

Dear Sirs,

19<sup>th</sup> August 2016

I am writing with regard to the proposed boundary changes in the Huntingdon constituency. I represent the Little Paxton Ward at Huntingdon District Council and oppose the formation of the three-member ward of Priory Park (including Little Paxton). I am supportive of retaining Little Paxton as a single member ward until the next boundary review, at which point Little Paxton may require two members.

The village of Little Paxton is distinct and historically separate to St. Neots in character and geography.

### **Community Boundaries**

Little Paxton dates back hundreds of years, it historically and currently noted to be separate to St. Neots. This distinction has continued in the identity of the village and how it has grown to its present form. There are many groups, services and community bodies within Little Paxton that help define this individual identity.

Little Paxton has numerous community groups including; a Parish Council, several youth football teams, an art group, friendship club, cricket club, gardening club and Scouts to name a few.

There are many physical shared facilities including; a primary school, village hall, nature reserve, church, village shop, Chinese takeaway, pharmacy, pub and sailing club. A community centre is currently being developed in Little Paxton, highlighting the future planning of the area has been based on Little Paxton as a village separate to St. Neots.

These are a just a few of the organisations that operate within the village with a total of 31 clubs and groups that define Little Paxton as an individual and separate community to St. Neots.

### **Geographical Boundaries**

My opposition based on geographical boundaries is based on the division of Little Paxton from St. Neots by the River Ouse. This is a natural boundary between the two settlements and development has not progressed beyond this boundary. This has served to prevent a conurbation between St. Neots and Little Paxton. This division can be seen with the road layout with the end of Priory Hill Road meeting Mill Lane and no developments bridging the line formed by the two roads.

Little Paxton is located next to the A1, this is an issue which affects the residents of Little Paxton which does not impact on residents of Priory Park in the same manner and is a distinct issue in the Little Paxton locality.

### **Proposed Ward Difficulties**

The proposed three-member ward of Priory Park including Little Paxton merges two areas that are very different. The Priory Park ward would require representation at St. Neots Town Council, the composition, issues and nature of the Town Council are greatly different to those requiring representation at Parish Council meetings, this will act as an inhibitor to councillors performing their duties to the utmost of their abilities.

There will be confusion amongst the electorate as to whom they should contact should they have encounter difficulties, this would also leave potential for "playing politics" with issues within the ward, which would be detrimental to residents' interests.

The naming of the new ward as Priory Park is also of concern, as it does not acknowledge Little Paxton and wholly removes the identity of the village within the ward. This is of great concern as an

identity that has developed over hundreds of years is no longer acknowledged, robbing a community of its identity and replacing that identity with part of St. Neots.

I understand that Little Paxton has a sufficient electorate to remain as an individual seat and strongly support it remaining a single seat ward. I would also ask that in any future reviews that if considering multiple member wards in which Little Paxton would be included that other nearby villages such as Southoe be considered. Southoe has similarities with Little Paxton, sharing issues such as the A1.

It is for these reasons I feel that the proposed boundary change should not be adopted.

Yours faithfully,

Laurence Swain