

Local Government  
Boundary Commission  
For England  
Report No. 122

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 122

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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Professor Michael Chisholm.

Sir Andrew Wheatley, CBE.

Mr F B Young, CBE.

To the Rt Hon. Roy Jenkins, MP  
Secretary of State for the Home Department

PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DISTRICT OF  
TONBRIDGE AND MALLING IN THE COUNTY OF KENT

1. We, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, having carried out our initial review of the electoral arrangements for the district of Tonbridge and Malling in accordance with the requirements of section 63 of, and Schedule 9 to, the Local Government Act 1972, present our proposals for the future electoral arrangements of that district.
2. In accordance with the procedure laid down in section 60(1) and (2) of the 1972 Act, notice was given on 10 June 1974 that we were to undertake this review. This was incorporated in a consultation letter addressed to Tonbridge and Malling District Council, copies of which were circulated to Kent County Council, Parish Councils in the district, the Member of Parliament for the constituency concerned and the headquarters of the main political parties. Copies were also sent to the editors of the local newspapers circulating in the area and of the local government press. Notices inserted in the local press announced the start of the review and invited comments from members of the public and any interested bodies.
3. Tonbridge and Malling District Council were invited to prepare a draft scheme of representation for our consideration. When doing so, they were asked to observe the rules laid down in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 and the guidelines which we set out in our Report No 6 about the proposed size of the Council and the proposed number of councillors for each ward. They were also asked to take into account any views expressed to them following their consultation with local interests. We therefore asked that they should publish details of their provisional proposals about a month before they submitted their draft scheme to us, thus allowing an opportunity for local comment.

4. In accordance with section 7(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 they had exercised an option for elections by thirds.
5. On 18 December 1974, Tonbridge and Malling District Council presented their draft scheme of representation. They proposed to divide the area into 28 wards, each returning 1, 2 or 3 councillors, to form a council of 54 members.
6. We considered the draft scheme submitted by the Council and the comments which had been made upon it. We noted that the draft scheme complied with our own guidelines but we considered that the range of elector/councillor ratios was so wide as to be contrary to the rules in Schedule 11 to the Act. We therefore decided to adopt the District Council's scheme but to increase the representation of the Blue Bell Hill ward to 2 councillors; to re-draw the boundary between the Cage Green and Higham wards and to reduce the representation of the former ward to 2 councillors; to reduce the representation of the Judd ward to 2 councillors; to transfer the parish of Stansted from the Oast ward to <sup>the</sup> Wrotham ward; to reduce the representation of the Oast ward to 1 councillor; to combine the Aylesford ward and the Eccles ward to return 3 councillors. Finally we decided to adopt one minor boundary realignment suggested by Ordnance Survey, but we overlooked a request by the Council to make an alteration to their own proposals relating to Tilebarn Corner but this was taken into consideration at a later stage (see para. 16).
7. On 18 February 1975 we issued our draft proposals and these were sent to all who had received our consultation letter or had commented on the Council's draft scheme. The Council were asked to make the draft proposals and the accompanying maps which defined the proposed ward boundaries available for inspection at their main offices. Representations on our draft proposals were invited from those to whom they were circulated and, by public notices, from members of the public and interested bodies. We asked that comments should reach us not later than 15 April 1975.

8. Comments received in response to our draft proposals raised objections to our changes and to the proposed representation of the Ditton ward.

9. We considered that we needed further information to enable us to reach a conclusion. Therefore, in accordance with section 65(2) of the 1972 Act, and at our request, you appointed Mr P B Ostler as an Assistant Commissioner to hold a local meeting and to report to us.

10. Notice of the local meeting was sent to all who had received our draft proposals or had commented upon them and was published locally.

11. The Assistant Commissioner held a meeting at the Council Offices, West Malling, Maidstone on 25 September 1975 and visited the areas which were the subject of comment. A copy of his report is attached at Schedule 1 to this report.

12. We have considered again our draft proposals in the light of the comments which we had received and the Assistant Commissioner's report of the local meeting.

13. We noted that, in consequence of the amended 1979 forecast electorate for the Blue Bell Hill ward produced by the District Council at the meeting, the Assistant Commissioner has recommended that the representation of the ward should be 1 councillor and not 2 as in our draft proposals. We have given further consideration to the representation of this ward in the light of the revised forecast but we consider that, even taking into account the slower rate of development, the electorate of the ward in five year's time would be inadequately represented with only 1 councillor. We concluded therefore that we would not modify our draft proposals for this ward.

14. We have also given careful consideration to the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations regarding the Cage Green ward. We accept his recommendation that the boundary between the Cage Green and Higham wards should, with the exception

of a minor alteration at Tilebarn Corner, be restored to the line originally proposed by the District Council. Taking this/<sup>change</sup>into account however, we still consider that the electorate of the ward would not justify more than 2 councillors and, in this respect, we decided to confirm our draft proposals.

