

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 05 August 2022 22:25
To: reviews
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGES

Categories: Submissions, [REDACTED]

I live in Kilndown therefore my comments in general relate to the proposed new ward of Hawkhurst, Benenden & South Goudhurst. - I have never heard of an area called South Goudhurst and it certainly has no relationship to our village of Kilndown. A made up name in the effort to create a solution to a problem perhaps. I have read the draft proposals with interest and make the following comments.

In principal I am in favour of a reduction in Councillors **IF** this will improve and make local government more efficient. I would highlight 'more efficient' as I personally do not believe the proposals will meet the criteria as you are trying to implement a one size fits all when you are dealing with two distinct and widely differing communities. Urban and Rural. All the proposals work well in the Urban areas but fail miserably in the Rural areas and in essence you are proposing ideas to disadvantage our Rural communities that have worked well for many years and have created local areas that work together and interact efficiently - especially I might point out to our wider Parish Council of Goudhurst that includes Kilndown. Our church is also a benefice of both villages. GPC were instrumental in getting our village a new Village hall and recently their efforts brought Fibre Broad Band (overnight my speed went from 0.8 to 350.) Your proposals are to remove Kilndown from its working neighbour of Goudhurst and include us with Benenden, Hawkhurst and Sandhurst all villages which are I am sure are worthy partners but have no connection with our village other than I think one village is passed through by one of our one a day buses.

Para 149 says they should -

- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links.
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries - perhaps someone from the council could explain what these are in relationship between Kilndown and the other villages mentioned.

I also understand how the average of electors per representative is calculated. Here we have a major problem. The average spread over an Urban area compared to the same average calculation over a Rural area disadvantages those in a rural location and is at odds with good electoral equality (para149) Would a single elected member have the time or knowledge to cover the needs of such a rural area (HBSG) as proposed.

The average is based on electorate rather than area and electorate. To have a meaningful average you need to take rural location into account due to the diversity of needs in a rural environment over those of an urban conurbation.

Further for efficiency here in Kilndown we are part of Goudhurst Parish Council who liaise with the local TWBC members where we have a need or help. I am assuming we will continue to be part of Goudhurst Parish Council. GPC will now have to deal with SIX ward members to cover the needs of the Parish - I question that all six will have the knowledge our current two councillors have to our needs within our two villages. This does not bode well for delivering 'effective Local Government' and is at odds 'to Improving electoral equality' Para 4

Under Para 135 your draft report states there are good road transport links between the parts of each of the wards. I have searched for transport links between the villages of Benenden, Sandhurst and Hawkhurst and find very little to substantiate this statement for our proposed ward. Yes there are road links but it is quicker to drive to TWells than Benenden or Sandhurst from Kilndown and we do have a bus that goes to TWells!!! Not very frequently though.

I have struggled to find any community interests that links which is stated in Para 149 perhaps you could enlighten me with the evidence that Para 149 eludes to regarding community links - we did share with St Mary's Goudhurst the services of the Benenden School chaplain but that was not the present but in the past.

I have also struggled to find any proposals of how these new wards will be served by the new members and how they propose to cover their much wider area. How are they proposing to deal with current issues. Our current councillors are involved with our village activities and serve on our various .village amenities - village hall, Quarry Centre etc.. Will the members covering such a wide area still be prepared to be involved on a village basis as they will have a greater number of villages under their remit. Until I read to the opposite I have to assume will will no longer receive such a good service- Does this comply with Para 149 - Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government. - short answer - NO

I strongly believe you should rethink how the small local areas will be better served by your council. TWells is fine you will have plenty of councillors covering small areas as against the new members covering much wider areas with a much more diversified community.

Regarding the name of the Ward we in Kilndown have no recognition in it as South Goudhurst does not exist and Kilndown is definitely not South Goudhurst. By creating this new huge ward covering an area that has no relationship to our productive village you are creating something that will put of your electors in Kilndown from being interested or involved with TWBC. A terrible shame and a great disappointment and a major failure by TWBC to deliver what it currently delivers.

Good ideas but in trying to resolve them a major failure - please think again.

[REDACTED]

Kilndown

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