeathed to the village of Coychurch over a century ago by the Williams family of The Mansion House, Plas Coed-y-Mwstwr. The hall is extremely important to the population of Coychurch, the Coychurch Lower Community Council being the sole trustee, and with residents' involvement in raising funds to assist with the ongoing maintenance emphasises its importance.

My views on Brackla:

I see Brackla as a large residential housing estate consisting of both privately owned and social housing; definitely not a village. Brackla in 2011 made up almost 25% of the population of the Bridgend area. In the 2021 census the total population showed that only 18% of Brackla Ward comprised of residents aged over 65+. Whilst, Coychurch records show 65+ more than double that of Brackla with 37% of its total population.

Coychurch Lower Community Council:

Apart from the chairperson, CLCC is made up of non-political people resident in the village. And, as I recall over the past 60 years this has always been the case with the elected people holding a vested interest in improving the village for the benefit of the people without any political interference or bias; therefore looking after the best interest of the village residents/the community. In my opinion when a councillor represents a political party there is a risk that any decisions made will support party views and not what is necessarily best for the community as a whole. This does not happen in CLCC meetings and being independent a great deal of success has been achieved for example:

- With fund raising for repairs to the Williams Memorial Hall without assistance from BCBC
- A complete refurbishment of the children's play park using a grant obtained by our Community Council

- Christmas lights displayed throughout Coychurch and Waterton village
- Various village competitions held during the Queen's Jubilee – Best front garden, best dressed house
- The Community Council led beacon lighting to celebrate the D-Day Landings, Queen's Jubilee, and King's Coronation
- I remember also when Prince Charles was invested as the Prince of Wales each child in the village received an Investiture Mug and likewise when he married Princess Diana celebration mugs were distributed

Brackla Community Council:

This council being represented with over 50% of the named councillors being member of the Welsh Labour Party hence affording great possibility that any decisions made could prioritise party interests over local community interests.

My Opposing Views Regarding BCBC's Proposals:

I strongly oppose any merger between Coychurch Lower and Brackla to form one Community Council:

POINT 1: Because Coychurch council has only 2 councillor seats this means that Coychurch will **ALWAYS** be a minority voice and could adversely affect any decisions made to the detriment of any funding and quality of services. This would inhibit Coychurch to retain its identity, something that BCBC claims it intends to do. **How?**

POINT 2: It appears that BCBC feels that Coychurch Village is more aligned to Brackla than any other ward, **how is this?** Both Community Councils could not be more different, Coychurch being independent of political influence and Brackla being the complete opposite. The demography of the areas are completely different as stated previously. Arguably Coychurch is a semi-rural area, whilst Brackla is definitely an urban area and the railway line forms a natural boundary dividing both wards. The residents of Waterton have family ties in the village and use the facilities. The proposal by BCBC to remove Waterton and Brocastle and to merge them with Bridgend Town **WHY?** There is no existing or natural affiliation.

POINT 3: Uncontested seats have been cited as a reason for BCBC's proposals to enlarge the electorate numbers within wards to 5000+ and have suggested that to have uncontested seats is "an indication of a democratic deficit" this could result in "a lack of democracy". This demographic deficit could be interpreted as: a) the seats were not contested because the communities were happy with the current representation and did not want to change it, b) an apathy and mistrust from the public towards politics/communities resulting in a reluctance to get involved or to vote. My personal view is that BCBC's use of this issue as a reason to propose changes is flawed and unjust. The existence of apathy among the general public is an issue across the whole of Wales and England and **CANNOT or SHOULD NOT be attributed solely to Wales or Coychurch Lower because the electorate is below 5000**. The merger of smaller Community Council wards **WILL NOT** in my opinion solve this lack of interest and could possibly make the situation worse, as **BIG IS NOT ALWAYS BEAUTIFUL**. People could become less inclined to volunteer their services or put their name forward to become a councillor, particularly for Coychurch as they will have a minority voice/vote. The public are engaged in Coychurch because of the personal knowledge of the Community Councillors and using the village hall, shop and garage. To change to a larger Community Council comprising of 14 councillors', 12 of which will have no real vested interest in Coychurch could potentially damage that democratic deficit not repair it. General elections of late have shown the lack of trust the public have in politics and notably politicians. BCBC has magnified mistrust in this draft document as I have already highlighted, lacking clarity and details of the principle authority's true motives and aspirations for such changes. As a resident I am being asked to provide feedback from an ill-informed position, quite simply because BCBC can say that they consulted my views.

POINT 4: A potential loss of the Williams Memorial Hall. As mentioned previously, the WMH is the heart of village life and BCBC's proposal will mean that 12 Brackla community councillors being appointed trustees with representation of just 2 from Coychurch. The job of the trustees is to manage the WMH for the benefit of the community so, in my opinion those not residing in the village community could deem it unviable and hence render disposing of it. This has happened many times within Bridgend town no longer being the quaint, thriving old market town as it was formerly known. Take note of the catastrophic market and Rhiw area, diabolical decisions made by past councillors.

POINT 5: The BCBC draft proposal does not outline any of the following: Why the current ward structure is not working and why it is ineffective and not convenient. Apart from an electorate of 5000 in each ward, any benefits are not apparent and are not contained in the document. Democratic Deficit is likely to worsen with larger faceless community councils. The proposed changes will become a financial burden which will indirectly fall to the local taxpayer for such things as rebranding and administration costs.

I oppose BCBC's draft proposals to change Community councils and ward boundaries as explained within and would like a response to my letter with clarity please.

Bridgend 030 – Member of Public via Letter – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I read with interest your Draft Proposal Report, and would like to make the following observations on your intention to merge Coychurch Lower with the greater community of Brackla. I can only take it that your proposals are based on a need for financial efficiency and gain, rather than overall community effectiveness, so could you please respond by informing me of the anticipated financial gain to BCBC, once this plan has been implemented? It would also be interesting to hear your views on what non-financial benefits your proposals would bring to the individual merged communities.

Observations:-

(1). It must be admitted that Coychurch Lower C.C. has 'enjoyed' the benefits of a community councillor representation beyond the norm, but that is not to say that it's always been efficiently and effectively run by its 7 members, and indeed, might well benefit from some degree of 'pruning' and overall cost saving, to minimise the amount of the precept being used for overheads and administrative purposes.

Having said that, your proposed merger will result in Coychurch having a representation so low as to be totally dominated by Brackla's influence. This cannot be considered democratic, and as such, is unacceptable, and will reduce Coychurch's position to one who scrabbles for crumbs of the large cake – simply not acceptable.

(2). You mention in Chapter 1 that '.....reflect the character of the areas involved....'

Amalgamating the rural and semi rural community of Coychurch with the domineering urban expanse of Brackla cannot in any way be considered linking communities with similar needs.

(3). Coychurch has in the past been a non political based council with councillors classing themselves as Independent to avoid any political bias or influence. Your proposed merger will result in Coychurch's two representatives being left to contend with what would seem to be an overall majority of a single political party representation of Brackla. Again not an ideal situation.

(4). Referring in part back to my opening paragraph, and my reference to financial implications, can I take it that the merged community precepts would simply amount to that currently paid to community A plus that currently paid to B? If so, can I also take it that you will not dictate how that total precept is distributed between the needs of the old A and B? If that is indeed the case, I'm sure you will appreciate that the minority representation of Coychurch's requirements are likely to be hard fought for.

(5). Finally, but certainly not of the lowest priority, Coychurch Lower CC have always acted as trustees of the all important village facility – The Williams Memorial Hall. Could you please let me know how you intend to satisfy the Trust holder's requirements within the new proposed merger?

The following is little more than background narrative, but may serve to give a indication/modelling of diverse requirements even within comparatively small areas :-

Coychurch Lower encompasses the more densely populated area south of the main railway line, together with the greater, but less densely populated, rural area north of the line. Having lived within the rural area for near to 50 years we have witnessed the need to continually fight for a shared cut of the cake, with (understandably?) the village's needs, which seem to automatically come first. I think scaling this experience up to the proposed Brackla/Coychurch merger, should provide a flavour of the potential issues which will confront the representatives of Coychurch.

Trusting the foregoing will be taken into consideration, and that you will be able to respond to the questions raised.

Bridgend 031 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

Interested area – Coychurch Lower to Brackla Community Council

Firstly I agree that overall there is a large imbalance with representation of community councillors in the Coychurch area, for the population of Coychurch representation is too high and therefore costs out of proportion. I however, object to moving the Coychurch lower area into Brackla on the following grounds.

1. The current Coychurch Community Council is well thought of in the area, is a source of information and maintains a high profile. A move into a larger area will reduce the effectiveness of our local representatives.
2. Coychurch Lower is not directly linked to Brackla and is a has different economic and social needs.
3. Coychurch Lower would represent under 10% of the total electorate and would therefore have difficulty in obtaining both any influence in the running of the new community area and be at the back of the queue for any resources or other considerations. Brackla due to population size would inevitably monopolise the funding and influence over the community council area.
4. Due to the difference in geography of the two areas, larger parts of Coychurch are rural and Brackla is completely built over the requirements of the two areas are not compatible. Disproportionate funding will inevitably be taken by the needs of the larger community within the council.
5. The area should remain as a wider Coychurch Lower area but with fewer representatives, two seeming to be (as the research shows) the optimum number of community councillors.

Bridgend 032 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Coychurch Lower:

The proposal is unsatisfactory for the community of Coychurch, who will suffer not having the representation on the community council and it seems unfair that no other ward within the existing will lose community councillors and there we will be less decision making powers for our village.

Bridgend 033 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I have recently been made aware of the proposed changes to the council boundaries and its effect on the village of Coychurch. As a long time residential of the village I have to say that I feel that the changes will have an adverse effect on the community of the village.

As a member of the Coychurch Women's Institute and the Williams Memorial Hall Fund Raising Committee, I see first hand the sense of community that lives in the village. If the village is run by Brackla Council with only 2 Coychurch councillors we will lose our voices and our identity. Many of the residents are elderly and I cannot envisage them going to a council meeting in Brackla. How are they going to get their opinions heard? Currently it is a walk to the village hall.

Also, the village hall is a very busy hub for all sorts of activities. If the council no longer need it will it have to close. This will further rob us of our community space. The elderly and the young all use and appreciate the activities that are run there. Please don't ignore that.

Having a focus in Coychurch brings people together to work for the village. Losing our council will remove our focus. To raise funds, we hold, parties, fashion shows, fun evenings, flower arranging, over 50's café, pop-up café, craft meetings, etc. to raise funds and maintain our village. Please allow us to maintain our identity. We are a separate village, not a part of the large area of Brackla.

Bridgend 034 – Member of Public via Letter – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I've just found out that you propose to amalgamate Coychurch Community Council with Brackla CC, if it makes any difference here are my thoughts on the matter.

1. I realise that your funds are low and you must make ends meet but your proposals are based on economics rather than the needs of the community
2. BCBC funds out much of its admin WHY! Eg. I have receipts for my care and repair package from Leicester – are there no tidy clerks in Bridgend
3. What happens to Williams Hall in Coychurch
 - Will the new council meet there?
 - Will all the activities still take place? OR will it be run for a profit?
4. Who will be responsible for keeping Williams Hall in good repair? OR will it be left to fall apart and sold as a premium housing site
5. Where will the village hold its
 - Famous flower show
 - Craft days
 - OAP coffee mornings
 - Election venue etc
6. If we lose our Community Council, who will keep an eye out for our footpaths, that need maintenance, hedges and verges that need trimming and any damage over our fantastic children's park and newly refurbished "cricket" ground. Many thanks to our present and past Community Councillors who've given such a great service

Finally,

14 on the new CC

12 from Brackla

2 from Coychurch

This may be pro rata, but will NOT, be what Coychurch needs. Coychurch would end up as a minor part of Bridgend's history, a sort of Llareggub (sorry Dylan T).

Bridgend 035 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

This email is regarding to abolish Coychurch lower community council and form new Brackla community council. I am very against this proposal. Coychurch is a small village and Brackla is a very large housing estate. Two totally different identities. Coychurch has been around a lot longer than Brackla and has been a very well run village. To lose our identity would be devastating for our village, We are a very close community. My family have been here for close to a hundred years. My grandmother run the post office for many years and was a close member of the church. My mother then took over the post office for another twenty years. So I have very close ties to this community.

Changing boundaries would not Benefit Coychurch at all. We will be forgotten and Brackla will thrive.

I am very against this proposal, this village is very well run with the community council we have now. Leave our boundaries alone.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Bridgend 036 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla, Bridgend Town:

I have been a resident of Coychurch village for 44 years and as such I am writing to you to strongly object to the proposed boundary changes.

During my time living in the village, the Community Council has served its residents very well. Members do not take payment thereby actually saving money. As trustees of the Williams Memorial Hall the Community Council supports both the maintenance of the Hall itself and the many organisations that use it and value it as a community resource. In addition we have a well used playpark and the newly refurbished community field. The Hall has many flourishing clubs and in addition puts on many other village events both for adults and children. We are currently fund raising to cover repairs and updates to the Hall. How can we ensure that the new Brackla Community Council will continue along the same vein? Will these facilities still be maintained by a new Community Council based in Brackla where the majority of the members will reside? What interest would they have in spending future money on these areas that won't directly benefit them unless they are willing to travel? The close connection and understanding between the Community Council and the residents would be lost if the proposed merger with Brackla Community Council was to go ahead.

In the draft proposal document great emphasis is placed on the term 'democratic deficit'. When this phrase was first coined it referred to cases where individuals did not receive a fair democratic right due to lack of elections, not where there was no need for an election but where elections were prevented from happening. It cannot be inferred from the number of recent uncontested elections that residents are suffering from 'democratic deficit'. There are many reasons why elections are uncontested; satisfaction with existing councillors, availability of transport, immobility, age, to name a few. None of these imply that there is a lack of interest or willingness.

In the recent Senedd consultation document on role Governance and Accountability of Community Councils, it is recognised that community councils play a vital role in delivering community focused services and contribute to the quality of life and democratic representation of rural areas in Wales. They provide a voice for their communities and ensure local priorities are considered in broader local planning. The proposal to merge Coychurch Community Council and Brackla into a new Community Council one could argue would still meet some of the points made by the Senedd. But it fails on two major aspects in that the two communities are completely different demographically and one is urban whilst the other is rural.

The merger proposal states there will be 14 councillors for this newly merged area, with 2 representing Coychurch who would very much be in a minority. How would BCBC ensure the 2 members would be from the Coychurch area? If there was a contested election – as BCBC hopes there would be to avoid its definition of 'Democratic Deficit' – then the 2 candidates from Coychurch would attract a much lower vote due to the number of residents in Coychurch compared to Brackla. On a simple first past the post system it is highly likely that the 2 Coychurch candidates would therefore not be elected. How is this more democratic for the residents of Coychurch? If the seats were to be ring fenced then this would go against the principles of avoiding 'Democratic Deficit' and in that case you might as well leave things as they are.

Coychurch would be marginalised and this would certainly not meet the views of the Senedd but seems to be acting against their views and the views of many councils in Wales who commented during their consultation. The Senedd report states that boundary reviews need to take into account communities as offering a place of local identity of residents. Coychurch Community Council does this. Being a part of a bigger Brackla Community Council would destroy this. Furthermore the report states that the views of local communities and inhabitants are of central importance when undertaking a review of community governance. BCBC would claim this consultation does just that – but the view of the residents must not be ignored and as I understand it residents of Brackla are also not in favour of the proposed merger. These views must not be ignored. That is certainly not democratic.

I wish to make a further point in relation to the precept – would this all now go to the new Community Council or would the precept be ring fenced for the residents of Coychurch? If the latter is the case there would have to be Councillors from Coychurch to make decisions as to how this money would be used and liaise with the

residents. If it is not and becomes part of the larger pot, then again Coychurch will be at a disadvantage. Even with Community Councillors from the Coychurch area, 2 voices out of 14 is very much a minority when it comes to deciding how money will be allocated and therefore again Coychurch will be at a disadvantage. Once again I ask how is this democratic? It seems the proposals will put Coychurch at a severe disadvantage and will cause much ill will and should not be a seriously considered proposal in a democratic country.

The proposal document recognises that the proposals will impact some areas more than others and asks for suggestions for alternatives. If this reorganisation must go ahead it would be better to cluster Coychurch Lower and Coychurch Higher where the demographic is very similar and local concerns and needs coincide. Coychurch Higher also has a flourishing Community Council with similar values as our own. We could liaise on certain areas that require contracts etc and would therefore obtain better quotes for work and get better value for money. Waterton and Brocastle could also be encompassed in this area as they are much more aligned with the rural aspect of Coychurch than the town area of Bridgend. Although this would not meet your arbitrary number to 5000 (which if this was applied to the whole of Wales, few councils would meet) exceptions are needed to cater for the very rural aspect of Coychurch as opposed to the town aspect of Brackla. Coychurch is one of the unique areas of the borough in being so rural. It does not sit on the edge of any major housing development or town area, being cut off from these developments by the main road on one side and the railway line on the other. For County Council elections the method used at the last election could be used which worked well, whereby Coychurch Lower was joined with Brackla East for voting purposes but each community continued to be served by its respective community council.

Lack of engagement in local elections is being looked into by the Senedd with a task and finish group set up to explore good practice in this area and come up with suggestions to improve participation. In this regard BCBC is jumping the gun and would be better placed to make recommendations once the Senedd has reported its findings.

I hope that you will give serious considerations to the points I have made and raise them at the forthcoming debate on the proposed boundary changes.

Bridgend 037 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I am writing to express my dismay at the possible joining of Coychurch with Brackla. Coychurch has been a village for many hundreds of years and has a very different entity to that of the far more recent Brackla estate. The residents of Coychurch are here because they wish to live in a village served by its own councillors. If they wished to be governed by councillors of Brackla they would live on Brackla. I understand that the current economic climate is probably directing these changes but for our village, and probably others too, to lose its identity is unacceptable. I find Bridgend's proposal quite upsetting.

Bridgend 038 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I have lived in Coychurch Village for over 60 years.

My father was a Village Councillor for over 25 years and my late husband also served on our local Council.

Growing up in village life, starting at our local Primary school and enjoying our local parks and facilities in our village hall, including Badminton, Youth Club. Garden Society and afternoons Bridge to name but a few, is something to be proud of.

I was Confirmed in our Parish church, took my first communion, married and over the years my son was christened and confirmed here.

So I feel I am an expert on local Village life and know the importance of being a village community. We have local councillors who are all devoted to ensuring village life is accommodated for all residents.

I therefore feel strongly that to alter the boundary and engulf Coychurch with Brackla would be of no benefit whatsoever and very much oppose this suggestion.

I would like you to communicate this to decision makers and look forward to receiving your comments please.

Bridgend 039 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

Introduction:

I have been a resident in Coychurch for 24 years. I moved to the village from Reading as part of a significant personal relocation. Part of the reason for choosing Coychurch to live was the feeling that there was a real community spirit in the village. You got a sense of that even just as a visitor, which I was before buying my house and settling there.

Since moving here, I have brought up a family and find it such a lovely place to raise children. In recent years having trained as a dance teacher, I now teach weekly dance classes in the Williams Memorial Hall (WMH). Which has been fundamental for me getting to know so many more people from the village that I didn't previously know. The hall is a great resource for the community and I would say a necessity for many otherwise lonely inhabitants. It is a community hub and strong friendships have developed for some, who attend many of the events held there.

Public Meeting:

My perception of Coychurch Village is that it is a semi-rural area, surrounded by farmland. We are fortunate to have many families resident here, but there is also an aging demographic that have either lived here all their lives or have retired here.

The community spirit has manifested itself in several ways over the years – during Covid, every street had a dedicated 'street warden'. Their responsibility was to patrol their respective street twice daily and check for displays of red or green cards in resident windows. Assistance was given to those in need using this system and lots of people joined in. There are lots of other examples, such as at Easter time, easter eggs, organised by the local council, are hidden in the gardens where children live. Many events such as Halloween parties, Christmas parties, etc are held in the hall for local children. The older generation is also catered for with regular over-50's coffee mornings.

The Williams Memorial Hall, left to the community by the Williams Family over 100 years ago is central to community life in the village, for those of all ages, from young children to the elderly.

View of Brackla:

My view of Brackla is limited and based on my knowing other families living there. My perception is that it is a large residential housing estate, comprising of privately owned & social housing.

Many families that I know don't even know their neighbours. It doesn't have a sense of community spirit – as far as I can tell.

In 2011, Brackla made up almost a quarter of the population of the Bridgend area.

Coychurch Lower Community Council:

Aside from the chairperson, the council comprises of non-political individuals, resident in the village.

As a result of this independence, the community & councillors have achieved great success within the village, for example:

- Complete refurbishment of the children's playing park, using grant funding obtained by our Community Council
- Fund raising for repairs to the WMH, no assistance from BCBC
- Display of Christmas Lights throughout the village and Waterton
- Village competitions; best front garden / best dressed house (Queen's Jubilee)
- Community Council led beacon lighting for D-Day Celebrations / Queen's Jubilee / King's Coronation

Brackla Community Council:

This council *has* far greater political representation with over 50% of the named councillors on their website. There is the possibility that decisions could be made that prioritise party interests over the welfare of local communities.

Opposing Views re BCBC's Proposals:

Unfair representation

The proposed community council affords Coychurch only 2 councillor seats. Whilst mathematically that may be accurate, in reality it will mean Coychurch will ALWAYS be a minority voice, hindering our ability to influence decisions about our own village. This has the very real potential to adversely affect any allocation of funds to our village & ultimately result in a poor quality of service. It also fails to '*retain the identity*' of Coychurch, something BCBC claims it intends to do.

Potential Loss of Williams Memorial Hall

As previously mentioned, this building is at the heart of Coychurch village. BCBC's proposal will see 12 Brackla community councillors appointed as trustees and only 2 representing Coychurch.

As trustees, they are supposed to manage the hall to the benefit of the community. There is nothing stopping 12 faceless individuals deciding that the WMH is no longer viable and disposing of it.

No Affiliation with Brackla

For some reason, BCBC feels that Coychurch Village is more aligned to Brackla than any other ward. This could not be further from the truth.

Both Community Councils are run completely differently, Coychurch heavily weighted as Independent of political influence, whilst Brackla is the complete opposite.

The demographic make up of each area is completely different.

Coychurch is arguably a semi-rural area, Brackla is most definitely an urban area.

The railway line forms a natural boundary dividing both wards.

No benefits to proposed changes:

Nowhere in BCBC's draft proposal document does it outline:

- a. Why the current ward structure is not working?
- b. Why the current ward structure is ineffective?
- c. Why the current ward structure is not convenient?
- d. Aside from giving each ward an electorate of over 5000, the benefits of these proposals are not apparent & certainly not contained within the document
- e. The financial burden to make these changes will be ineffective to the local taxpayer

I submit this report in opposition to BCBC's draft proposals to change Community Councils & ward boundaries.

Bridgend 040 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

The proposed merger of Coychurch Lower Community Council with Brackla.

I want to raise the strongest objection to this merger.

The two areas are completely different Coychurch is a village with a village community and Brackla is a large housing estate.

Coychurch has a strong community based around the two Pubs, the Church and the Williams Memorial Hall. There is a very active Coychurch Community Facebook hub.

Coychurch would only have 2 councillors as against 12 for Brackla meaning our needs will not be met. Also it is possible that all 14 councillors could be from Brackla depending on the election giving Coychurch no local voice.

Coychurch has a slow turnover of population where most properties only come on the market due to deaths or owners going into care. There are many families who have been in Coychurch for decades and many residents who have been in the village tens of years, whereas Brackla is a large housing estate with a more transient population with a constant turn over of properties.

Coychurch has more rural aspect which includes many farming communities.

Our village Hall is an asset to the village and is used for many events by Coychurch residents, National and Local Area groups as well. The hall is managed by trustees who are the members of the Community Council and the Clerk on a part time basis.

The community is fund raising to improve and maintain the building for the next 100 years.

Brackla already has a community hall so how much interest would they have in the hall in Coychurch?

Please support us against the proposed changes to the Community Council.

Bridgend 041 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

We are writing to express our concerns about the proposed new Community and Town Council Ward boundaries.

We have lived in Coychurch since 1992 and throughout this time we have had our own very successful Community Council. They meet in Coychurch in the village hall and work hard to make Coychurch the village community it is today. This new proposal could lead to the loss of village identity.

Within the new proposal the 14 Community Councillors become Trustees of the Williams Memorial Hall with the possibility that 12 of them have no affinity to Coychurch. The two Coychurch councillors will have very little if any ability to influence decisions affecting Coychurch Lower. To expect us to go from having our own Council to suddenly only having 2 members out of 14 is totally unacceptable.

It stands to reason that with the majority of the members being from Brackla more time will be spent discussing issues arising there and could well lead to people who do not live in Coychurch making decisions for us.

We are not aware of anyone living in Coychurch who is happy with this proposal and we sincerely hope that BCBC reconsiders this ill thought out proposal.

Bridgend 042 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

As residents of Coychurch Lower we would like to register our objections to your proposed boundary changes.

Two councillors for the village replacing the seven in May 2022 elections hardly seems equitable and doesn't reflect the good work they do in the village. The proposed number doesn't even confirm to the Ashton School guideline quoted in your proposal. To maintain parity we feel at least three would be required.

In Coychurch we have already lost our local representatives on BCBC as the two elected members live in Brackla. This has had a very significant effect as they are not conversant with the needs of the village and communication is virtually non-existent. This we feel would be extended to the proposed re-organisation of the Community Council as our representatives will be heavily outnumbered. We fear that Coychurch needs will be overlooked and there are no reasons to think otherwise.

We write therefore in hope rather than expectation as, although the public are asked for their opinions, historically it has been shown that if these clash with the proposals set out then we are "heard but not listened to" and the smaller organisations are swallowed up and disappear.

Regarding the name change it would be good if Coychurch could at least be acknowledged in the ward name.

Bridgend 043 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

Why do you think it wise to change Coychurch and put us as part of Brackla?? What will it achieve that helps Coychurch residents?? Why do you want to amalgamate small villages with larger complexes?? We look after our village and it is managed extremely well because we are proud of where we live.. It has not helped Coity by including them as part of Brackla in fact it has had the opposite effect.

Bridgend 044 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I am sending this email as I strongly oppose to your proposed changes to community and town council ward boundaries.

I very strongly object to Coychurch lower community being abolished and merged with Brackla East which could ultimately see the village of Coychurch no longer being a Welsh village with its own closely knit community.

Residents of Coychurch are very concerned in what happens in our local area and I strongly disagree that only numbers in an unknown consultation document would indicate a lack of interest by residents and this should not be used as a reason to merge.

As a resident of Coychurch I appreciate that Coychurch Lower CC meets in the village and therefore can be easily accessible. I am very happy with the current Lower CC ethos of being local volunteers who work together as a team for the benefit of our community.

I am very concerned as to how this would work with a different council and the village having just two members of fourteen. Every issue for the village could and would be overridden with their majority.

As Coychurch has natural boundaries with rail and roads I feel a merger would not enhance the village in respect to our community, play park and more concerning, the well used Williams Memorial Hall which requires the continuing support of Coychurch Lower CC as it's sole trustee. I do not believe a Brackla community council would take on Coychurch village issues in the same diligent way as our Coychurch Lower CC does.

I believe the proposed changes detrimental to the services provided to residents in Coychurch.

Please do not merge Coychurch.

Bridgend 045 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I am writing to formally express my concerns regarding the proposal to alter the boundary of Coychurch Community Council, thereby merging it with the community of Brackla.

If this proposal is implemented, I fear that Coychurch, with its representation of only two councillors compared to Brackla's twelve, will be overshadowed and its unique identity diminished. Coychurch is a vibrant and welcoming village, and the Memorial Hall serves as the heart of our social gatherings. Should this merger occur, residents of Coychurch may find themselves required to travel to Brackla for essential amenities, leaving our beloved Memorial Hall at risk of closure or demolition.

