

# Darlington

## Personal Details:

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## Comment text:

I am writing to comment on the Commission's draft recommendations for the new electoral arrangements in Darlington. As someone who lives in Mowden, I welcome the decision to retain the majority of the existing ward, but I believe there are several aspects of the proposals that deserve further consideration before they are finalised.

One point that stood out to me was the Commission's reliance on Carmel College as a defining boundary between the proposed Hummersknott and Mowden wards, particularly when explaining the inclusion of Cardinal Gardens and part of Nunnery Lane within Mowden. If the college is accepted as a meaningful physical boundary in one area, it would seem reasonable to apply that same principle consistently by bringing Broadmeadows and Clare Avenue, which lie to the north of the college, into the Mowden ward. Doing so would produce a more logical and easily understood boundary.

Having read the draft report in detail, I can also understand why Thornbury Rise and sections of Carmel Road North have been allocated to Mowden. Those roads sit alongside the existing ward and connect naturally with neighbouring streets already associated with Mowden, so there is a sensible basis for that proposal.

I cannot reach the same conclusion regarding Pierremont Crescent, Pierremont Gardens and Woodlands Terrace. These roads have much stronger links with Pierremont than Mowden and should, in my opinion, form part of the proposed Pierremont ward. Residents use the same local amenities and facilities as others in Pierremont, and there is a clear shared identity within that community. It would therefore be difficult to justify separating these streets from the wider area they have long been associated with.

The character of these roads also differs noticeably from much of Mowden. The larger Victorian properties are more likely to be converted into flats and apartments, bringing different demands on parking and local infrastructure. Families living there are also generally more likely to send their children to Abbey School than to Mowden School. Together with the obvious geographical links and, in the case of Pierremont Crescent and Pierremont Gardens, even the street names themselves, these factors reinforce their connection to Pierremont rather than Mowden. Including them within Mowden would weaken the coherence of the proposed Pierremont ward and would not reflect how many residents identify their local community.

I would also ask the Commission to give further thought to the way the town centre is represented. While I appreciate that the electorate is unlikely to justify a dedicated town centre ward, I believe the town centre should still be recognised as a distinct community of interest. Businesses there face significant challenges in the current economic climate and would benefit from clear and coherent representation.

There are neighbouring residential areas, particularly around Southend Avenue and Abbey Road within the existing Park West and College wards, whose residents have close day-to-day connections with the town centre. These communities share common concerns about matters such as parking provision, residents' permit schemes, congestion and supporting the local economy. Those links should be given greater weight when determining the final ward boundaries.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the Commission to reconsider the current proposals by:

- Including Pierremont Crescent, Pierremont Gardens and Woodlands Terrace within the proposed Pierremont ward so that the boundaries better reflect established community ties and local identity.
- Considering the inclusion of Broadmeadows and Clare Avenue within the Mowden ward to create a more consistent boundary using Carmel College as the defining feature.
- Giving further consideration to the representation of communities, including Pierremont, that have strong and longstanding connections with Darlington town centre.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments

## **Attached Documents:**

*None attached*