

Acres,  
Annascaul,  
Co. Kerry.  
04/03/2008.

Re: Dingle Electoral Area, Co. Kerry.

Dear Secretary,

I am writing to you as a self employed agricultural consultant, farmer and resident of the Dingle electoral area. I have read and noted with interest the terms of reference for your committee and having so done I have come to the conclusion that there is a compelling case for maintaining the three seat Dingle local electoral area.

In making my case I refer to your terms of reference.

1. CSO figures for 2006 puts the population of Kerry at just under 140,000. There are presently 27 councillors, that's an average of about 5200 head of population per councillor. The population of the West Kerry area is almost 14,500 giving an average of over 4825 head of population per councillor. This is within the recommended 10% variance figure for individual local authority representation. There is no reason to believe that population growth figures for the electoral area will not remain in line with other parts of the county given the presence of the towns of Dingle and Milltown and vibrant villages such as Ballyferriter, Ventry, Cloghane, Castlegregory, Annascaul, Camp and Castlemaine. The proximity of Milltown, Castlegregory, Annascaul, Camp and Castlemaine to the hub towns of Tralee and Killarney will insure that with proper planning, adequate services and a good road network that the population of these towns and villages will continue to grow into the future.
2. The main focal point for the Dingle Electoral area is the town of Dingle and to a lesser extent the town of Milltown. Extending the boundary of the electoral area to the east or south would immediately move you into the big urban areas of Tralee, Killarney and Killorglin, one of the fastest growing towns in Kerry. With the building of a new secondary school, community hospital, the development of the mart site, the imminent arrival of LIDL and the expansion of the Garvey Group of supermarkets of their Dingle based operation, the town of Dingle will continue to act as the main focal point for the electoral area.
3. People develop and come together as communities because of what they have in common. The GAA an organisation which has withstood the test of time in our communities has recognised this and when organising clubs into district based leagues and teams in the county championship has seen fit to keep clubs in the Dingle Electoral area together under the West and Mid Kerry flags. This has worked very well down through the years and strong community bonds have developed as a result. The towns and villages of the Dingle electoral area are rural based with little if any industry unlike the towns of Tralee, Killarney and Killorglin. Dingle and Milltown have developed as a result of farming, fishing and tourism and maintain an attractive "rural identity" as a result. Even the

education of our children has centred on excellent secondary schools in Castlegregory, Dingle and Milltown. I would estimate that 95% of the children of the electoral area would be educated in these schools. It is around these institutions of sport and education etc. that our communities come together and develop.

4. To increase the number of councillors in the Dingle electoral area would necessitate extending the boundaries beyond their existing limits. This would result in attempting to incorporate parts of the hinterlands of the towns of Tralee, Killarney and Killorglin into the Dingle Electoral area. This would neither serve the interests of the people of the Dingle Electoral area or the interests of the people of the towns of Tralee, Killarney and Killorglin. It would be safe to say that the people of the Dingle Electoral area have more in common with the people of the Iveragh peninsula than they do with the inhabitants of the aforementioned towns. However the existence of "Dingle Bay" would rule out an amalgamation with the Iveragh peninsula with whom we have no connections whatsoever and the geographic size of the area would be "disproportionately large".

We should learn from our mistakes. Castleisland was once part of the Dingle electoral area. At the time the town of Castleisland would have enough votes to elect a councillor. He knew that if he played his cards right and took care of the needs of the town of Castleisland that he would be re-elected. To get to Dingle he would have had to drive through Tralee which was ~~not~~<sup>of</sup> part of his electoral area. Suffice to say he was rarely if ever seen in Dingle. I would not recognise that man if I met him in Tralee today or if I saw his picture on a poster. As it stands the current councillors would have to get votes from one end of the electoral area to the next in order to get re-elected. This can only be good for democracy and for the development of the area. If anything the existence of this three seater has strengthened the bonds that exist in the electoral area. Last time out an independent candidate came close to being elected in the Dingle electoral area, this goes to show that any party or independent could make it in a three seater.

The geographical entity that is the Dingle electoral area has a growing community which has strong cultural, sporting, community and family links and any effort to divide or lump the area into another area would be detrimental to the long term development of the area. I would plead with the honourable and learned members of your committee to leave well enough alone because if it isn't broken why fix it.

Mise le meas,



Pat O' Shea