Furthermore, we have a significant population of pensioners within our community, many of whom may be unable to engage with a larger council due to age or disability. The Coychurch Community Council has demonstrated exceptional commitment and effectiveness in serving our village for over fifty years. It raises the question: why disrupt a system that is functioning well.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and urge you to consider the implications of this proposal on our community.

Bridgend 046 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

Why do you think it necessary to change a great situation and harm our community this way?? We pay our bills, we look after our village. We do not want to be part of Brackla, the road and railway segregate us automatically anyway. Please do not try to mess with a good thing. Improve the places that need it if you have the funds to spend.

Bridgend 047 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I write to express my rejection and opposition to the proposed abolition of Coychurch Lower Community Council and the consequential subsuming into a new Brackla Community Council.

This “merger” proposal flies in the face of all modern thinking that government should come closer to the people. Take the history of Glamorgan County Council (not to mention devolution of Welsh government from Westminster). The once enormous Glamorgan County Council was considered too big and was reorganised into three counties i.e. South, Mid and West Glamorgan. After a very short period of time, these counties were considered still to be too big and a further reorganisation resulted in the creation of much smaller County Boroughs, ours being Bridgend CBC.

Coychurch Community Council is dedicated to looking after Coychurch alone. Coychurch is a complete community with its Historic church, a village hall, a primary school, two public houses, a village shop, a garage, a children’s recreation park and a public park. The village is geographically isolated by two dual carriage ways and a railway line. We are a fully integrated community.

I see absolutely no advantage in being merged with our bigger neighbour.

As a village we have our own history and culture, dating back to at least, to the eighth century. The village hall was built to commemorate the Men of the village who served, and died, in the Great War. The descendants of those men are still to be found in the village.

If we become part of the proposed Brackla community council we will have two representatives on a committee of fourteen councillors. The other twelve members will be of, and concerned with the needs of the huge housing conurbation of Brackla. That situation does not favour the needs and interests of Coychurch. Brackla is a totally different community to Coychurch with its own needs and culture. Coychurch is a discrete community, geographically, demographically, and culturally. Coychurch Community Council has looked after the community of Coychurch very successfully and we wish it to continue to do so.

Bridgend 048 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I want to raise the strongest objection to this merger.

The two areas are completely different Coychurch is a village with a village community and Brackla is a large housing estate.

Coychurch has a strong community based around two Pubs, the Church and the Williams Memorial Hall. There is a very active Coychurch Community Facebook hub

Coychurch would only have 2 councillors as against 12 for Brackla meaning our needs will not be met. Also it is possible that all 14 councillors could be from Brackla depending on the election giving Coychurch no local voice.

Coychurch has a slow turnover of population where most properties only come on the market due to deaths or owners going into care. There are many families who have been in Coychurch for decades and many residents who have been in the village tens of years, whereas Brackla is a large housing estate with a more transient population area with a constant turn over of properties.

Coychurch has a more rural aspect which includes many farming communities.

Our village Hall is an asset to the village and is used for many events by Coychurch residents, National and Local Area groups as well. The hall is managed by trustees who are members of the Community Council and the Clerk on a part time basis.

The community is fund raising to improve and maintain the building for the next 100 years.

Brackla already has a community hall so how much interest would they have in the hall in Coychurch?

Please support us against the proposed changes to the Community Council.

Bridgend 049 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

As a long standing Coychurch resident I strongly oppose the village being placed with Brackla. Coychurch is a self defined village bounded by river, road and rail. We have an excellent community ethos with a long standing history of providing for all our residents through specific projects aimed at making a difference for our community and local charities. My understanding of our community council can boast of being free of any political differences with elected representatives wanting to get on with the delivery of much needed provision and support for its residents.

This is in complete contrast to Brackla where I would suggest has a different demography and socio-economical environment when compared with Coychurch. Issues there I would suspect to be completely different because of its age, position and scale resulting in little or no interest to the needs of our village which predates Brackla by some 700+ years should this boundary change go ahead. Adding to this and referring to your supporting document whereby you have identified Brackla to have 12 councillors compared to Coychurch 2 representatives would to my mind make it difficult (undemocratic even) to obtain support for any projects specific for our village of Coychurch. This proposed boundary change model could in time lead to a lack of interest in local issues due to the lack of perceived un-democratic influence consequently distancing residents from local government which cannot be a good outcome for all.

With your proposed boundary change I fear our village Williams Memorial hall. A well used focal point for all in our village. Reorganisation with Brackla may well place additional financial pressure, possibly closure, due to expected downsizing resulting from these proposed changes.

I would urge you to re-consider this proposal.

Bridgend 050 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I wish to object to the loss of our community council for the following reasons-

1. We have continually reported the poor state of our street for the last number of years but understand it is being prioritised alongside other local areas. It will worsen our chances of seeing an improvement if we are to be reprioritised within an even larger geographical area. Bear in mind that the street has not been resurfaced since our house was built in 1967.
2. Welsh residents were assured that local government reorganisation in 1996 would see improved economies of scale. However, in practice our council tax bills have increased exponentially. I anticipate the same impact will be felt by Coychurch residents in order to subsidise areas of Brackla.
3. We have already lost our County Borough Councillor and anticipate that the loss of our community council will see a further democratic deficit to ourselves.
4. Our Williams Memorial Hall is a greatly valued local resource. The significant reduction of local representation on its management board and competition for resources with other facilities in Brackla will jeopardise its continued existence and ongoing improvement.

I hope that you will pay due regard to local feelings and reject the abolition of Coychurch Lower Community Council.

Bridgend 051 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed merger of Coychurch Community Council with Brackla Community Council. This decision would have a negative impact on Coychurch Lower and its residents for several important reasons.

Firstly, the proposed representation is unfair. With only two councillors from Coychurch out of a total of 14, our community would have little influence over decisions that affect us. This imbalance would leave Coychurch residents at a disadvantage, with their concerns and priorities likely to be overlooked.

Secondly, this merger would undermine the unique identity of Coychurch. As a village with a rich history and a close-knit community, we take pride in our distinct character. Merging with a much larger area would diminish our individuality and erode the sense of local identity that residents value so highly.

Additionally, the ability of Coychurch residents to have a say in local matters would be significantly reduced. With such limited representation, crucial decisions regarding planning, infrastructure, and local services could be made without properly considering the specific needs of our village. Our community deserves to have a strong voice in shaping its own future.

For these reasons, I urge decision-makers to reconsider this merger. Preserving Coychurch's independence is vital to ensuring fair representation, protecting our village identity, and safeguarding the interests of local residents.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this objection. I look forward to your response.

Bridgend 052 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower

I am writing to oppose your plans to abolish Coychurch lower community council.

I disagree with this motion as retaining communities identities are crucial for community spirit decisions locally that affect our community. Also the William Memorial Hall is well used within the community for a variety of community projects, so to lose control of that would be catastrophic.

Also local decision making and maintenance of the play park would get lost

Bridgend 053 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

We are writing to register our opposition to the proposal to merge Coychurch with Brackla.

The demographic of Coychurch and Brackla are completely different.

1. Coychurch is an old community, with a large percentage of elderly people who have lived here for many years.
2. Brackla is a young community with a much more fluid population,
3. This will mean their needs are very different.

The representation of Coychurch on the new community council, may reflect the correct numbers by population, but it would mean that Coychurch would have no effective voice.

Brackla's needs would come first, Coychurch's needs would be very much second.

In our view, this would not represent true democracy.

We assume that the reason for this proposal is financial, but the destruction of a community like Coychurch should not be decided by money.

We urge you not to agree to this merger.

Bridgend 054 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I wish to make my feelings clear about the proposed boundary changes that is likely to have an adverse effect on my village of Coychurch, in as much as the idea that we as a village will lose both our identity, and our voting rights, if we are to become what will be merely a part of Brackla who it seems will have 12 community councillors to 2 for Coychurch, something I believe to be totally undemocratic and very unfair.

I hope in the end that common sense will stop this travesty in its tracks.

Bridgend 055 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

We feel that we must put on record our strongest possible objection to the proposed abolition of the Coychurch Lower community and the forming of the new community of Brackla.

Establishing what would seem to be an arbitrary number of 5,000 electors per community totally ignores the needs of small communities such as Coychurch Lower. As residents of Coychurch Lower we feel it is critical that the identities of such small community are maintained and that their specific needs are adequately represented. The needs of a more rural environment such as Coychurch Lower are vastly different to those of Brackla and to forcibly merge them will not benefit either community.

The proposal that the new community would have 12 councillors with only 2 representatives of Coychurch Lower also risks the needs of Coychurch Lower being overshadowed by the much more urban and populous community of Brackla.

The current Community Council understand the needs of Coychurch and serves its community well. Of course in the current environment it is important for local authorities to drive efficiencies and seek to reduce costs. Surely though there are better ways of achieving these goals rather than forcibly merge the representation to such different communities. Would it not make more sense to combine the communities of Coychurch Higher and Coychurch Lower?

We hope that you will seriously consider these comments and the representations made by residents of your smaller communities.

Bridgend 056 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I write to you to express objection to the merging of community councils. I believe that the merging of Brackla and Coychurch would be detrimental to the community of Coychurch Lower. My family and I moved to the village in 2022 due to it being a place where our little boy would grow up and flourish, this was based on the fact the village is well looked after and has the great amenities such as the playground and field. When we eventually moved here we learnt of the importance of the community council in the village and the positive impact they have on our small community. There is a genuine desire to do well for our community and there is a level of care about the impact the choices made have as our community councillors are all invested in the place that they live.

If this merger were to happen with only 2 representatives for Coychurch I think it would be to the detriment of the village and I believe that there would not be fair decisions made about the amount of money put into the village. Coychurch is a special place where community thrives and I believe it is one of the few places that this still exists. To remove decisions and money away from the area would result in the decline of the village.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email and acknowledge my objection to the merging of Brackla and Coychurch lower community councils.

Bridgend 057 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

As a long term Coychurch resident I must express my serious concerns regarding the BCBC proposal to join Coychurch Community Council with Brackla. I understand that there will be 14 councillors on the new ward with only 2 from Coychurch. How will the concerns and interests of people in the village be adequately represented? Coychurch is physically separated from Brackla by the railway line and Simonston Road and that that makes the village a totally separate conurbation. There are 3 areas of major concern:-

1. The playing field – This has recently been improved at great expense and is difficult for Brackla residents to access this due to the separation issues mentioned above.
2. The Memorial Hall. Brackla already has a modern one on Whitehorn Drive.
3. The play park between Glenwood Close and the main road.

Will Brackla councillors have the best interests of Coychurch at heart. I do not think so!

I hope that you will seriously consider these comments and vote against the proposals.

Bridgend 058 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I am a resident of Coychurch, and I undertint that there is a proposal to abolish Coychurch Lower Community Council, and merge with Brackla to form a new Brackla Community Council.

I'm strongly against this proposal as I feel Coychurch will have little or no say as to how the village is run, especially as the newly formed council will apparently consist of 14 councillors, but only 2 of these will be from Coychurch.

I feel the village will loose its identity.

Bridgend 059 – Member of Public via E-mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I write to register my concern and to ask that the boundary changes proposed do not include Coychurch. We have a very successful and efficient village council who work well to address all the needs of the village. This would definitely be adversely affected if we were linked with the Brackla.

Actually, I was talking to 5 teenager who live in Brackla who had come to Coychurch play park to use the basketball hoops because and I quote “Brackla have taken down our hoops because they couldn’t be bothered to fix them and they have a taken away our skate park area”

“we come to Coychurch because it’s better here and we use Coychurch field too to play football because it’s better kept than ours”

Please don’t ruin our village just for the sake of change.

Bridgend 060 – Member of Public via Letter – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I wish to express my rejection and opposition to the proposed abolition of Coychurch Lower Community Council and the consequential subsuming into a new Brackla Community Council. The proposal is absolutely abhorrent to us.

Coychurch as a village community dates back at least, to the eighty century and wishes to remain as an autonomous entity within the local government structure. We have our own history and culture. The village hall was built to commemorate the Men of the village who serves, and died, in the Great War. The descendants of those men are still to be found in the village.

This “merger” proposal flies in the face of all modern thinking that government should come closer to the people. Take the history of Glamorgan County Council (not to mention devolution of Welsh Government from Westminster). The once enormous Glamorgan County Council was considered too big and was reorganised into three counties i.e. South, Mid and West Glamorgan. After a very short period of time, these counties were considered still to be too big and a further reorganisation resulted in the creation of much smaller County Boroughs, ours being Bridgend CBC.

Coychurch Community Council is dedicated to looking after Coychurch Lower. Coychurch is a complete community with its Historic church, a village hall, a primary school, two public houses, a village shop, a garage, a children’s recreation park and a public park. The village is geographically isolated by two dual carriage ways and a railway line with no safe walking routes to other communities. We are a fully integrated community. We see absolutely no advantage in being merged with our bigger neighbour.

If we become part of the proposed Brackla Community Council we will have two representatives on a committee of fourteen councillors. The other twelve members will be of, and concerned with the needs of the huge housing conurbation of Brackla. That situation does not favour the needs and interests of Coychurch. We are self funded so we should control our budget. If this merger goes ahead we, the Coychurch Lower citizens, will have to stand aside and watch strangers manage our village including our village hall.

Brackla is a totally different community to Coychurch with its own needs and culture. Coychurch is a discrete community, geographically, demographically, and culturally. Coychurch Community Council has looked after the community of Coychurch very successfully and we wish it to continue to do so.

Bridgend 061 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Coychurch Lower, Brackla, Coity Higher:

Could Coychurch Lower become a ward of Coity Higher? That council has green space policies much more in line with Coychurch Lower's approach to its community field and play park. Though the issue of the trusteeship for the village's Williams Memorial Hall will remain a problem whether Coychurch Lower becomes part of Brackla or Coity Higher.

Bridgend 062 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Coychurch Lower:

To your proposal abolishing Coychurch lower I am against it

Bridgend 063 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla, Coity Higher:

My husband and I have lived in Llangrallo (Coychurch) since 1982. Originally we lived in a late 18th century cottage. Our village is unique in its history and culture and has different needs to the vast housing estate of Brackla. Indeed we have more in common with Coity!

