

~~Kilkenny Council~~
Slieverue,
Co. Kilkenny.
12 January 2016.

The Secretariat, Waterford Boundary Review,
c/o Kilkenny County Council,
County Hall,
John Street,
Kilkenny.

Dear Boundary Commission Members,

I am writing to you to express my total opposition to any plan to incorporate any part of South Kilkenny into Waterford. I live within the area under consideration and I am vehemently opposed to the plan for a number of reasons, just some of which I outline below.

In the world we currently live in we see images of wars and aggression beamed into our sitting rooms every evening and we hope that we will see this aggression replaced peace and understanding in the future. The key failing with aggression is a lack of understanding and empathy to the opinions of those considered to be on the opposing side. Forcing terms and conditions on people will never lead to effective and positive action and will not solve any issues. There is enough aggression and unrest in the world without needlessly creating more in our local area, instead we should be striving to work together as our local authorities have been in the recent past.

In the situation under consideration the language is inflammatory in the first instance. This is touted as the Waterford Boundary Review when in fact the boundary is a dual one, however the complete emphasis is placed on one side, straightaway the people of Kilkenny are being told that they don't matter and yet theirs is the potential loss. The outcome, should the boundary be changed as proposed, will wipe out the traditions of the people of South Kilkenny in one go. The inhabitants of rural Kilkenny would be expected to become inhabitants of urban Waterford, to go from Leinster people to Munster people in a moment, this is totally unacceptable and defies all logic, in actual fact it is an impossible task which will do nothing but create tension. I do not understand how any person thinks that forcing people into such a move can be considered an aid effective local government.

It is my firm belief that forcing people in this regard will only create ineffective local government, will create negative social situations, create suspicion and aggression within the community, will have a detrimental impact on various services across the county of Kilkenny and will wipe out the traditions and culture of the area. I direct you to the text of the UNESCO *Hangzhou Declaration: Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies* which 'reminds us of the inextricable link between culture, sustainable development and lasting peace.'

In my personal situation I am at the very least the 6th generation to live in the exact location of my home but my family ancestry and history is lost to records because it stretches so far back in this place. My family story is the story of Kilkenny; family members have fought for this county and country, given their lives in service to literally feed citizens of the area, been involved in education, politics, and intellectual research to help develop the social and cultural identity of the society which I am privileged to live in. My ancestors have for many generations worked the soil of south Kilkenny, and now lie at rest beneath that same soil. With connections such as these I hope you can begin to understand the depth of feeling with which I write this letter.

It is my firm desire that the next generations of my family be able to continue to live in county Kilkenny. I despair at a situation where the notions of a handful can put the very traditions and culture of thousands of people in peril. The foundations of our State rest on history, traditions and culture but also on our people and their actions, the ideals of neighborliness, positive community spirit and the notion of working together to find solutions to our problems. This is what our local authorities have been doing in the past and have been doing very effectively in recent times. Many examples of such collaboration has been listed both by Kilkenny County Council in their response to the proposal and in the thousands of submissions already received and so I will not list them here also. I strongly believe that the path to develop the south-east is through the effective co-operation of the current local authorities without impacting on any county boundary.

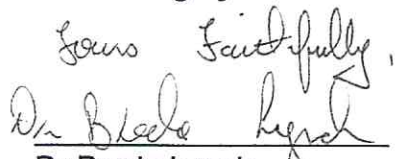
I refer again to the diverse cultural heritage which exists in the region. The people of South Kilkenny and Waterford City are different culturally, they are rural people versus city people, they have different accents, different colloquialisms, different histories, a different culture, and a different ethnicity which gives each community a unique culture and a unique way of expressing those respective cultures. In fact these differences are protected under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; I draw your attention to the text of the 2013 edition of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions which Ireland has adopted and where the first line states that 'In a world changing quickly, the diversity of cultural expressions is a pre-condition for vibrant and dynamic cultural sectors ... This is why it must be protected and promoted. The document continues with the following pronouncements: Cooperation - from the global to the local level - is fundamental ... cultural diversity ... is indispensable for peace and security at the national, local and international levels. Celebrating the importance of cultural diversity for the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other universally recognized instruments ... Recognizing the importance of traditional knowledge as a source of intangible and material wealth, and in particular the knowledge systems of indigenous peoples ... as well as the need for its protection and promotion ... recognizing the need to take measures to protect the diversity of cultural expressions, including their contents, especially in situations where cultural expressions may be threatened by the possibility of extinction or serious impairment ... recalling that linguistic diversity is a fundamental element of cultural diversity ... taking into account the importance of the vitality of cultures ... for persons to disseminate and distribute their traditional cultural expressions and to have access thereto, so as to benefit from their own development [Ireland] adopts this Convention'

The document, adopted by Ireland at its ratification in 2005 clearly enshrines a persons right to the access to, the development of, and dissemination of their cultural heritage. Recommending the extension of the boundary of Waterford City into South Kilkenny would certainly negatively impact on the cultural identity of the native people of

South Kilkenny and would therefore, in my opinion, be in breach of both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

The boundary extension is unnecessary and unwanted by the overwhelming proportion of the population within the area under consideration in Kilkenny, most particularly the native population. The proposal appears to be completely lacking in any substance or actual concrete future plan. The proposal seems to be beneath the level of interest of most of the citizens of Waterford City. No public representative of Waterford has even attended the public meetings in Kilkenny or featured on any of the local radio shows, and so appear uninterested in the proposal and by extension are completely uninterested in the opinions of the people under threat. This certainly does not bode well for any kind of effective local government if the extension were to go ahead.

I urge you, the members of the Boundary Commission, to reject this proposal.

Yours Faithfully,

Dr Breda Lynch

