

## 1957 suggestions for a Farnhill/Kildwick merger

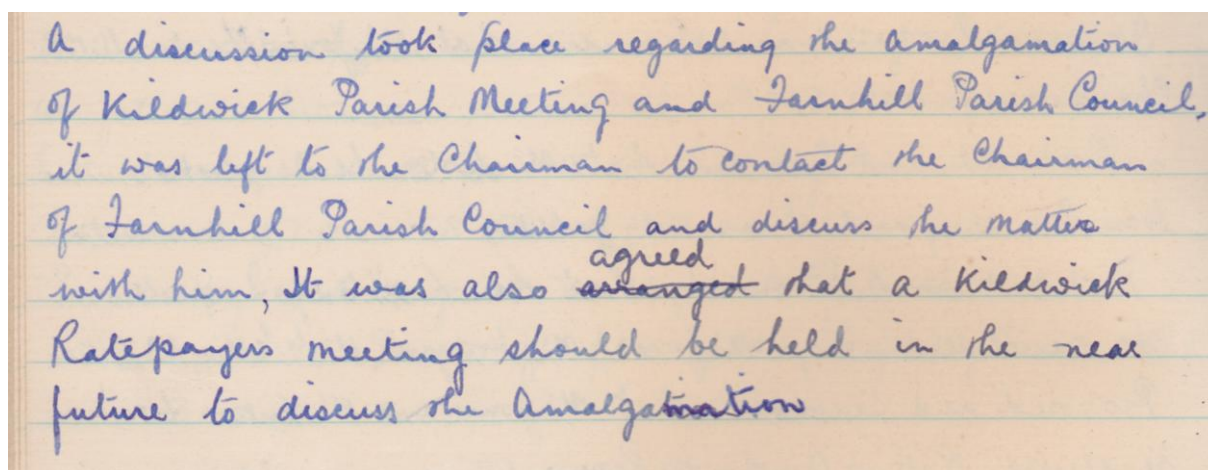
Farnhill and Kildwick have always been two different places. The distinction goes back at least as far as the Domesday Book, where they have separate entries and the two manors are recorded as being owned by different people.

Over the years, however, the development of the two villages – largely the expansion of Farnhill – has brought them closer and closer together, so that they are now like twins: separate, but with very close connections.

In 1957 things were almost taken a stage further, with the idea floated that the two villages should merge. It was a suggestion that arose more or less by accident and was torpedoed almost immediately.

### Kildwick Parish Meeting – 13th March 1957

The minutes of the annual Kildwick Parish Meeting record:



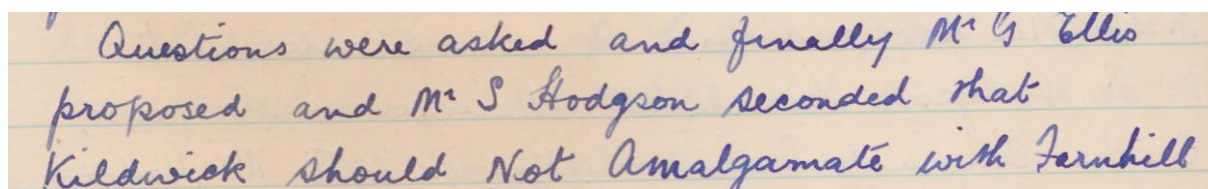
A discussion took place regarding the amalgamation of Kildwick Parish Meeting and Farnhill Parish Council, it was left to the Chairman to contact the Chairman of Farnhill Parish Council and discuss the matter with him, It was also <sup>agreed</sup> ~~arranged~~ that a Kildwick Ratepayers meeting should be held in the near future to discuss the Amalgamation

### Farnhill Parish Council meeting – April 1957

The possible merger was fully discussed at the April meeting of Farnhill Parish Council, with the Kildwick Chairman present. The Farnhill council agreed in principle to the merger.

### Special (Kildwick) Ratepayers Meeting – May 8th 1957

The special ratepayers' meeting to discuss the merger, promised in March, took place early in May. There were 18 ratepayers present.



Questions were asked and finally Mr G Ellis proposed and Mr S Hodgson seconded that Kildwick should Not Amalgamate with Farnhill

The vote against any amalgamation was carried by 16 to nil.

The newspaper report of meeting showed that people in Kildwick were unsure as to who had first suggested the merger and why ?

# KILDWICK DOES NOT WANT UNION WITH FARNHILL

## Who started rumour about merger?

WHO started the rumour that the twin villages of Kildwick and Farnhill were to amalgamate? This question was asked at a meeting of ratepayers at Kildwick last night.

No one knew the answer.

It was revealed that the subject had been touched on vaguely in a discussion at Kildwick's parish meeting in March (Kildwick has no Parish Council).

The Farnhill Parish Council heard of the discussion, took it as a suggestion, and discussed it thoroughly at their April meeting—agreeing as a Council to amalgamation.

### NOTHING TO GAIN

Last night's meeting was then called to discuss what was thought to be a Farnhill suggestion. And the 20 ratepayers of Kildwick's 157 population decided that they did not want an amalgamation.

The Kildwick ratepayers agreed

that Kildwick had nothing to gain at all from a union with Farnhill (population 612).

Although several facilities in the villages were used jointly—the church and school are in Kildwick and the chapel and institute in Farnhill—it was felt that the villages were not really in close contact, even though many people did not know where the boundary really was.

The Rev. S. A. Selby (Vicar of Kildwick Parish Church) was strongly against union. He thought it would be a great mistake to lose their individuality.

But as the meeting closed people were still arguing about who really started the rumour.

## Farnhill's response

The response by Farnhill Parish Council to the merger plans being rejected seems to have been one of total bemusement.



# KILDWICK AND FARNHILL

## More about their relationship

That the original idea of a Kildwick-Farnhill merger came from Kildwick was claimed at the monthly meeting of the Farnhill Parish Council on Wednesday evening. "I think we should clear this business up," said Coun. W. Dawson. "They began a discussion through the chairman of their meeting and from there we took it up. They asked to come with us."

Coun. D. Sugden supported, saying: "The surprise to us has been that the original discussion came from Kildwick, and yet they ended the affair."

What the chairman, Mr. D. Marklew, could not understand were remarks that had been made at last week's meeting regarding the relationship of the twin villages—that the people of the villages were not closely interwoven. "Our interests are so near together," he said, "and I do not agree with what was said at that meeting. We share the Institute and bus shelter, for example."

Coun. S. B. Kirk, of Aireside, Cononley, said he was very surprised to learn that there was any difference at all between Kildwick and Farnhill, while Coun. N. Webb was of the opinion that the two were together in everything but for local government.

So that was the end of the matter.

But the rejection of the idea of a merger would have consequences 17 years later.

## A 1974 “what if ...”

In 1974 there was a major reorganisation of local government. Locally, this saw the creation of Bradford Metropolitan Council and Craven District Council; with these two councils taking control of the rural villages either side of the border between North and West Yorkshire.

Bizarrely, Farnhill was assigned to Craven but Kildwick became part of Bradford. This resulted in a protracted campaign for Kildwick to be transferred to Craven. A significant argument in favour of this was the close association between Farnhill and Kildwick.

It was only after several years of arguments that Bradford let Kildwick go; finally agreeing that the two villages belonged together.

But what if the two villages had merged 1957 ?

If Farnhill/Kildwick had been a single entity in 1974 then one of two things would have happened. Either both villages would have been part of Craven from the outset – thus avoiding the long struggle for them to be reunited – or both would have become part of Bradford Met. In the latter case, the argument for a transfer to Craven would have had much reduced traction, as the “twins” would not have been separated.