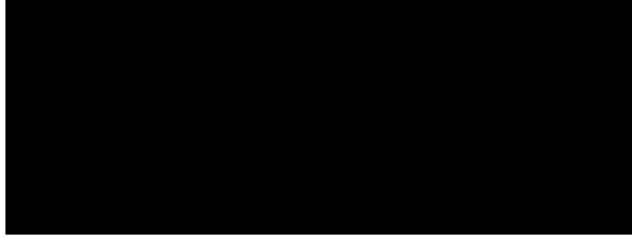


Received
16/8

CHRIS BREWIS

(Independent County Councillor for
Little Sutton, Long Sutton, Sutton Bridge & Wingland)
(Independent District Councillor for
Sutton Bridge and Wingland)



10th August 2006

Dear Sir or Madam,

Electoral Arrangements for South Holland District.

You may well be aware that the Boundary committee has issued final recommendations for the new warding arrangements for the district. I am taking the extremely unusual step of writing to you directly, to express my dismay (I would have put it more strongly, but . . .) at the cavalier disregard for local community identity within the District.

I am writing since, oddly enough, my own ward is unaffected by the proposals, so I am looking at the matter totally dispassionately.

I am referring to three proposals:

- (a) Crowland and Deeping St Nicholas.
- (b) Donington, Quadring and Gosberton.
- (c) Pinchbeck and Surfleet.

The Local Government Act specifies that there is a need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities, the need for effective and convenient local government, and equality of representation.

Nowhere does it say that equality, or near equality of numbers per councillor should be the **ONLY** or the **OVER RIDING** consideration.

South Holland is **NOT** (I repeat **NOT**) a Borough. It is a principally rural District with an urban centre (Spalding) which represents only about one third of the population. The committee has failed to understand either the status or nature of this District.

Several communities which currently enjoy unique representation, although departing from the average electorate by a modest amount, are planned under the proposals to be joined with communities which will (i)

swamp them and (ii) with which they have no connections or identity whatsoever.

Talk at both Central and Regional government is about “communities” and “place building”. I will deal with the three most serious problems your committee has caused:

(a) **Crowland and Deeping St Nicholas.** These communities have no affinity whatsoever, and almost no meaningful connections, either economic, social, or especially physical. The two wards existing should be left separate, as is the **WISH** of the communities themselves.

(b) **Donington, Quadring and Gosberton.** Once again, there are certain historic connections between Donington and Quadring. They do tend to look towards Boston for a number of activities, and even Grantham. Gosberton does not. It looks in an entirely different direction – towards Spalding – and has little or no affinity whatsoever with Donington and Quadring. I urge reconsideration of this ill thought out proposal.

(c) **Pinchbeck and Surfleet.** In some ways this is the worst of all. Pinchbeck and Surfleet have no real connections at all. Pinchbeck (even though the village does not wish it) is almost ‘Spalding suburbia’. Surfleet is a clearly integral village and community, and should remain so.

The logical extension of the committees ideas would be to move some wards into Peterborough City or the Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk. If there is any meaning in attempting to keep communities in a rural District with a voice, then the above three proposals should be reversed.

I could make case that linking Whaplode, Saracen’s Head, Whaplode Drove, Shepeau Stow, Holbeach St Johns and Holbeach Drove is an attempt to make a meaningless (in community sense) sprawling rural ward of villages with little or no connection at all with each other. I would elaborate on that, but have probably given you food enough for thought now.

My ward is Sutton Bridge. The issue of Little Sutton (its initial transfer and now return to Long Sutton) is numerically almost irrelevant, so as I have pointed out, I have no personal axe to grind at all in this matter.

Thank you for reading this submission to you.

Yours sincerely,



(Chris Brewis, District and County Councillor)