

PROPOSED CHANGES TO POLLING STATIONS/PLACES

2021/22

ABBEY

Current Polling Station for the ABD District: Bearwood Primary School

The headteacher of Bearwood Primary School is keen for the Polling Station to be re-located away from her school and suggested using other premises in the locality. However, having explored these possibilities, Electoral Services found these venues to be either unavailable to use as a Polling Station or are not considered suitable to be used as such.

It is therefore proposed that, in future, electors are directed to Thimblemill Library. This is already a Polling Station for the neighbouring district of ABC and the building has the capacity to accommodate a second Polling Station. The distance from the furthest point in the ABD district to the Library is, according to Googlemaps, a 10-minute walk/ a distance of 0.5 miles. Currently, some roads in these districts are partially in ABC and partially in ABD and so, by asking all voters in those roads to go to one station, i.e. the Library, this would avoid this confusion.

By transferring voters to this new Polling Place, this will enable Bearwood Primary School to remain open on election days.

One ward member sought clarification of a number of points relating to this proposal and, following an exchange of e-mails, accepted the rationale for the recommendation.

Recommendation:

The Polling Place/Station for the ABD district is transferred from Bearwood Primary School to Thimblemill Library, Thimblemill Road, Smethwick.

BLACKHEATH

No changes to existing Polling Stations are proposed at the present time.

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BRISTNALL

**Current Polling Station for the BRA, BRB and BRC districts:
Temporary hut Nos. 1 and 2 - Car Park of Langley Swimming Centre**

To avoid the continued use of two temporary huts at the Swimming Centre as Polling Stations, a church based within the BRC district was contacted to see if they were willing to allow us to their premises. Unfortunately, this request was declined for the foreseeable future.

Apart from the Swimming Centre itself, no other suitable venues to accommodate a Polling Station were identified in any other three districts.

Therefore, in anticipation of there not being a need to operate a one-way system for voters within Polling Stations in 2022 (as there was for the 2021 elections), it is proposed that voters living in the BRA and BRB districts are invited to vote inside the Swimming Centre itself and those living in the BRC district continue to use a temporary hut on the Swimming Centre car park.

Assuming these proposals are approved, this will lead to a net reduction of one Temporary hut being used at the Swimming Centre site in 2022.

Going forward, in view of the anticipated closure of Langley Swimming Centre in 2023, it is proposed that a further review of Polling Stations in the ward is undertaken prior to elections held in that year.

No objections to these proposals were received from ward members.

Recommendation:

The Polling Place/Station for BRA and BRB district transfers to inside Langley Swimming Centre, Vicarage Road, Oldbury and voters in BRC continue to vote in a Temporary hut on the car park of the Swimming Centre, entrance off Brookfields Road, Oldbury.

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CHARLEMONT WITH GROVE VALE

No changes to existing Polling Stations are proposed at the present time.

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CRADLEY HEATH AND OLD HILL

**Current Polling Station for the CRB and CRC districts:
Corngreaves Primary School**

As part of this review, three churches and a library located within the districts were considered as being potentially suitable alternative venues to the School.

Having contacted and/or visited the three most-likely of these four possible alternative locations, it is proposed that voters living in the Polling Districts for CRB and CRC are, in future, re-directed to the Salvation Army Worship and Community Centre, Meredith Street, Cradley Heath (car park entrance in Hingley Street) as it offers all the facilities that is required from a good Polling Station. The Station is just a 2-minute walk from the school.

By transferring voters to this new Polling Place, this will enable Corngreaves Primary School to remain open on election days.

No objections to this proposal were made by any of the ward members.

Recommendation:

The Polling Place/Station for CRB and CRC districts transfers from Corngreaves Primary School to Salvation Army Worship and Community Centre, Meredith Street, Cradley Heath (car park entrance in Hingley Street)

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FRIAR PARK

**Current Polling Station for the FPB district:
Friar Park Millennium Centre**

The Friar Park Millennium Centre was first used as a Polling Station for the elections in May 2021. It was used because the usual Polling Station for the district, Priory Primary School, was not able to facilitate a Covid-secure “one-way system” for voters within the building on Polling day.

The report which detailed this change of venue to members, stated that the switch would be reviewed following the elections.

On the day of the elections, the Millennium Centre proved to be a suitable Polling Station, and for the 2022 elections, it was initially proposed that this venue continued as the Station for the district.

