

Barnsley

Personal Details:

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Organisation Name: (Member of the public)

Comment text:

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find attached my response (2 pages) to Barnsley's latest boundary proposal (August 2024).

Attached Documents:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]



30th August 2024

Review Officer (Barnsley)
LGBCE
PO Box 133
Blyth
NE24 9FE

Dear Sir/Madam,

Local Government Boundary Commission – Barnsley, South Yorkshire Review

At an extraordinary Stainborough Parish Council meeting on 8th August 2024, I was made aware of Barnsley Council's (BMBC) proposal to move Stainborough Parish from the Penistone East ward into a new 'rural' Dodworth, Stainborough & Tankersley ward.

I wish to register my **objection** to this proposal for the following reasons;

1. Providing for Effective and Convenient Local Government

Moving Stainborough & Hood Green villages into the proposed new ward might be convenient with reference to location, but in terms of governance little will be achieved for BMBC, compared with significant loss of identity of the two villages. Stainborough Parish Council has always been part of the rural Penistone East Ward which is made up of 9 small rural parishes. The issues facing smaller rural villages such as ours are vastly different from urban sprawls, such as Dodworth and Tankersley, from whom support would be limited. Stainborough also falls within Penistone Ward Alliance. Local Councillors understand the rural nature of our parishes and currently provide effective and convenient local government.

Two examples of the rural nature of our parish are: Wentworth Castle and their Grade 1 listed gardens managed by the National Trust; and Bagger Wood, an ancient woodland managed by The Woodland Trust. The vast majority of the parish lies within the Green Belt. The same cannot be said of Tankersley and Dodworth, both of which lie adjacent to and have direct access to the M1 Motorway at junctions 6 and 37 respectively.

Dodworth & Tankersley have a Labour MP, and Labour and Liberal Democrat councillors. Until the last election Penistone East had a Conservative MP and in recent years had three Conservative councillors. We now have a mix of Conservative and Labour councillors. This mix is more representative of the voting inclinations of the parish.

2. Reflecting Community Interests and Identities

Stainborough is a small rural parish with a strong community identity, which we wish to retain. The proposal to link Stainborough with Dodworth & Tankersley by BMBC appears to be based solely on geographical location with disregard to facilities and services and how we connect to local amenities. The villages of Stainborough & Hood Green are hamlets with no local facilities other than a public house in Stainborough and they have no affiliation with Tankersley or Dodworth. Our closest local amenities all lie within our nearest neighbours of Thurgoland, Silkstone & Silkstone Common and Oxspring - all of whom lie within Penistone East, therefore our affiliation lies strongly within this ward.

They include:

- a. Primary Schools – Silkstone Common & Silkstone and Senior School – Penistone.
- b. GP Surgery – Penistone Group Practice with branch surgeries in Thurgoland & Silkstone
- c. Post Office – Silkstone and Oxspring
- d. Place of worship – All Saints & St James Silkstone with Stainborough Parish Church.
- e. Local Bus Services. Stainborough and Hood Green are serviced by bus routes 24 & 24a. This route links our villages directly from Barnsley to Penistone. There is no direct bus to facilities in Dodworth or Tankersley.

My family have been patients at Penistone group practice since 1995. It provides an excellent service. The reason for alteration in Penistone East boundaries is due to the increase in housing development in Penistone West. With the increase in population in Penistone, if Stainborough Parish were forced to move into the Dodworth ward, my grave concern would be that we would no longer remain in the catchment area for Penistone Group Practice.

Note above the name of our parish church. Prior to Wentworth Castle at Stainborough being taken over by the National Trust, the gardens were only open to the public on the May bank holiday weekend. As a member of the church with children at the Sunday School, our family spent that weekend each year volunteering on stalls raising money for the upkeep of Wentworth Castle and gardens.

3. Equality of Representation

At the last census Stainborough Parish had 350 electorates. Compare this with Dodworth who had 10,400 and Tankersley 1,900. We are therefore very disproportionate in size and concerned our voice will not have sufficient weight in the proposed new ward from whom support for our small parish with dissimilar priorities would be limited.

Due to the disparity in size, Stainborough Parish does not relate well to Dodworth or Tankersley in terms of needs, requirements and priorities. Both Dodworth and Tankersley have industrial and commercial sites, whilst Stainborough is a 'sleepy country' parish with no commercial or industrial areas. Dodworth lies adjacent to Barnsley Town Centre and is a predominantly urban community. BMBC's initial forecast of increased electorate numbers by 2029 of 16% was driven by housing development in Cudworth, Dodworth and Monk Bretton. Although this figure was challenged and downgraded to 5%, the Boundaries Commission still forecast there to be 1000 more electorates in Dodworth by 2029. **Moving a truly rural parish of only 350 electorates from a ward it has always been in and would like to stay in will not help to equalise the numbers in Penistone East when the new residents alone in Dodworth will outweigh our numbers threefold.**

BMBC's proposed new 'rural' name for the ward is misleading.

4. Inappropriate allocation

In the 2003 Boundary review, BMBC proposed moving Stainborough Parish out of Penistone East. This was objected to by the residents and rejected by the Boundaries Commission.

This current proposal for alteration of the Penistone East boundaries is not the first choice of Barnsley Council and has only been offered as an alternative when their original and favoured version to move High Hoyland, Silkstone, Silkstone Common and part of Cawthorne was rejected by the Boundaries Commission earlier this year. This indicates that Barnsley Council itself does not consider the proposal ideal which is reinforced by The Boundaries Commission Draft Recommendations May 2024 which considered the preferable option would be to move Tankersley Parish into the Rockingham Ward. The Boundaries Commission recommendations make no suggestion of the merits of moving Stainborough and Tankersley into the Dodworth ward. BMBC rejected the Boundaries Commissions proposals as they were not prepared to split Birdwell, they were however prepared to split Hoyland town and the parishes of Silkstone and Silkstone Common.

Residents of Stainborough Parish were only informed of Barnsley Councils proposals at the extraordinary Parish Council meeting on 8th August 2024, despite the Boundaries Commission draft recommendations being published in May 2024. The proposal was only put to the Councils cabinet meeting on 14th August 2024 and the minutes have yet to be published. The consultation process ends on 9th September 2024. This feels like a 'last minute, end of the road' plan with very little time for the Parish Council and residents to respond.

Conclusion:

For all the reasons given above, I do not believe that this proposal offers the best balance between statutory criteria and local evidence. In their response to the Boundaries Commission Draft proposals, BMBC state (1.2.4) '*local community ties are held in high esteem by their residents and, for Barnsley Council, this is the most single important factor when considering local ward boundaries*' and (1.2.10) '*Our response seeks to maintain and improve these embedded identities where possible and minimise unnecessary disruption*'. **Stainborough Parish does not in any way identify with and has no community ties or interests with either Dodworth or Tankersley.** At the extraordinary Stainborough Parish Council meeting on August 8th 2024, there was a unanimous vote to reject and object to this proposal.

The Boundaries Commission recognised that High Hoyland had strong ties to the rural parishes in Penistone East and that Silkstone Common had strong ties with Silkstone and limited ties with Dodworth. I hope they recognise the same applies to Stainborough Parish and choose to retain it in the Penistone East ward.

To confirm, I object to the proposal of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council to move Stainborough Parish out of Penistone East Ward into a new ward of Dodworth, Stainborough & Tankersley.

