

Holt, Nicole

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To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Lancaster Boundary Review

Categories: Submissions, Nicole

Submission from the University and Scotforth Rural Ward Councillors

The University and Scotforth Rural Ward Councillors have a unique challenge in representing two distinct groups in the rural element and the student elements of our ward. In spite of this challenge, we have worked hard to try and ensure that all our constituents' voices are heard when we are making our decisions on how we vote, and the programmes of work we take forward.

The student population is itinerant, and tends to move around the district through students' tenure at the University. Students may have more than 3 residences for their entire time at University. It is therefore a great challenge for the Councillors that have had to represent this ward to not only represent the 5000 or so students that live on campus, but all 16500 students that attend Lancaster University. This is apparent in the ward councillor's interventions over issues in Bulk ward with the disastrous opening of the Caton Court development, and in previous interventions to preserve student-focussed nightlife in Lancaster. In both these instances, it was the University and Scotforth Rural Ward Councillors who made their voices heard.

The University and Scotforth Rural Ward Councillors of this ward have achieved significant successes including the introduction of SMART bus passes and the implementation of signage on the cycle path between the University and Bailrigg to improve safety for cyclists. The councillors here have also worked hard to ensure that the roads around the university are not cluttered with cars from commuters, worked with County Councillors to combat flooding, and opposed unsustainable and uncontrolled development in our ward. Furthermore, the work of councillors within this ward has ensured that all eligible students are now registered to exercise their right to vote and partake in democratic processes. The University Ward Councillors also played a major role in the declaration of a climate emergency, and will be campaigning on spiking in the next few weeks. These achievements reflect the needs of the residents within the entirety of this ward and the district beyond, and would likely not have happened as they did without the unique composition of the ward.

Furthermore, the Councillors in this ward have traditionally played a role in ensuring that the University delivers on its promises to be a University that reaches out, and have brought pressure to bear, especially around climate action. The declaration of a Climate Emergency at a City level is incomplete without Councillors that are willing to act as ambassadors to the organisations in their ward to urge them to take forward the most serious issue of our time. We will be pushing Lancaster University to not only meet its own promises for carbon neutrality by 2035, but to overdeliver, and ensure carbon neutrality by 2030 in line with the Council declaration.

Making up 15% of Lancaster's population, students play a crucial role in energising the city in many ways including their contribution to the city's economy but also through the voluntary community work many students are involved with. It is absolutely essential that the views of all students - who are undeniably an asset to this city - are not marginalised and ignored, like they very often are when living outside of the University and Scotforth Rural ward. We believe that a change in boundaries will only ensure that this neglect is further perpetuated as students are left to be represented by Councillors that do not have to care about them given their transient nature.

The composition of this ward provides an excellent opportunity for collaboration amongst a very diverse community of individuals. Lancaster University alone is composed of thousands of people whose views, values and interests are distinct from one another and it is absolutely necessary that this diverse community is represented in its totality. We believe that any ward arrangements that don't take account of the distinct campus community would face massive community backlash.

We wholeheartedly believe that instead of creating new boundaries (ward or otherwise), we should welcome and appreciate the diversity this ward has to offer and work towards improving ever stronger community cohesion.

Signed,
Cllr Fabiha Askari
Cllr Oliver Robinson
Cllr Katie Whearty

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