However, following consultation with ward members and a subsequent written objection, Electoral Services sought to identify an alternative venue which it could recommend to Committee, whilst being mindful of the need to avoid, if possible, having to revert to the original school-based location.

Having explored further possibilities, it is now recommended that the Polling Station for the district becomes St Francis of Assisi Church in Freeman Road.

The church is located within the boundaries of the FPB district, has good on-street car parking facilities and accessible space for a Polling Station. According to Googlemaps, it's a 5-minute walk /0.3 miles from the Millennium Centre.

No objections were received with regard to the proposal to re-locate to St Francis of Assisi Church.

Recommendation:

That the Polling Station for the FPB district transfers from the Friar Park Millennium Centre to St Francis of Assisi Church, Freeman Road, Friar Park, Wednesbury.

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GREAT BARR WITH YEW TREE

Current Polling Stations for the GYG district:

Temporary huts nos. 1 and 2: Woodruff Way, Yew Tree Estate

Although no other potentially suitable, alternative and/or more permanent venues could be identified within this district, a review was undertaken of the necessity for there being two temporary huts at this location. The analysis concluded that, based on the number of electors in the district, the need for two temporary huts could be reduced to one, especially for non-Parliamentary elections when elector turn-out is traditionally lower. This proposal would, hopefully, reduce the concerns of some of the residents in the area and lead to a net reduction of one temporary hut.

Recommendation:

To reduce the number of temporary huts in Woodruff Way (in the GYG district) from two to one for elections where elector turnout has, traditionally, been lower than for Parliamentary elections.

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GREAT BRIDGE

Current Polling Station for the GBB district: Great Bridge Primary School

The Polling Station review found that, in the past, the school had remained open to pupils on election days, but that, in May 2021, it had closed, principally for safeguarding reasons.

Having carried out a site visit, a suitable alternative site has been identified which is very close to the school, i.e. the Community Room at New Road Methodist Church. This venue also has the benefit of a dedicated car park.

Transferring the Polling Station to the Methodist Church would enable the school to remain open on Election days.

it is therefore proposed to re-locate this existing Polling Station to the Church.

No objections to the proposals were received by any of the ward members.

Recommendation:

The Polling Place/Station for the GBB district transfers from Great Bridge Primary School to New Road Methodist Church, Mount Street, Great Bridge.

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GREETTS GREEN AND LYNG

Current Polling Station for the GGB and GGF districts: Hanbury Primary School

Current Polling Station for the GGD and GGE districts: Lyng Primary School

In looking for alternative locations for these school-based Polling Stations, a total of five new potential venues were initially identified and, following site visits, two of them were considered to be suitable.

Wood Lane Community Centre.

The Community Centre sits at the junction of Wood Lane and Claypit Lane. It has its own car park and a good amount of on-street car parking available too.

It is therefore proposed that voters living in the GGB district are allocated to this Centre. This will be instead of voters going to Hanbury Primary School.

Good Shepherd with St John's Church

This venue, situated at the borders of the GGD and GGF districts (at the junction of Bromford Lane and Lyttleton Street) has an on-site car park (accessed from Blacksmith Way) and on-street car parking available too.

It is therefore proposed that voters living in the GGD, GGE and GGF wards will go to this new Polling Place; which has the capacity to house two Polling Stations:

- i) one for voters in GGD and GGE districts and
- ii) one for voters in the GGF district.

By transferring voters to these new Polling Places, this will enable Hanbury Primary and Lyng Primary schools to remain open on election days.

A ward member has indicated support for these proposals.

Recommendation:

The Polling Place/Station for the following sites change as indicated:

GGB district transfers from Hanbury Primary School to Wood Lane Community Centre, Wood Lane, West Bromwich

GGD and GGE districts transfer from Lyng Primary School to Good Shephard with St John's Church, Bromford Lane, West Bromwich

GGF district transfers from Hanbury Primary School to Good Shephard with St John's Church, Bromford Lane, West Bromwich.

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HATELEY HEATH

Following consultation with ward members, there are no proposed changes in the Hateley Heath ward at the present time.

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LANGLEY

**Current Polling Station for the LAB and LAG districts:
Temporary huts at York Road Social Club**

The grounds of the York Road Social Club currently accommodate two temporary huts on polling day. One hut serves voters living in the LAB district, the other, voters in the LAG district.

It is proposed that, going forward, the Club only has one temporary hut in its grounds. This hut will serve voters living in the LAG district as well as voters who live in the LAB district to the west of the M5 motorway, e.g. in roads such as Titford Lane, Durham Road and Richards Close.

