

Proposed Boundary Change Comments

I have lived in Trenchard Rd for 23 years as part of Rural West Ward York in the Rufforth and Knapton Parish. Despite living inside the ring road and because we are adjacent to the fields of the Green Belt there is much more of a rural feel to our lives than feeling part of the city. I certainly don't regard myself as a city dweller.

The quality of support from the Parish Council has been, and continues to be outstanding and it feels personal. I do not believe we will get the quality and level of support and representation that we have had hitherto, from Acomb West. Although we are on the edge of the current parish they have worked extremely hard to make sure we feel part of the parish and continue to nourish the distinct community spirit that has developed over time. Examples of this are:

- Minor financial grants for Parish Council and Residents information boards and signage, contributions to an outdoor bench and a communal barbeque.
- Inclusion in the work to produce the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Strong support in protecting the Green Belt and resulting wildlife while developing a coherent house building policy for the Parish in support of the City of York.
- Applying pressure to improve the public transport into the city centre.

The move from Rural West Ward, York to Acomb West has other small but very significant implications to the residents affected such as:

- Potential changes to school catchment areas - Manor School remains in Rural West and moving to Acomb West potentially brings families into the catchment area of York High School.
- Reduction of Rural West electorate will no doubt put further pressure on the Green Belt to build houses to bring the total of householders to the presumed level of 3200 per ward councillor.
- A disconnect between us (if we are forced into Acomb West) and the Green Belt adjacent fields near Wheatlands (staying as Rural West Ward). There have been three attempts by large house building firms to build on this Green Belt land in the last 20 years and there is no doubt there will be further attempts in the future. The passage of information will be slower and will significantly impair our ability to respond in a timely manner if we are in a different ward. It should not happen but that is the reality of the somewhat dysfunctional position we face in York.
- Changing the parliamentary constituency boundaries, which will move the residents from York Outer to York. A neat bit of gerrymandering if ever there was.
- Financially. Firstly, because most insurance companies use automated risk algorithms based on post code, insurance premiums for home and cars are likely to increase because rural Rufforth and Knapton has a lower crime index than urban Acomb West. Secondly property values have the potential to be affected and drop.

Historically the Parish was within the West Riding which through a number of iterations became Rural West Ward and I would wish my small part of it to remain so.

I fail to see any cogent argument for moving this small community from Rufforth and Knapton into a large amorphous city ward, Acomb West. What was a relatively straightforward boundary line and easily understood is now unnecessarily complicated. Those being forced to move are likely to pick up a potential financial penalty because the consequences, both deliberate and unintended, have not been properly researched or understood.

I strongly urge that this proposal is not taken forward.