[IC – 010]

General comments on the Commission's initial proposals

Some of the proposed changes seem to be disjointed, with no thought given to community cohesion, and which could adversely effect smaller towns. Whilst I appreciate that some changes need to be made to balance voter numbers, some of these proposals seem to be little more than simple 'jig-saw puzzling', with no recognition of the ties that have bound communities together in a distinct, in a coherent and natural way over long periods of time. It also appears that the proposed boundaries have been manipulated to increase Nationalist representation and reduce Unionist representation.

Comments on the Commission's initial proposal for the constituency of Belfast East

The commission should look further West to increase the voter numbers in this constituency rather than having it sprawling out to Comber.

Comments on the Commission's initial proposal for the constituency of Belfast North

Saintfield has never looked towards South Belfast as a natural 'home' and could lose its natural and warm rural feel, and sense of community if moved into the proposed constituency. It would be best served to remain in Strangford rather than to be dragged into Belfast and suffer the indignity of sectarianism which is prevalent in Belfast's very being.

Comments on the Commission's initial proposal for the constituency of South Down

It would be very unjust if Ballynahinch were to be removed from its current position in the Strangford constituency. There is no natural affiliation to South Down and, having been moved into NM&D Council area in the reshuffle of Councils, it seems apparent that because Ballynahinch is viewed by the Nationalist controlled Council as Unionist, the town is denied it's fair share of funding and services. With the proposed changes I would fear that the town would suffer further impediment and would effectively start to die. It would also see Ballynahinch being included in South Down, whilst geography being further North than Downpatrick, which is to be hitched to the bottom of the proposed Strangford and Quoile constituency. It would be better that Ballynahinch, Crossgar and Drumaness are in Strangford to increase the voters in Strangford, and to reduce the numbers in South Down.