

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND

HELD AT

**THE ELLIOTT ROOM, BISHOP GROSSETESTE COLLEGE, NEWPORT,
LINCOLN LN1 3DY**

ON

**FRIDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2016
DAY TWO**

Before:

Mr Scott Handley JP, The Lead Assistant Commissioner

**Transcribed from audio by W B Gurney & Sons LLP
83 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0HW
Telephone Number: 020 3585 4721/22**

Time Noted: 9 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the second day of the hearing here at Lincoln. Our first speaker is due at 10.10, so we will adjourn the hearing now until 9.30 and if anybody attends ahead of time we will move on to them first.

After a short adjournment

Time noted: 9.30 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: There are still no attenders this morning, so we will re-adjourn until 10 o'clock.

After a short adjournment

Time noted 10 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is 10 o'clock. The first speaker has not yet arrived but we will leave the hearing open for the moment and wait for his attendance.

MR REED: Before we start, I just want to reiterate the requirements of the fire alarms, if they go off today. There are no plans for testing of the alarms but if we do hear the alarm please leave the building by the nearest exit. From here, they are at the back of the room and we will assemble on the grassy patch on the other side of the wall there.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will make a start. If I can call Mr John Mann to speak, please, and if you could give your name and address before you start to speak?

MR MANN: (Member of Parliament for Bassetlaw) John Mann, Member of Parliament for Bassetlaw. Old Hall, Church Hill, North Wheatley DN22 9DL.

The proposal I have put in is similar to a proposal that I put in in 2001 with the Newark MP Patrick Mercer and is similar to what the Boundary Commission itself proposed in 2011-12 for the area, which is to transfer Sturton and Beckingham wards from Bassetlaw to Newark.

I want to do two things in adding to the written submission that I have made. One is to explain why those wards fit much more comfortably with Newark and, second, to say a word on what that might mean in terms of other wards, which is logical, I think, from the argument I am putting.

When you are looking at the geography of north Nottinghamshire, industrially, socially, economically, and by and large politically, the critical issue that has to be

looked at all the way through is where coalmines were sunk. In essence, the fundamental thing to understand is that you cannot sink a coalmine where there is a lot of water – or, rather, you can but it is far more expensive and difficult. If you do, what you are doing is contradicting the other major industry that has been there for the last 300 years, which is agriculture. The whole way in which settlements have emerged over the last 300 years is quite similar to how settlements were there originally, going back 2,000 years; but the bigger settlements, as we have industrialised, are based on the water flows.

The best way to see it in the modern world is where the inland Drainage Boards go. Bassetlaw has two inland Drainage Boards. It has the Everton inland Drainage Board, which is east-west and goes back to the days of the Pilgrim Fathers, because that is the water they flowed down from Bawtry. It crosses over into the Yorkshire border – the bits of Bassetlaw that in fact in the '73 review shifted from Nottinghamshire to Yorkshire. All the settlements east-west at the north of Bassetlaw are dictated by where that inland Drainage Board has gone, because that is where the water flows are, the biggest of those settlements being Harworth, all the way across the north. That fits very coherently.

North-south along the Trent – and I have detailed precisely where it came from; it took quite a lot of Acts of Parliament to come through – you have the Laneham Drainage Board, which in 2011 merged into the Drainage Boards in Newark, which is rational and sensible because it is where the water is, where the water use is, what is needed for agriculture and it is there for where the industry is. That modern shift is rational and coherent, but actually is no different to what has been there for 300 years.

You have a wedge alongside the Trent – “the floodplains” would be the popular parlance – which have developed settlements because of their relationship with the river. Those settlements go all the way down. It follows the flow of the Aegir, one of the phenomenal Trent tidal flows, from Gainsborough down to Newark. Those villages that have emerged there have a huge amount in common, therefore, which is not new but remains constant today.

In terms of the way churches have developed, if you look at the boundaries of different churches, the Methodist Circuit being the clearest example – because they have always been more interested in geography than anything else and have not had big cathedrals to affect their decision-making – the Methodist Circuit crosses the constituency boundary. It is rational, it is coherent; it works and it always has worked.

What was initially proposed in 2011 was geographically, economically coherent; it does not affect the restrictions on the size of Bassetlaw. Also, if you look at where planning consents for housing are, 99 per cent in Bassetlaw are not in these two wards or the adjoining wards. That is quite phenomenal. All the housing growth that is happening is further across, around the coalmine areas, particularly Worksop and

Harworth; to a lesser extent, but significant, in Retford – huge housing developments with housing consents.

So this trend that has been there for 300 years will continue. Worksop in ten years' time will have another 10,000 people living there; but Harworth has 1,500 housing consents at the moment, which pretty much will add 35 per cent to the size of what is now called a town. Those future developments fit this concept that the industrial side of Bassetlaw and this wedge along the Trent have very little in common.

The final thing that goes with this, of course, is where people look to, where they shop, the bridges across the Trent. The people in these villages are looking to Gainsborough and to Lincoln for where they are going, to a lesser extent to Retford as the nearest landlocked community – unlike the rest of Bassetlaw, which does not look to that.

The last bit that goes with it is in relation to other proposals. The only one I can comment on knowledgeably is in relation to where Ollerton should be. It actually fits the same logic. If you look at where coalmines are, coalmines are where water has not been, which has been needed for agriculture. That is the land that has always been available.

People of Ollerton shop in Worksop and Mansfield. That is where they shop; that is where they have always shopped. That is where they look to; that is where the interrelationship with cross-family links are. Indeed, they even use, geographically rationally, the Bassetlaw Hospital a lot. You would never see that in other parts of the Newark constituency or indeed the Sherwood constituency, as is or as was – other than Edwinstowe, which is the other bit of mining.

Edwinstowe and Ollerton wards are wards which, with Worksop and my constituency, have a huge interrelationship. It makes absolutely no sense whatsoever to be splitting Edwinstowe and Ollerton. They have the same kind of community, the same people, they are looking in the same directions. Again, it is the same geography that leads to the rationale that I think you were right in 2011 in doing but I think is right now, and would suggest to me that Ollerton ought to be in with Sherwood, in with Edwinstowe. They are former mining communities and, for good reason, separated off from those communities that are affected by the Trent.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. On what you discussed first of all, the ones that are in Bassetlaw at the moment, can you just give me the names of those wards again?

MR MANN: Beckingham and Sturton.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: And you are suggesting they go to...?

MR MANN: Newark.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Not Gainsborough?

MR MANN: No, to Newark.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: But you would not see Gainsborough as an option?

MR MANN: Absolutely no. Crossing the Trent would create civil war!

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The Trent has generally been respected in these boundaries and you think that is important.

MR MANN: It is a big river. I think I could get 100 per cent consent from all my constituents that that should never happen. Whatever else you do, do not do that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is interesting you say that. We have had very similar things where rivers have either been boundaries or been bringing people together on both sides ---

MR MANN: It is fascinating, and the bridges are significant in the way people actually interact socially. But no, no, no.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Do you have a query?

MR FOX: Alan Fox, Liberal Democrats. I have two queries. First, are you, in arguing for Ollerton to stay in Sherwood, arguing for the Labour Party counter-proposal in terms of Sherwood and Newark, except for adding the two wards from Bassetlaw that was presented at the Derby hearing?

MR MANN: Those proposals were rational to me.

MR FOX: Except that you are just adding the Beckingham and Sturton wards on to the Labour Party's proposal for Newark?

MR MANN: No, you are putting words into my mouth.

MR FOX: No, it is just that if ---

MR MANN: I have put in a specific proposal that makes sense. I do not think I am suitably qualified to argue about which of the wards would shift from Sherwood. It looks fairly obvious to me how that could be done, but I do not have an expertise to comment on wards further south, so I have not done that.

MR FOX: In that case, you are just arguing for the Ollerton ward to be taken out of Newark.

MR MANN: That is the one that I can comment on with knowledge.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ollerton and Edwinstowe.

MR MANN: Ollerton going with Edwinstowe.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You see those as definitely connected.

MR MANN: They are totally and absolutely linked.

MR FOX: That then leads me on to two further questions. Are not Ollerton and Boughton very much connected with each other?

MR MANN: I would be very happy to see Boughton with Ollerton as well, yes.

MR FOX: Secondly and finally, the Misterton ward you intend to keep in the Bassetlaw constituency?

