

# Kentmere Parish Meeting 07 November 2011

## Proposed Boundary Changes

It has been suggested that Kentmere Parish Meeting might submit a view on the proposed Parliamentary Boundary changes. To stimulate discussion, two alternative suggestions are given below.

1. Max Biden is proposing five constituencies as follows:
  - a. Barrow & Millom
  - b. Carlisle & Solway
  - c. Westmorland & Lonsdale
  - d. Penrith & the Borders
  - e. Workington & Whitehaven

There is a map showing the proposed constituencies and a spreadsheet giving numbers for all the wards in the proposed constituencies. As these run to 6 pages, copies will be available at the Parish Meeting but if you want to see them beforehand, please contact me and I will send you a copy.

2. Below is a letter published in the Westmorland Gazette on 29 Sept 2011 giving another view.

*Westmorland Gazette - 29 Sept 2011.*

**18 LETTERS**  
the westmorlandgazette.co.uk/news

### Revamp plan would not be practical

So the Boundary Commission thinks Ambleside and Windermere should be in the same constituency as Whitehaven do they? (Gazette, September 15, 'Boundaries revamp will divide our communities').

On pure voter numbers alone, perhaps this makes sense, but geographically and socially it is "bonkers", as one Westmorland Gazette commentator rightly called it.

The Commission has the job of reducing the number of constituencies, and redefining boundaries so that they have a roughly equal number of voters. This means the number of constituencies in Cumbria will drop to five. On that score there can be no argument against the commission, so the status quo must end.

But constituencies also need to make a certain amount of socio-economic sense, and a combined Copeland/Windermere constituency fails the test.

Representation of voters is a very personal thing, and while the internet has improved access to MPs, there is no substitute for face-to-face meetings in many circumstances. So a constituency where the two parts are connected only by one road over Wrynose and Hardknott passes is pretty impractical. Where does the MP hold his surgery? Cockley Beck?

I have outlined a possible Cumbria of five parliamentary constituencies, designed roughly as follows: -

- Urban constituency 1 - Carlisle, Wigton and Dalston.
- Urban Constituency 2 - West Cumbria.
- Urban Constituency 3 - The Furness and Millom peninsulars
- Rural Constituency 1 - Penrith and Rural North Cumbria.
- Rural Constituency 2 - Kendal, Windermere and South Cumbria.

Now that still leaves room for debate about exactly where the boundaries might lie. But what it should do is give most communities the sort of representation at Westminster that they need.

The problems of the next few years look like being economic ones, with the environment closely tied in to them. The economic, environmental and social problems of Whitehaven are very different to those of Windermere, but pretty similar to those of Workington or Maryport.

It does mean that West Cumbria would only be represented by one MP instead of two, but is that so much of a disaster? There is only one FE College and one Enterprise Agency representing the whole of West Cumbria, so why not one MP?

This is not an attempt to attack either the Labour party or the voters of West Cumbria. In fact, if the constituencies were to be reorganised in that manner, I