

From: [REDACTED]] **On Behalf Of** Alun Jones

Sent: 19 August 2016 11:42

To: reviews <reviews@lgbce.org.uk>

Subject: Boundary Commission proposal

Review Officer (Huntingdonshire)

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

14th Floor

Millbank Tower

Millbank London

SW1P 4QP

Dear Sir or Madam

Hemingford Abbots Parish Council has reviewed the Huntingdonshire District Electoral Review consultation and strongly objects to the proposal to join Hemingford Abbots with Godmanchester and the Offords.

The statutory criteria are:-

- Equality of representation
- Reflecting community interests and identities

- Providing for convenient and effective local government

The proposal clearly fails the criteria for the following reasons:-

- Hemingford Abbots is a small rural village with (by 2021) 531 electors – Godmanchester is a town with more than 6500 residents, a Town Council, a Mayor, shops, surgeries, schools, a frequent public transport service and with a major development of 750 houses under way, is a wholly and completely different environment with completely differing priorities and characteristics. The Offords are villages located some 6 miles the other side of Godmanchester and share no links or commonality with Hemingford Abbots.
- Hemingford Abbots is separated from Godmanchester by the A14 trunk road dual carriageway – the busiest two lane dual carriageway in the country carrying 90,000 vehicles per day.
- There is no public transport connecting Hemingford Abbots and Godmanchester – the current bus service connects Hemingford Abbots with Hemingford Grey and St Ives.
- Hemingford Abbots and Hemingford Grey have St Ives as their local market town providing essential facilities not Godmanchester whose main centre is in adjacent Huntingdon.
- The schooling pattern of Godmanchester is different from that of Hemingford Abbots. The primary school for Hemingford Abbots children is Hemingford Grey Primary School, with Houghton Primary School as an alternative for just a few children. Both of these primary schools feed into St Ivo Secondary School in nearby St Ives town. Godmanchester primary schools, however, feed into Hinchingsbrooke Secondary School away on the western side of Huntingdon town.
- The area including the villages of Hemingford Abbots and Hemingford Grey is known locally as 'The Hemingfords'
- There is no separation of development at the boundary between the villages of Hemingford Abbots and Hemingford Grey.
- The 2 Hemingford villages are currently joined in a Conservation Area, entitled 'The Hemingfords Conservation Area' that encompasses the whole of the village of Hemingford Abbots and most of the village of Hemingford Grey.

- Hemingford Abbots has no shop and no Post Office – these facilities are located in Hemingford Grey and Houghton.
- Hemingford Abbots and Hemingford Grey are joint custodians of their Peace Memorial Playing Field located close to the boundary between the two villages. This was bequeathed to both villages in the 1940s.
- Hemingford Abbots and Hemingford Grey jointly run the Hemingfords' Regatta – the oldest continually run village rowing regatta in the UK – run since 1901. The Regatta takes place on the river at the boundary between the two villages.
- Hemingford Abbots and Hemingford Grey share a considerable number of special interest groups and clubs including a Hemingfords Local History Society, , Hemingford Bridge Club, Hemingfords Utd Football Club, Hemingford Bowls Club, Hemingford Park Cricket Club, the 1st Hemingford Scout Group to name just a few and noting there is no distinction between the villages in these organisations.

Traditionally Hemingford Abbots has been joined electorally with Hemingford Grey and sometime also with Houghton & Wyton – its near neighbours and similar villages with similar issues.

The current proposals appear to be moving Hemingford Abbots away from the villages with which it has natural links, to a group of two other villages and a town where it has no commonality – all, apparently, for the sake of making the numbers fit to a District-wide template. Hemingford Abbots Parish Council feels that such a move will disadvantage its electorate and significantly reduce its effective representation.

If Hemingford Abbots and Hemingford Grey together are represented by one District Councillor, then, with 3070 electors, the District Councillor would represent just 4% above the 2931 average. In the alternative, if the status quo is preserved, that is Hemingford Abbots, Hemingford Grey, together with Hilton and Houghton, the 5600 electors with two District Councillors would at 2800 per District Councillor be just 4% below the 2931 average.

Hemingford Abbots and Hemingford Grey, as well as sharing a name, are of similar character and have a close working relationship with many shared facilities and have frequently operated as one. It is therefore our strong belief and desire that the District Council electorate of Hemingford Abbots remain in the same ward as Hemingford Grey and, if appropriate, with Houghton and Wyton.

Yours faithfully

Alun Jones

Hemingford Abbots parish councillor