

Starkie, Emily

From: JONES SUSAN [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 April 2018 11:45
To: reviews
Subject: Response to Dover District boundary changes consultation

Response to the boundary consultation, reference Dover District St. Radigunds Ward.

As a resident of St. Radigunds Road for 25 years and a serving Councillor for both the Town and District councils for 10 years I wish to put the case for St. Radigunds not being merged with Buckland ward as outlined in the Dover District Councils proposal.

The ward is named after the medieval abbey ruins in the rural area at its far end, a recognised heritage asset. The main residential areas sit in a valley defined by Coombe Down to the North, a designated Local Nature reserve to the south, an industrial estate where the valley starts to narrow to the West and across the Dour Valley floor in the East to the main vehicular thoroughfare into Dover, the A256. The upper ward, as it is referred to, developed from one road of Victorian properties during the 20th century as family Council housing to replace town slums but is now a mix of private, social and rented properties. It is served by the St. Radigunds Community Centre at the top of the valley development, which houses a Surestart Centre (which delivers much needed family services and community events), a primary school within walking distance of all of the upper ward and St. Andrews church at the lower end of the valley. There is an active residents association, St. Radigunds Residents Association which serves the upper ward. A distinct retail area from Cherry Tree Avenue down to the boundary with Tower Hamlets Ward on the London Road, again within walking distance provides a mix of shops including a post office, convenience and independent stores, hairdressers, fresh food and an Aldi supermarket. When Dovorians get on the local bus to attend the hospital situated within the ward, they will say they are going to St. Radigunds, they identify with the name and this has created a tight knit, proud community who socialise together through the community centre, school and 2 former working men's clubs in the ward. Generations of families have lived here and offspring will look to remain near their parents when they set up home. This part of the ward does have complex social needs which 3 members across a massive amalgamated ward with Buckland would struggle to serve. The bus service does not link the 2 wards and there is no obvious reason for residents to cross into the other ward.

The lower ward from the A256 London Road across the river valley floor to the A256 Buckland Avenue does struggle to identify itself with the valley development as it is separated by a railway line and the A256 road and is primarily Victorian 2 and 3 storey terraces. These families are more likely to attend the other primary school in the ward, Barton. Though they will use the same parade of shops and church, they are less likely to access the community centre and local play area and they have their own London Road Community Forum.

Should any amendments to the St. Radigunds and Tower Hamlets ward which it neighbours (and is very similar in topography and social needs) it could be considered much more logical that the lower parts of both wards might be joined and better served as a single member ward with their affinity to the main town and Dover Big Local (a £1m lottery funded social mobility project) area and the upper parts joined as they share a common boundary(the open space used by both for recreation in the LNR). This, in part, reflects the Council officers original proposal to the Electoral Matters Committee. These 2 wards are currently served by 4 District Councillors and with the current caseload a drop would 2 members would at least enable co-operation, continuity and cover.

St. Radigunds has no natural affinity to Buckland, through community links and services, topography or built infrastructure boundaries.

I appreciate retaining community identities by mathematical equations and parish boundaries is not easy, but I hope you will consider my comments as a positive example of why this challenging ward should have extra consideration.

Regards

Susan Jones

Councillor Sue Jones

Member for Dover Town & District Council St. Radigunds Ward