



Comisiwn Ffiniau
i Gymru

Boundary Commission
for Wales

Boundary Commission
for Wales

Public Hearings: Bangor

Transcript of the Public Hearing

Bangor Audio

Key

SP:	Stephen Phillips
AC:	Andrew Clements
SW:	Shereen Williams
CC:	Catherine Cracknell
GB	Glenys Baker
CJ:	Clive James
EW-J:	Elin Walker-Jones
LT:	Ludwig Thouple
JR:	John Rooney

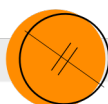
[Transcript starts at 00:00:00]

SP: My name's Stephen Phillips, I'm one of four Assistant Commissioners appointed to assist the Boundary Commission in this review. One of my colleagues, Andrew Clements, is sitting to my right and to my left is Shereen Williams, who's the Secretary to the Review.

We're here, or our role is, to assess the representations made and make recommendations to the Commissioners on any changes that we think appropriate to the initial proposals, which were published last September and the subject of a consultation period before Christmas last autumn. We're now in a secondary consultation period, which runs to the 30th of March, when the final public hearing will take place in Aberystwyth. This is the fourth of five hearings that we have conducted across Wales. We are essentially here, as I say, to, to analyse the evidence, not to debate the merits or otherwise of the initial proposals. Andrew, myself and the other two commissioners played no part in, in the drawing up of those proposals. We treat all representations equally, whether they're made written form, orally in English or Welsh and as I say, we will be completing the public hearings thi.. later this month and representations can be made online via the Commission website. It's my intention to conduct this hearing as informally as possible. We would ask speakers to come to the lectern to, you have ten minutes, after eight minutes you'll get a sort of two-minute warning from one of my colleagues, but we would, we would ask you to accept that points of clarification can be asked from, from either the panel or from members of the audience, but there aren't too many here this morning at the moment. So, if you could come to the lectern, state your name, the area you're from, not your address, but just, just the area so we, we can work out which particular area your representations focus on. And whether you're speaking in a personal capacity of you have some political or other affiliation. So, unless Shereen wants to add anything from her perspective, we'll move in.

[00:02:43]

SW: Okay. Good morning, bore da. Just to clarify, today's proceedings are being live-streamed and a recording is being made for transcription purposes. As you know, the UK Parliament has determined that each constitu, each constituency in the UK shall not have more than 105% and not less than 95% of the UK electoral quota, namely 73, 393 electors. The Commission launched its initial proposals in



September, and we received 1,211 representations during that period. The majority of the representations received were focussed on specific areas, here some of highlight, particularly for West Wales and for North Wales. The proposed Caerfyrddin constituency was broadly supported by the representations received, however, there were objections relating to the transfer of the community of Llangynor into the proposed Llanelli constituency. Many of the respondents argued that a community of Llangynor should be included in the Caerfyrddin constituency. Num, several, a significant number of representations opposed the proposals for Aberconwy and Dwyfor Meirionydd, the representations argued that Bangor, proposed to be in Aberconwy, sh.., should be wholly included within an Arfon constituency. The main objections to the proposed Wrexham constituency was due to the inclusion of Brymbo and Minera in a neighbouring constituency of Alyn and Deeside. Respondents argued that these communities should remain in Wrexham. There was support for the proposed Ceredigion Preseli constituency, though some representation received stated they would prefer a constituency that is wholly formed of the Pembrokeshire local authority. The main objections related to Delyn was due to its name, there was a preference for Clwyd East to be used instead. Several representations disagreed with the proposed Clwyd constituency. Arguments were varied, including how Llandrillo yn Rhos should be included in Clwyd instead of Llandrillo and Corwen, Ruthin, Prestatyn and Dyserth. Arguments against the proposed Alyn and Deeside and Delyn constituencies were mainly focussed on the inclusion of Fflint and Bagillt within Delyn and it was felt that they should be in the proposed Alyn and Deeside constituency.

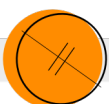
The Commissioner is looking forward to receiving more representations during this consultation period and will support the Assistant Commissioners in their recommendations for the revised proposals. We hope to publish our revised proposals in October this year. Diolch for listening and giving us your time today, I'll hand over the session back to the chair so he can begin inviting the speakers.

SP: Thank you, Shereen. The floor is yours.

