

# Tandridge

## Personal Details:

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**Organisation Name:** Limpsfield Parish Council (Parish or town councillor)

## Comment text:

**Related subject:** Limpsfield, Tatsfield and Titsey Proposed three member ward.

I am writing on behalf of Limpsfield Parish Council.

The TDC ward boundary review was discussed at the Limpsfield Parish Council meeting held on June 12th 2023. At this meeting there was a unanimous agreement to object to the proposal to combine the Limpsfield and Tatsfield and Titsey District Council wards to form a new three-member ward.

The grounds for this objection are:

### The Loss of Community Identity

1. The existing district council two-member ward, exactly matches the Limpsfield parish boundary, which is long standing and has been unchanged (according to our records) since at least 1841.
2. The Limpsfield Parish consists of 2 settlements (Limpsfield Village and Limpsfield Chart), the oldest parts of Limpsfield Village date from the 11th century, Limpsfield is referenced in the Domesday Book. The parish has 3 Grade One and 79 Grade Two listed buildings. The parish remains largely rural with 95% being green belt and parts are within the Surrey Hills AONB. (The current review of the Surrey Hills AONB boundaries is likely to further extend the AONB area in the parish).
3. Limpsfield Parish has a strong and distinct community identity, which is evidenced in the following ways.
  - In 1997, The Limpsfield Village Store (and sub-post office) was purchased by residents and since that date has been successfully run by a management team and staffed by volunteers.

- In 2018, an Enterprise Initiative Scheme (EIS) was established to purchase The Bull public house in Limpsfield High Street by residents and investors. Since that date, The Bull has continued to flourish and remains at the heart of the village community.
- In 2019, the parish council completed the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan for the parish, which has since been adopted by Tandridge District Council as part of its development control policies. There was very strong and widespread support for the Neighbourhood Plan amongst Limpsfield residents. At the Neighbourhood Plan referendum in May 2019, there was a turnout of 49%, with 87% voting in support of the Neighbourhood Plan. This turnout figure for a Neighbourhood Plan referendum, is one of the highest in the country.
- Regular participation in the Village in Bloom competition, which involves extensive community involvement and participation. Parish based projects arising from the Neighbourhood Plan such as the Limpsfield Way footpath and cycleway to join Limpsfield Village to Limpsfield Chart. The two Limpsfield ward councillors on the district council, live in Limpsfield and are well placed to appreciate and support this strong sense of community identity in the parish.

### Geographic Considerations

Limpsfield Parish shares a large common boundary with the Tatsfield and Titsey ward. But this is largely with the Titsey parish, the common boundary with Tatsfield is a small area at the eastern end of Limpsfield on the A25. Most of the Limpsfield parish area and all the dwellings in the parish are south of the M25 and below the ridge line marking the northern edge of the North Downs.

The major settlement in the existing Tatsfield and Titsey ward, is Tatsfield Village which sits north of the M25 motorway and above the North Downs escarpment. There are only a small number of dwellings in the Tatsfield parish that are south of the motorway and the North Downs escarpment

While there is a large shared boundary with Titsey, this parish largely consists of Titsey Place and the Titsey Estate, the parish has only a small number of dwellings and does not have a parish council.

There are many similar characteristics between Limpsfield and Titsey, but very few shared characteristics with Tatsfield. This is important because Tatsfield village has most of the electorate within the current Tatsfield and Titsey ward. Any proposal to merge the two wards should compare Tatsfield with Limpsfield, Titsey because of the small number of electors is not a consideration, although it has the large shared boundary with Limpsfield.

If the proposal was to change the ward boundary to include the Titsey parish with Limpsfield this would make sense, but is unlikely given the small electorate in the Titsey. But the inclusion of Tatsfield in a new three-member ward would be an artificial combination of two different and diverse geographical areas. Tatsfield residents live north of the M25 and the North Downs, Limpsfield residents are south of that divide.

### Commercial Considerations

Limpsfield is part of the Oxted Tier One settlement, at the parish's western boundary, the boundary between the Limpsfield and Oxted parishes is difficult to recognise. The doctor's surgery and library which are in Limpsfield are used extensively by residents from the adjoining Oxted parish. The main shopping area in Oxted/Limpsfield is bisected by the Limpsfield Oxted parish boundary.

Limpsfield's public transport links are mainly westwards with Oxted and onto Redhill (via bus), southwards to Lingfield and East Grinstead and north to Croydon and London by train and eastwards with Westerham. There is one hourly bus service from Oxted that skirts Limpsfield via Titsey

Road to go to Tatsfield.

There are very few commercial and transport links and no shared facilities between Limpsfield and Tatsfield. For Tatsfield the strongest transport and commercial links are northwards from Tatsfield to Biggin Hill, Warlingham and Croydon.

Most Titsey residents will rely on services and facilities (shops, doctors, train station) in Limpsfield/ Oxted.

The views of Limpsfield residents

At the June 2023 Parish Council meeting, when the proposed ward boundary changes were discussed, it was agreed that the Parish Council should consult Limpsfield residents for their views on the proposed changes.

The Parish Council has undertaken an on-line household survey and a face-to-face survey at the two village fetes held in the parish in June/July.

The survey consisted of two questions

1. Are you a resident of the Parish of Limpsfield? (If your poll card for the recent elections asked you to vote at either St Peter's Church Hall or St Andrew's Hall, then you are a resident of Limpsfield).

2. Do you think the district council ward of Limpsfield should be combined with Tatsfield & Titsey to create a new Limpsfield, Tatsfield and Titsey ward, as proposed by The Boundary Commission?

(Any non-Limpsfield residents have been excluded from the survey results).

In total 145 households participated in the survey. The responses to question 2 were as follows:

Yes 5 (3.4%)

No 138 (92.6%)

Do not Know 6 (4.0%)

During the face-to-face interviews, respondents frequently questioned the benefits of the proposed changes and expressed their satisfaction with the existing arrangements.

Summary

The proposed boundary changes to combine the Limpsfield and Tatsfield and Titsey wards, would be an artificial amalgamation of two very different and distinct areas.

The Titsey parish which shares a large boundary with Limpsfield could easily be included in the Limpsfield ward because of the geography and the commercial links (the regular use of the shops, restaurants, and other facilities in Limpsfield /Oxted by Titsey residents).

But The inclusion of Tatsfield with Limpsfield would combine two very different and distinct areas with different priorities which have little in common.

Limpsfield Parish Council believe that the present two-member district council ward should be retained, with or without the inclusion of the Titsey parish.

We oppose the proposed new three-member ward for Limpsfield Tatsfield and Titsey as we believe that it will provide no benefits to Limpsfield (or Tatsfield) residents and will adversely affect the representation of Limpsfield residents on Tandridge District Council.

## Attached Documents:

*None attached*