

Surrey

Personal Details:

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Organisation Name: Thames Ditton & Weston Green Residents' Association (Representative of a local organisation)

Comment text:

Proposals for new Surrey County Council Divisions would mean that Weston Green residents would move to a different Division, divorcing them from the Thames Ditton parish and community of which they have been a part since 1100 AD. The proposed changes would also separate Long Ditton from Thames Ditton, communities which, as can be gathered by the name, are very closely linked and have been since the Middle Ages. We understand that these proposals are not endorsed by Surrey County Council which felt that only very minor changes to the Dittons Division were required

We understand that The Boundary Commission's role is to consider three main criteria:

- Electoral equality
- Community identity and interests
- Effective and convenient local government

The TD & WG Residents' Association feel the proposals are at odds with all three of the Commission's own criteria and have been promoted by organisations with no electoral mandate within our area.

Electoral equality

The existing division actually gives more electoral equality than the proposals. The Dittons Division, of which we are a part, is currently 4% off the ideal Surrey average. The proposals would create a new Division which is 11% below the average. This makes no sense and does not move us further to equality.

Community identity and interests

The Manor of Weston Green is mentioned in the Domesday Book as part of Thames Ditton. We have been inextricably linked throughout history

and when the first local council was established in 1895 (the Esher & District Urban District Council) we became part of the same Division, which has continued to this day.

The Thames Ditton & Weston Green Residents' Association, formed in 1934, is the second oldest in the country. We are currently represented by four Councillors on Elmbridge Borough Council, as well as on Surrey County Council. All these RA Councillors were elected with very large majorities.

We have a large active membership, and volunteers who deliver our quarterly magazine (Thames Ditton Today). We run a website and we hold regular events including our annual Secret Gardens (which alternates between Thames Ditton and Weston Green) and our Nature & Climate Festival, which is in its second year. Weston Green residents feel part of Thames Ditton, with its community theatre, local shops, primary and nursery schools, Community Centre and library

A close relationship exists between the communities of Long Ditton and Thames Ditton with the respective Residents' Associations working together on numerous issues. To be represented by a different County Councillor will, we believe increase administrative burdens for no good reason.

Effective and convenient local government

This proposal would result in two County Councillors serving one community. The current division boundary is clear, easily identifiable, familiar to residents and, most importantly, it works. This is why Surrey County Council themselves did not propose any major change.

We urge you to reconsider these proposed changes for the reasons stated

Graham Cooke

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Attached Documents:

None attached