Electors living in the LAB district to the east of the Motorway, e.g. in roads such as Ashes Road, Pool Lane, Titford Road and Swan Crescent, will be directed to the Causeway Green Methodist Church in Penncricket Lane (see LAF below).

The proposals detailed in this section will therefore see a net reduction of one temporary hut.

Current Polling Station for the LAF district: Causeway Green Primary School

Following a site visit to the Causeway Green Methodist Church in Penncricket Lane, it was considered that the Church Hall would prove to be a suitable venue to accommodate a Polling Station. It has both on- and off-street parking available.

The church is situated within the LAF district and is immediately adjacent to the existing school-based Polling Station.

By transferring voters to this new Polling Places, this will enable Causeway Green Primary School to remain open on election days.

It is therefore proposed to re-locate the existing Polling Station for LAF to the Church, where it will also accommodate voters living in the East side of the LAB district (see above).

No objections were received from any of the ward members to these proposals

Recommendation:

The Polling Place/Station for the LAF district transfers from Causeway Green Primary School to Causeway Green Methodist Church, Penncricket Lane, Oldbury

The Polling Place/Station for eastern part of the LAB district transfers also transfers to Causeway Green Methodist Church, Penncricket Lane, Oldbury

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NEWTON

No changes to existing Polling Stations are proposed at the present time.

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OLDBURY

**Current Polling Station for the OLC district:
The Meadows School**

**Current Polling Station for the OLE district:
Rounds Green Primary School**

Following a site visit to the Community Hall at the Balaji Temple in Dudley Road East, it was considered that this would prove to be a suitable Polling Station.

The Hall is situated at the entrance to the Balaji Temple site, is in OLC and neighbours the District's existing Polling Station at The Meadows School.

It is also being proposed that the Temple accommodates voters living in the adjoining OLE district, currently served by Rounds Green Primary School. The distance from the furthest point in the OLE district to the Temple, is a 16-minute walk / a 0.8 mile journey.

The Balaji Temple site enjoys ample parking facilities.

By transferring voters to this new Polling Place, this will enable both The Meadows School and Rounds Green Primary School to remain open on election days and it is therefore proposed to re-locate these two existing Polling Stations to the Temple's Community Hall.

**Current Polling Station for the OLF district:
Tividale Community Primary School**

Following a recent site visit to the St Michael the Archangel, Tividale Road, Tividale (entrance opposite Gate Street) it was considered that this would prove to be a suitable polling station.

The site sits within the OLF district and has ample car parking facilities.

By transferring voters to this new Polling Places, this will enable the Tividale Community Primary School to remain open on election days.

It is therefore proposed to re-locate the existing Polling Station to the St Michael the Archangel Church.

No objections were received from any of the ward members to either of these proposals.

Recommendation:

The Polling Place/Station for the OLC and OLE Districts transfer from The Meadows School and from Rounds Green Primary School respectively to the Balaji Temple, Dudley Road East, Tividale.

The Polling Place/Station for the OLF district transfers from Tividale Hall Primary School to St Michael the Archangel Church, Tividale Road, Tividale.

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OLD WARLEY

**Current Polling station for OWA district:
Brandhall Primary School**

In seeking an alternative to using Brandhall Primary School as a Polling Station and following a site visit, Elections staff concluded that the Oaktree Centre at Kings Community Church in Tame Road would prove a suitable venue. Although located just outside the OWA boundary, the

Church was in a convenient location for voters. The Centre is a 6-minute walk/0.3 miles from the School.

By re-locating to the Centre, this would enable Brandhall Primary School to remain open on Polling days.

It is also proposed that voters living in the OWH district are also re-directed to this new Polling Station, i.e. rather than to their existing Station of Perryfields Primary School. (see also below).

Current Polling Station for OWG and OWH: Perryfields Primary School

Perryfields Primary School currently serves voters living in both the OWG and OWH districts.

In seeking an alternative to this School as a Polling station, Electoral Services also considered using the Oaktree Centre at Kings Community Church (see above).

It was concluded, however, that given the way the district boundaries fall, it was not practical to move voters from both OWG and OWH districts to the Centre, that is, in addition to voters in the OWA district.

The Centre was, however, considered to be a more convenient location for voters living in the OWH district than the school and so it is proposed that voters in this district are re-located here.

A more suitable venue was not, unfortunately, identified for voters living the OWG district, but Electoral Services will continue to look for alternatives to the school and will be particularly mindful of this district in forthcoming boundary reviews.

