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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 04 April 2022 23:28  
**To:** reviews  
**Subject:** Maidstone Consultation

**Categories:** Submissions, [REDACTED]

Dear Sirs

### **Local Government Boundary Commission - Maidstone Consultation**

I wish to express my concern over the suggestion from Maidstone Borough Council that Harrietsham and Lenham ward is significantly altered.

We live in Platts Heath and would, therefore, be directly affected by the changes proposed in the consultation.

The suggestion includes enlarging the ward in one direction while cutting it off in another and this would completely alter the representation we have enjoyed for several years. Lenham and Harrietsham ward is presently served by two elected Members at Maidstone Borough Council.

In my view this works 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.

As residents of Platts Heath:

- All our ties are with Lenham and Harrietsham

- My husband and I both grew up in Lenham and although now live a short distance outside of Lenham village, still very much consider Platts Heath as a part of the wider Lenham community.
- Our son attends The Lenham School secondary school.
- My office is based in Harrietsham and my work with the local churches (Len Valley Benefice) predominantly covers the areas of Lenham and Harrietsham. Our church parish is Lenham.
- Many of our son's activities are Lenham based. In addition to extra-curricular school activities, he also attends youth cricket at Lenham cricket club and hopes to enjoy playing for the adult team in the years to come.
- As a young child, he attended preschool in Harrietsham, and we have used the Lenham library since he was a few months old.
- Our family GP practice and dental surgery are both located in Lenham.
- Our community links and activities all centre around Lenham. My husband will also be using his professional skills in volunteering to provide first aid cover for some Lenham Parish Council and village events including offering some first aid training which is our way of contributing to the local community to which we consider ourselves to belong.
- Whilst Headcorn is a lovely village which we enjoy visiting from time to time, we do not have, and never have had, any such connections with Headcorn. As such, our interests at Borough Council level cannot be effectively represented under the new proposals. Our parish is Lenham and I cannot understand the rationale for removing those villages which fall within the Lenham Parish Council area, from the Lenham and Harrietsham ward of the Maidstone Borough Council.

The current elected members are completely integrated within the fabric of the ward they represent. When the COVID situation emerged they were there, organising local volunteers to deliver food and help people get their medication under lockdown. One of many ways in which they continually serve this part of the borough. Lenham must remain as one community and I view this suggested boundary change with much scepticism given the unacceptable garden village proposal in the locality which is fiercely opposed by local residents and our interests in relation to this would not be so vigorously represented by counsellors located much further away in Headcorn.

I have no objection to certain parts of the North Downs Ward consisting of the settlements of Otterden, Wichling, Frinsted and Wormshill which are currently in North Downs Ward, being incorporated into an enhanced Lenham and Harrietsham ward. I grew up on the North Downs in Lenham and know that these areas adjacent to both villages already associate themselves strongly with the two villages. However, this should not happen at the expense of the areas to the South of the ward, including Sandway, Lenham Heath and Platts Heath, in which I reside.

I reiterate that I am opposed to the suggestion of splitting the Lenham community and strongly urge the Maidstone Borough Council to revise any proposals to split the ward in this way.

Yours faithfully

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