



HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Office, Horsmonden Village Hall, Back Lane, Horsmonden, Kent, TN12 8LH

Clerk: Mrs L Noakes

Tel: 01892 724989

email: clerk@horsmonden-pc.gov.uk

www.horsmonden-pc.gov.uk

Dear Councillors

Re: TWBC Electoral System Consultation

Horsmonden Parish Councillors have asked me to write and express their views on the Electoral Review Consultation by letter, as well as completing the consultation on the TWBC webpage.

Parish Councillors at Horsmonden discussed this matter at their meeting on Tuesday 18th October and the majority of Parish councillors voted in favour of adopting an 'all-out' system for Election in the Borough.

The Parish Council believes that voting 'by thirds will-create 13 identically sized annually voting, three councillor wards resulting in:

- a) Cutting apart communities (e.g. Kilndown will be split from Goudhurst; Southborough will be split in two)
- b) Many local communities will be added to several others (e.g. Four *different* parishes adding together, up to some 14 miles across Goudhurst will be added to Lamberhurst, Horsmonden, Brenchley and Matfield)
- c) One of the stated objectives of the Boundary review is to achieve equity and democracy through respect of communities, however, the splitting of towns and parishes or merging of disparate communities removes "communities" as a criterion
- d) Wards will no longer have representatives elected with passion for their local community
- e) Size of the wards will make electioneering very difficult thus putting off potential candidates;
- f) The review makes it clear that there is a wish to attract a more diverse councillor base "not just the retired, self-employed etc." Representation at both parish and borough level is hard work, for little or no remuneration, requiring great commitment. In large diverse wards this difficulty is magnified greatly;
- g) The expense of holding election three years out of four;

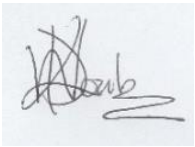
- h) We suggest that a near perpetual electioneering process running for much of the year – new councillor induction May-June, Candidate selections Sept-Nov, Campaigns March-April will make it very difficult for the borough to achieve any stability or long-term planning and implementation;

The Horsmonden Parish Councillors would prefer to see “all-out” Elections which they believe will resolve all the above issues and result in:

- a) Small single member wards based upon on Parish and or community Boundaries;
- b) Members being able to be focused upon single communities’ issues and not being stretched across communities that may have conflicting issues;
- c) Attract suitable candidates who are community focussed and not necessarily party political, similar to Parish Councils who are not party political;
- d) Make electioneering less time consuming, thus attracting more diverse candidates;
- e) Reduction in election costs and officer time;
- f) Result in democracy from the grass roots and not top down.

Horsmonden Parish Council believes this will result in Effective Local Government – the Boundary Commissions’ third principle.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Noakes', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Mrs L Noakes (Clerk to Horsmonden Parish Council)