MR MANN: Yes.

MR FOX: How would you get from the Misterton ward to the rest of your proposed Bassetlaw constituency, given that there seem to be no roads connecting the Misterton ward and the Everton ward?

MR MANN: There are. There is a whole series of major roads there. The 631 is the biggest, but the Misterton Carrs road is a very significant road across, which has been there for at least 300 years. The Gringley Beacon is the high point of it. That is the road I travel, so it is directly connected. Misterton, even if it was needed for the numbers, I would be arguing should stay within Bassetlaw. Misterton is part of that east-west connection.

I do not think it is relevant to defend that position because no one is suggesting it, but the canal is a key factor in that. The canal is what connects Worksop, Retford and Misterton; it goes nowhere near the Beckingham and Sturton wards.

MR JARVIS: Brian Jarvis, 74 Fifth Avenue, Edwinstowe, Manfield, Nottinghamshire NG21 9PL.

Mr Mann, just a couple of points of clarification, if I may. The first one is on your numbers, because if you are taking the whole of Ollerton and Boughton into the proposed Sherwood constituency it takes it over quota. Just to clarify you accept that something has to be lost at the southern end in the Sherwood constituency ---

MR MANN: I do indeed, yes.

MR JARVIS: ...but you do not want to comment on what that should be?

MR MANN: I think other proposals have come forward that would assist in that, but I am not sufficiently knowledgeable on those wards to say this ward as opposed to that ward.

MR JARVIS: Also, in terms of those community links between Ollerton and Edwinstowe, you referred to the shared mining heritage, which of course is undoubtedly true. Are there any current, modern links that you can think of? Certainly, as a person who is Edwinstowe born and bred and who has lived there for 38 years, I would say that those links are there from a historic/cultural point of view; but Edwinstowe looks towards Mansfield predominantly for services and in terms of schools, although there are some shared links with Ollerton. But Ollerton is definitely a distinctive place from Edwinstowe and if you spoke to most people in Edwinstowe they would say that Ollerton is a distinct community. We have our own high street; we use our own local shops. Ollerton use their own local shops. I may touch upon it when I speak later, but I think there are also historic/cultural differences between the two.

MR MANN: The reason why the bus services, for example, go from Worksop and where they go is because of the people flow. If I stand in the centre of Worksop on a Saturday, I can meet significant numbers of people from Edwinstowe and Ollerton. I would not meet any from elsewhere in the Newark constituency. I would not meet anyone from places like Beckingham and Sturton. It simply would not happen. It would never ever happen. Huge numbers.

That mining community, by the way, also mirrors Sherwood Forest. There is a suggestion someone has made that a new Sherwood constituency should be called "Sherwood Forest". It is a very minor point, but the majority of Sherwood Forest is in the Bassetlaw constituency, 80 per cent of it. The bit that is not, the majority of it is in Edwinstowe and Ollerton.

The roads – I could wax lyrical, and you would not want me to – the roads through the forest for 1,000 years ended in Worksop. The north-south road through the forest ended in Worksop. That is why Edwinstowe and Ollerton are where they are in terms of population. They are part of the forest road through. The roads that were not then affected by drainage for agriculture did not require the Act because they were not that much good in terms of the use of land, relative to the rest. They are the ones where the pits went. The pits went there for a rational reason, from which the railways then flowed, from which the roads then flowed, from which the communities then flowed.

If you had proposed Ollerton and Edwinstowe go in with Worksop, that would have been a very interesting proposal; but that is not there. I am not being that radical. Those places sit together, without any question. You can come into my constituency on a Saturday and see the same families from the two places. It is a very mining community.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You say that if you are in Worksop you are likely to see people from Ollerton or from Edwinstowe?

MR MANN: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: But you would not see people from Sturton or Beckingham?

MR MANN: Not at all.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Where would you need to stand to see them?

MR MANN: In Gainsborough you would see them; in Lincoln you would see them.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Across the Trent.

MR MANN: Across the Trent and sometimes in Retford. Yes, of course, across the Trent you would see them shopping – but not living.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for speaking.

We will move on and hear from Cllr McNeill. Give your name and address, please.

CLLR McNEILL: (Gainsborough Conservative Association) I am Cllr Giles McNeill of Office 1, 20 Union Street, Market Raisin LN8 3AA. I am the organising secretary for the Gainsborough constituency Conservative Association. My comments are based on the views of our Association.

The Gainsborough constituency Conservative Association notes the use of the Saint-Laguë method for the allocation of seats and is pleased to welcome the initial proposals by the Commission for the East Midlands region.

In concurrence with the wider Conservative Party, we support the allocation of 44 seats to the East Midlands and the decision to keep the regional boundary intact. We support the Commission's decision to group local authority areas into subregions and particularly the decision to treat Lincolnshire as a subregion in and of itself and the proposed allocation of seven seats to the Lincolnshire subregion, as currently extant.

The Association fully supports the Commission's proposals for the Gainsborough county constituency, specifically the continued existence of the Gainsborough constituency unchanged in its current form, with an electorate of 74,302, consisting of the whole area of West Lindsey district and the Wragby ward of the East Lindsey district.

We support the Commission's proposal on the basis that it reflects well the area's local authority boundaries; represents no change on the previous boundary; respects local ties by maintaining the West Lindsey district intact; and takes account of the geography of our area.

The wider Conservative Party is making representations for alternative proposals for the Lincoln borough constituency and Sleaford county constituency. We support these proposals. However, if the Commission were to reject these recommendations or alternative recommendations were to come forward, we would like to make it clear to the Commission that we would not support any proposals that combine wards from the West Lindsey district with those from the City of Lincoln, and go further and say that maintaining the whole of the West Lindsey district intact is desirable to us.

To conclude, the Association particularly welcomes the retention of the Gainsborough constituency's existing boundary and would not welcome change to that boundary.

Thank you, Mr Assistant Commissioner.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

Our next speaker is booked at 10.50, so we will adjourn until 10.50.

After a short adjournment

Time noted: 10.50 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning once again. We will reopen the hearing and I will call Cllr Leyland to speak. If you could come to the front and give your name and address before you start, please?

CLLR LEYLAND: My name is Craig Leyland, and I am Leader of East Lindsey Council. My address is 2 Upsalls Cottages, Blankney Fen LN10 6XH.

I am here today to support the Commission's proposals for East Lindsey, as it largely maintains the status quo and the established relationship with our MPs, which historically has worked very well and which our residents are used to. I would not want to see any confusion in any boundary changes subsequent to that.

Also, I do support the split of the ward of Halton Holegate being put into the Louth constituency. Again, to rejig that would cause too much confusion across the district. So I am fully supportive of the Commission's suggestions.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

I will call now Mr Phil Gray. If you would like to speak now you can or, if you would prefer to wait until your time? In that case, we will adjourn the hearing until 11.30.

Time noted: 11.30 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning once again. We will reopen the hearing and I will call Mr Phil Gray to speak. If you could give your name and address before you start to speak, please?

MR GRAY: My name is Phil Gray and my address is 108 Boundary Street, Lincoln LN5 8PF.

Having studied the Boundary Commission's proposals for the East Midlands region and, specifically, more the subdivision of Lincolnshire, it is a relief to me to see that Lincolnshire and Lincoln city in particular, where I live and have done for many years, will not be too much disrupted by the changes – which I welcome in general.

One concern I did have, looking at how the scheme is set up – it is probably inevitable that these things will occur – was the secession of Waddington South and the Bracebridge Heath area, as I live in Bracebridge. However, I understand that should not affect too much the character of the area in which I have lived for this period of time, as we are talking about parliamentary representatives and not necessarily local ward level.

In my view, anything that reduces the burden of government on people in general – so by the reduction of MPs – is to be welcomed. Basically, the Boundary Commission's restructuring as it affects Lincolnshire seems to me to be fair and equitable, and probably will make the job of the local representative for each of the areas more balanced and something that they will be able to carry out more easily.

As I say, I did worry about the changing of the boundary there with the south part of the Lincoln city area, the borough council area, but I considered that if MPs are representing the region and not just their constituencies it should not have an impact or an effect on the constituents in that area.

In conclusion, I broadly welcome the work of the Boundary Commission for England and look forward to the changes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

We will adjourn the hearing until 12.30.

Time noted: 12.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon. We will open the hearing again and I will call Mr Michael Watkinson to speak. If you could give your name and address before you start to speak, please?

MR WATKINSON: (Conservative Party) It is Michael James Watkinson, 5 Mabel Grove, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5GT.

I am going to be talking about my constituency, West Bridgford, and the proposals that came from the Boundary Commission. I approve of them, although I do have an exception to the name. I think it should be called "Rushcliffe North". The old Rushcliffe seat – part of the southern portion is proposed to go into Loughborough, and that is called "Loughborough and Rushcliffe South"; so, as a majority of the old Rushcliffe seat is going into the proposal for West Bridgford, I believe it should be called "Rushcliffe North".

Despite that, I am happy with the proposed constituency. If I just talk for a moment about how it compares to the existing constituency, 15½ local government wards are staying in the new proposed West Bridgford seat, only five are leaving to go into Rushcliffe South and Loughborough; so it is mainly similar to the old seat.

There are a lot of major populations in the proposed new constituency that were in the old Rushcliffe constituency. The town of West Bridgford, which has a population of 41,000, was a major part of the old Rushcliffe seat, as well as other towns such as Ruddington, Radcliffe-on-Trent and Cotgrave; so the only additions to it are two proposed wards from Nottingham city and half a ward from the Newark constituency.

I would like to talk about the local ties that the new proposed seat would have. There are major transport ties, which link up the areas of Nottingham city that are proposed to be put in with Rushcliffe. A tram service goes through Wilford, which is in the Clifton South ward, into Compton Acres, which is a Rushcliffe borough ward, and then to Clifton, which is in the Clifton North ward.

Buses? A service, 3/3B, connects West Bridgford, Wilford, Ruddington and Clifton. Service 2/2B connects West Bridgford, Wilford and Clifton.

There are roads as well which connect to the proposed new constituency. Ruddington is connected to Wilford and Clifton South via Ruddington Lane, and Clifton via Clifton Lane. West Bridgford, Wilford to Clifton have one long road connecting it, which starts from Wilford Lane and runs to the back of Clifton, the A453.

There are also school connections in the proposed new constituency. West Bridgford School, which is in the Rushcliffe borough, last year extended its catchment area to the village of Wilford, which is in the Clifton North/Nottingham city council area. Also, Farnborough Academy in Clifton, which became an academy a couple of years ago, shares the same operator as Rushcliffe School in West Bridgford, the Trent Academies Group.

I would like to move to my final part, which talks about the geographic considerations of the proposed new constituency. I think it is quite obvious that the additional half a ward, which would come from Newark, is good sense because that creates one

whole ward, which is in Rushcliffe borough and stops the splitting of one local government ward.

The two Clifton wards that are suggested to be added have actually more geographically in common with the West Bridgford and Rushcliffe area. That is because they are separated by the River Trent. Indeed, if you wanted to travel over the River Trent from Wilford village, which is in Clifton North, the easiest way would be to pass a bridge. That is the same for residents in West Bridgford, who would have to pass a bridge as well. Actually, on a note of history, West Bridgford and Clifton have been in the same constituency before: during the 1970s. So people recognise that they do have a connection and a geographical area to share as well. I believe it was called the Nottingham South constituency, which was changed in the 1970s or 1980s when West Bridgford was added into Rushcliffe.

With all that considered, I support the proposal for a new West Bridgford constituency, although, as said previously, I believe it should be called “Rushcliffe North” because most of the wards in it are part of Rushcliffe Borough Council and Rushcliffe South is referred to in the new Loughborough and Rushcliffe South constituency.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. You do not see any merit in the name including West Bridgford, in a similar way to the South?

MR WATKINSON: I do but what I would say is that West Bridgford is a big town, 41,000 out of the old constituency – 41,000 out of 75,000 – and there are still a lot of rural areas and smaller towns, such as Ruddington, Radcliffe, Cotgrave, Newton, Shelford, which have more of a Rushcliffe identity. I do find it a bit bizarre why, when it is called “Loughborough and Rushcliffe South”, there is not a Rushcliffe North name.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Should it be “West Bridgford and Rushcliffe North”?

MR WATKINSON: Perhaps. That is up to you, I guess. My proposal would be, even in West Bridgford where I live, people know they are in Rushcliffe Borough Council; the borough council is based there; every road in West Bridgford has road signs with a symbol of Rushcliffe Borough Council. So it is quite well known that West Bridgford is in Rushcliffe. I was thinking of the smaller towns and villages, which have more of a Rushcliffe identity, as well as the difference why Loughborough gets the “Rushcliffe South” bit and there is no mention of Rushcliffe North in the northern portion.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any other queries? Thank you very much.

We have no more speakers booked until 2 o'clock. Is anyone aware of anybody who might be likely to arrive before that? No. On that basis, we will adjourn the hearing until 2 o'clock.

After the luncheon adjournment

Time noted: 2 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon. We will reopen the hearing. If I can call Mr Butroid to speak? If you could give your name and address before you start to speak, please?

MR : Richard David Butroid, 1 High Street, Sturton by Stow, Lincoln LN1 2AE. Currently, I am Area Chairman for the Conservative Party in Lincolnshire. I am also a parish councillor for the village where I live, so I am quite involved locally as well.

I largely agree with the Boundary Commission's overall plan for Lincolnshire. However, as a past Chairman of the Lincoln Conservative Association and a business owner who works in Lincoln, I care passionately about Lincoln and the surrounding area.

I would like to support the Conservative Party proposal to include in the Lincoln constituency Heighington, Washingborough, Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East ward, which is a slight change to how the Boundary Commission has it. I feel that it keeps the area and the parishes together. It gives it a stronger local connection. It also moves quite a few less constituencies across from the Hykeham area. So it is an easier way to look at getting the right figure, in my opinion.

Across Lincolnshire I strongly support the area, especially in Gainsborough, which is the constituency where I live. It looks very good. The stress that I put forward is this brings the entire parish of Waddington together into one constituency, which is provided in the Commission's proposal.

I think that is pretty much everything that I wanted to say. My main issues are around Lincoln and how I feel we can keep those local connections, rather than taking one lot completely out and moving the Lincoln boundary right down to where you are proposing.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You do not see the merit in bringing in North Hykeham?

MR BUTROID: No, I think possibly you are moving fewer people if you keep in the current area and just adding slightly to it, rather than taking all of that out of Lincoln and bringing North Hykeham into it. I think the people around Waddington, and certainly the RAF camp, really feel part of Lincoln and the surrounding areas. I think that North Hykeham has always been very much outside the Lincoln boundary.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So you do not think that the people of North Hykeham look towards Lincoln?

MR BUTROID: Not totally, no. I think they would probably look towards Sleaford as well and maybe Newark, if you are looking at where you might go shopping and things like that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You mentioned that you operate a business in Lincoln, so you would not say from your experience that people in North Hykeham shop in Lincoln?

MR BUTROID: I think they do but, because of their location, it is as easy sometimes to travel to Newark to shop, straight down the bypass, as it is to try and come through Lincoln from that particular area.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any queries?

MR FOX: I am Alan Fox, Liberal Democrats. You would agree, though, would you not, that North Hykeham is physically attached to Lincoln in a way that the villages of Waddington, Bracebridge Heath, Heighington and Washingborough are not?

MR BUTROID: Yes. North Hykeham has expanded so much over the last 10-15 years that, yes, it is connected to Lincoln now.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

I will call now Mr Robert Jenrick.

MR JENRICK: (MP for Newark): Good afternoon and thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to make a few comments.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you could just give your name and address for the record?

MR JENRICK: I am Robert Jenrick, the Member of Parliament for the Newark constituency. My address is the House of Commons, London SW1.

I want to make a few comments, if I may, first about the present Newark constituency and then to speak in broad terms about the initial proposals for the new Newark constituency; but the main body of my remarks is to leave a counter-submission with you in respect of one ward, the Sturton ward, which is in the proposed Bassetlaw constituency. Myself and a number of others would like to leave the thought with you that that might be better placed in the new Newark constituency.

If I could turn to the present constituency, I have given you three maps. The first one shows the current boundaries. I think it is fair to say that, whilst the Newark constituency has had several incarnations in living memory, the present boundaries

are probably the most logical that they have been for many years. They represent the town of Newark, which is a growing area; what you might call the suburbs of Newark, places like Balderton, Fernwood and Farndon; then a collection of villages, over 100 villages and hamlets, which really all look towards Newark to a greater or lesser extent and which are rural in character; and then three small or very small market towns, Tuxford in the Bassetlaw district, Southwell in the Newark and Sherwood district, and Bingham in the Rushcliffe district – which, again, to a greater or lesser degree look to Newark and which are essentially rural market towns.

Although some MPs would say that having part of three different districts is added complexity, I think this is a very logical way for a constituency in this part of Nottinghamshire to be, because it does reflect the fact that there is a swathe of the eastern and south-eastern side of Nottingham which looks to Newark, is rural in character and shares Newark's essential "split personality", which is primarily Nottinghamshire but partly looking towards Lincoln and Lincolnshire.

Naturally, I suppose my preference would be for the constituency to remain as it is but I was pleasantly surprised by the initial proposals in that they keep the constituency largely unchanged.

Turning to the second map, which shows the initial proposals, perhaps I can make some very brief general comments on those. The village of East Bridgford, which is beside Bingham, has been proposed to be taken out and added to the new West Bridgford constituency. This surprised me to an extent because East Bridgford is essentially served by the town of Bingham. Bingham provides it with its secondary school, Toot Hill. It is really the central area for shopping, for the market and for smaller supermarkets like Aldi and Lidl, and the largest business in East Bridgford, a large garden centre, is one which services both and straddles the border. That, I appreciate it is fair to say is something that has mixed opinions in East Bridgford, as many people there also look towards West Bridgford.

Ollerton has been proposed to be moved into the constituency. That surprised me because there are relatively few links between Ollerton and Newark. It has always historically had quite a distinct identity from the rural villages and the small rural market towns, which, as I said earlier, I think are quite logically placed in the Newark constituency.

The main purpose of my coming here today is the alternative proposal, which is on the third map. That is, to ask you to consider placing the Sturton ward from the proposed Bassetlaw constituency within the new Newark constituency. There are a few reasons for that. There is no particular party political advantage one way or the other but I think it is very logical. There are very strong ties between Sturton ward and Rampton ward, which I have now represented as long as I have been an MP. They are obviously adjacent to each other. They are both collections of what we would call, for want of a better word, the Trentside villages of Nottinghamshire. Those are very rural villages, which look towards Tuxford, to Newark and also to

Gainsborough and Lincolnshire, and they really are best placed within the Newark constituency.

All of the material issues that I have dealt with in the past two and a half years as MP for Rampton ward have been cross-border issues: the future of the local primary school, which is shared between the villages of North Leverton in the Sturton ward and South Leverton in the Rampton ward; issues to do with BT and broadband along the railway line, which is the dividing line between the two wards; wind turbine applications, which at different times have been in one ward or the other but obviously have had a big impact and galvanised opinion in both wards. As the constituency MP, I think it would be very logical and helpful for them to be served by the same Member of Parliament and I have certainly seen the very strong ties between the two in the course of my time as MP.

From a local government perspective I think it would be considerably easier because it would bring all of the Tuxford County Council division within the Newark constituency. That county council division is a very large one. I think it is the largest one in the county. It includes a very high number of small parishes, villages, hamlets, and it is quite a task to represent it. The added complexity, I would argue, of having to deal with two parliamentary constituencies is something that could be quite simply resolved by taking Sturton into the Newark constituency.

Were you to consider this, it would be a proposal that has no knock-on consequences. Both the Newark and the Bassetlaw constituencies would remain within the legal boundaries of number of electors.

As I understand it – obviously others must make their own representations – it has widespread if not universal support: obviously myself as the Conservative Member of Parliament for the Newark constituency; the Labour Member of Parliament for the Bassetlaw constituency, John Mann, I understand supports this; the county councillor John Ogle; the district councillor for Rampton ward strongly supports it, Cllr Teresa Critchley – and she will be making her own representation in writing; and, as I understand it, the Independent district councillor for Sturton ward as well. I believe that he will be making a representation and obviously must do so himself, rather than me on his behalf.

I also have been contacted independently by a number of people who will be writing in to you, including one of the local vicars, a governor of Leverton Primary School, with whom I have liaised for some time over the primary school issue, which was the major cross-border constituency issue.

This modest proposal seems very persuasive to me, both in terms of local ties, the geography of the area, bringing together more if not all of these Trentside, Newark-facing rural villages within one constituency, and it appears to have almost universal support.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Just on that modification, you mention Sturton. Do you see any similar position for Beckingham, north of Sturton?

MR JENRICK: I think the same arguments could be applied to Beckingham. Beckingham is in a different county council division, so it does not have the simplicity of the argument of taking one ward and bringing it in. Then you only have Cllr John Ogle, or whoever represents that division in the future, having one Member of Parliament.

Obviously, I understand that you need to fit within the guidelines and you will be reluctant to do proposals which involve knock-on consequences elsewhere, but the beauty of this simple modification is that it could be done regardless of any consequences to the neighbouring constituencies.

As a general rule I would say that all of these, what I would call Trentside villages, look towards Newark. We have seen that very strongly in the last few months, when there was a proposal, which is still live, for Bassetlaw to move into the Sheffield city mayoral region. I think it is fair to say that divides opinion very sharply, where the people who lived in the villages in the Tuxford county division – and you could say the same for Sturton and Beckingham – felt very strongly that they did not want to do that because they did not look towards Worksop, the former coalmining communities, and towards Sheffield; they look very much towards Newark, a bit towards Lincolnshire, and the rural Nottinghamshire county identity.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any queries?

MR FOX: Alan Fox, Liberal Democrats. I do not know if you know, Mr Jenrick, that John Mann MP came this morning and argued that both the Sturton and the Beckingham wards be transferred into the Newark constituency. Would you like to comment on his plan?

MR JENRICK: I think I just did comment on that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I think you have covered that, yes. Are there any other queries? Thank you very much.

I will call now Cllr John Ogle. If you could give your name and address, please?

CLLR OGLE: I am John Ogle, Headon Manor, Greenspots Lane, Headon , Retford, Notts DN22 0RQ.

I am the Nottinghamshire county councillor representing Tuxford division of the Nottinghamshire County Council. I have every confidence that the Sturton ward in my division would appropriately fit and the community would enthusiastically support a move from Bassetlaw parliamentary constituency into the Newark parliamentary constituency.

Tuxford division is the largest county council division in Nottinghamshire. It is situated in the north-east of Nottinghamshire and in the east of Bassetlaw District Council area. Tuxford division is situated west of the River Trent, from and including Marnham parish in the south of my area to and including the small parish of Bole in the north of my division.

The majority of this division is in the constituency of Newark, represented by Robert Jenrick MP who has just spoken. There is a district council ward of my division in Bassetlaw parliamentary constituency, the northernmost in this area I represent. Officially this is the district council ward of Sturton, presently represented by Cllr Hugh Burton on Bassetlaw District Council. This ward comprises the parishes of Bole, Sturton le Steeple, with Littleborough and Fenton hamlets, Wheatley parish and North Leverton parishes. This ward is similar in topography, agriculture, outlook and character to the wards and parishes that I represent throughout my county council division of Tuxford.

The area is gently undulating westernmost, flattening out a couple of miles from the River Trent, down into what were marshes but are now drained arable land, with lush grazing adjoining the River Trent.

The parishes consist of communities in their hundreds – not thousands – of attractive villages, with many people still earning their living from agriculture. The villages have schools and community facilities, a pub in most villages, in demand and well patronised. The communities are sustainable as they are, with many retired persons and with a few commuters. There are close ties between the adjoining ward of Rampton to the south of the Sturton ward.

I would like to draw your attention to the villages of North and South Leverton. North Leverton at present is in Sturton ward; South Leverton is in Rampton District Council ward with Bassetlaw District Council. Both North and South Leverton are in Tuxford County Council division, my division.

Moving the Newark parliamentary boundary to include Sturton ward would unite these villages and their communities of North and South Leverton. The villages' identity, character and their residents and outlooks are very similar to the other village communities I represent. Retford is the market town west of them all and closest to these and all of my communities in the Tuxford division. These communities contrast markedly with the mining areas further west in Bassetlaw parliamentary constituency, which have different horizons, outlook and culture.