The Coed y Mwstwr hotel was originally the home of a liberal M.P. whose widow built the Williams Memorial Hall to commemorate his name and to give the villagers a meeting place. The names of the villagers who died fighting in the wars for freedom and democracy are displayed there.

THE Church built in the 13TH Century was originally a monastery and famous people are buried there.

The well that provided drinking water to the villagers is exhibited in the garden of Well's cottage.

There is a wealth of history in this village and Coity, with its ruined castle, that should be shown on the tourist map of Wales.

We should not be losing our identity. We should be called Llangrallo as the Welsh assembly wants and our Welsh heritage should be preserved, not diluted with only 2 councillors representing us at Brackla, with whom we have nothing in common.

Please reconsider your original idea!

Bridgend 064 – Member of Public via Letter – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I am writing to formally notify you of my concerns regarding the recent proposal to amend the boundary of Coychurch Community Council, thereby merging it with the community of Brackla.

My fear is this proposal is implemented is that Coychurch will be underrepresented as we currently only have 2 councillors to Brackla's twelve, we will be overshadowed and its unique identity diminished. Coychurch has always been a vibrant and welcoming village with the Memorial Hall at the heart of our social gatherings. Should this merger occur I worry that the residents of Coychurch may find themselves required to travel to Brackla for essential amenities, leaving our beloved Memorial Hall at risk of closure or demolition.

Furthermore, there is an increasing number of pensioners within the village community, many of whom will become isolated and may be unable to engage with a larger council due to age or disability. The Coychurch Community Council has demonstrated exceptional commitment and effectiveness in serving our village for over fifty years. It raises the question: why disrupt a system that is functioning well?

I appreciate your attention to this matter and urge you to consider the implications of this proposal on our community.

Bridgend 065 – Clerk to Coychurch Lower Community Council via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla, Bridgend Town:

As clerk to the Coychurch Lower Community Council (Coychurch Lower CC) I write to inform you that the community council strongly objects to the proposed boundary changes which will result in the ward being split into two with part being absorbed into the Oldcastle ward of Bridgend Town and the rest becoming a ward of the new Brackla Community Council.

During the last local elections Coychurch Lower was joined with Brackla East for county councillor voting purposes but each separate community has continued to be well served by its respective community council and we see no reason to change, or advantage in changing, that arrangement. There is a difference between voting for representatives at county / Senedd / UK Government level and having a local and accessible community council to respond to your concerns and improve your community.

We do not agree that the “democratic deficit” referred to in the consultation documents indicates a lack of interest by residents in what happens in their local area and this should not be used as a reason to merge the smaller councils into larger ones. In Coychurch Lower we have had high levels of engagement in public consultations which indicates the level of interest is more than that assumed by looking at councillor numbers. Currently we have 6 councillors on a council of 7.

We find it unfortunate that Bridgend County Borough Council has chosen to confuse two issues by using the statutory requirement to review voting numbers/boundaries as a means to reorganise the town and community council sizes to serve its financial objectives. Why can't the minimum number be adjusted to cater for providing a tailored local service to smaller communities (which was the reason for setting up community councils in the first place)? Bridgend County Borough Council agreed an arbitrary minimum of 5000 electors for community council at its meeting in April 2024. The report gives no evidence for needing this figure other than an opinion that it is necessary to achieve the county councils financial objectives which are not defined.

When Bridgend County Borough Council put forward the idea of merging councils it was originally proposed that councils would join together for purchasing arrangements to benefit from the cost savings available and to engage in combined projects. This is what the Welsh Government report on the Role, Governance and Accountability of the Community and Town Council Sector calls “Clustering” in Recommendation 7. This seems a much more sensitive approach to achieving the devolution of services from the County Borough Council to Town and Community Councils.

Councillors and residents are concerned about the following:

- **Distancing the Electorate from the First Level of Local Government** – Currently the Coychurch Lower CC meets in Coychurch and it is locally available to the residents with an office in the Williams Memorial Hall
- **Different Council Approaches** – The current Coychurch Lower CC ethos is that of local volunteers, working together as a team to better their community. There is concern about how this would fit with a very politicised council. Having 2 members in a total group of 14 councillors will make it very difficult to obtain consent for anything specific to Coychurch Lower
- **The Erosion of Community Identity and Cohesion** – We feel that while Brackla and Coychurch are physically adjacent communities, there is no actual connection between the two as Coychurch Road/Simonston Road and the railway line act as distinct boundaries between the two. The residents of Waterton have family ties and make use of the amenities in Coychurch as well as having such things as lamppost festive lights, poppies, etc. provided by the community council. Will these disappear as they will be at the very edge of the Oldcastle ward? Absorbing Waterton and Brocastle into Bridgend Town for the sole purpose of situating the industrial estates within the town council boundary means these electors will no longer have a distinct identity and no specific councillor to represent them.
- **Widely Differing Cultures and Priorities** – Brackla is very much an urban area with associated issues common to larger communities with a more transient population. Coychurch Lower includes considerable farmland to the east and south as well as the industrial and retail parks in the west with 3 small historically “rural” communities – Coychurch village, Waterton and Brocastle. People come to

Coychurch to experience village life for themselves and their children rather than being part of an urban estate community.

- **Loss of Control over Future Enhancements and the Maintenance of the Current Amenities:**
 - Coychurch Community Field: This is in the process of a Community Asset Transfer and there is an established plan for the development of the area which has been agreed by residents of Coychurch Lower. Phase 1 has been completed and there has been an increase in footfall from the residents. However, the only ways for people from Brackla to access the Community Field is to drive there or walk through the dangerous junction under the railway bridge. What interest will people from Brackla CC in continuing with the CAT, finishing this project and providing the ongoing maintenance?
 - Coychurch Play Park set between Glenwood Close and Main Road: This was revamped in 2021-22 and is the responsibility of Coychurch Lower CC which has a Lease with BCBC. Will Brackla CC take this on, complete the Capital Asset Transfer process and maintain the facility – equipment, boundaries and grounds?
- **The resulting uncertainty about the future of the Williams Memorial Hall** and the support that is currently provided by the community council. Brackla already has a community hall on Whitehorn Drive. How much interest will they have in the one in Coychurch? Coychurch Lower CC is the sole trustee of the Williams Memorial Hall and the building is in need of extensive renovation works. Would Brackla Community Council take this on?

In conclusion, we believe that the proposed changes are detrimental to the democratic process and will endanger the services provided to our residents in Coychurch Lower.

Bridgend 066 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Brackla:

Don't agree with any of it. Why does brackla need all those community councils. Not one councillor in any of those wards does anything to earn their right to be there. Only when there is an election they all come out of the woodwork.

Bridgend 067 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

I disagree with the proportion merge Coychurch with Brackla and reduce the number of members from Coychurch. It is an undemocratic approach

Bridgend 068 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Coychurch Lower, Brackla:

As far as Coychurch is concerned, I oppose any changes to the Coychurch Community Council or boundaries. Coychurch is unique and des not need to be part of Brackla.

Bridgend 069 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Coychurch Lower:

Coychurch Lower is a distinct village and should remain so within the Community council areas.

Bridgend 070 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Coychurch Lower, Brackla, Bridgend Town:

Waterton Lane is most definitely not, “urban”. We don’t even have pavements! Bounded by industrial estates, the B & Q retail park, Wick’s van hire, and Council grounds, Waterton Lane is located, “out of town” which is not the same as “urban”.

Some hold onto the romantic notion that Waterton Lane is a village, which the reality is that, Waterton Lane is a no-through road remnant, of what once was a village.

I appreciate that in tidying up boundaries, to include Waterton Lane within the Bridgend Town Ward looks to be a logical mapping exercise, however, Geographically and Perceptionwise, Waterton Lane has little in common with Bridgend Town.

I’ve lost count of the number of conversations I’ve had with delivery drivers and sometimes baffled, distressed, disbelieving couriers on the phone, when guiding them to Waterton Lane. Even new couriers who have resided in Treos all their lives, have only “discovered” Waterton Lane because of their new courier job, along with my much-practised, detailed directions which include the observation that, “after dropping downhill and turning through the dog-leg behind B & Q’s over-flow car-park, it looks like a country lane”.

One family member when visiting, described Waterton Lane as, “something out of Brigadoon”!

Waterton Lane has more in common with the existing Coychurch Lower Ward. Even their little egrets hang out over here in the Ewenny River. Furthermore, the Coychurch Lower Community Council knows that Waterton Lane exists. When the Clerk, Mabyn was new to the job, I mentioned to her that I live in Waterton Lane and was deeply impressed when she said that it was, “on the very edge of the Coychurch Lower boundary”. Even though Mabyn was new to her post, she had clearly done her homework – unlike many taxi drivers who always ask me if I’m sure I know where I’m wanting to go, as they are not familiar with this section of Waterton Lane that was cut off by the A473.

There would also be great concerns about the Williams Memorial Hall. Much effort has been made to keep it open and available to the Community. Buildings such as these in all Wards, are vulnerable to neglect. These buildings need to be used and maintained. They are part of the local Identity, History and Community. Each such building needs to be protected and a concern would be that when Wards are merged, then it could create a priority interest for some buildings over others when in reality, **all** of these buildings need Guardianship. Discussions about anything takes time and resources which as we all know, are finite. Looking after the Community Halls and building is important for, and to the local Residents. Even if the weather were not a consideration, not everyone can visit Parks and fields.

Waterton Lane, is a bit of a riddle for you. Not enough infrastructure (and fortunately, no graffiti) to be urban; looks like a country lane, but isn’t rural; no longer big enough and none of the Services associated with a village; too far out of town to be considered “towny”; proximitywise, closer to our fellow Community in Coychurch Lower.

Good luck with your deliberations!

Bridgend 071 – Cllr Ian Spiller via E-Mail – Laleston, Merthyr Mawr, Bridgend Town:

I am writing to support the boundary review in relation to Laleston community council, Merthyr Mawr community council and Bridgend Town Council, as a borough councillor for the ward of Bryntirion, Laleston & Merthyr Mawr, a community councillor with Laleston community council and a town councillor with Bridgend town council.

Firstly, I believe the balance has been struck between sensible changes and maintaining the identity of communities within the areas above.

It was very important that the village of Merthyr Mawr is not lost within the boundary review and I am pleased to see the development at Craig Y Parcau included within a ward called Merthyr Mawr within Laleston Community Council.

Likewise I am pleased to see Island Farm move to Bridgend town council, into the Oldcastle ward where the wartime history of Bridgend can be preserved within its logical home of Bridgend town.

To me it also makes sense for Stormy Down and Tythegston to be aligned with Porthcawl.

Turning to the changes within Laleston Community Council:

I am in agreement with the new development in the circus field in the LDP [Local Development Plan] form part of the new Laleston ward, it makes sense in terms of geographical context and electors per representative.

The re-alignment of Westward Place and Westward Close into a new Bryntirion ward, and moving of Morgan's Meadow into Cefn Glas has been something Laleston community councillors previously suggested and supported when Morgan's Meadow was being developed due to the access points for both.

The moving of Ael y Bryn, Beachwood Avenue, Heol y Frenhines (part), Heol y Ysgol and Maes Glas from LCC to BTC makes complete sense in geographical terms and moves all the former West House estate into Newcastle Ward. Whilst it is regrettable that the access to the MUGA funded by LCC moves to BTC I believe a sensible balance has been obtained by leaving the MUGA and Llangewydd Junior School within the LCC boundary recognising LCCs investment in the community.

The moving of Church Bell Sounds and Woodridge into the Cefn Glas ward in LCC from Newcastle Ward and the movement of St Winifred's Road creates a tidier boundary following modern access roads on the eastern side of LCCs and the western side of BTCs boundary.

Finally, the creation of a Broadlands ward has been long overdue. The largest community within LCC has finally been recognised as an electoral ward which has long been called for, from the early days of Broadlands Residents Association some 20 years ago, it is a much needed change and I am grateful it has finally been addressed.

I would also like to commend the review for listening and addressing the concerns of the communities. Given the minimum size restrictions for community councils this change is the best result for our communities.

Bridgend 072 – Clerk to Laleston Community Council via E-Mail – Laleston, Merthyr Mawr, Bridgend Town:
Response to the Electoral Arrangement Review from Laleston Community Council:

Laleston Community Council was pleased to see the inclusion of the proposals submitted by its Members during the initial consultation phase of the Electoral Arrangement Review, and fully support the recommendations as presented in the Draft Proposals Report.

Bridgend 073 – Clerk to Merthyr Mawr Community Council via E-Mail – Laleston, Merthyr Mawr, Bridgend Town, Porthcawl Town:

We are told the proposals have been made in order to reflect our local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government across the principal council area.

The Council puts forward the following general observation:-

Regarding the proposals to reflect the local identity; this Council represents a large rural area which would be fragmented and divided between three surrounding councils. The unique identity of the Community that Merthyr Mawr Community Council represents would be severely compromised.

Responses to specific points made regarding the future of MMCC by Councillor David Unwin

- 1. MMCC has had 11 clerks in 15 years and has had to manage for several periods with no clerk necessitating a councillor take on the clerking duties also that David Unwin has had to prepare the annual audit on at least 8 occasions in order to keep the council in session*

A few years ago our council took steps to completely transform the way in which it attracts, advertises for, selects and crucially retains a Clerk. At the last selection process, we had an excellent response from well qualified candidates. For the last three years MMCC has retained an extremely efficient, conscientious and competent clerk.

An essential element of running a Council is a clear, accurate, financial records. Our current clerk has 34 years experience in government finance and has completed module 1 of One Voice Wales – Finance as has at least one other member of the Council. Our clerk is the Responsible Financial Officer and, with her experience in government finance and experience elsewhere within the Council, should David Unwin ever choose to step down, our Council is more than confident that the financial records and auditing will be actioned efficiently and correctly.

- 2. The MMCC area is projected to see an increase by 500% in the number of dwellings which will swamp the area and make it impossible to govern under the current MMCC set up.*

There is no doubt that the new developments at Island Farm and Craig y Parcau will necessitate a big step up in the responsibilities and opportunities for our Council. As such we will look forward to encouraging and welcoming the new residents onto our Council so that they, and we as a Council, may advocate for the new residents and help to foster social cohesion and a sense of place both within the new development and as part of our wider Merthyr Mawr community.

- 3. Currently the MMCC area has no shop, school, play area, community hall etc, and much of the land is owned by 2 large “Private Estates”, so the Council is limited in what it can do... MMCC’s precept is therefore regularly the lowest in BCBC with the vast majority of expenditure directed into the statutory admin and costing every resident an average of £18 per head with no material benefits to them.*

What do our constituents get for £18 of their Council Tax?

Councillors are available or answer constituents concerns

Planning applications are rigorously scrutinised

Potholes are reported

Footpaths are maintained

Disturbances are reported to the police

Litter picking

Bulb planting and wild flower meadow seeding

CPR demonstrations arranged

Park benches installed and upkept

An interpretation board is also in the pipeline

We believe that the Council offers excellent value for money on it's £5,000 a year precept, championing the needs of the various stakeholders in the community ranging from farmers to those using the area for recreational purposes.

It is acknowledged that MMCC is an anomaly, being by far the smallest Council in the Bridgend County Borough Council area. Even with the 1,000 odd new houses to be built at Island Farm and Craig y Parcau, it is unlikely that we will reach more than 2,500 residents. Having said that, we would argue that the needs and priorities of our largely rural constituency, dominated as it is by 2 large private estates, is of a vastly different nature to that of Laleston CC, Bridgend TC or Porthcawl TC.

We have very little in the way of assets, our precept is tiny and the amount our constituencies pay, at £18 pa, is just over a third of that paid by residents of Laleston. This is indeed in part because so much of the area is owned by 2 private estates which does limit the areas in which we can contribute. MMCC however understands the importance of maintaining a healthy working relationship with the landowners in the area in order to bring about improvements to the area and to advocate on behalf of the residents.

The issues and concerns of residents in our area are not those of residents in an urban area for whom play areas, skate parks, community halls etc are a priority and will surely and rightly, take up a huge amount of council time and energy. Conversely our small precept reflects the current reality of our reach.

We believe strongly however that it is important to represent the needs of the semi rural community and villages in the area. To simply absorb each bit of rural area into the nearest conurbation is anti democratic and does much to undermine the sense of place and belonging which the new boundary changes are apparently seeking to foster.

Our deep reservation is that to subsume Merthyr Mawr Village into Laleston CC which has to manage the concerns of nearly 13,000 residents (soon to increase), living in 3 discrete and very separate areas, will leave little space for the concerns of Merthyr Mawr residents. Exactly the same can be said for Stormy Down vis a vis Porthcawl CC and Island Farm vis a vis Bridgend TC.

We argue that, rather than subsuming Bridgend's rural area into the nearest urban councils, who will not have the bandwidth to focus on our needs and issues, it would make more sense to beef up MMCC. The addition of the new housing developments will go a long way to do this but we would also suggest that Wigfach might be brought back under the wing of MMCC and furthermore we suggest that Laleston village could join up with Merthyr Mawr CC. This will provide the rural and semi rural area to the south of Bridgend Town with proper representation in accordance with our own needs and priorities.

We reiterate that MMCC functions perfectly well in its current form, representing and advocating for our community in a way that is appropriate for its needs whilst working with other stakeholders to maintain and bring about the enhancements to the area. We also work to ensure that all the separate geographical entities within our large, spread out area, are properly represented within the Council.

We do understand that our diminutive size is not in keeping with the efforts of BCBC to rationalise community and town councils, but simply absorbing our area into three large councils will result in residents having little to no representation. Hence it would make far more sense either to leave us as we are, a perfectly functional, conscientious and enthusiastic community council, or to join forces with Wigfach and Laleston village to increase our size and clout to be more in line with other councils. In this way, we would be able to properly focus on meeting the needs of our local community and environment whilst also welcoming visitors from the wider community.

Bridgend 074 – Cllr David Unwin via Letter – General:
REVIEW OF TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FOR MAY 2027

The above review document was issued recently and, by and large, I fully agree with the new proposals contained therein as eminently sensible given the situation we now find the sector in, as opposed to what seemed right back in 1974.

As a continuously elected councillor across six councils (three at Community level) for a collective 50 years since 1976, I am probably best placed of ALL local councillors to give a considered view on the proposals.

At the outset of the consultation, I supplied BCBC with a series of views on the way forward; most of which have been included in the final proposals. Well done.

Apart from my current 41 years on Bridgend Town Council and 17 years on Merthyr Mawr Council – currently Chairman for the past two years – my views submitted previously were my own considerations and not perhaps the views of other council members.

To that end, I have now had sight of a paper being sent to you from other members of MMCC with conflicting views from mine. That is democracy – I have no problem with that.

I must confirm however, that this paper is a majority opinion; not unanimous for the reasons stated. I basically do not agree with the views now being submitted so I have not changed my mind in any way in the light of this paper.

Your proposals should go ahead without alteration and MMCC disbanded and the various geographical parts allocated to other councils now better placed to administer the MMCC area in the future.

I am personally named in the new submission – something that could be considered as inappropriate; but the writers of the paper saw fit to do this – a matter for them.

I will not comment further except to congratulate your team on the sterling effort that has been put into this in-depth report which cannot have been easy.

I look forward to the full proposals being effected for the May 2027 elections.

Bridgend 075 – Llynfi Valley Labour Party Branch via E-Mail – Maesteg Town, Llangynwyd Middle:

Would you please note the following representations which are made in response to the above consultation by Llynfi Valley Branch Labour Party:-

In respect of the proposals which apply to the Llynfi Valley (incorporating Maesteg and Llangynwyd Middle), Llynfi Valley Branch Labour Party wishes to note that, by consensus, it is in favour as those outlined on pages 88-93 of the Report.

Bridgend 076 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Maesteg Town, Llangynwyd Middle:

[Boundary Review Maesteg & Llangynwyd Middle Town Councils]

I would like to make the following suggestions:

- 1) These two town councils should be merged, they are both situated in the Llynfi valley
- 2) Cwmfelin & pontrhydyckff should be one ward, and only have Three town councillors and not Four this would mean that there are 790 voters per councillor, on a similar par to Nantyffyllon
- 3) Both of these two Town Councils have been both subject of Police Investigations. Both involving theft of council funds by the Clerk of both town councils. While there is no guarantee that lightning will strike twice in the same place if both town councils are merged any subsequent wrong doing will be easier for the police to investigate (or not)
- 4) Merger will mean having all the rotten eggs in one basket
- 5) I'm still trying to get my head around why the Maesteg Town Councillor (he who should not be named) who signed something like 100 blank cheques wasn't prosecuted for Misconduct in Public Office and False Accounting?

Bridgend 077 – Clerk to Maesteg Town Council via E-Mail – Maesteg Town, Llangynwyd Middle:

In our recent full council meeting we discussed the proposed review of boundaries for T&CC's and Maesteg Town Council support the draft proposal of merging Maesteg Town Council with Llangynwyd Community Council – see below extract from the drafts minutes of the meeting.

FULL COUNCIL 04/02/2025 – MINUTE 424

TO DISCUSS BCBC REVIEW OF COMMUNITY ARRANGEMENTS OF THE COUNTY OF BRIDGEND

Members decided against going into committee to discuss this agenda item as this was only a consultation document for consideration.

Members discussed the proposed review with the following comments:

- We've known about this for years, the proposals seem fair
- Could we create a working group to deal with the merger?
- Proposal to represent the whole valley is good
- This was suggested to Llan Middle CC many years ago and was rejected at the time, now it seems good for the valley
- Nothing is set in stone

Cllr L Thomas **proposed**, seconded by Cllr G Thomas, that the Council support the proposal to merge Maesteg Town Council with Llangynwyd Community Council. Cllr P Jenkins objected to the draft proposal and wanted his objections noted.

RESOLVED: To support the draft proposal of merging MTC with Llan Middle CC

Bridgend 078 – Cllr Martin Hughes via E-Mail – Maesteg Town, Llangynwyd Middle:

[Town and Community Councils – Electoral Arrangement Review Consultation Response]

Would you please note my following representations in respect of the above:-

I would like to express my support for the proposals which apply to the Llynfi Valley (incorporating Maesteg and Llangynwyd Middle); these are as outlined on pages 88-93 of the Report.

Bridgend 079 – Clerk to Pyle Community Council via E-Mail – Pyle, Cefn Cribwr:

Further to your email 16th January. Pyle Community Council would like to make the following comment on the suggested name for the community council that would represent Pyle, Kenfig Hill and Cefn Cribwr, should the recommend proposal be accepted; ***Pil, Cynffig and Cefn Cribwr Community Council***.

The members of Pyle Community Council do not feel that the name suggested in the recommendations; 'Cynffig', would be inclusive to the villages of Pyle and Cefn Cribwr and a name that indicates the inclusion of all the villages represented by the Community Council would be a better proposal.

Bridgend 080 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Pyle, Cefn Cribwr:

I am in favour of reducing the number of Community Councils within BCBC and also the subsequent number of community councillors. There would be a further advantage to reduce the number of BCBC Councillors. To amalgamate the existing Cefn Cribwr Community Council within BCBC and Pyle I believe would be a good fit and would be beneficial to the residents of both Cefn Cribwr and Pyle.

Bridgend 081 – Clerk to Cefn Cribwr Community Council via E-Mail – Pyle, Cefn Cribwr:

I write on behalf of the Members of the Cefn Cribwr Community Council in response to your consultation in regard of the Town and Community Councils – Electoral Arrangement review.

Cefn Cribwr is a distinctive and historically rich settlement within Bridgend County Borough, with a legacy that dates back to the Iron Age – well before that of Kenfig Hill and Pyle. Our village boasts a strong, tightly knit community, supported by a range of vital local services and amenities. These include an over-subscribed Primary School, a Community Centre, shops, a garage, a Community Pub, an Athletic Club, a Sports & Social Club, playing field featuring sports pitches, a bowling green, and multi-purpose all-weather courts, as well as five places of worship, a Community Association, a Community Pantry, a Labour Party Branch, the Y Cefn Gwyrdd Local History Society, a Gardening Club, and more. These facilities reflect the vibrant, multi-generational nature of our community, which is deeply integrated and self-sustaining. A community identity we are keen not to lose.

While we recognize and value the connections with neighbouring communities, the geographic and topographical differences between them make meaningful integration – and, crucially, community cohesion – unfeasible. Community cohesion is not just an ideal but a foundational element of any democratic society, one that Town and Community Councils should serve. Therefore, attempts to merge or substantially alter our community's structure risk undermining the very purpose of these councils.

We strongly reject the notion that a larger community council would necessarily be more efficient or effective. Our track record of successful community engagement and the delivery of significant, beneficial projects, often in partnership with Bridgend County Borough Council (and local organisations speaks for itself. It's clear that our community thrives when our voice is heard and our needs are met on a more localised, manageable scale.

Furthermore, we dispute the assumption that an uncontested election reflects a lack of democracy or support for the community council. On the contrary, we believe that the absence of contested elections is a sign of satisfaction and contentment with the council's work. The notion that uncontested elections signify failure, or a democratic deficit is not only misguided but fails to take into account the unique nature of our community. The risk posed by a larger, less localised council without clear geographical relationships, is that smaller communities like ours will be overshadowed, leaving our distinct needs unheard. Several members of our community have expressed their concerns that such changes would inevitably marginalise Cefn Cribwr's interests in favour of larger populations.

We also note that the current proposals would result in the new Community Council spanning two separate democratic boundaries: Cefn Cribwr falls within the Bridgend & Porthcawl Parliamentary Constituency, while Pyle and Kenfig Hill are situated within the Aberavon & Maesteg Constituency. Additionally, Cefn Cribwr is in the Bridgend and Vale of Glamorgan Welsh Government Constituency, while Pyle and Kenfig Hill are part of Aberavon, Rhondda and Ogmore. It is difficult to understand how anyone could view this arrangement as offering coherent or effective representation. We fear that this proposal will only create confusion and divide the interests of our community.

Already, the loss of an individual representative from Cefn Cribwr has heightened concerns about our village's voice being lost in future decisions. Without dedicated representatives, the unique needs of Cefn Cribwr could easily be drowned out by larger, more populous areas.

Additionally, we are deeply concerned by the proposal to reduce the number of representatives for Cefn Cribwr to just two members on the newly formed Community Council. Given the dynamic, active nature of our community, currently served by ten members and a dedicated Clerk, this would be entirely unsustainable. We strongly believe that such a drastic reduction in representation, driven by an ill-conceived focus on electoral parity, would severely hinder our ability to effectively serve our community. The proposed changes would effectively reduce our representation by up to 90%, which is untenable for a community of our size and vibrancy.

Moreover, we would appreciate seeing evidence of a thorough and meaningful public consultation. The subject heading for the draft proposals, “*Review of the Community Arrangements of the County of Bridgend*”, does not adequately convey the far-reaching impact of these proposals on the communities involved. A generic consultation of this nature is insufficient to capture the nuanced views of residents and fails to provide the kind of in-depth feedback necessary to make an informed decision. We do not believe that an appropriate consultation have been undertaken with community councils, which is lacking democratic processes and is unconstitutional. We would have objected to the 5,000-electorate baseline, as it does not fit local community natural boundaries.

In conclusion, we believe that these proposals, if ratified, would be a direct attack on grassroots democracy. They would dilute the voice of local communities, weakening our ability to engage in meaningful, localised governance. We urge the Members of Bridgend County Borough Council to reject these proposals and to protect the integrity of our community’s voice.

Bridgend 082 – Member of Public via Letter – Pyle, Cefn Cribwr:
RE-DRAWING OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS BOUNDARIES
PROPOSALS FOR CEFN CRIBWR AND PYLE

CEFN CRIBWR

I have lived in the village of Cefn Cribwr all of my life (86 years, so far) and have spent well over 35 of those years on the local Community Council and 8 years as a County Borough Councillor representing the Cefn Cribwr Ward. I firmly believe I have a great affinity with and a considerable knowledge of the Village, or as a “Cefn Rider” (known locally).

Cefn Cribwr is a small and very closely knitt community, something that could not be identified with our neighbouring communities of Kenfig Hill, Pyle or Aberkenfig. So much so the Bridgend County Borough Council, in its infinite wisdom (rightly so) designated it as a Rural Settlement and therefore receiving protection against over development.

Unlike many other Community / Town Councils we have enjoyed years of settled and productive, representation of our population, small of otherwise.

THE PROPOSALS

Firstly, and some may say of little importance, but not to me and many others like me, as lifelong residents, the spelling of the word “Cribwr” with two “b’s” is wrong and was officially accepted (using one “b”) I the 70s / 80s by the then Ogwr Borough Council and was officially continued by the current BCBC.

It’s worrying that the current Council Officers get such an issue so very wrong, which leads me to wonder how much more of this and other proposals are affectively wrong and / or misleading.

To start, whilst there are one or two small re-alignments proposed to the Cefn Cribwr (spelt with one “b”) boundaries that make sense and should have been done years ago, your entire proposals are based solely on preconceived numbers of residents and NOT on the people that live within the Community of Cefn Cribwr.

The Community of Cefn Cribwr (whatever the numbers) has worked extremely successful, as an administrative area for many years, neigh generations, even way back when the Council area was called “Tythegston Higher”. IT concerns me that changing the Council area because it does not fit statistically and therefore comfortably into your numbering ratios does not, in any way, make for a cohesive Council area or for better governance.

Additionally proper governance does not depend solely numbers suggested in your proposals, but on local knowledge and having adequate representatives to operate that governance. According to your proposals, the number of representatives (councillors) will only be two (2) people, even you much agree it wouldn’t take much for: -

1. Those representatives for Cefn Cribwr would be overwhelmed by our neighbouring area, which is already operating as a Community Council – Pyle.
2. For any number of reasons namely illness, absenteeism or a lack of interest caused by No. 1 above, Cefn Cribwr could well find itself with NO representatives, on occasions.

NOT ACCEPTABLE – SHOULD NEVER BE ALLOWED

I would strongly hope that Cefn Cribwr (spelt with one “b”) will be kept as a Community Council area in its own right, no matter what its number of residents, it’s a sad problem that when history is played around with, you find this can never ben put right afterwards.

HOWEVER

In the event that the very strong wishes of the people of Cefn Cribwr are ignored then I feel the following should be considered: -

The spelling for the word Cribwr should be with one “b” (the Welsh way) reflecting the long standing wishes of local people. In fact all three areas should be known by their Welsh i.e. – Cefn Cribwr / Mynydd Cynfig / Pil.

For the reasons highlighted earlier in this letter the representation of the new proposed Community Council should be:-

WARD	COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATION
Mynydd Cynfig	6
Pil	5
Cefn Cribwr	4
TOTAL	15

This better reflects the area and number ratios should not come into the equation. Ten Councillors in no way is enough to reflect proper governance for the proposed area.

As already stated the small changes to the boundaries effecting Cefn Cribwr should remain.

The Principal Council Election Ward should revert back to single member' representation, to enable better and clearer representation (people will better understand who their Councillor is):-

1. Cefn Cribwr and upper Mynydd Cynfig – (High Street, and Crown Road/Victoria Road/Station Road area.
2. Mynydd Cynffig – from the bottom of High street to the Mynydd Cynfig sign (near Pyle library)
3. Pil – From the above sign to the main railway line.

I respectfully present this letter for consideration.

Bridgend 083 – Clerk to St Bride’s Minor Community Council via E-Mail – St Bride’s Minor, Ynysawdre, Newcastle Higher, Coity Higher, Coychurch Higher, Ogmore Valley:

The following are St Bride’s Minor Community Council’s observations on the draft review:

- SBM does not accept the proposed new arrangements and wishes to strongly reiterate its previous recommendation that St Brides Minor Community Council and Ynysawdre Community Council should be amalgamated into one council. In line with the arrangements for borough councillor representation of these wards. In particular it will not split communities
- SBM accepts that the part of SBM which sits south of the M4 should be excluded and accepts the review’s view that these should sit within Coity Higher Community Council
- That the council’s name should be St Brides Minor and Ynysawdre Community Council
- That councillor representation should be in line with the equation mentioned in the review
- The review proposals are not compatible with the two Coity Wallia Acts of 1976 and 2006. BCBC will be aware that the terms of these Acts in their present form must be complied with. Should the review wish to amalgamate Coychurch Higher with another council, with the legislation of the acts in mind, SBM suggest that consideration be given to amalgamate Coychurch Higher CC with Ogmore Valley CC

Bridgend 084 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Ynysawdre:

Message to the Change Team:

My message is focused on Ynysawdre CC, in particular Tondu (Maesteg Rd side) CF329DG. I became an elected councillor for Tondu in the May 2023 elections. I was interested in representing my neighbours in helping improve their experience when choosing Tondu as their place of residence for their families. At that time 6 opportunities were designated for residents to represent Tondu. Now under section 204 of the draft proposal the new structure shows none. The Tondu 'postcoded' homes across Ynysawdre are the majority, the other being Brynmenyn. As a result, I would feel uncomfortable putting myself forward at a future election as it does not feel 'inclusive'. This boundary changing initiative would seem a good time to rebrand some of these community councils in a naming format that is meaningful to a modern society.

When I moved to the area and saw the precept payment on my council tax demand was being paid to Ynysawdre CC and I was confused. Ynysawdre does not exist as a place. It has historical links that go back over 150 years but has little relevance to the current population. Had I seen on my tax demand a precept payment going to Tondu & Brynmenyn CC, I would instantly have related to that description and felt more inclusive. The council team acknowledgement of these concerns in a revised plan would be respected.]

Bridgend 085 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Ynysawdre, Newcastle Higher, St Bride's Minor:

Ynysawdre Community councils under the proposals majority will be absorbed by Newcastle Higher, while agree anything the non railway side of Tondu Road should be part of Newcastle higher as it sits better, anything the railway side of Tondu Road should be incorporated into St Brides so that would be Ynysawdre and Brynmenyn as they sit right next to St Brides and have a closer link, incorporating majority of the community council into st brides makes no sense. It cant be that st Brides would be too big as it will be smaller than Brackla which under the proposals would increase in size. Plus Ynysawdre and Brynmenyn are both represented by the same county councillor as St Brides and this would offer better continuity of the area.

Bridgend 086 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Newcastle Higher, Llangynwyd Lower:

In relation to the new Newcastle Higher, the proposal for two councillors for Cotragen seems to be high for the population size compared with other much larger wards

Bridgend 087 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Ynysawdre, Newcastle Higher:
Moving Tondy from Ynysawdre CC to Newcastle Higher CC.

Bridgend 088 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Newcastle Higher, Llangynwyd Lower:

I don't agree with the proposals. I don't agree with the policy of a baseline of around 5k electorate either. For my community I am happy with the current situation in Newcastle Higher. We have had good Councillors recently who are local residents and doing good work. To move to a larger area that extends as far as Coytrahen where there is little in common and the reduction in our representation does not make sense to me. It isn't broken and doesn't need changing. It would not encourage me to stand as it is a lot of responsibility across a wider area for a voluntary role, and waters down the current focus on our community.

Bridgend 089 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Newcastle Higher, Llangynwyd Lower, Maesteg Town:

Coytrahen is part of the Llynfi Valley NOT NEWCASTLE HIGHER. We do not want to inherit failing community councils special measures. Coytrahen prides itself and community being a small village. This is how we wish to remain. Llynfi Vale. BCBC are taking our heritage away from us via failing councils and their funds. We/communities are taking the brunt for this. Why should we be punished for your failings.

Bridgend 090 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Newcastle Higher, Llangynwyd Lower, Maesteg Town:

I recently purchased my property purely to be in coytrahen and the llynfi Valley for the historic and valley traditions. Should i become aware of this change i certainly would not have purchased my property. should boundaries change our house prices will go down. people do not want to be known as Newcastle higher

Bridgend 091 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Llangynwyd Lower, Newcastle Higher:

I am fostered and came to live in Coytrahen this is the 1st place I have felt safe and the community is accepting no matter who you are. Being fostered I have moved from area to area and never felt safe up to now. I was previously fostered in the areas you wish to mix Coytraahen with and i am having anxiety just to think about it and the bullying I was having. I would not go to any council meetings and this will make me vulnerable and not being part of the community i will become isolated in fear should i bump into these violent bulllys by entering their community. Thank you for taking my safety net away from me.

Bridgend 092 – Cllr Mark John via E-Mail – St Bride’s Minor, Newcastle Higher, Ynysawdre, Coychurch Higher, Pencoed Town, Coity Higher:

It would be beneficial to merge St Brides Minor with Ynysawdre Community Council, this would not just align the Boundaries with the Borough Council Boundaries but would reduce the overall number of Councilors from 23 to 15 using the equation of 660 residents to each Community Councillor as there are a total of 9940 electors between the two wards.

I would also like clarification about merging Coychurch Higher with Pencoed, my reason being that there are two places per Community Councils of the councils named below that sit on the Board of Conservators of Coity Gwalia, I believe this is stated in the Coity Walia Act of Parliament 1976.

St Brides Minor

Coychurch Higher

Pencoed

Coity Higher

Bridgend 093 – Clerk to Newcastle Higher Community Council via E-Mail – Newcastle Higher, Llangynwyd Lower:

Newcastle Higher Community Council object to the proposal as it is currently presented, with emphasis on the below points.

Newcastle Higher Community Council appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the consultation on the proposed boundary review, We welcome the rationale behind ensuring that community councils represent a minimum of 5,000 electors, as this aims to create structures that are sustainable long term. However, we would like to highlight several concerns regarding the potential impact of these changes, particularly in relation to representation and service delivery.

1. Increased Area/Ward Size

Expanding the geographic size of our community council area may present challenges in maintaining meaningful engagement with residents. A larger area could lead to difficulties in addressing hyper-local issues effectively, as community councils play a crucial role in representing distinct neighbourhood concerns. Although the rationale for ensuring wards are inclusive of a minimum of 5,000 electors, this concern should be recognised.

2. Ratio of Community Councillors per Elector

A key concern is that the ratio of community councillors to electors will not remain consistent across all wards. Under the proposed changes, Newcastle Highers' current representation of 12 councillors – equally divided between Pen-y-Fai and Aberkenfig – would be reduced to 2 in Aberkenfig and 3 in Pen-y-Fai. This significant reduction in representation could lead to an increased workload for remaining councillors, making it more difficult to engage fully with residents and community initiatives. Disparities in councillor-to-electors ratios across different wards may also create inequalities in representation, which should be addressed as part of this review. We highlight the disparity between the proposed Coytrahen and Aberkenfig wards where there is a difference of 902 electors but the representation is the same, with two councillors. **Newcastle Higher understand that the policy adopted by BCBC on Electorate sizes was never consulted on we question if this adoption should have been approved by the council without proper public consultation.**

3. Service Provision to Residents

Maintaining a larger ward could reduce our capacity to provide the same level of service and responsiveness that residents currently expect. With an increased population to serve, there is a concern that engagement and support for community initiatives, local events, and resident concerns could be diluted due to limited resources and volunteer capacity. Community Councillors are volunteers, however increasing the workload to cover much larger areas raises concerns if Councillors will be attracted to these roles. **OVW and the NALC have in the past expressed concerns over the ability to recruit and retain Clerk's and proper officers and increasing the work and the job roles for many could further deter the successful appointments to these roles.**

4. Impact on Community Identity

One of the strengths of a community council is its ability to foster a strong sense of local identity and belonging. Expanding ward boundaries may risk diluting this sense of community, making governance feel more distant and corporate. Residents may feel disengaged if the council becomes too large to maintain the close-knit, grassroots approach that is essential for effective community representation. Newcastle Higher Council do agree that retaining the name and the NHCC identity does alleviate some of these concerns.

5. Presentation of the Proposals

The presentation of the proposal is something BCBC need to reflect on. We appreciate this is a complex and varied task to undertake, however the response has been that of confusion, the need to decipher and further need for clarity.

Newcastle Higher appreciates the opportunity given by BCBC to clarify the proposals in a 1:1 meeting which has helped further understand the documents and maps.

We encourage the consultation team to carefully consider these factors when finalising recommendations. If changes are necessary, we urge that BCBC and the community councils effected work together collaboratively to ensure the best possible scenario, ensuring:

- Adequate representation
- Acknowledgement that community councillors are volunteers and a major increased in workload may deter future interest to serve
- Consideration that many Clerks work part time and major changes could see further retention issues
- Further understanding of how such changes will work, logistically, staffing on an employment and working rights basis and asset management when wards are being merged or dissolved

Thank you for considering our views. We look forward to further discussions on how to best support our community through this process.

Bridgend 094 – Ynysawdre Elderly Residents Association via Letter – Ynysawdre, Newcastle Higher, Llangynwyd Lower:

At a meeting of Ynysawdre Elderly Residents Association on 2nd April 2025 a discussion was held regarding the proposed boundary changes. A straw poll was taken of those present and note was taken of their views. The vote was unanimous that Ynysawdre should join with Newcastle Higher, Penyfai and Coytrahen.

Most of our members do not have access to the internet and therefore cannot fill in the online questionnaire. To enable their views to be known and following advice we are attaching the names of our members who have agreed with the views above.

All the names listed below are members of our association and where members were not present at the meeting they have been contacted by phone and have agreed to add their names to the list.

Could we respectfully ask you to take our members' views into consideration when arriving at your decision.

[NAMES REDACTED]

Bridgend 095 – Clerk to Ynysawdre Community Council via E-Mail – Ynysawdre, St Bride’s Minor, Newcastle Higher:

Ynysawdre Community Council’s response to the boundary review is to again express our preference to join with St Brides Minor Community Council in line with the boundaries of the St Brides and Ynysawdre ward with 3 BCBC councillors.

Our residents, through the Ynysawdre Elderly Residents Association, have noted that they supported the 2022 boundary changes with the combination of St Brides Minor and Ynysawdre as an electoral ward and they thought the natural progression was to combine the two community councils. They note the two communities of Ynysawdre and St Brides are of a similar type and share a similar culture, and many residents have family connections, friendships and combined memberships of associations. Many of the services and facilities are shared between the two communities, such as the surgery and chemist, shops and Post Office, the life centre and library, swimming pool and leisure centre, extra care facilities, CCYD and the primary schools, and the PCSO. The local bus service goes through Ynysawdre to St Brides Minor which enhances the links between the two communities. These services will be better served by our council merging with St Brides Minor Community Council.

Bridgend 096 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Llangynwyd Lower:

LLCC has very limited funding and covers mainly just the community of Coytrahen. Whilst this feels applicable it also feels like it has struggled to make big financial decisions for some time.

Bridgend 097 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Newcastle Higher:

I do not agree with pen y fai becoming part of Newcastle

Bridgend 098 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Newcastle Higher:

This movement will not improve anything or provide any value to our community of Pen Y Fai

Bridgend 099 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Newcastle Higher, Ynysawdre, Llangynwyd Lower:

I disagree with the proposals, including for my area Newcastle higher particularly. I don't agree with the initial policy of 5000. I can understand why councils of under 1000 electors need to be brought into an existing functioning council for sustainability and to reduce the duplication of costs (for example of clerks), and precepts in those small areas can be put to better use. However the way in which community councils operate particularly is at a very 'community' level – the clue is in the title. Expanding the NHCC ward to include areas such as Tondu, Coytrahen and Ynysawdre is just too big. I don't think it will encourage people to stand, it is a lot of work for volunteers to do now on the very local level, to expect them to take on more and outside of what is really their 'community' is likely to kill off the democratic process. As new areas in the Borough get developed (Porthcawl and Bryntirion for example, then consideration should be made at a time that happens – maybe the new community councils evolve at that stage it is it the public will.

Bridgend 100 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Newcastle Higher, Llangynwyd Lower: I think this is a bad idea. Living in Pen Y Fair with higher house prices which also influences council tax band prices. We will be paying in a lot more to the area pot which will then be pumped in to less nicer areas where residents don't care about what goes on where they live. They don't look after things, causing damage etc and not caring because it's not theirs. Once they have created carnage they will move in to the next village who will have them. I work in contraction and I currently see local authorities lie V2C pumping money into their rented house to make them a nice place to live and Tennent just destroying them. Long and short of it I don't want to be footing the bill for repairs around people who live live animals and treat their house like a zoo.

Bridgend 101 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Newcastle Higher:

I believe that extending the boundaries of Pen y Fai Cefn Glas will serve to dilute the services we currently have which are already being reduced if the grass cutting in Cavendish park and around Pen y Fai. We are paying more council tax for less services

Bridgend 102 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Newcastle Higher, Ynysawdre:

I live in Parc Tondy and walk daily to the park in Aberkenfig, visit the shops and café there, post letters and also catch the bus from there. I therefore feel much more aligned to Aberkenfig than Ynysawdre and would prefer to be in Aberkenfig ward

Bridgend 103 – Cllr Martin Williams via E-Mail – Coity Higher, Brackla, St Bride’s Minor, Ynysawdre, Newcastle Higher, Llangynwyd Lower, Coychurch Higher, Ogmore Valley:

1 – Coity Higher: I am broadly supportive of the proposed change in particular that the M4 forms the northern boundary which is sensible.

However, I share the community council’s view that the proposed eastern boundary with Brackla is inappropriate. It will take a ‘bite’ out of the industrial estate creating a messy boundary. I am content with the existing boundary of Brackla ridge however, recognising the apparent desire for Brackla residents to have the entire woods and the 8Xs within their community I propose the following alternative. That the boundary should be a line from Heol Simonston along Wyndham Crescent and connecting with the existing boundary at the roundabout next to Ffordd Cadfan/Shepherds vets.

2 – St Brides Minor and Ynysawdre: I am opposed to the splitting of Ynysawdre between the Newcastle Higher/Llangynwyd Lower council and existing St Brides Minor.

Although this solution does create two councils in line with the agreed minimum council size I feel it is messy and the process of dissolving and recreating the councils will be complex and fraught with difficulty.

Ynysawdre and St Brides Minor councils have both expressed a strong preference to combine. There is already co-operation between the two. It would be sensible and pragmatic to formalise this by combine the two in their entirety.

Furthermore, it is unclear how the assets of the existing YCC would be allocated between the new councils. For example, there is a property within one proposed council area. How would that be allocated? This could lead to future acrimony and legal challenge.

A combined YCC/St Brides Minor would be fully aligned with the BCBC ward.

3 – Coychurch Higher: Although the merger of Coychurch Higher with a neighbouring council is sensible and aligns with the minimum council size policy the proposal does not take into account the 1976 Coity Wallia Act.

The Act, which is primary legislation, provides for a board of conservators comprising of 18 members 10 of whom are representatives of the 5 relevant local councils. Ogwr Borough (inherited by BCBC), Coity Higher, St Brides Minor, Pencoed and Coychurch Higher who have two seats each.

Although it is appropriate that Ogwr’s seats would be taken by its successor, BCBC, there is no provision in the act for a merger of the four minor authorities.

The Act ensures that there must be 10 seats held by councils, this is to ensure that elected public bodies hold a collective majority. The Act also ensures that no one council has greater say on the board than another. Given that the area of common within each council area differs considerably it is clear that this allocation of seats was deliberate with the intention of balance.

Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that it would be unlawful for the new enlarged Pencoed Town Council to inherit the seats of Coychurch Higher as it would give it a disproportionate influence over the board.

But it would also be unlawful for Coychurch Higher’s seats to become vacant because the Act specifically requires a total of 18 seats, two of which must be held by Coychurch Higher.

Given the considerable development proposed on the common the board will become increasingly influential. Therefore, if this matter isn’t properly considered it is highly likely to be a source of future legal challenge.

Given that the specific provisions of the Act are primary legislation they cannot be amended without a new Act of Parliament the proposed arrangement will need to be revisited.

In light of this I see only two solutions. Firstly that Coychurch Higher remains at it is. Although this would result in a council far below the minimum size.

Or alternatively, Coychurch Higher is combined with Ogmore Valley community council. This solution would be compliant with the Act as Ogmore Valley currently has no seats on the board. It would also meet the minimum council size.

Bridgend 104 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Pencoed Town:

After reading the draft proposal as a residing resident of Pencoed, and I think I speak for many people in my area when I say this, there was always a feeling of too many councillors. As we are all aware we live in financial tightening times and to reduce the number of councillors paid for by the tax payer given the high salaries that they earn is a great sounding business plan to save money. You have my backing and I'm sure the majority of others too.

Bridgend 105 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Pencoed Town, Coychurch Higher:

General

It is fully appreciated that the proposals are only draft and have been based purely on a numbers of electorate basis for the areas being considered. Also a certain amount of “logic” has been used where smaller T&CC’s have been considered in merging. All and every comments received will be duly considered.

As far as Pencoed is concerned we would be happy to merge with Coychurch Higher CC as the electorate is lower than 700. However, the rationale of the logic used in proposing two councillors for that area could be a perceived problem.

As discussed should the proposal go through as suggested then there would have to be detailed and informed discussions on the practicalities of implication going forward. Again this would be a matter of public perception and could be a deterrent against the current proposals.

You may recall that some years ago Pencoed sought to merge with Coychurch Higher CC. This was rejected by Coychurch Higher as they felt that they would be the poor relation if they agreed to a merger at this time!!!

Overview of Process by BCBC

It is now understood that a Panel as opposed to a Cttee has been overseeing the draft proposals. A question posted was whether or not some of the Panel should declare an interest on any matter that affected their current area and role. You indicated that the Panel was made up of the heads of all the Political Groups of BCBC. Again from a public perception point of view this could be a contentious issue.

Bridgend 106 – Clerk to Pencoed Town Council via E-Mail – Pencoed Town, Coychurch Higher:

At last week's town council meeting the following was resolved in respect of the above.

Pencoed Town Council supports the merger of Pencoed Town Council and Coychurch Higher Community Council subject to the figure being used to allocate membership/councillors of the new Council going forward is on the basis of circa 700 electorate per member/councillor per ward.

Bridgend 107 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Pencoed Town, Coychurch Higher:

Can I ask what advantage the village [Heol y Cyw] will have been adopted by Pencoed council.

What will the local people gain from this as I fear we will become the poor cousins and be ignored by Pencoed council and our tiny voice will never be heard again. How will this benefit us.

I look forward to an answer.

RESPONSE VIA E-MAIL FROM BCBC:

Thank you for your email.

As part of our review, we must adhere to the council size policy. Currently, Coychurch Higher Community Council does not meet the size policy. Our proposals suggest Heol y Cyw becoming a ward within Pencoed Town council in order to meet this, which would then address the current democratic deficit that is in place in small councils.

More information on the council size policy can be found here:

<https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/gylmlcby/draft-proposals-report.pdf>

RESPONSE BACK VIA E-MAIL FROM MEMBER OF PUBLIC:

Thank you.

But if the local population is not for this. Then this is undemocratic

Bridgend 108 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Coychurch Higher, Pencoed Town:

Coychurch Higher community Council should jerge with Pencoed Town Council and Pencoed retain 13 seats and an additional 3 seats.

Bridgend 109 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Coychurch Higher, Pencoed Town:

Feel for the village of Heol y Cyw. Our voice will be lost. Pencoed will be master of the decision and we be the poor chil looking for breadcrumbs

Bridgend 110 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

I feel our small village will become lost and the small things the community council do will be lost as the bigger town that adopts us will fail to see us and nothing will get done.

Bridgend 111 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Pencoed Town, Coychurch Higher:

We are providing feedback in relation to the merging of Pencoed and Heol y Cyw. Taking in to account the representational proportion of electors in both areas. Heol y Cyw would have 2 Councillors per 700 given them 350 per councillor whilst Pencoed Town Council will have 670 per councillor, which is double to Heol y Cyw. We therefore suggest and recommend that Heol y Cyw have one councillor to fall in line with the proportional representation ratio of Electors to councillors.

Bridgend 112 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Pencoed Town, Coychurch Higher:

We are providing feedback in relation to the merging of Pencoed and Heol y Cyw. Taking in to account the representational proportion of electors in both areas. Heol y Cyw would have 2 Councillors per 700 given them 350 per councillor whilst Pencoed Town Council will have 670 per councillor, which is double to Heol y Cyw. We therefore suggest and recommend that Heol y Cyw have one councillor to fall in line with the proportional representation ratio of Electors to councillors.

Bridgend 113 – Clerk to Coychurch Higher Community Council via E-Mail – Coychurch Higher, Pencoed Town:

Coychurch Higher Community Council (CHCC) wishes to confirm that it strongly opposes the proposed merger with Pencoed Town Council, as outlined in Bridgend County Borough Council's Draft Proposals for the Review of Community Arrangements, published in January 2025.

As expressed in a previous representation, CHCC is a small community council with just seven members, yet it serves one of the largest geographic areas in Bridgend Borough County, delivering a high standard of service. The proposed merger would reduce our council representation to just two members, who would account for only 15% of the total Pencoed Town Council. This would be detrimental to the residents of Coychurch Higher, as it could result in us having very little influence in decision-making and the prioritisation of the needs of our rural area. CHCC members emphasise the importance of preserving the identity of Coychurch Higher and urge that areas such as Heol-y-Cyw and Rhiwceiliog are not subsumed into Pencoed Town Council, potentially being overlooked within a much larger, urban-focused governance framework.

The needs of CHCC, as a rural community, differ substantially from those of Pencoed Town Council. CHCC members are committed to representing the unique challenges faced by our residents. Many of our councillors have lived in Coychurch Higher for most of their lives, and this deep local knowledge and personal connection would be lost if a merger occurred.

As trustees of Heol-y-Cyw Welfare Hall, as required by the Charity Commission, CHCC members have invested considerable time and effort to ensure the hall remains compliant with regulations and is well-maintained. The Welfare Hall, which hosts the county's first Digital Hub, is a vital resource for our community and is regularly used by various organisations. Its success is a testament to the partnership between the Hall Management Committee and the Community Council, as our members take direct responsibility for the hall's upkeep and development.

While CHCC may be small, it is a dedicated and effective council, having successfully secured substantial funding for local initiatives and grants. In collaboration with BCBC, a new landscaping project has recently been completed, bringing significant benefits to the area's biodiversity. CHCC also maintains a Millennium Garden and woodland footpaths that are regularly used by the community. Furthermore, CHCC holds charitable competitions, organises an annual Carol Service, and creates poppy displays for Remembrance Day – all for the enjoyment and enrichment of our residents.

We would also like to draw attention to the Welsh Parliament's Local Government and Housing Committee's report, 'Role, Governance and Accountability of the Community and Town Council Sector', published March 2025. CHCC fully supports the view of One Voice Wales, which argues that mergers would not be in the best interests of communities like ours. Coychurch Higher, as a rural community with unique needs, would be better served by maintaining its distinct council rather than merging with a larger council that may not fully understand or prioritise our specific requirements.

In conclusion, merging CHCC with another council risks diminishing our community's voice and overshadowing its unique needs, as larger, more urban areas would inevitably take precedence. Such a merger would likely erode local identity and could undermine ongoing efforts to support vital community assets, such as Heol-y-Cyw Welfare Hall.

Bridgend 114 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Pencoed Town:
Makes sense for Pencoed area.

Bridgend 115 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Coychurch Higher, Pencoed Town:

I strongly believe that to merge Heol y cyw with Pencoed would be of no benefit to anyone, especially Heol y cyw! I live in Pencoed but I know how important it is for them to keep their identity and to be able to work for their community themselves. Both of these areas have very different issues and identities and it would be to the detriment of Heol y cyw if you took this away from them.

Bridgend 116 – Member of Public via E-Mail – Porthcawl Town:

It is blatantly obvious the proposed changes to extend Newton ward as shown below is to make way for the planning application for the housing on the field at the bottom of Dan y Graig Avenue. This area of Newton ward is already saturated. Police have been called to the new development of Llys Penfro several times for antisocial behaviour by nonresidents, the foot fall due to the new through way is extensive, changing the area completely.

Bridgend 117 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Porthcawl Town:

The proposal to transfer part of Porthcawl East Central to West Central makes sense; the Portway seems the obvious boundary. I'm not so sure about dropping "Central" from the ward names, it seems to hint that Nottage etc are in some way not part of the town.

Bridgend 118 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Porthcawl and further west should be NPT

Bridgend 119 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Cornelly:

How much money is being wasted on this when Council tax is being put up and yet again services cut, it's a wonder we have had services left. Cornell'y should just be Cornell'y, no dividing it up.. Most Councillors are only seen when they want to be elected and never seen again... It's been a nightmare with Cornell'y MP being part of Aberfan Maesteg and not Bridgend, no you are trying to sub divide this small community more dividing up the main B rd into 2 areas, Time you provided some real services to the area and stopped wasted money trying to decide where you will draw your pencil line just to make the umbers right for each area...!

Bridgend 120 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Cornelly, Pyle:

I write on behalf of Cornelly Community Council. Members have requested that the boundary stays as it is now, with Cornelly remaining as a stand alone ward with 9 community councillors, and all existing land is retained, including Stormy Farm. The land marked on the map as yellow should be retained by Cornelly Community Council and not transferred to Pyle. This was an objection that all members wanted to raise.

Bridgend 121 – Cllr Elaine Winstanley via E-Mail – Cornelly, Pyle:

Having looked at various proposals I am keen that Cornelly Community Council retains its existing boundaries including the areas where the new development is planned.

I also want to keep as is in the proposal, Cornelly being served by one Community Council and not merging with adjacent Community Councils.

Warding only works at the moment if, Cornelly is split into three roughly equal wards but none of the proposals but forward so far fit that pattern. We know that the electorate will be increasing due to proposed developments including west of Bridgend along the A48 but there are also smaller developments which are planned. The number of Councillors will eventually have to be increased at both Community and Borough level but it is tricky to work out boundaries when we know there are changes planned in the near future, but where building work hasn't started yet. It may be simplest to split Cornelly into two wards (5 or 6 Community Councillors each) once the building is under way.

Bridgend 122 – Clerk to Cornelly Community Council via E-Mail – Cornelly, Pyle:

The Cornelly Community Councillors discussed the proposed changes at a recent meeting and were unanimous in their views which are as below:

- 1) Cornelly Community Council to remain as a stand-alone council with 9 councillors and to stay as it is currently
- 2) To retain the existing land marked in yellow on the map and not transfer this over to Pyle
- 3) To retain Stormy Farm within the Cornelly Council boundary

Bridgend 123 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Cornelly:

I believe the Cornelly area should not be split into four wards. I also disagree that there should be an increase to 11 community councillors but remain at 9

Bridgend 124 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Garw Valley:

At the moment GVCC works well, I think if you merge with another CC it will become unmanageable. While every Councillor might not all agree on everything the one thing that we do agree on is whats best for our area. Smaller CC will lose their identity if they merge with another CC

Bridgend 125 – Clerk to Garw Valley Community Council via E-Mail – Garw Valley:

The following are the Garw Valley Community Council's observations on the draft review:

- The council does not agree with the proposed decrease in the number of councillors for Blaengarw ward as this ward contains a large amount of GVCC managed parkland, Parc Calon Lan and a decrease in councillors will increase the burden of effort on the remaining two
- The council does not agree with the proposed decrease in the number of councillors for the Bettws ward as there is proposed expansion of the number of electorate in this ward over the next 5 years due to the proposed housing developments

Bridgend 126 – Clerk to Coity Higher Community Council via E-Mail – Coity Higher, St Bride's Minor, Brackla:

The following are Coity Higher Community Council's observations on the draft review:

- Coity Higher CC does not accept the proposed adjustment to the boundary change between the proposed Brackla community and the proposed Coity Higher community. It does not accept the proposal to re-align the boundary to place the whole of Brackla Industrial Estate within the Brackla community. Coity Higher strongly suggests that the boundary should be along Wyndham Close and continue to and end at the roundabout at Oakwood View.
- Coity Higher CC agrees with the proposal to adjust the boundary between the community of Llansantffraid and the community of Coity Higher to transfer the area south of the M4 from the ward of Sarn to the ward of Litchard and the transfer from the ward of Bryncoch to the ward of Coity.
- The review proposals are not compatible with the two Coity Wallia Acts of 1976 and 2006. BCBC will be aware that the terms of these Acts in their present form must be complied with.

Bridgend 127 - Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

There is such an imbalance in the number of electors per Councillor across the proposals. For example Porthcawl are at 733 per councillor, but at the other end, Cornelly are at 515. What is the rationale being such a large variance? I believe there should be a consistent approach, so that each Community Council has around the same number of councillors per elector. Somewhere between 675 and 700. This would bring in line with current populations and be fair.balanced. There should be no political motivation to look after 'ones role' by retaining seats where there is no clear rationale behind the numbers being so skewed. More savings could be made by bringing the number per elector between 675-700.

Bridgend 128 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Waste of time and money. There are more important issues to be looking at like the state of our borough and waste going on within our budget.

Bridgend 129 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Reading the draft it is change for change sake. Nothing wrong with existing wards.

Bridgend 130 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:
Agree

Bridgend 131 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

These proposals are not fit for purpose. They attempt to take Community Councils out of their Communities, and amalgamate them with larger Community Councils therefore swallowing them up. No consideration has been given to the fact that all Community Councillors are volunteers, giving their free time to make their Communities a better place. Some have served their Communities for decades and these proposed changes will mean they are likely to reconsider their roles. I cannot believe how shortsighted BCBC have been and I would like to state my person strong opposition to this proposal that is currently out for consultation

Bridgend 132 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:
Don't waste money changing

Bridgend 133 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

I don't see why it's necessary. Surely the money could be better spent on other things? Maybe reconsider it in the future when we're in a better financial situation. I don't mind you putting up things like council tax to fund things that are essential, but this feels like this is an unnecessary waste of my money.

Bridgend 134 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Happy to have less councillors. They dont listen to what the villagers want only what they want!

Bridgend 135 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

It is absolutely ridiculous in a borough the size of Bridgend to have so many town councils.

Bridgend 136 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Look at your link to proposals – Page not found. You really should be checking these really simple hints, because not only does it make you look incompetent, it raises questions that you have something to hide

Bridgend 137 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

There are way too many councillors. Most of which don't act on behalf of their constituents. We never hear them promoting the work the council is doing or asking opinions on how they should vote on proposals going to committee. Instead everything is based on part politics (regardless of whether they are 'independent' or not). A complete waste of money where residents don't get a say!

Bridgend 138 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Get rid of all Community Councils!! They are too small, expensive and their services would be better run by the Unitary Authority. They just become an expensive talking shop for irrelevant very local issues with expensive useless councillors that can't make the grade at County level.

Bridgend 139 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

I strongly believe that Bridgend Tax Payers now deserve and need a break from all this utter nonsense of Bridgend overpaid councillors, We Do Not Need 55 Councillors, this is now a TAX burden on the people of Bridgend and this must now STOP

Bridgend 140 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

WE DO NOT NEED 55 COUNCILLORS Representing us, the decision has been taken and it's been agreed by 100% of Bridgend's Tax Payers that all councillors in April will now be paid only £4 thousand pounds per year, we have not taken this decision lightly and we now will have a positive impact on all the council tax payers in the area.

Bridgend 141 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Now idea, as I can not work out from the proposal where I currently am and where you plan to move me. As usual a dreadful service from Bridgend council and I have no doubt you will ignore what people say and do exactly what you want anyway.....so this is a complete waste of time

Bridgend 142 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Councillors cost the Bridgend Tax payers who work over 825 thousand pounds per year, this now needs to stop this is now unrealistic and a waste of tax payers money, with rising costs to the tax payers its time for a change and change is coming very soon.

Bridgend 143 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

We currently have 55 Overpaid and underworked councillors representing the local taxpayers, they are no longer a asset to Bridgend and they all should be removed from office, lowering council tax must be a priority one and lowering the amount of overpaid councillors should be a big focus, change is coming

Bridgend 144 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Total waste of taxpayers money, yet again a Labour council wasted hard working tax payers money, bring in the local elections so we can all make Labour Councillors collect their P45's ...

Bridgend 145 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Please do not make any changes as things are already stretched and this will just make the situation worse

Bridgend 146 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Not a good move individual areas have their own u ique ide tities and needs what suit one community diesnt necessarily suit another even if neighbouring

Bridgend 147 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

I don't agree with these proposals. These would mean that there are now, in some cases 5000 plus people in the electoral region. While this may seem beneficial, attending meetings will provide difficult for constituents with that amount of people to take into consideration, all with diverse needs (ie disability, working arrangements etc).

Bridgend 148 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

This should not go ahead under circumstances. Any changes that cost more are not wanted.

Bridgend 149 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Why are you extending the area when you can't provide a proper service in the area you already cover ?

Bridgend 150 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Not happy with the proposed changes. Currently feel we don't get value for money with current council tax arrangements. If the area is wide larger this could result in even less investment in my local area

Bridgend 151 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

I support the proposals to reduce the number of community councils and number of councillors. The interest in community councils is abysmal, with councillors frequently having to be co-opted. Scrutiny of Community councils and their use of public funds is poor, if not non-existent. I support any proposal to increase scrutiny, oversight and general public interest in community councils.

Bridgend 152 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

What an absolute waste of money. Considering there was a massive black hole in the budget, how much is this non-essential “work” costing?!?!

Bridgend 153 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Year after year after year after year after year after year our poll tax goes up!!!! I'm sick of it. My wages nevet go up by what you charge. I'm sick to death of it!!!!

Bridgend 154 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

I am concerned that the reduction of local Community Councillors for my area, may mean my area may get lost or forgotten. I believe our Community Council does a great job as it is, and the proposal is is to try and fix something that isn't broken.

Bridgend 155 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Along with changes to the electoral boundaries and the development of the new M.S's proposed, we have yet another example of administrators creating changes for no other reason than the proliferation of more administrators. Instead of wasting more money on this, try apportioning money on schemes that will benefit more constituents, road repairs, more community carers etc.

Bridgend 156 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Far far too many councillors and ‘public servants’ both locally and as proposed in the Senedd. We don’t have money to pay for these excess participants. More councillors/mp than population perhaps.

Bridgend 157 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

There is a lot of information, but no clarity of what the benefits are for this change. Seems like a lot of work time and money spent on this proposal. With no information on why this is being done, and the pros and cons. With very little communication to the community involved. Are you hoping to slip under the radar with the changes

Bridgend 158 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

We need less councillors

Bridgend 159 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

I live in area C of the proposals. It will from what I understand have no impact on me or my family if we are transitioned from one ward to another. It almost feels like a waste of council funds to be doing this exercise despite my support of the council's survey process in general.

Bridgend 160 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

I think it makes sense to reduce the number of councillors. Representation isn't particularly great and people don't fully engage with the democratic process. It's time to modernise, move on and save money exploring better solutions.

Bridgend 161 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

I feel increasing the boundaries of some town and community councils will lead to some areas being neglected and damage community spirit and appearance of the locality.

Bridgend 162 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

The community councils cannot handle the responsibility for the area they are currently operating. There is fraud, financial mismanagement and misplaced spending and providing more control to lay members who are not able to take responsibility is wreckless

Bridgend 163 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

If it saves money then great cause there are lots of councillors and what do they actually do? Writing on Facebook groups is not pro active and to take away customer service to pay these people for not filling their roles is just out of order

Bridgend 164 – Member of Public via Online Survey – General:

Positive idea although retention of historic ward names in some fashion would be even better

Bridgend 165 – Member of Public via Online Survey – Pyle, Cefn Cribwr:

amalgamating smaller Communities in to more urban one is a terrible idea identity of community will be lost, people will be suffer under representation on councils due to councillors oer head of residents what's good for jenfig hill isn't good for Cefn Cribwr this should have public meeting gs not all residents entitled to a say have online rescources

Bridgend 166 – Signed Petition – Coychurch Lower, Brackla, Bridgend Town:

**COYCHURCH LOWER COMMUNITY PETITION
Re: BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS BOUNDARY REVIEW**

BACKGROUND: Bridgend County Borough Council's review of town and community council wards proposes to split the Coychurch Lower ward into two parts. Waterton and Brocastle will be added to the Oldcastle ward of Bridgend Town and Coychurch village and the surrounding area will be known as Coychurch Lower and included in a new community of Brackla.

PETITION: We the undersigned residents of Coychurch Lower and users of our facilities object to the proposed boundary changes for Coychurch Lower and call on Bridgend County Borough Council to reject the proposal on the following grounds:

- 1 – We understand that this is a required review of **electoral arrangements** but it is being confused with changes to the number and size of Town/Community councils preferred by Bridgend County Borough Council. We had election arrangements whereby Coychurch Lower and East Brackla were put together for the last county councillors elections and each continued to be supported by their own community council. We see no need to remove a local community council which has served its residents well for many years.
- 2 – Rather than bringing democracy closer to the electorate (as claimed in the Summary of the proposals), the proposal distances the residents from the local level representatives/decision makers physically, psychologically and emotionally. The Coychurch Lower Community Council has worked effectively to improve our local amenities and environment and takes the lead on community events (Civic Act of Remembrance, Annual Civic Carol Service, etc.) We have no confidence that being a very small part of a much larger group will enable the same level of focus on our community.
- 3 – On our behalf the community council provides support to our Memorial Hall which enables local groups for adults and children to meet regularly. We have no confidence that this support would continue even if the Trusteeship of the Hall was transferred to the new Brackla Community Council (which already has its own community hall and they do have the right to refuse the Trusteeship). Thus degrading the availability of a much needed venue for the community and surrounding areas.
- 4 – Our community council arranges to supplement the services provided by Bridgend County Borough Council to improve our environment so there would be no additional services as a result of being joined with Brackla. Any benefits arising from bulk purchasing can be obtained by co-operation agreements with other councils.
- 5 – We do not have confidence that Bridgend Town councillors will be as close to, or as concerned about, the residents of Waterton and Brocastle which would be added on to the edge of the Oldcastle ward of Bridgend Town. This is so that the industrial estates and the retail park can be included in Bridgend Town as they are classed as "urban" but there is no electoral reason for doing this.

PETITION INCLUDED SIGNATURES FROM 802 MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC