

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Personal Details:

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Organisation Name:

Comment text:

I have lived in Rusthall for over 30 years. The village is a very distinct community 2 miles to the west of Tunbridge Wells, with a strong sense of community that makes it quite distinct from the settlements around it. It would therefore be a huge loss to our sense of village identity, and a denial of democracy, if the review of borough council boundaries were to deliver anything other than the continuation of dedicated borough councillors for Rusthall. Rusthall is close to Tunbridge Wells, geographically and culturally, but quite distinct from it. The Rusthall and Tunbridge Wells commons create a clear 'green belt' between Rusthall and the western parts of Tunbridge Wells such as Bishops Down, while agricultural land separates Rusthall from Southborough and Speldhurst to the north and north-east. Modern housing developments have created some geographical continuity between Rusthall and Langton Green to the west, but the two communities are very different from each other, with quite distinct socio-economic profiles. People in Langton Green would not want to be 'mistaken' for a resident of Rusthall, and vice-versa. It's no coincidence that the road close to the border between the two territories is called 'The Boundary'! More to the point, the local priorities of each community are likely to be so distinct as to make it very difficult for a single councillor to represent both at the same time. Rusthall's High Street is a small miracle of flourishing and diverse shops, which are well supported by local people. Rusthall's two borough councillors live in the village and are known personally to many residents. This provides a level of trust in the representation which these councillors provide in local government. It would be a seriously retrograde step for local democracy if, for the sake of some tick-box exercise, this pattern of local representation were to be disrupted by merging Rusthall with other wards, or by artificially breaking it up. If the objective of the review is to strengthen the democratic validity of the borough council (and it should be said that the council has not really spelt out any compelling reason why this review is actually necessary), then Rusthall must remain a single unitary ward within the borough council structure.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded