

**P-05-1007 Merge Hope and Caergwrle into a two-member ward in the
County of Flintshire, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 6.10.20**

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6th November 2020

Dear Petitions Committee,

Thank you for email regarding Petition P-05-1007 Merge Hope and Caergwrle into a two member ward in the County of Flintshire.

I would like to thank the Minister for taking the time to respond to the comments made by the Committee following their last meeting.

I fully accept the Minister's decision not to pause the process of the review of electoral boundaries and to seek completion of the reviews so that Orders can come in force by the end of September 2021.

I also note, and accept, that Section 30 of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 (the Act) does reference:

“the desirability of not breaking local ties when fixing boundaries for electoral wards.”

I accept, that this does allow for community cohesion to be considered in defining ward boundaries.

My contention is, of course, that, in consideration of the issue of electoral wards in the southern part of Flintshire, the final recommendations do sever the historical and communities ties between the communities of Hope and Caergwrle. These ties are sacrificed to secure arrangements which ensure electoral parity in terms of numbers of voters per elected representative.

I recognise the immense importance of the principle of electoral parity, the importance of the Welsh Chartists' campaign which included the demand for “Equal Constituencies” and the inequalities associated with the era of Pocket Boroughs. I also would hope that there are cases where community ties have been recognised to be of determining significance and that their importance has been recognised so that they are not broken by electoral arrangements.

I am arguing that the case of Hope and Caergwrle should be viewed as one such exception and that these ties should be preserved in order to facilitate community resilience which will be of vital importance as we move to the recovery phase of the current pandemic.

Arguments in favour of maintaining the link between these two neighbouring villages have been put forward by Flintshire County Council, Hope Community Council, the Alyn and Deeside Conservative Association and a significant number of erudite individuals within the communities of Hope and Caergwrle. Their arguments have not been based upon what may be viewed as narrow political considerations: they have been based on what is genuinely best for the community as a whole.

I would therefore appeal to the Minister to use her discretion to ask the Commission to review this aspect of its recommendations. It may be that the closest fit, which maintains precious community ties, would be two-member wards for both Hope and Caergwrle and Llanfynydd and Treuddyn and the retention of a single member ward for Higher Kinnerton.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Healey', with a small flourish at the end.

David Healey