

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND

HELD AT

THE MAIN GUILDHALL, HIGH STREET, KINGSTON UPON THAMES

ON

THURSDAY 27 OCTOBER 2016
DAY ONE

Before:

Mr Howard Simmons, The Lead Assistant Commissioner

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THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, good morning and welcome to the first of our two-day hearing here in Kingston. This is looking at the initial proposals from the Boundary Commission for England for new constituencies for the London region. My name is Howard Simmons and I am one of the three Assistant Commissioners responsible for London. I am supported by my two colleagues, Emma and Richard. We are holding hearings for two days. Today lasts from now until 8 o'clock this evening; tomorrow is from 9 am until 5 pm. People will have booked slots but we will have some time available so I will be able to juggle that and fit other people in as necessary. In a minute my colleague here, Tim Bowden, who is leading the support team from the Commission staff, will explain both the initial proposals from the Boundary Commission for England and also run through some administrative matters to do with using the building.

I would stress that today is an opportunity for people to present their views and we welcome that. I will ask for matters of clarification but this is not an opportunity for cross-examination. Please address all questions or queries through me as the Chair, not to the individual speaker. I will now pass to Tim who will set out the basic arrangements for the day. Thank you, Tim.

MR BOWDEN: Thank you very much indeed and good morning. As Howard has mentioned, my name is Tim Bowden. I am Head of Reviews at the Commission and a member of the Commission staff. I am responsible for supporting the Commissioners in their role to recommend new parliamentary constituency boundaries and at this hearing I lead the team of staff responsible for ensuring that the hearing runs smoothly. As Howard has already stated, he will chair the hearing itself and it is his responsibility to run the hearing at his discretion and take decisions about speakers, questioners and timings. My team and I are here today to support Howard in carrying out his role. Please ask any one of us outside of the hearing if you require any help or assistance.

I am now going to talk about the Commission's initial proposals for the London region, which were published on 13 September 2016. The Commission's proposals for this region are for 68 constituencies, a reduction of five from the current arrangement. Our proposals leave four of those unchanged. We used the European electoral regions as a template for the allocation of the 499 constituencies to which England is entitled. That is not including the two constituencies allocated to the Isle of Wight. This approach is permitted by the legislation and has been supported by previous public consultation. This approach does not prevent anyone from putting forward counter-proposals. They include one or more constituencies being split between the regions, but it is likely that compelling reasons would need to be given to persuade the Commission to depart from the regional-based approach we have adopted in formulating our initial proposals.

In considering the composition of each European electoral region, we noted that it might

not be possible to allocate the whole number of constituencies to individual local authorities or counties. The London region has been allocated 68 constituencies, a reduction of five from the current number, and our proposals leave four of the 73 existing seats unchanged. As it has not always been possible to allocate whole numbers of constituencies to individual London boroughs, we have grouped them into sub regions. The number of constituencies allocated to each sub region is determined by the electorate of the combined boroughs. Of the existing constituencies, we propose to retain one in the borough of Havering, two in the borough of Richmond upon Thames and one in the borough of Kingston upon Thames. Substantial change is required however throughout London in order to comply with the electoral quota. Consequently, it has been necessary to propose 38 constituencies that cross London borough boundaries. Of these, 36 contain part of two London boroughs and two contain part of three or more London boroughs. In order to create 68 constituencies wholly within London, we propose one constituency, that of Bow and Canning Town, that crosses the River Lea but we have not proposed any constituency that crosses the River Thames.

The statutory rules allow us to take into account local government boundaries as they existed on 7 May 2015. These include both the external boundaries of local authorities and their internal boundaries, known as wards or in some cases around the country, electoral divisions. We seek to avoid dividing wards between constituencies wherever possible. Wards are well defined and well understood units which are generally indicative of areas which have a broad community of interest. We consider that any division of these units between constituencies would be likely to break local ties, disrupt political party organisations and cause difficulties for electoral registration and returning officers, who are responsible for the running of elections. It is our view that only in exceptional and compelling circumstances will splitting a ward between constituencies be justified, and our initial proposals do not do so.

If an alternative scheme proposes to split wards, strong evidence and justification will need to be provided, and the extent of such ward-splitting should be kept to a minimum. The scale of change in this review, as I say, is significant and we look forward to hearing the views of people at this hearing and throughout the rest of the consultation period. We are consulting on our proposals up and until Monday 5 December 2016, so there is still time after the next two days for people to contribute to the review in writing. There are also reference copies of the proposals present at this hearing and they are also available on our website and in a number of places of deposit around the region. You can make written recommendations to us on our consultation website at bce18.org.uk. I urge everyone to submit written representations to us before the deadline of 5 December.

Finally, I would like to remind all participants that this hearing is part of a public consultation and you will be asked to provide us with your name and address if you make an oral representation. The Commission is legally obliged to take a record of the public hearings and, as you can see, just over in my left-hand corner - your right - we are taking a video recording from which we will create a verbatim transcript. The Commission is

required to publish the record of the public hearing along with all written representations for a four-week period, during which members of the public have an opportunity to comment on those representations themselves. We expect this period to occur during the spring of next year. The publication of the hearing records and written representations contain certain personal data of those who have made a representation to the Commission. We therefore invite all those contributing to read the Commission's data protection and privacy policy, a copy of which we have with us today and is also available on our website.

Before handing back to Howard to chair the hearing and begin it for today, just a few housekeeping rules and a few bits of information. We are not anticipating any fire alarms to be going off today, so if one does go off it is real. The exit is through that door (indicating), down the stairs and the meeting point is just outside the building. In terms of toilets, the ladies is outside the back door and to the right; the gents is outside the back door and down the corridor to the left. We ask during the day people coming and going from the hearing to use the rear entrance, just because anyone coming in through the front entrance will be blocking the camera if people are giving evidence. Finally, if people have a mobile phone, which I am sure we all do in the room, we ask you to keep it on silent. If you need to take a call during the hearing - we appreciate people are busy and have other bits going on in their lives - we would ask you to go outside and take those calls rather than in the room itself.

With that, I would now like to pass over to Howard to chair the hearing and thank you very much indeed today for your attendance.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Excellent, thank you. If we commence with our first speaker and that is Kevin Davis. If you would like to come forward, Sir, and speak from the podium. If you can by way of introduction give your name and address to commence, please.

CLLR DAVIS: I am Cllr Kevin Davis and I am the Leader of the Council at the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, which is where we are, and which has within its boundaries the whole of the Kingston and Surbiton constituency and four local government wards in the Richmond Park constituency. I was also the parliamentary candidate for Kingston and Surbiton at the 2005 general election. I have been involved in the local political scene here since about 1998.

Whilst I am giving this evidence in my role as Leader of the Council, the views I give here are my personal views. They are not the views of the Council, which we may well be hearing from a little later.

Having reviewed the evidence provided, I will start by saying that I fully support the Boundary Commission proposals for the seats of Kingston and Surbiton and Richmond Park. Whilst the Commission equally supports those, obviously, for me there are some

very good reasons why maintaining the existing boundary is quite appropriate. Kingston and Surbiton was first introduced as a seat in the 1997 general election and prior to 1997 the geographic areas which encompasses what were then the four parliamentary seats of Kingston, Surbiton, Richmond and Twickenham were generally deemed to be too small. At that time those four seats were solely within the boundaries of the two councils of Kingston and Richmond. There had been long-standing historic ties between the two councils, and they were seen as partners in many of the area-based reviews of public services that take place. At one point we shared a health authority and even in recent reviews around police borough commands, Kingston and Richmond are very much seen as being twinned up. Geographically, they also share features such as the river and Richmond Park and economically, the two boroughs are seen to complement each other, with their diversity of provision around retail and other aspects of commercial life.

The two boroughs very much look to each other more than they do to any of their other near neighbours. That is a very important reason why I think retaining the seats as they are within the boundaries of Kingston and Richmond Councils is quite an important aspect. The 1997 boundary review reduced those four seats to the seats we have today but the seats remained shared even at that stage, and as they do today, between those two borough councils, with Twickenham residing solely in the Richmond area, Kingston and Surbiton residing solely in the Kingston area and Richmond Park being split.

For Kingston and Surbiton the seat knits together four very, very close communities: the town centre of Kingston, Surbiton, Hook and Chessington and the Maldens (that is both Old and New Malden). These are very distinct areas with very distinct characteristics. They each have their own district shopping centres, but they are very much knitted together as what makes up this part of Kingston. The A3 forms a natural geographic division but whereas in the southern end, through Tolworth, this boundary sometimes appears to divide the community, when it comes to the area that runs up against the boundary with Merton Council in New Malden, it provides a natural boundary for the area around that; Burlington Road and those sorts of areas.

There was an earlier set of Boundary Commission proposals, which I would have fought, which sought to place the two wards of the Maldens area into a neighbouring seat across the boundary of Merton, and that would have significantly dislocated and confused the local community identity. For those reasons I am very happy that we have now got a settled view that Kingston and Surbiton should remain as it is, and I fully support the retention of the seat in its current form.

For Richmond Park, I again fully support what is being proposed in its current form, not least because the geographic boundaries it follows are quite natural boundaries. The river predominates within that boundary, but equally the A3 is another facet which acts as a boundary, particularly for Coombe Hill ward with the neighbouring both boroughs and constituency seats. Again, there had been earlier proposals to move those wards into a neighbouring seat, but it would have again dislocated those from the neighbouring areas

and I would have fought those had those proposals been brought forward in this boundary review, but they have not been, which is why I am very happy to support the actual proposals.

There is one aspect I would like to raise, although not directly something the Boundary Commission is looking to take into account on this particular area, and that is the names of our seats. I think it is time that we started to align names with the communities which they represent in a slightly better way than we currently have. If I take the Kingston and Surbiton seat, to be honest, this name was adopted for the 1997 election without very much thought to the geographic area it was covering. I do not know but, if I am honest, I think the Boundary Commission merely thought that there was the Kingston seat, there was the Surbiton seat, "We will combine them and call it Kingston and Surbiton". What it does not do is take into account quite distant communities from the centres of both Kingston and Surbiton in places like New Malden, which is very distinct, and Chessington, and the slightly smaller community of Tolworth. In the future, as Kingston grows, these three areas are looking to become significant in their own right and so, whilst adding those names to an even longer constituency name would not be appropriate, I do believe that probably the time has now come to call this seat "Kingston" and accept that that is the boundaries of where we are and it is what makes sense to people who live in Chessington and, equally, to people who live in New Malden.

There is a similar issue with the Richmond Park seat because whilst Richmond Park sits in the middle of the constituency, the majority of the seat lies within the area of Richmond Council, but, at the same time, its name also ignores the important area of North Kingston, which is in itself an important, significant community divided by Ham and Ham Common from the rest of the parliamentary seat. In this area, politically most parties have now adopted the local nomenclature of "Richmond Park and North Kingston", but this name is based upon the current seat name.

The proposal I would support (if the Boundary Commission were minded to look at this issue) is to move it to a new name of Richmond and North Kingston, as this better respects the realities that the seat, which encompasses the whole of the historic area of Richmond, separate from that of Twickenham, and adds in the North Kingston wards to it. I would just ask that those things are considered when we come to the finalisation of these proposals because for me it is quite important now that we bed down our constituencies into the neighbourhoods and areas that they represent.

Without any further ado, I fully support the proposal of the Boundary Commission. My understanding is there are no objections from other parties to these proposals and I would suggest that they create a firm bedrock for the redistribution of seats in neighbouring and other parts of London, and for that reason they are to be commended.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed, that is most helpful. Are there any matters of clarification? No? In that case, thank you very much

indeed.

I think our next speaker is Andrew Bessant. Again if you could just introduce yourself by way of name and address to commence, please.

MR BESSANT: My name is Andrew Bessant. I am Kingston Council's returning officer and electoral registration officer.

In making my comments I should stress, as the Leader of the Council has already said, the Council has not yet taken a formal position on these proposals, so I am putting forward my own personal view as returning officer and electoral registration officer. The Council will be considering the proposals at a meeting on 1 December, which is clearly still within the Boundary Commission's timescales. Whilst for purposes of administering elections it is always helpful to have parliamentary constituencies completely contained within borough boundaries, I recognise that is no longer possible in the majority of cases because of the electoral quota to which the Boundary Commission must work. Therefore, personally I certainly welcome the current proposals for the Royal Borough of Kingston which at least retain the existing arrangements, albeit with one constituency - Richmond Park - spanning two boroughs.

You heard from Cllr Davis some of the history and background to all this. I will not go into all that again. When the Richmond Park constituency was first created in the mid-1990s, the Council did object to that at the time, on the grounds primarily that it was bringing together parts of Richmond and parts of Kingston (particularly a small part of Kingston town centre) in a constituency that was being called Richmond Park, so it was not just the name; it was the combinations. However, since then we have obviously worked with that arrangement for 20 years or so and it does seem to work reasonably well. It is a solution that is a lot better than some of the proposals that were put forward in the more recent reviews, so certainly I would continue to support that.

I should again stress that this is my personal view as returning officer and the Council will be considering the matter in the near future.

In terms of the names of the constituencies, again I support what Cllr Davis has said particularly in relation to Richmond Park because that suggests a rather pleasant, leafy area which actually contains parts of North Kingston, including a small part Kingston town centre, which of course is very pleasant but does not quite fit with the Richmond Park description, so Richmond and North Kingston would seem quite a sensible solution if that is something within the Commission's remit. I think that is all I would like to say, thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Are there any matters for clarification? No. I was going to say a colleague of yours, the Chief Executive of Brent, spoke at our hearing at Harrow on the general principles of the issues facing

electoral registration and returning officers. Were you aware of that?

MR BESSANT: I was not, no.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I commend you to have a look at her evidence in due course. Thank you very much indeed. I think our next speaker is Ruth Cadbury. Again, your name and address please.

MS CADBURY: (MP for Brentwood and Isleworth) Thank you, Mr Simmons. I am Ruth Cadbury. Since May last year I have been the Member of Parliament for Brentford and Isleworth and for the public record my address is the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. If any records could be amended to that effect, please, for obvious reasons.

As I said, last year I was elected to Parliament representing the seat I have lived and worked in for many years. Prior to being elected to Parliament I was a Hounslow councillor, spending most of that time as a cabinet member or the previous equivalent of that and for a time as deputy leader. I have taken many of the cabinet roles and therefore have an understanding of the importance of the relationships between different levels of elected representatives and those who deliver services in the same place. Both previously as a councillor and now as an MP, I value the fact that we have had coterminosity of parliamentary and borough boundaries and I regret that it is not a higher priority for the Boundary Commission. I guess many people have said that in previous hearings and I know that argument cannot be rewound; I wish it could. Therefore, I am going for what I believe is the next best proposal for our area. I am supporting the alternative proposal submitted by the Labour Party. What that does is bring all four wards of the town of Hounslow into one parliamentary seat. They are currently split between the two. Turnham Green would go into a seat called Ealing Acton and Osterley and Spring Grove wards would go to Ealing Southall. This has the advantage of retaining the whole of the new constituency in one borough, the borough of Hounslow, and therefore makes the job of the MP and the local authority easier. So many council and other services are borough wide - health, police, fire. The voluntary sector organises along borough lines as does the Chamber of Commerce and they work in partnership with each other and in conjunction with the MPs. Those relationships are strong and valuable.

If we are to end up with orphan wards, it is either the Boundary Commission proposal, which puts orphan wards into a seat called Brentford and Chiswick, or the Labour proposal, which puts orphan wards into the borough of Ealing. I believe that it is much easier for an MP - which is one person and a very, very small staff - to be able to deal with those relationships in one borough, whereas a local authority is much bigger and is much better resourced to deal with the relationships with several MPs who represent very small parts of their local authority area.

The key advantage of the Labour proposal for the Brentford and Hounslow constituency is that it brings Hounslow town together in one constituency. This is a town which has

high needs and high levels of deprivation and therefore the pressures on all of those services that I mentioned are much higher. Therefore, keeping those relationships together: one MP, one local authority – although, obviously that is not changing - is much, much easier. This is an area of high need. I do not want to under-estimate the thriving sense of community that we have in Chiswick. There are many community institutions and organisations in Chiswick that operate across the W4 postcode. W4 is Chiswick. It is one and the same thing, but Chiswick is already split between three authorities and three parliamentary constituencies, so shifting Turnham Green into Ealing does not further complicate the relationships as much. Although Chiswick obviously uses public services - we all do - it is generally not dealing with so many of the high-end public services in the same way that Hounslow is.

That is my proposal in support of the Labour alternative proposals, Mr Simmons. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. Any matters for clarification? No. In which case, thank you very much indeed.

I think our next speaker is Cllr Bashford. If you introduce yourself by way of name and address to begin.

CLLR BASHFORD: I am Cllr Sara Bashford. I am a councillor in the London Borough of Croydon and my home address is Wagtail Gardens, South Croydon CR2 8TA.

I have been a councillor in Selsdon and Ballards for ten years and have lived in the ward for 17. I have lived in Croydon for all but the first three years of my life, which is obviously quite a while; the majority in the neighbouring ward of Heathfield in a part called Forestdale. This is important as I would say I am part of the community of the whole area which is only divided by a ward boundary, not by any community differences. At present there is not a local ward boundary but a constituency one which should be put right to ensure everyone who lives there feels that the community has been recognised as one. The three wards that I am specifically referring to are the Shirley ward, which is being proposed to be moved from Croydon Central into Beckenham, the Selsdon and Ballards ward, where the proposal currently is to keep it in Croydon South, and Heathfield ward where the proposal is to move it into Croydon South. What I want to talk to you about is the fact that those three wards are very conjoined and should be in the same constituency.

In my ward of Selsdon and Ballards there are a number of schools, GPs, community centres, dentists, shops, restaurants and a library. All of these are used by residents who live in part of Heathfield plus Selsdon and Ballards. My children attended primary school in Heathfield, as that was their local school and therefore the nearest one to walk to. Everyone will tell you they live in Selsdon, especially those who live on Monks Hill and in Forestdale. Monks Hill is an estate mainly council owned but it shares a postcode with Selsdon and everyone who lives there will identify with Selsdon as their community. The

local pub is in Addington Road and is a five-minute walk from Monks Hill. This is frequented by everyone from what is deemed to be Selsdon including Monks Hill and Forestdale. The largest local primary school is halfway between Monks Hill and the pub, so hopefully this gives some indication of the closest of the proximity of the community.

Forestdale is another estate which was built between the late 1960s and early 1980s and was originally all privately owned. Over the years a number of properties have been sold to housing associations and private landlords but it is still very much part of the Selsdon community. It is right next door to Selsdon Vale where I live. It is literally separated by a rumble strip of bricks. It is the same road but there is a rumble strip in the middle of it. The local Guide hut is actually right on the boundary of Selsdon and Ballards and Heathfield on that rumble strip. It is the meeting point of the Croydon Central and Croydon South constituencies, but the two communities on either side do not see themselves as being different. This is one community divided by a ward and a parliamentary boundary but absolutely nothing else. The boundary follows a footpath that goes along the back of homes and into woods and it is pretty much unused by residents. It is not a walking route apart from ramblers and maybe an odd few people taking the dog out, but it is certainly not a route that anybody local uses to access buses or services or anything like that. The Ballards part of Selsdon and Ballards is a very distinct area and it is very separate to Selsdon in many ways. It does not share a residents' association and although Selsdon is the nearest district centre and the local residents do shop there and they use the bank, they do not feel associated with it in the same way that those people from Monks Hill and Forestdale do.

Heathfield as a ward is made up. Heathfield does not really exist as a place. It is named after a very old house and area of land there which was a farm in the deep and distant past. It comprises a lot of communities that have been bundled together to form a large ward. Addington village is part of it and it is very small and very distinct and would probably feel most associated with Shirley, as does the Shirley Hills area of Heathfield. Shirley Hills and Ballards are next to each other. They are separated by a wood, but if they had not built houses then it would be a continual strip. It is one wood with buildings in the middle. Shirley Hills and Ballards are next to each other, separated by a wood, but those who live on Coombe Road, which is one side of it, would definitely say they feel more related to those who live around Shirley Hills, even though there is the main road and the tram track in the middle. This relates specifically to the type and size of homes and the type of families in those homes. Until 2002 Ballards was in Croydon Central which also supports where its natural affinity is. Back in 2002, although I was not a councillor at the time, I know that people who were living in Ballards did not want to move particularly; they were quite happy where they were. It has worked but they certainly feel that they are more aligned to the Shirley side of the ward rather than the Selsdon side.

The other main components of Heathfield are linked to the community of Shirley itself. These are the parts around Shirley Church Road, Upper Shirley Road and Wickham Road. I think the names actually indicate where they are. If you speak to any of the

residents in these areas they will tell you they live in Shirley; and they do. I actually work in Shirley as well as living in Selsdon, and the two communities, although not very far apart geographically, are different and Heathfield is where they come together, but the three combined make up a quite distinct type of community in terms of the type of families, type of properties and the feel of them.

The boundary is very random in terms of the community and Shirley is a very specific area. Like Selsdon, it has the schools, churches, GPs, pubs, restaurants, and those from the Heathfield side of Shirley will also say they live in Shirley - because they do. In Heathfield you have Shirley High School. Again, the name gives it away. I went there as a teenager, which I know was a long time ago, and I was actually brought up in Heathfield, which again shows that connection. There are a large number of children from Forestdale and from Selsdon who still go to Shirley High School. Shirley is a large area and has a number of residents' associations which work very co-operatively together. They have recently worked extensively with neighbouring residents' associations in the next-door ward of Ashburton to oppose certain items in the local plan. That has been particularly interesting because it shows how the Heathfield and Shirley Residents' Associations are linking in with the neighbouring ward because the issues are cross-boundary. There are various issues around de-grading green belt into metropolitan open land and that affects Heathfield, Shirley and Ashburton residents because of the way the land lies.

Selsdon and Ballards has a defined district centre; Shirley has a defined district centre, but Heathfield is made up and does not. Heathfield, depending where you are in the ward, will divide between Shirley or Selsdon and Ballards. Whilst the current ward boundaries are in place, I would suggest that these three wards are linked, so they have the same MP and they have that cohesiveness to feel like a whole community, as those three wards are particularly similar in terms of the way they work, with very active residents' associations, with community centres, with the sharing of schools and, in a lot of cases, the sharing of GP and dentist-type medical services.

I am aware obviously that in Croydon we have a ward boundary review taking place and a lot of what I have told you may well change with that, but I know that this is a separate review. We are not at the point where we have actually split boundaries at present for the wards, but certainly the type of information that I have given will go into that because I think it is important that places like Shirley, Heathfield and Selsdon remain or can become one constituency.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. That is very helpful and very clear. Any matters for clarification? No. In which case, thank you very much indeed. I think our next scheduled speaker is at 12.40 so I suggest we adjourn until 12.40.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, we reconvene and

we have our speaker, I think Mr Jay Crush. Would you like come forward and if you could introduce yourself by way of name and address, please.

MR CRUSH: Jay Crush, Flat 4, Salter Court, 25 Montague Road, Wimbledon, SW19 1TD, which is in the Abbey ward in the current Wimbledon constituency.

Today I want to make a case against the way the current Boundary Commission proposals effectively rip the Wimbledon community in two and to highlight the community links that this proposal will sever. As a resident of Wimbledon, it is striking how cohesive and self-contained it is as a parliamentary constituency. Over the course of a month I have an interaction with a majority of the ten wards making up Wimbledon. I live in Abbey ward, but I go to the gym, shopping and out to dinner in the town centre wards of Hillside, Dundonald and Trinity. I go running on Wimbledon Common in Village ward. My favourite Chinese takeaway is in Raynes Park ward. I play tennis in Wimbledon Park ward and visit friends in Merton Park ward. This is an experience shared by residents across the constituency from West Barnes to Wimbledon village. The places where people live, shop, see friends and travel from are all neatly contained within the constituency. Wimbledon town centre is the main focal point which most across the constituency will see as their main centre of gravity and most will travel through on their commute, but it is also the smaller high streets which service our own local centres of gravity in Raynes Park, West Barnes and Merton Park which share the residential zones that they would look towards.

In the Boundary Commission's revised proposals as part of the 2013 review, local transport links throughout constituencies were rightly taken account of. Clearly, it is very difficult for a community to be cohesive if there are no transport links between areas. In Wimbledon we have a variety of overlapping transport links throughout the constituency. As well as bus routes going in all directions, there is the Northern Line from Morden and Merton Park to South Wimbledon and Abbey, the District Line from Wimbledon town centre to Wimbledon Park, South West Trains which stop in West Barnes, Raynes Park and in the town centre and Thameslink which stops in Merton Park, Dundonald and the town centre. From experience, it is very easy to get anywhere within the constituency quickly.

There are also a number of civic routes organised around the current parliamentary constituency. For example, there is the Wimbledon Guild charity, which provides support for the elderly, those facing financial hardship and those suffering from mental illness, which was historically set up primarily to serve the Wimbledon community - and still does. Wimbledon also has an active variety of residents' associations who come together and arrange themselves in bigger groups within the constituency to amplify their voices. The Wimbledon Union of Residents' Associations is the key example of this, representing residents in the majority of wards within the constituency. The important point here is that their activities are limited to the constituency and were built up around the existing boundaries.

All this together ensures that Wimbledon's Member of Parliament is very well placed to serve a cohesive community and not a disparate group of areas which may have vastly differing priorities and experiences. Given that the majority of the facilities in the areas Wimbledon residents use on a day-to-day basis are in the same constituency as they live, our MP is able to more effectively represent us and understand any issues we may have. For example, Crossrail 2 is the biggest issue facing Wimbledon at the moment, which will have an impact on every ward for the three stops proposed within the constituency. The issues are completely inter-linked although geographically separate, so a change to the depot proposed in Wimbledon Park might look like it has nothing to do with West Barnes, but it will lead to changes down the line at the station at West Barnes which will affect the residents there. So having an MP who is tackling these issues on behalf of the whole community means that we are all better represented and informed about the wider picture and the effects that these proposals will have.

Unfortunately, the Boundary Commission's current proposals do not respect the community links of Wimbledon. Instead, Wimbledon is ripped in two, with Village and Wimbledon Park joining the current Putney constituency. The rest of Wimbledon is then joined by four wards from the current Mitcham and Morden constituency which have very few links to Wimbledon. Residents in Village and Wimbledon Park do not really look towards Putney. Instead, they would regard themselves as an essential part of Wimbledon. Residents in the rest of Wimbledon like me would certainly agree with that. Wimbledon village blends into the town centre and Hillside and Raynes Park wards are via Wimbledon Hill Road and the residential areas off it. There is no real divide at all between them. Those living in the village will most certainly go to restaurants, shops and commute from Wimbledon town centre. Wimbledon Park blends into Hillside ward through Alexandra Road and into Trinity and South Wimbledon down Haydons Road. It is a completely residential continuous area with the rest of the current Wimbledon constituency. There is absolutely no divide at all between them.

There is, however, a natural divide between the current Wimbledon constituency and the four Mitcham and Morden wards being added: Colliers Wood, Lavender Fields, Ravensbury and Cricket Green. Abbey Ward, where I live, is right next to Colliers Wood but I cannot picture where the residential areas in Colliers Wood are, and even if we look closely on the map, there are no links and cohesion between the two communities. This is even more the case with Lavender Fields, Cricket Green and Ravensbury even though they all also border Abbey ward. A closer inspection of the map will show you why this is. The residential areas on the east of the current Wimbledon constituency - so Abbey and Trinity wards - are separated from Colliers Wood, Lavender Fields and Cricket Green by a number of geographical features. There is the River Wandle, the Wandle Valley Park which surrounds it, an industrial estate, a shopping complex and Morden Hall public park. These act as barriers which keep the residential areas apart and distinct meaning that there are no community links between them. Instead Abbey and Trinity look towards Wimbledon town centre along The Broadway. Colliers Wood looks more towards the

Tooting area and Ravensbury, Lavender Fields and Cricket Green residents will look towards Mitcham town centre.

Although I am focusing on Wimbledon, I notice that the Boundary Commission have also split the historic Mitcham town centre, which is primarily made up of Cricket Green, Figges Marsh and Lavender Fields wards. Mitcham has community links as strong as we have across Wimbledon and I hope serious attention will be given to preserving them as well, as far as possible.

Working to preserve both Wimbledon's and Mitcham's communities will help mitigate the undesirable situation in the current proposals whereby the London Borough of Merton will go from having two MPs wholly self contained within the borough to four. This would make the local authority's job of engaging with the MPs and the community a lot more difficult.

As to the counter-proposals, I will submit a fully worked counter-proposal in writing before the deadline.

To conclude, a parliamentary constituency is not just about an election every five years. Community and civic organisations are built up over decades alongside these boundaries. This then enhances the community links within the constituency which in Wimbledon are particularly strong. Wimbledon is known all over the world making the name itself a brand. This brand is reflected in landmarks across the current constituency which will be split under the current proposal and one MP and a cohesive community together can make the most of this brand for the benefit of the area. Wimbledon is remarkably cohesive and self contained as a parliamentary constituency so I hope all efforts can be made to keep it together. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. That is very clear and very helpful. Are there any matters for clarification? No. In which case, can I thank you. Our next scheduled speaker is not until 2, so I suggest we reconvene at 20 past one, because there may be some people thronging in from the street - possibly.

Time noted: 12.50 pm

After a short break

Time noted: 1.23 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will reconvene and I call Mr Robert Ward to give his evidence. Could you start by introducing yourself by name and address?

MR WARD: Good afternoon. My name is Robert Ward and I live at 7 Lychgate Close, South Croydon, CR2 0DX. That is in the London Borough of Croydon obviously and the parliamentary constituency of South Croydon.

Obviously I am aware of where we currently are in terms of the boundaries and I have had a look at your proposal and I would like to start with the good things about it, because I think there is quite a lot of good about it, particularly as my wife and our three children, who live in the north of the boundary or over the boundary of the borough, all would refer to themselves as living in Crystal Palace, which currently has three separate MPs all of whom intersect out and around what everybody calls Crystal Palace.

So far as the north of the borough is concerned, they live their lives in the wards of Upper Norwood and Woodside and in Crystal Palace in the borough of Bromley. Bringing those three wards together is very much the community where they live, particularly for one of them who has a wife and small child. I think that part and the representation of Crystal Palace is quite an important improvement that has been made already. The borough of Lambeth also intersects over there. I think there is less of an argument for bringing that part into a common constituency, but indeed the priority, and an improvement that is definitely there as far as I am concerned is the Crystal Palace area becoming more coherent in terms of its representation.

In terms of where my wife and I live, that is in Croham, and as far as the changes that you have suggested, where previously we were in Croydon South, now we are going to be in a revised Croydon Central constituency. I think it is okay as far as the change. It is fairly neutral. Obviously, you have this elaborate jigsaw puzzle to make the boundaries coherent and within those limits in terms of the numbers in a constituency. The more coherent community as far as where we live our lives is more the south west of the current London Borough of Croydon. So Croham, Purley, Sanderstead, Coulsdon East, Coulsdon West and Kenley and Waddon is a coherent area which I think from my maths just about makes it within your boundary. That would be my preference.

If I had to add anything to that, I am afraid it would bust the boundary, but Selsdon and Ballards is our local Sainsbury's really where a lot of people accumulate around, but the south west of the current London Borough of Croydon is bounded by the geographical landmarks and roads and the like and is a more coherent area as far as my area of representation is concerned and where we live our lives. That is pretty much all I have to say.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is very helpful. I should have pointed out to you that the map of the constituency is behind you and should you have wanted to you can use that.

MR WARD: I have got one here.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You are okay? You did not want to point anything else out?

MR WARD: No, I think I have been through the ward boundaries and the like, but thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are there any matters for clarification? No. In which case, thank you very much for submitting your evidence.

MR WARD: Thank you for your time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I suggest that we now adjourn for lunch and we will return at 2.30.

After the luncheon adjournment

Time noted: 2.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, we will reconvene and I think we have our next scheduled speaker with us, Mr John Mays. Would you like to come forward and speak from the podium here? Could you start your address by giving us your name and address?

MR MAYS: Good afternoon. My name is John Mays and I am Chairman of the Wimbledon Society. The Wimbledon Society is a civic society with a remit to look after the interests of the old borough of Wimbledon as it existed up to the 1960s before it became subsumed into Merton. We obviously have very strict views about the proposals that have been put forward by the Boundary Commission.

Can I say first of all that Wimbledon is a world-class name. If you go anywhere in the world, as I have, and you go to some of more remote parts and you say, "I live in Wimbledon," everyone knows what you mean. They do not know what you do perhaps - they may imagine you play a superb game of tennis - but they certainly know where you come from, and that is because SW19 is a recognised symbol throughout the world. We feel these proposals split up the community in a way that is completely inappropriate. There is another point I would like to make, and I do not know whether the Boundary Commission took this into consideration or not, and that is we all pay a subsidy to keep the Common going. It is a levy and the way the proposals would work would split up the people who are paying the levy and it would represent something in the way of taxation without representation. We feel that this should also be taken into account when the final proposals are made.

One of the points that we are most anxious about is the hiving off of the two most northerly wards from the rest of the community. I am referring to the Village ward and the Wimbledon Park ward. Pushing them into Putney is quite inappropriate. The people who live there feel part of the Wimbledon community; they are part of the Wimbledon community, and to take them out of it is not the right course of action.

We feel that the right course of action would be to include the following wards in the new constituency. I will comment on that in a little bit more detail in a minute. The wards we have in mind are Abbey, Cannon Hill, Dundonald, Hillside, Merton Park, Raynes Park, Trinity, Village, West Barnes and Wimbledon Park. I mentioned two of those earlier on; Village and Wimbledon Park. That would represent a constituency number of about 63,000 or just over, and there would obviously have to be an additional ward or wards to make it up to the numbers which are the basis on which the Commission is working. We believe that one or two, or possibly three, of these wards - Lower Morden, Colliers Wood and St Helier - added to the ones I have just mentioned would make up a viable constituency with the requisite number of voters as set out in the remit that the Commission has.

There are one or two other points I would like to make. The Commission's remit is that local ties should not be broken, but what these proposals do is precisely that. It does break local ties and it is therefore on those grounds inappropriate. The Commission should also take into account special geographical considerations. We believe that the geographical considerations should include, amongst other things, the fact of where the Common is and the northern boundary. Also the Commission should have regard to local government boundaries. The boundaries that this proposal would set up would mean that Merton Council would have to relate not to two MPs as at present but to five MPs because of the way that it would be split up. Any council that has to deal with one MP or two MPs knows how difficult that is; to deal with five is compounding the issue.

We are going to put all this down in a written submission to the Commission which will go in before 5 December, but those are the points that I would like to make today which I hope the Commission will initially take into consideration. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. I am very pleased to hear that you will be making a written submission. I think it is very important that you hopefully amplify the points too. Thank you. That was very clear. Can I just check, are there any matters for clarification? No. In which case, thank you very much indeed, Sir.

Our next speaker is Mrs Leigh Terrafranca. Would you like to come forward? Again could you introduce yourself by way of name and address.

MRS TERRAFRANCA: I am going to leave these both with you. This is about a Future Wimbledon vision which won an award in Merton and this is a perspective on the whole of Wimbledon with Crossrail. (Same handed)

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. That is very helpful.

MRS TERRAFRANCA: My name is Leigh Terrafranca. I have lived in Wimbledon for 20

years and 32 years in the UK. I am a dual citizen of Britain and guess where else! We moved from Chelsea, which is called the “American ghetto”, to Wimbledon because we had young boys looking for schools and because we had not put them down at birth in Chelsea, we were actually to find places in Wimbledon, such is the quality of schools, both state and public schools in Wimbledon. King’s College School, for example, is rated the best school in the UK right now, I understand. It is a really international community and very progressive. I know some people talk about it being rich snobs and stuffy old whatever, but, in my view - and I have lived in New York and I have worked in the Far East - it is one of the most wonderful sustainable communities that I have ever been a part of. As I near retirement and I think it is going to be expensive to live in Wimbledon, I feel somehow we are going to find a way to stay on in Wimbledon such is the quality of life there. I think my views are shared by many.

The final thing is of course the great commute. The real estate agents call it “where the city meets the country” because you have got the Common, so on one side you have got all this good fresh air, and then you can get a black taxi outside of Wimbledon station (but you cannot get a black taxi at Clapham Junction). We have a queue of black taxis which is kind of odd, but it is all part of what makes Wimbledon quite special.

I have worked for 20 years as the planning and licensing officer of a residents’ association. We are the first community north of Wimbledon town centre and the station, and it is called WURA. Sometimes we are called “weary” because there are so many people who want to come in and take advantage of Wimbledon at the expense of the amenities that we enjoy there. It is an important job, but we do feel that generally we are listened to by the community.

I am also co-chair of the Crossrail 2 Group which was set up by the Wimbledon Union of Residents’ Associations, so we have 19 residents’ associations, and that is a growing group, that meet together about every two months and we share information across. We have also been told by a few different groups that we may have the highest density of residents’ associations in all London, but I am not claiming that.

Wimbledon is a world brand. My career was in global marketing. I started out in America working for Pepsi Cola and was hired to come over and help Gillette join up their 15 companies for Europe and then I got a global assignment working with a British brand called Alfred Dunhill, menswear and accessories; big business in the Far East. That is a luxury goods brands. It was like the Chanel for men at the time. It is out of style now; it is Hugo Boss. Then I worked for Guinness, the distillers. That experience has also made me realise that much about Wimbledon is very understated and quiet but underneath it all it is a luxury brand and it is for the UK. It is one of the jewels in the crown. You say Wimbledon, as John said, and they might say “Wimbledong” in China, but they know what it is. The same with Stonehenge. And apparently one of the Saatchi brothers lives in Wimbledon. People like myself believe that Wimbledon has even more opportunity as a name to make Great Britain more great with a future Wimbledon and the coming of

Crossrail 2.

I am pretty sure you know what is going on with Crossrail. I do not know how to say this but, pretty much, Wimbledon runs Wimbledon. We have a bookfest that is organised. We have the Wimbledon Society. We have so many professionals who give their time to help if we have issues related to Wimbledon. We often solve our own problems. It is not just the village versus the town - and there has been some talk that Crossrail is going to affect the town but not the village - but it is like a lake, and if you drop a rock in anywhere it affects all the places called Wimbledon.

We feel that now we have Merton Council really weighing in because they want economic benefits out of Wimbledon. Some of it of course is important and we have a lot of things that can be much better. The expectations are there about Wimbledon, but a lot of things, particularly in the town centre, are not wonderful, and we certainly want to improve that. We need the Wimbledon Society to help Wimbledon town be all that it can be.

This issue about boundaries, when it came out I was not initially going to speak because I did not quite understand how all this works and it is not planning or licensing, but to sever Wimbledon village from the town at this point, in our view, would just be catastrophic, because Wimbledon - and I hope if you get some free time later this afternoon, you will flip through these presentations - is West Wimbledon, South Wimbledon, Wimbledon Park, Wimbledon Reach, High Path, which is a huge estate having regeneration right behind South Wimbledon tube station, which I would have said was in Morden, but I was at a meeting with them and they believe they are in Wimbledon. That is good because I think Wimbledon is a beautiful image in one's mind, and even if they actually took a picture of it and looked at it and saw maybe it is not as fine as they might think, they want to be part of Wimbledon. In our view, if you are in Merton and you think you live in Wimbledon, like Raynes Park --- if you look at the websites of some of the shops, their adverts say they are in Wimbledon, but if you look at their postcode they are in Raynes Park. Wimbledon is quite a big, multi-faceted entity and people want to be a part of it. I will stop talking now, but we are getting right up to the edge of opportunity with Crossrail, and we feel that fracturing it by taking the village away, which is our deep roots - those are our tap roots - would make it so much more difficult to make Wimbledon be the place that we want it to be in 20 or 30 years' time. I think that is probably enough.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: No, that is very helpful, thank you, and very clear and a bit of passion, which I like. Any matters for clarification? No. In which case, thank you, and thank you also for these documents which I assure you we will read. I think that brings us on to Sara Sharp. The usual drill: your name and address to begin please. Thank you.

MRS SHARP: My name is Sara Sharp. I am a resident in Wimbledon. I also am a bit of a campaigner in recent months to try to get Wimbledon cohesive from not just the village but all across Merton. I will start just by saying thank you for letting me speak today. If I

were to take a pair of scissors and cut off the top part of your shirt saying it no longer belonged to it, it would hang untidily and flop, and it would no longer be called a shirt. That is the way I feel about the Boundary Commission's initial proposals for the new constituency boundaries. If you strip Wimbledon Village and Wimbledon Park from Wimbledon and adjoin them to the Putney constituency, you will be ripping up this community at a time when political uncertainty demands and social cohesion is needed to steady the bat. Wimbledon is not just a brand name, a world-famous town for its tennis; it is a cohesive community that spreads north and south, east and west, and it is all under one name: Wimbledon.

When I first dragged my husband south of the river to Wimbledon some 24 years ago, it was the "town meet country effect" that really made it and sold it to us. We embraced Wimbledon Common and Wimbledon Park just as much when the kids came along and we bragged about the transport links into the City. We felt we had at last found home. We have an active MP who understands our concerns and liaises effectively with the local council. There is no confusion about whom to approach. Putney is a short trip away, but it was never physically or emotionally a part of us; a part of Wimbledon. We are separated by the busy A3 and it is just different not only in feel but in layout, even on paper.

Whilst I do understand the Government's objective to reduce the number of MPs from 650 to 600, myself and many other residents for whom I speak today just do not see the sense in carving up SW19 whilst not actually achieving that aim at all. The Commission will actually increase the number of MPs from two to five by removing the village and Wimbledon Park and creating a Wimbledon Central and Merton constituency. This new constituency will include Colliers Wood, Lavender Fields, Ravensbury and Cricket Green, so instead of the two MPs we will now get five, and this will create confusion and make it even more difficult for five MPs to work and liaise with our local council. As it is, it is time consuming and laborious to get answers for the two current MPs from the Council, so imagine five and the time pressures, not only on them but council workers. Will anything get done or will it simply be counter-productive? I believe we are all Wimbledon, from the village, to the common, to the town centre, to the south of Wimbledon, to the west of Wimbledon. The word Wimbledon evokes a sense of unity and cohesion. We share a common pride and a sense of belonging. There are invisible threads of loyalty and support that stretch between us regardless of economic prowess or the lack of it. We share the same land, the same concerns, the same MP, the same name, and whilst Government looks to paper to sort out the problem, it must also be aware that by crossing a pen across a map to achieve its aims it only creates more problems than solutions in the future.

Apart from the number of MPs, the way you are carving up this constituency, you fail to recognise the links and bonds that make it work as it stands today. Colliers Wood residents do not feel an affiliation with neighbouring Tooting and yet they would be moved into the new constituency. The same with Mitcham Common. Why would you want to split up the common rather than leave it united? What about Lavender Fields and Cricket

Green, which are fundamentally Mitcham, but will no longer look towards Mitcham? Why are we being pulled apart rather than united? It is as though jigsaw puzzle pieces are being picked up and being forced into places just to make it fit, but it does not fit. It leaves a distorted picture and jumbled community that does not leave any clarity or certainty and certainly puts into question this idea of democracy and the democratic process.

I urge you to reconsider and put this proposal aside because, as they stand, you are not uniting; you are breaking us up, and this is a time when Government are spending lots of money in trying ensure that communities stay together rather than be split aside.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Again, thank you very much indeed. Clarification from anyone? No. In which case, thank you very much indeed.

Mr Robert Giles, would you like come forward, Sir? Can you introduce yourself by way of name and address when you arrive at the podium?

MR GILES: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Robert Giles and I am here in a personal capacity really but I am also Chairman of the Battles Area Residents' Association, which is an area --- (Going to map).

I will start again. My name is Robert Giles and for my sins I am also Chairman of a residents' association in the Battles area in Abbey ward in that kind of area (indicating), which is called the Battles Residents' Association because of the historic association with Lord Nelson's estate. The roads are named Hamilton after Lady Hamilton Hardy after Admiral Hardy, Victory after his ship and Nelson after Nelson.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Sorry to interrupt. I am afraid you cannot film.

MR GILES: Sorry, that is my fault; I asked her to.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You are being filmed but that is by the professionals. Sorry to interrupt.

MR GILES: Sorry about that. That is why it is called the Battles area. I want to speak in favour of retaining the territorial integrity of Wimbledon, and particularly keeping Wimbledon Park and Wimbledon village up here as part of the Wimbledon constituency. I want to make it clear that those of us who live in South Wimbledon, in the slightly less exclusive parts where a large three-bedroomed house is only £1 million these days, also feel very much part of Wimbledon and want to stay part. Five years ago, in 2011, you proposed in your initial proposals to move Abbey and Trinity wards in Wimbledon to Mitcham and to take other areas more to the west to complete your target population for the voters for the constituency. Myself and many of us campaigned against your proposals and I myself went to Wandsworth and made a presentation with some counter-

proposals. You were very kind and you accepted our arguments and you modified your proposals in order to maintain the territorial integrity of Wimbledon. You listened very carefully to what we said. Why on earth, having done that five years ago, have you completely forgotten and started again with a most ridiculous proposal? It seems that you have not really taken account of the very diligent work that you yourselves did five years ago in your proposals. I am sorry to say that. I do not wish to be rude, but that is how it seems to me.

From our point of view, obviously in our area we were going to be moved out of Wimbledon last time so we were angry and we campaigned against it and we were successful, albeit that it did not go through because the Boundary Commission proposals fell upon stony ground, shall we say. This time round I was rather hoping not to have to get involved. We have a young baby - you do not need to write all this down - and I really thought, "Well, it's not that bad because at least we are going to be in the middle of a new constituency, and it is going to be a very marginal constituency now, notionally I understand, between Conservative and Labour, so we will probably be listened to more on things like Crossrail, which has been mentioned already, which is an issue which greatly concerns those of us in our part of Wimbledon and its effect on the town centre because we feel part of Wimbledon. So I was kind of thinking, "Well, this is not so bad, maybe we don't have to get too involved". I made that point to our residents' association the other day and they all said, "No, of course you have got to speak against it because we are part of Wimbledon as well and we don't want to lose Wimbledon village and Wimbledon Park". Despite the possible advantages, which I pointed out, that we would now be in a marginal constituency rather than a safe constituency, and therefore our views would count for more under the first-past-the-post system, very much people say, "No, we want Wimbledon to maintain its integrity and we feel part of it".

Therefore, I want to support the proposals which I believe others have made for Wimbledon Village and Wimbledon Park to be retained and not given to Putney and for Putney to expand a bit in a more easterly direction. You will be familiar with proposals which are relatively complex in terms of restructuring quite large areas of South London to make more sense in terms of retaining local communities. I do not think it is appropriate for me to go into the exact detail of proposals that others have made in order to do that, but I would just like to say I do understand the very strict 5% limit and the very difficult job that the Boundary Commission has in order to meet these things. I thought last time, in 2011, on your second attempt, you made a very good attempt to reflect a number of local concerns that were raised. I would ask you, as you did five years ago, to do exactly the same and to look at the representations that are made by people in the area, particularly those people in the whole of Wimbledon, in order that we can maintain ourselves as a more cohesive unit under the parliamentary boundaries. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. That was very clear. Will be you making a written submission as well?

MR GILES: Not in any detail, no.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Fine, we have recorded all of what you have said and we have notes as well, so thank you very much. Matters for clarification at all? No. Thank you very much indeed, Sir.

We will now adjourn until 3.30 when our next scheduled speaker is due to attend. Thank you.

After a short adjournment

Time noted: 3.35 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, if we reassemble, I believe our speakers have arrived. I think the order is Lakshmi Kaul. Would you like to come forward first? If you speak from here and if you start by just giving us your name and address; thank you.

MS KAUL: Good afternoon. My name is Lakshmi Kaul. I am a local resident of the Hounslow South ward. I would like to congratulate you for initiating this rather long exercise of looking at the boundary reviews and I would like also to congratulate you for the really long-drawn proposals.

I do have a few points that I would like to make on the proposed boundary changes, especially with reference to the Chiswick and Hounslow wards. While I appreciate merging all the Hounslow wards within Feltham and Heston, it does have a slight bearing on areas such as mine that are actually slightly into the Whitton area and bordering into the Twickenham area, so while the Twickenham boundaries are not changing at all, my neighbourhood sort of becomes a bit confusing because I am not entirely in Hounslow but I am between Hounslow and Whitton.

The other thing I would like to say is Chiswick High Road is like a lifeline; it is not a boundary, so any boundary changes that you are proposing on that long stretch have to bear in mind that you do not disturb the lifeline of the Chiswick area. The loss of Hounslow makes sense, uniting Hounslow outside the constituency of Brentford and Isleworth, but all Chiswick wards must be kept together, including Turnham Green and Southfield. Chiswick High Road, as I said, needs to be retained as a lifeline, because it does remain so.

I would also like to say that the Southfield ward can be ceded to the new Brentford and Chiswick constituency in the Hounslow borough without undue concern. It is already in the DW4 postal district and many residents there feel they are part of Chiswick rather than the Ealing area. It shares more issues with Hounslow and Ealing. They have shared concerns. The old railway line forms a natural border between the DW4 and DW3 districts

so the residents naturally gravitate, for instance, towards the shops on Chiswick High Road, not on the Acton side or even Ealing Broadway. They go more to the Chiswick High Road areas.

Going further on into the Northfield area, the Northfield ward borders the London Borough of Hounslow with Brentford ward. Residents from both wards use Boston Manor underground station. Again, Gunnersbury RC Boys' School is located in Brentford and Isleworth constituency and serves many students living in the constituency and many, many students in the South Ealing area, in the Northfield ward. Again Gunnersbury Park is used by many Ealing residents, which is in Brentford and Isleworth constituency, but commonly used by the Ealing residents.

Those are my few suggestions. I fully support the Conservative plans that they have they suggested, so I hope you will take them on board. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. That is very helpful and very clear. Are there any matters arising? No. In which case, thank you very much indeed. Mr Singh. Would you like to come forward? Again, Sir, if you could just start by your name and address just to begin.

MR SINGH: First of all, my name is Maneesh Singh and I am from flat 627 The Blenheim Centre on Prince Regent Road from Hounslow Central ward.

First of all, thank you very much to the Boundary Commission for putting out this consultation and giving an opportunity to all residents to come and speak what their thoughts and views are.

I am going to talk about what personally I believe is right. I totally agree with the present boundary changes proposal that includes Hounslow Central and Hounslow Heath in the Feltham parliamentary constituency. The most important reason for me is Hounslow Lampton school where most of the children are from Hounslow Central and Hounslow Heath and Feltham wards. They attend the same school. It makes sense that socially in one particular school pupils from the same ward, from the same constituency are attending the same school. That is the only point which I would like to put in. Yes, I really agree with this proposal and I would like to go ahead with this. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. I do not know if there are any matters to clarify? No. In which case, thank you, Sir.

Our next scheduled speaker is not until 6 pm but what I suggest is we break now until 4.30 and return at 4.30 and see if anyone has come in through the door, which they might have done. Then we have a run through from 6 through until we close; it is quite busy then. We will reassemble at 4.00 maybe just briefly to then adjourn again, but that gives us a little bit of a break. Thank you.

Time noted: 3.40 pm

After a short break

Time noted: 5.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Right, ladies and gentlemen, we can reconvene now. As you know, we stopped at 15.40 and waited until 4.00 to see if anyone would come in. They did not so we then adjourned to the present time. We are now recommencing with our scheduled speaker, Mr Robin Healey. Welcome and if you would like to come to podium and just by way of introduction state your name and address, please.

MR HEALEY: My name is Robin Healey. My address is 31 Parkside Gardens, Wimbledon SW19 5ET. If it would help, Chairman, I have prepared a written statement of what I want to say which I am very happy to give you and your colleague a copy of, give you a chance to read through it and then any questions or queries I am happy to help with, if I can.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Are you going to take us through your statement?

MR HEALEY: I am in your hands on that one. If you to prefer just to read it to yourself -
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THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We can do that but if there are any questions, it would be better ---

MR HEALEY: --- If I take you through it? I start off, Sir, by saying I wish to object to the proposal in relation to the proposed Wimbledon Common and Putney constituency. I am opposing this personally as a resident of Wimbledon village, but also on behalf of the Parkside Residents' Association, the PRA, of which I am a former Chairman and a current committee member. Our membership covers about 320 households in the Parkside area of Wimbledon village, which, as you approach Wimbledon village from Putney, is mainly on the left-hand side.

Some brief details, Sir: Between 1971 and 1979 I lived in Inner Park Road SW19, which is as you come over Tippet's Corner from Putney on to Parkside over on the left-hand side. I spent about eight years on the Putney side of Parkside and became familiar with Wimbledon Common from there. Since 1988 I have lived with my family at my present address in Wimbledon village. I am married with two daughters now aged 27 and 24, who were both born and grew up at this address. At that time I was working as a solicitor in the City, until I retired in 2004. I used to commute into my offices which were near Tower Hill by underground from Wimbledon Park or overland from Wimbledon Broadway

via Waterloo. Both my daughters were educated to the age of 11 at the Study Prep School which is on Wimbledon Common, where I have been a governor since 1996. I also attend St Mary's parish church, which is the church that overlooks the All England Tennis Championships. You often see it on the television when they are featuring that. I am also a member of the Royal Wimbledon Golf Club which is on the edge of Wimbledon Common. My family shop in Wimbledon. There is a new Waitrose we use quite a lot. I would say nearly all our close friends and acquaintances are in the Wimbledon area. We use Wimbledon restaurants and cinemas. I have never been to Putney cinema at all in my life. We spend very little time in Putney apart from travelling through it by car on occasions. Wimbledon itself provides us with all the services we need, including legal, accountancy and social services. That is the wrong word - cinema, restaurants and so forth.

The particular issue I am addressing is the statutory issue of whether any local ties would be broken by changes, and that is in the guide at paragraphs 26 and 27. Paragraph 27, interestingly enough, deals with geographical issues, which is possibly what has been of interest to the Commission in relation to Wimbledon Common, but it does emphasise that what they call socio-economic and social factors are probably more significant, and I would submit, Sir, they certainly are in this particular case.

I have read the speech that was addressed to the Commission by our local MP Stephen Hammond on 18 October, and I would say that I would fully endorse everything he said in that, at least in relation to this particular proposed constituency. Wimbledon and Putney, I would suggest, are diverse, heterogeneous communities. They are split and totally divided geographically by the very busy A3 London-Portsmouth Road. It is a five-lane arterial road running east-west between Putney and Wimbledon and leaves little or no direct social or business overlap or ties between Putney and Wimbledon. The present Wimbledon constituency is a natural geographic and communal entity. It is founded I think on the old Wimbledon parish. I have attached there a census map from 1841, just to give you an idea of the history. It is a little confused, I know, but you can see in area 4 in the top left, that is Wimbledon Common. Area 3 below it is the present Wimbledon village. Then you go the down the hill and you will see where the railway comes through. If you look at the top of 6, you will see the station master, which is the present Wimbledon station. Looking at that, you can see that was the Wimbledon parish as it was right back in 1841, showing the village in relation to down the hill and what is now Wimbledon town, and it was regarded as one entity as far back as 1841. It was also a municipal borough dating back to 1894, which of course has now been merged into Merton Council. There is a strong Wimbledon ethic and civil pride, with a rich history, as I have suggested.

We also have this brand SW19, of which we are all very proud, relating of course to the tennis championships. It has become a brand in its own name, if I may use that expression. It is recognised all around the world and Wimbledon seems to have recognition as a result as a name all the round world globally.

Based on my personal experience, I can say that residents in my area socialise and do most of their shopping in Wimbledon. Both Wimbledon and Putney have good schools and services serving their respective communities, but they do not really serve each other, and community links between Wimbledon Common and Wimbledon town have always been - and remain - very strong. Many residents commute via Wimbledon town into the City and the West End and Wimbledon town is now a major rail head and transport hub in its own right. I know Stephen Hammond addressed this issue at length in his speech and it is an important factor because it does make for an awful lot of connections through Wimbledon itself. Residents here also use the local Wimbledon facilities such as the cinema and restaurants, et cetera. Our local churches and religious communities, of which we have several, are Wimbledon-based: Catholic, Protestant, Church of England and also other faiths. Also of course our local police are based in Wimbledon.

The proposal would cross the existing local government boundaries between Merton and Wandsworth. Wimbledon village is greatly concerned about planning and licensing issues. We call upon our MP Stephen Hammond regularly to lobby Merton Council in support of residents' queries and objections. I would suggest this sort of support would be lost with a Putney-based MP who would have no relationship with Merton Council; their relationship would be with Wandsworth Council.

There are, I believe, very different social and political issues arising between the two areas. I have listed some of them here: the runway extension at Heathrow; Crossrail 2; the redevelopment of Wimbledon town centre; localised traffic congestion and transport requirements and Thames river boat services. An easy way of identifying this is to look at the websites of the two MPs concerned - Stephen Hammond for Wimbledon and Justine Greening for Putney. They both have sections relating to their current campaigns. Stephen Hammond is particularly concerned with Crossrail 2 because it will involve the demolition of the whole of Wimbledon town centre while they rebuild the railway going through it - and that is a major concern - whereas in Putney for example, we know about the Heathrow runway extension, which is of great concern to them. Justine Greening has led the campaign against that. Stephen Hammond thinks both Gatwick and Heathrow should be developed. I sympathise with Putney. They have a problem with aircraft; I can understand that. We do not have such a problem in Wimbledon. I think it is much more nuanced and we would be more open to the business case for Heathrow extension than they might be in Putney, where residential properties are, I can see, affected. There is a distinction between the sorts of issues that arise between the two. I also mentioned the Thames river boat service. I know Putney has been keen on that. It has run from time to time. I suspect it would need central government funding and subsidy, which is probably why it is one of Justine Greening's campaigns. It would be of no direct concern to Wimbledon. We would never, I think any of us commute via there because we would have to get to the Thames itself in order to access the boat. It is just not feasible from Wimbledon to do that, not by the time you have got through Putney High Street and so forth.

I mentioned earlier my involvement with the Parkside Residents' Association (PRA), formed in 1975. It is also an active member in its own right of the Wimbledon Union of Residents' Associations, known as WURA for short. This body, which has been operating now for over 20 years, is a forum for 18 residents' associations, all of which represent residential areas covering over 6,000 households in the existing Wimbledon constituency. 11 of the WURA member associations are based either within Wimbledon Village or Wimbledon Park wards, which of course is also part of the proposal and would be moved therefore to the new Wimbledon and Putney Common constituency if that was put in place. WURA's agenda reflects issues which are relevant to the Wimbledon area, both the village and the town, and the PRA and other member associations work together on local campaigns.

To repeat a point I made earlier, the support and assistance of our local MP is extremely important in dealing with some of these issues, whereas if we were in with Putney and Wandsworth, they are a different local authority, a separate community and cultural focus, and would not be part of the WURA remit. Speaking for WURA, we would not wish to see the influence of either the PRA or WURA diluted or the work unnecessarily complicated or frustrated because of separate parliamentary representations.

Chairman, on page 3, if I may conclude, in my submission, all the above factors demonstrate that the proposal has not taken into account what I see as the inevitable breakage of local ties and links between Wimbledon village and the town of Wimbledon. The confusion of Wimbledon identity and cohesion I suggest is made manifest in paragraph 54 of the proposals, because what is proposed is two part Wimbledon constituencies in place of the existing one Wimbledon constituency. To me that would be destructive of our Wimbledon community.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. That is very helpful and very clear. Are there any matters of clarification? If not, then thank you very much, Sir, and thank you for the submission.

Next Mr Michael Rappolt. Again, if I could ask you to introduce yourself by way of name and address, please.

MR RAPPOLT: Good afternoon, Chair, and ladies and gentlemen. My name is Michael Rappolt. My address is 2 Peek Crescent, Wimbledon, London, SW19 5ER. I am here because I wish to object to the proposed Wimbledon Common and Putney parliamentary constituency.

A little bit of background about myself and why I feel qualified to object, as it were. I and my family have lived in Wimbledon Park and in Wimbledon village for 46 years. I am married with two sons, who were both born, educated and grew up there. During this period I worked as a management consultant based in Victoria and travelled widely in the

UK and overseas until retiring in 2001. I commuted in to my offices near Victoria by underground from Wimbledon Park or from Wimbledon and also from time to time by car. Both my sons obtained their primary education in Wimbledon and one of my sons his secondary education at King's College in Wimbledon. Since retiring I have occupied myself by trying to give something back to the local Wimbledon community in which I have lived through voluntary and charitable activities. I was a governor at a Merton local secondary state school for ten years. I chaired a local Wimbledon charity for ten years, which assisted disadvantaged young people in the local area. I was a non-executive director for 11 years at our local acute hospitals trust, St George's, and I am a committee member of our local residents' association, previously referred to - the Parkside Residents' Association.

I wish to challenge the proposals as, to my mind, they fail on at least two of the four criteria set out by the Boundary Commission. The first criterion was about local government boundaries as they existed on 7 May 2015. Under the current proposals, the London Borough of Merton moves from having to deal with two MPs to having to deal, as I understand it, with five MPs. That, I believe, will cause real difficulties, both for the London Borough of Merton, for the local authority, and for the quality of representation available to local residents, for example in the areas of current healthcare reorganisation, and the extensive debate on transportation from Wimbledon, such as the implementation of Crossrail 2, to which I will return later.

The second area which I want to challenge the proposals on falls into the one referred to by my colleague previously, and that is that local ties that would be broken by changes in the constituency boundaries. Wimbledon Common and Putney are very different. They are very heterogeneous communities and they are split geographically, as my colleague said, by the very busy A3 road, which is dual carriageway running right across the geographical area and really acting as a barrier almost between the areas of Wimbledon and Putney. There is little or no direct social or business overlap or ties between Wimbledon and Putney.

In direct contrast, there is a huge evidential base showing that the current Wimbledon constituency is remarkably cohesive in terms of where and how residents live their lives, particularly for shopping, leisure activities and transportation, and it contains, as previously mentioned, the SW19 postcode, which is a very marketable commodity and it is the most famous postcode in the world I would suggest; the brand of Wimbledon itself.

Many landmarks across the Wimbledon area contribute to this cohesiveness. The All England Tennis Club, Wimbledon Theatre, Wimbledon Park, Wimbledon village, the Wimbledon town centre, Wimbledon Hockey Club, the Royal Wimbledon Golf Course and the football club - AFC Wimbledon - who will return very shortly to Wimbledon. They all add to this. We even have the famous Wimbledon burglary who recently appeared on *Crimewatch*, and I will refer to him a little later as well.

Under the new proposals, many of these world-famous landmarks would no longer be in the Wimbledon constituency. In particular, it means that the current Member of Parliament for Wimbledon, who currently is able to represent and understand the issues faced by the voters as they are self-contained within the constituency, and that would change under the proposals. I believe that one of the biggest issues facing the constituents of Wimbledon over the next ten years will be the implementation of Crossrail 2. This focuses on the centre of Wimbledon, but will have a huge impact on the residents of Wimbledon Park and Wimbledon Village, who use Wimbledon town centre to commute in and out of London and to undertake their shopping and their access to leisure facilities. The new constituency proposals will significantly reduce and fracture residents' ability to have effective and powerful representation on this issue from their MP.

In contrast, the proposed new constituency has no cohesion in terms of its transport links. There are very few transport links across the new proposed constituency and very different needs and concerns for the local residents, as has already been mentioned previously, and the local councils of Merton and Putney take very different approaches to these issues. They would inevitably become intermingled and confused and yet they are mutually exclusive. Under these proposals voters would inevitably have their representation watered down and diluted. Another key element of local ties is law enforcement. For Wimbledon Park and Wimbledon village, the focus of their law enforcement is the centre of Wimbledon where the Wimbledon police force is located. Fragmentation of the current constituency would significantly weaken local residents' lobbying ability and, who knows, may even encourage the Wimbledon burglar to become the Wimbledon and Putney burglar!

In conclusion, on at least two of the criteria the Boundary Commission are tasked with taking into account, in these proposals they fail: the local government boundaries as they existed on 7 May 2015; and any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituency. However, I believe the most important issue is if these proposals are implemented it will deprive the approximately 21,000 residents of Wimbledon Park and Wimbledon village of appropriate and effective representation by their MP at the local level. Thank you very much. Chair, I have this on my computer. If you wish me to email it to you, I am very happy to do that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you would, that would be most helpful. Thank you very much. Can I just check if there are any matters for clarification? If not, again thank you very much indeed. That is very helpful evidence.

We will adjourn now until 6.30 when the next speaker is scheduled. Thank you.

After a short adjournment

Time noted: 6.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Right, ladies and gentlemen, we can reconvene now and welcome our next speaker, who I believe is Cllr Gregory Stafford. Welcome. Would you like to speak from here and start with your name and address, please. Thank you.

CLLR STAFFORD: Thank you very much. Cllr Greg Stafford, 20 Ivy Crescent, Ealing W4 5NG. I am speaking as the leader of the Conservative group on Ealing Council and as a resident of the London Borough of Ealing for the whole of my life, so I do hope that I have some understanding of how the local geographies and the local communities are made up in Ealing.

I want to start on a positive note. I think that the Boundary Commission's proposals for the new Brentford and Chiswick seat are extremely important and indeed are of natural communities. For us in Ealing it means that Southfield ward, which is, to all intents and purposes, a Chiswick ward, is being reunited with the three other Chiswick wards that are currently in the London Borough of Hounslow. The people of that ward - Southfield ward - shop on the Chiswick High Road. They use the stations that are in the Hounslow borough and the Bedford Park area is split between those areas, so it is a natural place for Southfield to go. Northfield ward is also moving down into that new seat and it also pulls closer to the Brentford area than it does to Ealing.

I give one example of that, the Brentford Festival, which is a great event that is held every year. At least for the last ten years it has been held in Blondin Park, which is actually in Northfield ward in the London Borough of Ealing. So both those wards I feel, are more naturally suited to Brentford and Chiswick, the new seat, and therefore I think what the Boundary Commission has proposed in those areas is appropriate, and I would support that.

Moving to the Central Ealing seat and what the Boundary Commission are calling Ealing Central and Shepherd's Bush, unfortunately, it misses out the Acton title which obviously is very important in a large proportion of that seat. The Boundary Commission are tagging on three of the four what we might call Shepherd's Bush or White City wards north of the Goldhawk Road. They really are not part of Acton. They sit alone and really it seems odd that the Boundary Commission has taken three of the four wards and tacked them on to Ealing. I am supporting the Conservative Party counter-proposal, which, essentially, reunites those four wards north of the Goldhawk Road. In doing so, obviously, that means that the seat as currently constituted would not have enough electors to meet the requirements of the Boundary Commission, so what I am proposing is supporting the Conservative counter-proposal, which is to bring into that ward the current wards of Cleveland and Perivale. Cleveland sits like an upside down L over the top of Ealing Broadway ward, which is a Central Ealing ward. And the people who live there interchange between Ealing Broadway and Hanger Hill. The very famous - or we think it is very famous - Pithanger Lane, which won the Great British High Street of the Year award last year, spans both Cleveland and Hanger Hill ward, so that is a natural joining

of those two wards.

Going more southerly in that ward, a number of the church areas, including St Stephen's Church, take in the parish boundaries of Ealing Broadway and Cleveland. Then uniting Cleveland and Hanger Hill we have St Barnabas Church again whose parish boundaries cover both those wards.

Moving further north then, you have got Perivale which, I admit, likes to see itself as a stand-alone area, but if they look anywhere they look towards Ealing rather than towards Greenford and Northolt. Perivale spans below the A40 and connects to Cleveland ward and to Hanger Hill ward. It contains Ealing Golf Club and has a natural boundary with the railway line which runs from West Ealing station all the way up to Greenford station. There is a natural railway line boundary and the Grand Union Canal at its northerly point, so I believe - and I support the Conservative Party proposals for this - that the Cleveland ward and Perivale ward, with their natural railway and canal boundaries, fit much more with a Central Ealing seat.

Finally then, moving on to the Ealing North seat, unfortunately, the Boundary Commission have decided that the two Northolt wards, Northolt West End and Northolt Mandeville, should be moved out of that Ealing North seat. Despite their name, Northolt Mandeville and Northolt West End again are much closer to Greenford than they are to anything to the west. The natural boundary - I call it natural as a euphemism - of RAF Northolt provides that block between the more westerly wards in Hillingdon. Some years ago we had area committees around the Council and one of those areas was Greenford and Northolt, because we recognised they essentially used the same shopping districts and the same areas. If you look at some of the ward boundaries they are very, very arbitrary. Between Northolt Mandeville and Greenford Green, a whole residential area is split in two. Northolt West End and Greenford Broadway are also split in two. If the parliamentary constituency took out those two Northolt wards, essentially you would be splitting two residential communities in half.

Finally, I want to very briefly touch on what I have seen of the Labour Party's counter-proposals. As far as I can see, what they are planning to do is to split Northfield in two, split Greenford in two, split Central Ealing three ways and split Chiswick at least two ways. In my view, this is a really, really bad proposal, not just because I think it is nakedly political but because it splits five communities apart. I hope that our proposals are seen to actually bring communities together, so that is why I am supporting the Conservative Party's counter-proposals. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed; that is helpful. Would you be able to give us a written copy?

CLLR STAFFORD: I will be doing a written submission. I cannot give it to you tonight.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is fine. That is most helpful. Are there any matters for clarification? No. In which case, thank you very much for your submission.

I understand the next speaker is now at 6.50 so we will adjourn until that time, thank you.

After a short break

Time noted: 6.52 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, we will reconvene now that we have a number of speakers present. The first person I would call is Grace Salmon. Lovely, do come forward. If you would like to speak from the podium here - there is a microphone that you can speak into - and if you could just start by saying your name and address just to contextualise it.

MRS DAWKINS: Thank you. My name is Pauline Dawkins and I am representing Grace Salmon, from 18 Bramcote Avenue in Mitcham in Surrey. I am representing our voluntary organisation called Positive Network Centre and we are based at Taylor Road.

We have come here really to express our opposition to the Boundary Commission plans to abolish the constituency of Mitcham and Morden. I recognise that Merton Council will remain in its present form but we suggest that you underestimate the impact of the proposal for Mitcham and Morden constituents, particularly on the local people. The Positive Network Centre, of which I am one of the directors of, is an intergenerational organisation that aims to improve community cohesion. We help to maintain independent living for older people but at the same time support and empower younger people to invest in their community by volunteering and offering support to their peers and older Mitcham residents. Our clients and volunteers are taken from all over Mitcham. Indeed, we provide a bus service to collect residents from across the Mitcham area and bring them to the centre. To me and the people who use our centre, Mitcham is a recognised and distinct area, with a strong community feel and a distinguished history. However, under your proposal Mitcham would be torn apart with bits of Mitcham being absorbed into larger and wealthier constituencies that have centres of gravity in other districts and communities. Our organisation has a good 50 or so members, but we also have lots and lots of other community groups using our building, so it is a well-used building. They all support the views that we are raising today. We have people from the Muslim Association using it; we have the Asian Association using our building; we have the Polish organisation using our building; we have a Christian church using our building, so it is well used, and we did make sure we consulted people before we came today to give our views because they are very concerned about the changes.

For example, if you live in the Lavender Fields ward in Mitcham which you propose to put in a Wimbledon constituency, virtually all of the new seats will be made of up of the

wealthier areas of Wimbledon town centre and surrounding areas whilst we in Mitcham will be at the tail-end of the seat. The MP will represent constituents who are overwhelmingly from the Wimbledon area, so the idea that we will take a big role in his or her (whoever they are) thinking is really not realistic. At the same time our nearby neighbours and many of our clients who live in the remaining Mitcham wards of Figges Marsh, Long Thornton or Pollards Hill will be pushed into Lambeth as part of a Streatham and Mitcham constituency, even though important parts of Mitcham will not be included in that seat. Also the centre of gravity of that seat will be in Lambeth, so again why would the MP for that area, in an entirely separate borough, pay much attention to the concerns of Mitcham residents?

