

Proposal for the revision of Shepway District wards for Lydd and New Romney Town and Coast

Introduction

When I first became involved in local (Lydd) politics, I was struck by the illogicality of the Parish boundaries and the unfairness of the allocation of the precept. I joined a group (Coastal Community Group) which achieved a majority on Lydd Town Council in the elections of 2007.

The main plank in this group's electoral platform was the separation of the coastal area from Lydd Town and the establishment of an independent coastal council. My proposal is to use this principle, with a minor adjustment, to revise the Shepway District Council wards for Lydd and New Romney Town and Coast. This proposal will correct the current anomaly of linking Lydd with Lydd-on-Sea and half of Greatstone, but sadly will not correct the problem of splitting the local governance of the village of Greatstone between Lydd and New Romney. For your interest I append the Shepway District Council's officers' report (GP/10/04) which assessed the group's petition to separate Lydd Town and Coast.

Following the Commission's guidelines, I set out below my reasons for the proposed boundary changes.

Electoral equality

The proposed Lade ward in the new pattern deviates from the average by 8.8% so fits within the Commission's illustrative guideline of 10%.

I propose one councillor be returned for each ward. The current number of councillors for the area I am considering is seven (three for Lydd Town, two each for New Romney Town and Coast). Under my proposal this will reduce to four. This is slightly more than the required reduction for Shepway as a whole.

The current representation does nothing to benefit the coastal electors since Lydd Town predominantly elects its own because of its numerical superiority. This is not to say that only candidates from Lydd Town are elected but that, e.g. a party political **group**, tends to garner the majority of votes. My proposal will focus electoral representation on the area being represented.

The Commission states that it likes to use parish boundaries as the building blocks for District ward boundaries. I would like to think that my suggested District Council ward of Lade may form the basis for a new parish.

Community identity

Transport links.

There are two early morning bus services from Greatstone to Lydd Town and two late evening services. From Lydd to Greatstone there are four early morning services and two late evening services. These are probably to cater for people working at Dungeness Power Station. However, there is at least an hourly service along the

coast road from “The Pilot” into New Romney. Moreover, the bus service from New Romney terminates at Battery Road, Dungeness, near “The Pilot”.

Community groups

Although, at present, there is no parish council for the coastal area, two referenda conducted by Shepway District Council (SDC) emphatically endorsed the wish for one. The details of SDC’s officers’ independent assessment of the validity of the proposed separation are set out in the attached report (GP/10/04). At the 2007 Lydd parish council elections the group campaigning for separation had all its eleven candidates elected to Lydd Town Council on a turnout of 42.5%.

There are separate youth clubs in Lydd and Greatstone and separate scout and guide units based in their own premises at Lydd and Greatstone. There are also local community groups based in Hardy Hall in Lydd and St. Peter’s Church Hall in Greatstone.

Facilities

There are local shopping facilities in the proposed Lade ward similar to those in Lydd, e.g. Spar, Londis. There are also two hairdressers, a pharmacy, and take aways. However, supermarket shopping is usually done in New Romney (Sainsbury’s). Also, there are no banking facilities in Lydd, but there are two banks in New Romney (Lloyds and NatWest).

Interests

The coastal community resents the fact that Lydd Town Council benefits from the precept contribution made by them (about 43%) but see little or no expenditure on the coast. Problems in Lydd Town include dealing with protected sycamore trees and listed buildings, whereas the coastal community has to deal with sand being blown into their front gardens.

Identifiable boundaries

Between Lydd Town and the coast there is a large area comprising farmland, an airport, a nuclear power station and a nature reserve. When I was Mayor of Lydd (and even now!) the distance from my front door to the Guild Hall was 4.7 miles. There are well defined boundaries for the proposed Lade ward at “The Pilot” inn, Dungeness at the southern end, and at “The Jolly Fisherman” in Greatstone at the northern end.

Effective local government

The proposed wards comply both with the guidelines within the area under consideration and the average for Shepway as a whole.

The suggested name of Lade to cover the area from “The Pilot” to “The Jolly Fisherman” is an old style for the area and avoids giving prominence to any particular village.

Proposal

I propose the following warding (and ward names) for the wards currently known as Lydd and New Romney Town and New Romney Coast.

	<u>Electors</u>	
Lydd	2665	(Comprising Lydd Polling District LD1)
Lade	2403	(Comprising Lydd Polling Districts LD2 & LD3 but <u>including</u> Dunes Road)
New Romney Town	2785	(As currently configured)
New Romney Coast	2608	(As currently configured but <u>excluding</u> Dunes Road)