

## **Scotforth Parish Council comments on Boundary Commission Draft Recommendations**

### **Comments relating to Scotforth Rural Parish**

Scotforth Parish Council made a detailed and measured submission in April 2021 to the initial consultation and we are pleased to see that many of our arguments have been incorporated into the draft recommendations published in September 2021.

We support the recommendation in sections 42 and 43 that Scotforth Parish, excluding the as yet unoccupied Bailrigg Student Living (also known as Filterhouse Studios), be part of the Ellel district ward and Bailrigg Student Living become a separate parish ward that is part of whatever district ward the University is in.

We note the observation in section 44 regarding the M6 bisecting the parish but we do not find that has any impediment on parish life and therefore agree with the conclusion that this should have no bearing on the boundary of the new Ellel district ward. Whilst there may be an argument to split the Ellel district ward along the line of the M6 into two wards we believe that this should only be considered at the next boundary review after greater clarity has emerged regarding housing growth in the much delayed and as yet unpublished Lancaster South Area Action Plan.

We also note the comments in section 48 regarding the parish boundary through the fields between the M6 and Bowerham Road and Newlands Road. A few of the new houses at Hala Carr Farm developments in those fields are indeed in the parish and should therefore be in the proposed Ellel district ward because they are insufficient to form a separate parish ward that could be aligned to a Scotforth East district ward. There is reference to a planned Community Governance Review but to date no-one from the City Council has approached the Parish Council about such a review and therefore such a review should be rightly disregarded for the purposes of this Boundary Commission report.

It is clear that the Boundary Commission has based its recommendation on detailed population projections provided by the City Council (section 24) but the Parish Council has not seen any data pertaining to the parish. We strongly oppose the recommendations in section 100 regarding the distribution of parish councillors between the three proposed parish wards because (i) it is entirely opposite to the current distribution of 4 councillors for the Scotforth ward and 1 councillor for the Burrow Heights ward and (ii) no evidence or data of projected populations by 2026 has been provided to justify the recommendation. We request that this information is provided to us as soon as possible in order that we can fully and further comment on section 100 within this current phase of the consultation.

### **Comments on the recommended boundaries of district wards**

In principle we contend that under the current voting system multi-councillor wards are less democratically representative than single-councillor wards (although some form of proportional voting system would support multi-councillor wards but such a system is not in place and is beyond the scope of this review) and therefore we would prefer to see 60 single-councillor wards as permitted under section 57 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

We understand (in sections 90-94) that various options for the communities of Halton, Aughton and Lower Lune have been considered but we, as a similar rural community, believe that the creation of a three-councillor ward covering such a wide area and many separate communities is inconsistent

with the technical guidelines for community identity (para 4.37-4.44). It is perfectly possible to create three wards by drawing boundaries appropriately (and, if necessary, amending new parish wards) that would enable local communities to elect their own more local representatives. We will not however offer specific proposals as we believe that should be left to the affected parish councils who have a greater understanding of their area.

Finally, we note that the principle of electoral equality has not fully operated when we compare Heysham area with the south east of the district. It appears that both areas have been allocated 11 councillors and yet mathematically it would be of great equality for the former wards to have 10 councillors and the latter wards to have 12 councillors as shown in the table below. We appreciate that this may require some changes to boundaries but such changes would create greater electoral equality. Clearly, we cannot make specific suggestions to where those boundary changes should be because the detailed population forecasts have not been made available to us but trust that the Boundary Commission will address this issue.

	councillors	variance%	2 d.p.	aggregated
Ellel	2	8	2.16	
Scotforth East & University	3	8	3.24	
Scotforth West	3	6	3.18	
Halton-with-Aughton & Lower Lune Valley	3	8	3.24	
	<u>11</u>		<u>11.82</u>	<u>12</u>
Heysham Central	2	-8	1.84	
Heysham North	2	-9	1.82	
Heysham South	3	-7	2.79	
Overton	1	3	1.03	
West End	3	-8	2.76	
	<u>11</u>		<u>10.24</u>	<u>10</u>



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