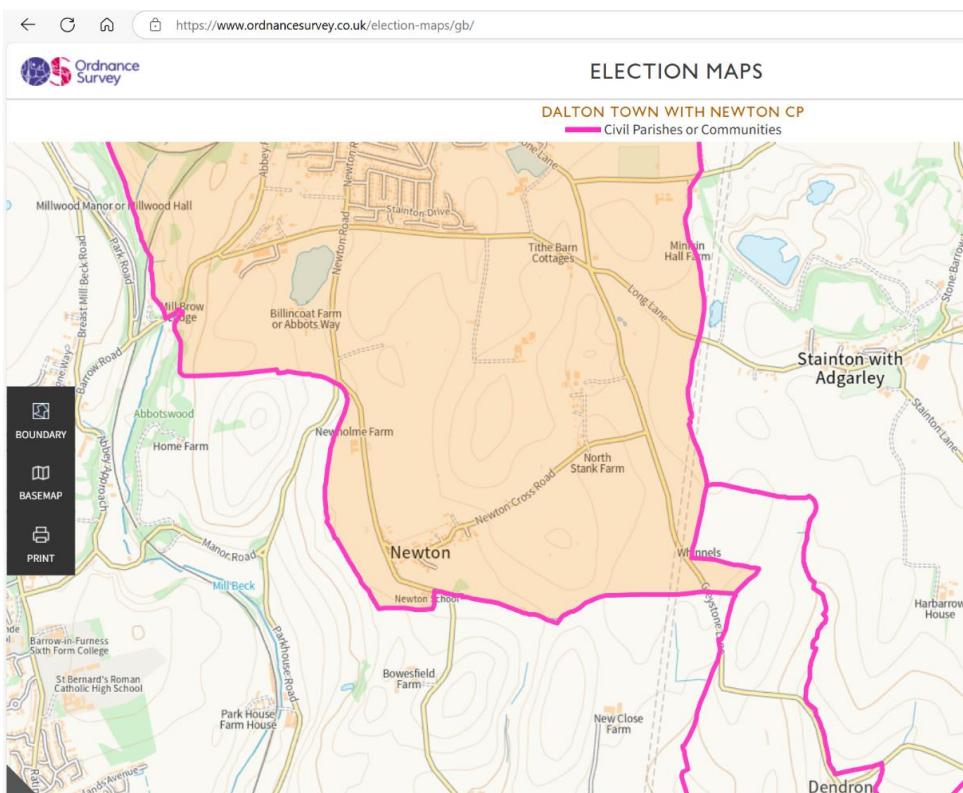


I'd like to register my general approval and satisfaction with the draft conclusions drawn by the Commission, with its proposal for a 2-member Dalton-in-Furness ward, and a single-member Low Furness ward, as well as the proposed Ulverston North / Ulverston South & Pennington 2-member wards.

The villages, hamlets, and farms of Low Furness have always been treated in separate warding arrangements from the nearby towns of Barrow, Dalton, and Ulverston for good reason. The villages and communities have deep links between and within them. Larger villages such as Great Urswick and Bardsea act as service hubs for other smaller villages and hamlets, with their pubs and restaurants, and with the local primary school situated in Urswick. Local residents see themselves as part of a rural community surrounded by farms, open countryside, country lanes, and the coast, sharing similar issues and challenges, and separate from the nearby towns. A larger proportion of the population across Low Furness is older than average, many families have links in the local agriculture and fishing industries, and local children attend the local Low Furness primary school in Urswick. These factors all contribute to a clear sense of a rural community, with intense community, family and historical ties, which define Low Furness as distinctly separate from its neighbouring towns.

The LGBCE draft warding proposals groups the Aldingham & Urswick parishes in the existing Low Furness ward, with the neighbouring parish of Lindal & Marton, and with the neighbouring village of Newton. This is a sensible proposal, reflecting the feedback from those Parish Councils and from Dalton-with-Newton Town Council, which maintains a rural-facing ward, knitting together local villages and communities with shared issues and characteristics, and separate from the nearby towns. Dalton-with-Newton Town Council specifically proposed in their submission, the principle of splitting Newton Village away from Dalton Town, and including the village within a revised Low Furness ward. This proposed warding arrangement also reflects the Commission's recommendations in other areas of Westmorland & Furness where there has broadly been a recognition of the separate nature of urban and rural-based communities.

In order to help keep the new Low Furness ward co-terminus, I would propose that Newton village is bounded using Long Lane and Newton Road, up to its junction with Parkhouse Road, as the boundary between Low Furness and Dalton, as can be seen below. Consequently, that would also become the proposed "Newton Village" ward within Dalton-with-Newton Town Council. Billincoat Farm, Abbots Way and the properties around Billings Road and Mill Brow would then remain within the proposed 2-member Dalton ward. This would be sensible as these properties and residents are very close to Dalton itself and have a direct line of sight onto the town. The residents who live south of Long Lane and east of Newton Road, are not close to the town itself and due to the topography of the land have no direct line of sight from their properties into the town. Therefore this feels like a sensible proposed ward boundary.



The Commission's proposed "Ulverston North" and "Ulverston South & Pennington" 2-member wards, as proposed on page 13, paragraph 54 onwards, will join together the Ulverston Town Council area with the neighbouring Pennington Parish, in order to achieve 2x 2-member wards with good electoral equality.

The Pennington Parish is currently represented on W&F Council in both the High Furness ward (Pennington Parish Ward) and the Low Furness ward (Swarthmoor Parish ward). As noted by the Commission, while Pennington Parish has a large rural element, the bulk of the electorate within the parish is in the Swarthmoor area, on and around the A590, and bordering directly upon Ulverston. There are good transport links and close community ties between Pennington Parish and Ulverston, with residents looking to the nearby town for local shops, pubs, and its leisure and cultural facilities. The Swarthmoor Parish ward today is quite suburban, with "new-build" style developments at Birkrigg Park (High Carley), and the Trinkeld Estate in Swarthmoor itself, as well several streets with open space, which gives the area very similar characteristics to the Croftlands area in the south of Ulverston. Therefore, it is a generally sensible proposal to bind the Pennington Parish with the area south of Dragley Beck in Ulverston into a new 2-member ward for W&F Council.

Noting that the bulk of the electorate within Pennington Parish is in the Swarthmoor area, it may be more sensible to name this ward as "Ulverston South & Swarthmoor".

There is also the option to maintain the existing Parish split for the purpose of W&F Council ward arrangements. This could see the more-rural Pennington Parish ward (currently in the W&F High Furness ward) to be joined with either the neighbouring Lindal & Marton Parish within the revised Low Furness ward, or to be joined instead with the neighbouring ENMO Parish within the new Hawkshead & Greenodd ward, instead of being grouped with Swarthmoor and Ulverston. This could be seen to reflect the Commission's recommendations in other areas of Westmorland & Furness where there has broadly been a recognition of the separate nature of urban and rural-based communities.

