

Darlington

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Comment text:

Related subject: Hummersknott

Response to the Local Government Boundary Commission Draft Proposals

Dear Sir/Madam

As a resident of Hummersknott, I would like to register my views on the draft proposals for local government boundaries in Darlington. The Commission cited a resident who claimed that the Park West ward "lacked a clear centre, shared facilities or established identities." I strongly disagree with this assertion.

The historic village of Blackwell, which makes up the majority of the Park West Ward, has retained its own distinct identity as Darlington town expanded. Blackwell and its residents identify with their locality, retaining a sense of community served by shared facilities like Blackwell Post Office, Blackwell Meadows Rugby Football Club and New Blackwell Tennis Club, notwithstanding All Saints and Elm Ridge Churches.

I also believe Blackwell has stronger community ties with Hummersknott than the draft proposals recognise. We share important green spaces (Broken Scar Riverside Walk and the areas surrounding West Cemetery) with local primary schools in Blackwell "feeding" into Hummersknott Academy and Carmel College, both of which serve families across these neighbouring communities.

Transport links further reinforce these connections. Coniscliffe Road provides a direct route between Blackwell and Hummersknott, while local bus services connect residents to shared facilities and to Darlington town centre. These links help create a natural community that extends across the current Park West and Hummersknott wards.

Many residents of Hummersknott, including myself, also use services previously mentioned in Blackwell, and I believe electoral boundaries should reflect the close connection between our two communities.

I am also concerned that the draft proposals overlook the importance of the town centre. In the current economic climate, small businesses in the

town centre require effective and coherent local government representation more than ever. While I understand that the town centre may be too small to form a ward in its own right, communities within the existing Park West and College wards, particularly around Southend Avenue and Abbey Road, have strong connections to the town centre through proximity and shared concerns, including parking pressures and congestion during peak shopping periods.

For these reasons, I urge the Commission to reconsider its assessment of Park West. Blackwell possesses a clear historical identity, shared community facilities, and strong connections both within the ward and with neighbouring communities like Hummersknott. Any revised boundary arrangements should recognise and reflect these established community ties.

Yours faithfully,

Attached Documents:

None attached