

Susan Carey

District/County councillor

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"I am the district councillor for Tolsford. I am also the County Councillor for Elham Valley which encompasses the current district council wards of Tolsford, Lypne and Stanford, North Downs East and North Downs West.

The proposals from Shepway District Council split the current Tolsford ward into three different new wards. The Tolsford ward has four distinct communities (Saltwood, Newington, Etchinghill and Postling) so it is reasonable to split them up to help create wards of equal size with fewer councillors. However, I do have some comments on the new wards proposed by Shepway District Council. It is my experience that each village has a separate identity and the links between them are not strong. Each village has its own parish council or parish meeting and many of them meet on the same evening. I would therefore prefer to see one member wards for the rural areas so that they do not have so many different communities to represent and stand a chance of attending more parish/town council meetings. It is also my observation that one councillor always has a heavier load where there are multiple member wards and the person with the name listed first receives the most initial contacts. It is often also the case that one councillor has a reputation for helping an another does not. In these cases the work of the ward falls disproportionately on one person. With fewer councillors the workload will inevitably be higher and fall even more heavily on one person. I therefore support the proposal from Stelling Minnis parish council that the new ward of North Downs West be divided into two single member wards which is possible whilst respecting the required variations from electoral equality."