



THORNABY **TOWN COUNCIL**

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NEW ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR STOCKTON BOROUGH COUNCIL – THORNABY TOWN COUNCIL RESPONSE

Thornaby Town Council wish to object to the proposed draft recommendations contained within the Electoral Review for Stockton on Tees Borough Council.

In 2003 when most of the current members of Thornaby Town Council (TTC) were first elected, Thornaby on Tees, one of the original four towns that made up the Borough of Stockton on Tees, consisted of four wards served by eight borough councillors. TTC comprised thirteen councillors and that is still the case and not fourteen as wrongly stated by the LGBC.

Some years later, ward boundaries were changed and reduced to three wards. Village was allotted two councillors, Stainsby Hill, two councillors, and Mandale merged with Victoria to be served by three councillors. All of which was imposed at a time when Thornaby on Tees was undergoing significant change and, oddly, at a time of population increase.

New ward boundaries were defined simply by lines drawn around built areas to arrive at the numbers required by the recommended changes. And those lines stuck over the years with outer lines mistakenly interpreted as the town's extremities. All of which has been a source of deep rooted angst in the town for so long. And now Thornaby on Tees has been singled out again with LGBC recommendation for the loss of another councillor and, astonishingly, with a huge section the town adjacent to Thornaby Road/Low Lane (where plans for two hundred new homes have been approved) annexed into a new hybrid called Southern Parishes.

For the record, it is worth pointing out that the traditional boundaries of Thornaby on Tees – established by Royal Charter in 1892 – stretch from the Old River Tees and Stainsby Beck in the east to the River Tees north and west and then south beyond Low Lane and once encompassed Maltby and Hilton. Much of the southern boundary beyond Low Lane simply evaporated over a period of time following the disastrous abolition of the Municipal Borough of Thornaby on Tees in 1968 and is now recognized as east of Bassleton Beck and marked by a sign at the Low Lane/Thornaby Road confluence bearing the legend: Welcome to Thornaby on Tees.

Significant changes in intervening years included a whole series of ill thought out local government reorganization that saw Thornaby on Tees lose autonomy almost without a whimper

and being subsumed against the wishes of Thornaby folk into what is still widely regarded as an alien Stockton authority. Thornaby on Tees was ignored throughout that myopic process and that has continued -reflected in a legitimate referendum in 2015 when 72.5% of those voting opted for separation from Stockton. Sadly (predictably) the result was ignored.

Another major change occurred in the early 1970's with the approval of a master plan for a huge private housing development at Ingleby Barwick west of Bassleton Beck that has since been accepted as the established separation of Thornaby on Tees from the sprawling and overdeveloped new settlement. This separation was recently emphasized by a Planning Inspector when rejecting a development appeal at Hollybush Farm in Thornaby on Tees.

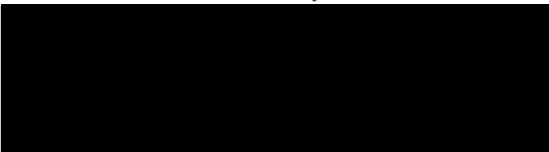
So why do TTC and Thornaby residents feel so strongly about our town, culture and uniqueness. Evidence of a Neolithic settlement at Thornaby was discovered some time ago and the village of Thornaby is mentioned in the Domesday Book a number of times. The name Thornaby is thought to originate from a Viking presence and Grace Pace, mother of renowned explorer and cartographer, Captain James Cook, was born in Thornaby on Tees and baptized at the beautiful Norman Church on the green where services are still conducted.

Thornaby on Tees has a wide and varied history of industry and commerce and townsfolk are justifiably proud of their Yorkshire identity. Servicemen and women have served (and continue to serve) the country in times of conflict – many of whom lost their lives and are recorded on the town's cenotaph whilst some are interred in war graves in award winning Thornaby Cemetery. The whole community is also proud that the town was also home to RAF Thornaby on Tees – an air base that contributed so much to the nation in times of both war and peace. And so there is deep rooted resentment when there is any suggestion that a town with an approximate population of 26,000 is an inconsequential periphery of the cross county boundary unitary authority of Stockton on Tees. Thornaby on Tees has a first class town council and so clearly is not just a mere estate.

Thornaby Town Council is confident that members collectively speak for a whole community treated with an almost arrogant disdain since 1968 and seemingly routinely selected as a river crossing and thoroughfare – aided and abetted by political opportunism of parties and individuals with no affection or interest in our town other than as a means to hang on to perceived power. It is hoped that the LGBC recognizes those facts and is now cognisant of both internal and external boundaries of Thornaby on Tees and what these misguided recommendations mean to Thornaby people.

Yours faithfully

On behalf of Thornaby Town Council



Councillor Steve Walmsley
Mayor of Thornaby
Honary Alderman of Stockton on Tees