As a director of an important community resource that has been there for many, many years, I would like reassurance that the issues that affect Positive Network Centre, the people who use it and the people of Mitcham will be dealt with really seriously. Your plans will also see those of us in the present unitary seats having to convince four MPs in the future, all of them having a minority of Mitcham and Morden wards in their new constituency. Mitcham is a strong community with a long history and these plans just brush us away. Adding Mitcham to a constituency name proves nothing if most of Mitcham is actually scattered elsewhere. We really hope you will take our concerns seriously and reconsider your current plans to ensure that Mitcham remains cohesive and united as a community. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. That was very clearly put. Is it possible to have a copy of what you have said?

MRS DAWKINS: We are going to post it.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You are going to write it in?

MRS DAWKINS: Is that all right?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Please do. That will be excellent. Hang on one second. Are there any matters for clarification?

MR GOLD: My name is Peter Gold. Could you tell us exactly where the centre is because I think it was very helpful what you were saying.

MRS DAWKINS: The Taylor Road Centre is actually just off Figges Marsh, so if you are by Victoria Road, it is just down at the end there.

MR GOLD: So it is in Figges Marsh basically in the centre of what you would call the fulcrum of Mitcham itself, coming out towards Mitcham town centre?

MRS DAWSON: It is a very big focal point and a lot of people use it.

MR GOLD: That is all I needed to know. Thank you very much for your help.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, that is most helpful. The next speaker is Mr Eason. Again, if you address us from the podium and if you can introduce yourself by way of name and address to begin please.

MR EASON: I am Richard Eason, 475 Twickenham Road, Isleworth in Hounslow borough. I would just mention that I know Howard from some unrelated roles.

I have lived in Hounslow for 16 years, during which time I have been extensively involved in the voluntary and community sector, particularly regarding equalities and health and social care. Through this work, I have learnt the importance of alignment between the local authority council geography, health geography, with our CCGs and hospitals, our police and parliamentary geography. This alignment enables the development of strong and collaborative relationships which are essential for actually delivering positive change for particularly disadvantaged residents.

The Boundary Commission proposals for Hounslow severely disrupt these relationships and will have an adverse effect on community well-being. There are a few specific points I would like to make, including putting a counter-proposal.

First of all, I am very disappointed by the loss of the name of Isleworth from the parliamentary geography. Currently the seat of Brentford and Isleworth acknowledges the ancient village of Old Isleworth, which is the largest conservation area in the Hounslow borough and has historical significance. The nonsense is that the Boundary Commission proposals do not actually change Isleworth membership of that ward whatsoever, so it will stay put, but the name changes. That is going to confuse people a lot, is it not?

The second nonsense with the proposal is that it puts Hounslow Civic Centre, which is located in the Heston Central ward in Lampton Road, into, essentially, an Ealing-based constituency of Southall and Heston, which I think again is a nonsense that will confuse the population.

The third point would be that the across Hounslow borough there are eight wards that are changing constituency, which account for about 40% of the current electors in Hounslow borough. A number of those are more the deprived wards where they have perhaps less capacity for coping with change.

My counter-proposal would be that we start from the point of view of the 20 wards in Hounslow and try and retain as many of the current features as possible. I would aim that we retain the essence of the Brentford and Isleworth seat, taking in the fourth part of Hounslow town centre, so Hounslow West constituency, and then balancing the numbers by pushing out two wards on the northern side, so Turnham Green and Osterley and

Spring Grove which are pretty resilient. When we have looked at the indices of deprivation, adult skills and English language, houses with multiple needs, these are the least deprived in the borough. That would then allow Feltham and Heston to remain largely the same. I think it would need one ward from elsewhere to come into the constituency, and perhaps Heathrow Villages would be right one there because it is quite detached from the rest of Hillingdon. Having spent a couple of years working in Hillingdon, it is detached and challenging.

That proposal would mean that only 14.5% of the population would change constituency and 9.6% would go outside of the Hounslow pair of wards, so there would only be two wards from Hounslow that would not be in a Hounslow-based constituency, compared to the disruption of about 40% of the population in the Boundary Commission's proposals. I would ask that due consideration be given to this so that we can have constituencies that work for the community in Hounslow. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you, that is helpful. Are you planning to make a written submission on these lines?

MR EASON: Yes, and I will send the spreadsheet with the deprivation indices.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I was going to say if you could evidence some of the data that you have used, that would be helpful.

MR EASON: I have a spare copy here, if that helps for now, but I can also email that in.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, if you want to leave that, but if you integrated it into whatever you submit, it would be helpful. Are there any matters for clarification? No. Thank you very much.

Would Suzanne Grocott like to come forward? If you can just start by introducing yourself by name and address, thank you.

MS GROCOTT: Hello everybody. My name is Suzanne Grocott. I live at 22 The Quadrant, West Wimbledon SW20. I am one of the local councillors for Merton in the Dundonald ward. I am here really to talk about the proposal to split Wimbledon and part of it going into Putney and the Commons and the other part to be Wimbledon and Central Merton, I think are the names.

Wimbledon and SW19 is a brand. All the people in Wimbledon feel as if it is a brand and look together to all the things that are Wimbledon named. Two of the wards that are now deemed to being moved are actually Wimbledon Park and Wimbledon Village wards, which includes the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Centre, which would no longer be part of Wimbledon, and also AFC Wimbledon, which has just fought very hard to have football come home to Wimbledon, only to find that they would no longer be in Wimbledon.

In my role as a local councillor, I obviously spend a lot of time with local residents' groups. My ward of Dundonald stretches from Wimbledon town centre down then to Raynes Park. I also get to see Raynes Park and the community centres around there and also Wimbledon Park and the community around there. Whilst there have been many discussions about possible suggestions to put, because they are two different areas they are not agreeing, but one thing both of them agree on is that Wimbledon should stay as Wimbledon and the parts of Wimbledon that actually have Wimbledon in their name should be part of Wimbledon.

I was at the Raynes Park Association, which is like an umbrella organisation of community groups for all the residents' groups around the Raynes Park town centre, and one in particular there is called RAWW, which is the Residents' Association of West Wimbledon. They are sat in Wimbledon village but really identify themselves as part of the Raynes Park group. They are particularly upset to find that they are no longer going to be in Wimbledon; they are now going to be part of Putney.

I lived in Putney for 14 years and I know that Putney and Wimbledon just see themselves as two completely different places. There is a feeling that there are the two commons. The two commons are just that; they are two commons, and they see each other as totally separate. Thank you. That is what I want to say.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is great. Thank you very much indeed. Any matters of clarification? No. In which case, thank you so much for your submission.

MS GROCOTT: Thank you and I do know that the Raynes Park Association themselves are going to be submitting written evidence. I am sure there will be lots of other people.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good. Please do encourage any of your constituents or groups to do precisely that because the more we hear the better.

MS GROCOTT: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I think we have another speaker. We are just going to check. We will adjourn for just a few moments because the speaker wants some time to prepare.

After a short break

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, we will reconvene and I think our next speaker, Mr Oliver Cooper, is present. Would you like to come forward and speak from the podium here? Could you start by way of your name and address, please?

CLLR COOPER: My name is Cllr Oliver Cooper. My address is Flat 3, 42A, Hampstead High Street NW3 1QE. I am here primarily to speak tonight around a few constituencies in north London, particularly focused around Hampstead and Kilburn where, as I noted, I am a councillor on Camden Council. Particularly I want to speak in favour of the proposals that the Boundary Commission has put forward, which I think take into account a number of important factors that some of the boundaries in the past have not. The most important one for my residents and my community is the fact that it unites Hampstead into one constituency, something that has not been the case before since 1885. It was one seat called Hampstead until 1983. It was Hampstead and Highgate afterwards, which was broadly similar, and then Hampstead and Kilburn since 2010, which is a recognition by the Boundary Commission and its forebears of the fact that the community has commonalities across it and also has significant community ties that should be preserved if we want to make sure it is represented well in Parliament.

Within the current constituency of Hampstead and Kilburn Hampstead is the largest community of any sort of extent. Four wards are said to be included within Hampstead, which is more than any other community in Hampstead. West Hampstead might be considered to have two; Kilburn might be considered to have two, which means it is the focal point and is the main part of Hampstead and Kilburn which we would want to see preserved in the new constituencies. I would however go further and argue that the constituency itself does not just capture the core of Hampstead, but in resurrecting the boundaries roughly of the old Hampstead constituency and the former borough of Hampstead, which have maintained community ties to this day and a sense of community to this day, actually we are creating a constituency that is entirely fitting for the area. As well as the four core wards of Hampstead, which are Hampstead Town (which I represent), Frognal and Fitzjohns, Belsize and Swiss Cottage, there are also the wards of West Hampstead and Fortune Green. I do not want to dwell on an alternative proposal that has been put forward that creates a constituency based around those wards and Kilburn together, but I would contest that those two wards particularly, as well as the other ones in the new proposed constituency by the Boundary Commission have very, very close ties to Hampstead, to the extent that they are considered to be part of Hampstead in many walks of life. Like Hampstead they are defined by a considerable number of active community groups that have activity not just in West Hampstead and Fortune Green but also in Hampstead proper.

I would also direct the Commission to the headlines from a local newspaper, the *Ham & High*. If anyone is to know what the definition of Hampstead is, it is going to be the *Ham & High*, the *Hampstead & Highgate Express*. If I call attention to this week's newspaper headline of "MPs back husband's call to Boris Johnson to free Hampstead mum Nazanin". She lives in the Fortune Green ward. "Green lights for big ugly block in Hampstead". That is in West Hampstead ward. "Calls for more security after raids at Hampstead church", a few weeks ago admittedly rather than other ones; that is in West Hampstead ward, in fact abutting on to Kilburn ward. I also note that the Hampstead Garden Suburb ward, called Garden Suburb ward for local government purposes, has been proposed to be included

in the constituency the Boundary Commission puts forward as well. It would be remiss of me not to point out there was a headline in this week's newspaper "Justin Bieber moves to Hampstead", which I was very disappointed by, but it demonstrates he was moving to Hampstead Garden Suburb not to Hampstead proper, and yet if the local newspaper and a national newspaper consider it to be part of Hampstead, that should be a good indication to the Boundary Commission that it forms one demos, one constituency and one community that should be respected in the Boundary Commission.

The same is true to an extent of the parts of Kilburn that are included within the Hampstead and Golders Green constituency that has been proposed, two-thirds of which is part of Kilburn proper but one-third of which could be properly described as part of Swiss Cottage in West Hampstead and Child's Hill ward, which is in, admittedly, Barnet, is so close to Hampstead that it shares a huge number of commonalties. Two-thirds of the ward is closer to Hampstead School than it is to any other state secondary school and more children go to Hampstead School than any school in Barnet. That school by the way is in Fortune Green ward, not in what might be called Hampstead village.

As a consequence I think I have portrayed the fact that Hampstead as one community extends not just from Hampstead Town, which I have the fortune to represent, but also the neighbouring wards of West Hampstead, Fortune Green, Frognaal Fitzjohns, Swiss Cottage and Belsize as well as Child's Hill and Hampstead Garden Suburb in Barnet. Therefore I would advocate the fact that the Boundary Commission keeps to the recommendations that they have put forward.

I would suggest a slight change of the name rather than the boundaries, on the basis that Golders Green ward itself is not in the constituency that has been proposed, so Hampstead rather than Hampstead and Golders Green would probably be a more suitable name for it, but at this stage we are talking about minor details compared to the important fact which is keeping Hampstead together as a community.

I do want to touch on other neighbouring constituencies. First, I want to speak in favour of the Queen's Park and Regent's Park constituency that has been put forward. There have been suggestions that the alternative proposal put forward by the Labour Party would unite Kilburn. That is not true. There is a large part of West Kilburn that is in Westminster and part of it is the Harrow Road ward in Westminster. Only the Boundary Commission's proposals rather than the alternative put forward would unite that into one community and one constituency. The same is true of Queen's Park. There is a ward called Queen's Park in Brent and a ward called Queen's Park in Westminster and, by uniting them together, the Boundary Commission has recognised that municipal boundaries that happened to be formed in 1965, or perhaps in 1890, actually do not fit the needs of those communities, and creating a constituency that crosses those two boroughs is a great step forward to make sure that both Kilburn and Queen's Park are united, just as Hampstead is in Hampstead and Golders Green constituency.

I also want to talk about Holborn and St Pancras. First, I think that obviously as an historic constituency, it is a good idea to maintain the name. However, by virtue of the fact that it is a constituency based around Camden Town rather than Holborn, which is actually being moved into the City of London and Westminster constituency (a move that I applaud) I think it should be renamed Camden Town and Tufnell Park, which are the two communities that are united within that proposed constituency. It reflects the two locuses of activity within it which have very strong community ties, an area that is united by connections via the Northern Line down through Camden Town, all the way from the north to the south. It has a vibrant arts scene, music scene, creative industries scene, all of which would benefit from being represented in Parliament by a single Member of Parliament, so I applaud the Boundary Commission for that proposal. I just wanted to come here to applaud the work of the Boundary Commission in recognising those communities of Hampstead, of Kilburn, of Queen's Park and of Camden Town, and making sure that we have constituencies that are based around those areas rather than based around simply local government boundaries or the proposals that are being put forward alternatively.

Finally, I want to speak on one issue which is, as I have mentioned previously, the alternative proposal that has been put forward by the Labour Party, which would split my community of Hampstead right down the middle. It would divide Frognal and Fitzjohns ward from Hampstead Town ward and simply does not meet the criteria that are required to make sure we keep Hampstead together in one community and one constituency. It takes a large number of minor roads rather than main roads. It has no logical divider between the two. Frognal and Fitzjohns and Hampstead Town - and I speak as a councillor for one of those - work incredibly closely together. They have joint liaison with the police. They have joint community newsletters. They have neighbourhood development forums that are united. They share the NW3 postcode which they do also with Belsize ward, which is one of the strongest postcode indicators in the country.

For all those reasons, I would urge the Boundary Commission to continue with the work that it has done, to continue with the proposals that it has put forward, and I want to applaud the work based around continuous constituencies. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. That was quite a virtuoso performance, Sir, I thought. Are you going to submit that in writing at some stage?

CLLR COOPER: I can do. Is it suitable to do it at a different point rather than now?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: In due course. Please email us in or something.

CLLR COOPER: I will do that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That would be very helpful. Any matters for

clarification? Please state your name.

MR BURNELL: My name is Richard Burnell. I am from the Labour Party. Just about the comment about Golders Green and the dropping of the name from the constituency. In which local government ward in Barnet is the Golders Green tube station?

CLLR COOPER: It is in Child's Hill ward, but I want to touch on a number of factors that combine Child's Hill with Hampstead as an area. One I have already mentioned. Hampstead School is a local state secondary school for the vast majority of Child's Hill ward. It also includes the majority of North End, and the north end of Hampstead is the north end it describes. The south end of Hampstead is part of my ward. Thus I think it unites a huge amount there and has a large number of commonalties. If you look at the boundary, it actually goes through a Camden housing estate, which is on both sides of the boundary, so rather than focusing entirely on the tube station, which is at the very far north of Child's Hill ward, I would actually focus on the community ties between Child's Hill and Hampstead, and not only between Child's Hill and Hampstead but also Child's Hill and Fortune Green ward, part of which, about one-third of which might be properly described as Cricklewood, as might approximately one quarter of Child's Hill ward. Forming the Hampstead and Golders Green constituency on the current boundaries does not just unite Hampstead into one constituency; it also unites Cricklewood as well.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am going to adjourn for ten minutes. We have two more speakers to come and they are on their way. Thank you.

After a short break

Time noted: 7.38 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Ladies and gentlemen, we will reconvene. We have our two speakers present now I think and I would ask Charlotte Chirico to come forward. Can you speak from the podium here, the microphone is already wired up, and just introduce yourself by way of name and address. Thank you.

CLLR CHIRICO: Cllr Charlie Chirico. My address is Flat 1, 14 Harewood Road, Colliers Wood SW19 2HD. I will commence my objections to any proposals that propose to break up Wimbledon. I am a councillor for Wimbledon Broadway, namely Trinity ward, and that runs along the High Street and then stops at Wimbledon train station. What I would say is this: residents get off at Wimbledon train station and they have a short walk amongst the Wimbledon centre wards; five minutes up to Hillside and Village wards and five minutes towards Raynes Park on a bus, and what is important is to unify these wards. Wimbledon village is the heart of Wimbledon. It is one of the most recognisable places in the country. Residents on Wimbledon Broadway, in my ward, often spend their weekends up in the village - it is a short walk for them - and, vice versa, Wimbledon village residents come down towards Wimbledon Broadway as their main centre. This centre is

not just about the shopping at Centre Court that they can use the facilities of, which is more sophisticated than Wimbledon village; it is also about the Polka Theatre, the Wimbledon Theatre and the other amenities that Wimbledon village look to in Wimbledon town centre. Other town centres that would be the next closest thing to them are quite far away. We have Mitcham, but that is divided by the River Wandle, and Wimbledon village residents certainly do not look to that for their nearest amenities, and nor do they with Putney either. The proximity is quite far in the sense that you would have to drive or hop on a bus. You cannot walk to Putney like you would be able to walk from Wimbledon village to Wimbledon Broadway and, in fact, Putney is divided by the physical barrier of the A3 as well.

What I would say is that Wimbledon residents share transport links. They also share the shopping centre, the cinemas, the theatres, as I have already discussed. I regularly attend Wimbledon Community Forum and what I would say about Wimbledon Community Forum is that residents from Wimbledon town centre wards, including the Village, including Hillside, including the Broadway, which I represent, as well as Dundonald ward, all attend there and they have the same issues. They have the same concerns about Crossrail 2 for example. It would be very difficult for an MP to represent different areas of the borough whereas Wimbledon residents in relation to Crossrail 2 have similar issues and it important for it to be unified so when Crossrail 2 comes in that Wimbledon MP is able to adequately represent all those residents sufficiently.

Brand SW19, brand Wimbledon is not just about the tennis. Yes, I said it is recognisable and, yes, it is distinctive all over the world, and Wimbledon village is at the heart of that, but what is important are the other factors, the other services that it shares; the theatres that I have mentioned, the Polka Theatre, the shopping centre, the big shops - for example Morrison's and Sainsbury's - that Wimbledon village residents and other Wimbledon ward residents would go to to do their big weekly shop. It would be a big loss to local councillors of any of the Wimbledon wards to lose any Wimbledon town centre wards that sit at the heart, that link, where it is possible to walk to all of them within the space of about ten to 15 minutes.

What the Boundary Commission need to do today is devise a method of unifying Wimbledon, ensuring that it is protected, that it is kept together and that the amenities continue to be shared, ensuring that Wimbledon village is linked to its nearest town centre, Wimbledon; not Putney, not Mitcham, not anywhere else. The name speaks for itself: Wimbledon village, of Wimbledon. Imagine Wimbledon village residents living in Putney, feeling desolate, away from what they are used to, away from an MP they know, in a constituency that is very different to what they have been used to over a number of years. They truly are better together.

Finally, looking at any other proposals that might come about in relation to other wards, I would say that Ravensbury ward and Cricket Green ward both look towards Mitcham. You heard me say earlier that I am a resident of Colliers Wood and I would say that I look

towards Tooting. It is my nearest centre. It is also a short walk from where I live in Colliers Wood. It is the nearest for me to get to. So whilst I do not have all the solutions for you today, I cannot emphasise enough the importance of keeping those Wimbledon wards together. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Are there any matters for clarification? No. In which case, thank you very much indeed. Krystal Miller, would you like to come forward, please, and again introduce yourself by name and address? Thank you.

MS MILLER: My name is Krystal Miller. I live at 8 Clarence Road, Wimbledon SW19 8QE. I did not know Cllr Chirico was going to be speaking just before me but I am afraid my remarks are going to be very, very similar. I am a Wimbledon resident and I am a former local councillor, also for Trinity ward. I am also a former mayor of Merton. I currently chair a residents' group called the Friends of Wimbledon Town Centre, which has 1,000 members from across the constituency. This experience, as well as my own as a resident, having lived there for 15 years, means that I have deep roots in the constituency and feel I have a good understanding of how people think and feel about where they live.

These experiences have also shown me that Wimbledon is very much one community. As mayor I must have visited just about every corner of the constituency. I am here to urge you to keep Wimbledon together as one constituency to reflect the cohesive community that it currently is.

In my brief remarks I want to explore some of the key reasons why I believe this to be the case, focusing on both the history and its residents. I will start with the history. Some 150 years ago Wimbledon was just a rural village at the top of Wimbledon Hill. Today we call that Wimbledon village. In 1838, Wimbledon railway station was opened at the bottom of the hill and, like many parts of London, indeed many towns and centres around the world, the population followed the transport. There was a real turning point when at the end of the 19th century there was a proposal to bring the District Line to Wimbledon. Many workers followed. Rows and rows of terraced houses were built for people to live in as the railway could now carry workers into the centre of London. These streets of terraced houses characterise our community; they characterise all the residential areas around Wimbledon. However, the station would not have come nor the town existed if it was not for the village. The history of the two are intrinsically linked.

I live in Trinity ward which is proposed to remain in the new Wimbledon constituency, but if I walk for less than five minutes from my door, I could be in Abbey, Dundonald, Hillside or Wimbledon Park wards and it would not take me much longer to get to the village. If a neighbour were going off to visit a friend in Cromwell Road which is currently in Wimbledon Park ward, they would not say they were going to Wimbledon Park; they would not say they were going to Putney. I do not believe anyone on the neighbouring

Haydons Park Road would describe themselves as living in Putney either.

The current proposals do move all these streets to Putney yet this area is less than ten minutes' walk to Wimbledon station. These people feel and very much identify with Wimbledon town centre. They would describe themselves as living in Wimbledon.

I mentioned the Friends of Wimbledon Town Centre group, which I chair. When we were forming this group we were very mindful that it was very much in response to some of the big changes that Wimbledon has coming, and I think this is very important in terms of why I think it is important all the wards have the same Member of Parliament. There are some big changes. There is Crossrail 2 and Merton Council is itself starting a master planning process for Wimbledon town centre. My goal as Chair of this residents' group is to share information around the changes that are happening in Wimbledon and to help give residents a voice. The 1,000 residents who are registered with us to keep up-to-date on Wimbledon town centre include predominantly people living in Trinity, Abbey, Dundonald, Hillside, Merton Park and of course Wimbledon Park and Village wards. We deliberately as Friends did not define a boundary so that anyone with a shared interest in Wimbledon town centre could join, and I think the fact that people have joined from Wimbledon Park and Wimbledon village very much speaks for itself. Those big changes I mentioned will impact residents in Wimbledon Park and village as much as they do those living more in the town centre itself because this is where they socialise, go to the theatre or travel to work from. It is important that the Member of Parliament is able to represent residents on issues in the town centre that affect those living in Wimbledon Park and Wimbledon village, too. If the MP can represent both the area where residents live and where they go out and socialise and commute from, it makes for much more effective elected representatives. It means that they can give residents a clear community voice and for residents, if we wish to lobby our MP on issues which affect us, we only have to lobby one person. Certainly to lobby two MPs over proposals in the town centre would seem odd. I also believe that it would inevitably - sadly - lead to representatives seeing less of the overall Wimbledon picture because you would be less able to balance the different interests and concerns of all those impacted. Instead each representative would naturally focus more on the priorities of the smaller part of Wimbledon which they were elected to represent.

My conclusion is that, yes, this really does matter. It is not just about the community, but the community and the Member of Parliament must reflect each other. The current proposals feel like an arbitrary split across the Ridgeway and create a boundary that no one locally living where we do would recognise. Wimbledon grew as one. It has always been one and I believe it should remain one. I would therefore urge you to reconsider the proposals as they stand. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Are there any matters for clarification? Could I just ask, you said you Chair; are you speaking on behalf of that group?

MS MILLER: I am not. I am speaking in a private capacity. I have not sought views particularly from our members in order to inform my remarks. They are my remarks.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is helpful. Thank you very much indeed.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is ten to eight. We are not aware of any other speakers coming, so I suggest that we adjourn for this evening and commence again tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The hearing adjourned at 7.55 pm until 9.00 am on 28 October 2016

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