

Saltdean Residents' Association

*Founded in 1934 Embracing East and West Saltdean
(Currently over 700 members)*

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Andrew Ogden
Director of Law and Personnel
East Sussex County Council
County Hall
St Anne's Crescent
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4 March 2010

Dear Mr Ogden

Re: Administrative Boundary Review – Saltdean, Sussex

On the 31 May 2009 this Association wrote to you about its campaign to unify Saltdean within one local authority. As part of that campaign we want to ask that a survey or referendum be undertaken to see whether residents want to be within one authorities area and if so which one.

Since May the matter has been discussed by various councils. On the 9th December 2009 Brighton & Hove Cabinet resolved that:

- (1) *That Cabinet supports Saltdean Residents' Association's request for an administrative boundary review of the Saltdean area, and instructs officers to write to the Boundary Committee for England strongly supporting the request and asking for the review to be expedited; and*
- (2) *That Cabinet notes Saltdean Residents' Association's request for the council to conduct a local referendum or survey on the matter and agrees to conduct a survey at the appropriate time, with due regard to any guidance on the exercise of administrative boundary reviews published by the Boundary Committee for England (or successor body), and to the desirability of conducting any such survey in association with Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council.*
- (3) *That Cabinet reports their decision on (1) and (2) to Council, for information.*
- (4) *That Cabinet communicates their decision on (1) and (2) to Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council, also for information*

On the 10 February 2010 the Cabinet at Lewes District Council resolved:

That a local referendum or survey relating to the administrative boundary at Saltdean, as detailed in Report No 45/10, be conducted at the appropriate time, with due regard to any guidance on the exercise of administrative boundary reviews published by the Boundary Committee for England (or successor body), provided that the administration and the cost of such referendum/survey is shared equally between the Council, Brighton and Hove City Council and East Sussex County Council.

Lewes District Council had already recommended on the 14 July 2009:

That the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to write to the Saltdean Residents' Association and the Electoral Commission, advising that the Council supports the Association's request for a review of the administrative boundary of Lewes District Council and Brighton and Hove City Council in the area of Saltdean, subject to the understanding that it is very unlikely that the Commission will be in a position to review the external boundaries of local authorities in England until 2011-2012, as set out in paragraph 8 of Report No 138/09.

We are therefore approaching East Sussex County Council to:

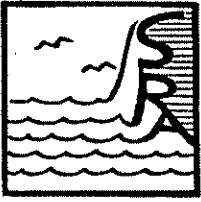
- Gain the support of the council in the aim to unify Saltdean within one council area and communicate this decision to the Boundary Committee.
- Ask that a survey be undertaken prior to the Boundary Committee starting their review.

Some of the arguments behind these requests are set out as an appendix to this letter. Can you say how East Sussex County Council wishes to deal with this matter. We are happy to provide any further information and would wish to attend any public meetings that consider this matter.

Yours sincerely

Laurence O'Connor
Saltdean Residents Association

Cc: Councillors L. Hyde, D. Smith & M. Mears for Brighton & Hove,
Councillors P. Howson & J. Livings for East Sussex,
Councillors J. Page & R Maskell for Lewes District,
Martin Duckworth, Town Clerk, Telscombe Town Council
Dr Des Turner, MP Brighton Kemptown



Appendix to letter dated 04.03.10

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Unification of Saltdean and the need for a survey of residents

The Saltdean Residents Association is campaigning for the unification of Saltdean.

A survey of all residents should be undertaken to see what the wishes of residents are on this issue.

1. Saltdean is split between Brighton and Hove City Council and Lewes District Council. The division is right down the main shopping street and this causes confusion and unnecessary bureaucracy. To sort out the most straightforward matter such as a pothole in the road or grass cutting can require the cooperation of up to four separate councils, Brighton & Hove, Lewes District, East Sussex and Telscombe Town.
2. This matter has been outstanding ever since Saltdean was created over 80 years ago and it is about time the town stopped being ignored in its requests for unification. The last request made after a full survey in 2001 undertaken by the SRA was ignored by all the councils and the Boundary Commission.
3. The Boundary Commission have now agreed to a review being undertaken and we would therefore ask that East Sussex County Council undertake a coordinated survey of all areas within Saltdean to see what the will of the community is. The pros and cons should be drawn up and presented to all residents. This survey would be in readiness for the review and would need to be coordinated with Brighton & Hove as well as Lewes District Council to ensure that a common approach is adopted. Both these councils have indicated their willingness to undertake a survey in collaboration with East Sussex.
4. Although Saltdean residents may want to be unified within one authority there is also the question of which one they would prefer. Thus any survey would need to cover both aspects.
5. There is a legitimate desire by the community of Saltdean to have this matter finally dealt with. The Association believes that the town should be treated as one town rather than having an arbitrary boundary, which historically was in place as a parish boundary before the town, was built in the 1920's and 1930's.
6. It is appreciated that there are issues in adjoining towns in respect of electoral wards and sizes of those wards but why should Saltdean not have a right to be treated as a community in its own right. The adjoining towns of Telscombe Cliffs and Rottingdean are able to enjoy a sense of completeness whilst Saltdean is not. This is simply not acceptable. After all Saltdean is one community with one postcode, one church but split right down the middle of the main shopping area.
7. There is a view that Saltdean needs a strong voice in the local community of towns and the present arrangements deny it that opportunity.

8. We would suggest that a survey be undertaken before the Boundary Committee commences its review and that it be organised jointly by all the local councils. We feel that although a council's support for a review is useful it does not show any real tangible commitment to resolving this issue. We are therefore requesting concerted action by all councils to show that this is an important issue.
9. We agree that there is no point in holding a survey now; it needs to be held nearer the time that the Boundary Committee undertakes their review. Costs could be shared between councils. Previously the SRA did its own survey but the Boundary Commission ignored it. We therefore feel that we need the official stamp that the councils will give to any referendum. In this way any final conclusion from it would have more weight than just a survey by a residents association.
10. So why is a survey so very important before the Boundary Committee undertake their own consultation exercise? The Boundary Committee has not undertaken such an administrative boundary review before and we know that its predecessor organisations had not done such a review for over 20 years. Their criteria for undertaking a review and the means by which a decision will be made are therefore not transparent and we simply do not know how they will undertake the whole thing. If there is a survey available to them beforehand which says that Saltdean residents want to be within one local authorities boundaries they will have a powerful piece of evidence and it would constitute a significant lever in favour of changing boundaries. We all know that there will inevitably be a drag weight of indifference and negativity towards a change from officialdom. A survey supporting a change would be a major argument against that. This is why the SRA feels that Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council need to actually show a definite commitment to this matter.
11. Of course we accept that the survey may conclude that people do not want to live in a unified Saltdean. They may want to live in a town that has a nonsensical boundary down the middle of a main shopping street rather than a much more sensible natural boundary such as at Telscombe Tye. They may want to continue living in a town where their voice on things like schooling, social services, the environment and all manner of other issues is split because their town is divided between different councils. That is their choice but they should be given the chance to decide that for themselves.
12. The Saltdean Residents Association therefore asks East Sussex County Council to provide support for an Administrative Boundary Review and asks that it agree in principle to the need for a survey, before the Boundary Committee review in 2011/12. It further asks that if it is agreed that a survey can be undertaken it begins the process of organising this with the others councils.