A ward member indicated support for these proposals

Recommendation:

The Polling Place/Station for the OWA and OWH districts transfer to the Oaktree Centre at Kings Community Church, Tame Road, Oldbury from Brandhall Primary and Perryfields Primary Schools respectively.

PRINCES END

Current Polling Station for PEB district: Wednesbury Oak Academy

In attempts to identify an alternative site for a Polling Station in the PEB district, a site visit was recently made to the Tipton Sports Academy Social Club in Wednesbury Oak Road, Tipton.

As members will be aware, the site shares its car park with the Tipton Sports Academy.

Members will also be aware that the Sports Academy usually acts as the Council's election count venue but, because of the Centre's usage as a Covid vaccination hub, the count was relocated to the Sandwell Valley for the elections in May 2021.

It is hoped that the Count can return to the Sports Academy in May 2022.

Although part of the same large building, The Sports Academy and the Social Club buildings have separate entrances/exits to each other.

In the event that the Count is able to return to the Tipton Sports Academy in May 2022, it is expected that preparations for the start of the Count at 10pm and a functioning Polling Station (which will close at 10pm) can be managed and kept distinct and separate from each other.

It is therefore recommended that the Tipton Sports Academy Social Club becomes the Polling Station for the PEB district.

By transferring voters from the school to this new Polling Place, this will enable Wednesbury Oak Academy to remain open on election days.

No objections to this proposal were received from any of the ward members.

Current Polling station for the PED district: Glebefields Primary School

The PED district is adjacent to one of the smallest Polling districts in the borough, i.e. PEC. The Polling Station for PEC is St Mark's Church Hall in Ocker Hill Road.

It is proposed that by merging the two Polling Places into one, (i.e. to be based in the Church Hall) this will enable Glebefields Primary School to remain open on election days. Also, because of the way the Polling District boundaries are currently drawn, this move would actually result in many voters living in the PED district having less distance to travel to their Polling Station.

As part of the consultation process, one ward member suggested merging the Polling Station for PED with the Polling Station located at Glebefields Library. In considering this suggestion, Electoral Services felt that there would be better overall balance of numbers of voters aligned to Stations, if the original proposal to merge the School with the Church was pursued.

Recommendation:

The Polling Place for the PEB district is transferred from Wednesbury Oak Academy to Tipton Sports Academy Social Club, Wednesbury Oak Road, Tipton

The Polling Place for the PED district is transferred from Glebefields Primary School to St Marks Church Hall, Ocker Hill Road, Tipton.

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ROWLEY

Usual Polling Station for the ROF district: Brickhouse Primary School

Following a request from the headteacher of Brickhouse Primary School not to use it as a Polling Station for the May 2021 election, Electoral Services were able to arrange for the neighbouring Brickhouse Community Centre to be used instead.

Agreement was originally made on the basis that this would be a “one-off” to see how successful the move was.

There were no reported issues and so, it is proposed that this move becomes a more permanent arrangement. By taking this course of action, this means the Brickhouse Primary School can continue to remain open on election days with, where necessary, and by agreement, appropriate security measures in place.

No objections to this proposal were received from any of the ward members

Recommendation:

The Polling Place for the ROF district is transferred from Brickhouse Primary School to Brickhouse Community Centre, Dudhill Road, Rowley Regis.

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ST PAUL'S

Current Polling Station for SPB district: Rood End Primary (SPB district)

The Polling Places for a) the SPB district (Rood End Primary School) and b) SPA district (St John's Church and Community Centre) are only a 6-minute walk/0.3 miles apart.

By merging the two Polling Places together, and by being based at the Church and Community Centre, this will enable the school to remain open on election days.

The Church and Community Centre has capacity to accommodate the additional voters who will be visiting it.

It is therefore proposed to merge these two Polling Stations together at St John's Church and Community Centre and for the school to remain open on Polling day.

**Current Polling Station for the SPE district:
Galton Valley Primary School**

A site visit to the Brasshouse Community Centre in Brasshouse Lane found this to be an ideal venue for a Polling Station. The Centre is just a 3-minute walk from the school and lies in the heart of the SPE district, with ample car parking and easy access into and around the building.

By transferring voters to this new Polling Place, this will enable Galton Valley Primary School to remain open on election days.

It is therefore proposed to relocate the Polling Station to the Community Centre for the elections in May 2022 and thereafter.

No objections to either of these proposals were received from any of the ward members.

