

I am writing in as a **Borough Councillor** for Goudhurst and Kilndown and also as a **Kilndown resident** and **Kilndown Councillor at Goudhurst Parish Council** to completely **reject** the draft proposals as these will result in Goudhurst and Kilndown being split apart and Kilndown residents being completely disenfranchised.

The existing draft proposals are contrary to the Government Localism Act 2011, which aims to devolve power away from Whitehall and back into the hands of local councils, communities and individuals to act on local priorities, see - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/localism-act-2011-overview>

COMMUNITY LINKS

It is also contrary to The Local Government Boundary Commission's own guidelines which state, "...the pattern of wards should as far as possible reflect the interests and identities of local communities" - these draft proposals do no such thing as this just does exist between Kilndown and Benenden or Goudhurst and Brenchley, as they completely separate communities. This is opposed to the very strong links between Goudhurst and Kilndown as explained in detail in our Parish Council's submission.

ELECTORAL EQUALITY

TWBC is split between Rural and Urban populations and to try to ".....deliver electoral equality, where each councillor represents roughly the same number of electors as others..." is grossly unfair on the Rural councillors, as their wards are less densely populated, as so become far to large to manage and represent properly, as these draft proposals clearly show. One size does not fit all and this is only one factor that LGBC has to take into consideration. Also, the Rural councillors costs are far higher these larger wards.

TRANSPORT LINKS

Under Para 135 the draft report states there are good road transport links between the parts of each of the wards. Having looked at the links between the villages of Benenden, Sandhurst and Hawkhurst and find very little to substantiate this statement.

Further more the views from the local community have been expressed in individual comments and by the following -

1. Residents petition from Christ Church, Kilndown
2. Residents petition from St Mary's Church, Goudhurst
3. The Submission from Goudhurst Parish Council - GPC
4. On line petition circulated by GPC

As I am sure your are now aware, last week there was an Extraordinary Meeting of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) to consider a Motion to review of TWBC's previous decision to go for thirds elections. The Motion was overwhelming Resolved, to return to consultation for all-out elections, without a single vote against it and this will be commencing next week.

I am involved with many of Goudhurst and Kilndown activities and serve on various committees across both Kilndown & Goudhurst, but if I to be asked to cover a super large ward I will simply not be able to do this and so will not be able to serve my community as well. Does this comply with Para 149? - "*Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government*" obviously not! - This whole process has already wasted hours of my time as well as TWBC and GPC.

CONCLUSION

I would like to put forward a counter proposal which would keep the 641 residents of Kilndown together with Goudhurst and this is to include Kilndown in the Rural Tunbridge Wells ward. Based on projected numbers, that this would result in RTW elector numbers being increased from 6410 with the inclusion of 641 Kilndown electors, giving a total electorate of 7051. This would result in a + 15% variance.

From the Draft Recommendations that the LGBCE have rejected a + 18% variance at para 69, and a + 16% variance at para 105. There are also references in the Draft Recommendations too much higher variances which have also been rejected.

However at para 69 a **+12% variance has been** accepted and note that a **-14% variance has been accepted** in relation to the Cranbrook, Sissinghurst and Frittenden Ward.

Therefore a **+ 15% variance should** be acceptable in circumstances in which the community links between Kilndown and Goudhurst are so overwhelming and to prevent the disenfranchising of our Kilndown residents.

Cllr David Knight, Goudhurst Parish and TW Borough Council

8/10/22