

Designated bathing waters

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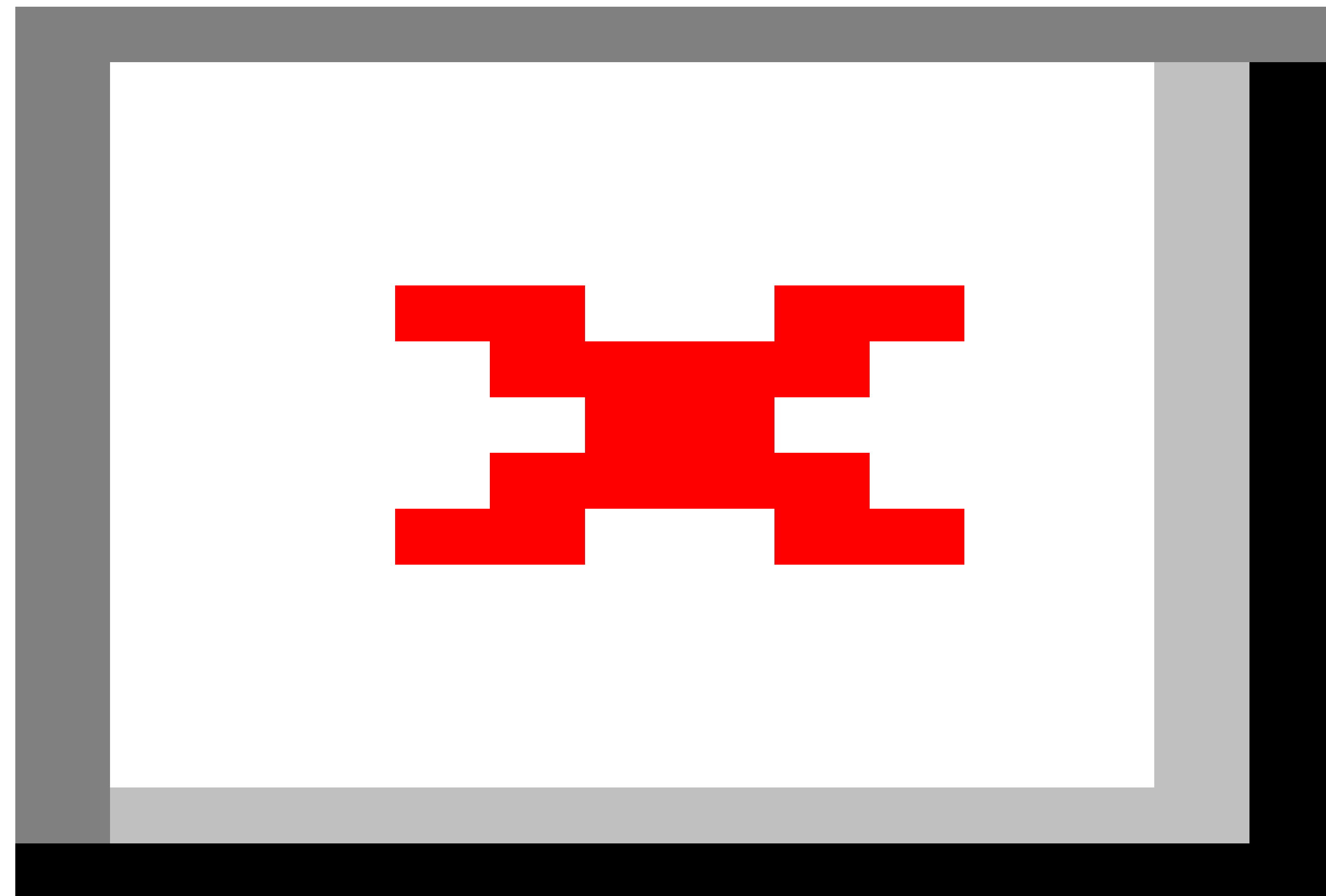
What are bathing waters?

- Protected areas defined in the Bathing Water Regulations 2013
- At defined locations
- Monitored by Environment Agency
- Classifications published every year
- Duty to inform the public of results
- Not all beaches are designated

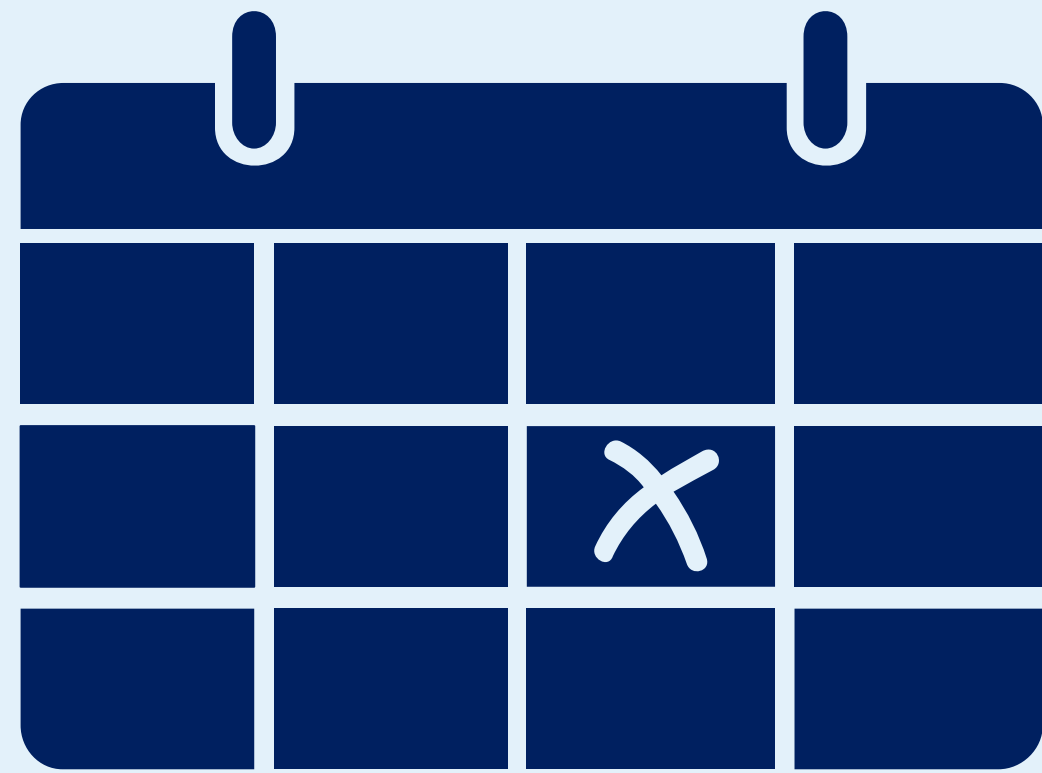


Bathing waters in our area

Key:  designated bathing water,  advice against bathing



How are bathing waters monitored?



1 May and 30 September



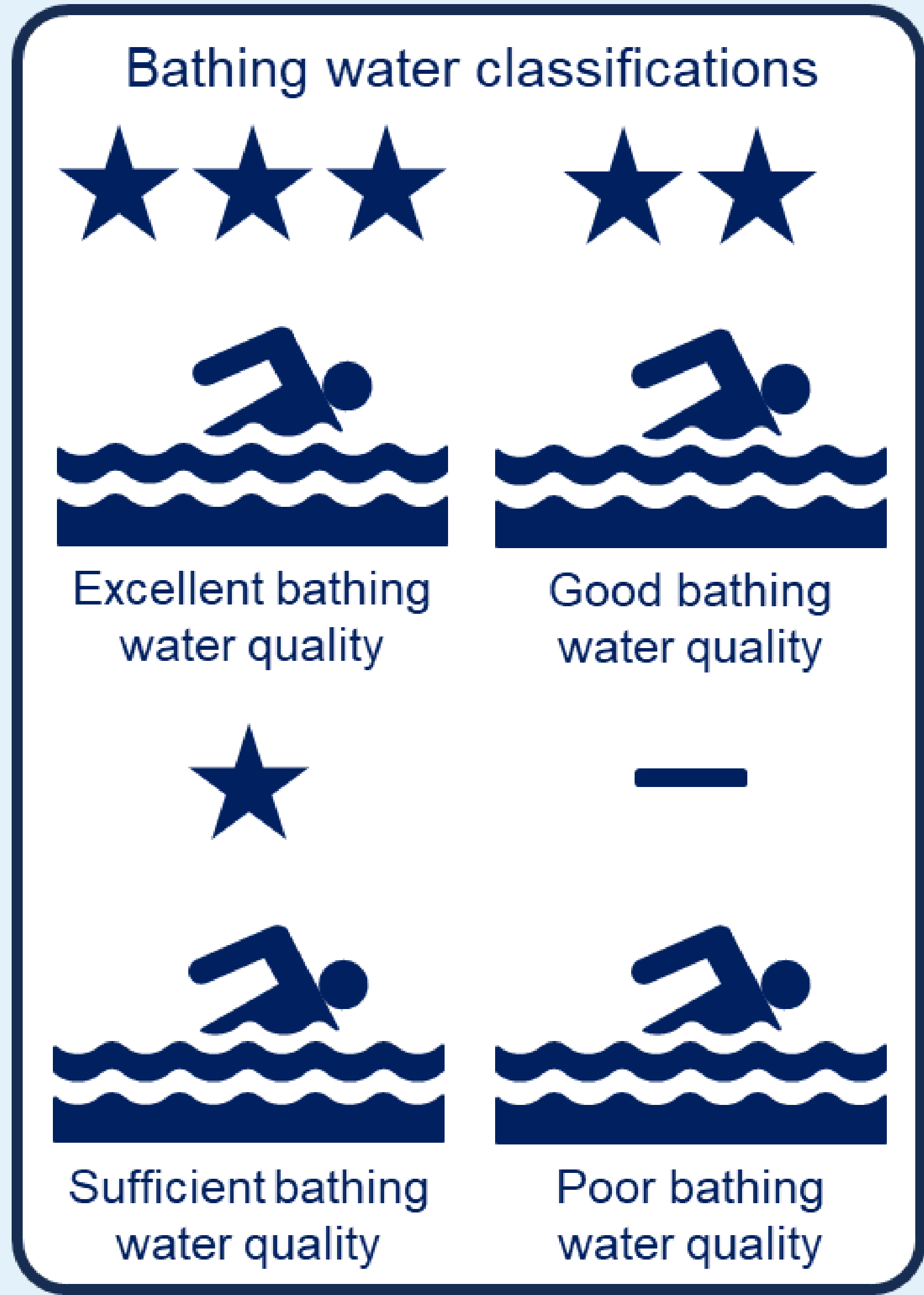
Samples analysed after 4 days



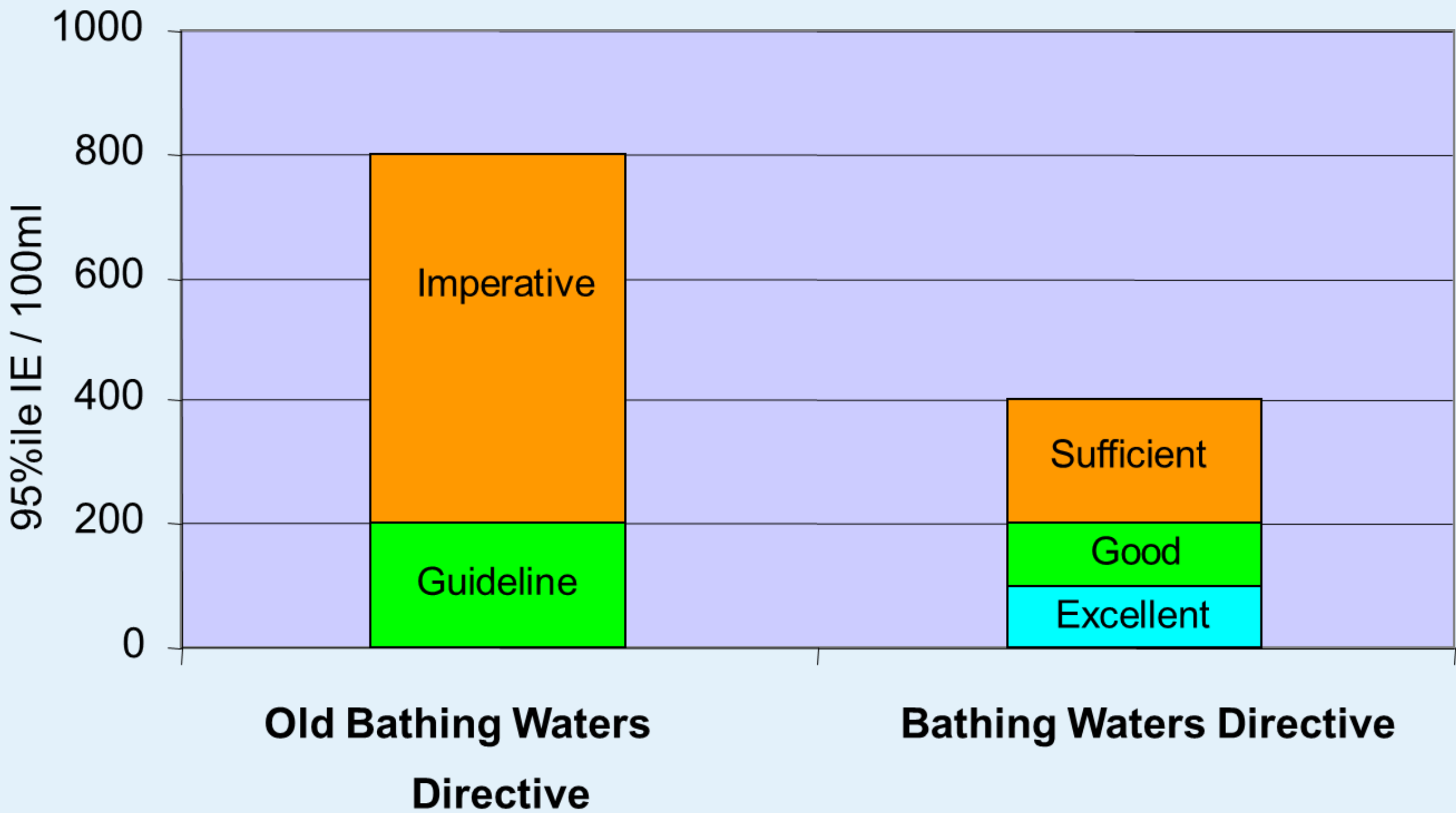
Find out more on Swimfo at <https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/>



Bathing water classification



Graph, right, showing the comparison of Intestinal Enterococci classifications. Source Environment Agency 2024



Parameter	Excellent	Good	Sufficient	Poor
Intestinal Enterococci (colony forming units per 100ml)	100	200	185	>185
Escherichia coli (colony forming units per 100ml)	250	500	500	>500
Percentile	95th		90th	

Table, left, showing the Intestinal Enterococci and Escherichia coli parameters per classification. Source Environment Agency 2024

Why do we classify bathing waters in this way?



You can also read our blog about testing at <https://environmentagency.blog.gov.uk/2024/08/07/behind-the-scenes-how-environment-agency-scientists-are-testing-bathing-water-quality/>

Improvements in Bathing Water Quality

Significant Improvements Over Time:

- In the 1990s, only 28% of bathing waters met the highest standards.
- This year 85% achieved the highest standards of Good and Excellent.
- 92% met the minimum standard of Sufficient.
- More Work to Do:
Classification results indicate areas for improvement.



Potential Sources of pollution

Human Sewage

- Water Company & Private discharges
- Misconnections

Agriculture

- Runoff and discharges to groundwater

Other

- Urban runoff
- Dogs, Birds, Litter
- Sewage from ships and boats



Images of
examples sources
of pollution.
Source
Environment
Agency 2024



What are we doing to improve bathing waters?

Environment Agency	Local Authorities	Southern Water
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring through statutory and investigative samples. Analysis of sample data alongside environmental data to help identify sources of pollution. Regulation of water companies, business and individuals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairing Partner Steering Groups. Leading on Public communications and engagement/education (yellow fish campaign). Working with the water company on misconnections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrity check of sewers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> respond to, investigate and take appropriate enforcement action following pollution incidents. Regulation of the agricultural sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigating sewage disposal from holiday lets WASC (Water and Sewerage company). Displaying water quality signage to inform the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring assets are managed to prevent pollution incident occurring. Ensure all discharges from outfalls are compliant with environmental permit limits. Investigating and remediating misconnections.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We work with community groups and partners to identify and stop sources of pollution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seaweed management. Gully Cleaning. Litter/dog foul management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing the potential location of unconnected properties and working with customers to become connected to the public foul sewer.

Role of Environment Agency



Our staff collecting samples and working with partners. Source Environment Agency 2024

Creating a better place for people and wildlife

Incident Hotline 0800 80 70 60

Planned actions for 2025



- Additional monitoring in surrounding area
- Microbial Source tracking (MST) – *DNA tracing*
- Data review
- Catchment walkovers
- Continue working with partners

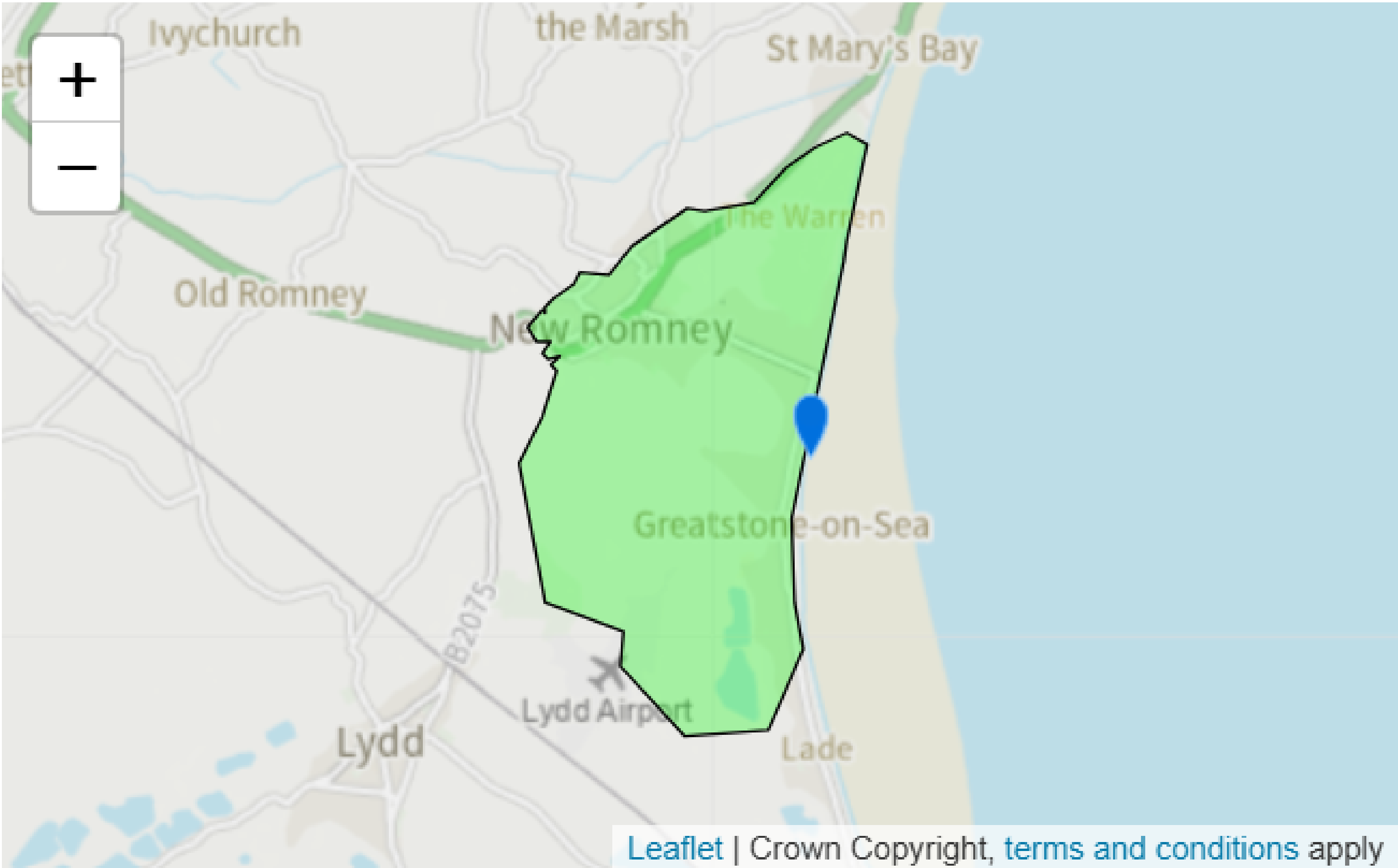


Priority bathing waters 2025

- St Marys Bay
- Littlestone
- Dymchurch
- Deal
- Folkestone



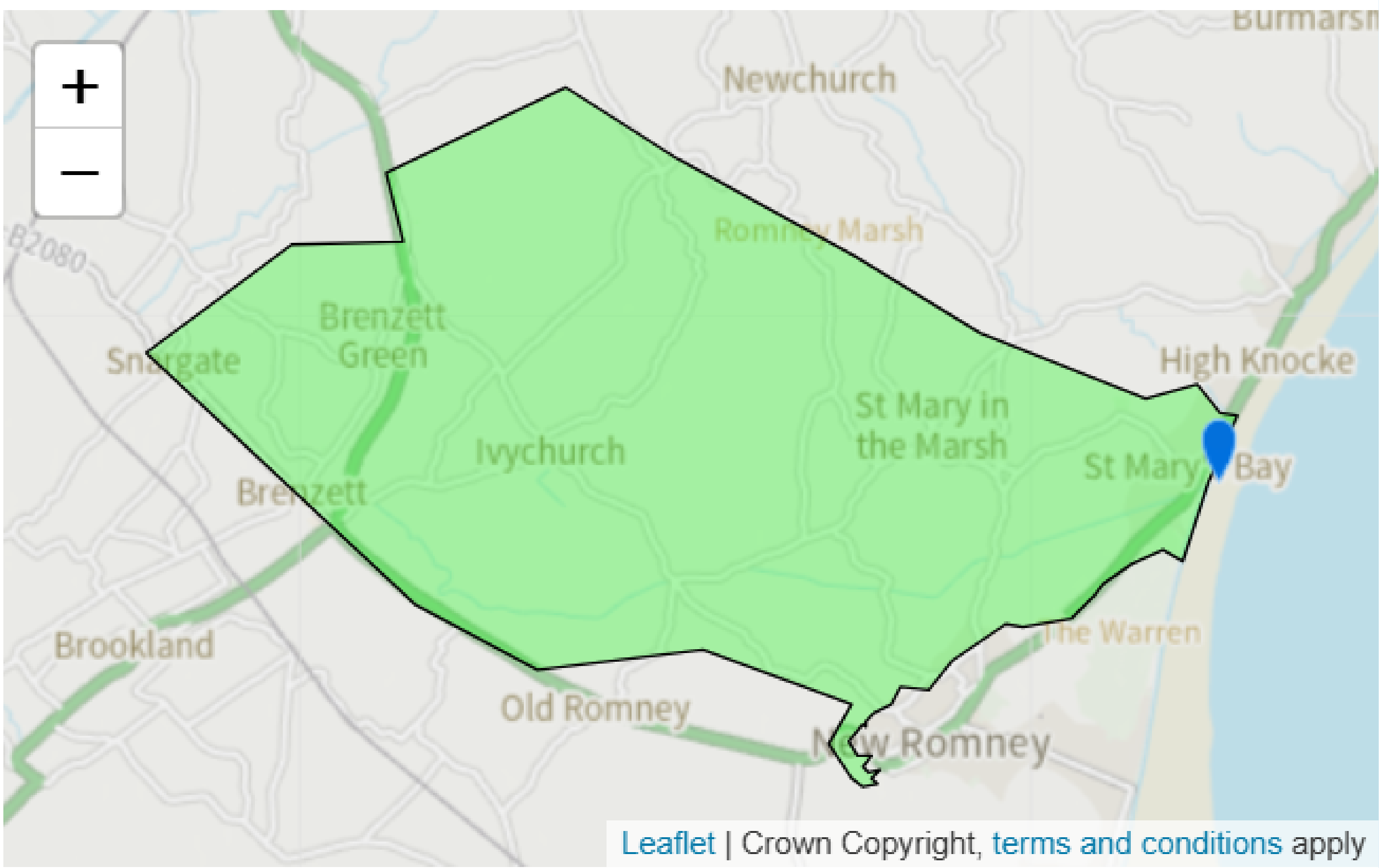
Littlestone bathing water



Map of Littlestone bathing water (surface water) catchment.
Source Environment Agency 2025

Year	Classification
2002 - 2005	Sufficient
2003 - 2006	Sufficient
2004 - 2007	Poor
2005 - 2008	Sufficient
2006 - 2009	Poor
2007 - 2010	Poor
2008 - 2011	Sufficient
2009 - 2012	Sufficient
2010 - 2013	Sufficient
2011 - 2014	Good
2012 - 2015	Sufficient
2013 - 2016	Sufficient
2014 - 2017	Good
2015 - 2018	Good
2016 - 2019	Good
2017 - 2021	Good
2018 - 2022	Good
2019 - 2023	Poor
2021 - 2024	Poor

St Marys Bay bathing water

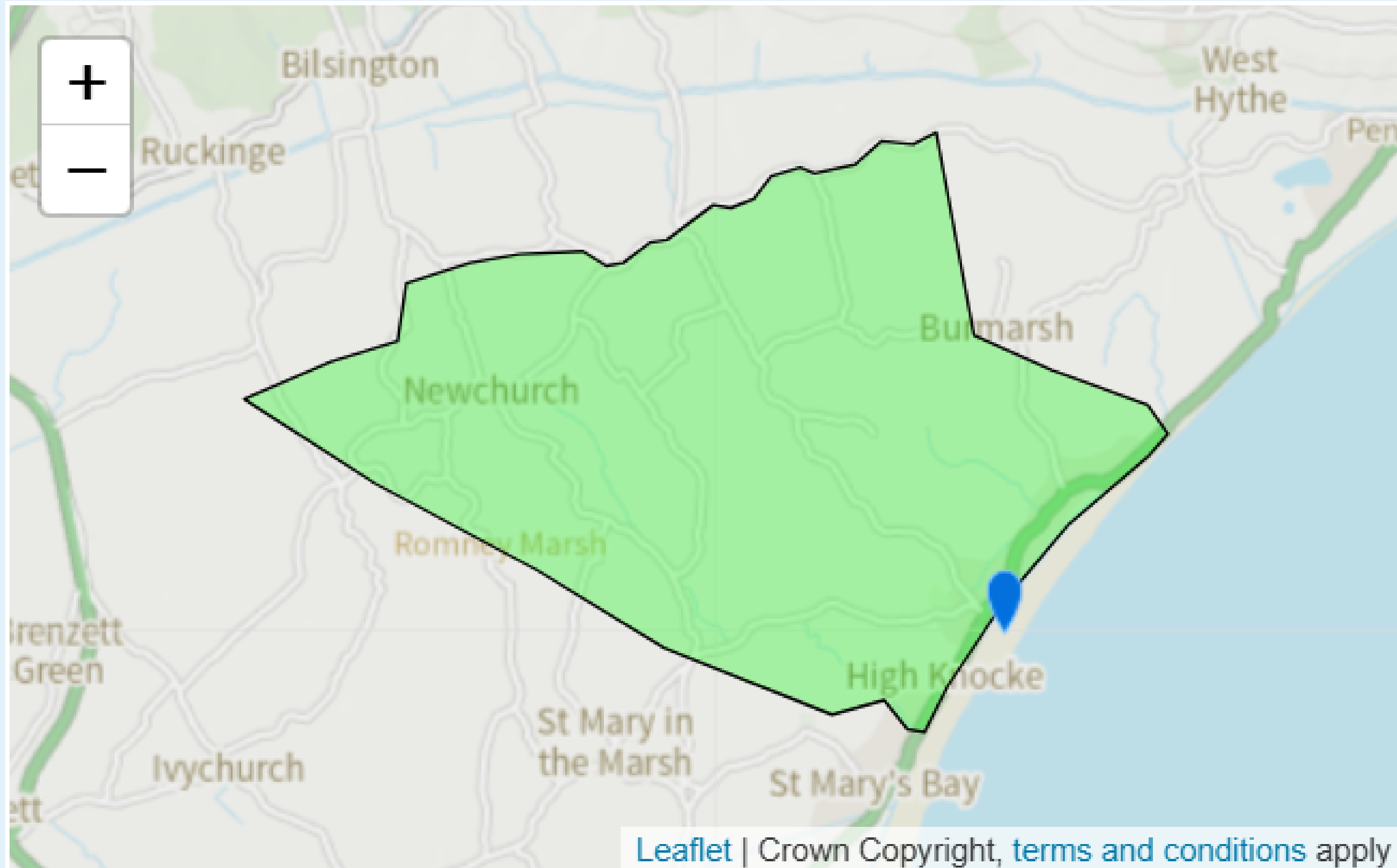


Map of St Marys Bay bathing water (surface water) catchment.
Source Environment Agency 2025

Year	Classification
2002 - 2005	Excellent
2003 - 2006	Good
2004 - 2007	Good
2005 - 2008	Excellent
2006 - 2009	Excellent
2007 - 2010	Good
2008 - 2011	Good
2009 - 2012	Good
2010 - 2013	Good
2011 - 2014	Good
2012 - 2015	Good
2013 - 2016	Good
2014 - 2017	Good
2015 - 2018	Good
2016 - 2019	Sufficient
2017 - 2021	Sufficient
2018 - 2022	Poor
2019 - 2023	Poor
2021 - 2024	Sufficient



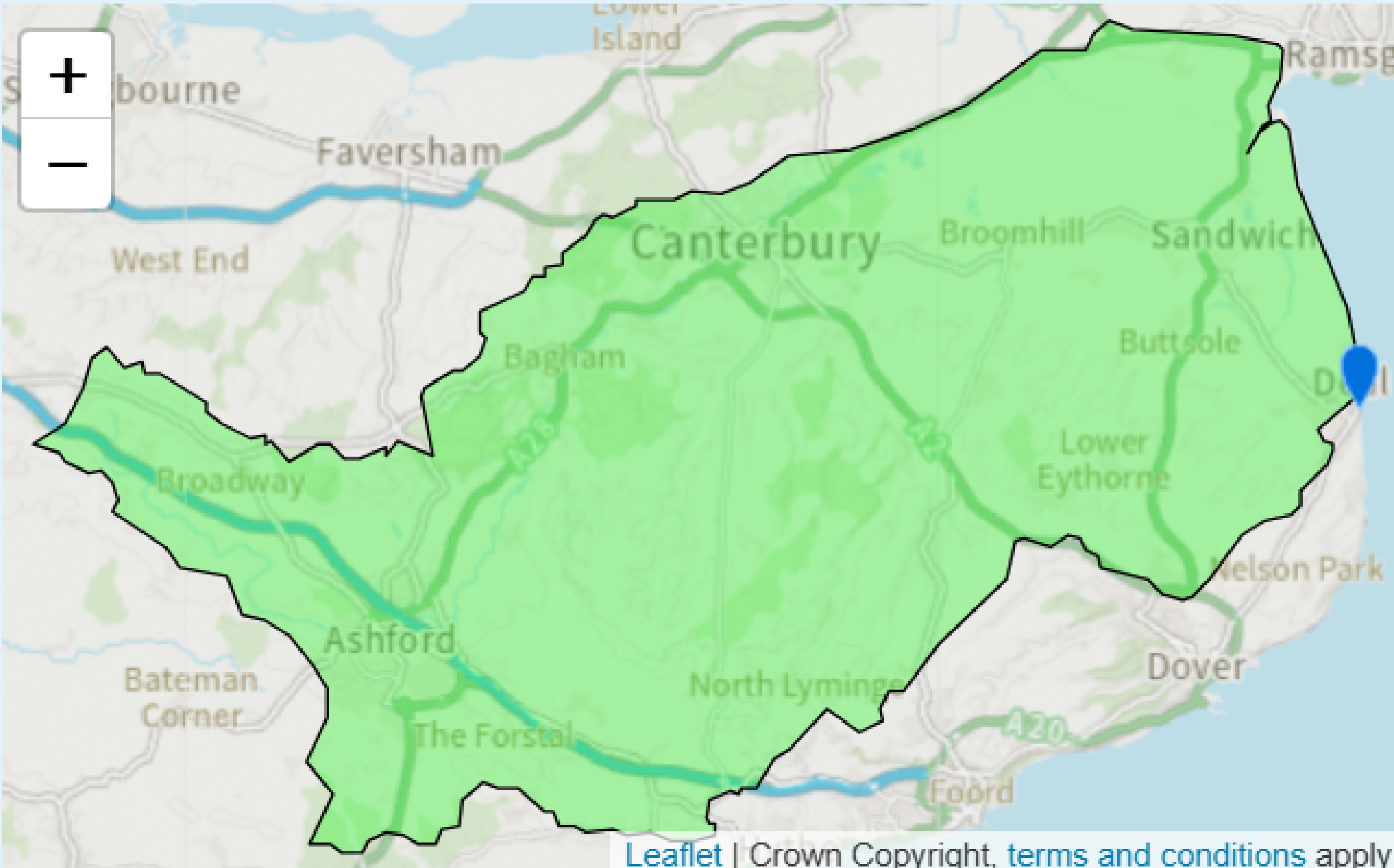
Dymchurch bathing water



Map of Dymchurch bathing water (surface water) catchment.
Source Environment Agency 2025

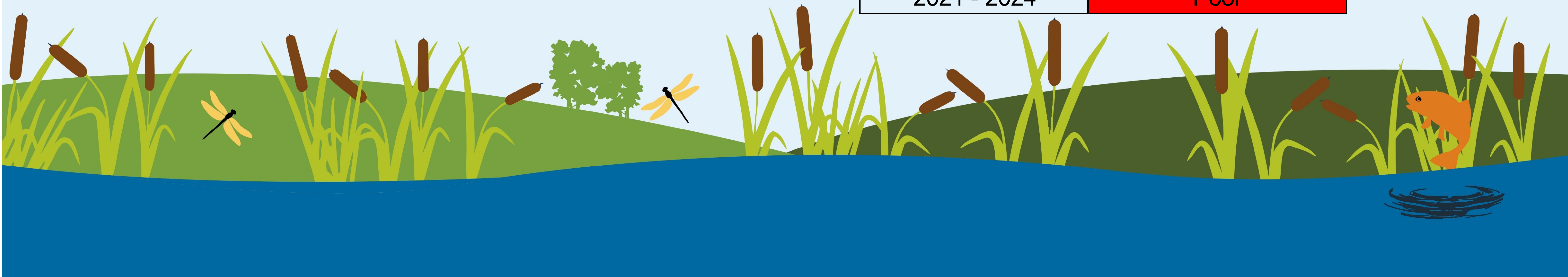


Deal bathing water

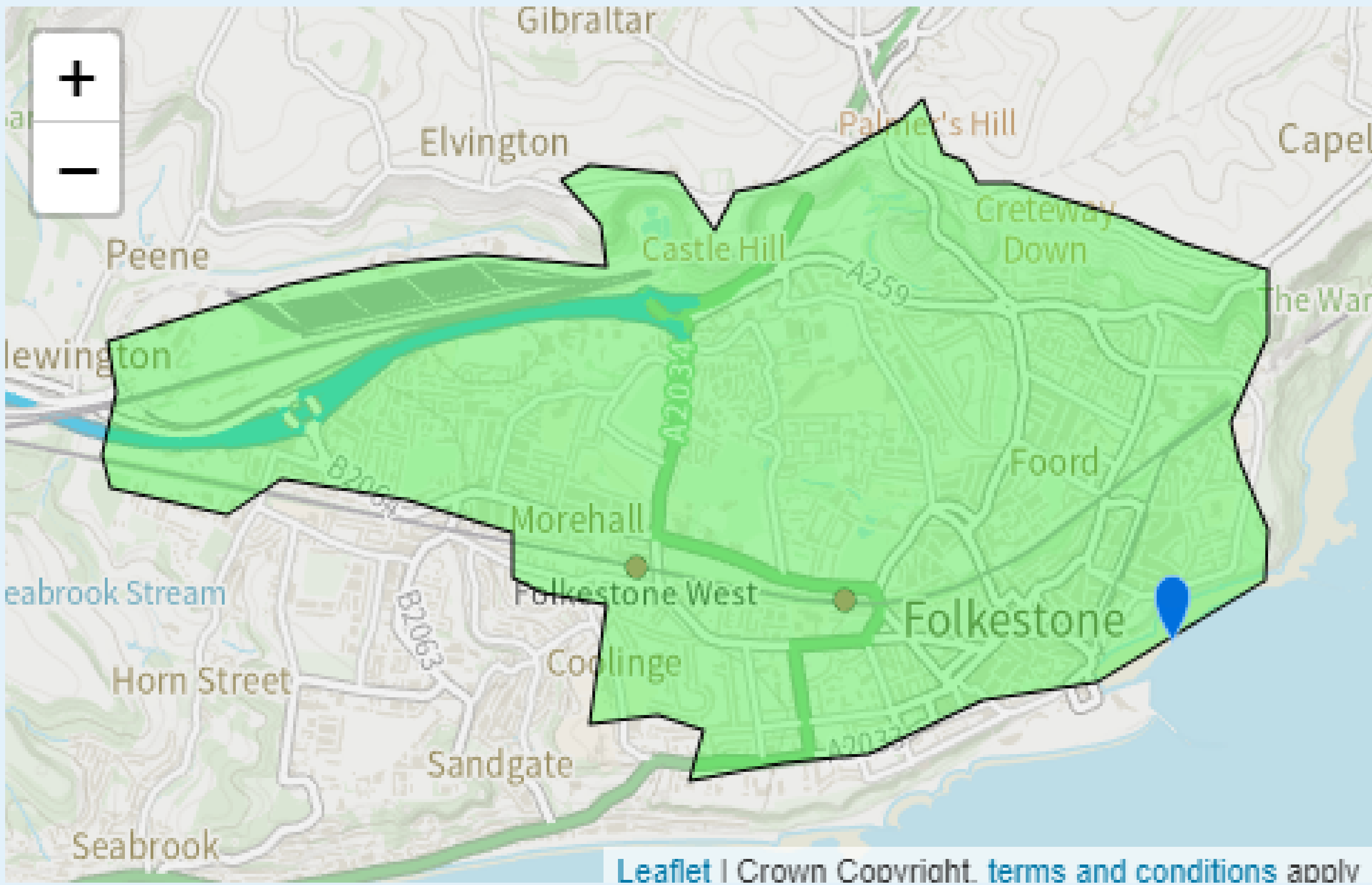


Map of Deal bathing water (surface water) catchment.
Source Environment Agency 2025