I therefore have absolutely no doubts that the communities in Sturton ward of my division would fit comfortably and enthusiastically into Newark parliamentary constituency. Including Sturton within Newark constituency would simplify the situation in my Tuxford County Council division.

When the Boundary Commission last made its recommendations I was delighted to observe that they had recommended Sturton ward and Tuxford County Council division were all included in the same constituency. I have lived in the centre of Tuxford division all my life. I went to school at Tuxford and Rampton. I have been aware of the close ties between and within my area from an early age. My grandfather was born in Wheatley to a resident farming family. Many of my ancestors are buried in Wheatley churchyard. Wheatley is a village in the Sturton ward group.

I would strongly recommend and support that you consider including Sturton ward in the Newark parliamentary constituency. Thank you. That is my presentation.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you for that. Just looking at the Wheatley villages, North and South, where do they look to for shopping facilities et cetera, at the moment?

CLLR OGLE: They look to Retford but their outlook – they would have sympathies with Newark rather than Worksop. People have said they have more in common with the Newark area than Worksop, but I do know that the Beckingham ward has stronger ties to Gainsborough.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Putting Worksop aside, what are their ties with Retford?

CLLR OGLE: The Wheatley residents?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes.

CLLR OGLE: They shop there, the secondary schools. They would do their shopping there, yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Is it right to say then that, if the boundary moved along the way that you are suggesting, they would have a separate MP for the area where they shop and have their schools to where they live?

CLLR OGLE: Some of them would go to Newark but in the Wheatley ward they would shop in Retford or Gainsborough for their groceries.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any other queries?

MR FOX: Alan Fox, Liberal Democrats. Just a couple of questions about North and South Leverton. Are they distinct villages? Looking on the map, it seems to me that North Leverton is attached to Hablesthorpe, but they are distinct from each other?

CLLR OGLE: North Leverton and Hablesthorpe are considered the same village. Hablesthorpe is not considered a hamlet. Yes, they do have separate district councils but their communities do mix.

MR FOX: So they have separate parish councils?

CLLR OGLE: Parish councils. I apologise for that.

MR FOX: Do they have separate facilities like village halls and suchlike?

CLLR OGLE: They do have separate facilities but, when they have coffee mornings et cetera, most of the close ties are between Rampton and Sturton ward. People from Rampton would attend coffee mornings in Sturton ward and vice versa. There is a surgery in North Leverton and some people will travel from Rampton to that doctor's surgery; so obviously the people in South Leverton would use that doctor's surgery as well. And there is a shop in North Leverton and people from South Leverton would use that. There is no shop in South Leverton.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

I will call Cllr Purdue-Horan. If you could start with your name and address, please?

CLLR PURDUE-HORAN: I am Cllr Francis Purdue-Horan. I live at 46 Tithby Road, Bingham NG13 8GP. I am a councillor for the Bingham division in Nottinghamshire. I am also a local borough councillor for Bingham West ward and a Bingham town councillor, but I am not here to give you my views specifically as a councillor from that area. I wish to support my colleagues in the Conservative Party as an officer of Newark Conservative Association for seven years so far and currently the Chairman of Newark Conservative Association.

I probably will not be here for ten minutes because I certainly do not have the close local knowledge that Cllr Ogle has, but what I can give is some anecdotal support to his comments and observations from the perspective of assisting local councillors, also county councillor Ogle and our Member of Parliament in terms of taking the enquiries for surgeries and other constituents' enquiries.

We keep a database at the office for enquiries from local constituents and what I can share with you today is that we have what I suppose you could call a lot of cross-border enquiries, all over the constituency. There does appear to be – we are not overwhelmed, of course – anecdotal evidence from my office manager that we have enquiries from people in the Sturton area (not just Sturton but the Sturton area) who assume that they can contact their local MP or councillors on whatever matter. Unfortunately, on some of those occasions we discover that we cannot pass those on to our MP or local councillors because they happen to be in Bassetlaw. We keep the details of those enquiries that are made within the Association constituency area but we advise them to contact the Bassetlaw MP if they are in that area.

If there was consideration as to whether Sturton deserves to be in the Newark area, I can only say to you that it does not seem to be illogical, given our experience at the office.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any points to raise? Thank you very much.

I will call Cllr Martin Cleasby.

CLLR CLEASBY: Martin Cleasby. I live in Flat 1, The Maltings, George Street, Newark NG24 1LU.

I come to this as someone who in the past has known most of Bassetlaw, given that I have campaigned many times in virtually all parts. I have been a member of Bassetlaw District Council. I have stood for Parliament for Bassetlaw twice, and obviously a lot of these places I have canvassed regularly. Currently as town Mayor of Retford – sorry, Newark (I have been town Mayor of Retford) – I support the fact that we are looking towards making Sturton part of the Newark constituency.

The present boundaries are as they are but I believe it has been proposed that Sturton does become part of Newark. Local ties? I feel that people who live in the Trentside villages are very much tied more to Newark and that side of Nottinghamshire. I have lived in Worksop. I have lived in Retford, too. But I feel there is a vast difference between the way that people look at the boundaries and so on and where they are and, quite frankly, I feel that Sturton certainly should move into Newark.

There are very close ties with certain parts of Bassetlaw and Newark; for instance, Rampton. To my way of thinking it would be far simpler to have Sturton in Newark. It seems logical to me.

Sturton brings it into the county division and, of course, represented by Cllr John Ogle, who we have heard from today. He currently has two MPs to deal with. Our own MP has to liaise with John Mann across the border. As I have said already, for me the Trentside villages have a common identity with Newark and obviously close to Lincoln, too, but historically I think they would feel that they were more in the Newark side of the county.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You have mentioned that you have been Mayor of Retford.

CLLR CLEASBY: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Given that, can you give us any information on the North and South Wheatley villages? They seem to be midway between Retford and Gainsborough. Are you suggesting that Newark is the place they look to?

CLLR CLEASBY: I am not sure about North and South Wheatley. It would seem to me to be logical, since they are so close together, for them perhaps to be in Newark.

When I was Mayor of Retford, obviously I knew most of the area. I lived in Retford, having previously lived in Worksop; so, as I said, I know the area – perhaps not in the detail that some people do – but that was all I was telling you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

The next speakers we have reserved slots for are Mr and Mrs Brown, due at 3 and 3.10. I do not know if you would like to speak earlier? Otherwise, we will adjourn the hearing until 3 o'clock.

Mr Brown?

MR BROWN: My name is Donald Brown. I live at 3 Drummond Grove, Collingham, Newark NG23 7BF.

I would like to say that I agree with the proposals that have been put forward for the Newark constituency, which has moved from Sherwood. I have recently moved to Newark in the last year but previous to that I lived in Ollerton for 16 years, so I really have a connection with both.

The two points I am going to speak on are (a) education and (b) the culture of the area. For the past eight years I have been a governor at the Dukeries Academy, which is in Ollerton and serves that area. I am still a community governor, even though I live in Newark. I was asked to stay there because I have been working with them on various projects. The Dukeries school is attended by some 900-1,000 pupils and, over the past four years, has progressed from almost being a failing school to one that is now recognised as a good school. I am very pleased to have had a part in that. In fact, it is the first ever time that the school has been called a “good” school for 50 years, so it has been quite an extraordinary journey.

A nearby secondary school is at Tuxford, which is in the Newark constituency. I would like to take a few minutes to talk about that. Tuxford is about a ten-minute drive away from Ollerton on a straight road. It is in the Newark constituency. Both schools share a similar catchment area in certain places. The Dukeries also have a college of further education, and that is shared basically by the pupils within the whole of the catchment area; so there are some advantages of the two being together.

My ambition is to increase the working of these two schools together because I think it would be an advantage. The staff can work together to perhaps put on more classes on different subjects, because the Tuxford school is also a large comprehensive school/academy. For that particular reason, I would support the Commission on that proposal. I think it will help both schools.

Furthermore, I would like to add some content to the mining links in the area. I worked for 20 years in the mining industry. I was a civil engineer and I worked for 16 years in the Nottinghamshire coalfields. I was responsible for structures, both on

the surface and underground, so I actually came into contact with the whole workforce. The one in particular in the Ollerton area is Ollerton and the Thoresby colliery, which is in Edwinstowe. Ollerton itself had a colliery, and the other one very near to Ollerton was a colliery called Bevercotes. Bevercotes was in the Newark District Council area at the time. Both Thoresby and Ollerton collieries had been there for many years, in the 1920s, but Bevercotes was a new colliery and that was in the 1960s.

The workforce came down from the north-east to work at Bevercotes because Durham and the Newcastle collieries were closing; so they came down. When they came down, it actually caused quite a different outlook to life and a bit of a different culture. In fact, people have said, "Well, Edwinstowe and Ollerton are the same" but they actually are not. The A614 is a boundary. They are not the same.

The miners who came down, their houses were in the Ollerton area but they were also in Tuxford, because they had to expand and so some of these miners were in Tuxford. They also had their own shared Miners' Welfare, which was the Bevercotes/Ollerton mines. They had the same one. Apart from this, they still had their Geordie way in which they looked at things, and their culture. They did not necessarily support Notts County or Nottingham Forest; it was still Sunderland and Newcastle. Recently, when pits have closed, the Bevercotes and the Ollerton Welfare, which was in one building, was closed and has now been demolished; but the local Geordie Club – they call it "the Geordie Club" – is still thriving. So we still have a little bit of that culture there.

The main point I am making is that you cannot necessarily put Edwinstowe and Ollerton together. It would certainly help Ollerton and Boughton and that area, I think, to be connected to Newark. It is the place where people look to and, for those reasons, I would support the proposals that you have put forward.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. There is a question. If you could give your name, please?

MS GRAY: My name is Sue Gray.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: And your address, please?

MS GRAY: Brough House, Stapleford Lane, Brough, Newark, Nottinghamshire.

I think the Newark seat has had many alterations over time but I am not aware that Ollerton has ever really been part of that discussion. Basically, because Ollerton looks more towards Edwinstowe, Clipstone et cetera, do you not think that it would be very difficult for people in Ollerton to lose that sort of mining identity?

Secondly, at one stage Laxton was being considered to be part of the Ollerton division and there was a huge outcry, which really showed that there was absolutely

no synergy between the two areas. We are now proposing for that to happen. I just wonder what the people of Ollerton would feel with moving into the Newark seat.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: To be fair, I think you have probably addressed that matter in terms of the modern links between Ollerton moving towards Tuxford and Edwinstowe being separate – unless there is anything you want to add on that?

MR BROWN: I do not think I can speak for the Ollerton people, but I personally feel that, from the education point of view and the fact that the culture of Edwinstowe and Ollerton is different, you cannot put those two in the same part; I think you must treat Ollerton as it is now, as obviously things have moved over the years. New housing is happening in and around the area and gradually the whole thing is moving forward – and I think Newark would be good for Ollerton.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. I will now call Mrs Brown to speak, and if you could start with your name and address, please?

MRS BROWN: I am Mary Brown. I live at 3 Drummond Grove, Collingham, Newark NG23 7BF.

I previously lived in Ollerton, Newark, for 20 years, until I moved less than a year ago to Collingham. I am here to support the Commission's proposals for Ollerton and Boughton going into the Newark constituency, for the following reasons.

As a previous active member of St Giles Ollerton – I was on the parochial church council – St Giles is part of a benefice of three churches, Ollerton and Boughton. As a church, our community links are all with the neighbouring parishes to the east in the Newark constituency, as are Walesby and Kirton, and all are in the Newark and Southwell deanery.

The villages to our west, Edwinstowe and Clipstone, are in the Mansfield deanery. Social interaction between the churches in, i.e. the Mothers' Union, the community support groups, youth groups, Scouts and Brownies, and the British Legion, all revolve within their separate diocese.

Secondly, I was a trustee of ODEF – Ollerton and District Economic Forum. This was set up in 1993, when the Ollerton pit closed. ODEF provides a variety of public services, including training, employment, community support, in the form of projects and action teams. That might be jobs clubs, CVs, interview techniques, volunteering opportunities. The skills training given has enabled many to get back into employment. ODEF's services do not stretch to Edwinstowe, the reason being because Edwinstowe and Clipstone look towards Mansfield for their employment opportunities, whilst Ollerton, Boughton and Walesby look towards Newark. To help with transport, ODEF have facilitated a daily bus that runs in the early morning and back in the evening to Newark, to help employment prospects.

I was also a director of the Citizens Advice Bureau. Again, the Newark and Ollerton Citizens Advice Bureau have linked up together.

Finally, when in Ollerton I did as much of my shopping as possible to support local businesses on the main street, apart from those larger items that I purchase and for these I would go to Newark, Nottingham or Meadowhall in Sheffield. When Tesco opened in Ollerton relatively recently, about six years ago, those of us who used to shop elsewhere now migrated back to Ollerton – to the extent that, before Tesco got into its financial problems, they were planning to expand the supermarket.

The shopping footfall for Ollerton, Boughton and Walesby may not be that expounded by John Mann, MP for Bassetlaw: that Ollerton people significantly shop in Worksop. Indeed, having moved to Newark, where I now shop, I am actually amazed how many people I know who live in Ollerton and shop in Newark. They come to Newark for Waitrose, Morrison's and Aldi in particular.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: There is a query. Just give your name for the record.

MR JENRICK: Robert Jenrick. I had a question about employment. I have to confess that, as Member of Parliament for Newark, I fail to see any links between Ollerton and Newark, particularly on the employment front. In the businesses I have been to in Newark I have almost never met somebody who lives in Ollerton. Which businesses are you referring to where Ollerton residents would work in Newark?

MRS BROWN: I cannot tell you exactly, Robert, I am afraid. I do know that one of the students from the Dukeries College has recently got an apprenticeship in Newark. Whilst I agree with you that communication links are bad in Ollerton for everywhere, and it is one of the reasons why they wish to get a railway and improve those links, if somebody from Ollerton, for instance, would like to work in Nottingham it takes then an hour and a half to get there. So the employment in that area is very bad at the existing time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

We are just checking if one of the speakers who has booked a later slot is wanting to speak now, so bear with us for a moment.

That last speaker is not quite ready, so we will adjourn the hearing until 4 o'clock.

After a short break

Time noted: 4 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon again. We will reopen the hearing. If I can ask Mr Brian Jarvis to speak, please?

MR JARVIS: (Conservative Party) I am Brian Jarvis, 74 Fifth Avenue, Edwinstowe, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG21 9PL.

I am going to divide my comments in two. The first part will be adding some points on behalf of the Conservative Party more generally. Secondly, I will speak about Ollerton and Edwinstowe from a resident's perspective.

My colleague Roger Pratt at the lead hearing in Derby stated that the Conservative Party would listen and reflect upon the contributions made during this process. On the basis of the submissions made, we would like to make the following observations.

First, while still supporting the Commission's proposals for Leicestershire, we comment that, if the Commission was minded to support a coterminous North West Leicestershire seat, then we believe that the Liberal Democrat counter-proposal offers a better arrangement than the proposal that has been put forward by the Labour Party.

Secondly, in the event that the Commission chooses to keep their proposed North West Leicestershire – and we believe that there is some merit in placing the town of Shepshed in the North West Leicestershire seat, as it is separated from the rest of Loughborough by the motorway – the Commission should still look at retaining the Wolds ward in its Loughborough and South Rushcliffe seat, based on the views that we have heard expressed.

This could easily be accommodated by moving the East Goscote ward from the Commission's proposed Rutland and Melton seat into Charnwood, which would then allow the Wolds ward to be returned with Loughborough.

Turning to the debate that we have heard throughout this hearing in relation to the Ollerton ward and its relationship with the surrounding areas, I think it is worth reflecting that there has been much talk about cultural and historical links, as well as more current ties in terms of where people go shopping, where people go to school, where people visit the cinema. Of course it is true that Ollerton is part of the Dukeries coalfield community, as is Edwinstowe, as is Clipstone and other former mining towns in the constituency. They therefore share a similar mining heritage. However, as we have also heard, the north Nottinghamshire coalfield extends to many other areas. John Mann spoke about the Worksop coalfield. Don Brown spoke about the Bevercotes colliery in the Tuxford and Trent ward of Bassetlaw, which is currently in the Newark constituency.

All these communities of course share a common mining heritage. There are family links. I have family in Edwinstowe and I have family in Ollerton, as I also have family in Mansfield and in Newark as well – as families tend to be over a number of different areas.

Edwinstowe also has a number of community links with its surrounding neighbours. The Trussell Trust foodbank is shared between Ollerton and Edwinstowe. Since the Rufford School was closed in Edwinstowe, a number of pupils from Edwinstowe attend the Dukeries College. However, many other pupils in Edwinstowe and Clipstone, probably the majority of them these days, attend the Meden School and, in terms of Clipstone, the vast majority attend Garibaldi School in Mansfield.

There are also many cultural/sporting ties between the surrounding areas. It is true that both Edwinstowe and Ollerton have cricket teams in the Bassetlaw Cricket League, but so does Tuxford and so does East Retford and many other communities from across the area. There is a Sherwood Ladies Rounders League and it is true that Edwinstowe has a team in this league, as does Ollerton; but so too do Laxton, Bothamsall, Tuxford and Worksop.

The people's community links are often wider than constituencies. It seems to me that the debate seems to have been quite narrow-minded, in a very narrow link that suggests Edwinstowe and Ollerton are somehow tied at the hip. They are not.

In terms of historic cultural differences, you have heard some of them mentioned by Don Brown. My brother-in-law is the son of a Geordie miner. His father's name is "Geordie George". The Ollerton pits tended to have miners from the north-east. During the miners' strike it was fair to say there was more support for the NUM from the Ollerton and Bevercotes miners than the other coalfield communities, which tended to consist of Nottinghamshire miners, who tended to support the Democratic Union of Mineworkers. That was a cultural divide at the time, and did divide the mining communities. The communities have now left that history behind them and people share community links.

As I stress, these community links are shared equally between Ollerton and Edwinstowe and their surrounding areas, including many areas in the Newark constituency.

It is fair to say that Ollerton does not have too many ties with the town of Newark but, as you have heard, those ties are with other areas in the Newark constituency, particularly in the Tuxford and Trent ward. Ollerton is increasingly looking to its east.

There has been a conversation about the merits of having county council divisions all within one constituency. The new Ollerton County Council division, which I think was referred to earlier, actually consists of the Ollerton ward and parts of villages in the Newark constituency.

When we refer to Ollerton and Boughton, the Ollerton and Boughton ward does not only consist of Ollerton and Boughton; it consists of Perlethorpe-cum-Budby, Walesby and Kirton. These are agricultural villages, demographically very similar to communities to their north like Bothamsall, and to their east like Laxton and Egmanton.

In short, of course there are community ties between coalfield communities but those community links are not exclusive between Ollerton and Edwinstowe; they are shared links that cover quite a large area. It is fair to say that Edwinstowe does indeed look more towards Mansfield than Ollerton. Mr Mann said that people from Edwinstowe and Ollerton shop in Worksop. More people I know go from Ollerton to Worksop than they do to Edwinstowe, because Edwinstowe and Clipstone are closer to Mansfield. If I go to the cinema, I go to the cinema in Mansfield. If my sister, who lives in Ollerton, goes to the cinema she goes to Worksop.

My point that I would like the Commission to take away is that the community links that exist between Ollerton and Edwinstowe do indeed exist, but the suggestion that the wards are tied together and should not be separated is misleading. There are community links that cover a large area. There is no problem in my mind of having Edwinstowe and Clipstone retained in the Sherwood constituency, and the Ollerton ward placed in the Newark constituency.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any queries? No. Thank you very much.

I will call Mrs Penny Griggs to speak. If you could give your name and address, please?

MRS GRIGGS: (Labour Party) My name is Penny Griggs. I live at 48 Caledon Road, Sherwood, Nottingham NG5 2NG.

I am speaking here today as a member of the East Midlands Regional Board of the Labour Party; therefore I am speaking in support of the Labour Party's submission, but I have some comments that I would like to raise with you.

I am a former city councillor. I represented the Sherwood ward in the City of Nottingham for over 15 years and, to my huge delight and pride, for one year I was the Sheriff of Nottingham. I have left my horse, my sword and everything behind – but, anyway, we should move on!

I am also speaking as an exile from Lincolnshire. My husband and I both grew up and lived in Lincolnshire and we still have family in Lincolnshire we visit regularly. I spend many, many hours on the A17, the A52 and the A46, so I have comments I would like to make about Lincolnshire as well as Nottinghamshire.

There are two areas I want to talk about and there is another, more general point I would like to make. First, I would like to start with the evidence of Mr McCartney yesterday. I agree with him on two points: that the historic name of Lincoln should be retained as the parliamentary constituency name, but I do not share his concerns that the residents of North Hykeham would insist that the name of North Hykeham be included in the Lincoln constituency. There is no evidence that this is the case. Residents have had the opportunity, both now and in 2011, to raise this concern. If you read the transcript of the 2011 public meeting here in Lincoln, you will note the

affirmation of the North Hykeham representatives for the proposal to unite North Hykeham with Lincoln and the apparently total absence of any demand for North Hykeham to be named in the Lincoln constituency.

I must admit that I am surprised that the discussion of the eastern villages being part of Lincoln is being revisited, when it was discussed in 2015 and it was concluded, I thought definitely, that this was not a popular idea. The then local Conservative parish councillors stated that they felt no affinity with being part of Lincoln city.

Now I come to my second point of agreement with Mr McCartney, which is that, regardless of what you would determine, sir, on the final placement of Waddington East and Waddington West, I strongly believe that both wards should be placed in the same constituency.

Other than that, I believe that what the Boundary Commission has placed on the table for consideration is a compact constituency, incorporating Lincoln and North Hykeham – places that do have very similar demographics.

I would now like to move on to the proposals for the constituency of Sherwood. Ollerton and Boughton have been in Sherwood since 1983. There are strong ties with the ex-mining communities to the western side of Newark and Sherwood council area, including the communities of Bilsthorpe, Bestwood and Calverton, whereas Lowdham and Dover Beck were only moved into Newark recently. It makes little sense to move them back in and Ollerton out.

Children from the western villages go to the comprehensive in Ollerton and Ollerton residents look towards Mansfield on the western edge for their shopping services, and the major bus routes run towards Mansfield rather than towards Newark.

I now want to make a more general point; that is, I am surprised at the number of split wards that have been included in the counter-proposals and submissions, given the Commission's view that in the absence of exceptional and compelling circumstances it would not be appropriate to divide wards in cases where it is possible to construct constituencies that meet the electoral rules. I have seen no evidence that the proposals of Stanion and Corby Village wards in Corby, Harrowden and Sywell wards in Wellingborough, Sileby and Mountsorrel wards in Charnwood, and Tollerton ward in Rushcliffe meet the high bar that the Boundary Commission have set.

You will no doubt, sir, receive correspondence from residents in these areas about their views on splitting their ward between Members of Parliament. It is certainly my observation that I really was not anticipating any ward in the East Midlands region to be split.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. I was not aware that those were split wards. As part of the recommendations they are not split.

MRS GRIGGS: No, I said in the counter-proposals.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am sorry, my mistake. Are there any queries? If you could just give your name before you speak, please?

MRS BROWN: Mary Brown. Could I make a comment, please? When you heard this lady's address, NG5, Mr Reed immediately put up the map of Sherwood constituency, hence demonstrating the confusion by people often between the place Sherwood, which is in Nottingham, and the Sherwood constituency – hence the reason for asking for the change of name.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

I will call Mrs Carol Wright.

MRS WRIGHT: Carol Wright, 39 Swinton Rise, Ravenshead, Nottingham NG15 9FS.

Before I start my submission, perhaps I might address the point that Mrs Brown has just made. For nearly 20 years I have worked for the Member of Parliament for Sherwood. It is true that a number of people rang the constituency office and it became clear, once they put their case, that they lived in the Sherwood postal area. It was never a problem really because we just took their details and either passed them on directly to the MP for the Sherwood postal district or we gave them the relevant numbers and information they needed and they made their own thing.

We have heard quite a lot over the last couple of days about the problem of having two or more MPs covering specific areas. In my experience it has never been a problem about passing constituency casework between one constituency and another, regardless of the political persuasion of the relevant MPs.

As I have stated previously, I broadly agree with the Commission's proposals for the East Midlands, with the exceptions that have been put forward by my colleagues. However, I particularly want to expand a little further on the proposals for Sherwood and the movement of Ollerton and Boughton out of Sherwood. There has been quite a lot of discussion about that today.

