

Three Rivers District

Personal Details:

Name: Stephen Giles-Medhurst



Organisation Name:

Map Features:

Comment text:

I am a Three Rivers Councillor representing Leavesden ward and also a Herts County Councillor representing Central Watford and Oxhey division, which has a long boundary with the Three Rivers wards of Oxhey Hall and Carpenders Park. I am pleased that the Commission has chosen to respect the Parish Council boundaries where it is numerically possible to do so in Abbots Langley, Croxley and Watford Rural. These are ancient boundaries that delineate community ties and links. I would like to make specific comments about your proposals for the Abbots Langley area and Watford Rural Parish. Abbots Langley I am happy with the proposed Leavesden ward, which is very little different to the current ward. However I cannot agree with the Commission's plans to split Abbots Langley village, whilst keeping the two very different areas of Bedmond and Primrose Hill together. Abbots Langley is an ancient village mentioned in the Domesday Day Book and the current Three Rivers ward contains the oldest houses in the area and has a very strong community feel. It seems that the ward is being divided simply to make numbers add up, rather than respecting a strong community, which has existed for hundreds of years. However the current Three Rivers ward of Bedmond covers two very different places. When Parish wards were redrawn in 1998, residents and councillors wanted to keep the two one member wards for each of Bedmond, and Primrose Hill to reflect their very different needs and feels. All the travel and the transport routes in this area run north to south. There is no link except the long residential road of Toms Lane. People living in Bedmond use the shops, library doctors' surgery and dentist in Abbots Lange High Street, whilst those in Primrose Hill part use the facilities in the village of Kings Lange in Decorum. Secondary school children from Beyond attend Francis Commbe or Parameters School, along with those from Abbots Lange, which those from the Primrose Hill area attend Kings Langley or schools in Hemel. Splitting Abbots Langley in the manner that you propose makes no sense and I would strongly support the council's alternative proposals as stated above. Also I do not feel that the

residents of Hillside will want to be in a ward with so much of the current Abbots Langley ward – they already can feel dominated by the main village and have their own primary schools, shops, community hall and very strong residents association. I therefore support the original suggestion of the Council to make one ward by adding together the polling area of DAB (Bedmond) with Abbots Langley village and placing DAA (Primrose Hill area) with the existing Langleybury ward, as it identifies more with the Hunton Bridge area, being linked by the canal, railway line and bus routes. Watford Rural The area is already split into Oxhey Hall and Carpenders Park in one area, sharing a County Councillor and MP, and South Oxhey, which has its own County Councillor and does not share an MP with any other part of Watford Rural. The community of South Oxhey is very strong and sees itself as one place. It must be kept together in as few wards as possible, rather than divided up and placed with Oxhey Hall and Carpenders Park, with which it has almost nothing in common. The three areas of South Oxhey, Carpenders Park and Oxhey Hall have their own very separate residents associations, community centres gardening societies and Neighbourhood Watch groups, and attend different schools and places of worship to each other. Both the Carpenders Park estate and the Oxhey Hall conservation area, which are the vast majority of their respective wards, have very strong identities, whilst South Oxhey is still almost entirely the old World Ward II former GLC estate. I understand that it is very difficult to divide up this area whilst respecting community ties and keeping to three member wards. However I understand that a solution is being brought forward that would allow the Oxhey Hall estate to have its own councillor, with a small area of the existing ward on the Watford borders but not part of the Oxhey Hall estate could be combined with the entire area of Carpenders Park into a three member ward. Both areas would retain the same county councillor and will be within the same parliamentary seat. Where as the proposal from the commission would have the wards spread over two county councillors and two parliamentary seats very much cause confusion. The added benefit what is now suggested is there are clear boundary lines that are retained. Having listened to the very strong views of all three communities wanting their council to remain as much like they are now, I think this is the best solution and urge the commission , as it has in other reviews to allow from the departure here from three member wards.