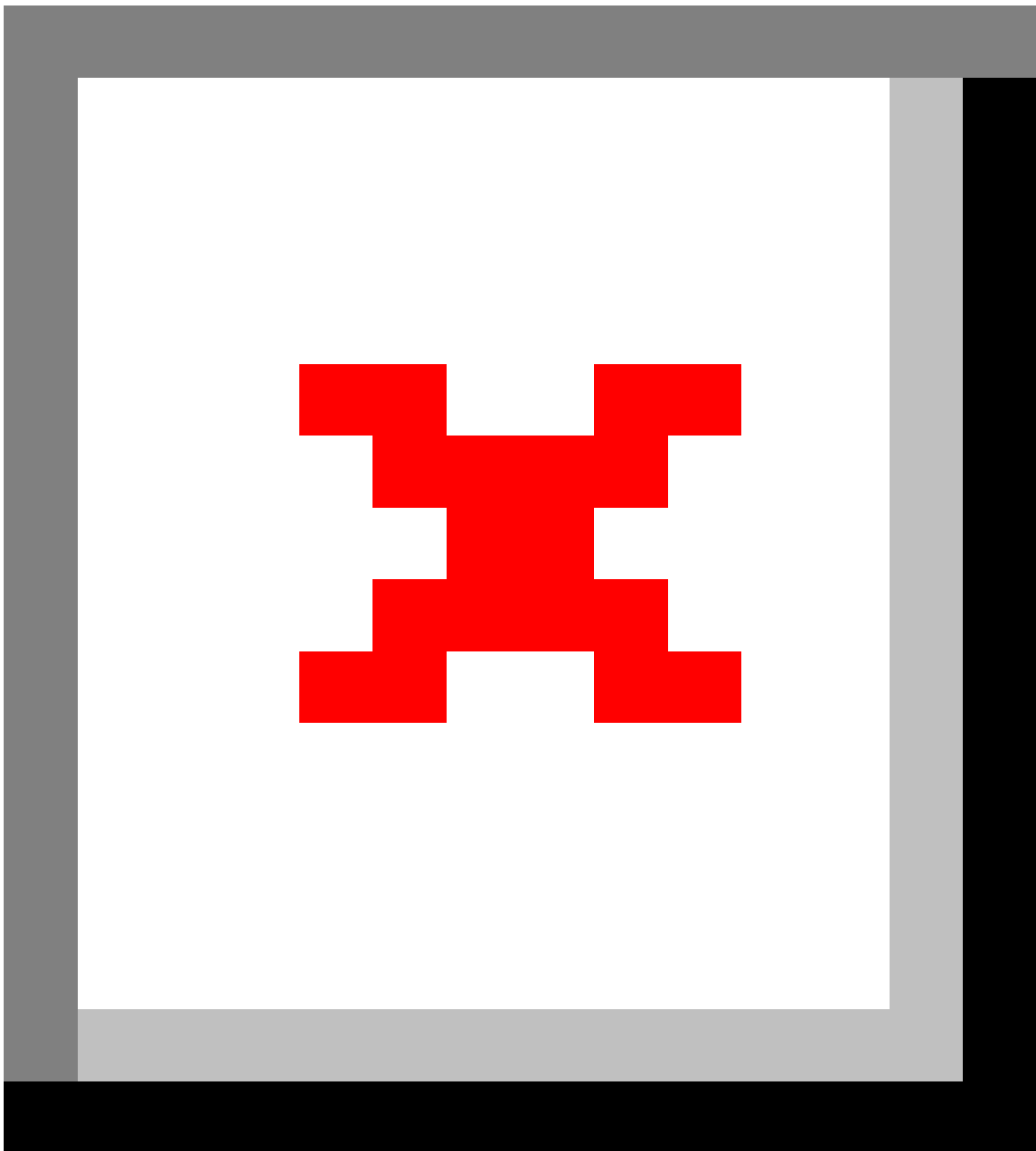
Year	Classification
2002 - 2005	Good
2003 - 2006	Good
2004 - 2007	Good
2005 - 2008	Good
2006 - 2009	Good
2007 - 2010	Good
2008 - 2011	Good
2009 - 2012	Good
2010 - 2013	Good
2011 - 2014	Excellent
2012 - 2015	Excellent
2013 - 2016	Excellent
2014 - 2017	Excellent
2015 - 2018	Excellent
2016 - 2019	Excellent
2017 - 2021	Good
2018 - 2022	Good
2019 - 2023	Sufficient
2021 - 2024	Poor



Folkestone bathing water



Map of Folkestone bathing water (surface water) catchment.
Source Environment Agency 2025



What can we all do to improve water quality at all of our beaches?



Images of misconnections. Source Environment Agency 2024



Creating a better place for people and wildlife

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New Bathing Waters



Anyone can apply to designate a bathing water

A proposed designated bathing water must:

- be a coastal or inland water
- have at least 100 bathers a day during the bathing season (15 May to 30 September)
- have toilet facilities bathers can use during the bathing season, within a short distance of up to about 500m from the site

A consultation must be carried out to get views about the proposal from as many local people, organisations & businesses as possible

Defra ministers will make the final decision on whether a site can be designated as a bathing water.



More information and contacts



- Visit our new online Water Hub at <https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/hub-page/water-hub>
- Visit Swimfo at <https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/>
- Follow us on X at <https://x.com/EnvAgencySE>
- To report environmental incidents call our Incident Hotline 0800 807060
- To report flooding call Floodline on 0345 988 1188
- For enquiries email us at ksle@environment-agency.gov.uk

Thank you

