

FRITTENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Park Cottage  
Frittenden  
Cranbrook  
Kent TN17 2AU

22 November 2022

Jane Clarke  
Head of Policy and Governance  
Town Hall  
Mount Pleasant Road  
Royal Tunbridge Wells  
Kent TN1 1RS

Dear Ms Clarke,

**Consultation on the Electoral System in Tunbridge Wells Borough**

At the last meeting of Frittenden Parish Council (15 November) it was agreed that we make the following submission to Tunbridge Wells BC to explain the principal reasons why we support a move to all-out elections within the borough.

Frittenden Parish Council wants Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to change to all out-elections in order to ensure that we can remain as part of a single-member ward.

We feel that multi-member wards are inappropriate for rural representation as they require the grouping of parishes, often spread over a considerable area, in order to create a ward with the requisite number of electors.

We believe that this will:

- Stifle the voice of small communities.

In the case of Frittenden we are part of a ward comprising two neighbouring villages. Under the proposed three-member ward Frittenden would form about one tenth of the electorate. Its representatives would be chosen by the voters in the nearby town. As a small rural community, without shops or public transport, our interests are quite different from those of our much larger neighbour, Cranbrook.

- Destroy the close connection between councillors and their electors which exists in single-member wards.

People whose main allegiance is to their own local community, rather than a political party, are less likely to stand for election as councillors.

- Increase costs and reduce efficiency

Three-member wards increase the cost of holding elections as elections are needed three times as often. Council Tax payers will pay more yet receive a lower quality of representation. This is indefensible when TWBC are struggling to balance their budget.

Servicing the needs of an electorate spread over a large geographical area will incur greater costs and fuel use, and require more time if councillors are to do their job effectively.

I should be grateful if you could pass on our Council's views to the relevant members and officers of Tunbridge Wells BC.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Staples

*Chairman*

*Frittenden Parish Council*

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