

From: KEARNS, Alicia <alicia.kearns.mp@parliament.uk>
Sent: 25 February 2025 12:47
Subject: Save Rutland Petition

Good afternoon,

I hope you are well. As you will be aware the Government is proposing to abolish two-tier authorities and small unitary counties like Rutland County Council to create larger unitary county councils with a minimum of 500,000 people. I held two public meetings and have been contacted by hundreds of residents to discuss what the proposals mean for Rutland.

My public meetings to discuss the future of Rutland have made clear that we Rutlanders will not give up our identity or be stripped of it, and that protecting our ceremonial status must be a red-line in negotiations around Local Government Re-Organisation.

Having made representations to the Minister for Local Government, who would give no commitments, I have written to the Deputy Prime Minister imploring her to protect our ceremonial status. In the meantime, I have come together with our communities and pubs to launch a #SaveRutland Petition urging the Government to protect the ceremonial county of Rutland. The petition must have wet signatures only – we are not permitted to submit an online petition to Parliament. I will present the petition in Parliament at the end of March to tie-in with the first Government deadline for proposals to be sent by Local Authorities back to them.

I am asking you to please support the campaign and sign our petition, you can:

- Visit participating pubs to sign the petition. You can find a list of pubs [here](#).
- Sign the petition at my constituency office: 6 Market Street, Oakham, LE15 6DY.
- Print the PDF version using [this link](#) and return by hand or post to constituency office in Oakham.
- Collect copies of the petition from my office (or print them) and take them to your local shop, café or community building or event and collect as many signatures as you can.

I'd be very grateful if you could encourage all pubs in your parish if they haven't done so already to sign up to host the petition by emailing alicia.kearns.mp@parliament.uk. If you'd also like a Save Rutland poster or banner to display in your village hall or noticeboard, please do get in touch and I will post one out to you.

Last week I set out six tests to fight Rutland's corner and shape negotiations by Rutland County Council with Leicestershire County Council, the Leicestershire District Councils and the Government. These were formed based on my discussions with residents. We must stand up for ourselves and what is best for Rutland. I have also encouraged the Council to consider all possible options outside of Leicestershire.

The six tests are as follows:

1. **Ceremonial County Protected:** Rutland has to maintain its ceremonial county status. The Government must provide legislative or legal assurances – not just verbal commitments - to protect our ongoing ceremonial county status.
2. **No Single Unitary:** If Rutland's unitary is dismantled by the Government, or the Council continues to seek re-organisation, Rutland must not join one unitary covering the whole of Leicestershire. There should be at least two unitary councils serving Leicestershire and Rutland e.g. Rutland and Leicestershire East, or Rutland and North Leicestershire.

3. **Council Tax Equalisation:** Rutland's Council Tax must be reduced down in the event of re-organisation, and therefore equalised, to the same as all residents within any new County Council we join.
4. **Rutland Consequential, Fair Share:** A mandate or formally agreed mechanism should be created in the constitution of any new County Council, which calculates an equitable allocation of Government funds for Rutland to ensure fair division of future funding.
5. **Smaller Council Wards:** Rutland currently has 27 County Councillors. Proposals for a single Leicestershire Unitary Council would reduce this number to just three. A two-unitary model would still see Rutland represented by only six Councillors. Any council re-organisation or devolution must ensure smaller council wards to ensure democratic accountability and keep democracy closer to communities.
6. **Rutland in the Name of the Council:** As a Ceremonial County, and given our distinct identity, Rutland must be in the name of any new Council serving Rutlanders.

I hope Rutland County Council will adopt these six tests as they formulate their response to future negotiations, and ensure the Council approaches discussions from a position of clarity and strength. My greatest concern is the view that we must just go along with the process as it will be done to us anyway. We may be a small county, but we are a fiercely independent one. Central Government's approach may seem immutable, but we have a voice that should be heard and respected in these negotiations. I would welcome your thoughts on the six tests.

As I covered at my public meeting, there is a significant risk we will lose our ceremonial status. I have concluded we need to present a petition in Parliament to urge Government to legislatively or legally protect us. We have under a month to make clear to Government we are Rutlanders, we intend to stay as such and put a stop to the Government stripping us of our identity.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch and I will do all I can to answer them or explain the process.

All my best to you and yours -

Alicia

Alicia Kearns MP
Member of Parliament for Rutland and Stamford
Shadow National Security and Safeguarding Minister
Sign up to my constituency update [here](#)



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