

Gloucestershire

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Organisation Name: Stroud District Green Party (Political groups)

Comment text:

Related subject: Stroud Trinity, Brimscombe & Thrupp and Whiteshill & Ruscombe

Stroud District Green Party (SDGP) is pleased to comment on the latest proposal for the Stroud District of Gloucestershire as follows:
Green Party principles generally are based on the principle that democracy works best when it is set firmly in a community or a geographical area that resonates and makes sense to the electorate.
Therefore, SDGP strongly supports the key principles that sound county divisions should be based on the key principles as set out by the LGBC:
Reflecting community interests, identities and community links.
Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries.
Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government.
SDGP opposes those proposed changes from the LGBC, where these links are broken by the new proposals.
Specifically, it opposes the proposals for the Wards of Stroud Trinity, Brimscombe & Thrupp and Whiteshill & Ruscombe as it feels each of these proposals fail the test in 2 a-c above.
Specifically,
Stroud Trinity is an urban ward, right in the centre of the Town, whereas the remainder of the proposed Division is extremely rural.
A split of Stroud Trinity from the rest of Stroud Town means that the Town Council would have to deal with two different county councillors, rather than one, at present. Such a move will not help the delivery of effective or convenient local government. Particularly as it is unlikely that a councillor based in the rural part of the Division, would have any understanding of the feelings or issues facing those living in Stroud Town.
People in Stroud Trinity live in Stroud town; they feel they're part of Stroud town, they can walk into Stroud town, and in some roads, their neighbours on the opposite side of the road will remain in Stroud town. To change it simply because the Bisley Division doesn't have enough

numbers because new housing isn't being built there, isn't a sufficient reason to remove the long-standing and well recognised links between Stroud Trinity and the remainder of Stroud town.

Elsewhere in the District, similar breaks of the fundamental links lived by communities are proposed, which we believe breaks the democratic link between electors and elected, specifically taking Brimscombe & Thrupp from Chalford and Minchinhampton. There is a clear community of shared experience along and above the Golden Valley that would be broken if Brimscombe & Thrupp were to be moved to a more remote and rural Division of Bisley and Painswick. Such boundaries would make little or no sense to the electorate along the linear parishes of Brimscombe & Thrupp, who intrinsically look and go to the neighbouring parishes of Chalford and Minchinhampton, and rarely to Painswick, let alone Bisley. The final proposal SDGP feels breaks with these core principles is in the case of Whiteshill & Ruscombe. These two parishes are essentially rural and hilly and 'look to Stroud' and the Valleys for local needs, whereas Haresfield and Upton are satellite towns of Gloucester. Upton parish includes the large commuter housing of Cooper Edge, on the outskirts of Gloucester; that has no natural affinity or link with the more rural parishes of Whiteshill & Ruscombe.

In summary, SDGP believes that we need more people engaged with and understanding the three tiers of local politics in Stroud District. Breaking strong, existing links, which are well-known and understood to create artificial Divisions which only meet one of the four stated criteria (equality of numbers) is not a positive move for local democracy.

Attached Documents:

None attached