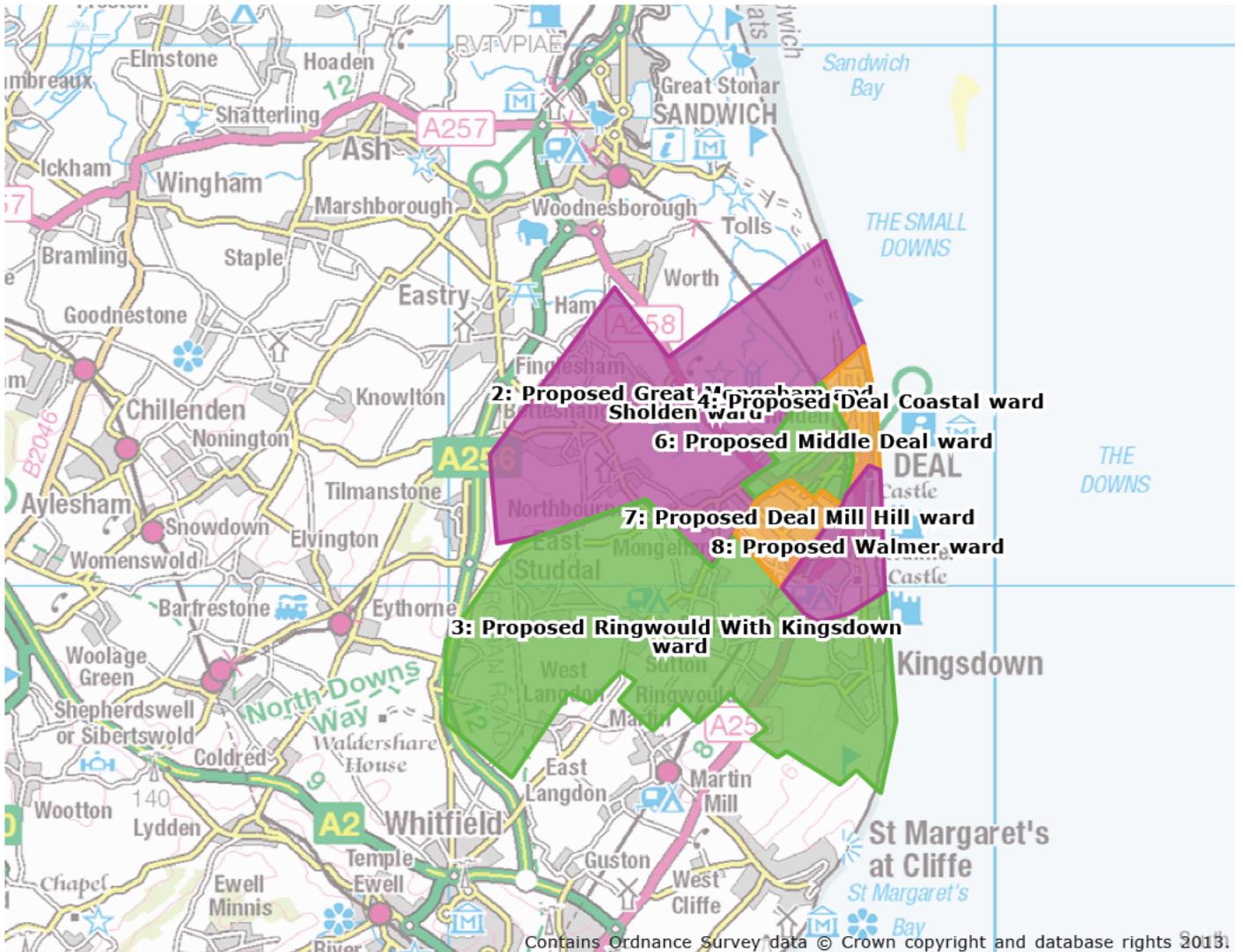


Dover District**Personal Details:**

Name: David White
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Organisation Name: The Deal Society

Feature Annotations**Map Features:**

- Annotation 2: Proposed Great Mongeham and Sholden ward
- Annotation 3: Proposed Ringwould With Kingsdown ward
- Annotation 4: Proposed Deal Coastal ward
- Annotation 6: Proposed Middle Deal ward
- Annotation 7: Proposed Deal Mill Hill ward
- Annotation 8: Proposed Walmer ward

Comment text:

This submission is by The Deal Society, the civic society for Deal and Walmer. Please refer to attached document for detailed explanation. We would be happy to discuss these proposals by contacting the Chairman, David White, at [REDACTED].

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded



Dover District Council Boundary Review

Overall comments

This submission is made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in response to the electoral review of Dover District Council (DDC).

The Deal Society has for over 50 years been the Civic Society for Deal and Walmer. We have built a reputation as a non party political organisation working with all of the councils and all of the political parties. We have recognised expertise in the planning process and knowledge of the community.

The area upon which we will comment is Deal and Walmer and the surrounding villages.

We do not take a position on the number of Councillors and our comments are concerning the Ward boundaries which would need to be changed if the number of Councillors were reduced to 32.

Whilst we have access to the electorate figures for 2023 published by DDC, we do not have access to population data below polling district level nor data on the potential political implications of any changes. Our recommendations are therefore based purely on the sense of community felt by each area which we hope will help you define suitable boundaries which reflect those communities.

We wish to emphasise the confusion that the public have in understanding the three levels of local government which exist in this area. Having different boundaries at each of those levels adds to that confusion. We have therefore taken as our starting point the town/parish wards which represent the commonly held sense of community, where applicable we have broken these into polling districts.

We feel that two councillors per ward is the ideal – more than that could be argued to give electors more choice as to who they contact but in practice it causes confusion amongst the electorate and wasted councillor time coordinating action if an elector contacts all of them. A one councillor ward can work with more isolated communities with a strong local community feeling but is less than ideal.

Communities

The whole of the area is primarily residential. Deal has a vibrant High Street and many community buildings (such as a theatre) but there is virtually no industry or other business activity.

Deal

The town of Deal first developed around St Leonard's Church at the junction of Rectory Road, Manor Road and London Road about a mile inland from the current coast. Development of a fishing community took place on the coast and the area between became filled in. The area of Mill Hill was developed to provide housing for Betteshanger Colliery. Development on the edges of Deal has continued ever since.

That development has led to natural divisions of the community based on the distance from the sea and those historic communities. These are generally reflected in the polling districts.

AB1 - Middle Deal, Manor; AB2 - Middle Deal, Park; AB3 - Middle Deal, Upper

The main characteristic of these areas is that of a residential area which does not relate itself closely with the sea.

AC1 - Mill Hill, South; AC2 - Mill Hill, North

These are the areas which retain a strong connection with the former mining industry. The main characteristic of these areas is that of a residential area which does not relate itself closely with the sea.

AC3 - Mill Hill, West

This contains the original settlement of Deal. The main characteristic of this area is that of a residential area which does not relate itself closely with the sea.

AD1 - North Deal, Sandown

Generally consists of modern residential housing, this area has a sense of being near the sea.

AD2 - North Deal, St Andrew's

Mostly historical housing, often Georgian, with a very strong association with the sea. It also contains part of the High Street commercial area.

AD3 - North Deal, Victoria; AA4 - North Deal, Gladstone

Mostly historical housing, often Victorian, with a very strong association with the sea. AD3 also contains part of the High Street commercial area.

Walmer

Polling Districts AA1, AA2 and AA3

This has a strong community identity despite being contiguous with Deal. Some of the housing is similar to that in Deal, whereas in many parts of Walmer the housing is significantly less dense with larger houses and gardens. Walmer contains two areas of fine Georgian military buildings, now converted into residences and effectively private estates.

Historically, Walmer developed separately from Deal and although they have grown together there is still a strong sense that Walmer is different to Deal.

Neighbouring Villages

Around the conurbation of Deal and Walmer are villages which are either connected or are closely related. These villages have in common a strong local identity coupled with a recognition that Deal is the nearest place to go for shopping and many recreational activities.

Great Mongeham

Polling District PGM

This has a strong relationship with Sholden because they are both contiguous with Deal but have a distinct village based community feeling.

Ringwould

Polling District PRG

Although not contiguous with Deal, it has links with Deal because local services are there but has a strong identity as a separate village.

Kingsdown

Polling District PRK

Likewise it is not contiguous with Deal, it has the identity of a seaside village.

Ripple

Polling District PRP

This parish is on the border of places which recognise a close association with Deal, it is a spread out rural village.

Sholden

Polling District PSH

Contiguous with Deal, this also has a strong relationship with Great Mongeham. Development in the fields between Sholden and Deal is blurring the boundaries and eroding the feeling that Sholden is a rural village.