CC: Basically, I'm, my name's Catherine Cracknell. I'm from the Alyn Deeside constituency, we happened to be away on holiday when the Wrexham one took place, so we've come over here. I'm speaking in a personal capacity, I am a member of the Conservative party, but I don't necessarily (laughter) support everything the party put in.

[00:05:39]

What my main issue is with Alyn and Deeside is the inclusion of those two wards from Wrexham into the Flintshire constituency. It makes no logical sense, I actually live on that side of Alyn and Deeside, I live in the ward of Treuddyn, which is, which is actually at the cusp of Delyn, Wrexham, and Deeside. We're right on the boundaries. My son even goes to Scouts in the Bwlchgwyn constituency, which is in Brymbo over the border. But there are genuinely no links. Flintshire, having, Alyn and Deeside comprising solely of Flintshire makes so much more logical sense. I think actually I've worked out and I don't know whether I've got the numbers here, but I think that, yeah, if we were to put those, if you were to put those two wards in from Wrexham, what you're doing is, you're saying in Alyn and Deeside only seven percent of the electors are going to be in Wrexham, 93% are going to be in



Flintshire, it doesn't give, they're never going to feel part of it. It's just not going to make logical sense. There are the schools, there's no, because of you dealing with county boundary, people don't cross those boundaries and there is no community links. My proposal was, is that we actually put those two wards... I, I, I've put it all in writing, so this is, this just literally follows what I submitted in writing, is that what we should be doing is putting those two wards back in Wrexham. Now I understand that there are knock-on effects, so I worked the whole proposal around; Alyn and Deeside becomes too small by, if we lose the two wards which are, what was it, Brymbo and Minera. But we can legitimately take two wards, which are the Northop and Northop Hall wards from Delyn and add them into Alyn and Deeside. They, there are strong community links, in fact, most people don't even know where the boundaries are at all in Flintshire, and it makes logical sense to add them in there. The knock-on effects for that are minimal because Delyn is over-represented, it, it's on the upper end of what's the allowable range. If we take those electors out of Delyn and put them into Alyn and Deeside, it balances out, you don't actually need to do any more changes in the Delyn constitu, Delyn proposal to allow that to make sense. Now it does actually have knock-on effects when you come down into Wrexham, because we've added extra in and, actually, in my proposal, I worked all that up of what wards we can take out, but I didn't understand really that's not an area I'm very familiar with, whether there would be an issue down in the, in the, which would it be? The Pant wards, but I think my main issue is, is that we really ought to be looking at keeping Flintshire and Deeside as all of Flintshire. That change is just going to cause unnecessary moving of electors and they don't feel part of the community, they're never going to... They feel part of Wrexham, they don't feel part of Flin, of, of Alyn and Deeside and it's just not going to be a sensi..., a a good, a good match. As I say, in the written proposal, I worked it all up, so it all works out number-wise as well, so it's not a random, I don't like this, I haven't got a com, a complete counterproposal, because it does work out that way. But the main objection is purely to keep those two wards in Wrexham, in Wrexham. They feel more part of Wrexham, they wa..., they're going to want to stay in Wrexham, we don't want them into Alyn and Deeside because it just muddies the water, and it makes life a lot simpler. I don't know if there's anything else really, I need to add to that.

SP: Thank you very much.

AC: Which were the two wards, I didn't quite catch what you said, sorry.

CC: The two wards would be the wards of Brymbo and Minera, which...

AC: No, I'm sorry, the ones that moved from..

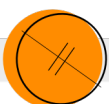
CC: The ones I want to move into, they would be the wards of...

SP: Northop and Northop Hall.

CC: Northop and Northop Hall and I've also..

[00:10:11]

AC: They're the ones in Delyn?



CC: Yes, they go from Delyn into... and I'm just trying to work out... I, I, I've got it there written with the numbers...

AC: Oh okay.

CC: That they actually, the.. . Okay, the proposed size of the Delyn constituency at the first round of the proposal was 76,074 electors. The removal of Northop and Northop Hall can be absorbed, the result in my proposed Delyn is 73,247 electors, which is within the param, parameters allowed. So we take those two out of Delyn, making Delyn that bit smaller, add them into Alyn and Deeside, but then we've pushed the two wards of Brymbo and Minera onto Wrexham and then that does have an effect in that we... . I actually did write it up here, I don't know whether you want me to read it out, of what we were proposing for the Wrexham? But my main concern is the Alyn and Deeside...

SP: No, that's fine.

CC: The nuance of this is subtle, but it's all written there in the proposal.

AC: Lovely, thank you.

SP: Thank you, very much.

CC: Okay.

AC: Any, anyone from the audience got any points for clarification?

SP: No, thank you very much indeed.

CC: Okay, thank you. I don't know whether you want, this is just a printout...

SP: Yes, that would be helpful actually.

CC: I have just got them out of order, so if you give me a second.

SW: That's your attendance sheet.

SP: Mmm?

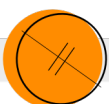
SW: Your attendance sheet.

CC: That was it in writing and that's... . You might want, the, the pages are not numbered so probably ought to staple them together.

AC: Okay, thank you.

[00:11:59]

SP: That's helpful.



AC: Thank you very much.

CC: Thank you.

SP: I think our next speaker is here, you're more than welcome, it's a bit early, if you would like to, or, or, did you sir want to speak as well or?

X: No, no I'm not going to.

SP: Okay, fine.

X: Is it okay if we head, head off now?

SP: Yes, that's fine. Thank you very much for attending.

CC: Thank you.

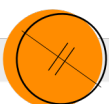
AC: Thank you.

SP: I won't go through all of the introductory spiel that you may have missed, but if you could come to the lectern, state your name, the area that you're from; not necessarily your address and whether you're speaking in a personal capacity of you have a, a, an organisational affiliation. The floor is yours.

GB: This is a representation by the Bay of Colwyn Town Council. My colleague and clerk, [Inaudible 00:12:56] Earley, couldn't come with me this morning. Good morning, my name's Councillor Mrs Glenys Baker, I've lived in Rhos on Sea, Llandrillo yn Rhos for the last ten years. Rhos on Sea is part of the geographical area covered by the Bay of Colwyn Council. I've been a town councillor on the said council for the last seven years, representing Rhos, Llandrillo yn Rhos ward. Dinerth and part of Rhiw ward town councils are also within Rhos on Sea.

00:13:31]

Thank you for inviting and allowing a representative from the town council, who I am representing today, to comment on the currently proposed parliamentary boundary changes affecting Clwyd West. The area covered by the Bay of Colwyn Coun..., Town Council is currently all within the Clwyd West parliamentary constituency. The current proposals will split, will split off the Rhos on Sea wards, placing them in the new Aberconwy constituency from the rest of the Bay of Colwyn Town Council wards, which would be located in the Clwyd constituency in future parliamentary elections. Rhos on Sea is now part of an uninterrupted built-up area forming part of the town of Colwyn Bay, which has a long uninterrupted historical associations with Rhos on Sea. The western boundary of the council area is formed by a stream. Excuse me, my Welsh isn't brilliant, the Afon Ganol, running through a green unbuild on area. This stream was the dividing line between the historic Denbighshire and Caernarfonshire and currently is boundary between the ceremonial counties of Clwyd and Gwynedd. If accepted, the proposal would break this stong, this longstanding geographical boundary. Culturally and socially, Colwyn Bay and Rhos on Sea are strongly intertwined with, for example, Colwyn Bay cricket club, rugby and sailing clubs, all located physically within Rhos on Sea. And the



Colwyn Bay Rotary Club holds its meetings in an ancient Rhos on Sea hostelry, the Rhos Fynach.

Town councillors discuss matters concerning local affairs throughout Colwyn Bay and are represented at another level on the Conwy County Borough Council. Including Rhos on Sea, irrespective of which ward they represent, these events, the social events are, Wales and Colwyn in Bloom, which we have won... Rhos on Sea and Colwyn Bay has won, 1940s weekends, Café, Cafes, Coffee and Classic Cars on the Prom, art and sculpture trails, intermingle from one area to the other. Markets, Christmas fairs, lighting and also the large Eirias sports arena used for evenings with, for example, Tom Jones, covering so many aspects of our homogenous seaside community. With no secondary schools in Rhos on Sea, the majority of the students of this age attend the schools in Colwyn Bay, again reinforcing our cultural links for the future. Breaking these in representation at parliamentary level seems incomprehensible and illogical, resulting in residents with geographical, social, cultural, and historical links in the same relatively small urban area being represented by different MPs. As a town council, we strongly argue that our small homogenous community of residents should be represented by a single MP. We therefore strongly object to the proposals and would ask the Commission to consider the alternative proposals put forward already into your office by the Rt Honourable David Jones, MP, and the MS Darren Millar.

I have copies of my speech to you and also Darren Millar's letter and David Jones' letter.

SP: Thank you very much.

GB: Okay.

SP: Could I just ask one point of clarification?

GB: Yes.

SP: I think I know the answer, but as you say, David Jones MP and Darren Millar and others have made a representation.

GB: Yes.

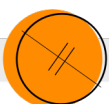
SP: And David Jones spoke at our meeting in Wrexham. Is it, will it be fair to summarise the position, ah the local perspective as priority would be to have Rhos on Sea and Colwyn Bay in the same constituency as opposed to one particular constituency?

GB: Yeah, yeah, to keep us together.

SP: Yes.

[00:18:10]

SP: Andrew? No? Thank you very much.



GB: Thank you very much.

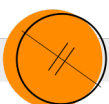
SP: Okay, our next speaker is not due until eleven o'clock, so I propose to adjourn the meeting until that time. Thank you very much.

SP: Good morning, I'm Steve Phillips, I'm one of the Assistant Commissioners, along with my colleague Andrew Clements to my right, who's, we're assessing the evidence from, from this hearing, which is the fourth one across Wales, one, one to go in Aberystwyth. Thank you for coming, you're very welcome. What we're asking you to do is to come to the lectern to make your, your presentation, you have ten minutes and my colleague over there will give you the two-minute warning. Just very briefly, our role is to assess all the evidence written or oral, English or Welsh, everything being treated equally and then make our recommendations to the Commissioners for any changes that we think are, are needed to the initial proposals. We will ask you to state your name, the area that you're from, not your address, but, but so we've an idea of which particular constituency or area you're referring to or any organisational affiliation. So, if you're speaking in a personal capacity, that's fine, but if you're representing an organisation, please state who they are. So, Mr James, the floor is yours, sir.

CJ: Right, good morning, thank you very much. Clive James, I live in Caernarfon, and I'm representing myself, no-one else. Like Karl Marx, I wouldn't join a club that would have me a member of it. My background is down one, two, three, four, it's just background and I think there's no point going over it, nothing to change. The only thing I would emphasise, some relevant experience, I referred to three reports from the sixties and I think they're still ground-breaking today, what is it, it's 60 years later? And I remember having a cuppa with Derek Senior, a minority report, part of a range of reports reviewing local government in England.

[00:20:46]

Right, first of all, perhaps unlike a lot of people, I'm not against Wales having fewer seats in Westminster. Because I believe in a democracy, every elected member should to all intents have the same number of people behind them, so that when they stand up to speak, they all represent approximately the same number of people. I'm aware that Arfon is the constituency with the smallest electorate, if I recall correctly, in Wales? I think that's a luxury, considering the size of the place, and yes, I've been friends with the Member for Arfon of the Senedd in Cardiff for many years. There are also a number of members in Westminster, and the size of the civil population across the UK is one of the highest of all the big Western European countries, and when you consider the Lords as well, it's ridiculous. You must also remember that the existence of the Welsh Government and the Welsh Senedd in Cardiff reduced the responsibilities of our MPs in Westminster. So I support the principle of the proposal, but what is disappointing, a scandal to all intents, is the gerrymandering. Gerry, nothing to do with Germans, Gerry was an officer or councillor in Chicago and he would change ward boundaries in the city so that his party, I don't remember whether he was a republican or a democrat, won more seats, and people opposed this, that is, poor people over here, rich people over there, and if the demographics changed, he changed the boundaries in favour of one party, his party.



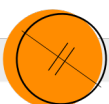
I'm trying to think, scratching my head, I've travelled all over these islands, so why is Anglesey still called an island today? If it's not an island, I assume there won't be a bridge, a third bridge, we'd just have cyclists, pedestrians going over the Menai bridge, and the top deck of the Britannia bridge would be closed, and we'd just go on a train or a boat, as in days gone by. Anglesey isn't in an archipelago like other islands, it came up as part of a dissertation at college in Durham, it's not like Shetland, I've been studying the reform of the Church of Scotland recently. The Isle of Wight is different, you have to get on a boat to get there, and no-one has talked about extending a pier ride out over the water to Portsmouth. But the impact of this is to limit choices on the mainland. If you don't leave it, unless you take some island from some seat somewhere, it puts limits on common sense.

There have also been complaints in Wales that the size of some particular seats, those in the south, the south-west, makes them too large to be served by one member. I haven't seen the statistics, but just looking at maps of the United Kingdom, seats in the west of Scotland, and certainly north Yorkshire and Cumbria, are also large. I was talking to a cousin who lives in Penrith, and she doesn't hear people complaining, our seat is too large. It's up to members to do their job, and in the digital age, it's easier not harder. I believe they are drawn in through highly paid staff to act, in some cases, more or less, like social workers.

I haven't gone over time yet. When I worked for Gwynedd Council, Gwynedd County Council and Caernarfonshire Council, I explored the proposed boundaries there. Each and every valley, comparing them with community council boundaries and so on. But as a desktop study of North Wales, because I've lived there, up in Caernarfon and Caerthor, since 1972. I lived with my parents through secondary school and through college in Bridgend and [unclear] afterwards, and my family comes from Swansea. I looked at three areas, just to get a snapshot, basically, and I could see, I needed to apply common sense regarding what we say about Bangor. One thing I'd like to know about Bangor, I have probably mentioned it, is where in the process of making an order, or whatever process it is, did British officialdom give Bangor, sorry, Anglesey, that special status? It was implemented by politicians, members of some commission, who changed it? Because I think this deserves a lot of publicity, and if I don't hear about it sooner rather than later, I will make a Freedom of Information request to find out when, and who was present, and were there minutes of the meeting where Anglesey was given this stupid status. Because again, over a fine cup of chocolate, I was thinking about two islands, the Isle of Thanet and the Isle of Grain in north Kent, where the Medway goes into the Thames, and they're similar in nature to Anglesey, there are bridges and a railway to the mainland, but they don't have special status in the UK review.

[00:27:13]

The third element, sorry, yes, the third element, it's important that I mention it, is names. Perhaps I'm now more interested in names, place names everywhere. I'm not a person who believes, as many do in Wales, that everything must be bilingual. I think there is room for some English names, Welsh names, depending on the situation, but I recommend that all names for constituencies for Westminster are in Welsh only. Welsh names suitable for non-Welsh speaking electors to pronounce and understand. The important thing is to avoid, it is to avoid misunderstanding



when you have more than one area with the same name; one example would be Waunfawr, near Caernarfon, people get confused, including members of Gwynedd County Council, about Waunfawr. There is confusion locally, and we don't need confusion. There are plenty of historical names around that serve our needs, being clear, simple, and easy for non-Welsh speakers to pronounce, who may have problems with names like Llechwedd, as I said; or people talk about names being incorrect, such as Talybont, Llandegai and Abergwyngregyn. Talybont could have been the name of a seat, who can say, in which ward are you standing [Unclear 00:28:59]. From Talybont, you know, Talybont, Llandegai and Abergwyngregyn. So I think it's important to have unique, simple names in Welsh only, and the Welsh Place-Name Society could help the commission. How much do I have left? Thank you very much.

SP: By all means finish.

CJ: Oh no, I have, I have.

SP: You have? Okay, thank you very much.

CJ: I've reached the bottom of point two and the last note, if you just want me to cover the two notes, comment on that and send in the script again, I'm happy to do so.

SP: Thank you.

CC: It was 'similar to chocolate'. (Laughter)

SP: Any points of clarification?

AC: No, thank you.

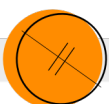
SP: No? Thank you very much.

CJ: Right, thank you very much.

SP: I think our next speaker is not until ten to two according to my list, so I propose that we adjourn until a quarter to two. Thank you very much.

[00:30:01]

SP: So, my name's Stephen Phillips, I'm one of the four Assistant Commissioners assisting with this review. Andrew Clements, my colleague to my right and the secretary, Shereen Williams, to my left. You're very welcome. What we're doing is assessing the written and oral evidence that we've been gathering. This is the fourth of five hearings across Wales. And we will be formulating some recommendations based on that evidence to the Commissioners once we've completed the round of hearings. We've got a secondary consultation period open at the moment, which closes on the 30th of March to coincide with the final hearing in Aberystwyth. We played no role in, in formulating the initial proposals, so we're independent in that regard, treating all representations, written, oral, English, Welsh as equal contributions, for which we are grateful. This afternoon, if, if we can invite our speakers to approach the lectern, state your name, the area that



you're from, not, not your address, we just want to have a, a sort of general geographical idea as it were from w, w, which part of the area you're representing, and whether you're speaking in a personal capacity or for and on behalf of an organisation or political party, or whatever.

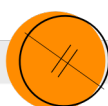
So, our next speaker is here, so the floor is yours.

EW-J: Thank you. I'm Elin Walker-Jones and I'm a city councillor and a county councillor for Glyder ward in Bangor, and I'm speaking as an individual and also as a Bangor city and county councillor.

Well, dear friends, I won't keep you long. I have a cry from the heart and just one issue to discuss this afternoon. You'll be familiar with what I'm saying, I'm sure that other people have said the same thing, but it's such an important issue, it's worth repeating. I endorse all the comments already made about the ridiculous plans to divide the community of the city of Bangor into two parts. I am a city and county councillor representing the electorate of Glyder ward within Bangor's city boundaries. It's a suburban ward, adjoining Menai on one side, the community of upper Bangor, with its diverse population of students and others, Dewi ward lies to the south, with communities such as Coed Mawr, and Pentir ward lies to the northwest. Everyone who lives in this area knows that Pentir ward includes village communities such as Glasinfryn, Caerhun and Pentir, in addition to the suburb of Penrhosgarnedd. Penrhosgarnedd is an integral part of the life of our city here in Bangor. The plans currently before you propose to divide our city, to divide the heart of our community. There is no natural boundary between Glyder ward and Pentir ward, and it is absurd and cruel to draw a line in this location. On paper, the boundary may seem straightforward, but it would divide communities. This was demonstrated clearly during the pandemic, when the city of Bangor was under lockdown and people were unable to cross the road, even on the Holyhead road, and unable go to the nearest shop without breaking lockdown conditions.

[00:34:00]

Under the current plans, the community of Penrhosgarnedd remains with the rest of Arfon in the proposed Dwyfor Meirionnydd constituency, and the community of the city of Bangor is included in the Aberconwy constituency. But Penrhosgarnedd is not a village community on the outskirts of Bangor, it's an integral part of the city's tapestry. You can't create a boundary and cut Penrhosgarnedd out of the city of Bangor. The people of Penrhosgarnedd go shopping in Bangor, the children of Penrhosgarnedd go to school in Bangor, many of them attend Ysgol y Garnedd, for example, which is within the city's boundaries. Clubs and enterprises in Bangor city meet the needs of Bangor's children and young people to socialise and learn new skills. The people of Penrhosgarnedd work in Bangor, socialise in Bangor and attend chapels in Bangor. Ysbyty Gwynedd is one of the main employers in Bangor for the people of Pentir ward, but under the current plans they would be in the constituency of Dwyfor Meirionnydd, while a large number of staff who live in Bangor would be in the proposed Aberconwy constituency. Ysbyty Gwynedd is the reason why so many people want to live in Bangor. A care home called Cae Garnedd is also located in Penrhosgarnedd, but most of its residents come from Bangor (laughter). In the minds of the people of Bangor, and in our services too, there is no boundary between Bangor and Penrhosgarnedd.



Under the current plans, Gwynedd Council would provide services to the people of Penrhosgarnedd in the Dwyfor Meirionnydd constituency, and to the people of Bangor in the Aberconwy constituency. What impact would this have on services and the excellent existing collaboration between councillors? The endless traffic on the Penrhos road, for example, is a huge problem for constituents in three wards and we are working together to try to solve this atrocious problem. How many more obstacles would we face if we had to deal with two constituencies, two councils and a boundary between one house and another on different sides of the road? The people of Bangor need representation by members who understand them. Aberconwy is a very different area, it is coastal and more anglicised. The people of Bangor are historically and traditionally aligned with Arfon, facing Anglesey. So I urge you to reconsider, to reconsider your plans and to keep the wards of the city of Bangor, including Penrhosgarnedd, together in one constituency, and to avoid dividing a united community, the community of the city of Bangor, into two. Thank you very much.

SP: Thank you very much. Questions, comments? No? Diolch.

EW-J: Diolch.

SP: Is, is Mr Thoupel here? Okay.

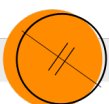
I don't know whether you heard the introduction, but, but I'm Stephen Phillips, one of the Assistant Commissioners chairing this afternoon. My colleague Andrew Clements to my right, Shereen Williams to my left, the secretary to the review. We're here to look at the evidence, gather evidence, put some recommendations once the public hearings across Wales have been completed at the end of the month. This is the fourth of five. You're more than welcome to approach the lectern, if you can state your name, the area you're from and whether you're representing an organisation or speaking in a personal capacity. We have ten minutes per speaker, my colleague there will give you the two-minute warning, if necessary, but the floor is yours, sir.

LT: Diolch yn fawr. My name is Ludwig Thoupel, I live in Glas Enfryn, which is outside the city of Bangor, and it falls under the proposed, sorry, it comes in the Pentir ward, which under the current proposals, falls under the, under the Dwyfor Meirionnydd constituency. So, can I start?

SP: Yes, sure.

[00:38:52]

LT: Okay. So, the point I'd like to make is Pentir ward counts as Bangor for postal address purposes, I live in Pentir, I work here, [Inaudible 00:39:02] in Bangor city. Most of my neighbours work in Bangor city as well. The residents of Pentir are connected by employment, social connections, as well as logistic services to the city of Bangor. So, I would say that it doesn't make much sense to separate Pentir from the city of Bangor and connect us with Penllŷn and Caernarfon, which always are, even though Caernarfon's fairly close to us, it's a different community and it's a different, in terms of connections, employment, social, it's further away from



Pentir than the city of Bangor, which we fall under. So, my proposal is that the Boundary Commission for Wales considers that the Pentir ward, the little ward of Pentir should be moved from the Dwyfor Meirionydd constituency to the proposed Aberconwy constituency. So, I had a look at the, at the electors in the spreadsheet that has been put online. So, Pentir ward has 2,159 electors and moving them from Dwyfor Meirionydd to Aberconwy, the electorate size of the proposed Aberconwy constituency would go from 69,909 to 72,068 and the electorate size of Dwyfor Meirionydd would go down from 71,962 to 69,803. Both constituencies would remain between the minimum and maximum electorate sizes of 69,724 and 77,662, but the electorate, the electors of Pentir will have representation that makes more sense to them at Westminster. Geographically, by being connected with, not just the city of Bangor, but the surrounding villages of Bethesda, Mynydd Llandegai and Tregarth. So, at, yeah, so we wouldn't be sort of sticking out in a different constituency. So, last but not least, if the entirety of Bangor, including Pentir ward, were included in this constituency, I would also propose that the name of the proposed constituency should be changed from Aberconwy to Conwy and Bangor or Conwy a Bangor in Welsh. Diolch yn fawr.

SP: Thank you very much. Any questions or points of clarification?

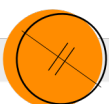
AC: No, thank you very much.

SP: No, thank you very much sir. Is there anyone from the floor who wishes to speak? If not, our next speaker is not due until round about five o'clock, so I will propose to adjourn the hearing. Thank you.

LT: Diolch.

[00:41:29]

SW: There we are. Prynawn da and welcome back to the afternoon session of the fourth public hearing for the Boundary Commission for Wales for the 2023 review. My name is Shereen Williams, and I am the secretary to the Boundary Commission for Wales, and I'll be chairing this part of the public hearing. The format, the format for today will be, we will invite our contributors to come up to the lectern, please introduce yourself, give us your name, the area that you live in. Please do not say your, tell us your address, just the area that you live in, if you're speaking as an individual or on behalf of a group, organisation, or political party. The session is being live-streamed and being recorded for transcription purposes, the Assistant Commissioners will then look through the evidence received in the first consultation period and the secondary consultation period, which is taking place right now. Evidence given, orally and written submissions will be given the same weight and in both in English and Welsh. They will then prepare a recommendations report to the Boundary Commissioners, who will then take them to consideration as they draft their revised proposals that's due to be published in October this year. You will be given ten minutes to give us your evidence, at the eight-minute mark, my colleague will give you a two-minute warning and at the ten-minute mark, I will ask you to wrap up and you'll have 30 seconds to wrap up. So, I'll invite our next speaker, Mr John Rooney to the lectern to give us his evidence.



JR:

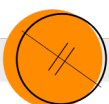
Right, thank you very much, diolch yn fawr. Prynawn da, good after, good afternoon to you. My name is John Rooney, I live in Deganwy, which is between Llandudno and Llandudno Junction, I should declare that I'm the Deputy Chair Political of the Aberconwy Branch of the Conservative Party, but the points I'm about to make are not necessarily those of the party, they are those of myself as an individual.

To begin with, I agree with the Boundary Commissioners objective of having constituencies of broadly similar voters. Votes throughout Wales as a general principle, should carry equal weight. I'm going to look at two constituencies, just to make that point. One being Arfon, which has 40,000 electors currently, and I believe that at the other end of the scale, there is a constituency in Cardiff, which is 74,000, which is a significant differential between those two, two constituencies. And one could understand electors in the Cardiff constituency thinking that they have to cast votes 74,000 and they will return one Westminster MP, very different from vot... electors in Arfon. And I've just done a comparison as well and my comparison is Greater Manchester. And if you look at Greater Manchester, the average across the constituencies there is 75,000 electors, so I think there's a very strong case for certainly increasing the numbers of, average number of electors per constituency across Wales as there's strong grounds for, for doing so.

My second point is looking at the number of elected representatives to the respective legislatures that we have in Wales, there are 60 Senedd members and 40 Westminster members currently, so that's a total of 100 elected representatives for those two legislatures. And that's, and that's to cover a population of 3.1 million. Again, I'm going to pick the Greater Manchester area as, as a comparison. You've got a very close population there, a fraction over 2.8 million. They have just 27 Westminster MPs, so on that comparison, there is a significant scope for reducing the number of Welsh Westminster MPs. Currently 40 and the proposal is to reduce them to 32. In my opinion, there's strong evidence for doing that and there would therefore concur with Boundary Commission's findings on that point.

[00:46:27]

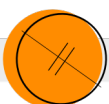
I've had a look at some of the other written representations that have been made and looked at the, particularly the objections that come from what I call the Bangor hinterland and, perhaps understandably, there are objections to the changes which are based either on language or community in that area. It's reasonable to describe them maybe as, you know, more Welsh community than other areas about North Wales and that, that is a fair comparison. However, I would make the point that, you know, all of us in Wales are a Welsh community and it's inappropriate to differentiate between one part and another part. We are all Welsh in Wales, together. Many of us speak Welsh, I do as a second language, and I have to use Welsh in, in work every day. I consider myself very much part and parcel of the fabric of, of Welsh society, but don't necessarily vote for a nationalist or other party from, from my own and I would not be alone in voting that, that way in these other, other parts of North Wales. There are electors currently in the Aberconwy constituency that could run the same argument or run the same, same objection. If you look at Llandudno in the north of the Aberconwy constituency and then take a town to the south, Llanrwst. The residents of Llanrwst would argue, fairly strongly and with some point, that they're a very different community to



Llandudno. But you have to have a constituency which all fits together. The radical proposals which are put forward distort the existing boundaries and there's a possibility that might that might be done to achieve a particular electoral result. You could understand that point being put forwards, but there is a term for that, and the term is gerrymandering and that is to achieve a result by altering the electoral boundaries so that a particular result could be achieved. That is not desirable at all, and the term actually developed in Northern Ireland, where there were significant historical problems that resulted from that, and I would strongly urge the Boundary Commission in their considerations to, to reject any of what are the more radical proposals which are put forwards.

And then turning my attention to the proposed Aberco, Aberconwy constituency, as I said at the start, it's entirely logical to balance up the number of electors or very closely between constituencies in Wales. Obviously, there's a tolerance about that, but the objective should be to have a narrow tolerance around an average that would apply across all constituencies in Wales. The proposal avoids breaking up Aberconwy, that is a desirable result, the constituency is working well at the moment and, what's being proposed is no more than an addition. In North Wales, there are natural links east and west, rather than north and south, so again, it's thoroughly practical to include Bangor as part of the proposals for the new Aberconwy constituency, and in any case, there, there is historical precedent here because up until 2010, Bangor was very definitely part of the, what was then the Conwy constituency, which is still largely the Aberconwy consistency, constituency. So, Bangor, historically, was part of the constituency which is, which is being proposed. As a declared Conservative, you would expect me to have some resistance about the inclusion of Bangor. Historically, Bangor has generally, and I emphasise generally, been Labour leaning, so you would think that I, I would naturally object to that. I'm not objecting to it, because I'm trying to come to the Boundary Commission with, applying a very even hand over this and, you know, accept possibly, (laughter) you know, an adverse effect from the Conservative point of view. So, nevertheless, and notwithstanding that, I'm agreeing with the proposal to include Bangor. There's just two qualifying points that I'd like to make, regarding the proposal. It does seem odd that Penrhosgarnedd in isolation, is excluded from Bangor and attached to the proposed....

[End of Transcription 00:52:17]





**Comisiwn Ffyniau
i Gymru**

**Boundary Commission
for Wales**

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