

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 19:54
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Penshurst & Fordcombe Parish Council

FOR THE ATTENTION OF MR.IAN BIGWOOD.

Dear Sir,

I am strongly AGAINST the proposed separation of Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish Council. This union has worked extremely well in the 25 years I lived in Penshurst. They have so much in common, similar number of residents and sharing of Parochial duties.

There is an element of unrest in the Village at the moment started by a few new comers who are inexperienced in Village matters, they moved here because of the delightful village Penshurst was; they are now set on changing something they don't fully understand.

Yours faithfully,
Mrs. A.M. May.

[REDACTED]

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 19:54
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish Council

Dear Sir,

I am writing to oppose the suggestion that the Parish Council of Penshurst and Forcombe be divided.

The idea to divide would appear to be part of an attempt by those proposing the idea to thwart the contentious planning proposal regarding Forge Field which currently divides the Village of Penshurst.

There appears to be no other reason for the division. Division will only have the effect of increasing costs and bureaucracy and thereby increasing the Parish Rate unnecessarily. This politically motivated proposal should be rejected, to submit to the request would be to capitulate to the highly vocal tactics, aimed not at improving democracy but rather imposing certain individuals views.

Trevor May
[REDACTED]

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 19:57
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: division of penshurst parish

I write to give you my oppinion on the division of Penshurst Parish. I think the whole idea is redicules, the two Parishes work extremely well together and no change is needed, and my family are of the same mind. Mrs J A Freeman.

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 20:22
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: splitting the parish of penshurst and fordcombe

To Ian Bigwood

I live in the parish of Penshurst and have done so for 9 years and I don't see any benefit of splitting up the parish of Penshurst and Fordcombe. I think that the parish boundary should stay as it is. I feel that there is a good amount of representation from both villages together and if Penshurst and Fordcombe were to split from each other we would loose that sense of being part of a team.

Emma Freeman

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 20:40
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Fordcombe & Penshurst Parish Council

Dear Mr Bigwood,

I have just learnt that it has been suggested that the villages of Fordcombe and Penshurst are split and each should have their own Parish Council. I also understand that tomorrow is the last day to lodge any points of view. I find this most extraordinary as we live in the centre of Fordcombe and have not seen any notices about this at all. Surely we should have been notified of this proposal by yourselves?

We have lived in the village for 38 years and have always been most satisfied with the way the Parish council is run and how wisely the Parish money has been spent.

If the Parishes were to be split, wouldn't this be a bad economic move, especially in the times we are in? We would have to pay two Parish clerks and how would the funds be split? Fordcombe is the smaller of the two villages and presumably would surely suffer for the lesser proportion of funding. Also the two Parishes are ecclesiastically linked and what a shame it would be to separate us in other ways.

I should be grateful if you could let me have some replies to my questions so that I can understand the logic behind this proposal.

Yours sincerely
Yvonne Fry (Mrs)

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 21:44
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: separation of parish councils

Hello we would like to make our feelings clear that we DO NOT want Penshurst and Fordcombe parishes to be split, they have been together for years and should remain this way.

Thankyou.

Louise and Steve Bull.

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 21:59
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Community Governance Review

For Mr Bigwood,

I have only just heard indirectly of this review. I am sure that the vast majority of parishioners do not know of it, for there have been no notification whatever direct to all voters. I note that comments have to be in by tomorrow, 24th February.

I understand that you have been lobbied by residents of Penshurst, in particular by those living in the village centre who object to the building of six new houses nearby. Largely arising from this, they wish to have the longstanding Civil parish of Penshurst, which has always included Fordcombe, separated into two separate parishes. If this were to be debated and voted on by all the residents of today's total Penshurst Parish (i.e. including ALL eligible to vote on the matter, when properly informed) and the decision were to be for the splitting of the age old relationship - so be it. But such a decision obviously must be taken when all have been fully briefed, which is most certainly not the case. This mirrors exactly the questions now being raised about the separation of Scotland from England.

John Sworder
Fordcombe

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 09:00
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Division of the parishes of Penshurst and Fordcombe

Dear Mr Bigwood,

I have just heard on the grapevine that the campaign group "Keep Penshurst Green" are pushing to split the parishes of Penshurst and Fordcombe. In my opinion this is a terrible idea as I don't think either village is large enough to warrant having its own parish council. It would also be hard to decide which parish the areas of Walters Green and Poundsbridge would fit into. In this age of austerity can we really justify increasing council costs by running two parish councils?

From what I understand the only reason why Keep Penshurst Green wish this idea to be considered is down to their opposition to the affordable housing project on Forge Field. An important issue such as this shouldn't be pushed forward on a whim over a single issue.

Kind regards,
Simon Broad

[REDACTED]

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 09:34
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Penshurst Parish Council

Dear Mr Bigwood

I have received notice just today of an application to you by some Penshurst village residents who see purpose in splitting the Parish Council administration of Fordcombe and Penshurst villages.

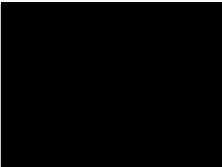
I was privileged to serve two terms on this Council as a Fordcombe member and appreciate that though the two villages have some substantially differing characteristics, most obviously how significant is the role of Penshurst Place Estate is to Penshurst life, there also are strong ties between the two villages, not least by those of the Church. From my experience of the Council I would conclude it is stronger and more effective by its broader representation, not so prone to be hijacked by single issue councillors, also I have no issue with the present Council's behaviour or decisions.

However, irrespective of the rights or wrongs of this argument is the disturbing situation that as a resident I was made aware of this proposal only by chance and am convinced relatively few other residents will have had knowledge of this proposal and hence the opportunity to express their views to you.

If you are to make any decision to change the status quo I would expect that to be on the basis of understanding the representative views of all of the present administrative area, I do not believe that presently this can be the case.

Yours faithfully

Colin Viccars



Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 10:06
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Community Governance Review

FAO Ian Bigwood,

RE: COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

I read in my local parish magazine that Sevenoaks District Council is about to conduct a review of the Parishes within the District. I have lived and worked within one of the Parishes, Penshurst and Fordcombe, for over 20 years and it has been brought to my attention that there are suggestions that the two villages should be divided into separate Parishes. I would like to express my opinion that I think the Parish of Penshurst and Fordcombe should remain as it is and that it is my belief that those proposing this change have a vested interest in the division.

The division is being suggested because of the proposed affordable housing development currently with the Sevenoaks District Council Planning department. This development is a contentious issue that has inflamed considerable debate and division within the Parish. It is probably not surprising that the majority of those opposed to the development live in the village of Penshurst whereas those generally in support of the development are from the village of Fordcombe. Those that are opposed to the development can afford to buy and live in Penshurst whereas those in support of the proposed development cannot and see the development as an opportunity to live in suitable housing in the Parish in which they choose to live. The division of the current Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish into separate village Parishes would signal the death knell for Fordcombe. I have lived all of my life in and around the Parish of Penshurst and Fordcombe and in that time I have seen the slow degeneration of both villages - Penshurst has lost 3 shops and Fordcombe one. If Penshurst and Fordcombe were to be split into separate Parishes it is my opinion that Fordcombe would suffer much more than Penshurst. Penshurst has more facilities - shop, post office, garage, pub, a tea room, the village hall, the school, the church and Penshurst Place - which all draw people to the village and help to keep it alive. Fordcombe only has the pub, church, village hall and school, not enough to maintain a strong community spirit which is so important to keep a village or Parish alive. By having both villages of Penshurst and Fordcombe joined in the same Parish there is a larger community which creates a stronger community spirit.

The division of the Parish would also reduce the amount of funding available to each village, again further increasing the danger of losing the community spirit. The Parish of Penshurst and Fordcombe has just constructed a children's playground at Fordcombe which is for the benefit of the whole Parish not just for those living in Fordcombe - a point I think is lost on those villagers living in Penshurst that are suggesting that there should be a division in the Parish.

The Parish of Penshurst and Fordcombe has to stay as it is. I see Penshurst and Fordcombe as big brother and little brother; one and the same family and always there for each other. If the Parish is divided, big brother Penshurst won't be there to look out for little brother Fordcombe, which will be a real shame.

I hope that my comments will be taken into consideration during the forthcoming Community Governance Review.