15. Finally we have given further consideration to our proposed Oast and Wrotham and Stansted wards in the light of the written representations which we received and the evidence put before the Assistant Commissioner. We noted that the Councils of Trottiscliffe, Addington, Offham and Stansted had objected strongly to our proposal that the parish of Stansted should be detached from the ward as it exists at present and should be linked with the parish of Wrotham. We also noted that the four parishes were similar in character, that Wrotham was less rural than these four parishes and that the M20 already passes between Addington and Trottiscliffe and, when extended, will pass between Wrotham and Stansted. We noted that the Assistant Commissioner had recommended that our draft proposals for these two wards should be confirmed and in doing so we have no doubt that he had regard to the balance of electoral equality this arrangement achieved. He made an alternative suggestion that if the four parishes of Trottiscliffe, Addington, Offham and Stansted were to form a ward they should be represented by only 1 councillor. In view of the strong community ties which would be broken by our draft proposals we have concluded that we should modify them by adopting the Assistant Commissioner's alternative suggestion, even though this creates /<sup>some</sup> imbalance of representation between the Oast and Wrotham wards.

16. As a result of this review of our draft proposals we therefore conclude that they should be confirmed with the following modifications; that the boundary between the Cage Green and Higham wards should be the line originally proposed by the District Council with the minor adjustment at Tilebarn Corner suggested by the District Council and recommended by the Assistant Commissioner and that the parish

of Stansted should be transferred to the Oast ward and that the Oast ward and the Wrotham ward should each be represented by 1 councillor. We formulated our final proposals accordingly.

17. Details of these final proposals are set out in Schedule 2 to this report and on the attached maps. Schedule 2 gives the names of the wards and the number of councillors to be returned by each and Schedule 3 shows the order of retirement of councillors. The boundaries of the new wards are defined on the maps.

#### PUBLICATION

18. In accordance with section 60(5)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 a copy of this report and copies of the maps are being sent to Tonbridge and Malling District Council and will be made available for public inspection at the Council's main offices. Copies of this report (without maps) are being sent to those who made comments. A detailed description of the boundaries of the proposed wards as defined on the maps, is set out in Schedule 4 to this report.

L.S.

Signed

EDMUND COMPTON (CHAIRMAN)

JOHN M RANKIN (DEPUTY CHAIRMAN)

DIANA ALBEMARLE

T C BENFIELD

MICHAEL CHISHOLM

ANDREW WHEATLEY

F B YOUNG

DAVID R SMITH (Secretary)

27 November 1975

## REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

## TONBRIDGE AND MALLING DISTRICT

I have the honour to submit my report following my appointment by the Secretary of State under Section 65(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 as an Assistant Commissioner with respect to the review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England of the electoral arrangements for the District of Tonbridge and Malling.

In accordance with arrangements made by the Commission I held a local inquiry at the Council Offices, West Malling, Maidstone, Kent on the 25 September 1975 on which day I also visited those parts of the District to which reference had been made during the proceedings.

At the outset of the meeting I explained the purpose of the proceedings as part of the process of local consultation and read out the relevant parts of the Commission's letter of 29 August 1975 which had been sent to the Council's Chief Executive. I also read out the provisions of Paragraph 3 of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, drawing attention to the reference therein to the period of five years. The meeting was well attended and a list of the names and addresses of those present showing the interests they represented where applicable is appended to this report (Appendix A).

The District Council's draft scheme of representation submitted in December 1974 provided for 28 wards each returning 1, 2 or 3 councillors to make a council of 54, one more than the existing number of councillors. The details of electoral equality produced by this draft scheme are shown in the document reproduced as Appendix B. The only substantial change which the Council proposed to make in the existing arrangements was to increase the representation of the parish of Snodland from 2 councillors to 3.

The Commission, following consideration of the comments made after the Council's draft scheme had been advertised, decided to adopt the draft scheme but to make the following alterations:-

- i. to increase the representation of the Council's Blue Bell Hill ward from 1 councillor to 2;
- ii. to adopt a proposal put forward by the Tonbridge and Malling Constituency Labour Party for an alteration of the boundary between the Council's Cage Green and Higham wards and, as a result of this change in electorates, to reduce the representation of the Cage Green ward from 3 to 2;
- iii. to combine the Council's Aylesford and Eccles wards to return 3 councillors;
- iv. to reduce the representation of the Council's Judd ward from 3 to 2; and
- v. to transfer the parish of Stansted from the Council's Oast ward to Wrotham ward and to reduce the representation of the former from 2 councillors to 1.

The draft proposals of the Commission were issued on 18 February 1975 and I was supplied with copies of the written comments received by the Commission in response to their draft proposals. In most cases these comments were the subject of oral evidence at the meeting, but where they were not I took them into account in formulating my recommendations.

None of the alterations proposed by the Commission found much favour. The District Council wished their draft scheme to be adopted without modification; the Tonbridge and Malling Liberal Association, while not objecting to the proposals for Tonbridge objected to those affecting Stansted parish, the village of Eccles and the Blue Bell Hill ward; Stansted and Trottiscliffe Parish Councils objected to the proposal

to link Stansted with Wrotham in one ward; the Higham Branch of Tonbridge and Malling Conservative Association objected to the Cage Green and Higham ward proposals while Ditton Parish Council, commenting on the proposal to have three councillors for the Aylesford/Eccles area and two for the Blue Bell Hill area while Ditton would still have only two, repeated its earlier request for a third representative on the District Council. There were also three individual requests for separate representation for the Eccles ward.

At the meeting on 26 September the Council's case was presented by Mr J E Sweetman, the Council's Administration Director. After describing the formation of the District and the extensive post-war development which had increased the population of the district by some 10,000 between 1961 and 1971 Mr Sweetman referred to the characteristics of some parts of the District under consideration. He said that Aylesford was still of historic interest, that Eccles, which used to depend on cement presented a problem nowadays and that Blue Bell Hill was partly a dormitory for the Medway towns. The major industries in the District were the manufacture of paper and cement and the extraction of gravel.

Turning to the current review Mr Sweetman explained that it had been carried out under the aegis of a group of members comprising the Chairman of the Council, the leaders of all the political parties and an Independent and that the Council's draft scheme had been approved unanimously and had evoked little controversy. He also mentioned that the wards in Tonbridge Urban District had been reviewed by the County Council as recently as 1969.

Mr Sweetman then dealt with the five proposals made by the Commission and submitted that the Council's scheme did not conflict with the rules in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, thus rendering the Commission's proposals unnecessary. Only in two areas of the District was growth likely, one being the

Blue Bell Hill area where 850 dwellings were planned, but the timing of the development uncertain, the other in Larkfield where the development had not yet started and where again the programme was uncertain.

In summarising the Council's case Mr Sweetman maintained that except in the Cape Green ward the existing boundaries were easily identifiable and that in general the District Council's scheme complied better with the Local Government Act requirements than the Commission's. He formally submitted a copy of the District Council's comments on the Commission's draft proposals as submitted previously to the Commission and drew attention in particular to the comment in paragraph 1(c) thereof in relation to the proposal to reduce the representation of the Tonbridge wards by two, and to the absence of any parish council to whom the residents of Tonbridge could turn.

Following Mr Sweetman's address it was agreed that I should hear evidence about the disputed wards in an order which met the wishes of those present. The procedure followed was for the Council's case to be presented first followed by the contributions of others who wished to speak. In this report I have followed the order in which the ward proposals were discussed and have thought it convenient to include under the relevant headings the account of my inspections, my assessment of the weight of the arguments advanced at the meeting and my firm recommendations in relation to each ward. These recommendations have naturally not been considered and made in isolation but in all cases I have endeavoured to pay proper regard to the Schedule 11 rules as reasonably applied to the conditions obtaining in the Tonbridge and Malling District.

#### OAST AND WROTHAM WARDS

Mr Sweetman referred to the objections made by Trottiscliffe and Stansted Parish Councils and produced letters addressed to him in March 1975 from Addington and Offham Parish Councils also asking that Oast ward should continue to be composed of the four parishes and to have two representatives. It appeared that Wrotham

Parish Council would receive Stansted but that no claim was made. Mr Sweetman also stated that the reconstructed M20 would pass between Wrotham & Stansted, that all four parishes in Oast ward were similar in character, that Wrotham was less rural than these four parishes and that there were reasonable fears that Stansted would be submerged if the Commission's proposals were to be adopted. Support for these views came from Mr Hewitt, Chairman of Stansted Parish Council who referred in particular to the severance from Wrotham by the road, the difference in size between the two parishes and their difference in outlook.

Mr Lander, a District Councillor for the Oast ward, gave six reasons why the District Council's scheme should be preferred. In the first place the four villages were approximately the same size in population and in acreage (the following figures were later given by Mr Sweetman:-

	<u>Pop</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
Offham	759	1479
Addington	621	1319
Stansted	490	1974
Trottiscliffe	549	1131 )

Secondly, there was a considerable amount of social interchange between them; thirdly, if Stansted went with Wrotham it was unlikely that a Stansted resident would be elected; fourthly, Kent County Council was proposing to transfer Stansted from the division including Wrotham to that containing the other Oast parishes; fifthly, all the Parish Councils wished to stay together and lastly, the four had been put together as recently as 1973.

Speaking as Leader of the Tonbridge and Malling District Council Mr Ashton said that the recommendations for warding were non-political and that the scheme had not been put forward lightly. The electorate were only now beginning to become

familiar with the new arrangements and it would be confusing to disturb these unduly. Mr Ashton accepted that Stansted was not geographically linked with the other Oast parishes, but there was great affinity between the four and he asked for the views of the parish councils to be respected. There would be a heavy burden on the one member proposed with the removal of Stansted.

