

Baile Caneen,
Glens,
Dingle,
Co.kerry.

10.2.2008

Secretary,
Electoral Area Boundary Committee,
Room 203,
Custom house,
Dublin 1.

Re: Dingle Electoral Boundary (Co. Kerry)

I have spoken to many people through out West Kerry and all of whom I have spoken to are vigorously opposed to a change of any sort in the Electoral area, as it will result in poorer representation and a divided electoral area. West Kerry Geographically has very clear and obvious boundaries – any change will have negative and unpopular results. I am aware that the preference is to have between 4 – 7 councillors per electoral area but that you also have the power to recommend 3 councillors.

This submission sets out the rational behind retaining the Dingle Electoral Area boundary under a number of headings.

1.Population.

The total population of Co. Kerry in 2006 was 140,000approx. 27 councillors represent the county, therefore an average of 5,000 approximately per councillor.

The population of the Dingle Electoral area in 2006 was 15,000 approx. Three councillors represent this area – an average of 5,000 approx. Therefore without any doubt we are in line with the County average and certainly within National recommendations.

2.Neighbourhood focal point.

The main focal point for the Dingle Electoral area is Dingle/An Daingean. Enlarging or dividing the current electoral area could lead to a new /rival focal point and will have devastating effects and will divide the community and peninsula. The majority of the population on the peninsula travel to Dingle for work, leisure, and the many services provided there such as banks, insurance brokers, doctors, dentists, optical services, secondary schools, library, council offices etc. Adjusting this boundary would be an unnatural act, which would sever community ties; shatter a century old established focal point.

3.Preserving Natural Communities.

The Dingle electoral area is a peripheral peninsula with a disperse population .It could well be described as an island as we have little to do with areas such as Tralee, Castleisland (which is further away by road than Tralee) Killarney or Killorglin.We are a totally independent entity. Given our geographical formation there is only one logical natural community and that is of the entire peninsula. An increase in the electoral area would result in us being swamped with issues from much larger population areas with which we have no physical, social or economic

connection. As a community we are very satisfied with the current set up. Any representation, which we now have, would be lost to the gain and advantage of larger towns. As part of this natural community it is worth noting that we all currently reside within the South Kerry Constituency. Don't forget also that the Dingle Peninsula is famous and well recognised for its Irish Language of which there are according to CSO figures 6,500 native speakers. Dividing or increasing the electoral area will have nothing but negative cultural and linguistical results for the community . Simply drawing lines on maps for population, mathematical and convenience purposes will clearly not work in this case.

4.Geographical Size


The physical size of the Dingle Electoral area is already expanded beyond its natural hinterland. It takes an hour and a half to travel from one end of the electoral area to the other end. Over ten years ago we had a most unsatisfactory case where we the Dingle Electoral Area included Castleisland Town. There was an elected councillor there whom I shall not name but it is well known that he never seen or represented the people of the peninsula simply for two reasons 1. The journey time to Dingle is a three hour round trip and the person in question felt that this was too long a trip for him 2. He was assured of re-election on each occasion as he had a sufficient voting population in the Castleisland area and could rely on getting the majority of votes/transfers from that region.

To increase the number of Councillors to four would require a substantial increase in the geographical area due to the low-density dispersed population. We are very happy with the current system as all three councillors can be seen throughout the electoral area on a regular basis. The alternative to which I have alluded to above and which is a most unsatisfactory situation is to have more councillors but who will only specialise and concentrate on certain areas. Ideally all electoral areas should have three councillors. Who says that 4 –7 councillors will represent you better? The clear facts of the matter are that there is more choice but worse and unfamiliar representation. Maintaining the Status quo, will enable local representatives to continue their work and shared vision for the area.

In conclusion I would like to say that based on Population figures, our well established Focal Point of Dingle, The Natural community of West Kerry , and the already extended size of the electoral area that the status quo should remain. We as a people on the peninsula are more than happy with the current situation and that any change will only have negative effects.

Trusting that you will give this matter full, proper and fair consideration,

Is mise le meas,



Jonathan Fitzgerald