

Buckinghamshire Council

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Organisation Name: Penn Parish Council

Comment text:

Local Government Boundary Commission from Penn Parish Council The creation of our new Buckinghamshire Unitary Council required the removal of the four former district councils. The election which took place on 6 May 2021 elected a total of 147 councillors with 49 wards electing 3 councillors each. The Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) has already consulted about how many Councillors will be needed for the new Council wef May 2025. They have recommended 98 councillors, presumably assuming 2 councillors for each of the 49 wards, and have now moved on to consider how to divide the county up in wards of roughly equal size. Penn Parish Council supported the proposal for 98 Buckinghamshire Unitary Councillors. Penn Wood and Old Amersham Ward includes Penn Parish (the parish contains is composed of 5 villages - Penn, Knotty Green, Forty Green, Penn Street and Winchmore Hill) as part of the widespread ward with three councillors and a current electorate of 8,539 of which Penn Parish provides 3,194 electors. We agree with the inclusion of Penn Parish in its entirety in the Penn and Old Amersham Ward. The Parish Council agreed on 16 March 2022, the Penn Wood and Old Amersham Ward ward is the appropriate location for the whole parish. Eighty per cent of the widespread Parish is located in Green Belt, and much lies in AONB. The five villages share similar rural characteristics and problems and identify with their historic location. Penn Parish is in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and the parish boundary has been accepted as the Designated Plan Area. Residents are well engaged with the Neighbourhood Plan, with consultation response rates in excess of thirty percent. Penn is historically a very important rural settlement and lends its name to the Ward. Some 16th and 17th century buildings close to the 12th-century church lie at its locus, and it has attracted numerous notable and prosperous residents. Six grandchildren of William Penn, the notable Quaker founder of Pennsylvania are buried in the village in the large family vault. Penn Parish Council's view is any arguments for bringing together the 'Penn' part of Penn Parish with Tylers Green into the same ward or parish disappeared with the abolition of the district council. Requests for unification fail to recognise the new reality of a single Unitary Buckinghamshire wide Council It is not clear what problem they are trying to solve, and proponents for unification have been unable to articulate a case. The local residents' society shares this view. Penn Parish Council believes an alteration to the Parish or Ward Boundary would adversely affect service delivery and be to the detriment of the whole Parish. There is no democratic support for amalgamating Penn with Tylers Green which is far larger, and has a far more urban character. Penn residents would be unlikely to benefit from the change, as neighbouring Council Taxes rates are far higher, and a transfer would create significant difficulties by removing 'Penn' from Penn Parish and from 'Penn and Old Amersham Ward'. In conclusion, we argue firmly for retaining the status quo, and keeping the whole of Penn Parish in Penn Wood and Old Amersham Ward. 16 March 2022

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded