

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Personal Details:

Name:

E-mail:

Postcode:

Organisation Name: N/A

Comment text:

I am writing to object to the proposed, enlarged new wards for Hawkhurst, Benenden & South Goudhurst - and specifically for the Parish of Goudhurst. The new wards may be of equal size, but they do not respect our current community boundaries and relationships. I am writing to support the proposal for community based wards - which is largely the system that we have already. There is an old adage, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. If the Covid-19 pandemic of the past 2+ years has shown us nothing else, it has highlighted how important our communities are. The new proposed ward boundaries will mean that our local councillor representatives will become far more remote from the communities that they represent because they will have to cover a much larger area and spread themselves around more thinly than they are able to do at the moment. The new boundary proposals will particularly affect Goudhurst Parish - the nearby village of Kilndown, which is a big part of our local community, is proposed to be split from Goudhurst and added to distant parishes in the North. At the same time, Goudhurst is proposed to be split away to join with villages much further away, largely towards the south. This is not really an acceptable proposal as it does not take into account the existing communities and our representation. In addition, it is proposed to reduce the number of councillors. This really is not acceptable. It will make the workloads of the councillors even greater than they already are and it will be much harder for those councillors to get to know our views, let alone adequately represent them. Currently, our local councillors can respond to local issues relatively quickly, they get to know us, they know the area and they get to know how we feel about certain issues and how work out how they can help us. They ensure that our voices are heard. If there are fewer councillors who have to represent more voters, then their input will be diluted. Tunbridge Wells Borough is growing by tens of thousands annually, so it means that our councillors will become more remote and there will be less community representation. Therefore, to summarise. I think that • Goudhurst Parish should not be split and Kilndown should remain in the same ward as Goudhurst, even if the resulting Rural ward exceeds the 7000 average. The population of Kilndown is relatively small - surely, this low number is not going to greatly skew the proportion of the new proposed wards?. • Furthermore, each community must have one or two councillors to represent them - so that councillors can adequately represent their communities, as is the case today. In conclusion, I think it is a mistake to propose these new wards and this matter must be re-visited and reconsidered. Please think again and bear in mind the issues raised above.

Yours sincerely

Date: 3rd October 2022

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded