

## Dunkeyson, Nicholas

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**From:** Stephen Giles-Medhurst [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 03 September 2012 15:26  
**To:** Reviews@ [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Local views sought on number of councillors for Three Rivers District Council

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Dear Sir,

My comments are as follows regarding the consultation being carried out by the Boundary Commission about the number of Three Rivers councillors (TRDC) there will be in future after 2014.

At present there are 48, representing 20 wards \_ nine wards with 3 members, 10 wards with 2 members and 1 single member.

Personally I believe this number to be right and a correct reflection on the different communities that make up the Three Rivers area. Effectively Three Rivers is unlike most local councils in that it has no core centre.

Instead it has communities at Abbots Langley, Rickmansworth, South Oxhey, Croxley, Sarratt, Chorleywood, Maple Cross, Oxhey Hall and Carpenders Park.

All of these are very different.

The current wards were not randomly set up but carefully worked out some years ago to give appropriate representation to the diverse areas and communities in Three Rivers. They include areas of affluence, of deprivation, rural parts and more suburban developments, villages and small towns.

The Boundary Commission is effectively insisting on 3 member wards so the official TRDC proposal is for 39 members.

Whilst this is a reduction of the current number it is the least worse option if the figure must be reduced.

It is essential that how our communities can be best represented with their geographical integrity preserved, community life is recognised and respected.

The Labour proposal is for a very small reduction to 42 members which I would not disagree with.

The Conservatives however are calling for a huge reduction of more than a third from 48 down to 30 and reducing the wards from 20 to only 10.

This would mean that areas would have to be combined. This could mean that South Oxhey has to be combined with both Oxhey Hall and Carpenters Park to make 3 three member wards yet the said three areas are very different

Representation that at present protects the different character, needs and interests of communities will be diluted.

If the Conservative view is adopted the four wards in Abbots Langley Parish area are likely to become just two with the number of councillors reduced to just 6 serving over 20,000 people!

It is obviously important to have enough councillors to carry out council committee work but just as vital that there are enough to deal with local ward issues, closely involved with their communities and being able to attend the meetings outside council affairs that provide the opportunity to speak up for their area.

With the access to many new forms of electric media the work load of local councillors has increased . No longer is it a letter in the post perhaps one a week but at least two or three email (or more in my case) a day about issues. Residents have the right to fair and equal representation and to increase the work load of councillors by one third as the Conservatives have suggested would result in the role of councillors only being able to be carried out by those who not employed, retired or are financially independent. It goes totally against the "localism" mandate of the government.

Equally it is important that councillors have a firm role in the running of the Council. The return to the Committee system at Three Rivers would five that. A reduced number of councils would mean that most councillors would have to site on more than one committee and find their skills reduced an time input increased. Thus there is a need for good government.

If a reduction must be made then the very least the numbers should be reduced to is 39.

Regards

Stephen Giles-Medhurst

Cllr Stephen Giles-Medhurst

