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PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE KINGSTON CIVIL PARISH WITH RINGMORE

At the instigation of the Boundaries Commission, the South Hams Council have been looking at the Parish boundaries to see whether any changes could usefully be made, and they are under strong pressure from the Boundaries Commission to reduce the number of very small parishes in their district.

After looking at population figures they have decided that Kingston (pop. about 330) and Ringmore (pop. about 200) should be amalgamated as a Parish Council with two wards, each electing four councillors, instead of our present seven.

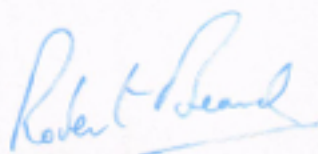
On paper, from a distance, this looks perfectly sensible. However, my own feelings are that these two villages are two separate and distinct communities with totally different characters. I believe that there is a very powerful feeling within both communities that they wish to retain their identity and that such an amalgamation simply would not work.

Apart from the fact that only one Parish Clerk would be needed instead of two, the savings in cost to the S.H.D.C. in administration would be minimal. There is a sizeable body of people in this village who give generously of their spare time to helping the community in all sorts of ways; like for instance, the operation of the Reading Room, the maintenance of the Playing Field, and the most outstanding example has been the restoration of our Church Bells.

Once this village loses its identity as a community in its own right, I do not believe that people will be nearly so keen to volunteer their services. This could well mean that some jobs which are now done for nothing, would have to be done by paid labour, and I think the standard of village facilities would drop, or the cost of providing them would rise considerably.

There is to be an open Parish Meeting at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 30 September, to discuss the matter, and I hope that all members of the village who are interested will attend. This will be followed by the monthly Parish Council Meeting.

If there is to be any hope of stopping this proposal, we must produce some well argued reasons why we do not want it and they must have the support of the whole village. A petition signed by as many householders in the Parish as possible, would be a help, and volunteers to undertake this project would be most welcome. The closing date for our reply to the S.H.D.C. is the 17th October.



A R Beard
Chairman Kingston Parish Council