The previous speakers were supported by Mrs Nelson who said that she had lived for four years in Fairseat, a small hamlet in Stansted Parish, and believed that there was a general feeling that they would be better served by an Oast councillor than by one who also represented Wrotham, while Mrs Ingram, a member of Addington Parish Council, who had lived for 15 years in Addington also gave support for the view previously expressed and commented that only the Boundary Commission seemed to be in favour of the proposal to annex Stansted to Wrotham; she also paid tribute to the work done by the two Oast ward representatives.

My visit to this part of the District confirmed the impression created at the meeting that the four villages in this ward were purely rural. Although Offham and Addington were divided by the A20 they both, as well as Trottiscliffe which lay to the north of the M20, enjoyed the advantage of the traditional village green and all three villages, lying to the south of the Pilgrims' Way and the North Downs gave the appearance of very similar communities geographically as well as sociologically. The approach to Stansted from Trottiscliffe involved a climb up to and across the Pilgrims' Way and through the very attractive hamlet of Fairseat, there being quite a noticeable break formed by most pleasant country between Fairseat and Stansted village proper, another rural and attractive village, although containing a little modern development. Wrotham, approached via the A20 which I understood was likely to be superseded by the re-aligned M20 in this section, certainly gave the appearance of a small country town rather than of a

small rural village with good quality residential development on its fringe and containing also District Council development. Much of the ward area, however, was substantially undeveloped and rural in character.

In considering the Oast ward representation it must be borne in mind that the four Parish Councils are supported by the District Council in their desire to stay in the same ward and there is considerable similarity between the four villages. Wrotham village is also less rural than the other four and the re-aligned E20 would not be likely to weld Stansted and Wrotham more closely together.

The informal and provisional proposals of Kent County Council as notified in a letter from the County Secretary dated September 1975 are also to be noted, although these may well have been affected by the District Council's warding scheme. On the other hand there is no significant increase in the electorate forecast for the District Council's Oast ward for 1979, while Wrotham is expected to increase by only just over 100. There seems little doubt that the Oast ward is very generously represented and as all the evidence produced went to show the similarity of the four villages it might be held that the ward should be left as it is in area but with its representation reduced to one. This would, however, give a ratio of electorate to councillor in 1979 of 1900 to 1, higher than that in any other ward in either the District Council's scheme or the Commission's proposals with the exception of Larkfield and of Blue Bell Hill in the District Council's scheme. There did not seem to be any serious objection to placing Stansted in the Wrotham ward for electoral purposes and I could not see that local ties would necessarily be broken if the ward boundary were to be altered. I think that there are only two courses open 1) to keep the ward as it is in area but to reduce the representation to one councillor 2) to reduce the ward area and representation together and to adopt the Commission's proposal to transfer Stansted to Wrotham ward and I recommend the second alternative.

## AYLESFORD AND ECCLES WARDS

Mr Sweetman reiterated the District Council's strong objection to the Boundary Commission's proposals and spoke of the risk of Eccles being overshadowed by Aylesford. The drainage embargo had now been lifted. Aylesford was divided into two polling districts and the communities in the south were very different from Eccles. He could not, however, produce any firm figures or convincing evidence about the prospects of future development in Eccles.

The Commission's proposals to take Eccles into Aylesford was also opposed by Mr Sandford who spoke of Eccles as a separate community with an identity of its own. It had been an elderly community but younger people were now coming to live there. Speaking as a member of the county council for the division which included Aylesford and Eccles he regarded 950 as a modest estimate of the electorate for 1979. Mrs Bradshaw, the District Councillor for Eccles, referred to the Eccles Carnival and to the other village activities. She herself lived in Eccles and she believed that the great majority of residents wanted to keep it as a village, peaceful and quiet and completely separate from Aylesford. These views were supported by Mr Holmes, District Councillor for the adjoining ward of Burham and Wouldham, who referred to the County Council's Structure Plan as he had done in his letter of 30 March 1975 and to the proposal to use land in Burham and Eccles for the building of some 3000 houses in the period 1981-1991. Mr Ashton expressed his belief that the estimate of 950 for the 1979 electorate in Eccles would be exceeded, and his conviction that Eccles wanted to stay on its own rather than be joined with Aylesford.

On my visit I found Eccles to be a compact village mostly of older type terraced properties which had apparently been constructed in the nineteenth century to house workers in the cement industry. There was still evidence of quite marked differences between Eccles and the adjoining areas. The entrance to the village of Aylesford lay just under a mile away. Aylesford Priory and picturesque old houses

were close by the Medway while across the river and the railway were to be found private and local authority housing estates in the area north of the A20. There was also some more expensive and modern development within the ward.

It was clear from the evidence given earlier to the Commission and at the meeting that Eccles could reasonably claim to be different from Aylesford in many respects and to have its own characteristics. At the same time there was no very firm evidence that the electorate would be substantially greater in 1979 and indeed the District Council's figure of 950 was not seriously challenged. The case for the continued existence of Eccles as a separate ward would appear to rest rather on its individuality as a village than on any increase in numbers which might lead perhaps to a loss of that very characteristic. There would seem to be no valid reason for holding that the existence of a separate ward is necessarily synonymous with the individuality of a village and although Aylesford is composed of differing elements it is in my opinion very difficult to justify the continued over-representation of the electors of Eccles on the District Council particularly in view of the under-representation of electors in the Aylesford ward which would come about by 1979. I recommend, therefore, that the Boundary Commission's proposal to join Eccles with Aylesford in a combined ward to be named Aylesford and Eccles be accepted, with the representation of the combined ward to be three councillors.

#### BLUE BELL HILL WARD

Mr Sweetman explained that this ward contained parts of two parishes and that it was comprised largely of ribbon development on both sides of the Maidstone Road. It was proposed by Kent County Council that this development should be consolidated by the creation of a neighbourhood unit and the development was being co-ordinated by the County Council. The first scheme in the first phase had just gone to tender and 1976 should see 20-30 houses completed. The development would not be completed

before 1981 and the District Council thought it premature to provide for the number of councillors to be raised from 1 to 2, and certainly at the expense of reduction in representation elsewhere. The Conservative Association, however, considered that an increase in the ward representation was justified in this initial review.

Mr Craven, a District Councillor resident in the ward, spoke of the area as one of continuous housing development and near to the Medway towns and Maidstone. It was subject to enormous traffic pressures and the road developments had led to a number of blighted properties. There was a general feeling of frustration in the area, the road developments would split it into three portions and he felt that it was impossible for one councillor to give attention to all the problems involved. Mr Craven was supported by Mr Sandford who spoke as the County Council representative for the division including this ward and also as Chairman of the County Council Committee responsible for roads. He said that the completion of a roundabout in 1976 would enable development to start and estimated that by 1978 500 houses should be complete, the equivalent of an increase of 1000 in the electorate. He agreed with Mr Craven's views about the pressure on councillors and supported the Commission's proposals for an increase in representation.

Mr Morgan, a local resident, believed that by 1979 the electorate in the ward would rise to around 2500.

My visit to the area showed me clearly the ingredients of the frustration to which reference had been made at the meeting. Local communications were being made exceedingly difficult by the major road works taking place and the development of A229 as a main north to south road linking M2 and M20, the severance of the locally important Robin Hood Lane and the construction of a new road on the periphery combined to produce a scene which belied the ward's attractive name. There was no clear indication, however, that housing development was imminent.

I find this a difficult case. On the one hand the best estimate produced at the meeting was an electorate in 1979 of 2500, as compared with the earlier figure of 3500. The District Council still maintain that an increase in representation would be premature, a view expressed by the Tonbridge and Malling Liberal Association in their letter of 12 March 1975 and confirmed in their letter to the Commission of 22 September 1975. On balance, while fully accepting that conditions in the area due to the road development, the blighted properties and the general feeling of uncertainty about the future must bear hardly on those in office, I favour the view that there is not likely to be a substantial and certain increase in the electorate in sufficient time to justify any increase in the ward's representation at this review.

#### CAGE GREEN AND HIGHAM WARDS

Mr Sweetman stressed the wish of the District Council to make no change in relation to the boundaries or the representation of these wards. Referring to the problem of finding a satisfactory boundary between them he produced a six inch to the mile map of Tonbridge showing the existing ward boundaries and explained that the problem posed by the difficulty of access to the polling station for certain electors in Cage Green ward, a difficulty which had prompted the Constituency Labour Party to suggest a transfer of these electors to the Higham ward, had been satisfactorily resolved by an adjustment of polling stations. The electors in question would now be able to vote at a school in Higham Ward and he believed that there was now no need to adjust the boundary. The combined electorate was in his view sufficient to justify six members and he drew attention to the size of the electorate in the Higham Ward which would be produced by the adoption of the Boundary Commission's proposals.

Mr Sweetman also asked that the Boundary Commission should implement the District Council's proposal for a minor adjustment in the boundary between the two wards to bring all the 18 old person's bungalows at Tilebarn Corner into the Higham Ward, a proposal which appeared to have been ignored by the Commission.

In two letters handed in at the meeting all three District Councillors for the Cage Green Ward expressed their dismay at the proposal to reduce the representation of the town of Tonbridge on the District Council and their particular opposition to the Commission's proposal to limit the number of councillors representing the Cage Green Ward electorate. Their views were strongly supported at the meeting by Mr Ashton and Mr Foy, the latter pointing out that before the 1972 Act Tonbridge had had 21 councillors. These speakers, as well as the Cage Green Ward members in their letters, stressed the need for the electorate in Tonbridge to rely solely on their District Council members. Unlike the electorate in the rural parishes they had no parish councillor to whom they could turn in addition.

On behalf of the Labour Party Mrs Haines supported the views expressed by the previous speakers concerning the under-representation of the Tonbridge town area by the Boundary Commission's proposals with which she expressed strong disagreement. Mrs Haines confirmed that the Labour Party were now satisfied with the arrangements made for the Cage Green Ward electors to vote in the Higham Ward. She also said that there was no objection to the Council's request for the adjustment of the boundary to bring the bungalows at Tilebarn Corner into the Higham Ward.

On my visit to the area I was satisfied that the adjustment in polling stations would satisfactorily meet the needs of the electors in Cage Green Ward to whom reference has been made above and that no boundary adjustment was needed in this connection.

I was also satisfied that the District Council's proposal for an adjustment of the boundary at Tilebarn Corner was reasonable and should be implemented.

As regards the representation of the electorate of these two wards I am naturally obliged to consider the requirements of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972. In this connection it is to be noted that neither in Cage Green Ward nor in

Higham Ward is the electorate likely to be much larger in 1979 than in 1975 and in Higham Ward only marginally so. With three members for each of these two wards the average electorate per councillor in 1979 would be 1150 and 1300 respectively and neither of these figures would appear to conflict with the principles laid down in Schedule 11. To deprive the electors of Tonbridge of one of their six representatives in these two wards would seem to result in under-representation of the town's electors and I am of the opinion that the difficulty of producing a satisfactory alternative boundary between the Cage Green and Higham Wards, combined with the need to secure fair representation for the electors of Tonbridge town justifies the adoption of the District Council's proposal that the Cage Green and Higham Wards should continue to be represented by three councillors. The increase in the Higham Ward electorate proposed by the Commission appears to be unwanted by any local interest while the reduction in the Cage Green representation proposed by the Commission would not in my view be justified in the circumstances.

#### JUDD WARD

The District Council's proposal was supported by Mr Sweetman who argued that by providing for continued representation by 3 members Tonbridge's representation would be kept in reasonable comparison with other parts of the District. He referred to the existence of three distinct communities, the Barden and Meadow Lawn areas to the north and south respectively of Tonbridge railway station and the Brook Street area with its newer local authority and private housing estates. The District Council thought it better to keep to the existing ward boundaries but he maintained that there were good grounds for keeping also the existing representation. Mr Sweetman's views were supported by Mr Crouchman.

My inspection of the area showed that the older development lying each side of Tonbridge Station, while admittedly divided into two physically by the railway line and with separate access from the main road was not for the most part dissimilar

in character although the Barden area also comprised some local authority housing. The Brook Street area was a congeries of more recent housing development. Even allowing for the very large acreage of this ward and for the distinction between the Barden and Meadow Lawn areas referred to by the Council it seemed to me to be difficult to justify continued representation by three councillors, particularly as the Council's forecast figure for the 1979 electorate was less than 100 over the 1975 figure. In any event I could not accept that the physical barrier formed by the railway station was in itself sufficient reason for the existence of another member in this ward with an estimated electorate of 3250 in 1979.

My recommendation in relation to Judd Ward is that the number of councillors should be two, giving an estimated electorate per councillor in 1979 of 1625.

I have not overlooked the case of Ditton ward but having regard to the evidence available and to my recommendations in relation to other wards I cannot make any recommendation for any increased representation in this ward.

In every case I have paid due regard to the forecast figures for the 1979 electorate as well as to the 1975 figures. The meeting produced no significant change to the Council's forecast figures except in the case of Blue Bell Hill ward where there appears to be a considerable degree of uncertainty. I took note of the references to the undesirability of making changes so soon after the new District Council had been formed, but I consider that it could equally well be argued that if changes are to be made they might as well be made now rather than when the electorate have become more accustomed to the present system. I have sought to produce a fair balance between urban and rural representation while realising that urban areas are not necessarily synonymous with those formerly managed by urban district councils nor rural/those by rural district councils. To endeavour to equate the two is probably even now an academic exercise and must become increasingly such as time goes on. As matters have worked out the existence or non-existence of a parish council is probably a matter of greater significance in the eyes of the elector.

My recommendations in relation to ward representation are set down in summary form in the following table which follows the form and order of the draft scheme in Appendix B:-

<u>Ward</u>	<u>Electorate 1975 Register</u>	<u>No. of Cllrs</u>	<u>No. of Electors Per Cllr</u>	<u>Estimated Electorate 1979</u>	<u>Estimated Electorate Per Cllr.</u>
Cage Green	3335	3	1112	3450	1150
Higham	3895	3	1298	3900	1300
Judd	3157	2	1578	3250	1625
Aylesford/Eccles	4176	3	1392	4500	1500
Blue Bell Hill	1557	1	1557	? 2500	? 2500
Oast (less Stansted)	1483	1	1483	1520	1520
Wrotham and Stansted	1623	1	1623	1750	1750

I also recommend the implementation of the adjustment at Tilebarn Corner as sought by the Council.

*By Roger Osier*  
October 1975

DISTRICT OF TONBRIDGE AND MALLING : NAMES OF PROPOSED WARDS  
AND NUMBERS OF COUNCILLORS

<u>NAME OF WARD</u>	<u>NO OF COUNCILLORS</u>
AYLESFORD AND ECCLES	3
BIRLING, RYARSH AND LEYBOURNE	2
BLUE BELL HILL	2
BOROUGH GREEN	2
BURHAM AND WOULDHAM	1
CAGE GREEN	2
CASTLE	2
DITTON	2
EAST MALLING	2
EAST PECKHAM	2
HADLOW	2
HIGHAM	3
HILDENBOROUGH	3
IGHTHAM	1
JUDD	2
LARKFIELD	3
MEDWAY	2
MEREWORTH AND WEST PECKHAM	1
OAST	1
PLATT	1
PLAXTOL AND SHIPBOURNE	1
SNODLAND	3
TRENCH	3
VAUXHALL	2
WATERINGBURY	1
WEST MALLING	2
WROTHAM	1

SCHEDULE 3

ORDER OF RETIREMENT OF COUNCILLORS

NAME OF WARD	NO. OF COUNCILLORS REPRESENTING WARD	1st YEAR	2nd YEAR	3rd YEAR
AYLESFORD AND ECCLES	3	1	1PE	1
BIRLING, RYARSH AND LEYBOURNE	2	1	1PE	
BLUE BELL HILL	2	1	1PE	
BOROUGH GREEN	2	1	1PE	
BURHAM & WOULDHAM	1		1PE	
CAGE GREEN	2	1		1
CASTLE	2	1		1
DITTON	2	1	1PE	
EAST MALLING	2		1PE	1
EAST PECKHAM	2	1	1PE	
HADLOW	2	1	1PE	
HIGHAM	3	1	1	1
HILDENBOROUGH	3	1	1PE	1
IGHTHAM	1		1PE	
JUDD	2	1		1
LARKFIELD	3	1	1PE	1
MEDWAY	2	1		1
MEREWORTH AND WEST PECKHAM	1			1PE
OAST	1		1PE	
PLATT	1			1PE
PLAXTOL & SHIPBOURNE	1		1PE	
SNODLAND	3	1	1PE	1
TRENCH	3	1	1	1
VAUXHALL	2	1		1
WATERINGBURY	1			1PE
WEST MALLING	2		1PE	1
WROTHAM	1			1PE
		17	18	17

PE = Parish Elections for any parishes within the ward which have parish councils.

## WARDS OF TONBRIDGE AND MALLING DISTRICT

## TRENCH WARD

Commencing at the point where Darenth Avenue meets the eastern boundary of Hildenborough CP, northwards and following said boundary, eastwards and following the western boundary of Hadlow CP, southwards along Shipbourne Road, westwards along Darenth Avenue to the point of commencement.

## CAGE GREEN WARD

Commencing at the point where the Ridgeway meets the eastern boundary of Trench Ward, northwards and following said boundary, eastwards and following the western boundary of Hadlow CP, to grid reference TQ 606494735, thence southwestwards in a straight line to a point on the footpath at the northwestern corner of the property No 181 Hunt Road; thence northwestwards and southwestwards along the said footpath and continuing across Whistler Road to the western boundary of No 51 Knight Road; thence southwestwards along the said boundary and following the rear boundaries of Nos 49 to 1 Knights Road and continuing in a straight line to the footpath south of No 1 Knight Road; thence southwestwards along the said footpath to Pen Stream; thence southwards and following Pen Stream to a point being the prolongation northwards of the rear boundaries of Nos 5 and 7 Higham Lane, thence southwards along said prolongation and said rear boundaries to the northern boundary of No 3 Higham Lane, thence generally westwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 1 to 19 Nursery Close to the rear boundary of Nos 18 to 11 Tilebarn Corner, thence southeastwards along said boundary to the rear boundary of No 147 Hadlow Road, southwestwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 147 to 99 Hadlow Road, southeastwards along the southwestern boundary of 99 Hadlow Road, southwestwards along Hadlow Road, northwestwards along the northeastern boundary of No 95 Hadlow Road, southwestwards and northwestwards along the southeastern and rear boundary of No 7 of The Ridgeway and continuing northwestwards along the rear boundaries/properties on the southern side of the Ridgeway, southwestwards and following the rear boundaries of Nos 29 to 12 Exeter Close and continuing northeastwards along the western boundaries of Nos 77 and 79 The Ridgeway, thence northwestwards along the Ridgeway to the point of commencement.

## HIGHAM WARD

Commencing on the eastern boundary of Cage Green Ward in Hadlow Road opposite the southwestern boundary of No 174 Hadlow Road, northwestwards and following said ward boundary, southeastwards and following the western boundary of Hadlow CP and continuing westwards along the River Medway to a point being a southeastwards prolongation of a straight line from NG TQ 59960 47376 through NG TQ 6050047070; thence northwestwards along said prolongation and straight line and continuing along the southwestern boundary of No 174 Hadlow Road to the point of commencement.

## CASTLE WARD

Commencing at the point on the eastern boundary of Leigh CP where it is crossed by the path from Powder Mills to the River Medway, being parcel No 5377 as shown on OS 1:2500 plan TQ 56/5746 Edn of 1973, northwards along said CP boundary, northeastwards and following the eastern boundary of Hildenborough CP, southeastwards and following the southern boundaries of Trench Ward and Cage Green Ward, and continuing southeastwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 43 to 53 Yardley Park Road, southwestwards along Hadlow Road, northwestwards along Yardley Park Road, southwestwards along the northwestern boundary of No 44 Yardley Park Road and continuing southwestwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 81 to 55 Hadlow Road, northwestwards along Bourne Lane, southwestwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 53 to 31 Hadlow Road, southeastwards along the footpath known as Lovers Walk, southwestwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 29 to 25a Hadlow Road and in continuation to the northern boundary of No 14 Kendal Drive; thence northwestwards along said boundary and the northern boundary of No 13 Kendal Drive to the rear boundary of said property; thence southwestwards along said rear boundary and continuing southwestwards, northwestwards and northeastwards along the rear boundaries of No 12 Kendal Drive and Nos 12 to 6 Keswick Close; thence northwestwards along the northern boundary of Ferox Hall to High Street; thence southwestwards along said street westwards and following the River Medway, northwestwards along the unnamed stream being Parcel No 4868 as shown on OS 1:2500 Sheet TQ 56/5746 Edn of 1973 to a point being a prolongation southeastwards of a straight line from NG reference 5737046750 through NG reference 5739046692, thence northwestwards along said prolongation and straight line and in continuation to

to the eastern boundary of Leigh CP, thence northwards along said boundary to the point of commencement.

#### MEDWAY WARD

Commencing at the point where Quarry Hill Road crosses the railway from Tonbridge to Ashford, northwards along said road, Railway Approach and High Street, continuing generally northeastwards along the eastern boundary of Castle Ward, southeastwards and following the southern boundary of Higham Ward, southwestwards and following the western boundary of Hadlow CP and the southern boundary of the District, northwestwards along Pembury Road, northwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 1 to 75 Goldsmid Road, northwards along the said road and Priory Road and continuing northwards along the unnamed road connecting Priory Road and Vale Road, westwards along the Ashford to Tonbridge railway to the point of commencement.

#### JUDD WARD

Commencing at the point where the eastern carriageway of Quarry Hill Road meets the southern boundary of the District, thence generally westwards and following the said boundary, eastwards and following the southern boundary of Castle Ward, southwestwards and following the western boundary of Medway Ward and continuing southwestwards along Quarry Hill Road, following the eastern carriageway of said road where it crosses the Tonbridge By-Pass, to the point of commencement.

#### VAUXHALL WARD

Commencing at the point where the southern boundary of the District meets the eastern boundary of Judd Ward, northeastwards along said ward boundary, eastwards and following the southern boundary of Medway Ward, southwestwards and following the southern boundary of the District to the point of commencement.

## AYLESFORD AND ECCLES WARD

The North ward, the South ward and the Eccles ward of the parish of Aylesford

## BLUE BELL HILL WARD

The Blue Bell Hill ward of the parish of Aylesford and the North ward of the parish of Burham

## BURHAM AND WOULDHAM WARD

The parish of Wouldham and the South ward of the parish of Burham

## BIRLING, RYARSH AND LEYBOURNE WARD

The parishes of Birling, Ryarsh and Leybourne

## WEST MALLING WARD

The parish of West Malling

## OAST WARD

The parishes of Addington, Offham, Stansted and Trottiscliffe

## WROTHAM WARD

The parish of Wrotham

## BOROUGH GREEN WARD

The parish of Borough Green

## IGHTHAM WARD

The parish of Ightham

## PLAXTOL WARD

The parishes of Plaxtol and Shipbourne

## MEREWORTH WARD

The parishes of Mereworth and West Peckham

## EAST PECKHAM WARD

The parish of East Peckham

## WATERINGBURY WARD

The parish of Wateringbury

## PLATT WARD

The parish of Platt

## DITTON WARD

The parish of Ditton

## LARKFIELD WARD

The North ward of the parish of East Malling and Larkfield

## EAST MALLING WARD

The South ward of the parish of East Malling and Larkfield

## SNODLAND WARD

The parish of Snodland

## HADLOW WARD

The parish of Hadlow

## HILDENBOROUGH WARD

The parish of Hildenborough