

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND

HELD AT

**NEW COUNTY HALL
TREYEW ROAD, TRURO, TR1 3AY**

ON

**FRIDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2016
DAY TWO**

Before:

Ms Anita Bickerdike, The Lead Assistant Commissioner

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THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning, welcome to day two of the public inquiry into the Boundary Commission's initial proposals for the new parliamentary constituency boundaries in the South West region.

We do have a speaker who was booked to speak at nine o'clock. However, yesterday he cancelled that slot, so perhaps I can check whether or not that speaker is here: Mr Michael Chappell? (No response). On that basis our next speaker is booked at 9.30, so I will adjourn the hearing until 9.30.

After a short break

Time Noted: 9.30 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome back to day two of the public hearing into the initial proposals of the Boundary Commission for the new parliamentary constituencies in the South West region.

My name is Anita Bickerdike and I am an Assistant Commissioner with the Boundary Commission and my role is to come and listen to what people locally want to come and tell me and then, with my fellow Commissioner, to actually look at those oral representations, together with any written representations that are received during the consultation period. Once all those consultations have been concluded, then my job with my Assistant Commissioner, as I have indicated, is to send a report to the Commissioners to see whether or not the initial proposals need to be amended.

I think we have two speakers in the chamber. At 9.30, I think we have Miss Deborah Hopkins. Just a little bit about time-keeping: although today we do not have a full list of speakers, generally speaking, slots are around ten minutes, but, bearing in mind that we only have two speakers booked this morning, we have got plenty of time available, so there is no problem with the presentations running over a little bit. It is just that, when we do have people booked in, we need to respect the time that they have been given for their booking.

Can I invite then the first speaker to come down to the lectern, Miss Deborah Hopkins. Good morning. Would you like to give your name and address, please.

MISS HOPKINS: My name is Deborah Hopkins. I live at number 1 Vildebeest Road, St Eval, Wadebridge in North Cornwall.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you for attending. Just so that you are aware, we are recording all of the presentations and they will be published at a later time, so just be aware that that process is happening while you are giving your presentation.

MISS HOPKINS: Okay, thank you. I am speaking as a private resident of Cornwall and not as a Cornish person. I am an incomer; my family moved here in 1969 with the Air Force so, sorry, Dick, I am not truly Cornish. However, I feel that I can speak for the many thousands of people in Cornwall who have been brought down here by work and by family and have committed themselves to this community over decades and are now wholly a part of the community and identity of Cornwall. We feel very passionate about the nature of Cornwall and that Cornwall carries its clear cultural history very proudly, and we are very proud to play a part in carrying that with them and supporting them to do that.

I also speak as a nurse and a member of the Health Service in Cornwall. I work in education with the young people who see themselves wanting to build a future in Cornwall. I work in and am involved with local government and in social care and I also work with the union to represent working people in Cornwall and the Labour Party and I am currently the Chair of the North Cornwall Labour Party.

North Cornwall constituency is going to lose five wards out of its constituency through a cross-border constituency. Three of the towns, three of the branches out of five of our branches in our constituency in North Cornwall, are going to be lost to a cross-border constituency, so, as I am sure you can imagine, the people of North Cornwall are almost speechless - almost, but not quite; they were not speechless at Polson Bridge – at the concept that their representation will be removed with no opportunity, no democratic vote, no decision of theirs to take a part in this process. They feel quite passionately that this is standing against what they understand to have been the democratic choices they have made as electors in their constituency in North Cornwall.

The shifting of a boundary so that it blurs identity across recognised cultural structures stands against the criteria by which the Boundary Commission was set up and stands against the criteria that were set out in the Act when it was passed through Parliament. The other criteria concerning respecting geography, respecting culture and cultural identity are also being swept aside, and the people of North Cornwall who are being forced against their will to lose their Cornish representation in Parliament are incandescent about this and feel not only is this an anti-democratic mechanism to increase a parliamentary majority quite substantially without a single vote cast, but it is also a mechanism by which their voice in Parliament is no longer recognised as being unique and of Cornwall. They will not feel they represent Cornwall in Parliament or that their voices are represented in Parliament by a Cornwall MP if they are in a blurred line somewhere between Cornwall and Devon. They are absolutely furious.

Whilst I recognise the attempts that the Boundary Commission have made to open their doors and to listen and to allow people to speak, the great shame is that the hall is not full, it is a working day, so it is very difficult for people to get here. I acknowledge that there are evening opportunities and online opportunities. We do feel quite powerfully that this is a decision that has been made, that we are being walked through a lip

service process of public engagement which will have no impact whatsoever on the end outcome of this, and the end outcome of this is that a politically-driven Act was passed through Parliament and that the Boundary Commission is required to fulfil those obligations, but has done so in such a way that the people of North Cornwall will never have a really effective voice in saying, "This is not what we want".

The claim that this is about saving money is a political claim; there is no basis for it on the grounds that the massive increase in members in the Lords has vastly outweighed the tiny reduction in costs by shifting 50 MPs. Additionally from that, additionally from the outrage about identity, about culture, about the sense that this Commission has worked directly in opposition to the criteria that were set up and it was required to work towards, it gives the impression of unfairness, which sounds adolescent, but we should always work to be transparent, to be open, to be honest and to be fair. If you are going to set up criteria and then choose to ignore them in order to impose what appears to be an ideologically-driven gerrymandering attempt to massively increase a parliamentary majority, then you can hardly expect anything else but anger and frustration in return.

The other major concern that we have in North Cornwall in the face of the challenges that we have with infrastructure, with local government support and with funding for local services is that this will create an almighty confusion between council co-ordination of services and parliamentary funding and constituency, national government measurement of services, local population, population need, and how we structure and support our residents in North Cornwall. If residents in North Cornwall are going to be both managed by a non-Cornish MP and by a Cornwall County Council, how will that work as infrastructure goes? How will our governance be organised? How much chaos and confusion is this going to cause for the residents?

We have a new structure for health and social care coming out which is absolutely in recognition of the Devon and Cornwall border, yet the people who are living in a third or a half of our previously North Cornwall CLP will no longer be under the parliamentary recognition of that area, so, whilst we have health and social care recognising a Devon and Cornwall border, we will have a parliamentary democracy which does not. So who are they? Are they Cornish to the Council and not Cornish to the Government? What they are doing is treating with contempt the history, the culture, the organisation, the infrastructure and the mechanisms we have for supporting, caring for and providing for our population in North Cornwall.

The Labour Party stands quite powerfully against this and I hope that, although I have very little hope that this will change, honestly I believe that, without Parliament standing against this, this is an expensive waste of our opinions because I am not convinced that we are going to make any difference here, but we do appreciate the opportunity to speak. I do feel quite powerfully that this is a decision that has been made and, regardless of the Boundary Commission's determination to run independently, that the

political die has been cast and that we are very much fighting against the current like salmon.

The voices of North Cornwall are very, very clear; the voices of the whole county are very, very clear. We absolutely reject this on a number of bases that I hope I have made clear. The issues that concern us most are the loss of identity, the loss of culture, the working against your own criteria and the impression we have that the Boundary Commission has become a puppet to an ideological decision which is about entrenching power in Parliament and walking all over the opinions of the people who put them there and pay their taxes. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would you remain there for a moment, please, just in case there are any questions from the floor for clarification. Does anybody want to ask any questions for clarification? (No response) Thank you very much for your representations.

Mr Robert Lawrance, good morning. Do you want to just give your name and address, please.

MR LAWRANCE: My name is Rob Lawrance, 6 Higher Row, Ashton.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I just check what it is that you have got on there?

MR LAWRANCE: Can I just record what I'm saying?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We are recording everybody and then those recordings will be published so that the public can see them.

MR LAWRANCE: Okay, yes. It is not any pictures, just my voice just so that I can put it on my 'We love Cornwall' website, if that is okay.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We generally do not allow private recordings because we are going to be recording everything publicly and then it is for everybody then to see, at the time that we publish, all of the representations so that everybody can see and hear what people have said and take it in the round.

MR LAWRANCE: Okay, no problem.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Did you give your name and address?

MR LAWRANCE: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for that. If you would like to make your representations, please, then Mr Lawrance.

MR LAWRENCE: Hi there. My name is Rob Lawrance. I feel so passionately about this that I have had to take a day off work today and I am self-employed with just myself and my business partner, so it shows how passionately I feel about this. I am not a clever man when it comes to politics and facts and figures and I am definitely not very good at public speaking; it is not something I am used to. I am just here to put my point across with some facts and some more personal opinions as well. I do not speak with a huge education, just a huge passion and pride for my Cornwall and all I believe it to be.

What makes Cornwall different and much-loved is its history, its culture, its people, its language, its geography, its unique identity and the pride and passion we feel in it. I am not the best at facts and figures and I have got a shocking memory, but there are many facts, not opinions, that must help decide this vital issue which means so much to the people of Cornwall.

Here are but a few of the facts. Cornish history begins with pre-Roman inhabitants and was part of the Dumnonii tribe. In 1337, the Duke of Cornwall title was created by the King for his son and heir, which still stands today with Prince Charles and the Duchy. We are a Duchy, we are ruled by the Duchy, whereas England is ruled by the Sovereignty, by the Queen, which makes us distinctly different people wanting different things with different mindsets.

The current border of Cornwall was set in 936 by King Athelstan and was set at the high watermark of the eastern bank of the Tamar. We are recognised as one of the Celtic nations, as Scotland and Ireland and Wales. On 24 April, we were granted minority status which meant so much to us. Although I have always said I'm Cornish, not English, now we are legally allowed to say this and it was granted under the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Our name. 'Cornwall', first appears in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in 891. In the Domesday Book, we were noted as 'Cornualia' and, in 1198, we got the name 'Cornwall'. We are one of only a few places in Britain to have a corresponding name in the French language along with Bristol and London. The very first account of Cornwall comes from the 1st century BC Sicilian Greek historian Diodorus Siculus, predominantly to do with our tin trade. Therefore, with these facts, we have a unique history, we have a unique identity; we are part of the UK, we are not part of England. As Bert Biscoe said, we are not anti-English; we are just very much pro-Cornish.

Cornwall County Council voted 78-12 to oppose Devonwall and the 12 people were all Conservatives, including our six MPs, which we feel very, very let down by in Cornwall. We feel they do not stand for us, we feel they do not listen to us. We feel that they are

not representing us and not one of them turned up to the Devonwall protest at Polson Bridge, even just to have their say to say why, why, why they want to have a Devonwall. They all voted for it, but they could not defend themselves and we have not heard any good arguments from them why. A lady in my village sent an email to our local MP and she got a very bad response and she has asked for my help, much good that will do, to reply to him again.

The review being undertaken at the moment is on the basis of a register that is nearly a year out of date and the facts and figures, and I've just heard more facts and figures, it just does not stand what we need to do, the joint constituency.

To show the waste of money, our last MP appointed 205 peers over the last six years at a cost of £13 million, which pales one MP into insignificance. An open public opinion poll run by Pirate FM returned results on 15 September 2016 indicating that 94 per cent of Cornish folk opposed Devonwall. Similar polls by the Daily Mirror say that 89 per cent are against it.

When you have got places like Orkney and the Isle of Wight, they had an exemption rule that allows them to deviate from the 5 per cent of the average rule, so surely Cornwall should have the same treatment?

Those are some of the many facts I would like to record. Now, here are some of the more heartfelt and passionate points and opinions I would like to get on record. This is perhaps a little bit easier for me as I am a born and bred and passionate Cornishman who is very vocal and speaks straight from the heart.

I am here to defend our borders, to defend our identity, to prevent the watering down of our borders and to explain why any change to our borders is totally unacceptable. We are totally different from Devon and, as I have gone into, we are a proud Duchy, a proud principality and we are passionately against any border changes. Myself and my family were at Polson Bridge with a few hundred other folk to oppose the Devonwall proposal. Passions were very high and many great speeches were made. We were in our gold and black and we all felt we had to be there to defend Cornwall. It was a peaceful protest with many good speeches about why we cannot accept this. We felt we had to be there so that we did not let Michael Joseph An Gof and Thomas Flamank down, who led the Cornish Rebellion in 1497 defending Cornish rights even back then, and they marched on London from St Keverne, so the least we could do is defend Cornwall on that weekend. Also, I do not want to let Bishop Trelawney down, who was imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1688, again for defending the Cornish, and, as it happens, I have one of his pewter plates from there.

Talking about the gold and black, my family were at the protest. This (indicating) is my top and these are the colours that I believe in and this is our pride of our rugby team, who are current back-to-back county champions. Just to see the Cornish pride, you

should go to Twickenham, go to the Cabbage Patch pub before the game and see the passion and pride of the Cornish folk and my little boy leading "Oggy Oggy Oggy". Although we have got the furthest to travel of any county to support our team, we are there in our hundreds and thousands each year to support Cornwall as and when they get there, and seeing my boy leading "Oggy" which is the best part of my bringing him up. We lose our voice with the passion of the songs we sing.

To see how many folk love Cornwall, just go on to Facebook and its multitude of Cornish pages, including at least five of my own that I have set up, 'We Love Cornwall' and 'The Devonwall Protest in Truro'. See how many books there are and how collectable they have become. See how popular we are in the summer. See how many well-known and very much-loved Cornish songs, including *The Song of the Western Man* by Reverend Hawker and *Cornwall My Home* by Henry Glasson, which I think you heard a snippet of yesterday, and how pro-Cornish folk are singing them right around the world and, as you can probably tell by me, it almost brings a tear to your eye because of the passionate love we feel.

See the love of our Patron Saint, St Piran, and the pride in his flag which I am flying here, St Piran, and the yearly remembrance of his stay at Perran Sands when you have a massive turnout to show how proud we are of being Cornish. See the amount of uniquely Cornish days and festivals we have, Trevithick Day, of which I am a committee member, Murdoch Day, Lowender Peran, Golowan, Mazey Day, Flora Day, 'Obby 'Oss Day, to name just a few, to show how much the Cornish love to march and show their pride.

I am into underground mining and exploring, and you should see the history of the Cornish miners and how far and wide our forefathers and engineering has spread. At the bottom of every holiday in the world, you find a Cornishman. I have Cornish tattoos and my daughter has a Cornish name.

Basically, to sum up, our borders must be left alone, our borders must be respected and Devonwall cannot be allowed to happen. It is fine to reduce our MPs to five, but do not have a cross-border constituency. We have the support of Plaid Cymru and SNP and even a politician came down from Norfolk to speak out and see what a cultural uprising the Cornish are and how proud and how important our borders are to us, and he came down from Norfolk, I believe. So Plaid Cymru and SNP, as our brother Celtic nations, which says a lot, their borders have been fought for for many years and blood has been shed for their borders. We do not want to shed blood, we do not want to fight, but our borders should be as solid as theirs.

Such is the strength of the feeling about this, I will be organising another demonstration in Truro against the Devonwall proposal, so you may well see me again. *Kernow Bys Vyken* and 20,000 Cornishmen will know the reason why. Keep Cornwall whole.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Lawrance, and thank you very much for coming to speak to me today. You spoke very eloquently, so thank you for giving me all of that information; it is really useful to hear how passionately you feel about it. Are there any questions for Mr Lawrance? (No response) Thank you very much.

Our next speaker is not booked until 10.50. It is now about 9.55. Is there anyone who would like to speak? On that basis, I will adjourn the hearing until 10.50 which is the time of our next speaker.

After a short break

Time Noted: 10.50 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Welcome back. Can I invite Miss Zoe Fox to come down to the lectern, please. Good morning, Miss Fox. Can I ask you to give your name and address, please.

CLLR FOX: (Mebyon Kernow) I am Zoe Fox of 11 Pengegon Moor, Camborne, TL14 7TY.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. I understand that you have been made aware that we will be observing a two-minute silence at 11 o'clock, so, if you are still speaking, I will indicate at that point that we will be observing that.

CLLR FOX: Yes, thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you would like to make your representations.

CLLR FOX: I am a Mebyon Kernow councillor for Camborne Town Council. I am here to report that our council is opposed to plans for a cross-Tamar constituency and passed the following resolution at a meeting of the full Council last evening:

“This Council opposes reconfiguration of boundaries which proposes any constituency which crosses the boundary of Cornwall and Devon. There are exceptional issues to consider, including unique culture, history and Cornish minority status. A constituency MP affected by the formation of a cross-border constituency would have to deal with multiple agencies, such as Cornwall Council, Devon County Council, district councils and several large town councils at the various stages of devolution, and this would make the role untenable. On current figures, five constituencies wholly comprising Cornish territory and the Isles of Scilly would number only 268 electors per constituency above the current proposed upper limit.”

I am here to tell you that local councillors do not support the proposed boundary changes, despite the apparent agreement of certain central Westminster parties with whom they may associate themselves. Opposition at last night's meeting was unanimous of every councillor of every stripe, that is, Mebyon Kernow Labour Party, Conservatives, Green Party and Independent, all 16 councillors in attendance. I also chair a local union branch where a similar motion was passed and I have found no support for these proposals from local people or representative organisations.

I hope to take up less than the allotted time because, as I am speaking on the second day, I am aware that many points may have been raised. However, to reiterate, clearly I believe Cornwall has a distinct culture and history which demands that it be respected as a political unit. The Westminster Government has recognised this on many occasions, not least with the recent Unitary Authority Devolution Deal.

Practical and cultural considerations mean most administrative bodies are coterminous with our border. There is one NHS commissioning group in Cornwall; one local enterprise partnership. A cross-Tamar Westminster seat would be, at best, unwieldy and, at worst, set a precedent which could undermine the integrity of our public service provision and, further, dilute the hard-won concessions in our Devolution Deal. It would divide our MPs, who now at least have the possibility to work together in the interests of an area which is recognised as suffering from low pay, deprivation and educational under-achievement. We are peripheral and we are also a proud nation who wish to improve our lot, thank you very much, for ourselves.

Imposing arbitrary boundaries on communities which have little in common would not only be impractical, but serve to alienate and disenfranchise these populations. Ninety-four per cent of those polled recently did not want this imposition. Imposing arbitrary boundaries has a history of ending badly.

The basis for this review, whether a claimed democratic equalisation or reduction in the number of MPs ostensibly to save money, is highly questionable in the light of the fact that David Cameron's Government which enacted this review also created 250 new peers, never hindered by cost or accountability.

There appears to be a hair's breadth between the numbers required for five constituencies wholly within our borders and the upper limit for new constituencies. The voter figures used for this review are already out of date and do not take account of future projections. The Isle of Wight, Orkneys and others are exempted, but Cornwall has been overlooked again.

Finally, since this boundary review was enacted, the Cornish have been recognised in the National Framework Convention for the Protection of Minorities, which should give us the same protection in law as the Scots and Welsh, whose borders are to be

respected. This should finally put this wrong-headed idea to bed. These proposals take no account of history, nor is it forward-looking and they should be rejected.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any questions for clarification? (No response) Thank you very much for attending and for your representation.

Bearing in mind the time and that we are going to observe a two-minute silence at 11 o'clock, I propose not to call the next speaker at this point. We will just observe the two-minute silence at 11 o'clock, so I will announce at 11 o'clock the start of that two-minute silence and then I will take the next speaker at the conclusion of that two-minute silence.

(After a pause) It is now 11 o'clock and we will observe a two minute silence. (The hearing observed a two-minute silence). Thank you. I call the next speaker, please, Mr Craig Weatherhill. If you would like to come to the lectern, please. Good morning, Mr Weatherhill.

MR WEATHERHILL: Myttin Da, good morning.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I ask you to give your name and address, please.

MR WEATHERHILL: My name is Craig Weatherhill. My address is Rosemary House, Newbridge, Penzance, Kernow.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Just to let you know, we started a little bit late. We generally give a ten-minute speaking slot for people. However, the speaker who booked the slot after you has informed us that he will not be speaking, so there is a little bit of capacity for you.

MR WEATHERHILL: That is fine, thank you very much. I wish to speak this morning on the case against the proposed Bideford, Bude, Lanson cross-border parliamentary constituency. The proposal is, in my view, unworkable in that it will be a constituency of two distinct halves divided by a 1,100-year-old border, the east bank of the Tamar. Unlike any English county boundary, this is a territorial one that is deeply embedded in law, both constitutional and otherwise. On the eastern side, the owner absolute of the soil is the monarch; on the other, it is the Duke of Cornwall, and unique laws peculiar to Cornwall and largely concerning the Duchy of Cornwall and the Stannaries apply on the Cornish side but not in the Devonian half. Cornwall may be currently administered by England, but it is not England and never has been. It was a QC attached to the Boundary Commission in 1988 who found a *de facto* but not *de jure* joinder of Cornwall to England, and nothing has changed.

The Cornish border is as significant as those that define Wales and Scotland. When the Cornish people and their territory were included on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 2014, we were assured by the then Communities Minister that we now enjoyed precisely the same rights and protections as the Welsh and Scots. This is now being ignored under this proposal, which is considered to be an act of assimilation, expressly forbidden by Article 5(2) of the Framework Convention. Accordingly, the Leader of Cornwall Council has declared the proposal to be unlawful, and we strongly believe his assessment to be correct. That a legal challenge may result if the proposal is enforced cannot be ruled out.

The two halves of the proposed constituency can be further differentiated in terms of culture, language, genetics and history. One half will be administered by the Cornwall Unitary Council, to which certain powers of devolution have been permitted; the other by North Devon District Council, which does not have devolutionary rights. This is a non-compatible situation in a single constituency and the Commission can be assured that the people of North Devon are as deeply resentful of this proposal as are the Cornish. We do not believe for an instant that a single Member of Parliament can adequately represent a constituency of two such distinctive halves, let alone fully understand those important differences.

In rural parliamentary elections, the returning officer is the High Sheriff, but in this case which one would be chosen and given precedence over the other: Devon's, who is appointed by the Crown or Cornwall's who, uniquely in the UK, is appointed by the Duchy of Cornwall? Whose jurisdiction will intrude into the others in direct breach of constitutional law? This has the potential to create a further legal dispute between Crown and Duchy, of which there have been several in the past, one of which dragged on for four years. The Commission can be assured that the Attorney General for the Duchy of Cornwall has been alerted to this situation.

With regard to the figures on which this proposal is based, no account has been taken of the 52,500 houses to be built in Cornwall in the next 14 years and which have been imposed by another governmental agency, the Planning Inspectorate. The vast majority of these houses will be unaffordable to Cornish people, who have the lowest incomes in the UK, and this means a further population increase in the Duchy of between 100,000 and 150,000 by 2030. Surely, the Commission must take note of the considerable can of worms that its proposal is likely to unleash, in addition to the deep resentment and outrage it has already caused among the electorate. It is entirely avoidable by way of a small amendment to the Act that has already been applied to the Isle of Wight and among the Scottish islands.

The Commission will have seen the proposal formulated by Professor Gareth Parry which keeps all constituencies within the Cornish border and suggests a reduction of MPs in Cornwall from six to five. We have had five MPs in the past; we are used to that. The Government's target electoral figures will be exceeded only by a few hundred

to cater for the inclusion of the small electorate on the Isles of Scilly. Professor Parry's proposal is eminently sensible, creates none of the considerable problems of the current proposal and I would strongly recommend it to the Commission.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr Weatherhill. Does anybody have any questions for clarification for Mr Weatherhill?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You mentioned the data that was presented and the result of the boundary review 1988 for the European constituency. Is that data that you have presented to the Commission already, or is it something that they need to look at themselves?

MR WEATHERHILL: No, I was only quoting from a QC who made that observation in 1988. It was a QC attached to the Boundary Commission. His name was GD Flather. There was a *de facto* joinder of Cornwall to England but not a *de jure* one. It has never been achieved at law.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Any other questions for Mr Weatherhill? (No response) Thank you very much for attending and thank you for your representations.

MR WEATHERHILL: Can I just say one further thing? We were told before we came here obviously that the proceedings would be filmed, which have never come across in a public consultation before, and I have attended several and I have even presided over a couple. Unfortunately, I do not recall being asked for my consent and my consent would not have been given and, therefore, my submission today has been made under protest. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I think actually people were told on booking in, or should have been told on booking in, that there would be filming.

MR WEATHERHILL: Yes, we were told, but we were not asked for any consent.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay, thank you. Our next speaker is Mr Malcolm Brown. Mr Brown, I note that you are booked to speak at 11.20. Are you happy to speak now or do you want to wait?

CLLR BROWN: Yes, that is fine.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Could I ask you to give your name and address, please.

CLLR BROWN: (St Austell Bethel) My full name is Malcolm Alan Brown, I live at 20 Killyvarder Way, Boscoppa, St Austell, Cornwall.

I am speaking in a personal capacity, but, in the interests of transparency, I had better say I am the Cornwall councillor for St Austell Bethel. I am also a town councillor for St Austell Bethel. I am the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democratic group on the Cornwall Council. I have been helping Ian Jolly on some of the submissions on behalf of the Liberal Democrats and I used to work for Cornwall County Council, in which part of my role was work upon electoral reviews, and some of the insight that I have comes from that experience.

I think the first thing I want to say is that I went to the opening morning of the inquiry at Exeter and I was impressed that there was a very broad consensus by the main spokesmen for all of the political parties. It does seem to me that everybody is trying to approach this boundary review in a serious way and I think most of the arguments which have been put forward are genuine ones, not to try to secure party political advantage.

Cornwall Council, as you know, passed a very clear resolution and you have heard, first at Exeter from Richard Williams and yesterday from John Pollard, the views of Cornwall Council. I think Cornwall Council has given a very clear lead to the people of Cornwall and I hope you will place a large amount of weight on it. To add to that, I would just like to point out for the record the resolution that went through Cornwall Council, that every single councillor, other than some members of the Conservative group who were present, voted for the resolution and I think Cornwall Council has stood up well for the people of Cornwall.

I next want to read a resolution which St Austell town councillors passed on Monday of last week. I asked the Town Council to debate it and I think the wording of the resolution, which was passed unanimously by all councillors, whether they were Conservatives, Independent, Labour or Liberal Democrat, reflects quite well how this inquiry fits into the overall process. The resolution we passed was: "To object to the proposals of the Boundary Commission and to write to the Boundary Commission, the Members of Parliament and the Government to explain the Council's objection to the proposals and, in particular, to the proposal to create a parliamentary constituency straddling both Devon and Cornwall and to further seek legislative changes to amend the criteria for the creation of community boundaries and the unique nature of Cornwall."

I think that is important. I do not want to spend much of the minutes allocated to me to talk about the Devonwall proposal because other people have spoken about it yesterday and today very well and I am sure further speakers later in the day will do so. There is great passion in Cornwall about this. You are receiving a variety of arguments which are probably not all totally consistent, but at least some of which must have great merit. Some people are arguing that Cornwall deserves special consideration because of its geography, others because of its constitutional status, others because of how close we are to meeting even the very rigid criteria on numbers, and I think all we can

ask you, and I, certainly, and I think others, do fully appreciate that your role is to implement legislation which was passed by Parliament, but we would hope that, when you are writing your report on this inquiry, you can try to reflect the mood that came across in Cornwall and the strong and genuine feelings that there are.

The only danger about this inquiry is that, because so much of the attention has been focused upon the Devonwall constituency, the impression might be given that otherwise everything is fine about the proposals, and the truth is lots of other things about the proposals are not fine. That again is partly because of the very rigid 5 per cent threshold which has been laid down and I think that is making it very difficult for you to come up with detailed proposals for individual constituencies which do align with how people see natural communities, and the consequence is that it is going to make it less convenient for many people to be in touch with their Member of Parliament, so I want to make quickly some references to what I think are the bits of Cornwall where there are problems, and it may be there is no better alternative, but they are the bits of Cornwall where, I would suggest, further work by the Commission, when you assess everything, will be helpful.

In the run-up to the formation of Cornwall Council, work was done to try to divide Cornwall into a number of community networks, of which there were altogether 19, and one thing which is encouraging about your proposals is that 14 of the 19 community networks in Cornwall are totally within one of your new constituencies, so that is one respect which is encouraging. I just want to touch briefly on the issues, though, which are outstanding and I will finish by talking about the Mid Cornwall area.

Firstly, Portreath is part of the Camborne, Redruth and Pool community network, but yesterday there were representations from individuals that Portreath ought to be in the new Falmouth Camborne constituency. I did speak last night to the Cornwall councillor for Portreath and Mount Hawke whose view, which I will pass on, is that the division that she represents should continue to all be in one constituency and, given that, I think it is preferable for the Portreath and Mount Hawke to be not in the Camborne Redruth constituency because, if you did that or even if you separated Portreath from Mount Hawke, that would be inconvenient and, if you kept them together, it would mean that the Parish of St Agnes would be divided between two constituencies. I think that one general theme that I suspect that you all get, and certainly I get talking to parish councils about all electoral reviews, they find it unfortunate if they are divided either between constituencies or, in the case of local government reviews, between district wards.

The Launceston community network is also divided, in that you have the Launceston divisions in one constituency and those to the south of Launceston in a different one. The main respect in which this is unfortunate is that you end up with villages which are only two miles from Launceston not being in the same constituency as Launceston. Having said that, I think you are going to find it very difficult to overcome that problem

and probably the only alternative would be for you to look at the St Blazey/Par area so that you would extend the South East Cornwall constituency to the west, and I think it would be even more serious to break up the large population in the Par/St Blazey/Tywardreath area.

The next area is the Newquay/St Columb community network. This has not been discussed today by anyone, but there is a problem in that all of the electoral divisions are in the Newquay constituency. The one exception is the St Columb Major one. St Columb Major is a distinct town. It is north of the A30, which is a good natural geographical boundary, and I will be concluding in a minute by suggesting that one possible improvement you might like to consider would be to swap the St Columb division with the St Stephen in Brannel division.

I will introduce that by really coming on to talk about the China Clay Community Network. You heard from Councillor Lobb from St Dennis yesterday and I am pretty sure Councillor Cole is going to devote quite a bit of his bit later to the china clay area. I hope you are aware, and you certainly should be, that the china clay area is a very distinct area, 36 square miles formally, and still in part actively devoted to the working of china clay, which means it has a landscape unlike anywhere else in Great Britain with the exception perhaps of the South Wales mining valleys. There is a very strong identity. In the past, the china clay area, apart from St Enoder, going back a bit further, was all in the same constituency. One of the worst consequences of the proposals is that there are six electoral divisions which make up the china clay area; three of them are in one constituency, three are in another. I think it is really bad and the china clay area is an area which really often feels it is the repository of the worst things in Cornwall and that not enough respect is paid to it by any government agency, whether it is Cornwall Council or government agencies. I would ask you to have a very careful look at the boundaries to see whether any alternative solution can be found.

If you can get all six divisions in the same constituency, I know that would be very much appreciated, but I think you will find it difficult, so, if you cannot do that, I think what I am suggesting about St Stephen in Brannel is a sensible solution, partly because it would bring in villages like Langess(?), which is only three miles from the edge of St Austell, into the same constituency as St Austell. I will just make the general point which I touched on earlier, that trying to make it as convenient as possible for individuals to see their Member of Parliament remains important. I know we are in the age of computers and all that, but a lot of people want to sit down face-to-face with their Member of Parliament and, if they are living 20 miles away from a town where the Member of Parliament is likely to be holding surgeries, rather than two miles away if the boundaries were more in line with the way that Cornwall functions, that would not be beneficial.

If you go back in history, St Austell has always been in the same constituency as Truro up until the last parliamentary boundary review when it was put in with Newquay. That was logical because, in those days, we had district councils and they were the two main

towns in their district. When the boundary review started, it seemed to me that there would be an opportunity for Truro and St Austell to be reunited, just as it would be possible for Newquay and Bodmin, who had always been in the same constituency, to be reunited, and in fact the first recommendation from the previous Boundary Commission work was to that effect and that was changed.

In practice, I think mainly because there has been possibly as rapid a population growth in Truro and St Austell as any town in Cornwall, it is very difficult to come up with boundaries that put Truro and St Austell in the same constituency, although I suspect probably St Austell people might, on balance, prefer it. I cannot come up with a way of making that work within the range of numbers that you have got, so, on balance, I do tend to support the proposals that you have got, but I think it is another thing that you might want to do further work on and have a look at.

Also, I think partly because of that, I would make a general point that it does not seem to me to be necessary for boundaries to look neat on a map, to go sort of like that (indicating). What is more important is that each individual, where it is possible, is in the same constituency as the major town which is closest to them. We do have very poor public transport in Cornwall. Many Members of Parliament hold surgeries on Friday evenings. If it is a Saturday, that is probably okay, but, if it is a Friday evening, people in many places would find they could get to their Members of Parliament's surgery, but they could not get home again, so I do think you need to pay a lot of account to the public transport network as well.

I think those are my conclusions. I will finish just with a quote from the late great Member of Parliament for Truro and St Austell, David Penhaligon, who defined politics as being "a choice between rotten options". That is rather a sad comment, but it is true. I think you have got a really difficult job in coming up with proposals that fit the criteria that have been given to you which will also be welcomed by most people in Cornwall, and I think from Cornwall we would wish you well in that.

Thank you for coming here and listening to what we have had to say. We have been civil, we have been grateful for the way that we have been received and we do hope that you will listen seriously to all the evidence that has been put by us, in particular, the type of evidence which probably is not being given in other parts of the country about the constitutional status of Cornwall. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Brown. Are there any questions from the floor for clarification? (No response) Thank you very much for attending and for your representations.

Mrs Charmian Larke, would you like to come down to the lectern, please. Can I ask you to give your name and address, please.

MRS LARKE: Charmian Larke. I live at Quenchwell, Carnon Downs, Truro.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Would you like to give your representations, please.

MRS LARKE: I am Cornish by birth and family and have been working in Cornwall on local energy matters for over 25 years with the aim of increasing Cornish energy resilience, which I think is fairly important to us. I object to the proposed cross-border constituency based on our local history, culture, identity and special legal situation.

The Commission is allowed to make changes to the formula application to allow for local ties and I would, therefore, suggest that we should do that in this case because of the local ties being vitally important. The Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities is based on the principle of the protection of minorities as part of the universal protection of human rights. The actions under the Convention include standard-setting, inter-governmental co-operation, importantly from our point of view today, activities for the development and consolidation of democratic stability and confidence-building in civil society.

The Cornish were recognised in 2014, as I am sure you have been told many times in these consultations, by the UK Government as a national minority under this Convention. The Government may have changed, but the legal protection under this Convention remains. As a side note, it is important to recognise that the Council of Europe, under which the Convention is administered, is not part of the EU and hence Brexit does not give a get-out to this Convention.

A key point concerning the proposed Devonwall constituency is that it would violate Articles 5, 7 and 15 of the Convention. In particular, Article 5 requires parties to the Convention: “(1) to undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage; and (2) without prejudice to measures taken in pursuance of their general integration policy the parties..” ie the UK government in this case “..shall refrain from policies or practices aimed at assimilation of persons belonging to national minorities against their will and shall protect those persons from any action aimed at such assimilation.”

More than one local opinion poll shows that 90 per cent of those polled are against this proposed cross-border constituency, hence such a constituency would be against the will of the national minority. Whilst, from the perspective of Whitehall or elsewhere up country, this might seem a nicety, please be aware that we Cornish value and cherish our culture and identity. It is vital to see how we see ourselves, that our boundaries are maintained and that there is no attempt to assimilate us with the folk across the Tamar, not that we have anything against them in particular.

The border and our identity. The boundary of Cornwall has been set for over 1,000 years. It is said that King Athelstan set the boundary along the Tamar around 920. The same border was observed in Cornwall's exemption from the tripartite English literature introduced by Canute in 1015 and exemptions have been written in since then. Had the border not been viewed as sacrosanct, Cornwall would have been included in Wessex law from the outset, but it was not.

It is also regarded in several legal texts and options as a legal entity and hence cannot be easily changed and is shown in up-to-date laws including, as has been quoted by others, I am sure, The Tamar Bridge Act of 1998 which refers to the general law concerning the applicability of statutes to the Duchy of Cornwall in section 41. This border is, therefore, enshrined in law today and in perpetuity; a breach of this border is, therefore, unlawful. Others have also found the role following relevant legal information. The whole territorial interest and dominion of the Crown is vested in the Duke of Cornwall and this continues to this day in several ways, such as ownership of the seabed below the high tide line. This confirms that Cornwall has a separate Head of State from the remainder of the UK and has been upheld in the High Court in 1855 and in 2011. Furthermore, the QC to the Boundary Commission itself in 1988 stated: "Although Cornwall is *de facto* administered by England, a formal *de jure* joinder of England and Cornwall has not ever taken place."

To change such an important boundary is to strike at the heart of Cornish identity. A change such as the proposed Devonwall constituency makes that change by changing our representation in Parliament, which obviously is a key part of our identity.

Representation and numbers. I understand the Boundary Commission is tasked to reduce the number of MPs and ensure the electorate of each constituency is between 71,000 or so and 78,507. Professor Parry has done some useful work on this and he suggests that the Commission's figure of 5.27 in the actual numbers of constituencies is based on the assumption that there are 74,739 electors in each constituency. However, we are permitted 78,507 electors. If that were the case, the allocation would be 5.17, which would give us a target of five constituencies. If we have five constituencies of the allowed maximum, or what it would turn out to be, there would only be 268 more per constituency, or 0.3 per cent above the target number. If this extremely small number were permitted, Cornwall would remain whole with the five constituencies or, as Professor Parry has said, we are imposing Devonwall on the basis of 268 electors, which seems daft considering the importance of our boundary remaining the same.

This suggests, if we are basically looking at the Isles of Scilly as the one that turns the tables, and you are going to move the boundary from our Cornwall/Devon historic border, that it might be reasonable to make the case that one Cornish constituency should be permitted to exceed the maximum to include the Isles of Scilly. Anything else is, I suggest, you taking a sledge hammer to crack a nut, as the saying goes. The result

of the nut, in this case Cornwall, would be similar to that expected when the sledge hammer hits the nut. It would lead to a long-lasting loss of identity and culture. It would not happen as immediately as the destruction of the nut under the sledge hammer, but it would be a slow, drawn-out loss. This is something I strongly object to. I think numbers can be very powerful, but it does in this case need to be tempered with local reality.

On practical issues, in order for our democracy to work, there needs to be an assessment of practical issues and how the different levels of government are to work together. Cornwall, in particular, has devolved local government through the Devolution Deal recently agreed with the Government. How is an MP supposed to operate and provide a sensible service to their constituents in such a circumstance where they are operating in two different legal and administrative approaches to local government? Our democracy will be seriously inhibited if this does not coincide with parliamentary constituency boundaries.

It appears that most Cornish MPs have not complained to the Government about this proposal or asked for it to be changed. This should not be construed as suggesting that they agree with the proposed Devonwall constituency or that, in being of the party of the present Government, they regard their party position as more important than their allegiance to Cornwall. It was a wise man who stated, "It's hard to understand something when your salary depends on not understanding it", and one could add "especially if you're a Minister".

The legislation provides the Commission with the discretion to take into account local government boundaries, boundaries of existing constituencies and any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies. I understand there have already been changes to the proposal for specific instances, islands. It is important for the Commission to recognise that Cornwall is an island. We only have about ten miles of land border with Devon and, in identity and cultural terms, we have a long history as a separate cultural island.

Present times are important. We are familiar with some of the conclusions of the Brexit vote and can see a similar process happening in the States with the election of Trump. The key element of understanding how this came about, alongside similar rises in anti-establishment actions across Europe, is that many voters are feeling disenfranchised. It is clear that voters want more local control, "I want my country back" to quote many Brexit voters, and want their own identity back. In Cornwall, our identity is completely linked to Cornwall with its ancient boundaries, both as the Duchy and with its own local autonomy. To go against this is to increase the local dislocation and disempowerment of our citizens. It was dramatic that most of Cornwall voted to leave in the Referendum, even though we have major European funding and a large agricultural sector with its major dependence on European funding. It was noticeable that the only area to vote remain was the richest area of Cornwall, ie this area. We have major pockets of areas

of multiple deprivation, which are particularly noticeable as increasing mood and anxiety disorders measure. We have around 25 per cent of families suffering fuel poverty alongside a dramatic rise in the use of food banks. These people are the dispossessed and disempowered and their numbers are growing.

A Devonwall constituency would prove to these, and many other people here, that the powers-that-be neither listen to them, nor care about their views on self-determination or anything else for that matter. I beg you not to make that mistake. Please act on this and rework your proposals for Cornwall to keep us whole and respect the ancient boundaries. I suggest, as have others, that we should have five constituencies and retain our identity. These local ties are vital to our culture and self-respect. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any questions for clarification to Mrs Larke? (No response) Thank you very much for attending and for your representations.

I understand that Mr Lance Dyer is here. Would you like to come down to the lectern, please, Mr Dyer.

CLLR DYER: Myttin Da.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning, Mr Dyer. Can I ask you to give your name and address, please.

CLLR DYER: (Truro) Councillor Lance Dyer, 4 Rundles Court, Malpas Road, Truro.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Would you like to give your representations, please.

CLLR DYER: I would just like to make a couple of statements that have been made over the last few years. "There is a distinct history, culture and language in Cornwall which we should celebrate and make sure is properly looked after and protected": this was David Cameron in April 2015. Then, last month, we had, "Some in Cornwall, for example, see their county as distinct from the rest of the region, a special case that should be handled separately from everywhere else east of the Tamar. That whole attitude has to change." That was our friend Sajid Javid, the Community Secretary, speaking in Exeter in October.

So which is it? The latter, in fact, is the offhand way that London often treats Cornwall and, unfortunately, what we have come to expect and indeed resent. Although Cameron's statement was made just before the 2015 General Election, no wonder the Cornish are cynical when we have not been treated as a special case or distinct. For example, we have lost our police service to Devon and Cornwall with headquarters in Exeter, we lost our ambulance service to the South West, so again management and

control was outside Cornwall and we lost the chance of a university to become an outpost of Exeter University, which even dissimilated the world-famous Camborne School of Mines. We are, in fact, distinct and, as such, the Cornish were recognised in 2014 under the Framework for the Protection of National Minorities, so the Cornish are on a par, equal pegging with the Scots and the Welsh.

At this time, money was allocated to develop the Cornish language and then suddenly this funding was halted; again, another way that London talks with forked tongue as far as Cornwall is concerned. Article 4 of the Convention states that they, "shall take account of the specific conditions of the persons belonging to the national minority". Surely, this should mean continuing to live and remain within our national boundaries? Article 5 of the Convention says that, "Parties shall undertake to preserve the essential elements of their identity and cultural heritage". Again, our historic boundaries are essential elements of our identity and culture. Article 5 also states that, "Parties shall refrain from policies or practices aimed at assimilation of national minorities against their will and protect these persons from any action aimed at assimilation". These Cornwall/Devon proposals are yet another attempt at assimilation and they are all in complete contravention of the Convention.

Also, I wonder about the wider parliamentary changes: is it about saving money or improving democracy? Both have been claimed and both are flawed. Saving money, well, surely democracy should not have a price on it and, if money is the issue, we need to reform or abolish the House of Lords with a much-reduced elected second chamber.

Democracy: as has been shown by Brexit and the US elections, people are not engaged in nor believe that the parliamentary systems work for them. Your proposals do not help to counter this view. Cornwall already suffers a democratic deficit in that, on the creation of the Cornwall Unitary Authority, a whole layer of councillor accountability, ie the district councils, was abolished. There are also plans to reduce Cornwall county councillor representation, so overall the democratic representation is being reduced still further.

Even the boundaries proposed are based on out-of-date electoral registration figures with some 18 million people not registered to vote. Preferably, the plan should be based on population of voting age in each constituency and not registration. An MP, once elected, is expected to represent everyone in the constituency.

Here in Cornwall, there are plans for 52,000-plus more homes in the next few years, so a potential of at least 150,000 more people; another reason to keep the boundaries within Cornwall and to arrange them accordingly. Again, if democracy is the issue, why not have a proportional representation system of voting and open elections to 16-year-olds as in Scotland, our sister Celtic nation? The reduction of MPs will also strengthen the ruling party in Westminster; with fewer MPs overall and so many MPs these days in ministerial and PPS roles, any independent thought and action from the governing party

will be diminished. This was proven when one of our MPs spoke out against Devonwall, but then was soon reined in by Tory HQ who reminded him that his junior ministerial post was by courtesy of the Tory Government. A similar situation seems to have occurred over the Cornish language funding. The total number of MPs being reduced reduces the independence of those MPs because so many are dependent on their party for goodwill and so on.

A creation of a cross-Cornwall/Devon boundary would have many practical obstacles to overcome in dealing with different local authorities and different historical backgrounds of Cornwall and Devon. Cornwall is a Duchy, so the Duke of Cornwall takes precedence over the monarch in many matters relating to Cornwall, eg foreshore ownership, mineral rights and so on. Indeed, Cornwall itself is described as a Duchy as opposed to an English county and, although administers of the county, it does not have the same incorporation into England as Devon.

Historical rights and legislation relating to Cornwall are still in place, and one example is the Stannary Parliament. Just a few years ago, as another example, an examination of DNA in various parts of the UK was carried out. This showed very clearly that DNA from Cornish people with Cornish-born parents and grandparents were quite distinct from those of Devonians.

In many ways, due to the neglect of Cornwall by Westminster, the Duchy is now one of the poorest regions in Europe and, as such, has been allocated EU funding. How would an MP with a cross-boundary deal with this? Will they effectively be able to lobby for EU replacement funding for Cornwall when the Devon side may not be eligible? How will they balance the different needs of both areas? Cornwall has a devolution package which is to cover healthcare, transport, energy, employment support, environment, heritage and culture. It would be rather ironic that an MP representing Devon would be asked hopefully to support Cornish heritage and culture when they have been appointed on the back of destroying this heritage and culture.

In summary, the whole boundary review is flawed as far as democracy is concerned, but especially in relation to Cornwall and its heritage. The Framework Convention would be breached. Cornwall should be treated as a national minority in the same way as Wales and Scotland. As people have said before, our boundary is one of the oldest in Europe, established in 936 AD, and must remain intact. Interestingly enough, the comments that I have made and the comments that people have made are broadly in line with the recommendation of the Electoral Reform Society. Meur Ras.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr Dyer. Are there any questions for Mr Dyer for clarification? (No response) Thank you very much for attending.

Our next speaker is Mr Colin Retallick. Good morning, Mr Retallick. Would you give your name and address, please.

MR RETALLICK: Colin Retallick, Station Road, Perranporth. I am here to oppose the proposal by the Boundary Commission to link North Cornwall with West Devon. From my experience here this morning in this chamber, a lot has been said already of what I intended to say, so, rather than repeat everything that has already been said, I will simply associate myself with the comments of those that have been said before me by the last two speakers, but I will emphasise some points that I wish to make.

The Boundary Commission's proposal to reduce the number of constituencies within the UK to 600 is something to which I have no objection; in fact, I think there is an argument for saying that it could be reduced even further than that. However, as I have said, the proposal to reduce Cornwall's constituencies or link the North Cornwall constituency with Devon is one which I strongly disagree with. I will quote, as previous speakers have done, the European Framework Convention, recognising the Cornish as a national minority and that, having been subsequently endorsed by the British government, the Boundary Commission does not recognise Cornwall as any different from the rest of the UK, but the proposal suggests that no single constituency may be split between different parts of the United Kingdom. I say that Cornwall is just that, a separate part of the United Kingdom.

The Boundary Commission does not cross borders with England, Wales or Scotland, and I say give Cornwall the same respect. An exception has been made for the Isle of Wight. One option would be to make Cornwall an exception in the same way. To amend the figures, the maximum of 78,000 for each constituency, just by a few hundred, as I understand it, would mean that, if the constituencies within Cornwall were reduced from six to five, then Cornwall would fall within that caption of just over 78,000 for each of the constituencies.

The Act requires that each constituency is designated as either a county or a borough, but the proposal for the Devon and Cornwall constituency will be neither of those two things. I would mention that the High Sheriff is the returning officer in parliamentary elections and in Devon the High Sheriff is appointed by the Crown, whereas in Cornwall they are appointed by the Duchy, so the question arises: who will have jurisdiction in this case and who will take priority? It has to be something that needs to be sorted and the proposals do not seem to mention that.

I would mention, as the previous speaker has done, what Sajid Javid, the Secretary of State said recently, that, "Some in Cornwall see their county as distinct from the rest of their region; a separate case that should be handled separately from everywhere east of the Tamar. If we are going to make a success of the South West, that whole attitude has to change." I say that, if anybody's attitude has to change, it is his because, while

there is a Cornishman alive who knows its history, Cornwall will never be part of the South West region of England.

There has been much dilution of Cornwall over the years and again that has been referred to by the previous speaker, and I say that this proposal goes beyond that, it goes beyond amalgamating, for instance, the Cornish police force with Devon. This is something for which I say a line has to be drawn in the sand and I say that that line is the one fixed by Athelstan in 936, the east bank of the Tamar. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for your representations. Are there any questions for Mr Retallick? (No response) Thank you very much for attending.

Mrs Eileen Carter? Good morning, Mrs Carter.

MRS CARTER: Good morning. I have no script, I have no notes, I am merely a mother, a wife and a granny. I am a nobody.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mrs Carter, could I just ask you to introduce yourself first of all, please.

MRS CARTER: I am also an English woman, so I speak from a different perspective.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Could you give your name and address, please?

MRS CARTER: Eileen Carter, Rhosynwyn, Chapel Hill, Bolingey, Perranporth.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, and what do you want to say in terms of the representations you want to make?

MRS CARTER: I do not want to talk about the legal side. I am not a legal person, as I have said, I do not know anything, but I do know the Cornish race and that is what I want to talk about, the Cornish race. I have been here 70 years and I was quite surprised to come here and find a different race from England. They are quiet, gentle, law-abiding and mild-mannered citizens. When you come to Cornwall, you do not have plate-glass windows kicked in, wheelie-bins set on fire or stones thrown at the police. We have a wonderful place here. In our celebrations, we can get as many as 800 or 1,000 people come and wave St Piran flags because we are proud of what is here. We have 800 people march on lovely sand dunes not far from here shouting for Cornwall, and there is not one policeman in sight. This is how quiet and gentlemanly the Cornish nation are. But, because they are quiet and gentlemanly, I have found over these 70 years that they have been treated quite dreadfully by Westminster and I think it is about

time that Westminster listened to the people instead of just going on their own sweet way.

I wonder if you realise that, a fortnight ago, there was a demonstration on the banks of the Tamar. Every one of those six Tory MPs was invited. Not one deigned to come to speak to those constituents of theirs. They just sat back, they sent a recorded message, I got it myself, a recorded message from an office. You never see these MPs. It is about time these MPs stuck up for Cornwall and stopped just sitting on their backsides in Westminster. I am sorry if I am different from all the other speakers, but I am a loud-mouthed English woman, not a just, gentlemanly Cornishman, and I want to stick up for them because why are there not big demonstrations outside County Hall? I will tell you why: because a lot of the Cornish are shy, quiet and do not like to make a fuss. They all feel the same as these people that speak, but they do not dare come in here; they would melt away. I am speaking for the downtrodden people of Cornwall, so that is really the main thing I want to say.

I do not want to talk about legalities and I do not want to talk about what has gone on in history in the past. This is now and you are nailing the coffin of Cornwall to the ground, and I know what is going to happen: you will go back, you will tick the right boxes, our six useless MPs will agree and Parliament will agree, "Yes, let's take a big chunk out of Cornwall, it doesn't matter, it's only a line of ink on a page". Well, to the Cornish it is not that way. They are different, their language is different, their history is different and that should be taken into account. If you tried to take a big chunk of Surrey away and put it into some other county around London, there would be hell let loose and the Government would say, "Oh no, we can't do that", but, because here the Cornish are quiet little people stuck on the edge of England, it does not matter.

I am asking you to search your hearts. I do not know how much you know about Cornwall. I do not know you or where you have come from. Have you ever been here, have you immersed yourselves in Cornish events? It is a marvellous place. Cornwall was here before the Houses of Parliament, before the Tower of London and it was here before King Athelstan, and I think it is about time, if you do not mind my saying so, that Westminster treated Cornwall with a little more respect.

I do apologise to you for venting my wrath, I feel a bit like Donald Trump, but I just have to do it because the Cornish will not; they are too polite. It takes an English woman to be rude and horrible, so thank you for listening to me and I hope you will go back and bear what I have said in mind.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mrs Carter, thank you for coming to speak to me; I am really pleased that you have come and given those representations. Are there any questions for Mrs Carter?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I just want to confirm to the Commission, please, that, if these hearings were held when the public of Cornwall were able to come, the public who are itching and scraping away, the public that I represent as a Councillor who are working from ten in the morning until eight at night, who are working from six in the morning until ten at night on minimum wages and who cannot attend this hearing because this hearing is set during two working days, and I know that you work hard in the community and I am sure that you will be in a position to confirm that this room would be full of hundreds of people if this meeting were held for the purpose of the public rather than the Commission.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mrs Carter, what would you like to say to that?

MRS CARTER: Well, wearing deaf aids, I did not hear a word he said.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I think what was said is that ---

MRS CARTER: Could you tell me in brief? Can I approach you? I am not going to bash you on the head.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am very pleased that you are not going to do that. What was asked is that, if the hearing had been held out of working hours, so in the evening or at the weekend, it has been suggested that the room would be full of hundreds of people who would want to come and tell me what their thoughts were, and you were asked whether you would agree that that would be the case.

MRS CARTER: I think the problem is that having it in County Hall, to a lot of Cornish people, is a little intimidating. If you gathered on the dunes of Perranporth, they would all be around you, but it is intimidating to the quiet, ordinary Cornish person in the villages.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay, thank you.

MRS CARTER: It should be held somewhere insignificant. This is too grand for Cornwall.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We are not probably getting your answer because you just need to be a little bit closer to the microphone. We do not want to miss what you are saying.

MRS CARTER: I think the Cornish people are too shy to come forward into County Hall. This is very imposing to a lot of the elderly who would really like to come and speak. I was quite surprised to have a lectern and stand here. I think it would be nice if

you had a desk where the speaker sat in front of you, more casual. This is too “Westminster” for us Cornish.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Any more questions? (No response) Thank you very much, Mrs Carter, for coming and speaking to me.

Dr Ken George, please. Good afternoon, Dr George. Could I ask you to give your name and address, please.

DR GEORGE: I am Dr Ken George, I live at Fosbren, Keval Lane, Seaton, Torpoint.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. I understand that you will be requiring the services of an interpreter because you will be speaking in Cornish. Is that correct?

DR GEORGE: I shall give a short statement in Cornish and I understand it will be translated.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, thank you. Just to make you aware, we have got some spare capacity. Sometimes, it takes a little longer if we have to have things translated; it can double the time. Normally, there will be a ten-minute slot, but we have got some capacity because the next speaker has not yet booked in, so I just want to make you aware of that before you start. Thank you.

DR GEORGE (via an interpreter): Cornwall Council has a policy of making every sign for street names in Cornwall bilingual, in English and in Cornish. There is an official panel, of which I am a member, to translate names into Cornish. Nowhere in England does one find bilingual street names because there is only one autochthonous language in England. However, in Scotland, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Wales and Brittany, there are bilingual street names. Each of these five Celtic countries has its own language, just like Cornwall. All of this shows that Cornwall is separate from England. It is imperative that the Commission recognise that it has responsibility for two countries rather than one. Just as constituencies are not split across other international boundaries within the United Kingdom, it must respect the Tamar as a boundary of this kind.

I would propose a simple solution to this problem: recognise Cornwall as a special case like the Isle of Wight, keep her traditional boundary sacrosanct and give her five constituencies. I acknowledge that the consequence is to redraw the boundaries of the constituencies in the south-west of England, but I am sure that this is not a great problem for the Commission. That concludes what I have to say.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Dr George. Are there any questions for clarification for Dr George? Thank you. Would you give your name, please.

CLLR JENKIN (via an interpreter): Thank you. My name is Councillor Loveday Jenkin. I want to ask my question in Cornish as I never speak to Dr Ken George in English. The question was that you never mentioned about the number of people in each of the constituencies, and the response was?

DR GEORGE: I pointed out that Cornwall had five constituencies for some years in the past and only recently has it had six, and it is more important to us to preserve the boundary of Cornwall than to retain six constituencies. I also pointed out that the amount by which one would have to bend these arbitrary rules to allow five constituencies instead of six, or five and a half, is quite small and, therefore, Cornwall ought to be a special case.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Dr George. Are there any other questions for clarification?

DR GEORGE: I myself have a question of the Commission. It is quite clear from the poster behind you that you regard Cornwall as part of England. I would like to know when you think Cornwall became part of England?

MR HARTLEY: Dr George. I am Sam Hartley, the Secretary to the Commission, and I think it is fairer if I take that question as Anita has been appointed just to look at the initial proposals. In the Commission's view, the legislation that governs it covers the English part of the UK and it is the Commission's view that that legislation applies to all the counties, including Cornwall. I appreciate that you may not agree with that. It is the sort of question that really probably only the courts can decide. I am very happy to discuss it with you outside of the hearing, if you would like to, and indeed happy to enter into correspondence about that.

DR GEORGE: Thank you, I would be quite happy to discuss that outside. I will just make two final points on that subject, which is that, in the century between 1450 and 1550, a number of maps and documents are available using the expression "*Anglia et Cornubia*", which we all know means "England and Cornwall." This was clearly a common phrase during that century, just as England and Wales is now. Also, during that century, Cornwall went to war twice with England and, to my knowledge, there has been no Act of Parliament since which has tried to make Cornwall part of England. I will conclude there, thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you for attending. The next three speakers who have booked to speak have not yet arrived. However, we do have somebody who is interested in speaking, Mr Angus Lamond. Mr Lamond, would you

like to come down to the lectern, please. Good afternoon, Mr Lamond. Would you like to give your name and address, please.

MR LAMOND: Angus Lamond, Wadebridge. I have not been able to put some notes together, so this is going to be a bit *ad hoc*.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is fine; you just deliver it in the way that you want to.

MR LAMOND: I have lived in Cornwall for about 40 years now. In all that time, I have known Cornwall to be a Celtic nation of the British Isles which is next to England, just like Wales and Scotland. Nobody in the Boundary Commission or in Parliament is suggesting that any parliamentary constituency should be created that overlaps England and Scotland or England and Wales. The same applies to Cornwall in the best interests of the Cornish people and their democratic representation.

Particularly in light of the CFNM, how could a Cornish MP represent both Cornish interests and English interests? It is not possible because Cornwall's interests are particular and special. That is it.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any questions for Mr Lamond? (No response) There appear to be none, so thank you very much for attending and giving those representations.

Is Miss Chloe Tennant in the chamber? (No response) Is Mrs Sylvia Ronan in the room or Mr Graham Ronan? (No response) The people whose names that I have just read out, Mr and Mrs Ronan, I believe that they are here. Their speaking slots are not fixed until 12.30, so I am just going to wait a few minutes for them to come into the chamber, but I am not going to adjourn for that purpose, so we will just wait for them to come in. (After a pause) Mr and Mrs Ronan? You have booked a speaking slot at 12.30, Mrs Ronan, and Mr Ronan at 12.40, so would you like to come down to the lectern, please. Good afternoon.

MRS RONAN: Good afternoon, and thank you very much for the opportunity to come and say, though I do not think it will take me ten minutes, that I do object to the idea of the boundary changes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mrs Ronan, can I just ask you to give me your name and address, please.

MRS RONAN: It's Sylvia Ronan. The address is Trebant, 14 Bowglas Close, Ludgvan Churchtown, Penzance, TR20 8HH.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mrs Ronan. Would you like to make your representations? What would you like to say?

MRS RONAN: I would like to say please do not change the boundaries. We are two very different counties with very different ideals and thoughts about the way ahead. I originally lived in Devon and I moved to Cornwall to work for two years 26 years ago, and 26 years ago there was the same discussion about whether to change the boundaries or not. I do not think it is right. I think we need to keep our identities as much as we can in this country, and our counties help us to do that. The Cornish are very Cornish; the Devonians are very Devonian. I know I am a Brummie, but I do live here and appreciate the way that it all works down here. Thank you very much for listening to me, and please do not change the boundaries.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for coming to speak to me, Mrs Ronan. Are there any questions? (No response) Thank you very much for coming and speaking.

Mr Ronan, are you comfortable standing or would you like to sit down?

MR RONAN: I am fine, thank you. As for my address, I live with her.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay, thank you very much for that.

MR RONAN: So it is the same address as hers.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: What would you like to say, Mr Ronan?

MR RONAN: I would just like to say first of all that I am a Devon boy, but I have lived more than 50 per cent of my life in Cornwall and I love Cornwall. We originally farmed in north Cornwall and now live in west Cornwall, but we still own land in north Cornwall and that land is in one of the two parishes of Werrington and North Petherwin which, prior to 1953, were in Devon on the wrong side of the Tamar. There was so much feeling about it that it got changed back by the Boundaries Commission in 1953, if you look at your records.

The two counties are different in make-up. They have their own ideals and there is the sometimes not so friendly rivalry between Devonians and Cornwall, and that boundary must stay. There is no reason, with the modern technology, that you have to change the boundaries just to make the numbers look good. With modern technology, it does not matter what the numbers are, everybody gets a fair representation, so it is just an exercise on paper giving somebody a job to change the boundaries. That is all I want to say, thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay. Are there any questions for Mr Ronan for clarification? (No response) Thank you very much for attending and giving your thoughts.

We have one remaining speaker who had booked a slot to speak this morning at 12.20. That person is not here yet. What I propose to do is to adjourn the hearing until ten to one and to review the situation at that point. Before I do that, is there anybody else in the chamber who would like to speak? (No response). Thank you very much. I will adjourn the hearing until ten to one and then review the situation with regard to that speaker who is booked at that point.

After a short break

Time Noted: 12.50 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Welcome back, ladies and gentlemen. It is now ten to one. The speaker that we were hoping might arrive, I am afraid, has not arrived, so we have no more speakers booked this morning. Our next speaker is not booked until 2.00 pm, so I will now adjourn the hearing until 2.00 pm.

After the luncheon adjournment

Time Noted: 2 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome back to the public hearing. We have a speaker listed for two o'clock, Ms Jane Howells. Good afternoon, Ms Howells.

MS HOWELLS: Dohajydh da, good afternoon.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Could I ask you to give your name and address, please.

MS HOWELLS: Jane Howells, Bostrase, Millpool, Goldsithney, Penzance, Kernow.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, if you would like to give your presentation, please.

MS HOWELLS: My name is Jane Howells and I am speaking on behalf of Bewnans Kernow, the partnership of 45 Cornish cultural organisations, in response to the published boundary proposals for Cornwall.

We note that the Boundary Commission states on its website: "Public hearings: a crucial part of the consultation". We hope that the hearings are genuinely crucial and we trust

that our recommendations will carry weight and will lead to change in the Boundary Commission's proposals. Our request and recommendation to the Boundary Commission is that Cornwall's ancient border remains intact and that all the constituencies in Cornwall remain entirely contained within its territory. For this, we seek a change in legislation. In order to retain the integrity of its geographic and historic boundary, Cornwall should be treated as a special geographical case under the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act, like other peripheral regions, such as the Isle of Wight, the Western Isles and Orkney and Shetland.

There is an overwhelming view in Cornwall that we should not share a constituency with Devon. This was also the view expressed by the Boundary Commission itself. In 1988, the Boundary Commission concluded that: "It is to be recalled that, together with the County Council of Cornwall, the views from other democratically elected bodies were virtually unanimous in their opposition. In the result, my view is that there is a strong likelihood that the sentiments expressed at the inquiry upon matters of history, culture, language and other emblems of separateness would be shared by enough people in Cornwall to make the geographical consideration a consideration of weight." The Assistant Commissioner of the time also recorded that he could only find Cornwall's *de facto* but not *de jure* joinder with England. No legal joinder with England clearly signifies that there is an extant border defined and delineated in law. The unique constitutional difference lies, among other things, in the Duchy of Cornwall. The continuing constitutional powers, privileges and duties of the Duke of Cornwall relate to the territory of Cornwall and are clear evidence of Cornwall's continuing and active distinction. Maintaining coterminosity between the constitutional area and the electoral area is of key importance to Cornwall. Although the former Boundary Commission spoke of separateness, we do not ask for more separateness and we do not want assimilation; we want to retain the *status quo*.

I will firstly speak about Cornwall's border. Cornwall's traditional border with Devon has legal recognition as a national border in many instances and needs to be treated as such by the Act. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a nation as "a large aggregate of communities and individuals united by factors such as common descent, language, culture, history or occupation of the same territory so as to form a distinct people", which clearly applies to Cornwall.

On 24 April 2014, the Cornish were recognised as a national minority by the Government and, since then, have received legal protection under the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. In recognising the unique identity of the Cornish people, the Government provided the same status to the Cornish under the Framework Convention as the UK's other Celtic people, the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish. This is a substantive change in status and legal recognition since the last Boundary Commission hearing of 2011 and can provide the Boundary Commission with the rationale for protecting Cornwall's territorial integrity under the Act. The Framework Convention is an international treaty ratified by the UK

Government that is based on the principle that the protection of national minorities is essential to stability, democratic security and peace. The Framework Convention supports state parties in managing diversity by creating appropriate societal conditions. The Framework Convention binds state parties from its entry into force within the domestic jurisdiction.

In the UK, the process is via the Ponsonby Rule, whereby the treaty is laid before Parliament for scrutiny for 21 days prior to ratification by the Executive. The Advisory Committee affirms that it has consistently acknowledged that state parties have a margin of appreciation in this context, but has also noted that this margin must be exercised in accordance with the general rules of international law contained in Articles 31 to 33 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. In particular, it must be exercised in line with the obligation to interpret a treaty in good faith and in the light of its object and purpose.

The Advisory Committee explained: “The superficial conclusion is sometimes made that the application of the Framework Convention is, in practice, left solely to the discretion of state parties.” This interpretation, however, is incorrect. It runs counter to Article 26 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties and the basic principle of *pacta sunt servanda*. We know that the Council for Europe’s Advisory Committee is monitoring the attempt by the Government to remove Cornwall’s territorial integrity.

Cornish national identity is also recognised and was sanctioned by Parliament as part of the Census Order 2010. The recognition of a national identity, by definition, implies the recognition of a national boundary. Groups that were not territorially limited, such as gypsies, travellers, were not coded according to national identity, only ethnicity.

The Cornish language is a distinctive, cultural and identity indicator which also underpins the concept of a national border. Eighty per cent of the place names in Cornwall are of Cornish origin and the Cornish language is protected under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages 1992, which includes the following section which government has agreed to “the respect of the geographical area of each regional or minority language in order to ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of the regional or minority language in question”. We ask and expect the Boundary Commission to recommend that the Government upholds its international agreements with regard to the Cornish and their traditional homeland and its borders.

Furthermore, we utterly reject the newly emerged concept of a Cornwall and Devon sub-region. Sub-regions are an element not required by the Act. It is a concept that was, effectively, killed off to the benefit of Cornwall in 1999 when Cornwall and Devon became separate NUTS Level 2 regions.

My second point is about the lack of fairness within the proposals and the arbitrary nature in which the Act has been applied. The attempt to respect county boundaries in some areas is not required by the legislation; indeed, it is illogical. The Act is based on a purely numerical approach to constituency size. The respect given to some English county boundaries but not to Cornwall is confusing and does not follow logic. This assumption should either be applied universally or not at all; it should not be selective. Further evidence of the lack of fairness is the way Cornwall is deeply disadvantaged by being joined with the powerful Unitary Authority of the Isles of Scilly. If it were not for the 1,651 electors resident on the Isles of Scilly, it would be possible to create five parliamentary constituencies within Cornwall which were all within the permitted electoral ranges. Additionally, no account has been taken of the huge extent of the St Ives constituency, stretching, as it does, for at least 60 miles. These factors alone, given fairness and consistency, should mean that Cornwall in its entirety is treated as an area of special geographic consideration.

Thirdly, I will speak about political and economic matters. Both the EU Referendum and the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act were founded on the same formative principle which, to put it bluntly, is seen as a use of the mechanisms of state to bring advantage to the Conservative Party. The EU funding which was Cornwall's due, and which would have delivered an economic step change to our Duchy, is now in jeopardy. It would be the height of bad governance if Cornwall's economy were to suffer a further setback due to a range of unwanted compromises, including the loss of a hard-won brand through the enactment of the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act as it stands. The proposals by central government to create a cross-border constituency undermines the relationship between Cornwall and central government. This Act has reduced the trust of the Cornish electorate in their elected MPs. Trust is valuable and it can be rebuilt if Cornwall's border is retained for parliamentary constituency purposes.

Fourthly, I will speak about our pride in Cornwall. Cornwall is a unit with the strongest sense of identity and community cohesion. We are proud that our administrative structures are coterminous with Cornwall and are able to better serve our communities in this way.

In conclusion, Cornwall's border is one of the oldest in the world. It is a territorial border that has also been sacrosanct for the purposes of parliamentary representation since the late 13th century. The people of Cornwall are not asking for greater representation; we would be perfectly content with lesser representation in order to maintain the integrity of Cornwall. Bewnans Kernow recommends and requests that the legislation is changed to maintain Cornwall's territorial integrity. The Parliamentary Act is bad law, as evidenced by the need for exceptions and as a result of the controversial party-political interest from which it was developed and its arbitrary distinctions.

We ask the Boundary Commission to join with us in saying “*Kernow Bys Vyken*”, Cornwall Forever, and to commit to ensuring a change in legislation which will give Cornwall’s constituencies a protected status within the Act to protect Cornwall’s traditional and ancient border and the retention of all parliamentary constituencies within its territory as they have always been. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Ms Howells. Are there any questions for clarification for Ms Howells? (No response) Thank you very much for attending and for providing the transcript. Ms Howells, would you like to just perhaps return to the lectern for a couple of minutes while we deal with the question?

MR ROWE: I would just like to ask, seeing as we do not live in England and we will never live in England, is it really appropriate that we should be asked to help to change the parliamentary constituencies in England, do you feel?

MS HOWELLS: I think we must respond to this. I think we cannot ignore it and I think we should respond to this.

MR ROWE: Yes, but it has done something which, having attended the 2011 inquiry and the previous inquiry, with the time, worry, stress and expense, is a distraction from other things that you have to be getting on with and doing, to be continually dragged into different parts of the British Isles to represent Cornwall when we are continually attacked by Westminster’s whims, fancies and expansionist ideas. Is this a total ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I just stop you? Do you have a question for clarification? That is the purpose of this part of the proceedings. What is your question for clarification?

MR ROWE: Do you feel that this has been a useful programme?

MS HOWELLS: Well, we will have to wait and see what the result is.

MR ROWE: Yes, but it is an anomaly, which we seem to have lots of, and they are repeated and it does take up an unnecessary amount of valuable time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. I think that the speaker has actually answered your question. Do you have any other questions for clarification?

MR ROWE: No, thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Could I just ask you to indicate your name for the record, please.

MR ROWE: Yes, Mr Hugh Rowe.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr Rowe. Thank you, Ms Howells.

Mrs Angela Angove, please. Good afternoon, Mrs Angove. Can I ask you to give your name and address, please.

MRS ANGOVE: Good afternoon, everybody. I am Angela Angove. I have been an activist and campaigner for Cornish issues for 30 years. My address is 70 Albany Road, Redruth.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. If you would like to make your presentation, please.

MRS ANGOVE: Thank you. I speak first as Chairperson of Cornish Quest. This is a small charity dedicated to raising money to buy books for Cornish schools. We were registered as a charity in 2009 and our number is 1129987, if anybody is interested. We believe Cornish history and culture should be more widely accessible to all and we are committed to supporting the teaching and learning of Cornish heritage for people of all ages as well as schools.

Whilst we recognise that you have no control over the name of the body you represent, I must firstly state that the 'Boundary Commission' is a misnomer since Cornwall is historically separate from the 'E' place and maintains a distinct legal status as a Duchy. In our view, to encompass it within a proposal from England is every bit as inaccurate as if it was including Wales and Scotland.

In April 2014, the Westminster Government, you know all this, recognised the proud history, the unique culture and the distinctive language of Cornwall under the Council of Europe Rules for the Protection of National Minorities. The decision affords Cornwall the same status under the Council of Europe Framework Convention for National Minorities and as the Britons of other Celtic peoples, the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish. This can all be found on the Government's website.

In terms of the proposals themselves, we have no comments on the specific boundaries proposed that lie wholly within Cornwall and wish to address only the submission entirely to the proposal of a cross-border seat between England and Cornwall. Whilst we recognise that under the current boundary legislation you are legally required to produce a proposal that includes a cross-border seat, it is our contention that such a seat is historically and culturally ludicrous and will result in inadequate representation for all involved.

We would also ask the Commission to state clearly within their report their professional concerns about the constituency boundaries that they have been required to produce

and to categorically state that they would not have chosen to cross the Cornish border had they not been so required to do so by English law.

To assist you in understanding the contents of the submission, the remainder of my submission is a brief overview of the relevant historical and cultural points. Cornwall is historically and legally distinct and leans against England, but it is not part of it. The border between Cornwall and England was fixed at the River Tamar by a treaty of King Hywel of the Cornish and King Athelstan of the Anglo-Saxons. With the creation of the Duchy of Cornwall in 1337, Cornwall was granted a distinct and constitutional status in British law. As part of the settlement, Cornwall maintains Stannary institutions that granted local control not found in any other part of Britain. In both 1497 and 1549, Cornwall was involved in notable uprisings in connection with Cornish law and the language and our faith, further emphasising the historical distinctiveness of Cornwall.

The Commission may be aware of the recent press story regarding the consultation of our beloved Duke on all bills subsequently affecting the Duchy, which is the whole of Cornwall, which clearly demonstrates that Cornwall's unique status persists to the present day. He is our Head of State.

Culturally, Cornwall is distinct from any other part of Britain in a way in which Orkney and Shetland and the Isle of Wight, which are not compelled to suffer such constituencies with other areas, cannot claim. The Cornish language has several thousand speakers now. Street signs are now official local government policy throughout Cornwall. The Heritage Lottery Fund has recently granted funding for an inaugural Cornish Language Festival to be held in February and March 2017 at Penzance.

Cornwall possesses several distinctive Cornish cultural organisations, including the Gorsedh Kernow, a non-political organisation which it is to maintain the national Celtic spirit, and of Bewnans Kernow, a Cornish partnership of cultural organisations, and of course MAGA, the Cornish language partnership. Furthermore, Cornwall has several distinctive Cornish festivals, including Lowender Peran, the Montol Festival, the Golowan Festival, 'Obby 'Oss, Allantide and Michael Joseph An Gof, a pilgrimage that we go to at St Keverne to commemorate him every year, and of course our beloved St Piran. We also have a national flag and of course our national anthem.

In conclusion, any proposal that separates part of Cornwall for the purpose of parliamentary representation, which is political, will inevitably result in a watering down of Cornwall's historic and cultural distinctiveness, will undermine the protection of the Cornish under the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and is unjustifiable, as would be any proposal to cross any of the other national boundaries within Britain. Remember, our border was set 1,100 years ago.

We recognise the invidious position in which the Commission finds itself and respectfully request that the Commission itself makes this clear and states unambiguously in its report that, had it been able to legally propose a set of constitutional boundaries, then it would not cross the Cornish border into England.

Now, and this is my personal point of view and I have kept this, this is very, very emotional for me, very. I found this statement several years ago and I think it is Cornwall to a 'T': "Deprive the people of their national consciousness, treat them as a tribe and not as a nation, dilute their notion of pride, do not teach their history, propagate their language as inferior, imply that they have a cultural void, emphasise their customs are primitive and dismiss independence as a barbaric anomaly." This quotation, Commissioner, is from Reinhard Heydrich on the gamification of Czechoslovakia. What is the difference between then and now?

A major genetic study was created out of the people of Britain some 15 years ago, in which I and my husband took part, by Oxford University and the Wellcome Trust. This was headed by Sir Walter Bodmer. We, the Cornish, alongside pockets of Welsh people, have the longest known history within the British Isles. My DNA was taken along with my husband's. I am 98 per cent Cornish Celt and 2 per cent Danish. I am no Anglo, which is what the English are trying to say I am.

Dr Robyn McKay's book *The Face of Britain* describes the Cornish as "the oldest inhabitants of these islands" and still the English Government are trying to assimilate us. Mr Sajid Javid, the latest Minister for Communities, should do his own research before he opens his mouth and comes out with the old rhetoric of the South West region drivell. I will not have it. We had that for the last 20 years. We are Kernow, Duchy or country, take your pick, I do not care, just take your pick; we will not be subjugated by the 'E' people. *Kernow Bys Vyken*.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mrs Angove, thank you. Are there any questions for clarification from the floor for Mrs Angove?

MRS ANGOVE: Everybody knows everything with what I have said.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, I am sure but we just need to give that opportunity. (No response) Thank you very much for attending and coming to speak to me.

Councillor Dick Cole is our next speaker, please. Thank you, Mr Cole, could I ask you to give your name and address, please.

CLLR COLE: (Mebyon Kernow) Yes, my name is Councillor Dick Cole. My home address is Lanhainsworth, Fraddon Hill, Fraddon, St Columb, TR9 6PQ.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. If you would like to make your presentation, please.

CLLR COLE: Thank you. My representation today is on behalf of Mebyon Kernow, the Party for Cornwall, also known as MK, which seeks to win greater powers for Cornwall. I am the Leader of the Party and I am also a councillor on the Unitary Authority.

I note that the larger Westminster parties were each afforded 30 minutes on the first day of the hearings in Exeter to give their initial views on the proposals. I would like to thank the Boundary Commission for considering my subsequent representations and agreeing to allow Mebyon Kernow to have a longer speaking slot in excess of the normal ten minutes in lieu of the arrangement afforded to the other political parties on Monday.

Speaking on the second day of the hearing in Truro, I know that many of the issues I wish to raise have already been covered in some detail by previous speakers. I have done my utmost to focus my comments in this representation, although there will inevitably be some repetition with what you have already heard.

What I say next will come as no surprise to you: Mebyon Kernow strongly objects to the proposals for parliamentary constituencies which do not respect Cornwall as a political or electoral unit, and we object specifically to the proposal for a Devonwall constituency which you have named 'Bideford, Bude and Launceston'. We believe that the creation of such a cross-Tamar seat would be a disaster for Cornwall, breaching our historic border which has existed for more than 1,000 years. It would also be against the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities through which the Cornish people have been recognised. I will address this more in a while.

Importantly, we would stress that this is not a symbolic issue. We maintain that the creating of a Devonwall seat would have a significant and detrimental impact on the future governance of Cornwall as a coherent political and economic unit. Issues such as the future devolution of powers and the provision of public services would be undermined. We would be correct to fear for the loss of political and economic power out of Cornwall, and the ability to prioritise the distinct needs of our local communities would be denigrated. I will not dwell on this as I believe the strategic argument was ably covered through the previous representations from Cornwall Council.

At this point, I would state that we understand that the present constraints of the boundary review process as presently being taken forward are dictated by the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011, which specifies that the electorates for individual seats, except for the four named exceptions, must be within 5 per cent of the UK average. In addition, whereas Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales were protected as entities in the legislation, even being allowed their own boundary commissions, Cornwall was denied such recognition. On behalf of MK, I would,

therefore, formally raise an objection that the design of the new parliamentary seats for Cornwall has been undertaken by a Boundary Commission for England and not a Boundary Commission for Cornwall.

We also object to the present approach, namely setting the electorate of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly within a larger and artificial area to gauge our entitlement to 5.27 MPs, which means that it would be a statistical impossibility for the Boundary to propose five seats for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly because of the 5 per cent rule. That is why we are building a strong campaign to persuade central government to modify the 2011 Act to ensure that Cornish constituencies remain whole and lie entirely within the boundaries of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

We further agree with previous speakers that, as far as Cornwall is concerned, the whole process is not fit for purpose. We would remind the Commission that, on Monday in Exeter, representatives of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties expressed the view that they were content that the basis for the boundary review for Cornwall and the South West of England, which was the electoral region for the EU Referendum, they were content with that and that they were also content with the Commission sub-division of that area into four sub-regions. On behalf of MK, I would state that we do not agree with those observations.

It is nonsensical that, whilst the Commission is failing to recognise the integrity of Cornwall, it wishes to respect the extent of a wholly artificial government region. It is doubly nonsensical that the Commission has come up with a Cornwall and Devon sub-region, so, whilst it fails to respect Cornwall's national border, it has by default ensured that the county boundaries between Devon and its neighbours of Somerset and Dorset would not be crossed. Please accept this as a formal objection to the very basis of your view and the geographic approach that has been undertaken.

Perhaps the key point is that Cornwall is not some generic geographical sub-division of England, but is a Celtic nation with its own distinct identity and nature, just like Scotland and Wales. It also has a unique constitutional position which sets it apart from the rest of the UK.

You have already heard much about Cornwall's distinct nationhood and our unique traditions. Ours is a national identity of great time depth, and I would like to share some historic quotes with you for a bit of colour and to further emphasise this point. In 1603, the Venetian Ambassador wrote that the late Queen Elizabeth I had ruled over five different peoples. The quote is: "The English, Welsh, Cornish, Scottish and Irish." You see, back then we were so important that we were not even just tagged on the end.

A little earlier, 1535, Polydore Virgil wrote: "The whole country of Britain is divided into four parts, whereof the one is inhabited of Englishmen, the other of Scots, the third of

Welshmen and the third of Cornish people who all differ among themselves, either in tongue, in manners or else in laws and ordinances.”

My personal favourite is from the resigning Archdeacon of Cornwall in 1342. I do not think he liked it down here because he wrote: “The folk of these parts are quite extraordinary, being of a rebellious temper and obdurate in the face of attempts to teach incorrect.” And we must not forget the disturbance in Bodmin in the early 12th century when some visiting French monks suggested that King Arthur was not coming back to reign over England again.

I can assure you that these last two references do not represent threats but show how our Cornish passion, which persists to 2016, has very deep roots and why we are determined to campaign hard to guarantee that this will endure for centuries to come.

I will not labour this point further today because I believe the relevant arguments have been made repeatedly over the last couple of days, except to emphasise that ours is a national identity which truly survives and thrives into modernity. I am sure that you will agree that you have been very lucky to be treated to a number of presentations wholly or partly in the Cornish language, which is perhaps the most clear and compelling demonstration of Cornwall’s nationhood and its sense of difference from the rest of the UK. I would suggest that it is telling that you will probably not be hearing any presentations in non-English indigenous languages in your hearings in Exeter, Bristol and Poole, or indeed experience anything like Mr Thomas’s terrific rendition of *Bro Goth Agan Tasow*.

It is the view of Mebyon Kernow that the border between Cornwall and England, which has been in place since the early 10th century, should have been respected by the 2011 Act, just as the borders between England and Scotland and England and Wales were safeguarded within the legislation. As you have heard repeatedly, three years after the Act was confirmed in April 2014, central government recognised that Cornish is a national minority. At that time, as has been mentioned a few times already, central government stated: “The decision to recognise the unique identity of the Cornish now affords them the same status as the UK’s other Celtic people, the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish.” Central government further summarised the significance of the Convention as follows: “The broad aims of the Framework Convention are to ensure that the signatory states respect the rights of people belonging to national minorities, undertaking to combat discrimination, promote equality, preserve and develop the culture and identity of national minorities, guarantee certain freedoms in relation to access to the media, minority languages and education and encourage the participation of peoples belonging to national minorities and public life.”

Indeed, central government has also made reference to Cornwall’s unique geography and rich heritage in the Devolution Deal. It agreed with the unitary authority, but it is undeniable that the UK authorities and various statutory bodies are failing in their duties

with regard to the Framework Convention, and the 2011 Act is significantly in conflict with many of the 32 Articles contained within these protections.

As well as defending the culture and identity of national minorities, the Convention also seeks to protect the political integrity of territories associated with such groups. I would ask you to study the relevant documentation and I would, in particular, bring your attention to Articles 15 and 16. Article 15 refers to “the effective participation of peoples belonging to national minorities in cultural, social, economic life and in public affairs”.

The text in the explanatory report on Article 16 meanwhile refers to the need “to protect against measures, such as the re-drawing of administrative borders which could restrict the rights and freedoms of people belonging to such minorities”. The associated notes even raise concerns about gerrymandering and the fact that 57 per cent of voters in the Devonwall seat would be resident in Devon. Putting the residents of the Cornish part of the proposed constituency into a minority further contravenes the Convention.

Frankly, it would be relatively simple for central government to amend the Act. Only a few months ago, the Government agreed emergency legislation to extend the deadline for people seeking to register to vote in the Referendum on the EU. This was following the failure of their registration website. The Government could likewise deliver a simple amendment to the 2011 Act to respect the Convention and keep Cornwall whole.

It is our hope that the Boundary Commission will recognise these arguments and make representations to the UK Government, as signatory state, to correct this unjust situation.

We would wish to make a number of further detailed comments. The first is about the level of representation. MK is not seeking that Cornwall is over-represented in the Westminster Parliament. In December 2015, Cornwall’s electorate was recorded as 392,223, with that of the Isles of Scilly at 1,651, making a total of 393,874. If Cornwall had five seats, the average electorate would be about 78,775, which is extremely close to the top end of the Government’s own range of between 71,000 to 78,000 electors. Indeed, as you have already heard, Cornwall without the Isles of Scilly would fall within the Government’s own range, as noted above, and it is ridiculous that the rigid application of the 5 per cent rule, as set out in the legislation, is deemed more important than Cornwall’s very nationhood.

Secondly, I would wish to address the issue of electoral unfairness often raised by government spokespeople. In this, I would like to quote from a recent letter I received from a local Conservative MP. She stated that the present constituencies were out of date and that real unfairness had crept in, with some constituencies having 21,000 and others 108,000 constituents. I thought that this comment was somewhat helpful in bringing attention to the poorly contrived legislation which underpins this process. I believe that the reference to a seat with 21,000 voters is false as this is the Western

Isles of Scotland and that seat is protected within the legislation and will continue to exist with 20,887 voters, as is the seat for the Orkney and Shetland Islands with a projected electorate of 33,229 voters.

The figure of 108,000 meanwhile refers to the present single seat for the Isle of Wight, but the legislation would in future allocate two seats to the island. Indeed, the present proposals indicate electorates of 52,000 and 53,000, both well below the Government's range. This really puts into context our call for Cornish seats which are less than 300 voters outside of the Government's range.

A third new point is the practical difficulties of other aspects of this review. It cannot be denied that the rigid guidelines from the legislation and the resultant threat to Cornwall's historic border are dominating this review and, as a consequence, there is little real consideration being given to the detail of potential constituencies in Cornwall. It is normal practice to minimise disruption when making changes to constituency boundaries with the Commission seeking not to divide areas of significant community identity. This is a particular problem in Cornwall, the land mass of which is a relatively thick peninsular.

I look now to the Commission and I say, as you will know from watching Poldark on the tele, we are never more than half a mile from the sea. Four of the five presently proposed seats which lie entirely within Cornwall stretch from the north coast to the south coast. Obviously, with this constrained geography, the rigidity of the review, the 5 per cent rule and the need to focus on whole-council divisions, there is very limited scope in how parliamentary seats can be developed. One key example in your proposals is the creation of the Truro and Newquay and Bodmin and St Austell seats, which mean that the unique china clay area is split between two constituencies. The three divisions of St Dennis and Nanpean, St Enoher and St Stephen would be allocated to the Truro/Newquay seat while the three divisions of Bugle, Penwithick and Boscoppa and Roche would end up in Bodmin and St Austell. The lack of local understanding in this area is exemplified by the fact that the actual parish of St Stephen in Brannel would end up being split between the two proposed constituencies. As Councillor Brown has already stated, this area has often lost out to other areas across Cornwall. It often feels dumped on, for example, with the construction of a massive incinerator, and it is disappointing that once again, this time through the Boundary Commission, the integrity of the clay area is deemed less worthy than the integrity of other areas. It is my hope that such issues can be revisited once we have successfully dealt with the Devonwall issue.

In concluding, I would note that the resounding message that you have heard from speakers at this hearing is that we wish to keep Cornwall whole. It is my hope that the Boundary Commission will, in its heart of hearts, recognise that, as far as Cornwall is concerned, the boundary review is flawed and would damage the best interests of our nation. Please join us in recognising the self-evident reality and make representations

to central government to rethink their approach to Cornwall, to modify the existing legislation and make sure that a cross-border Devonwall constituency is not created. Thank you for your time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Councillor Cole. Are there any questions for clarification for Councillor Cole? (No response). Thank you very much for attending and for your representations.

Ms Juliet Johns, would you like to come down to the lectern, please. Good afternoon.

MS JOHNS: Gorthuher da, good afternoon.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would you like to give your name and address, please.

MS JOHNS: My name is Juliet Johns. My address is Portymawr, Quenchwell Road, Carnon Downs, Truro, TR3 6LN.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Would you like to make your representations, please.

MS JOHNS: Thank you. Now, I know over the last couple of days that you have listened to politicians, you have listened to historians, experts, academics and you have been given a lot of information about why we do not want Cornwall mixed with Devon and about the Boundary Commission. I am none of those. I am not an expert. I am an ordinary Cornish member of the public and I am certainly not a public speaker, so bear with me.

What I am is a Cornish woman of many generations, passionate about my country, and, although I am not going to give you facts, which you have had a lot of from everybody else, I want to help you and the people who listen to you to understand what Cornwall is about. I want to help you, if I can, understand something of what we love about our county and what makes our county different from the rest of England.

As I understand it, there are political and economic reasons for this boundary change proposal. That is not my business, but I understand that there are. What I want to talk to you a little bit about is the fact that on another level there are cultural and historical reasons why we should remain Cornwall.

