

## Maidstone Borough Council

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## **Response to MBC Ward boundaries consultation**

### Downswood and Otham;

1. Numbers 1-25 of The Beams are currently in the Downswood Parish but are not accessible by road from Downswood or Otham, only through Shepway South. It is the forgotten corner of Downswood and as such these residents would be better served joining Shepway so that their street is joined to the rest of their ward.
2. The area between the Sutton Road and Gore Court Road (known locally as the Buffkyn Way estate, after the spine road that serves it) should be moved into Otham, to join all the other developments north of Sutton Road between Shepway and Sutton Valence.
3. The area South of the Ashford Road, currently in Bearsted, should also be considered as an expansion to this ward. Spot Lane and the Madginford area has more in terms of community connections to Downswood and Otham than it does to Bearsted; for example Madginford Primary School is the main primary school for the Downswood estate, whilst Bearsted residents north of Ashford Road tend to use Thurnham & Roseacre school. It is well known-locally that Bearsted Parish Council consider the green to be the centre of Bearsted; the areas south of Ashford Road are very much the forgotten parts and known locally as not 'proper' Bearsted. The area to consider including would be all roads south of the Ashford Road from Willington Street to the East through to the current Bearsted/Detling & Thurnham boundary in the west, with the exception of Biddenden Close which should remain in the same ward as the northern end of Willington Street as it is a cul-de-sac off Willington Street and not connected to the rest of Madginford.
4. Proposed names for this new ward are Bearsted South, Downswood & Otham or Downswood, Madginford & Otham. Downswood is a distinct estate with a strong community spirit, so the name should be retained in whatever ward it sits.
5. This would also affect Parish Council boundaries; the Downswood Parish Council could have expanded responsibilities to cover the area south of Ashford Rd, with an increase in representation on that council.
6. If these changes are made, and accounting for the significant building developments approved in Otham parish to be completed in the next 2-3years, would require two councillors rather than the existing one.

### Bearsted, Detling & Thurnham

7. The rest of Bearsted (North of the Ashford Road) could join with Detling and Thurnham to create a larger single ward there, served by two or three councillors.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
(Member of the Public)