Dover District Council Submission

DDC had an Extraordinary council meeting on Wednesday 28th March to discuss a proposal for ward boundaries. At the time of writing this report, the minutes of that meeting are not available but we will assume that the proposed document was accepted for submission.

We would point out that there was a previous draft which proposed minor amendments to the current Deal and Walmer wards with two councillors per ward. We had some detailed comments but that is a proposal which we would broadly support.

The revised proposal put to the above meeting would fundamentally change traditional ward boundaries so there would be no correlation between those boundaries and the town/parish and county boundaries. The proposed wards have been drawn with no regard to traditional feelings of community. As mentioned earlier, we also do not favour three councillor wards.

We specifically comment on their proposed wards:

- **Ward 4 - Eastry Rural:** Great Mongeham would not associate itself with the rural communities as much as it does with Deal.
- **Ward 6 – Whitfield Rural:** Ripple and Ringwould would not associate themselves with Whitfield at all, they associate themselves with Deal.
- **Ward 10 – Walmer and Kingsdown:** Whilst Walmer and Kingsdown may have similarities in character, the former is physically linked to Deal whereas the latter is not. The area of Mill Hill would find absolutely no synergy with Walmer.
- **Ward 11 – North Deal with Sholden:** As described earlier, the coastal area of Deal has an entirely different character to the middle of Deal and the village of Sholden has another different character. The concept of this ward is fundamentally flawed.
- **Ward 12 - Middle Deal:** The comments given for proposed ward 11 apply here too.

We therefore do not support the proposals by DDC for the Deal/Walmer area and ask that you consider the communities which electors associate with when setting the boundaries.

Our proposals

We believe that the wards should be based around the sense of community explained above and that Deal, Walmer and surrounding villages would be best represented by these wards:

Deal Coastal

Polling Districts AD1, AD2, AD3 and AA4

Two Councillors

This ward is currently called North Deal. Whilst people living in the north part of this ward associate themselves as being in North Deal, those in other parts of the ward would not (in fact many of them would describe themselves as South Deal). We therefore propose that it is renamed Deal Coastal.

This ward has fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district but the railway forms a clear boundary between communities so we cannot recommend any alteration to the boundaries.

Middle Deal

Polling Districts AB1, AB2 and AB3

Two Councillors

Some parts of AC3 would need to be added to this ward, as below.

There is very considerable development in the fields between Deal and Walmer, which currently fall into PSH (Sholden). This development is contiguous with Deal, all of its traffic links are into Deal and all of their amenities are in Deal. There is the strong possibility of further development on those fields. We therefore propose that the boundaries of PSH are redrawn to follow the rear of properties along London Road, the village of Sholden and the wooded areas bounding the Betteshanger Country Park.

Mill Hill, Deal

Polling Districts AC1, AC2 and part of AC3

Two Councillors

The area north-west of Mongeham Road should be with Sholden. There may be pressure for development in the future on the empty fields known as Sholden Downs, and we should ensure that is associated with Sholden from the outset.

The area between Mongeham Road and Rectory Road could included in Middle Deal.

Walmer

Polling Districts AA1, AA2, AA3

Two Councillors

This ward has more electors per councillor than the average for the district but in view of the strong sense of identity we cannot recommend any alteration to the boundaries.

At the south of this ward there are two anomalies which should be addressed if possible:

- The boundary should be at the junction of Ripple Road and Dover Road as the development there is contiguous with Walmer and the commercial estate is known as the Walmer Court Farm Shop. There is a planning application (17/00487) which has been allowed on appeal which is contiguous with Walmer and yet is currently in the Ringwoud with Kingsdown parish.
- There are properties along Kingsdown Road / Wellington Parade which are contiguous with Kingsdown and should be part of Kingsdown and not Walmer.

Gladstone Road forms a natural boundary between Deal and Walmer and we would recommend that the Walmer Parish Council boundary is redrawn to exclude AA4 (Gladstone) which should be part of Deal Town Council. We would likewise recommend that the boundaries of Walmer Parish Council are redrawn if the anomalies mentioned above are resolved in the District ward.

Great Mongeham & Sholden

Polling Districts PGM, PNR, PSH

One Councillor

Ringwould With Kingsdown

Polling Districts PRG, PRK, PRP, PSU

One Councillor (but more than 10% below the average number of electors per councillor for the district)

Those one Councillor wards could be combined into one ward called Deal Rural, which would help the number of electors per councillor.