

"St. Patrick's" N.S.
Strangsmills, Kilmacow, Co. Kilkenny, Ireland.
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Roll no. 16875g
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To whom it may concern

My name is Valerie Bhreathnach and I am the principal of the above school. I have taught here since 1985. When I started teaching here this side of the parish i.e. Strangsmills/Dunkitt was very cut off from the rest of the parish and the school operated as a separate entity. It was a "them" and "us" situation, as is the case in many parishes which are divided by main roads etc. Over the years many organisations in the parish have worked tirelessly and very successfully to bring both sides of the parish together in a meaningful way. The schools work together at every opportunity. Children from both sides of the parish come together for schools hurling, camogie and football, First Holy Communion, Confession and Confirmation, amongst other things. We built a community hall in Strangsmills which is used for various different activities availed of by all parishioners. It also has mass every weekend. This mass is attended by people from both "sides" of the parish. There is a fantastic sense of community and belonging here of which we are very proud.

I feel that the proposed boundary extension would be very detrimental to the community that we have built up over the years. It would put part of the parish into a different county and different province - a no-man's land. A sense of identity and belonging is hugely important to people no matter where you're from. We're no different. The proposed extension has absolutely nothing to offer the people of this area and will have nothing but a very negative and divisive impact on the area. It would be very irresponsible of us not to oppose it.

Having listened to and read arguments both for and against I feel that the boundary extension is something that does not need to happen. Kilkenny and Waterford are already working together on initiatives. There is no reason why this cooperation cannot continue and would result in a win win situation for all counties, instead of destroying small rural communities. I feel that it is very irresponsible of politicians to stir up this old hornet's nest again, causing unnecessary tension and bad feeling amongst neighbours and neighbouring counties.

The one positive thing about this is that it has made our community stronger and reinforced our sense of identity, community and county pride. Every man, woman and child in South East Kilkenny is determined that it will stay that way....South East KILKENNY.

SOUTH KILKENNY SAYS "NO!"

Yours sincerely,

Valerie Bhreathnach (Principal)

