

Return of The Battle of Titans

Almost like turning the clock back 20 years....Ex Councillors Jess Hibbert and Martin Curtis slugging it out of Facebook™with a sprinkling of public just to jigger things along....

So what has caused this last spat between the two old adversaries.

Apparently Jess H has found out that there is a Govt White Paper (not seen myself) that maybe will change the numbers of local authorities, amalgamate some, do away with others....

Pile in the public on FB™ who are expressing their personal opinions and not always aware of the history or the facts.

So this is what we have at the moment in Cambridgeshire/Fenland/Whittlesey.

A Local Council (Whittlesey Town Council)
A District Council (Fenland District Council)
A County Council (Cambs County Council)
A Combined Authority (Peterborough & Cambridge CA)
A National Government (Parliament)

5 layers of democracy far - far too many

This subject has been looked at before – still it is high time to slim down this bureaucratic mess....

For every argument to join with Peterborough there is a counter argument, I am just stating the facts....and yes I do have a preference which I will reveal at the end.

Over the past 20+ years, having attending hundreds of meetings as 'a community activist and member of the public' I have met lot of local politicians.
In the case of Peterborough – I have met Ex leaders Peach and Celeste and current Leader John Holdich OBE – All have ask me the same question.

Why doesn't Whittlesey join up with Peterborough.

Answer – Our local politicians (Whittlesey) no affinity to join with Peterborough and 'they' have stated in the past 'they' do not wish to loose their identity.

Those on Facebook™ are somewhat 'confused' if they don't think how close we are 'connected' to Peterborough.

1/ Over 80% of those who live in Whittlesey – work in or nearby Peterborough.

2/ All major supermarkets are based in Peterborough – yes I know some shop in Ramsey/March or Wisbech.

3/ Higher education is predominantly based in Peterborough.

4/ All major leisure/nightlife is based in Peterborough,

5/ The close proximity of Peterborough is getting closer and closer by the year.

6/ Our hospital is based in Peterborough as is all the support services.

7/ Major transport – be at A1 or Railway the main hub/connection is Peterborough

Now for some of the negatives joining up with Peterborough (a unitary authority)

All areas can claim they are a forgotten part of their local County Council

Will local taxes/rate go up – who knows – given the current situation.

Peterborough has plenty of its own ‘financial challenges’ – as does Cambs CC

Some say parking charges will come in... that is not the end of the world given the for ever complaints about parking in Whittlesey/Fenland (The current Fenland Council stated no car park fees will be introduced)

I doubt very much if the rest of ‘remote’ Fenland would go with The Peterborough Effect....

Surely employment should be the major driving factor – again the current situation makes it very risky – but up until the COVID pandemic – Peterborough was the 3rd largest growth area in the Country.

We should be looking at giving the next generation opportunities – and that I am afraid will be in Peterborough or Cambridge.

So – Do I want to loose my identity being a ‘Fenman’ – No

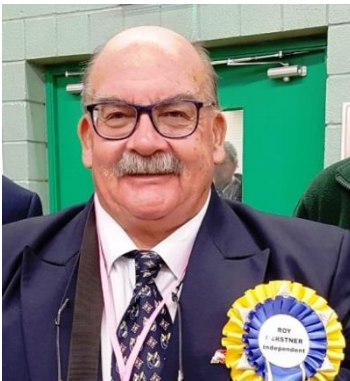
Do I want a future for our young people – Yes

So I want to get rid of layers of bureaucracy – Yes

Do I want to join up with Peterborough – No not under the current regime – I believe that we could well be coming a complete circle and end up with One County Council (Gillian Beasley is Chief Exec of both Peterborough & Cambs Councils).

If and that’s a Big If - Whittlesey was to given more powers/financial control/planning controls under a new regime – then I and some others would probably go with the idea.

We have been ‘promised’ localism’ before – up until now – haven’t seen much of it....



I am Roy Gerstner. The Independent Councillor for **St Mary’s Ward South - Whittlesey Town Council.**

Primarily I report on Council meetings & business to keep the electorate informed on both what I am actively involved with and in part other interests that I believe the electorate within Whittlesey & District may also wish to be informed. My Web-Blog is community based and I report and comment on many other subjects.

I occasionally make a mistake and am more than happy to correct this if it pointed out to me.

If you have any issues or concerns outside of the St Mary’s Ward South, please contact your own local Councillor. If you contact me – I am more than happy to forward onto them. If you have a generic issue or wish to make a comment I am more than happy to publish or promote any community events – (subject to meeting publishing criteria)