

Gloucestershire

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Comment text:

Related subject: Stonehouse & proposed Haresfield and Upton and St. Leonard's ward

I strongly disagree that the parish council of Standish should be moved from the Stonehouse division into the newly proposed Haresfield and Upton and St. Leonards division.

Standish ward is projected to grow in electorate size from 286 to 475. This was considered in a recent Community Governance review conducted by Stroud District Council earlier this year. (see here <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/elections/community-governance-reviews> and here <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/media/2208844/item-14-annexe-a-parish-governance-arrangements-and-electorate.pdf>)

This growth is mainly due to the Green Walk development of the old Standish Hospital site. This site is within walking distance of Stonehouse. It is therefore absolutely key that nearly 200 eligible voters (the growth size of the parish council size) are able to vote for the county councillor in the town nearest to their homes, where many will use the local amenities. I am also sure that the other existing residents of the Standish Parish continue to identify with Stonehouse as their nearest urban centre, and we absolutely should not be placed in a division that has no natural community links to the areas that the other parishes in the newly proposed division would associate i.e. Gloucester and areas surrounding it.

I note you said you visited this area on your tour, but I wonder if you visited the parish of Standish, and the new Green Walk development to understand how its proximity to Stonehouse makes it part of that town, and therefore crucial that its electoral association remains. Indeed, I note there is not a single mention of Standish parish at all in your document, suggesting that you have not consulted at all with the local people living here.

Having looked at your calculations for the newly proposed Haresfield & Upton and St Leonard's division, I note its size is 6518. This is a very small division compared to the others you have listed. This makes no sense. I also can see it makes it almost impossible for you to move the Standish Parish back into Stonehouse. It would only increase Stonehouse division by 475, and this would still mean Stonehouse is smaller than other divisions you have proposed; even by 2029, with no significant additional planning permission yet granted in the Standish Parish, the projections still keep the Stonehouse division smaller than others such as Brockworth, Highnam and Severn Vale. The challenge I know you will push back is that it makes the Haresfield, Upton & St Leonards division unviable in the short term. However, your population growth of that new division is predicted to be 8,722 with a -9% variance on the average. If you were to mmove Standish into Stonehouse, the newly proposed division would be 8,247 and have a -13% variance. Given that Winchcombe and Woodmancote would have a +12% variance in 2029, and that you are prepared to accept a -26% variance in 2024 for the newly proposed Haresfield, Upton & St. Leonards division, I do not see why you cannot move the Parish in its entirety into the Stonehouse division.

This would keep our Parish's natural association with Stonehouse. Whilst I appreciate that we are in the Hardwicke with Brookthorpe District Ward, this does not necessarily justify us being in the same division as Upton St Leonards in the future, just because Hardwicke (which also associates with Gloucester rather than Stonehouse or Stroud like Brookthorpe and Upton). In fact, with the projected growth at Hunts Grove, it might be that at some point Standish parish joins the Stonehouse ward locally too.

I strongly believe Standish Parish with its doubling in size represents a much stronger connection now to Stonehouse. Please consider not moving this Parish out of the Stonehouse division. Thank you.

Attached Documents:

None attached