Kind regards,

Andy Stronghill



23 February 2012

Mr Ian Bigwood
Electoral Services Manager
Sevenoaks District Council

Dear Mr Bigwood,

Re. Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish Council

I write in response to the request for submissions to the Community Governance Review being conducted by Sevenoaks District Council.

Penshurst Place Estate covers 2,500 acres within the historic parish of Penshurst and Fordcombe, and is proud of the close links that have been established between estate and parish over the centuries. It would be true to say that Penshurst Place and the parish thrive on the close relationship, with the Estate being a major employer and landlord across the parish, as well as supporting both parish churches and both primary schools.

The elected parish council acts for the entire parish, and shares the same boundaries as the ecclesiastical parish. It has worked to the benefit of the parish for many years, and there has never been any indication that this has been anything but positive for the whole parish.

It has come to my attention that a number of individuals opposed to a proposed affordable housing development of six houses in Penshurst are attempting to use the current review to split the parish. Penshurst Place Estate would formally object to this proposal in the strongest possible terms. Any such proposal would be deeply damaging to proper governance and due diligence. It is precisely because the parish council is made up of councillors from both Penshurst and Fordcombe that the council can act as a check and balance across the whole parish. Remove this and the door would be open for those with vested interests to seek election to a smaller parish council and dictate policy.

It is telling that there has never, in the history of the parish council, been any previous indication of unhappiness with the make up of the council, until the current debate over affordable housing. The Estate believes that any attempt to split the parish is a cynical, invidious attempt to subvert local democracy and should be resisted at all costs.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Thomas
General Manager

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 10:27
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Community Governance Review

[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Bigwood

Although I had been aware of the move by some disaffected Penshurst village residents to try and split our Parish into two I was startled to discover yesterday that you could only accept views on their proposal until the end of today. I am sure a great number of people living in both our villages are unaware of this 'deadline' and would have welcomed the chance to support the status quo.

I have lived in the Parish for forty four years and in this time, and I am sure since its inception, the Parish Council has worked for the mutual benefit of both villages. The current brouhaha is not typical and the Parish Council should be retained in its current form.

Yours sincerely

Mavis Cass

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 10:44
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Fao Ian Bigwood

Dear Mr Bigwood,

I am writing in response to the Community Governance Review. I live in Penshurst and want to register my support for the current parish council made up of councillors from both Penshurst and Fordcombe villages. This arrangement serves the parish well as it fosters a sense of community between the two villages, as well ensuring that all aspects of parish life can be looked at both closely and also dispassionately. Any suggestion that the parish should be split would undermine local democracy and be hugely divisive to the community.

Kind regards

Oenone Thomas

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 10:57
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Penshurst Parish Council - Proposal to split the ward of Forcombe from the council.

For The attention Mr Alan Bigwood.

Dear Mr Bigwood it is with some surprise, that by word of mouth, I have become aware this morning of a proposal apparently being floated by the pressure group "Keep Penshurst Green" that the ward of Fordcombe should be split from Penshurst Parish Council and that today is the last day to make any observations. If all this is true I would be grateful if you could advise me how this issue has been or should be communicated to parishioners, I certainly was not aware of the issue. More importantly on the proposal I would like to make the following observations.

1. 100 plus years ago Fordcombe was within the Ecclesiastic parish of Penshurst and today Forcombe, though a separate parish, is within the joint benefice of Penshurst and shares the Rector and has a combined pattern of Church services. There is therefore much combined community interest (it is only 3 miles apart)
2. I have resided in the parish for 45 years and was a parish councillor in the previous term of office which concluded last year. The Penshurst parish council has functioned without problem to the mutual benefit of both Penshurst and Fordcombe villages over many years. ' IF IT IS NOT BROKEN DO NOT FIX IT '
3. I believe this proposal by the pressure group is motivated only by the fact that they think that the Parish Council might not have supported the affordable housing project if Fordcombe had not been represented on the Council. It has nothing to do with improving or benefiting the services to the parishioners in both villages. Indeed, if the split were to come about it would be to the detriment of both.

As a result of the above I strongly believe the proposal should be rejected.

