

**BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND**

**PROCEEDINGS**

AT THE

**2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN ENGLAND**

HELD AT

**PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL, GUILDHALL SQUARE, PORTSMOUTH PO1 2AB**

ON

**FRIDAY 28 OCTOBER 2016**  
**DAY TWO**

Before:

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

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Time noted: 9 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Good morning, Portsmouth. As I look out, I see a sea of faces, eager, willing. Sadly, I have to adjourn until 10 o'clock.

After an adjournment

Time noted: 10 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You are ready? Off you go.

MRS CAROLINE NOKES: (MP Romsey and Southampton North) Good morning. I wanted to start by putting some context to my knowledge, relationship with, and understanding of, constituency boundaries in the part of ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Sorry, could you introduce yourself first.

MRS CAROLINE NOKES: Caroline Nokes, MP for Romsey and Southampton North. To put that into context, I have been MP for that specific constituency, which is subject to some very significant proposed changes, since 2010. I was the parliamentary candidate for the Romsey constituency in 2005, and prior to that was also a parliamentary candidate for the Southampton Itchen constituency in 2001. To put that into some context, I have a long history of knowledge of boundaries of both constituencies, wards and, indeed, parishes in that patch over some considerable period, and what is very apparent to me is that change happens, change comes and goes, and that impacts communities. What you cannot do, I do not believe, is measure tangibly the impact on communities. It is more a feeling that you get, a sense that, as a locally-elected representative, you hear from people how they feel about the constituency in which they live, how well connected they feel to it, how they think it relates to themselves and to the particular part of that constituency that they live in.

I would like to make a comment on the proposed name change from Romsey and Southampton North to Test Valley, and I think that that is problematic in a number of regards. Firstly, obviously, the Southampton North part is proposed to leave the constituency so I utterly support the removal of that part of the name, but I do worry very significantly about the inclusion of villages like Twyford, Colden Common, Otterbourne, in a constituency whose name is Test Valley when they are very clearly in the valley of the River Itchen. I am not suggesting that the two finest trout rivers in the world have any sort of competitive nature to them but I do think it is really significant that the proposals as they stand seek to put a number of villages into a constituency named Test Valley when they are currently in the Winchester constituency and will remain in the City Council district of Winchester, and indeed Hiltinbury and Chandler's Ford who are within the Eastleigh borough. None of these villages, parishes, communities, have ever been within the borough of Test Valley and they are certainly not geographically located in the valley

of the River Test. Interestingly, Hiltingbury and Chandler's Ford were, until 2010, part of the Romsey constituency, and whilst I am, I have to say, very relaxed about the name of the constituency, I think something like Romsey might be more appropriate. It might give people a closer and a more identifiable geographic place than Test Valley which in itself was sort of a borough construct of 1973.

But I wish mainly to focus on the proposed changes in the Southampton part of my constituency. I really welcome the Boundary Commission's decision to keep the wards of Bassett and Swaythling in the same constituency, there are many synergies between the two wards and not least the physical geography. However, in this submission I wish to lay out the reasons why I believe that Bassett and Swaythling not only belong together but also belong within the constituency of Southampton Itchen. The large Flower Roads Estate has one residents' association and it is one community, we always refer to it as the Flower Roads. They are split over the two wards of Bassett and Swaythling, although the Swaythling part of the Flower Roads was historically, certainly in the 2001 election, within the Southampton Itchen constituency. For the 2005 election, the two polling districts OA and OB, which primarily encompass that part of Swaythling, came into the Romsey constituency, and then in 2010 the whole of Swaythling came into the Romsey and Southampton North constituency. In the middle of the Flower Roads - and I will not pretend that it perfectly depicts the border, it does not - is Daisy Dip which is the only green open area within that part of the city. It is a communal area used for a wide variety of local activities, particularly for young people, and it is impossible to distinguish it from whether it is in Bassett or whether it is in Swaythling, the boundary runs through it at one point. I would like to see that community benefiting from staying with one Member of Parliament as opposed to being split in two.

Historically, Swaythling has never been part of the Southampton Test seat. As I said, until 2005 it was wholly within Southampton Itchen, and at that election only two polling districts moved into the Romsey seat. For the 2010 election the whole of Swaythling moved into Romsey and Southampton North. Swaythling has the lowest turnout at both general and local elections of any ward in the Romsey and Southampton North constituency, and I have heard anecdotally from residents, my constituents, that part of that is their uncertainty as to which constituency they belong. A further move to Southampton Test may see turnout reduced yet again and that is something that we would all wish to avoid. It is something that I am very conscious of, people often speak to me about feeling disjointed from Romsey, and I think it is important, particularly for the people of Swaythling, that they become part of a constituency that they feel part of, that they are familiar with.

The two secondary schools in Bassett and Swaythling accept children from feeder schools across Swaythling. There are existing travel patterns from Mansbridge Primary, Swaythling Primary and, indeed, Bassett Green Primary to the secondary provision at Cantell School. However, there is also very significant movement of pupils from Mansbridge and Swaythling Primaries to the alternative secondary provision of

Bitterne Park School which is well into the current Southampton Itchen constituency. Bitterne Park also provides some of the best sixth form provision in the city and is therefore a popular destination for those who have previously attended Cantell and St George's Schools.

Swaythling and Bassett are served by a number of medical practices, including the Burgess Road Surgery in Swaythling which has a number of patients from Bassett. However, many residents in Swaythling, particularly in the Mansbridge part of the ward, also go to the Townhill Park surgery which is within Southampton Itchen.

The religious parishes in the area are also largely eastward-facing from Bassett, with St Michael's and All Saints both connected to St Nicholas at North Stoneham. St Mary's at South Stoneham is linked to St Alban's in the Flower Roads, and there are no similar parish links crossing over into the Test side of the city.

Further south in the city the current proposal is to move the Bevois ward into Southampton Itchen. Bevois is separated from the main bulk of the Itchen constituency by both the railway line and the River Itchen. It does not share a boundary with either Bassett or Swaythling but only with Bargate ward within the same proposed configuration. Geographically, it appears to make more sense to include Bassett and Swaythling within the Southampton Itchen constituency to leave Bevois within Test, and add the Bargate ward, which is also to the west of the River Itchen, to the Southampton Test constituency. The river I believe provides a very clear geographic boundary, and Bargate, the other side of the toll bridge from the rest of the Itchen constituency, seems currently to be very cut off. To include Bargate in Southampton Test would then bring all of the commercial docks in the city into the same constituency, whereas at the moment there is a fairly arbitrary line which divides the docks in two. The Itchen toll bridge is currently the only toll route in the city and provides an accessibility barrier between Bargate and the rest of the Itchen constituency.

My final comment - and I appreciate that this is a matter of numbers and we have to be cautious and wary of seeking to take any action which would break the limits that have been set down for this proposed Boundary Commission review - is I would just like to make a plea on behalf of the villagers of West Tytherley who have asked me to raise their significant concerns that they do not feel connected to the New Forest. I have looked at the proposals, I have considered them, and, sadly, I cannot see a way, given the geography of Hampshire with the South East/South West regional boundary running up the west-hand side, with water to the south, any alternative to the configuration for the two proposed New Forest seats that you have put forward. So I do not oppose them in any shape, I would just like to make a comment on behalf of the community of West Tytherley that they do not feel connected to that seat, but I am sure that they will make their own representations to you in due course.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed. I would just like to ask one question if I may. You talked about the barrier of the River Itchen between Bargate and Woolston, Peartree, is there not a similar problem between Bitterne and Swaythling?

MRS CAROLINE NOKES: Ah, well - and if you look at your maps I am sure you will see this very clearly - the river as it runs through my constituency is very narrow. I can say this as somebody who has frequently gone and cleared Himalayan balsam from the banks of it and picked up litter along the length of it over many, many years. It is narrow. There are many crossing points in the more northern part of the city. By the time you get down to the south of the city, the River Itchen is busy flowing into Solent water, it is a very wide river. I would commend to you having a quick look at a photograph of the Itchen toll bridge, which is the most enormously high structure - I think it is probably the highest structure in the city - and of course you have to pay to cross it, whereas none of the crossings further north require that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am not familiar with the area but I can see on the map there is one crossing at Bitterne Park, and then I think, it is a bit unclear, but there seems to be another crossing at Woodhill, is that right?

MRS CAROLINE NOKES: Woodmill.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Woodmill?

MRS CAROLINE NOKES: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, okay.

MRS CAROLINE NOKES: That is a very --- The Woodmill Activities Centre is one of the major recreational facilities in the city. It sits within the Southampton Itchen constituency, it is technically within the Bitterne Park ward, however it is very well used by people from Mansbridge because it is so obviously walking distance and, unusually for much of that side of the city, a pretty flat walk. Itchen, if you were to establish the geography, is probably the hilliest constituency in the south of England.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Right. Well, I do not have any other questions. Julian, I presume you do not have any questions. So thank you very much indeed.

MRS CAROLINE NOKES: Thank you. I hope you have a busy day, it is not looking it so far.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Sadly, I do not think we are going to have a busy day.

MR REED: Eleven o'clock the next one.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: It is 11 o'clock. What time is it now? It is 9.58 am, so we are going to adjourn until 11 o'clock.

Time Noted: 9.58 am

After an adjournment

Time Noted: 11 am

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will start our session again, and whenever you are ready to make your representation we will be happy to hear from you.

MRS MIMS DAVIES: (MP Eastleigh) Do we just stand up?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You will have to come over to the lectern. Just so you are aware, everything is recorded for the public record.

MRS MIMS DAVIES: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So when you start, if you would not mind saying who you are and where you are from, and then you will have ten minutes to make your representation, and we may have questions from either the audience or ourselves at the end just for clarification purposes. Whenever you are ready, we can start.

MRS MIMS DAVIES: Good morning. I am Mims Davies, I am MP for the Eastleigh constituency, and I am delighted to be here today - I love a crowd - to talk about the idea and the campaign for a name change for my constituency.

Name is more than a way of being addressed or referred to, it speaks about the character and identity and can help shape the future of the constituency, and currently our constituency is comprised of various settlements, each of which has its own unique character. When I think of all the communities that are part of my constituency, I do not just see Eastleigh and its growth from the railway town, the home to many businesses that I am proud to represent and the manufacturing area that I have as well, but I also see many village identities, such as the Hamble which is prominent to the boating community, and to Botley which is a picturesque market village, very traditionally Hampshire, and Hedge End and its wonderful carnival and its growing settlement, which has certainly grown in the last few years that I have been there with more housing. In fact the carnival is very unique and has been going on since 1921, and people come from far and wide to take part. So my constituency is shaped by the day-to-day work and the contributions

that the people in the area give, and part of that is why I believe the constituency names should perhaps reflect more than just one single population centre.

The Boundary Commission recently published its proposals for redrawing constituency boundaries and there were no changes for the Eastleigh constituency in terms of shape. However, I do believe under the consultation process there is a chance to seek perhaps a change in the name and I believe this is a great opportunity for us to reassert our wider identity as a constituency which is composed of quite unique parts. Although we cannot change the name to include every single village, perhaps by including further names of the larger settlements outside Eastleigh we could be describing our constituency in a slightly more representative way.

When we look at the areas that constitute my constituency population, Eastleigh comprises of the largest settlement, but even so they only account for 26 per cent of the constituency. Meanwhile, 31 per cent of the population is accounted for if we combine the people living in Hedge End and Bishopstoke into that area of Eastleigh. But more than just a number, this breakdown alludes to the fact that areas apart from Eastleigh also have sizeable populations which constitute different communities and therefore there is a possibility of being able to reflect as the MP different interests and priorities of the constituency. Although, as an MP, I represent all the villages, I do believe a name change could be more representative for Eastleigh as a whole in terms of my current constituency.

From my initial conversations I think there is some support for a new name because of the really varied and unique composition of the constituency, sort of cut in the middle by the M27, with a real boating community at the bottom, the railway town, and of course the feeling of pure Hampshire as you head into Fair Oak and Botley. I also believe that it gives us a chance to reflect the geography of the area. People are unsure whether a village or a town is part of the Eastleigh constituency. I know previous MPs have described themselves when doing press releases as the Hamble MP when referring to Hamble and do not mention Eastleigh at all. In fact it can be a barrier when representing the constituency when only one town is named, and I think it would give me an opportunity, for me as the MP, to engage with my constituents more broadly.

Personally, I have been thinking hard about the name. Eastleigh, Hedge End and Hamble seems a viable option to me and perhaps better represents the geography and the reality of the population concentrations. Most people know that Hedge End has the largest M&S in Europe, so if they do not know where Eastleigh is, they have certainly been to the Hedge End M&S. They perhaps watched *Howard's Way* and know about the boating community in Bursledon, or indeed Netley, as much as Hamble. If they have not been to Hamble, they may have been to the Jolly Sailor.

I believe it is a chance for residents to voice what matters to them in this consultation because I do not think politics should be done to people, people should be involved in politics, and I think this is a real opportunity for constituents to feel very much involved in

their constituency and I would like a chance in this process to be able to represent the entire constituency. So a possible name change could reflect this but perhaps people do not want this and I do recognise this. Perhaps they have a better idea for a name to represent the whole constituency, which is why I am running a poll on my website through Facebook - it is on a SurveyMonkey, so we are getting all sorts of different ideas. But it is a powerful exercise to try and make sure that people and communities feel very much involved in the communities that I seek to represent.

So from the initial consultations there has been some interesting feedback in terms of the outcomes that I have heard from people. Remaining the same has been quite strong - people generally know what they like and are frightened of change - but quite a few people have come back to me about Eastleigh and Hedge End, Eastleigh, Hedge End and Hamble, Hamble and Monks Brook, which is apparently a traditional river in the area, Eastleigh and the West Hamble Valley, Eastleigh and the Lower Hamble Valley, Eastleigh and South Central Hampshire, the River Hamble constituency, and one person has also suggested that Netley should be included in the name, and also Bursledon. So I think it shows that everybody probably really, if they get a chance, would like to have a say.

So I would like the Boundary Commission, in part of this wider process, to perhaps look at the Eastleigh constituency, a potential name change, and whether they felt that it was acceptable. I have looked at other MPs having two or three different populations as part of their constituency when it is so described when I see it up on the annunciator at work and see that regularly there is quite some - if you look at the Scottish MPs - very long names and wide representations when it comes to constituency names.

So I thank you for giving me the opportunity, I will happily feed in my results, and happy to take any questions.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Does anybody have any questions? No? Certainly, of course we will listen to what the people's representations make on this issue and we would be very interested in the results of your poll, and if you could send those in by 5 December, that would be terrific.

MRS MIMS DAVIES: I would be delighted to, and thank you for the opportunity for coming here today.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much indeed.

MRS MIMS DAVIES: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The lady who came in just recently, would you like to make a representation or are you just here to listen?



MS UDY: I was down to speak but I think I wrote the wrong thing down. I am here to watch and maybe speak, I am just ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You are more than welcome to speak. We have got you down as speaking.

MS UDY: (Inaudible).

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay, that is all right. That is all right but in that case we do not have any further speakers booked in until 2 o'clock. What we normally do is adjourn for an hour to see if anybody else comes in and then we will reconvene at 12 o'clock. If nobody else has come in, then we will adjourn again for an hour, or for three quarters of an hour in that case, and see if anybody comes in. I have to say our experience to date is that we are not the most popular show in town so we do not get --- I do not think we have had anybody just come off the street to make a representation. The likelihood is at 12 o'clock we will not have got another person in.

MS UDY: Well, I am not a member of a political party. What I can do, I might adjourn to get some lunch and I will have a chat with some people and see if they are concerned and represent it here, rather than a local party.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That would be excellent. The more representations we have, the better.

MS UDY: Of course.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I will adjourn the meeting then until 12 o'clock. Thank you.

#### After an adjournment

Time Noted: 12 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: We will resume our meeting. Do we have a speaker for 12 o'clock?

MS UDY: Yes, that is what I am going to do.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay. You have to come to the lectern to make your intervention. It is all recorded for the public record and so you just need to start off by saying who you are and where you are from, and then you have ten minutes to make your presentation or make your points; and then at the end we might ask for a point of clarification, but it will not be a debate, it will just be we would just like to

understand a point better, or indeed a member of the audience may well ask that. Whenever you are ready, please do start.

MS UDY: Hello, I am Claire Udy. I am a resident of the Portsmouth South constituency and I still will be a member of the Portsmouth South constituency with the boundary changes.

I just want to say in principle I am in agreement with the boundary changes in Portsmouth as a whole. I feel like the new inclusion of more of the poorer parts of the city will give a greater turnout to elections in Portsmouth and give a greater voice to the very impoverished in the city considering I believe that we are quite a poor city and I feel we need greater representation of the poor. Even though nationally I feel like the boundary review is not so great in big terms, I do in principle agree with it in Portsmouth. That is pretty much all I have to say.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Righto. Any questions of clarification? No? Well, thank you very much for coming in and making those points.

MS UDY: That is all right.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Do not forget ---

MS UDY: (Inaudible).

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay. We have got written submissions up until 5 December.

MS UDY: Yes, they are written.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That being the case, I shall adjourn again until quarter to one, and then at quarter to one, assuming there is nobody here, we will adjourn for lunch until 2 o'clock, and then we do actually have some people at 2 o'clock.

After a short adjournment

Time noted: 12.45 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yet more excitement, so we will adjourn until 2 o'clock. Thank you.

After the luncheon adjournment

Time Noted: 2 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Our 2 o'clock has not turned up as yet, so my suggestion is that we just wait to see if they turn up in the next ten or so minutes. The next speaker after that would be Mr Crow at 2.20 pm, so we will just hang fire for a few minutes.

After a short adjournment

Time Noted: 2.20 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Let me just say a few words before you start. The whole thing is going to be videoed so everything is on the public record.

CLLR BINNS: Right.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If you could start by saying who you are and where you are from, then you have ten minutes, and then if there are any questions either from Boundary Commission or other members of the audience, we will take those at the end, but they will just be for clarification, we are not starting a debate.

CLLR BINNS: All right. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So off we go.

CLLR BINNS: I am James Binns. I am a councillor in the New Forest, New Forest East constituency to be precise, although I am here representing both New Forest East and West constituencies for the Conservative Party Associations there. I did not realise I was supposed to be speaking today but I am quite happy to do so anyway.

Really I am just here to say that we are very pleased with the boundary proposals. Obviously, New Forest West cannot - we will be losing in the East, to the West constituency, Boldre and Sway; that had previously come across to us in the East in 2010. We appreciate obviously there has to be a boundary change there and that is the only change that can happen because obviously the West constituency being on the border of the south-east cannot go anywhere else, but we are quite happy with, we will work as one autonomy anyway.

We are very pleased with the boundary proposals that have been commissioned and showing that we will take on in the East, we will go up and take in --- Goodness, it has gone now.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Dun Valley and Blackwater.

CLLR BINNS: Thank you, Dun Valley and Blackwater. We are very happy with that. They are actually New Forest areas anyway, although not within the New Forest District Council authority.

Julian Lewis, our Member of Parliament, I believe has written to yourselves at the Boundary Commission. He is very happy with the proposals, we are very happy with the proposals. Actually, on behalf of the associations, we would just like to actually thank the Boundary Commission for recognising that we are not part of Southampton and that no effort has been made to put us into Southampton. Although on a map the temptation may be to do so, we are not an urban constituency, so we do appreciate that very much.

Purely from the East and West side I would like to say that we are very happy with the boundary proposals, but also while I am here - just speaking as a former University of Southampton student, having campaigned there and lived there for three years - I would like to give my support to the proposal that the Bargate and Bevois really they should not be split - they are currently split - and they should be put into one constituency. Also in respect of Bassett and Swaythling, they tended to look towards Itchen anyway, that was my experience when I was there, so I think that that recommendation should happen.

Other than that, I have nothing else to say, unless you have any questions for me.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I do not have any questions. Does anybody else have questions?

MR WALDEN: Thank you very much. Julian Walden from the Conservative Party. James, when you say that Bargate and Bevois should not be split, which constituency are you suggesting that they should go into, please?

CLLR BINNS: I would suggest that they should go into Test.

MR WALDEN: Thank you very much.

CLLR BINNS: Yes. I think it is better to have the business side really of things in one constituency.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Lovely. Thank you for that clarification and thank you for coming and speaking.

CLLR BINNS: Thank you. Thank you for your time.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Excellent. So Mr Crow, just so you are aware, everything is videoed, and you just introduce yourself by saying who you are, where you are from, then you will have ten minutes, and then there may be questions at the end.

MR CROW: Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to come along this afternoon. My name is Stuart Crow and I am a resident of Portsmouth South and, as well as that, I am the Conservative Party's recently adopted candidate for Milton ward in the next local elections in 2018, as I have been in past ones, and we may say it is a work in progress.

It is an area I have a real interest in since my family have lived in the same couple of streets for over 100 years now and it is an area which your Commission has particular interest in because it is at present the northern frontier of the Portsmouth South constituency.

I do wish to support the recommendations of the Commission as they apply to Portsmouth South. The present size of the constituency is well outside the tolerance, within 5 per cent of the quota, and the only way that you can redress that is by bringing a ward into the constituency from Portsmouth North. You only have two wards from which to choose in order to do that: you have Nelson ward on the western side and Baffins on the eastern. I am aware that there are suggestions - and the Commission considered it quite carefully in drawing up the report - to look at Baffins, which I think would be a mistake for quite important reasons which I will come back to, if I may, although there are important reasons for integrating Nelson into Portsmouth South.

The present boundary divides the Buckland community and, despite being somebody who knows the city about as well as anybody else, I often find it confusing myself on the ground there when out campaigning because the boundary zigzags around the streets which look exactly the same and feel exactly the same and there is a homogeneous feel to that community which at present is divided by the boundary between the two wards and the two constituencies. But if I may say so, the picture on the Baffins side is even more confused because it is, with all due respect to the previous local government commission, a very badly drawn up ward. It includes a sliver of Milton, which is a community which is otherwise entirely within Portsmouth South, and although you are concerned here with the local government boundaries as they are, I am aware that this has become a factor in the debate. But Baffins proper, that part of Baffins to the north of Baffins ward, contains the overwhelming majority of the population of the ward and it is separated from the Milton sliver of it to the south by some quite formidable barriers - the same barriers separate Baffins in fact in entirety from Portsmouth South: you have the Eastern Road, Milton Cemetery, the St Mary's Hospital campus and the large expanse of Milton Common. If you are on the stretch of Milton Road alongside the hospital along there, you feel very much that you are driving between two distinct areas rather than driving up a road which unites them as Fratton and Kingston Roads do around the Fratton and Nelson area. There is a seamless run of streets and community between the Charles Dickens ward and Nelson ward, and the proposal would reunite the two parts of the Buckland community which, as I have said, they are currently split in two. There is, however, no such community between Baffins and Milton. Indeed, on the ground you

move seamlessly from the Baffins, proper area of Baffins where the majority of people in the ward live, seamlessly into Copnor and on into Portsmouth North. Those are areas with a very different character and community to the parts of Portsmouth South which they border.

The other great merit of the proposal is that it will bring together all the interests in Portsmouth Harbour when it comes to docks and their related business interests. Employment, governmental interest and the business community can all be brought together on the western side, stretching from the Camber Docks through the Isle of Wight ferry terminal, the Royal Dockyard, the commercial docks, and the very important naval establishment at Whale Island, and I think everybody involved in those undertakings would welcome being combined in one constituency. So I hope the Commission will stick with the proposal it makes to integrate Nelson ward into Portsmouth South, and I would like to give it my own support here now. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. I just have one question about Buckland and you saying that the Commission's proposal would reunite Buckland. I am just wondering how long is it that Nelson and Charles Dickens wards have been in different constituencies, if you know.

MR CROW: I do not, as it happens, no, but I think it is a mistake to split an area that has such a homogeneous character between two constituencies when the opposing proposal would actually try and stick together two communities which in essence have a lot more that separates them.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: One of the criteria that the Commission have to take into account is about existing constituencies and so I was just wondering, you know, how long those existing constituencies had existed.

MR CROW: I am not sure. While I recognise that the Commission is bound to look at boundaries which have existed for quite a period of time, in this case I think there are positive reasons for reuniting Buckland in one constituency when the counter is to bring Baffins back into Portsmouth South which was formerly part of the constituency but it was never really matched up in the same way that it does in the west. The shape of Portsmouth has also changed since Baffins moved into Portsmouth North. The western side commercially has become stronger, there is a much stronger sense of community there between the commercial ferry port and the dockyard - "synergy" is a horrible word to use but there is one.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay, thank you very much. We will then move on to Mrs Lunn. Mrs Lunn is not here. Would Mr Sanders want to take the opportunity now of making his representations?

CLLR SANDERS: (Liberal Democrat Party) I am happy to.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You have heard what I said about all that?

CLLR SANDERS: Yes, I have. Thank you very much.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So I do not have to repeat that.

CLLR SANDERS: Thank you, Mr Chairman. For the record, my name is Darren Sanders. I am - I was in 2015 - the Liberal Democrat parliamentary candidate for Portsmouth North for my sins and have been a Liberal Democrat councillor for the Baffins ward since 2012, re-elected this year, and I am here to support putting my ward into Portsmouth South. My reason for doing so is not about the numbers because, frankly, as Stuart has already outlined, you could put Nelson or Baffins into Portsmouth South and it really would not matter as far as the numbers are concerned, and crucially it would not matter as far as the rest of Hampshire was concerned, because that would work. It is not about the politics because the result is basically the same. But looking at your map earlier on, I see that what you were suggesting was essentially a version of the pre-2010 boundaries, particularly with the quite correct removal of Meon Valley. I am proposing that you apply the same logic to Portsmouth and come back to a version of the 2010 boundaries, which also will meet much more of your criteria than Nelson would because the ward itself, or the vast majority of the ward itself, looks culturally and politically to the south.

You mentioned about how long Buckland had been in Nelson and Charles Dickens and been in separate constituencies, my belief is the answer to the question is 42 years. Not since 1974 has Buckland been reunited. I could be wrong and, if I am, I apologise, Sir. But in Baffins, three of the five polling districts and 70 per cent of the electors, about 7,000 out of the 11,000 that you have got on your current list, were in Portsmouth South in April 2010. Tangier Road, the main road running through the ward, was the constituency boundary of Portsmouth South, part of it, between 1880 and 2010. So therefore I have 7,000 electors in my ward who were part of Portsmouth South until very recently, unlike Buckland. I have to say talking to them this morning at my council surgery and talking to them as frequently as I do, they would be desperate to get back. It is not part of their big life - that is planning, parking, more parking, more planning, more housing and more parking - but if you ask them, they see themselves culturally and politically as part of the south. So in terms of minimum change, Mr Chairman, putting Baffins rather than Nelson, which had the grand total of no electors in Portsmouth South at the dissolution of the 2010 parliament, fits your criteria much, much better.

But it is not just politically what I am suggesting is sensible, it is also culturally, too. Stuart has alluded to many things around the Milton area, and I know it because 2,000 people who live in Milton live in my ward. Politically, 70 per cent of the electors in the ward look to Miltoncross School, the main secondary school for much of the south-east of the city but also for three polling districts in my ward. The housing offices are part of the city south, the blocks in my ward are also part of the city south housing office, to the extent

that there are surgery posters for the MP for Portsmouth South up in them and nobody has complained yet, which is quite striking, but I think it is an interesting sense of the mindset the people have.

But I want particularly to focus on the polling district HE or, as I call it, Milton or Southsea, depending on how they go. When those people in particular - which is the same number of people as the IF polling district in Buckland that you are proposing to put into Portsmouth South - became Baffins they were totally confused. They did not want to be part of the Baffins electoral ward and they certainly did not want to be part of the Portsmouth South constituency. Certainly when I speak to those people as I did this morning and as I do regularly, they would love to have the chance to be reunited with Southsea at least. Milton Common, Milton Common is in my ward. The Good Companion Pub, which is one of the hearts of the Milton community, is in my ward. The Chairwoman of the Milton Neighbourhood Forum lives in my ward, because when Baffins was created, this polling district HE chose to stay as part of the Milton Neighbourhood Forum, it is part of the Milton Neighbourhood Plan, and they would love to be reunited. At the very least, in parliamentary terms, they will put up with being in Baffins because of the quality of the representation they get from myself, my colleague Steve Hastings and my colleague Lynne Stagg, but they would love to be put back into Southsea, which is what the Royal Mail says they are.

A lot has been talked again about Buckland versus Milton because that is essentially what we are looking at, two communities that essentially could be argued should be reunited. When I go to Buckland, when I volunteer at the Buckland Community Centre, when I volunteer for their fêtes and their stalls, I simply do not get the desire that I see from the Keep Milton Green Facebook group, when I go around Moorings Way, to come back into Portsmouth South, I just do not get the level of enthusiasm that Stuart was outlining.

Stuart also mentioned Baffins as well. Baffins centrally consists of three polling districts with about 8,000 voters. The HC and HD polling districts, which consist of about 5,000 of those electors, were in Portsmouth South before 2010, and talking to people who live north of Tangier Road, again they seem to us part culturally of the South rather than the North. The one bit of the ward that sees itself as part of Portsmouth North is the HA polling district or, as we have to call it, Copnor, because again they do not understand why they are in the Baffins electoral ward. That does see itself as part of Portsmouth North, but the southern half of it, everything below the church, everything below St Aidan's Church, and the pub on Copnor Road is actually opposite Fratton, so the Fratton electoral ward. Indeed, the biggest issue in that area is parking and it is parking from the other side of the road, the side of the road that is in Portsmouth South, and that is one of its major issues. So they would, although it would be difficult for them, there is a plausible way of looking at it and again it looks minimum change, and it would be 1,100 voters who would have to face a significant change as opposed to the 7,800 electors who live in the non-Buckland part of Nelson. So you will be looking at something that is minimum change, that would satisfy your desire to retain communities, that fits within your quota,



that does not affect the rest of Hampshire, and would reunite people who have always felt part of Portsmouth South back where they came from.

On that suggestion, Mr Chairman, I respectfully suggest that you put Baffins into Portsmouth South, and I am happy to take questions.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay. Thank you very much indeed. Does anybody have any questions?

CLLR SANDERS: Stuart. I expect nothing less, Sir.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Excuse me, I am running this.

CLLR SANDERS: Oh, I am sorry.

MR CROW: Just a question.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just one minute. Before asking your question, you need to say who you are and where you are from again.

MR CROW: Okay.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MR CROW: My name is Stuart Crow. I am a resident of Portsmouth South and a Conservative Party activist.

Just to clarify what you said, Darren, about the numbers of people in polling districts in Baffins, you said the Milton component - which we would both agree is Milton - of Baffins ward is how many? Was it 2,000 out of about 10?

CLLR SANDERS: According to the 2015 electorate that was used for the local council review, the Portsmouth review, of polling districts across the city, it was 1,850. The IF polling district of Nelson, which everybody knows as the Buckland polling district of Nelson ---

MR CROW: You have answered my question, Darren. Thank you.

CLLR SANDERS: --- is 1,850, it is the same.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay. If there is no other questions, I thank you very much indeed.

CLLR SANDERS: Thank you. I am grateful to you, Sir.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Our next speaker, who was due at 2.20 pm, has not turned up yet, so I suggest we wait for about ten minutes just to see if she does turn up and, if not, then we will adjourn.

After a short adjournment

Time Noted: 2.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Mrs Lunn, who is due at 2.30 pm, has not appeared, so I intend to adjourn until quarter to four and then we will see who comes. Okay.

After a short adjournment

Time Noted: 4.30 pm

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Shall we restart our hearing? Just a bit of background, everything is being recorded and videoed for public record.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: (MP Southampton Itchen) Right, okay.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You will have to stand at the lectern.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: Right.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: If right at the beginning you could just say who you are and where you are from for the record - I mean of course I know who you are, but for the record if you say that - and then you have ten minutes for your presentation, we are not going to be - given the audience is ---

MR ROYSTON SMITH: You do not want to keep the queues waiting outside.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Exactly. There are a lot of young girls downstairs but I do not think they are interested in this.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: We did think they were queuing when we arrived.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes. Then at the end, if there are any points of clarification, we will ask you, and members of the audience, if we ever had any, would also ask you, but that is it.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: Sure.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: I apologise for my tardiness. I roll my papers up, as I tend to do, and now I cannot see it.

I will not read my notes but I will talk to them, if I may, and then talk to the slides, because I want to not repeat things that perhaps you have heard before or the submissions that you have had before from people, because they will be, I assume, relatively repetitive.

For the record, you wanted me to say I am Royston Smith. I am the Member of Parliament for Southampton Itchen elected in May 2015, but I would also say - and I think it is quite important - that many MPs get elected or selected all over the place and they are not necessarily local. I am a resident, a resident of Bitterne Park, and that will become relevant later on because of course when we are talking about some of the wards that move, I have some particular connection with those. I was elected in May last year and I think, like many people, I am quite pleased with part of the Boundary Commission's proposal, but I think the principle of some of it is right but I think the way that it has been done is not something that I would completely agree with.

This is the current boundaries, which of course you will be familiar with, and the bit that ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: I am sorry. Because we are recording it, you need to stand ---

MR ROYSTON SMITH: Right, say it again, okay. So round about here is the bit that I would, as a resident, be particularly interested in talking about because this is Swaythling and this is Bitterne Park. As a child, following the river where we used to fish, Mansbridge here, the church hall I used to play piano, and the tennis courts here, this is sort of one and the same to us. We did not travel about much when we were children, because even going up to the common we would take some sandwiches and stay all day. It is not like kids now, they seem to travel a lot more than perhaps we did. So that was sort of where I was brought up and lived when I was a child.

These are the current boundaries and these are the Boundary Commission's proposals, and they do have, I think, some merit - well, quite a bit of merit as it happens. These two wards here, Bevois and Bargate, are quite obviously belonging together - I think that has probably been said by other people, I would be surprised if it was not - and this of course forms part of the Boundary Commission's proposals. Where I would differ with that is which constituencies they would then stay in, and it comes back to my first point about being a local resident and understanding this area more.

I think this ought to be mentioned because it has been mentioned to me. So there is the Boundary Commission proposal and there is a proposal of least resistance, if you like, with the least amount of disruption, and that is leaving pretty much everything as it is but

taking those two which were in the Southampton and Romsey North, Romsey and Southampton North constituency, and just reallocate one either side, one into Test and one into Itchen. It is not my favoured option by a long shot but it does have some merit when I talked about that in the first place, but it is another option.

My option or the one that I favour. I talked earlier about these two belonging together, and there is absolutely no question that they geographically belong together and in fact demographically belong together in no small part here. If you were looking to Woolston here, which is in Itchen, it has no connection, has no physical connection but for the Itchen Bridge, which is a toll bridge, and the Northam Bridge, over a large stretch of the river and it has no sort of connection. They would never think of themselves as the same part. They know they are in the same city but they never think of themselves in the same way as these two would, which share an awful lot here and then down this way. I think making that point that these two belong together is right but I think similarly the point can be made that these two belong together.

Firstly, Swaythling and Bitterne Park were, up until very recently, 2010, part of the same ward, in fact more of it in 2002 when the boundaries changed in the local government, this was all together. These people in Mansbridge, they still think of themselves as part of Bitterne Park, as do people in Bitterne Park think of themselves in the same way as they do Mansbridge. In fact if you go round here you sort of come back in - you know, some of these roads have been changed now but they were always together, so you could go out this way and come back in and go this way and come back in. So they feel together I think and I think that residents would agree with that and I would agree with that. I would definitely think that these two belong together but not in the way that is being proposed. There is a reason for that, which I think is relevant, and I do not think the Boundary Commission are wrong, I do not think that for one second. I just think that local knowledge and the way the geography and the demography works is probably better known by people like me and local residents than it would be by the Boundary Commission and I completely acknowledge that.

So the reason or two or three reasons why I think this proposal works better. Firstly, we are a very, very busy port, 430-450 cruise ships every year, 1.8 million passengers, 850 cars now are exported through the port of Southampton. In fact only yesterday I think, when the Chancellor came to visit, they were talking about how important this is as a national piece of infrastructure. It covers four wards in Southampton: Redbridge, Millbrook, Freemantle and Bargate. These three of course you know are in Southampton Test and this one is in Southampton Itchen. What would make perfect sense in my opinion, while we are looking at these two being closely linked and we all agree on that, is that that port would be better served with one MP than it would be served with two. So I think that is really quite important and makes the case for this over here much stronger than perhaps people would imagine on balance. So having one MP for the port I think would be very, very important.

The other point that I think is important - and I think again that the Boundary Commission would have overlooked but again not because of any failing but because you would have to know really - is the proposed new developments in Southampton. These are not someone's idea of what they would like to see, these are in planning with planning consent or in construction. Woolston is a big one, about 1,630-odd dwellings, and you can see they have done the better part of 700 already. These all come in. Woolston school is in planning and now in development. Meridian site, they are up to first floor on that one. Townhill Park, they have demolished all the existing local authority flats and are now building there. Ocean Village, another development coming. Lime Street has now begun. Fruit and veg market is halfway completed. East Street has planning and they will be on site next year with a completion in 18 months' time, as they will with the Bargate Centre.

So when you take these all together there are some, I think, 2,800 new dwellings - I will just refer to my notes on that because that is quite important - 2,800, of which would probably give you another 5,000 adult voting residents. I know that we are not looking ahead particularly but I do not think it is unreasonable to look to when these boundary changes will come in and then see - and incidentally there is not developments of that nature here, I have not just left these off, they just do not exist. The difference, I mean particularly up here there is very different --- They have neighbourhood planning and that sort of thing. It is much slower and there is less opportunities there because of the way the wards are laid out. These numbers will come in before the proposals will be put to the electorate in the next general election which means that, although I think it is important just to look to an horizon and say these numbers will not last for very long, these numbers will be different before we even get to the election and I think that is really quite important for us to acknowledge as well.

I could make a lot of comments but I think other people will. I think that one of my colleagues, one of the local councillors, will make their points about the local communities and how that affects them personally. But I think those three things alone to confirm where these wards would sit together, to take into account the amount of new development that is going to appear, and I think very importantly to put the docks into one constituency. I think in conclusion those would be my three, I hope different points, slightly different points that you may have had before, I do not know. In fact perhaps I hope that everyone has made these points and therefore they are being reinforced everywhere. But I think they are just quite important and I hope that will help you when you come to look at the proposals to see whether you might be sticking with the originals or whether you might want to modify them somewhat.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Does anybody have any questions? (None) Can I just ask one question then? One of the criteria which the Commission has to have regard to is the boundaries of existing constituencies. Clearly, in regard to Swaythling and ---

MR ROYSTON SMITH: Bassett?

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: --- Bassett, you know, we have proposed a change there.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: But in relation to Bargate our proposal is to remain in its current constituency, but the counter-proposal so to speak would remove it from its existing constituency.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: Yes, it would.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Do you know how long Bargate has been in Itchen as a ward? I mean, I do not know, is it a new - was it put in recently or is it ---

MR ROYSTON SMITH: No, it is part of --- It goes back to I think --- I think the boundaries changed, local authority boundaries changed in 2000, and we had an all-out election in 2002. So the wards of Bargate and Bevois were together in St Luke's ward, was part of that ward, yes, and that changed at that point, so they have not been apart for ever by any means. I mean, you know, this one is newer, this moved from Swaythling out and far, far more recent than these were, but they do have a connection which has been there for some time, so probably, well, 14 years I think.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: So those new boundaries of Bargate, you know, some of it was there already, but new ones.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: That is very helpful, thanks. Okay, that is great.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: Good.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So Cllr Fuller.

CLLR FULLER: Good afternoon. My name is David Fuller. I am a city councillor for the Bitterne Park ward in Southampton.

Firstly, thank you, Commissioner, for allowing us to present this submission this afternoon. I am presenting this on behalf of all three of the Bitterne Park councillors who, unfortunately, the other two could not be here today.

It is my view and the view of my colleagues as local councillors that the Boundary Commission's current proposal is not the best fit for the communities of Southampton and therefore we believe every effort should be made to better reflect those communities. In particular we recognise the natural fit between the communities of Swaythling and Bitterne Park. As such, we would welcome any proposal to bring those two communities together.

Bitterne Park currently sits at the northernmost point of Southampton Itchen constituency, a position it has held since the last boundary review in 2010; that review removed parts of Swaythling from the constituency. Bitterne Park ward's connection with the Swaythling ward, and more specifically with the Mansbridge section which is the polling district that sits here, goes back beyond that area's previous inclusion in the Southampton Itchen constituency.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Can I just be clear?

CLLR FULLER: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: The Mansbridge part of Swaythling was in Bitterne in previous ---

CLLR FULLER: Yes, it was in Bitterne ward.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Pre 2010?

CLLR FULLER: It was early 2000 that changed, but obviously Swaythling was in, in parts, in the constituency as well, so there is a joint link there both on a constituency level and a ward level.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So Swaythling was in Itchen?

CLLR FULLER: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Prior to 2000 ---

CLLR FULLER: and 10.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Prior to 2010?

CLLR FULLER: Yes, but the local wards included a chunk of Mansbridge and Swaythling as well before that, so that goes back to a more historic point.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes.

CLLR FULLER: Which obviously, as I say, Mansbridge was previously within the boundaries of Bitterne Park ward. It is that historic connection and the reasons for that connection that have led my ward colleagues and I to try and rectify the past wrong and reunite Swaythling with Bitterne Park, particularly obviously in that area. The historic link with Mansbridge is clear and the historic reasons for the make-up of that ward are obvious.

At the boundary of Bitterne Park and Swaythling is Riverside Park which covers all this section of river here, which is one of the busiest open spaces in Southampton, boasting a miniature train, skate park, pitch and putt, football pitches, tennis courts, children's play parks, as well as a large open space for local residents to enjoy. This park draws people from all the surrounding areas, a community hub for all those within walking distance, which sort of includes a big chunk of Swaythling and Mansbridge there and obviously our own ward of Bitterne Park as it currently sits. It is a bit of a beating heart of the locality, particularly in the summer, and it is a delight to be down there to be honest, and you see people from all the local community enjoying it and taking part.

Alongside this, the small independent shops, cafes and restaurants of the Bitterne Park Triangle draw trade from Mansbridge and greater Swaythling, and it is these small establishments that create the community feel and belonging that the area boasts. Very few places in Southampton have as much of a village-like feel as Bitterne Park and that is precisely because of the facilities available at the centre which bring people in from both the Bitterne Park ward as it currently sits and the old areas of Mansbridge and Swaythling which used to sit in the ward. If you go into Cotton's Bakery, the Songbird Cafe, the Bitterne Balti, any of the shops in the Triangle, they all tell you of their regular customers that come in and shop from the Mansbridge area just walking over and taking part in the community there.

The links of Bitterne Park with Mansbridge and Swaythling also go beyond the obvious historic and community ties. The areas also share common roads such as Woodmill Lane which goes through both wards, and also have joint common leisure and activity facilities such as the Woodmill Activity Centre which sits just here on the border, which has canoeing and all sorts of other stuff, and a community cafe again which residents both young and old from both wards currently enjoy.

The Swaythling train station is also the nearest rail link for nearly a third of Bitterne Park - it sits just here - which encapsulates the entire third of the ward. So many thousands of my residents use that train station, well, have access to that train station, and that train



station's usage has gone up by nearly 50 per cent in the last five years, a huge chunk of which is coming from my ward, so there is obviously that link of transport there as well.

As councillors we often receive correspondence from those living in the old - in Mansbridge, which obviously used to sit in the ward, of people who think they still belong in the Bitterne Park ward and feel associated with it and do not really understand why they are not represented by us. That feeling of belonging of those residents is something that we feel should be reflected in the outcome of the boundary review but is certainly not taken into account in this initial proposal.

In conclusion we would urge the Boundary Commission to think again about its proposals for Southampton and recognise the historic and existing communities in a new proposal. We believe that proposal should incorporate both Swaythling and Bitterne Park into a single constituency. That is it. Thank you.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Any ---? No? Could I just ask one question?

CLLR FULLER: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: School catchments are often used as an indicator of local ties, where would the school catchments be in these ---

CLLR FULLER: So the main secondary school for the northern area here is Bitterne Park School.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes.

CLLR FULLER: The catchments for that do fall into Mansbridge and Swaythling as well as primary feeders, so Bitterne Park ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So the official catchment area of Bitterne Park School includes Swaythling?

CLLR FULLER: Yes, I believe so.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: What about vice versa then, Bassett and Swaythling, the main school for that is?

CLLR FULLER: I do not know.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: St George's.

CLLR FULLER: St George's.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: From Bassett and beyond as well.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: So they cross over?

MR ROYSTON SMITH: But not from Bitterne Park to St George's but from Swaythling to Bitterne Park, yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Right, okay. That is very helpful.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: Can I ---

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Just because everything is for the record so to speak, so you just have to say again who you are.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: Is it on? Okay. Royston Smith, Member of Parliament for Southampton. David, can you confirm that prior to 2010, and prior to 2002 when the first boundaries were done, that the Swaythling ward, or part of it, Swaythling was a new construct, was actually called Bitterne Park ward?

CLLR FULLER: Yes, it was. So, as I say, it took into account this area here and was called Bitterne Park, simply because Bitterne Park in effect is Riverside Park and the areas around it, which obviously do not just stick themselves to this area, they go all the way around here, and that is the point. This park here is particularly well used. It is a community asset and community facility and draws people from all over. It is probably the main amenity for both, for that entire locality there.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: One other question then. So Mansbridge is an area.

CLLR FULLER: Yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: And, you know, you are saying that they have an affinity with the river park and Bitterne.

CLLR FULLER: Bitterne Park, yes.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: But what about the rest of Swaythling, do they have a historic connection with Bitterne Park? You know, Hampton Park, for instance, I think is in the Swaythling constituency.

CLLR FULLER: Well, Mansbridge takes up quite a big chunk of Swaythling, so that sort of all pulls in. I am not sure beyond that. I mean my concern is really this bit here and the wider area. I mean I think if you were in this area here in the Bitterne Park ward, you

would probably have the section on the other side as well, but your affinity would be for that.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes.

CLLR FULLER: So that would be where your locality is, your high street, your local shops.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: There are some --- (inaudible).

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes, I am afraid you have to say who you are again.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: Royston Smith again. Because I am older than David, but for no other reason than he probably would not know the history, Hampton Park and those areas all went to the same school as me at Bitterne Park Secondary. There was always the catchment there and it pretty much is now, apart from St George's, so there is a crossover. But they would have broadly assumed themselves the same but for the very parochial - people get very parochial, even right down to small areas. But they used to go to the same school as me in Bitterne Park so they would have felt probably quite connected.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Okay, that is great. I do not suppose anybody else has questions. (None) So that is very helpful to us and thank you very much for coming over to Portsmouth to talk to us about that.

MR ROYSTON SMITH: Thank you for giving us the opportunity.

THE LEAD ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: With that, I think we are going to close for the day.

The hearing adjourned

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