

## **Sub 16/113**

Ballintue,  
Ballynacargy  
Co. Westmeath

6<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

Constituency Commission,  
Room 1.65,  
Custom House,  
Dublin 1.

It is clear that the purpose of the Constituency Commission is to ensure that the PR-STV operates as intended, with the underlying purpose of ensuring that political parties are returned to Dáil Eireann in proportion to their share of the National Vote.

It is widely accepted by psephologists among others that the size of constituencies is a variable which impacts upon proportionality - The larger the number of seats per constituency the greater the prospect of voter's preference being proportionately reflected in the allocation of seats between the parties. That being so the number of five seat constituencies would predominate and recourse to three and four seaters would be a departure from the norm, justified by special circumstances.

That of course is not the case. Over the decades the reverse has happened and the five seat constituency is becoming an exception rather than the rule. The corollary is that the number of three seat constituencies has been increasing, thereby diluting the proportionality effect of the system as a whole.

One notes the Commission Report of 2012, and in particular Page 13 thereof. "In complying with the Constitutional requirements and terms of reference, the Commission endeavoured to suit the constituency size to the population and particular circumstances of each locality. It is not a constitutional or statutory criterion that the arrangement of constituencies should seek to achieve any particular number of a balance between the three consisting sizes"

It is submitted that a further objective of the Commission is to strive to retain and maintain the physical integrity of the County structure and in this respect in the context of Westmeath, part of the Longford-Westmeath Constituency; the current configuration has miserably failed. As a previous boundary commission in 2002 severed a significant area of North Westmeath comprising a number of communities purely for electoral convenience, and transferred them into Meath West Constituency in order to constitute same as a three seater.

Huge geographical areas such as Castlepollard, Delvin, Clonmellon, Collinstown and Fore, comprising well in excess of 6,000 people on the electoral register were moved involuntary. I am seeking to have these people and their communities, returned to the Longford-Westmeath

Constituency, because they have a clear affinity with the geographical entity of Westmeath, from an administrative, cultural and sporting perspective. Their local municipal administrative area is Mullingar, and they are served locally from Council offices in Castlepollard. They are clearly attached to the County Council Administrative area, with budgetary allocation, expenditure and income administered from the Headquarters of Westmeath County Council, based in Mullingar.

From the perspective of sporting loyalty, Westmeath people are intensely devoted to their own County, and the inhabitants of these areas have expressed by way of signed petitions submitted to this Commission, their absolute desire and wish to be reintegrated from an electoral perspective back into Westmeath.

I hereby request that the Commission take cognisance of the petitions furnished from these people which I wholeheartedly endorse and support and return these areas to their natural home of the Lake County of Westmeath. Many of the constituents of these areas which have been allocated to Meath West, rely and depend upon elected representatives from Longford-Westmeath, as they are clearly well acquainted with them, and it is their expressed wish to be re-integrated back into the Longford-Westmeath Constituency for electoral purposes.

Yours sincerely,

WILLIE PENROSE TD