

Councillor Barnacle Boundaries Commission

Readers should note my representation to PKC on 11 May 2015 reproduced here from the June edition of the Newsletter:



It is my understanding that the Commission's proposals include the outrageous option of dividing the current Kinross-shire Ward and reducing its number of Councillors from 4 to 3. This appears to be proposed in the interest of voter parity on ward numbers and a projected reduction in voter numbers, rather than any interest in maintaining local identities.

As you should be aware, Kinross-shire has been a county since 1685 and merged with Perthshire in government reorganisation during the 1970s. The current Ward reflects the shire's historic boundaries with the addition of Glenfarg, whose services and school catchment lie in Kinross-shire. There is a strong sense of local identity that will be broken by this proposal.

I understand that the other boundary changes proposed are minimal for PKC with the exception of the Kinross-shire Ward. I also fail to understand the voter projections given the level of proposed and ongoing development taking place resulting from our Local Development Plan and Tayplan.

I would argue that there is a strong case for maintaining PKC numbers at 41 (good to have an odd number in the unlikely event of a close political vote), retaining the current Kinross-shire Ward boundary and 4 Councillors. I sincerely hope you will adopt this position in your response to the proposals and support my local Ward member colleagues who I understand share my concerns about this proposed change. I will be interested to learn of the period for public consultation thereon, being certain of a strong community objection from Kinross-shire folk to this latest attempt to ignore their historic boundaries and identity.

At Full Council on 13 May 2015 it was unanimously decided to support all the Kinross-shire members in opposing the Commission's proposals and write to maintain PKC's position that there should be no reduction in councillors and Kinross-shire's Ward boundary to the north, along the ridge of the Ochil Hills, should be preserved, along with the incorporation of the parish of Arngask.

The faceless bureaucrats that run Britain, of which the Commission are clearly a part, have effectively ignored PKC's representatives in their latest proposal, subject to a public consultation that runs until 22 October 2015 (see display at Loch Leven Community Campus library).

It is still proposed to reduce our councillors from four to three and the northern boundary of the ward has been moved slightly north of the A91 to reflect the Milnathort Polling District.

This is a blatant, but not unsurprising, disregard of the elected view of PKC and I call upon the people of Kinross-shire to oppose the Commission's proposals vigorously and support your elected members.

When one considers Kinross-shire was a county in its own right until the 1970s, why should there be a reduction in our representation up at Perth when our population has not only grown since then but is forecast to grow significantly in the future?

My colleague, Councillor Cuthbert, is working on a detailed analysis of the flawed methodology the Commission have

employed in reaching this extraordinary and illogical boundary proposal. A summary of this and suggested arguments to counter what's proposed will be made available to assist folk who feel strongly about Kinross-shire's historic boundaries and identity in writing their objections to the Commission.

I very much hope that our voice will be heard and that the Commission reconsider their rejection of the Council's position. I suspect, if not, that this could lead to Scotland's 'Rutland' moment. The smallest county in England, which has a landscape dominated by the large expanse of Rutland Water, had been incorporated with Leicestershire, but effectively won its county back after a hard fought campaign. Kinross-shire's landscape, dominated by Loch Leven, has a "claim of right" that may be heard again.

Food for thought and action, folks.

In 2010, another unaccountable body in the form of the Royal Mail unveiled plans to delete county names from its database by 2016, inspiring representations that "We are not a postcode" and a specially written poem by our laureate Carol Ann Duffy, *The Counties*:

The Counties

But I want to write to an Essex girl,
greeting her warmly.

But I want to write to a Shropshire lad,

'brave boy, home from the army,
and I want to write to the Lincolnshire Poacher
to hear of his hare

and to an aunt in Bedfordshire
who makes a wooden hill of her stair.

But I want to post a rose to a Lancashire lass,
red, I'll pick it,

and I want to write to a Middlesex mate
for tickets for cricket.

But I want to write to the Ayrshire cheesemaker
and his good cow

and it is my duty to write to the Queen at Berkshire
in praise of Slough.

But I want to write to the National Poet of Wales at
Ceredigion

in celebration

and I want to write to the Dorset Giant
in admiration

and I want to write to a widow in Rutland
in commiseration

and to the Inland Revenue in Yorkshire
in desperation.

But I want to write to my uncle in Clackmannanshire
in his kilt

and to my scrumptious cousin in Somerset
with her cidery lilt.

But I want to write to two ladies in Denbighshire,
near Llangollen

and I want to write to a laddie in Lanarkshire,
Dear Lachlan ...

But I want to write to the Cheshire Cat,
returning its smile.

But I want to write the names of the Counties down
for my own child

and may they never be lost to her ...

all the birds of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire...

by Carol Ann Duffy
Poet Laureate

(published in *The Guardian*, 7 August 2010)