Yours sincerely
Mike Gilbert

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 11:11
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish Council

Dear Mr. Bigwood,

I have heard that there are plans afoot to split the Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish Council into separate councils.

As a former Chairman of the Council, I cannot understand why this is advantageous to either village, particularly Penshurst who, I understand, is requesting the change.

Penshurst, rightly, has a majority on the Council and all that the good people of Penshurst have to do is to elect Councillors who share their interests.

Yours sincerely,

D. J Rose

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2012 11:21
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: att: Ian Bigwood

RE: Community Governance review

Dear Mr Bigwood,

I am writing to share my views on our local parish council. I feel that having our Parish of Peshurst tied in with Fordcombe works well in helping to keep a broad spectrum view on how our communities are looked after. Both communities are of a similar size but there tends to be a greater level of wealth in the Peshurst Parish, with a lightly lower economic level in Fordcombe and by combining the two gives a well balanced view for both communities.

I do think that there needs to be an improvement to how community related issues and information is passed onto all its residents, as at the moment information like the council news, including information on this review, is entrusted to a 'Parish Magazine' which is not viewed by all members of the community as it is a subscription or purchase only newsletter managed by residents of the village, and a community notice board.

The numbers of councillors works well, although when reading the parish meeting minutes there that there is a bias towards some people doing all the actual work and wonder whether the councillors should be more readily available for council duties during a working week and not just at the social community events. I also have personal concern for members of the council holding a strong bias against any proposed developments in the village and the fact that their views are regularly published in the parish magazine. This does not lend towards a feeling of balance or reliability for any current or future decision made by them on any planning application. Being a member of a group labelled as 'keep peshurst green' gives the impression that they will not support any development that may impact any green space at all within Peshurst is less than ideal as a councillor.

At least by having two parishes together there is a greater opportunity for a fair and democratic view on village life, the community and how it is managed.

Sincerely

Cory Furness
Peshurst Resident

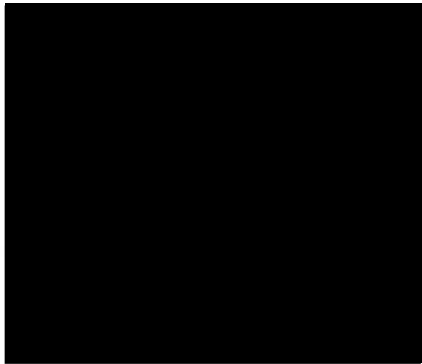
Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 February 2012 19:24
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Peshurst Parish Council

For the attention of Ian Bigwood

I noted, with some distaste, news in the local magazine suggesting a split of villages which form the Peshurst Parish Council. As a former member of this Council for some twenty years or more and at one time Chairman I strongly oppose this motion.

Helen Mackenzie,
[REDACTED]



22 February 2002

Dear Mr. Bigwood

I have only just heard about the proposal to split
the Pensthorpe Parish Council into two ^{separate} entities Pensthorpe and
Fordescale.

As a former Chairman of the Council I cannot
see any merit in the proposal. The present Council has
always in the past worked harmoniously together and
I see no reason why this should not continue

Yours sincerely





23. 2. 2012

Dear Sir,

I am writing as a Parishioner of over seventy years and a former Parish Council Chairman regarding the division of Penshurst & Fordcombe into separate parishes. The two villages have shared many community activities through out my life time and I see no reason why it should change on a whim of a few nymbs.

I feel very strong that if its not broken don't mend it.

I think my opinion is one that is shared by many of the elderly parishioners in this parish.

Yours sincerely


(MR. R. SELLINGS)

Ian Bigwood

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 February 2012 21:27
To: Electoral Registration
Subject: Penshurst and Fordcombe parish councils

Attention of Mr Ian Bigwood.

Dear Mr Bigwood,

As a past parish council member and past chairman of Penshurst and Fordcombe Parish Council I wish to express my disapproval of the suggested scheme to separate the two parishes .

The present well proven structure has worked for many years with elected members representing the combined parishes over many local issues.

I feel that any proposed change will only incur considerable expense at a time when funding in this respect is difficult to say the least.

I cannot visualise any advantage to either parish, so why change a system which has worked well for years to the advantage of the villages and the satisfaction of the majority.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Bastable.

[REDACTED]