I am sure you have heard something about our heritage. You know that we are a nation; we were established over 2,000 years ago. We were trading as a race before Christ. We traded with the Phoenicians. There is a legend that Christ came over at one stage and traded with the Mediterraneans and traded with the Cornish. Of course, we traded in tin, we traded in metals, we know that; we go back a long, long way. We were

a country forged from a long, long time ago and over the generations, over the centuries, you must be aware of the great people that have lived and worked in Cornwall. As you came up the stairs, you may have noticed a piece of work by Terry Frost, one of our adopted Cornishmen, it goes everywhere, and of course explorers, there is Richard Lander and his brother John Lander who explored Africa, the scientists, you have heard of Trevithick and Humphry Davy, and of course our writers, and Poldark is still going on strong, but people like Charles Causley as a great Cornish writer and adopted writers as well. We have this huge wealth of culture, of history and of people who feel that by being here in Cornwall, they do not have to be born in Cornwall. I have had friends come to me over the last couple of days saying, "Juliet, I feel Cornish. My children were born here. Does that make us Cornish?", and I said, "Being Cornish, it's inside of you, yes", so all these things have helped make our country what it is.

But I am wondering what about you, both you and the people again that you represent? You come to Exeter, you sit in a hall and you listen to people. You come down here, you sit surrounded by four walls and you listen to us. What does that tell you about Cornwall? I wish you had time to get out, though you may do this in your holidays, I do not know, to walk inland Cornwall where the mines are, to walk around the old mine tracks, to see the rivers, the wonderful old red river that flowed down through the mines, to go on the cliffs, to walk on the beach, let the sand come through your toes, look at the water and to look at the wonderful cliffs; all this is part of Cornwall. The fishermen, the farmers still, the people who work here who need the economy of Cornwall, these too are part of what we are. If you had time and you could see the fishermen bringing their catch, if you could talk to fishermen, if you could talk to the farmers, if you could walk through the streets of Camborne and Redruth, once the richest few square miles in the world, now an area of poverty, but still see how these proud Cornish people hold on to their heritage, we are a proud people and this is their heritage, this is Cornwall. (words in Cornish), this is Cornwall.

One thing has annoyed me immensely over the last few days and I have to mention it. I do not know when I have been so annoyed, like I suspect many people here, about Mr Javid, our Secretary of State. He does not understand. If you can get him to understand that no, we are not, and he does not even call us a region, he calls us 'a part of a region', but no, we are not. We are an ancient people and we are proud of our ancient heritage and no, Mr Javid, we are not going to change our mind. "This is something that needs to be changed", he said. No. He must change his mind; he must change his attitude. No, not us. Here today, gone tomorrow? Him perhaps, not the Cornish. We will not go away.

It was 519 years ago when my ancestor, Thomas Flamank, led an uprising together with Joseph An Gof against the imposition of English taxes; you must know the story. He set off from Cornwall with 15,000, probably more than that, and we say 20,000 Cornishmen, but certainly there were 15,000. They walked all the way to London. They got to Blackheath where they were fought with, attacked and Thomas Flamank – if I am

absolutely honest, I was descended from his younger brother, not him, but he is a member of the family – Thomas Flamank was hanged, drawn and quartered and his head stuck on a post up there in England. Did they do this for nothing? Was it all for nothing? We still have that same mindset, you know.

Perhaps I have given you some idea of how much our country means to us. You cannot dismiss us.

I would like to crave your indulgence and just finish with a few words from a man who is far more eloquent than I am with his words, Charles Causley:

“One day, friend and stranger, the granite beast will rise, rubbing the salt sea from his hundred eyes, sleeping no longer. In the running river he will observe the tree, forging the slow signature of summer, and like Caliban he will stumble and clamour, crying ‘I am free! I am free!’ Night bares her silver wounds in the sky, and flees from the shouting sun. O monster! What spear, what rock gun shall storm the fortress of your clear eyes? Your teeth sharpened by many gliding waters, lying awash in the snarling tide, how long, how long must you wait to ride, swagged with thunder on lovers and traitors? Cast off your coloured stone ropes, signal the tourney! And to the bells of many drowned chapels, sail away, monster, leaving only ripples written in water to tell of your journey.”

Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ms Johns, thank you. Are there any questions for clarification? Again, would you introduce yourself, please, and then put your question for clarification.

MR ROWE: Mr Hugh Rowe, Cornish Stannary Parliament. The question I would like to just ask the lady is not that complicated, but I think it’s important to all here. In 1998, I was one of the members of the Cornish Stannary Parliament who were signatories to the Council for Racial Equality here in Cornwall, and I feel that the Commissioners should also be made aware of the point that respect has to be earned and racial equality. For a race to earn respect and have respect, it must and should respect the rights of others. I do not feel that Mr Javid has.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mr Rowe, could I ask you to get to your question for clarification, please.

MR ROWE: Yes, certainly. I just wondered if the lady recognised that Mr Javid should have respect for her culture as well before dismissing it?

MS JOHNS: I agree with you entirely, of course he should, which is why, when I mentioned Mr Javid, I hope that somehow some of our feelings can be transmitted back to him so that he may perhaps change his views. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for attending. Our next scheduled speaker actually is not booked until 4.50. Is there anybody in the room who would like to speak? (No response) In that case, I intend to break for one hour until five to four and review the situation at that point.

After a short break

Time Noted 3.55 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon and welcome back. I think we now have Mr Denzil Monk, who would like to speak. Would you like to come down to the lectern, please. Mr Monk, I understand you had a speaking slot booked for later in the day, but you are happy to speak now?

MR MONK: Yes, absolutely.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would you give your name and address, please, Mr Monk.

MR MONK: Denzil Monk, 7 Reeds Cottages, Penzance, TR18 2RP.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, and would you make your presentation.

MR MONK: (Words in Cornish) Good afternoon. My name is a Denzil Monk and I am a Cornishman. I am here to talk to you about the reason why our border matters.

In a connected, globalised world, boundaries are increasingly less important. However, edges define us, politically and geographically, historically and socially, linguistically and culturally. Cornwall's border with England, diminished, and set at the east bank of the Tamar 1,000 years ago, defines the then embryonic nation state of England as much as it defines the ancient, indigenous nations currently. Others have spoken to you already and made representations previously to the UK Government of the many distinctive and undeniable historical reasons why the integrity of this border matters, why it is important to keep Kernow whole, so it is not to our past that I turn to explain to you why our border matters so deeply, but to our future, Cornwall's, England's, Europe's and the world's.

There is an urgent need in Britain for the political establishment to reappraise the paradigm through which they view the world, to appreciate the true value of culture and identity beyond mere mechanistic economic analysis that misses so much of human

experience, to understand the complexities of multiculturalism, not to fuel the fear of others.

The Conservative MP for South West Devon, Gary Streeter, commented that the creation of a Devonwall constituency would be a minor local inconvenience for a handful of people. The tone and substance of his remark is entirely at odds with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, signed and ratified by the UK Government. We are not a handful of people complaining about a minor local inconvenience; we are a nation of people standing up for the right for our 1,000-year-old national boundary to be respected. In its recent recognition of our language, Kernowek, Cornish national minority status and the step towards devolution of administrative powers for Cornwall, the UK Government has over the last two decades made some slow but steady movements towards healing a historical rift with the Cornish people.

If you look at Cornwall now, there is a new and flourishing cultural confidence, a re-flowering, a fresh and positive pride that had formerly been suppressed and fragmented, divided and conquered, but not anymore. Now, we stand together.

Multiculturalism first requires a recognition of the diversity of cultures which exists. In Britain today, there are people living and born of hundreds of different ethnicities and nationalities, but our culture is indigenous to these islands and affords it no more right to life, liberty and opportunity than any other, but we absolutely have an equal right to be recognised and to not be suppressed. Ask a Welsh person if they are English and whether their border with England should be capriciously moved. Why would you expect the response from a Cornish person to be any different. For the Cornish, it is simple: England is the other side of the Tamar across our border. This is not about an inward-looking, Trumpish building of walls around borders. In Kernow, we have traded internationally for thousands of years long before even the idea of England existed. We welcome immigrants into our communities, whether they come from England or further afield. The problem is that you are approaching this entire matter from an inappropriate frame of reference.

Cornwall is not, cannot and never will be part of the UK Government's sub-national building block, the South West region. The 'South West region' is a misnomer for an administrative impossibility that exists in ignorance of the granular reality of the people who live within its ill-defined borders. It is conceptually a gigantic blot of misconceived, outmoded macroeconomic policy that has proven throughout my entire lifetime to serve only Westminster and never Cornwall. To quote, in an antithetical context Sajid Javid's recent contribution to the discourse, "that whole attitude has to change". A productive, pragmatic approach would be for the UK Government to accept the reality that is Cornwall and to work with us in partnership, recognising our national boundary and respecting our identity, language and culture. It begins with respect for our national minority status, it begins with respect for our language and culture and it begins with respect for our historic border. There is, therefore, a single, simple message for you to

take back to the UK Government: that, in the context of the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011, Cornwall be recognised as a special case and that the integrity of our border be respected by parliamentary constituency boundaries. We will not be gerrymandered. (Words in Cornish) Keep Kernow whole. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Monk. Are there any questions for clarification on anything that Mr Monk has said? (No response) Thank you very much for attending and for your representations, Mr Monk.

I understand that we have a gentleman by the name of David Hughes who would like to speak. Would you like to come down to the lectern, please, Mr Hughes. Good afternoon, Mr Hughes.

MR HUGHES: Good afternoon. My name is David Hughes. I am a Cornwall councillor from Fiddlers Green, Castledore Road, Tywardreath, Cornwall, PL24 2TR.

I did not intend to speak when I came into County Hall this afternoon because I did not know I was going to have the opportunity; I have been in another meeting. I, as my accent shows, am a 'bloody foreigner'. I have worked all over the world and the only place I have ever been called a 'foreigner' to my face was in Cornwall. That was a long time ago, but that is how people from upcountry are seen by a lot of people. They do not see Devon, let alone London, as being their territory. It is going abroad going to Plymouth. I came down here 49 years ago. I now like to think of myself as Cornish, although I know that the Cornish would never accept that. My children are very proud to be Cornish. My daughter, who has just set up a business in New Zealand, has given it the name 'Tywardreath Limited', naming it after her village in Cornwall, and, when she said that to the lawyer, he said, "Oh, Tywardreath, that's Cornwall, isn't it?", and he was in New Zealand. It is an internationally recognised identity not in a very different way from that of English counties.

I have worked extensively in Scotland and my sense of a Cornish identity here is very similar to the sense of a Scottish identity which I had when working in Scotland. It is very different from the sense of identity that you get on one side or other of a county border. I have, in fact, worked in the Devon part of the proposed Devonwall some years ago and they certainly, in the clay mines there, consider Cornwall to be a different place and they do not see it as a natural affiliation. I do feel very strongly that there are strong human grounds for making Cornwall an exception in the same way that Wales, the outer isles, Orkneys and Shetlands, have been made special cases in terms of the number-crunching.

The reason I actually registered to speak was much more parochial, that, on the penultimate boundary revision, after a big fight which I was actually involved in, the boundary for the South East Cornwall division was moved to incorporate three parishes west of the River Fowey. At the last boundary revision, that was undone, but, from

personal experience, it caused a very serious democratic deficit for those three parishes because the River Fowey, although it is only a little line on a map, is actually uncrossable between the two sides of what was in the constituency and you had to go outside the constituency boundary to get from one bit to the other. I would just make a very strong plea, and I have not had time to prepare a numerical case or anything, but please, please will you respect the River Fowey at least as far as Lostwithiel as being an insurmountable natural barrier when looking at number-balancing. I realise that it is an impossible task you have to do, but I think that the River Fowey up to Lostwithiel is a significant natural barrier in terms of your mandate. That was really what I wanted to say, and it is a purely practical point, but a lot of us felt deprived because we saw our MP far less than the people the other side of the river. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr Hughes. Are there any questions of clarification for Mr Hughes?

CLLR BROWN: Malcolm Brown. I would just like to ask Councillor Hughes just to clarify even further what he was saying. Is he suggesting that the Fowey, Tywardreath and St Blazey area, while being distinct from St Austell, looks to St Austell as its natural centre and, therefore, would wish to be in the same parliamentary constituency as St Austell?

MR HUGHES: I would very strongly support that comment. We look to St Austell rather than eastwards and we look to Truro beyond that rather than northwards.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr Hughes, for attending. We have no more booked speakers. Is there anyone else in the chamber who would like to speak? (No response) In that case, I will adjourn the hearing until 4.50, ten to five, and I will reopen the hearing at that point.

After a short break

Time Noted: 4.50 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Welcome back. It is now ten to five. I do not think we have any more speakers, but I do intend to keep the hearing open until five o'clock.

After a short break

Time Noted: 5 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, or is it just gentlemen? No, there is one lady in the room. It is now five o'clock, so I do now close the second day of the public hearing in Truro. I would like, in closing, to thank the

Council for accommodating us in the Council Chamber and for actually supporting the hearing to be here. It has been a very good experience, I think, for everyone who has attended and, in particular, I would like to thank them for providing the interpreter, which was invaluable for us. I wish you all a safe journey home.

The hearing adjourned

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