

Dear Jane  
copy of my response to  
Corsham submission

Best wishes  
Margaret

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Mr John Watling  
Head of Electoral Services  
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16<sup>th</sup> September 2014

Dear Mr Watling

I have recently read the Corsham Town submission regarding their rationale for boundary changes and am incensed at the unsubstantiated statements they make

Most of the points they make are a good case for transferring some of the Rudloe houses from Corsham to Box, rather than the other way round. There appears to be no evidence to support the Corsham town Council's assertions.

**Corsham Town Comment:** Replace the arbitrary parish boundaries which dissect and divide Rudloe housing estate and would avoid people living in different parishes to their neighbours. T

**Response:** The majority of houses in Rudloe are within Box Parish Boundary (approx. 400 out of 500); there will be changes for fewer residents if the boundary change is reversed i.e. transferred from Rudloe to Box. This achieves the objective of replacing the arbitrary boundary between neighbours in Rudloe.

**Corsham Town Comment:** Put in place clearer settlement boundaries and identities for Corsham and Box, based on fixed features which are likely to remain in place for many years. The current proposal follows the established and recognised AONB and A365 as boundaries

**Response:** Current boundaries already offer clear boundaries. Moving the smaller number of houses to Box from Corsham will achieve the Corsham Town Council objective. Future housing development may well change the local scene, however many areas within England currently demonstrate that this is not an issue for councils. For major issues it is possible for Councils to communicate and work together.

**Corsham Town Comment:** Facilitate the future sustainable development and expansion of Corsham

**Response:** This comment is from the Corsham point of view. Whilst they may wish to increase their area, the impact of their ambitions on Box must be considered impartially. Any boundary change MUST ensure the sustainability of Box Parish. The 2010 census indicates a population in Corsham of c13, 000 and in Box of 3,500. . Rightly or wrongly I anticipate that decreasing the population of Box would adversely affect the efficiency of Box Parish Council with no compensatory gain for local residents. There is a proposal to include some of Chippenham within the Corsham population. This would assist in the expansion of Corsham. I am not commenting on the impact of that proposal.

**Corsham Town Comment:** Provide clearer and effective governance of Corsham and Box, with more inclusive participation, representation and leadership

**Response:** It is laudable that Corsham should aim to provide clear and effective governance for its own residents. To the best of my knowledge there is no evidence that Box Parish Council is failing in its governance. With regard to 'inclusive participation, representation and leadership', local residents already participate in the Box community rather than Corsham. Previous experience over many years has demonstrated a lack of participation by Corsham Town Council with those Rudloe Residents within their boundaries. My statement is based on experiences as a Trustee of Rudloe Community Centre and multiple appeals to Corsham Town Council for their participation and assistance, which never elicited a response of any sort.

**Corsham Town Comment** Offer more efficient, cost-effective and convenient delivery of council services at a local level.

**Response:** Increasing the size of a council decreases its convenient delivery and responsiveness to local needs as the needs of the majority overwhelm the needs of the minority. Reducing the population base of Box will reduce its opportunities for efficiency and effectiveness.

**Corsham Town Comment:** Enable a clear and effective Neighbourhood Plan to be produced for Corsham.

**Response:** moving the boundary will have no positive impact on Corsham Town Council's ability to produce a neighbourhood plan for Corsham. Quite the reverse, an increased population base will adversely affect the effective engagement of neighbourhood plans. Planning Portal Guidance indicates that neighbourhood plans should cover a maximum of 5,000 residents, therefore the proposed boundary changes will hinder, not aid, the production of a neighbourhood plan for Corsham.

**Corsham Town Comment:** Build a stronger, cohesive and more engaged Rudloe community which feels part of one place.

**Response:** where is the evidence? Many residents, me included, already feel part of the Rudloe/Box community. In fact the Box church has an outreach service in Rudloe; moving Rudloe into Corsham with decreases the cohesiveness in the Rudloe community.

**Corsham Town Comment** Improve democracy, electoral accountability and representation with increased elected representation.

**Response:** How does this work? Wouldn't increasing a population base dilate the views of the minority? Are the current democracy, electoral accountability and representation within Box unacceptable? Is it demonstrably evident in Corsham Town Council – with it' track record of making these proposals without involving the community it is annexing?

Having listened to debates and read documents I remain convinced that the proposed boundary move of Rudloe from Box to Corsham will not be to the advantage of Rudloes residents or Box Parish.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Rousell

