

Maidstone Borough Council

Personal Details:

Name:

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Postcode:

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Organisation Name:

Comment text:

I would like to express my concern over the suggestion from Maidstone Borough Council to alter Harrietsham and Lenham ward, specifically the suggestion to include enlarging the ward in one direction while cutting it off in another. This would completely alter the representation we have enjoyed for several years. The current representation, with Lenham and Harrietsham ward served by two elected members at MBC, Lenham and Harrietsham ward is presently served by two elected Members at Maidstone Borough Council, has and continues to work out well in terms of community building, as the two parishes, Lenham and Harrietsham, sit on the eastern boundary of Maidstone borough distinct from the other major settlements, such as Headcorn 6 miles to the south, and share much common infrastructure in terms of services, for example: Both have been designated in the 2017 Maidstone Local Plan as Rural Service Centres; Both are in the same Kent County Council Member Division and are served by the same KCC councillor; Both are covered by the same County Council Community Warden; Both form part of the same Kent Police area and so are served by known and shared Police Community Support Officers; Both are covered by Len Valley Practice, the part of the Ridge Primary Care Network, with the primary surgery at Groom Way Lenham and a secondary surgery at the Glebe Medical Centre in Harrietsham. Aside from these shared statutory services, which make continuity a strong facet of the distinct communities of both parishes, many of the organisations that run for both young and old, involve residents from both parishes. The football club, the cricket club, Young at Heart, community hub club, Dance club, Ballet School, Scouting and Guiding movement are but some of the examples of joint enterprises. Additionally, the one secondary school serves both parishes and beyond, including pupils from Maidstone and Ashford. The current elected members are completely integrated within the fabric of the ENTIRE ward they currently represent. When the COVID situation emerged they were there, organising local volunteers to deliver food and help people get their medication under lockdown. That is but one recent example of how they constantly strive to serve this part of the borough. The current MBC proposition would split Lenham Parish Council, splitting both services and people's identity, as demonstrated above. It does not make sense to have the same geographical area belonging to a parish but to a different ward. The ENTIRETY of Lenham Parish Council should continue to belong to the SAME ward. It can only serve to the detriment of services offered to local people that Lenham Parish Council would be forced to deal with two different wards, rather than one. It would be an unacceptable situation. I, however, support the suggestion made by Lenham Parish Council that parts of North Downs Ward adjacent to and north of Lenham and Harrietsham villages, consisting of the settlements of Otterden, Wichling, Frinsted and Wormshill which are currently in North Downs Ward, could be incorporated into an enhanced Lenham and Harrietsham ward. These areas adjacent to both villages already associate themselves strongly with the two villages. This change would further align the areas of the AONB from the North Downs into the enlarged ward footprint, providing additional enhancement for tourism and greater cohesion for the communities within them. A cohesion that the current MBC proposition would completely destroy. Thank you very much for your attention, [REDACTED] of Lenham

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded