

R.A.Couchman
High View,
Mill End,
Clavering,
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Essex.
CB11 4RP

Mr. Phillip Hardy,
Election Services Manager.
Uttlesford District Council,
London Road,
Saffron Walden,
Essex.
CB11 4ER

26th. October, 2021.

Dear Mr. Hardy,

**Community Governance Review of Parishes 2021.
Consultation Process – Stage 2**

I am a member of the Clavering Parish Council having been elected at the last contested election in 2007 when there were 15 candidates for 11 places.

I was amazed to see on the report from our District Councillor, that the "Clavering Parish Council's application to reduce it's number of councillors by 2 to 9 came before UDC's GAP Committee recently and was agreed".

No such request has been made by this Parish Council. No report or mention of this reduction, or the consultation has been discussed by this Council.

I am strongly against this change and the way in which it has occurred without the involvement of Parishioners or the Parish Council. Whilst there may be a population disparity with other Parishes, Clavering looks likely to expand considerable over the next few years. When parishioners complain to me about the actions, or inactions, of the Council I suggest to them that they apply to join. The reduction in numbers reduces that opportunity.

Whilst it has not been possible to fill vacant positions on the council for some years, there are reasons for this.

New Councillors have been co-opted from time to time, two more recent resigning fairly quickly. Others have applied for co-option but have been rejected by the Council or thought better of it. One prospective candidate went to the trouble of collecting 10 signatures to seek an election to fill a casual vacancy but was advised not to proceed.

Perhaps internal difficulties over the years contributed to this.
There have been six changes of Clerk in the past few years.
There have been acrimonious disputes between the Council and various parishioners.
Frequently and regularly the public (parishioners) have been excluded from meetings.
Code of conduct complaints have been made against Councillors.

It is my earnest hope that the next election will attract sufficient candidates to hold a contested election and I believe that 11 places will make that more attractive to candidates.

I urge the Committee to rethink it's decision or at least widen the consultation more directly to Parishioners and Parish Councils.

Please pass my comments to the Committee.

Yours Sincerely,

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