

# Northumberland

## Personal Details:

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## Comment text:

**Related subject:** New Delaval & New Hartley, Hartley

I vehemently oppose the proposed boundary changes affecting New Hartley. The proposals to divide the village of New Hartley into two respective Parishes is not in the interests of a close knit and enthusiastic community, whose collective drive and proactive partnership with the Parish Council have boosted community spirit in post-covid times.

The division of the settlement seems ill conceived. Whilst accepting that existing Parishes within the Seaton Valley Area have a projected population above average of those nearby, it is illogical to impose division upon the community by separating one half of the village from the other. I struggle to comprehend how the best interests of the community can be delivered when responsibility for its services is shared between two Parish Councils. This is of particular concern given how small the settlement is in comparison with those nearby. It would be in the best interests of the community to include the whole of the village within one Parish, whether that be Hartley or New Delaval & New Hartley.

Adjustments could be made to group areas to the south of the railway line in Seaton Deleval with areas to the north. The railway line does not read as a logical boundary on the ground in this part of Seaton Delaval and amendments could potentially be made which would enable the village of New Hartley to be included within a single boundary.

I have concerns about the impact the changes will have on the positive community spirit which New Hartley currently possesses. The boundary commission will unlikely be aware of vehemently opposed plans for new housing in New Hartley, which were allowed on appeal by a Government appointed Inspector and are currently being developed. The community have already been severely affected by substantial changes within their

community as a result of new housing development, and will undoubtedly encounter further frustration from these proposed boundary changes. Since this appeal was allowed the community has become more cohesive, and residents are more responsive to ensuring that the needs and interests of its community are met. There is a greater appreciation of the settlement's history and identity than previously, and arguably a stronger community bond.

As a small community it is only right the village is included within a single boundary, not divided along an arbitrary line which sees the very limited services and facilities separated into two different Parishes.

The small number of people included within New Delaval and New Hartley would be disconnected geographically, functionally and socially from the vast majority of electors within Newsham. The interests of those in Newsham are inherently different to those within New Hartley and I fear the few residents included within this proposed boundary will fail to have their voices adequately heard. Grouping half of the community with a significant portion of Newsham, the outer suburb of one of the largest settlements in Northumberland, cannot be said to be truly representative of the village's identity.

The proposals in my view would lead to electoral inequality for members within this community. Whilst population is the primary determining factor in ensuring electoral quality, the proposed changes would have a marked negative impact upon identity of this small community. It is in the interests of those within the settlement that they are grouped together within a single boundary. Only this way can the combined efforts of those within the community continue to ensure the village prospers. Having two Councils determine how tax contributions are best spent will, I fear, lead to the village being forgotten about. The County Council, in engaging with the proposed changes, seemingly acknowledge the value and importance of including New Hartley within a single boundary and are not seeking to encourage its division. This is reflective of the views of the community who do not wish to see the village divided between two Parishes.

I trust my views and those of others within the community will be taken into account. I urge the boundary commission to review proposals and ensure electoral equality within the area without dividing this small community in two.

## **Attached Documents:**

*None attached*