

18.016

A Chara,

I have lived in my current dwelling since 1983. It is located in Baltrasna, Ashbourne, Co Meath.

Just as the address shows my home and my neighbours homes are located in the Ashbourne Area.

The area is geographically adjoining the Ashbourne "town area", and is geographically linked in it's location and in the minds of the local residents to Ashbourne.

It is just 2.0 km from my home to the centre of Ashbourne, and it is just 2.6 km from the centre of our area (Baltrasna), to the centre of the town of Ashbourne.

The distance from the centre of our Community to the centre of Ratoath is 6.5 km. and there is a "natural" barrier between our area and Ratoath in the form of the new M2 motorway, which is located to the west of our neighbourhood. There is no geographical or community link or draw from our neighbourhood towards Ratoath, and there never has been any such link or draw. The community in our area identifies with Ashbourne and generally identifies Ratoath as "the next village over" the road. We look towards Ashbourne as part of this community.

Our kids attended primary and secondary school in Ashbourne. (with the Ashbourne Community School being only 1.5 km away.

Our commercial centre was always, and still is, Ashbourne.

The focus of our social, sporting, religious and political interests or involvements are concentrated and focused in & on Ashbourne.

Our local sporting Clubs include (Donaghmore)/Ashbourne GAA Club, Ashbourne United Football Club, Ashbourne Rugby Club, Ashbourne Golf Club, Ashbourne Badminton Club, Ashbourne Baseball Club, Ashbourne Cricket Club, Ashbourne Archery Club, etc. etc.

Our local social clubs include Ashbourne Boy Scouts, Ashbourne Girl Guides, Ashbourne Tidy Towns, Ashbourne Nature Watch, Ashbourne Church Choir, Ashbourne & District Community Council, Ashbourne Lions Club, Ashbourne Players, Ashbourne Youth Cafe, Ashbourne Men's Shed, Ashbourne & District Senior Citizens, Ashbourne Hill Walkers, Ashbourne ICA, etc., etc.

Local voluntary services to the community are provided by organisations such as Ashbourne First Responders, Ashbourne Red Cross, Ashbourne Meals on Wheels, Ashbourne Chapter of St Vincent de Paul, Ashbourne Chamber of Commerce, Ashbourne South Community Text Alert, Ashbourne & District Community Council, etc., etc.

Our community is located in Ashbourne Parish, our community is served by Ashbourne Garda Station, and by Ashbourne Fire Service, etc., etc.

Hopefully you will understand that this neighbourhood is effectively a neighbourhood of Ashbourne. Every fibre of our community is entangled with Ashbourne, and we wish to continue to be part of Ashbourne in the electoral system.

However, in the previous revision of electoral boundaries our community was "reassigned/moved" from its natural link with our local town of Ashbourne to be linked with the next nearest village of Ratoath, 6.5 km away and on the far side of the M2 motorway.

Ratoath is a fine village, (or town), and has an equally strong community as Ashbourne. However, our neighbourhood does not look towards Ratoath for its identity, it looks to Ashbourne. The evidence of this is clear every day as many of my neighbours walk into Ashbourne to carry out daily "chores" or to be involved in their selected or preferred

activities with the various Clubs and Organisations in Ashbourne. The distance from the Centre of Ashbourne to the Centre of our neighbourhood is only 2.6 km., whereas the centre of Ratoath is located a distance of 6.4 km away to the west of our area.

We therefore ask that our neighbourhood be "put back" into the Ashbourne Municipal District where it was previously for many many years. The relevant townlands are Baltrasna & Harlockstown, and these are identified as Small Area Sa2017_167078024 in the relevant documents. The number of residents involved in the area referred to is only 377 and therefore the effect of this number on the mathematics or representations for either area is effectively insignificant and irrelevant. The action of returning Small Area Sa2017_167078024 to its natural position in the Ashbourne Municipal Area would increase the number of "Population Per Member" in the Ashbourne Area by 63 people, and would reduce the corresponding number in the Ratoath Area by 54 people. Neither number is significant in the overall scheme of things and the change does not alter the number of "Members" that would be allocated to either area.

The main effect of the requested change of returning our area to its natural position as a "suburb of Ashbourne" in the Ashbourne Municipal Area would be to give back to our community its voice in Local Government.

I set out below the figures as presented in the "Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee Report 2013", showing the effect of the change on the Ashbourne & Ratoath areas.

Minor adjustment:	No of Members	Current Populations	Current Population Per Member	Proposed Populations	Proposed Population P Member
Ashbourne	6	27,164	4,527	27,541	4,590
Ratoath	7	31,894	4,556	31,517	4,502
Kells	7	31,534	4,505	31,534	4,505
Navan	7	32,934	4,705	32,934	4,705
Laytown-Bettystown	7	31,557	4,508	31,557	4,508
Trim	6	29,052	4,842	29,052	4,842
Total	40	184,135		184,135	

In conclusion I ask that your Committee take serious account of the information presented above, and take the correct decision to return our area to its natural identity as a suburb of Ashbourne, to the Ashbourne Municipal Area.

If you have any questions, or require any clarification on any of the above information, please feel free to revert.

Is mise, le meas,

Thomas Keenan