

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Personal Details:

Name:

[REDACTED]

E-mail:

[REDACTED]

Postcode:

[REDACTED]

Organisation Name:

Comment text:

Having lived in Tunbridge Wells for thirty years, with various homes, schools, and workplaces in many of the wards, I am writing to express my view on why I believe the Rusthall ward should remain independent and not be absorbed into another ward. Rusthall ward is unlike all other wards that I have experienced. It really is a village separate to Tunbridge Wells and it behaves as such, with a wonderful community spirit and a shared want to look out for our village environment and each person who lives here. If there was a word to sum up Rusthall, it truly would be community. Over the nineteen years I have lived in the ward, each new resident that I encounter appears to share the same view of wanting to live in a place surrounded by green spaces and be part of a thriving community where people know each other and contribute to the success of village life. It is rather unusual to know a couple of neighbours in many wards, yet in Rusthall it is not unusual to know most of your entire road. I remember fondly in lockdown that my neighbours would leave gifts on my doorstep to know that they were thinking of our family. It is indeed a special place. I am unaware of any other ward that has all the things that Rusthall has. Rusthall hosts its own successful cinema, has two thriving allotments, a wonderful High Street with some incredible independent businesses, bonfire, fete and Commons Committees, a school, churches, and its own Parish Council. To include it into another ward could remove all the local knowledge and personality that makes Rusthall such a thriving and special place to live. We celebrate people and life. In Rusthall Life, our local magazine, each edition features different people in our village, who contribute to making it so special. The volunteers of the magazine work hard to bring together the latest news and invite us all to contribute to the success of our village and to ensure that it continues to thrive. We have lots of events in Rusthall, each set up by willing volunteers, with an army of Rusthall supporters behind them. There is nothing so English as a large group of people cowering under brollies on a summer's day, in the pouring rain, to support a fete knowing the amount of effort that our fellow Rusthallians have invested, to put on such an event. The local community guitar band, the Rusties, will have been rehearsing all year in our Parish Council home, to be the back-drop sound to the day. Though we may all be shivering, we are cheering on our fellow residents, thankful for their effort at wanting to bring us all together once again. In which other ward, do you see a live-torch procession on Bonfire Night, the result of the hard work of another incredible committee? For many children in the village, the torch will be an early experience of respecting something of danger. The thrill each of them has at being allowed to hold something with live flames is an unofficial rite of passage. We are definitely a ward that shares in all of life events, from birth to death and everything in between. When our neighbour unexpectedly went into labour, three households assisted in the birth of the baby (in the car), a fourth was directing the traffic ... and the ambulance, to the specific car! I remember fondly when the residents of our road watched and cheered on a young resident, who had his hair chopped for a children's cancer charity and the tears of many, as we said goodbye to our longest-term resident. In June 2022, for the second time since I have lived in our home, our road will be closed off, so that we can come together to share in the celebration of the Queens jubilee. Old residents are already planning to return to celebrate with us, as their new homes 'don't have the same community spirit,' as their old homes of Rusthall. We love our environment; yet another volunteer-led committee encourages us to keep our village tidy and serve hot refreshments as the reward for the litter picking after their regular gathering. Our local school has been on a plight to save plastic from landfill. Both allotments contribute to the health of our bee and wildlife community by successfully growing flowers, fruit, and vegetables. We gather together each year to share in the joys of the season and the challenges of sharing space with our local badgers. Our churches are integral to the community, hosting regular services and community groups and friendly ministers who you will no doubt see as you travel around the village. Rusthall library is also something rather special. Over the years, the wonderful people who have worked there have offered something unique and contributed to village

life. It is safe to say that of everyone who lives or works within the village, they all contribute to the village we know and love. I am sure that I have missed many of the elements that make our ward so special. They have no doubt become part of the very essence of life here and I may have unwittingly taken them for granted. What I do know is not all wards are the same, nor have the same needs. Please do consider keeping Rusthall as a separate ward. Everything that makes our village such a special place should be protected, including the knowledge it takes to remain such a fabulous place to live. Thank you.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded