Dear Local Government Boundary Commission,

KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY REVIEW

We have seen a map on the Council’s website that proposes to move the Allom and Barlow Estate and our neighbour Nottingwood House out of Notting Barns ward, where we are at the moment, into the Norland ward and I am writing on behalf of residents of Allom and Barlow and also of Nottingwood House to urge the Local Government Boundary Commission to reject this proposal.

We and Nottingwood House are blocks of social housing managed by the Council’s Tenant Management Organisation. We are also directly next door (across the road) from the Lancaster West Estate, which is also TMO-managed social housing.

There are many family ties between the residents of all these blocks and we work closely with the Lancaster West Tenants’ Association. For example, last year we promoted a summer Funday and this year there were two Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Festivals. We have many issues in common across all the estates about repairs and maintenance and our Notting Barns ward councillors work with us and advocate on our behalf to the TMO to ensure that the problems are dealt with swiftly.

Before 2002 Lancaster West and our blocks and Henry Dickens Court, another large TMO estate, along with the social housing further south, mostly managed by the Octavia Hill housing association, were all in the same ward of Avondale. Avondale ward covered roughly the area once known as “Notting Dale” – the “piggeries and potteries” of the Victorian days. Many descendants of the original residents of Notting Dale live to this day in these social housing schemes.

We have absolutely nothing in common with the residents of the huge mansions, garden squares and luxury flats that are in Norland ward. There was a recent programme on the BBC that contrasted the history and current circumstances of Portland Road. This showed that the very rich people who now live in the south never ever go into the northern part of Portland Road that contains our social housing (Winterbourne House and Nottingwood House mark this boundary in Portland Road). They feel that it is a completely alien country.

For our part, we have no historical, social or community connections with the area to the south either. We think it would be quite wrong to join us with that part of the Borough. Our friends and neighbours in Henry Dickens Court, Winterbourne House, Crosdale House and the Octavia Hill housing often say that they felt much more engaged and better represented when they were part of Avondale ward. For example, we used to have a summer party in Avondale Park in the heart of Avondale ward, but this stopped when we were put into different electoral wards.

In 2014 a new secondary school is going to open on the Lancaster West Estate. Lots of the pupils will come from all these local social housing blocks, whereas the children in the south of Norland ward all go to private schools. We have waited a very long time for this school. It would be very good if we could work together to reinstate local community events such as the summer fundays in Avondale Park for all our local children and help us knit our community back
together again.

So our recommendation to the Local Government Boundary Commission is to ask you to re-create the old Avondale ward so far as is possible. We do not understand why the Council wants to keep the three member ward system. Before 2002, Norland ward had two councillors for their part of the neighbourhood and we had three councillors for our part of the neighbourhood. This arrangement worked very well.

I hope very much that you will take our recommendation on board.

Yours faithfully,

Jose Fernandez