

Finchingfield Parish Council. Essex. 2022 Boundary Commission Review Submission

Whilst we appreciate the need from time to time to redraw parliamentary constituency boundaries to ensure an equality of size by constituents count, it needs to be workable on the ground and where possible to strengthen rather than weaken political representation.

Currently Finchingfield falls within the area of Braintree District Council. Residents pay their council tax to BDC and we have two Braintree district councillors (representing 4 other adjacent Braintree parishes) and one Essex county councillor.

Our MP for as long as anyone can remember has been the constituency MP for Braintree. Thus he is well known at district and county level and by the Braintree office of his political party. Conservative since 2005.

It was Labour prior to 2005 but the political persuasion of the MP makes no difference to the issue.

The effect of this boundary change would be to give us a Suffolk MP not known at either Braintree District Council, Essex County Council or the Braintree branch of his political party. It might be argued that he/she could develop such contacts but since they would need to maintain equivalent contacts in Suffolk, this would double the amount of time they would need to spend on developing local relationships.

The House of Commons library website states

“Parliamentary constituency boundaries are reviewed periodically. This is principally so that constituencies are altered occasionally to take account of changes in population. Changes are also made to reflect local government boundary changes, so that administrative boundaries coincide as much as possible.”

As a Parish Council with a responsibility for representing the interests of our residents, the above makes sense and we would support these goals. The Boundaries Commission should practice what government preaches.

The new north Essex to mid Suffolk parliamentary constituency proposed would be incredibly inefficient and effectively unworkable. It's a proposal designed either unwittingly, or deliberately to deprive Finchingfield and other affected Essex villages of political representation.

If boundary changes are needed to maintain parity in population, the parliamentary constituencies should always remain within one county. Ideally they would remain within the boundaries of one district. We appreciate that may be a difficult balance to achieve in every single case but emphatically, county boundaries should not be crossed except, to reflect the HOL website statement above, where local government administrative boundaries change.