Recommendation:

The Polling Place for the SPB transfers from Rood End Primary School to St Johns Church and Community Centre, St Johns Road.

The Polling Place for SPE district transfers from Galton Valley Primary School to Brasshouse Community Centre, Brasshouse Lane, Smethwick.

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SMETHWICK

No changes to existing Polling Stations are proposed at the present time.

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SOHO AND VICTORIA

Current Polling station for the SVE district: Cape Primary School

The Polling Station is currently based in Cape Primary School, in the southern edge of the Polling district.

By transferring voters to a non-school-based Polling Place, this will enable the school to remain open on election days.

Two potential suitable alternative sites were identified, but the preferred venue is the CAP centre; an existing Polling Station which lies just outside the SVE district boundary on Windmill Lane.

If the proposal to relocate to this location is approved, the building would still have the capacity to deal with the additional voters from the SVE district on polling day. From the furthest point in the SVE district it's a 9-minute walk/0.5 miles away, according to Googlemaps.

The Centre has good parking facilities (both on and off-site) and is a well-known community resource.

As part of the consultation process, no views on the proposals were received from Ward members.

Recommendation:

The Polling Place for the SVE district transfers from Cape Primary School to the Community Action Project (CAP), Windmill Lane, Smethwick.

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TIPTON GREEN

Although a suggestion for an alternative Polling station in this district was received from a ward member, it was not possible to pursue this idea because the owner of the particular building in question was unwilling to allow it to be used for our purposes.

Therefore, no changes to existing Polling Stations are proposed at the present time.

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TIVIDALE

Current Polling Station for the TIE district: Residents Lounge in Darley House

Due to forthcoming refurbishment work at Darley House, it is unlikely that this venue can be used as a Polling Station in May 2022 and so an alternative venue needed to be sought.

A site visit to Portway Lifestyle Centre, also located within the TIE district, has confirmed there is a room suitable to be a Polling Station and so, it's proposed to move the Station to this venue for the May 2022 elections. Darley House and the Lifestyle Centre are an 8-minute walk/0.4 miles apart.

The room identified as being suitable for the Polling Station is at the rear of the Lifestyle Centre, near to the Centre's Car Park. Voters who visit on foot, would be directed into the Centre and through the building to the Polling Station.

Should this new venue prove to be successful, it is proposed to continue to use this facility for future elections, too. No objections to these proposals were received from any of the ward members.

Recommendation:

The Polling Place for the TIE district transfers from Residents Lounge in Darley House to Portway Lifestyle Centre, Newbury Lane, Oldbury.

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WEDNESBURY NORTH

**Current Polling Station for the WNE District:
Temporary hut on the Car Park of Holyhead Primary School.**

For the May 2021 elections, this Polling Station moved from its previous location, inside the school itself, to a temporary hut on the school car park. However, following a drive to reduce the number of Temporary huts used as Polling Stations, an alternative, permanent site was sought within the district.

The Wednesbury Leisure Centre lies within the WNE district and offers ample space for a Polling Station and for car parking. Following a recent site visit, it is considered to be a suitable alternative venue for a Polling Station.

By transferring voters to this new Polling Place, this enables Holyhead Primary School to continue to remain open on election days and will improve the voter experience by the virtue of the fact that voting wouldn't be taking place in a temporary hut. This re-location will also deliver savings by avoiding the costs associated with hiring a temporary hut.

No objections to these proposals were received from any of the ward members.

Recommendation:

The Polling Place for the WNE district transfers from a temporary hut on the car park of Holyhead Primary School to Wednesbury Leisure Centre, High Bullen, Wednesbury.

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WEDNESBURY SOUTH

No changes to existing Polling Stations are proposed at the present time.

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WEST BROMWICH CENTRAL

Current Polling Station for the WBG district: BT Building

For the May 2021 elections, voters in the WBG district were re-directed from their usual Polling station, West Bromwich Town Hall, to the BT Building in Providence Place.

This move took place because, at the time of the election, the Town Hall was being used as a Covid testing/vaccination site and Providence Place was available to use.

Now that West Bromwich Town Hall is no longer being used in this way and that Providence Place is no longer in council ownership, it is proposed to re-locate the Polling Station back into the Town Hall for the May 2022 elections.

The proposed move back to the Town Hall has received the support of a ward member.

Recommendation:

The Polling Place for the WBG district transfers from the BT Building to West Bromwich Town Hall, High Street, West Bromwich (entrance via Lodge Road)

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