



## **CORNISH CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION**

**14<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

### ***Good news for the Cornish from ONS about 2021 Census – it's all about data!***

**Long-term census campaigner and Cornish Constitutional Convention chair, Bert Biscoe, welcomes ONS White Paper.**

One the face of it the news from the Office for National Statistics is disappointing in not providing a tick box for Cornish on the paper forms for the 2021 census. However, the campaign has been incredibly successful in achieving a fundamental change in the ethos of the census. We should all take a moment to toast our success. Because substantial and lasting change has been secured.

In 2001 the ONS team in Cornwall was negative about Cornish responses. In 2011, it was neutral, bordering on mild tolerance. In 2021 we have:

*'A strong local marketing and communications campaign. Additional local field support will also be on hand to enable all those who wish to self-identify as being of any particular identity, including Cornish, to know how to do so'.*

John Pullinger, Head of Census, to Sarah Newton

The most important change, which we have led the way in achieving, is that, for the first time, ONS will produce an analytical report on the population who identify as Cornish, and how their health, housing, work and education differs from those who do not identify as Cornish.

Mr Pullinger goes on to say:

'We are also developing an on-line flexible dissemination system where users can specify data they need and define their own queries to build tables'.

This means that any body can use census data freely. It is a true democratisation of the census and its all-important data. If the Cornish had not mounted the campaign for a tick-box, this would not have occurred. It is a major achievement.

The Convention does not accept that the Cornish are a minority confined to Cornwall. In 2011 0.1% of the population of London self-identified as 'Cornish'. Plymouth, in particular, has a substantial Cornish minority amongst its population. However, with the commitment to strong marketing, freely useable data, and the commitment to comparative tables, we have taken a major step forward.

Thanks to all those who have contributed to the campaign.

The next steps must be

- to ensure that the work in the run-up to 2021 reaches and encourages people who are not on-line to participate confidently;

- to ensure that public bodies incorporate the new data and comparative information into their policy-making and, by so-doing, build the principles of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities into the delivery of public services;
- to develop the 2031 campaign to develop a dispersed approach to developing the national census which enables regions and nations to develop their own forms, questions and policy objectives in a manner which allows the diversity of identities to find quality data to support cultural, economic, social, linguistic and spiritual freedom within the bonds of a national framework.

So, thanks to all who have worked so tirelessly – including Cornwall’s former and present MPs, Cornwall Council and in particular Adam Paynter, Leader, and Kate Kennally, CEO. Now, we must come together to ensure that the opportunity is taken full advantage of.

Bert Biscoe

Chair, Cornish Constitutional Convention

**ENDS**

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