

Bluebird Lodge,

Coniston,

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11th May 2025

Dear Sir,

**Westmorland and Furness Council: Local Government Boundary Commission Consultation**

Coniston Parish Council met to consider the consultation and its response.

The proposal to break up the existing ward that constitutes a ‘natural community’ at the north of the Furness Peninsula is a very real concern. The existing ward joins together parishes that are dealing with similar challenges such as rural isolation, an aging population, inadequate or failing infrastructure e.g. minimal bus services, shops closing, second home ownership escalating, vulnerable schools and threats to GP services. It is through working closely together under the leadership of our ward councillor that we have been able to adequately heard by Westmorland and Furness Council. The proposal threatens this community of interest.

The ward changes being proposed would effectively reduce the common voice of parishes such as Coniston, Hawkshead, Skelwith, Torver, and Claife. It would divide natural communities, undermine effective representation and the collective ability of parishes in the existing Coniston and Hawkshead ward to effectively address issues that result from being a rural area. The Parish Council considers that the proposed ward would have a weakened voice within Westmorland and Furness Council, this in turn would exacerbate the existing perception that there is a very real democratic deficit, a disconnect between the residents and those making decisions.

The Parish Council would propose that the consultation results in a recommendation that the status quo is maintained. The review, having been primarily generated due to the population growth in Ulverston, is causing an unreasonable level of disruption to communities of interest and to effective local government throughout Furness.  Further, as population growth in Ulverston is causing this pressure then the most logical solution would be to create a new ward in Ulverston to accommodate the additional population growth that will result from the large housing estates, the construction of which has recently been approved.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Dearnley

Parish Clerk