Much has been made of the community links in the areas towards Newark, which I would argue are not substantial. The majority of pupils from Edwinstowe, Clipstone and other rural villages in the western edge of Newark and Sherwood council attend the Dukeries comprehensive in Ollerton and the Catholic school in Mansfield. Few pupils attend the Tuxford schools. However, since changes to the catchment area regulations, travel-to-school routes are no longer a good indicator of community links. Indeed, I live in the southern end of the Sherwood constituency, in front of the Ravenshead CofE primary school, where pupils come from Ashfield, Mansfield and other villages such as Linby, Papplewick, Rainworth and Blidworth, making around 60 per cent of the total pupil number in the school from out-of-catchment.

Edwinstowe residents use GP services in Ollerton and look to the big supermarket in Ollerton for their weekly shop. Ollerton and Edwinstowe residents have long been campaigning for an extension to the Robin Hood Line, which runs from central Nottingham via Mansfield along the old colliery railway line to Ollerton. Some progress has now been made on this plan, with outline approval from the transport minister.

In his evidence this morning, John Mann mentioned the use by Ollerton and Boughton residents of the Bassetlaw Hospital. In my experience, Ollerton residents access Newark Hospital only for minor services, where they are likely perhaps to get a quicker appointment, whereas more serious issues are dealt with by King's Mill Hospital in Mansfield or Bassetlaw Hospital, particularly emergency services. In recent weeks, night emergency services at Newark Hospital have been discontinued and, although work is ongoing to try to put them back in place, they are struggling to get staff.

Finally, strong evidence has not been given to return the Lowdham wards into Sherwood. Again, my experience is that Lowdham residents use Southwell and Newark for services, particularly now that the A46 to Newark, which runs from Lowdham, has been dualled in the last two or three years.

I thank you for the opportunity to express these views.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

I will call Mr Jack Boyce to speak.

MR BOYCE: (Derbyshire Dales Conservative Association) Jack Boyce, 5 Devonshire Avenue, Ripley, Derbyshire DE5 3SS. I am the agent for Derbyshire Dales Conservative Association but I am also a resident of Ripley in Amber Valley, so I will speak dual-hatted.

I was surprised to see the contents of the proposals for both areas. I thought that in many cases the Commission appeared to have complicated things, perhaps changing in areas more than what was necessary. However, I would like to thank the Commission for not crossing county boundaries and also for addressing the issue as a whole.

First of all, I have lived in Ripley my entire life. I went to school in Ripley; my friends are from Ripley and are now starting families of their own; and my family has lived in Ripley for generations.

The Commission's proposals split the parish of Ripley and take the town away from the Amber Valley constituency, with which it has always had historic ties. It then puts it with Clay Cross, with which it has no historic ties. When the proposals first

came out, I looked to draw upon examples of how to highlight what the potential problems with splitting the parish were. It ended up being a personal one.

My parents' house is in the town of Ripley. My family lives throughout the parish of Ripley, in various capacities. My mum and her sisters decided to live close to their parents, who live in the parish of Ripley, a short 20-minute walk away, so that they could all remain within the Ripley community. My grandfather would soon, if the proposals go ahead, be in the Amber Valley constituency and my parents and one of my aunts and not the other would be out of it. It clearly highlights the split in the community which that would cause if the proposals were to go ahead.

From that personal point of view and drawing all of that together, it also has an influence at the administrative level. From a council point of view, a constituency point of view and a community engagement point of view, it is a benefit for there to be some comprehension of what it means to be Amber Valley.

The Amber Valley Borough Council building is in Ripley. Should the proposals go ahead, the Amber Valley Borough Council building would be outside the Amber Valley constituency. The people of Ripley and the people I have spoken to around the town, maybe in a pub or so, have said "The Amber Valley building" (no reference to "council") "will be out of the Amber Valley area". That is how it was reflected by residents of Ripley.

I would argue that, from a Ripley resident's point of view and in terms of community cohesion, it would be wise to make sure that the Ripley parish stays together within Amber Valley. For the parish of Amber Valley to stay together would also require Ripley to be moved, so the parish can stay together with Ripley, Heage and Ambergate, all together within that constituency of Amber Valley.

Secondly, speaking on behalf of the Derbyshire Dales Conservative Association, I want to support the proposals of the Conservative Party, too. As it stands, the proposal plans to transfer five wards into Derbyshire Dales constituency from North East Derbyshire. Those wards are Ashover, Barlow, Holmesfield, Brampton and Walton, Dronfield Woodhouse and Wingerworth.

While, again, I will concur it is necessary to review these boundaries, these wards have few local ties to the constituency and it ends up dividing the parish of Dronfield, as it did in Ripley, between two constituencies – which, again I argue, for people who have been in areas for a long time will break those strong community ties. As with Ripley, as one of the main towns in the area, I would argue that this would have a wider negative effect.

As I said earlier, I believe that this will have a more serious consequence in terms of addressing district council issues. When promoting the district council for economic or other reasons, it is helpful to have a constituency of the same name, so that there is a wider geographic recognition of that council and identification with local issues. A lack of North East Derbyshire constituency simply does not achieve this. It would

mean that the residents of that area will live within North East Derbyshire District Council area, formerly of the North East Derbyshire constituency but now in Derbyshire Dales constituency, which also has a district council known as Derbyshire Dales. Anyone listening can appreciate quite how confusing this might be. The current proposal, with the split of the Dronfield parish council, would also have confusing effects.

The proposals set forward by the Conservative Party suggest putting Belper, which is currently part of Mid Derbyshire, back in with Derbyshire Dales. After speaking to the office of Pauline Latham and Patrick McLoughlin, it is clear that the residents in the area still identify themselves as West Derbyshire, which went on to become Derbyshire Dales. By bringing the four Belper wards back into Derbyshire Dales, it allows for those North East Derbyshire wards that do not associate themselves with Derbyshire Dales, have no historic ties and would create confusion – those Belper wards can re-enter the Derbyshire Dales area as it is now known. It would also allow North East Derbyshire to become coterminous with its council areas and would also prevent an additional council area entering Derbyshire Dales; whereas the addition of Belper would go along with the Alport, Crich and South West Parishes, which already fall within the Derbyshire Dales constituency area.

In addition, the wards of Bradwell, Hathersage and Eyam and Tideswell should be moved back into High Peak, as they were originally. It would also ensure that all Hope Valley seats are together, as was recommended by the previous boundary review.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are there any queries?

MR FOX: Alan Fox, Liberal Democrats. When Belper was in the West Derbyshire constituency, am I right in thinking that Duffield was also in that constituency?

MR BOYCE: Yes.

CLLR WILLIAMSON: George Carr-Williamson, the Labour Party. It is a similar question really. Do you feel that Belper has a greater affinity with the Derbyshire Dales constituency than it does with Duffield or Allestree?

MR BOYCE: From the perspective of a local, my interpretation is that Belper looks differently to the way that Duffield or Allestree would look. Belper is significantly further away from the Derby-looking wards, which Duffield would fall into.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

That was the final speaker who is registered to speak. Is anybody aware of anybody else who may be wanting to attend? No. On that basis, we have had no additional walk-ins since this morning, so we will close the hearing now.

This is the final day of the final hearing in the East Midlands region and I would like to thank you all for attending over all of the days, if you have, or today's adherents. Thank you very much.

Time noted: 4.30 pm

B

MR BOYCE, 31, 33
MR BROWN, 22, 24, 25, 30
MRS BROWN, 24, 25, 30
MR BUTROID, 13, 14

C

CLLR CARR-WILLIAMSON, 33
CLLR CLEASBY, 21

F

MR FOX, 5, 6, 14, 17, 19, 20, 33

G

MS GRAY, 10, 23
MRS GRIGGS, 28, 30

J

MR JARVIS, 6, 7, 26
MR ROBERT JENRICK MP, 14, 17, 25

L

CLLR LEYLAND, 9

M

MR JOHN MANN MP, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
CLLR McNEIL, 8

O

CLLR OGLE, 17, 19, 20

P

CLLR PURDUE-HORAN, 20

R

MR REED, 2,30

T

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33

W

MR WATKINSON, 11, 12
MRS WRIGHT, 30