

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

Personal Details:

Name: David Cooper
E-mail: david.cooper@tmbc.gov.uk
Postcode: XXXXXXXXXX
Organisation Name: Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

Comment text:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND SUBMISSION TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL DITTON WARD

Ditton is an ancient village that was small and almost entirely agricultural until the post-war building boom when it and neighbouring villages were built on and lost their individual identities as the housing in one village merged with that of its neighbours. The current Borough Council ward is roughly bounded by the river Medway to the north, the "Trees" estate in Larkfield and the East Malling Research Centre to the west, rural lanes to the south and residential roads in Aylesford South ward to the east. The ward north of the M20 motorway is given over entirely to industry with no residential property there. There are two polling districts in the current ward which roughly splits the ward north and south on either side of the A20 London Road. It is currently a two-member ward, and to meet the population requirements on the boundary review the ward as it stands is too small to support two members but too big for one. The Conservative party's proposal which is outlined here is to retain all of the housing in the current ward and also incorporate the residential roads leading off Woodlands Road to the termination of Woodlands Road with London Road to include the London Road houses on the south side of the road. This new ward to be renamed Ditton and Holtwood.

GEOGRAPHY The current ward boundary on Woodlands Road is indistinct and is at the junction with Woodlands Road and Gorse Crescent. The proposed additional roads are in the area known as Holt Wood. These roads are in the current Aylesford South ward, but have previously been in Ditton ward, and in the time when it was actually a wood was a popular recreation area for the residents of Ditton. Both members for Ditton ward occasionally get queries from residents in these roads as they consider themselves in Ditton. The ward is a narrow north/south ward through which a stream runs before flowing into the River Medway.

FACILITIES The St Peter ad Vincula church in Ditton dates to the 15th century and this is the original village centre. Nearby are the junior and primary schools, the St Peter's pre-school and the Ditton Heritage Centre – a Victorian school building that has been restored to provide a source for the village's heritage with documents and artifacts illustrating the past, and a re-creation of a schoolroom of the 19th century often used for educational visits by local schools. The village also has a large community centre with three separate halls and adjoining sports fields that host football and cricket. There are also lawn bowls and petanque clubs nearby plus allotments, and a nature reserve on the site of an old ragstone quarry. The community centre has a bar and social club which is the only premises licensed to serve alcohol for consumption in the village. Prior to the pandemic the centre hosted a number of local clubs including badminton, indoor bowls, dog training, five-a-side football as well as being available to hire for parties, dances, exhibitions etc. There is a One Stop convenience store on New Road, and a similar Costcutter store, a beauty salon and a couple of fast-food outlets in a parade of shops on Woodlands Road. Lidl is currently constructing a supermarket in the village on London Road. There is an active youth football club in the village, and Ditton has its own Scout hut for Scouts, Cubs and Beavers. 2374 (Ditton) Squadron Air Training Corps is based in the Territorial Army centre within the village. The village has two fish and chip shops, two curry houses, a garage, a pet food store and a hairdressers on London Road. North of the M20 the old Aylesford Newsprint site is currently being developed into an industrial park by Panattoni which is expected to provide 3,000 jobs when completed. The K Sports complex on Station Road has all weather pitches for football and hockey, a gym and hard courts for tennis and basketball. Straddling the London Road as it does the village benefits from bus services to and from Maidstone and going as far as Kings Hill, West Malling, Snodland and Wrotham. There are no rail stations in the village, but both Aylesford and East Malling stations are within reasonable walking distance each being on a different mainline route to London. There are no medical facilities in the village and most residents are registered at Thornhills surgery in Larkfield.

SUGGESTED WARD BOUNDARIES An earlier iteration of the warding arrangements suggested that Ditton and East Malling should be merged into one ward. This does not seem to be a good fit, and is not supported. The vast expanse of the East Malling Research Centre divides the two villages. While the normal road route taken between Ditton and East Malling would be westwards along the A20 this passes through Larkfield South ward. The only road connection directly between the two existing wards is

via Kiln Barn Road, Easterfields and Rocks Road, all of which are single track lanes. PROW MR100 passes through the Research Centre and is the main route between the villages for those on foot wishing to use the railway station or visit the King & Queen pub. The inclusion of the Holtwood roads in the new ward, which is now the settled position of both the Borough Council and the Conservative party, is preferred as this would remove the anomaly of a ward boundary being in the middle of Woodlands Road, it would include in Ditton an area that has historically been in Ditton and is closer to the centre of Ditton than it is to Aylesford. Residents of Ditton have a number of supermarkets within a couple of miles including Tesco and Morrisons in Larkfield and Sainsburys in Aylesford, and shoppers will tend to travel to their favoured store as they are all so close. This may change when Lidl's store in Ditton opens in November.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded