

Somerset

Personal Details:

Name: Ms Sarah Buchanan

Email: [REDACTED]

Postcode: [REDACTED]

Organisation Name: Brompton Regis Parish Council (Representative of parish/town council)

Comment text:

Related subject: Brompton Regis parish - two polling districts

Brompton Regis Parish Council (BRPC) has considered the boundary review at two meetings and reached the following conclusions.

1. The circumstances of Exmoor (geography, cultural, community and business) and the administrative arrangements of Exmoor and parts of the Brendon Hills as a national park require an approach to the definition of divisions which is not solely or wholly based on population numbers. Catchment areas for a range of public services and a range of public policies, regulations and legislation are affected by the circumstances of Exmoor and unite parishes within. Ideally polling districts within the national park should be within one Division focussed on Eastern Exmoor and the Brendon Hills.
2. Brompton Regis parish includes two polling districts, both of which look largely to the south and west to Dulverton as the nearest centre for administrative, business and community services and Dulverton is the base of the National Park Authority.
3. BRPC has been part of an effective Local Community Network covering Exmoor and Brendon Hill parishes within Somerset which has demonstrated and reinforced links across the area., including with neighbouring Upton and Skilgate parishes and these three parishes cooperate on a range of initiatives.
4. The main east-west road across Exmoor and the Brendons (B3224) provides a natural and working divide between the parishes to the south (including Brompton Regis, Upton and Skilgate) and those to the north which largely look toward the Bristol Channel for administrative, cultural, community and business lives (including Old Cleeve, Carhampton, Dunster etc).
5. BRPC is of the view that its polling districts, and those of Upton and Skilgate, are best placed in a division that includes other Exmoor parishes and it would like to see a Division along the lines of the effective Exmoor Local Community Network.
6. BRPC is concerned that in its consideration of population figures Somerset Council may not have fully appreciated the extent and impact of the

links between Exmoor and the Brendon Hills, as is perhaps evident in the notes provided by the Council to describe the proposed division of Carhampton, which is described as 'a geographically large division is largely a rural area behind the West Somerset coastline'. It should be noted that this proposed division includes communities which are from between 18 and 9 miles from the coastline and which do not look to the coastline for services or amenities. BRPC is concerned that should this division go ahead the elected representative will need to comprehend a very wide range of communities and interests and that the smaller communities of the Brendon Hills may struggle to have their interests represented.

7. BRPC is concerned that if the Somerset Council proposal for the Carhampton division and the Dulverton and Exmoor division go ahead the description provided by Somerset Council of the latter as 'encompasses the Exmoor National park' is misleading: many parishes within the national park are not within that proposed division.

8. BRPC is of the view that should population figures take precedence over the circumstances of communities and businesses and the Brompton Regis polling districts are placed in a division linked to the coastline then the name of that division should clearly indicate the mixed communities within it. It should perhaps be called 'Eastern Exmoor, The Brendon Hills and coast'.

9. Overall Brompton Regis Parish Council is concerned that the needs and interests of its upland, sparsely populated, largely hill farming community will not be well mixed with or represented by a division that includes large coastline and lowland communities.

Attached Documents:

None attached