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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 05 September 2022 12:42  
**To:** reviews  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** For the attention of the Review Officer (Tunbridge Wells)  
**Attachments:** LBGCE Proposed TWBC Wards 20220905.docx  
  
**Categories:** Submissions, [REDACTED]

Dear Review Officer

Please find attached my comments on the Proposed Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Wards; Goudhurst & Kilndown

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

To: The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

From:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Date: 5 September 2022

Re: **Draft Recommendations on New Electoral Arrangements for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council  
Goudhurst & Lamberhurst Ward**

I am writing to object to your draft recommendations to split the current Goudhurst & Lamberhurst ward into two and add each part to a different large rural non-community based ward. Under this recommendation Kilndown would be added to the proposed Hawkhurst, Benenden & South Goudhurst ward; and the rest of Goudhurst would be added to Lamberhurst, Horsmonden, Brenchley and Matfield in the proposed Rural Tunbridge Wells ward. The benefits of equalising the number of voters across wards in this way would be far outweighed by the negative impact on locally representative democracy due to the lack of geographic and social cohesion within wards:

The Parish of Goudhurst, which serves Curtisden Green, Goudhurst & Kilndown, would be split across two wards reducing the effectiveness of the Parish Council itself and as well as adversely affecting the character of the Parish. It would also reduce the effectiveness of interactions between the Parish and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. Splitting parishes across wards is not best practise in local government organisation and your recommendations breach previous commitments not to split the Parish of Goudhurst across wards

The current Goudhurst & Lamberhurst ward is represented by two councillors on Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and our representatives are residents in the local communities. They are familiar with the interests and issues that affect the local communities and are visible and available to voters as they go about their business within the communities. This close democratic connection would not be possible with three councillors representing the proposed Rural Tunbridge Wells ward, comprising five different communities spread across a much larger geographic area. Voters may be less inclined to vote for locally unknown and remote candidates and local elections may become a reflection of national politics rather than local issues

The Parish of Goudhurst has significant issues and interests that it does not share with the other communities within the proposed Rural Tunbridge Wells ward. The biggest issue is the level of traffic, in particular large lorries, on the A262. This issue has little or no impact on Horsmonden, Brenchley and Matfield as this traffic does not pass through these villages. It is self evident that the Parish of Goudhurst has shared interests: our church, primary school and GP surgery serve Goudhurst and Kilndown. Kilndown is within walking distance of Goudhurst but it's six miles away from Hawkhurst, its nearest neighbour in the proposed Hawkhurst, Benenden & South Goudhurst ward and there is no public transport link

The proposal to elect one of three councillors each year will increase the annual cost of elections; and will undermine effective local government, in particular stable long term planning, as councillors will be in perpetual election mode and the group of councillors in perpetual change

The recommendation of 13 equal size wards of approximately 7,000 voters for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council wards meets your objective of Electoral Equality at the expense of Community Identity and Effective & Convenient Local Government. Please reconsider your recommendations so that the whole of the Parish of Goudhurst remains within a single ward and the connection between councillors and the communities they represent is preserved

END