



Chailey Parish Council



Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor Millbank Tower
21-24 Millbank
LONDON
SW1P 4QP

FAO: The Review Officer (East Sussex)

23rd November 2015

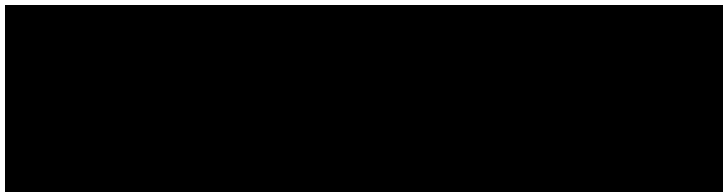
Dear Sirs

Electoral Review of East Sussex County and Districts Lewes District – Chailey & Wivelsfield

I am writing to you following a meeting of Chailey Parish Council on 2nd November 2015. At this meeting Councillors discussed your letter of 22nd September 2015. I shall be grateful if you will amend your records to show me as Parish Clerk for Chailey: I recently took over from Mrs Grainger.

Councillors are aware that an Electoral Review Working Group established by Lewes District Council has recommended a change in respect of our Ward, currently Chailey and Wivelsfield. The recommendation is that Chailey and Wivelsfield should be split with Chailey Parish joining the neighbouring Parish of Barcombe and Hamsey in a new new Ward called Chailey, Barcombe & Hamsey, and Wivelsfield becoming a separate Ward. At an Extraordinary Meeting of Lewes District Council held on 9th November 2015, the Working Group's recommendations were adopted without alteration.

Neither the Working Group nor any official of Lewes District Council has seen fit to inform the Parish Councils concerned, far less consult them, on the proposed change. It is also notable that the minutes of the meeting of 9th November 2015 make no reference to the opposition to the proposal voiced at the meeting by the District Councillors concerned.



Chailey Parish Councillors are surprised and disappointed at the approach taken by Lewes District Council, which seems to be very much at odds with the guidance that has been issued. It seems to pay scant attention to the need to balance electoral equality, the interests and identities of the communities concerned and effective local governance. Instead, in order to justify its conclusion, Lewes District Council gives overwhelming and distorting priority to electoral equality and completely ignores the fact that, as the preliminary findings of the Neighbourhood Plan which we are preparing show, the inhabitants of Chailey have, and feel themselves to have, much closer links to Wivelsfield than to Barcombe.

Chailey Parish Council objects to the change proposed by Lewes District Council for the following detailed reasons;

Electoral equality

Councillors noted from your data that the electorate of Chailey Parish is expected to show an increase of 20% by 2021 (2,291 rising to 2,755). We are very surprised by this figure which contrasts starkly with an expected increase of just 8% in the neighbouring parish of Newick and is markedly higher than all the other surrounding parishes. Enquiries made of East Sussex County Council, which is understood to be responsible for these figures, to find out how this figure has been calculated have been unsuccessful.

Under the Lewes Core Strategy an increase of approximately 40 dwellings is envisaged for Chailey by 2030. The comparable figure for Newick is approximately 150.

Councillors consider that the forecast 20% increase does not make sense and are concerned that the LGBC may be working from incorrect figures which bear no relation to those in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment or that the increase may have been transposed between Newick and Chailey.

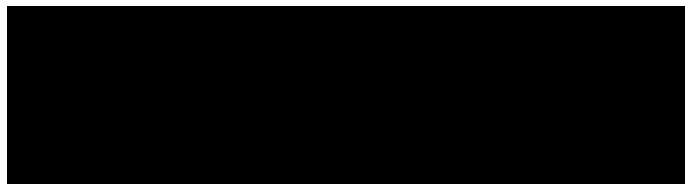
Interests and identities

As indicated above, this important criterion has been ignored by Lewes District Council and its Working Group when making its recommendation.

Chailey is an extensive, largely agricultural, settlement which lies at the boundary between East and West Sussex. This is similar to Wivelsfield with which it is linked across Chailey Common, an SSSI. Chailey's commuting and shopping links tend to run East-West along the A272 towards the railway station at Haywards Heath (West Sussex), and towards the important work centres which lie along the London to Brighton railway line and the main M23/A23 London to Brighton Road. This too is similar to Wivelsfield.

Chailey is directly linked to Wivelsfield by North Common Road which runs across Chailey North Common into Wivelsfield and on to the secondary railway station and shopping centre at Burgess Hill.

Chailey A&E patients are directed westwards to the Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath, as are patients from Wivelsfield. St Peter's & St James' Hospice stands on the border between the two villages and campaigns for funding from both.



By comparison, Barcombe lies to the South-East of Chailey and away from the A275 road to Lewes, Chailey's direct link to the County town. Lewes Station is on a branch line off the main London to Brighton Line, and therefore considerably less attractive to commuters. There is no direct road linking Chailey to Barcombe, Barcombe's shopping links tend towards Lewes and Barcombe patients access the A&E at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Lewes. There is no reason for residents in Chailey to go to, or pass through Barcombe and Hamsey as a matter of course. The direct opposite is true of Chailey's links with Wivelsfield.

Concluding remarks

Lewes District Council has seen fit to put forward a proposal which has not been discussed with, or even drawn to the attention of, the three Parishes who would be affected if the proposal is accepted by the LGBC. The proposal has been formulated purely on numbers, which have not been properly explained and which Chailey Councillors consider may be wrong. No regard has been made to the fact that the proposal, if implemented, would break the strong, longstanding links that exist between the parishes of Chailey and Wivelsfield and would tie Chailey to Barcombe and Hamsey, a parish with which Chailey has few if any links or interests.

Councillors in Chailey consider that the existing Ward of Chailey and Wivelsfield should be retained. Any issues over electoral equality should be resolved by other means, for example by adjusting the number of District Councillors, rather than by ignoring the interests and identities of the communities concerned.

Yours faithfully



Stephen Treharne
Clerk to the Council

