

**BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND**

**PROCEEDINGS**

**AT THE**

**2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND**

**HELD AT**

**JURYS INN HOTEL, BRIGHTON**

**ON**

**TUESDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2016**  
**DAY TWO**

**Before:**

**Mr Colin Byrne, The Lead Assistant Commissioner**

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**83 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0HW**  
**Telephone Number: 0203 585 4721/22**

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Time not noted:

MR HARDING: My name is Neil Harding. I am just a member of the public. I live at 1, Stanmer Village in Brighton. I have lived in Brighton for 14 years in four different areas and I am a street cleaner at the moment, so I know the areas pretty well.

My proposals regard the Boundary Commission England's initial proposals which are concerning Brighton Central and Hove, Brighton East and Newhaven, Brighton North and Lewes and Uckfield. They do not affect any other constituencies, just those four that you propose. I am not completely happy with those.

My concerns are the loss of Hove Park ward from the Hove constituency - this is regarding your proposals - the loss of the Hove entity as a distinct constituency, the loss of the iconic Brighton Pavilion name and the loss of a constituency that is centred on Brighton.

In terms of Brighton East and Newhaven and Lewes and Uckfield, I agree that following the A259 is one solution but to go as far as Seaford creates a very elongated constituency. There are strong road links between Lewes and Newhaven, Uckfield and Seaford that enable those two to be linked in different constituencies instead. There is also the loss of Woodingdean from the Kemptown constituency and the loss of the Lewes districts of Newhaven from the Lewes constituency.

My idea of linking East Brighton and Lewes together, which share a hospital trust and loads of road and public transport links, and also linking Lewes with Newhaven, Telscombe Cliffs, Peacehaven and all the Kemptown area enables beneficial changes that maintain also Brighton Pavilion constituency and Hove to remain as distinct constituencies.

My proposals are: changes to Hove constituency are to move Brunswick and Adelaide ward to Brighton Pavilion and to move Withdean ward the other way from Brighton Pavilion into Hove constituency. This ensures the correct number of electors in Hove. I believe both of these ward changes are minor and that Withdean fits well in the Hove area and Brunswick and Adelaide fits well in the Central Brighton seat. This also allows Hove Park to remain in the Hove constituency, as I feel that the park is an integral part of the Hove area.

Brunswick Town was built as a late addition on the extreme east of Hove and its Regency architecture makes it an ideal fit with the Regency ward, as a natural continuation with Brighton conurbation along the Western Road. Withdean, with its larger housing and suburban feel, is a perfect fit with Hove Park within a Hove constituency.

Equally, there are only minor changes to Brighton Pavilion. In addition to the above, Pavilion will gain Moulescoomb and Bevendean ward from Brighton Kemptown. Both Hove and Brighton Pavilion constituencies will remain completely within the Brighton and Hove city area.

In addition to the above, my changes to Brighton Kemptown constituency are the addition of Newhaven, Lewes and the wards of Kingston and Ouse Valley and Ringmer. There are ample roads and public transport linking these areas with very good bus and train links. Brighton and Lewes share a hospital trust. This also enables the Lewes districts of Telscombe Cliffs, Peacehaven and Newhaven to either relink or remain in the Lewes constituency, with strong road and rail links from Lewes to Newhaven, the A26 linking back to the A259 along the coast to Brighton.

Also, Woodingdean wards remain in the same constituency as well, which links well with the Downs and Rottingdean on the coast. I feel the name "Lewes and Brighton East" now better reflects this constituency area.

Finally, I propose the new seat of Seaford and Uckfield, made up of ten Lewes district wards and 16 Wealdon wards. The A22 links the wards in the north of this constituency and also southwards towards Polegate. The Alfriston road links with the coastal south of this constituency to Seaford. The A272 and A275 link to the west from Uckfield and the B216 to Ditchling. The wards north of Lewes, I feel, have a mid-Sussex feel and fit better in the Uckfield constituency than a Lewes and Brighton East constituency.

The advantages of what I am proposing, I think, are the retention of the two distinct constituencies Brighton and Hove both within the Brighton and Hove city area, the retention of their seat names, including the iconic Pavilion name. Brunswick and Adelaide, with its close connections within the Brighton conurbation and the Regency architecture, is a better fit in a Brighton constituency than Hove Park would be.

There is an ideal link between the east of Brighton and Newhaven and the relinking of Lewes districts with Peacehaven and Telscombe Cliffs within the Lewes constituency, allowing Newhaven to link to both East Brighton and Lewes in the same constituency, the best of both worlds, as I put it.

The people of Brighton and Lewes have very close links through work and leisure and also to the South coast wards of Telscombe Cliffs, Peacehaven and Newhaven; also, very close links with both Brighton and Lewes for work and leisure reasons. The links between Lewes and Uckfield, I feel, are a lot weaker.

The enabling of Woodingdean ward, with its links to the surrounding downland, to remain in the same constituency as Rottingdean and the other coastal areas to the south and also with the Kemptown area. Maintaining a coastal and seafront link for all the constituencies involved I think is quite important.

My proposals more closely resemble the existing 2015 constituencies in terms of both wards and registered electors. I have some percentages I could show you later. Only three wards are moved between constituencies in the Brighton and Hove city area and my plans, compared to five wards that are moved under the Boundary Commission England's initial proposals.

The new Lewes and Brighton East seat I propose contains 11 wards and 41,575 electors from the Lewes district, whereas the Boundary Commission England's proposals for Lewes and Uckfield only contain ten wards and 28,880 electors from the Lewes district. The wards north of Lewes, I feel, have a mid-Sussex feel and they fit better within the Uckfield constituency.

Finally, looking at a map, I feel all the constituencies have a more rounded appearance and a less odd shape compared to the current Boundary Commission England's initial proposals, especially compared with the Brighton Central and Hove proposal and the Brighton East and Newhaven constituency proposal.

That is pretty much it really. The proposals are for a Brighton Pavilion, as we have now, which has about 85 per cent of the electors it had before, Hove, which has over 90 per cent of the electors it had before, Lewes and Brighton East, which is about 84 per cent of Brighton Kemptown and about 40 per cent of Lewes, and finally a Seaford and Uckfield seat, which means you have pretty much the same percentage of Wealdon as your proposals have.

That is it. Any questions?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Would anybody like to ask a question for clarification? Can I just ask you about the links between Seaford and Uckfield? Looking at your map, there does not seem to be a main road.

MR HARDING: It does not show on there very well. There is the Alfriston Road. You have the A22 coming down from Uckfield towards Polegate but, before you get to Polegate, there is a turning off and the Alfriston Road goes straight down to Seaford. That is quite a good road. There are good road links.

In these big constituencies, it is always difficult to find a natural whole anyway, but I think they link quite well. I think, if you put Seaford in with a Lewes constituency, then it does not work really and there would be too many electors as well. Also, I think it creates quite an elongated seat, just having it from East Brighton to Seaford.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Julian?

MR WALDEN: (Conservative Party) Good morning. Is the road through Alfriston that you said is a good road an A road or a B Road, please?

MR HARDING: It is a B road, I think. I am not sure of the number.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We can look it up.

MR WALDEN: It is though classified as a B road, not an A road?

MR HARDING: I think it is a B road. The B216 I think, but I cannot remember exactly.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed for your interesting proposal, which we will look at very carefully.

MR HARDING: I can give you that as well. (Same handed)

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. Do feel free to stay for our other presentations. Do I take it you are Clare?

MS DIMYON: I am.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would you like to make your presentation now?

MS DIMYON: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Because we are recording, you need to stand there and the first thing you need to say is your name, your address and then you will have ten minutes and then possibly questions.

MS DIMYON: Okay. My name is Clare B Dimyon, MBE (Human Rights). I was a cost engineer at British Aerospace and that was indicative of high functioning Asperger's that has only recently been diagnosed or assessed. In women, that is characterised by a rather high mathematical and logical approach. I am also a Quaker. We are obliged by religion to participate in political affairs as the religious dimension to how people are taken care of.

I used to be a teacher, living at the same address, in a school on the far side of Hove Park. I would concur that a Hove without Hove Park is bizarre. For a teacher, the maintaining of a separation between your pupils and your own personal life is rather important.

Could I ask you also to bear in mind that I have severe and chronic post-traumatic stress? I have been doing moderately stressful things this week.

I took a look at the original proposals. The thing that jumped into my mind was the front page of the newspaper on 9 May 2015. "In a sea of blue, Brighton bucks the trend". In fact, Brighton and Hove, actually. The observation I would make is that, as I always tell people, Brighton, like many cities, is a bicycle wheel. Sorry; it is the old teacher coming out in me. It is a bicycle wheel with spokes. Those spokes determine the functionality of the city. I can tell you, as a teacher who drove daily from one side of the Dyke Road to the other, that would be a very natural boundary in my mind.

The other thing I need to let you know is that, when I spoke to Brighton Electoral Services, I cannot remember quite how they put it but it is the readjustment of the local wards according to the distribution of voters. They told me that that is normally done every ten years and, in this case, it has not been done for 13 years. We had a good old joke about them being a bit tied up with the referendum.

I would simply place that as a question, as a cost engineer, and inject that into the calculation. It is possible that the ward boundaries may impact on this decision and, if so, that could create distortion.

As a cost engineer, I zapped the relevant sums into a spreadsheet. In the south-east, we have 33 seats. At the moment, we have 31 Conservative, one Labour and one Green, which reflects the newspaper. Rattling out the stats, as I do, the Conservative vote was 886,749. Any other was 814,555, give or take. As somebody who has lived much of her life in constituencies where I was not represented, the thing that I always felt was, at least in the neighbouring constituency, there is somebody who is more of my flavour.

The new proposals result in 33 Conservative seats. There are Conservatives I would vote for: Teresa May, God bless her, and Maria Miller, who have both been saying very sensible things about sexual violence. However, I would suggest, from my Quaker and my logical background, that 33 out of 33 seats for just over half of the popular vote ain't fair and it leaves us a long way from anybody who might be said to be our flavour.

Being a spreadsheet sort of a girl, I looked south because I have a friend in Winchester, who is also a Quaker. You get pretty much the same effect so 1,126,156 votes and 767,000 votes for non-Conservative candidates. Again, under that, we currently have 36 Conservative MPs, who I am sure are very faithful to their electoral duties, but only two Labour candidates. By any proportional reckoning of the whole rather than the individual

parts, that would be more like 22, five, four, five and two for the distributed parties. I would point out that it might not be my flavour but I think we all know what happened in the referendum. That may well be an outcome of people not feeling they had a political voice. I rattled out the situation in the south-west. It is a bit remiss of me, as a lesbian of the British Empire, not to have done Ben Bradshaw's seat, but again it is one seat in 32.

Those are all available to you. I have spoken about the wheel and the hub. I have spoken about Hove Park and I have mentioned what Electoral Services told me about that.

The final thing is, on the Withdean ward, as somebody who lives on the corner of it, that would much more naturally fall into Preston Park than it does Withdean. That is an anomaly by itself. Were a local boundary redefinition to occur, my suggestion would certainly be that the area to the east of the London Road and possibly to the east of the Dyke Road would be included in a constituency. Moulescoomb looks fine to me. So does Hanover. That goes over the Lewes Road.

Otherwise, this gentleman has gone into the detail at the bottom which I have not had the opportunity to do. That was my advantage as a cost engineer, as I look from the top down. I hope that is helpful.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is very helpful. Do send those in.

MS DIMYON: I have them for you on a memory stick.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Does anybody have any questions that they would like to ask? No. Thank you very much indeed for coming in and giving us your presentation.

MS DIMYON: You are more than welcome.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Our next speaker is due at 10.50, so shall we just adjourn for 20 minutes until 10.50, assuming our speaker comes?

Time Noted: 10.30 am

After a short break

MS KNIGHT: I am Julia Knight. I live in Kemptown, in Great College Street. Do you need my full address?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That will do fine.

MS KNIGHT: That falls into East Brighton ward for council purposes. My interest in the Boundary Commission changes is that I think that constituencies should match as closely

as possible the ways that communities work. When we have changes like this, obviously the government of the time puts in place the rules that you use to make the changes, but I think that there should be a general principle that we should be trying to play a longer game.

I understand the idea of balancing numbers of electors and electorate in each constituency but ultimately, as a longer term plan, it seems to me that we should be aiming to be a bit more like France, where the boundaries are all very set. You are within a big area or region and then each of the boundaries of everything fit together, so you are not in a position where an MP has to deal with several different authorities and be really mixed up. It takes up much more time, I am sure, to build those relationships with different councils and so forth. They are my principles of what I think we should be working towards.

Whilst I understand that balancing numbers is in theory probably a good idea because it is fair, I am not sure whether it actually is because I think that different constituencies have very different makeups. If you go to different constituencies, if you got the MP to report all the numbers of cases that turn up at the surgery, they might have the same number of people in different places but they will have a different proportion of people coming with cases that they really want their MP to help them with.

That workload should be divided more evenly. Obviously, there is a complexity to that because it is not simple in terms of saying, "Oh well, you could look at demographics" or, "Oh well, you can look at the age of the constituents". Finding a way to build some of that in would be a good thing to do.

I realise that there is an upper and lower limit but it does not give you much wriggle room. Also, I know you have to take a point in time but there was a massive change last year in terms of numbers because lots of people suddenly registered. I know you have to draw a line in the sand but not to take account of what was an obvious expansion of the numbers seems to me to be not a good idea.

To be more specific about where I live, living in East Brighton----

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Would you like a more detailed map?

MS KNIGHT: I can probably see it. To me, it is very much on the big, urban conurbation of Brighton, which is very different to the places further along the coast. Although you could look at a map and say, "Oh well, it is all seaside", it is not when you look at the people who live there and the sorts of issues they might have. We tend to share more issues with more of urban Brighton. Things like homelessness and drug problems and stuff would be similar in our ward to the west rather than to the east.

I have read a few things that different people have put out. I do not know enough really to say whether it would be a better thing, but I can recognise the value. One of the

suggestions I have seen is to not do the seaside but to go that (indicating) way and join Lewes to East Brighton. We share lots of things with Lewes. The hospital trust is in common. The transport is all linked. That might make more sense but it is a consultation and I am saying what I think.

That is probably all I am going to say, I think, unless anybody wants to ask me any questions.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

MS KNIGHT: Thank you for nodding. That is very supportive.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Does anybody want to ask a question?

MR BEAMENT: (Green Party) I am from Ditchling. I am really sympathetic to an awful lot of the things you said. As I am supposed to ask clarification questions, I wondered how you felt about especially the early stuff that you mentioned in terms of a different way of approaching this kind of thing. We are limited by first past the post. We have to have one MP per constituency. If we had a different voting system - and I wondered how this tied in with what you were saying - you could have a larger constituency with more representatives and then you could start drawing the boundaries in a way that made sense for local communities or what could become larger communities, as opposed to being limited by only having one seat in one place and we have to draw the lines in places dictated entirely by numbers, which are fairly arbitrary.

MS KNIGHT: I do think that is an important point. It goes back to the same thing. As a member of the community, if I have an issue, I need to think about who I would need to talk to about that. I have my ward representatives but then, if something is a bigger issue or I need more clout, I might want to go up to the MP level. I know that the boundary changing has to be not about party politics. At the moment, my MP, shall we say, is not sympathetic to my views. I can ask him things but whether or not he is going to have the same view as me - and I do not have an alternative particularly, because there is no other representative.

If you change how we vote, it would be a bit more like the European one where you have several people. Therefore, you would have more options and also you would spread workload. I do feel that, as an MP, you get so much thrown at you in terms of surgeries and local issues that being spread out in all these diverse places with different issues does not seem sensible.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We are not going to get into a debate about the electoral system. I have been very indulgent.

MS KNIGHT: I am not a member of that party or anything like that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am referring to that (indicating) lot. Thank you very much indeed.

MS KNIGHT: You are very welcome.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is it for this morning. We do not have anybody for this afternoon, sadly. I am going to adjourn until two o'clock and then I will further adjourn, if nobody arrives, until three o'clock. Then, if nobody still arrives, I will adjourn again until four o'clock and that will be the end of it, so we will finish at four if nobody turns up. I shall see you all again at two o'clock.

There were no further speakers and the hearing adjourned

Time not noted

**B**

MR BEAMENT, 9

**D**

MS DIMYON, 5, 7

**H**

MR HARDING, 2, 4, 5

**K**

MS KNIGHT, 8, 9, 10

**T**

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10

**W**

MR WALDEN, 5