

## **SELECTION & CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**9<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2014**

### **POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW 2014**

A Meeting of the Council's Parish Council Review and Polling District Review Task Group was held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 to consider the Polling Districts and Polling Places Review 2014 report.

The Task Group made a recommendation to Selection & Constitutional Review Committee and Council to agree the report.

The notes of the Meeting containing that recommendation and the papers considered by the Task Group have been appended for information.

#### **Recommended:**

**That Selection & Constitutional Review Committee notes the discussion and agrees to recommend that the Council agrees the Polling Districts and Polling Places report.**

# Parish Council Review and Polling District Review Task Group

Notes of a Meeting of the Parish Council Review and Polling District Review Task Group held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014.

## Present:

Councillor Mrs Bell (Chairman);  
Councillor Claughton (Vice Chairman);

Cllrs. Apps, Britcher, Davidson, Mortimer.

## Also Present:

Mr J Rivers – Kent Association of Local Councils.

Electoral Services Manager – Valma Page; Electoral Services Officer – Vanessa Collick-Yeandle; Principal Solicitor for Property & Projects – Sarah Hartles; Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer – Rosie Reid.

## 1. Polling Districts and Polling Places Review 2014

- 1.1 The Task Group Members introduced themselves, and the Chairman explained that this was the first meeting of the Task Group and the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the report relating to the review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations. She advised that consultation had ended on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014 and that the Task Group were to consider the report and make recommendations to the Selection and Constitutional Review Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> October. The publication of the new register was planned for 1<sup>st</sup> December.
- 1.2 In response to a question about disabled access to the polling stations, Valma Page responded that some form of audit had been undertaken by the Council previously, although she did not know the exact details. She said that when the Disability Discrimination Act came into being, all Authorities were obliged to review their polling stations to ensure they complied with the new legislation, and inspectors had checked venues for satisfactory disabled access. She acknowledged that the disabled access to some buildings was not ideal and occasionally the designated disabled access was via a separate entrance to the building not in general use for the election. This sometimes relied on polling staff opening the doors as required when alerted by voters or even tellers that they required access through a different entrance. However, under the Act, it was the owner of the building who was responsible for ensuring compliance with the Act. It was noted that disabled voters often opted to vote by post, and that there had been no consultation complaints regarding access for disabled voters. However, the Task Group agreed that

all disabled voters should have the choice of voting in person and that access should be available at every polling station.

- 1.3 It was noted that in Bockhanger Ward the two polling stations were not actually situated within the ward itself, but Valma Page said that suitable polling stations only needed to be in the vicinity of the polling place and were not always available in the immediate area.
- 1.4 Valma Page said that she had reservations concerning the use of the RCCG Church Hall on Maidstone Road as a polling station, as she felt it was unsuitable for a number of reasons. She also said that the seven mobile polling stations were not ideal as the access for disabled voters was not completely satisfactory, but that they would continue to be used for the present due to the lack of suitable alternative community buildings in each area. She explained that the polling station locations could be changed at a later date without having to report back to Committee.
- 1.5 With regard to a consultation response on the polling station in Shottenden, which had been removed following the previous polling districts and polling places review in 2011, no comments had been received by Ashford Borough Council following the change of venue, and the Parish Clerk had confirmed that the Parish Council had also received no complaints regarding this alteration.
- 1.6 It was agreed that more thought needed to be given to improving the signposting for polling stations, and Valma Page said that she was going to look into the possibility of purchasing A-frame boards to give more prominence to notices. She explained the difficulties in signposting due to the constraints of only using the space immediately around the facility. She said that each polling station needed to be considered individually with regard to how best to display signs. It was suggested that signs could also be displayed at a higher level using carbon fibre poles with a notice at the top, which could be kept within the confines of the polling station. It was considered that due to recent and future housing developments in the Borough there would be a number of new voters in the area and signposting and promoting polling stations would be a key issue. Sarah Hartles advised that the Boundary Commission were due to carry out a review of wards after May 2015 and the Council were looking at whether to carry out a Community Governance Review to consider the impact of the planned new developments. Any Review would lead to a consideration of the location of polling places in those areas affected.
- 1.7 In response to a question, Valma Page advised that there had not been any complaints regarding tellers in the last three elections, and she considered this was more of an issue in the past than at present. One Member assured the Group that tellers were well-briefed before election day. The Group acknowledged that the behaviour of tellers at the polling stations was the responsibility of the appointing agent, and not Members. Guidelines on the behaviour, rules and regulations for tellers were available, and Valma Page undertook to circulate these guidelines to the Group. One Member noted that

problems were caused where three or four parties were represented at a polling station and were not working together, and this was when voters got upset. It was considered that this situation could sometimes be intimidating for voters, but that it was difficult to legislate against and was part of the prevailing democratic system.

- 1.8 One Member said he would like to see more restrictions with regard to parking at polling stations. He considered that there should be areas of 'no parking' which were left available for disabled voters. It was agreed that this was a matter for KCC Highways, but Valma Page said she would discuss this issue with colleagues from other Kent councils.
- 1.9 There was a suggestion that the William Harvey Hospital car park could be used as a possible polling station, and Valma Page said she welcomed all suggestions regarding appropriate alternative venues.

### **Recommendation**

**That the Selection and Constitutional Review Committee note the above discussion and agree to recommend that the Council agrees the Polling Districts and Polling Places report.**

Councillor Mrs Bell  
Chairman – Parish Council Review & Polling District Review Task Group

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Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact Rosie Reid:  
Telephone: 01233 330565 Email: [rosie.reid@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:rosie.reid@ashford.gov.uk)  
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: [www.ashford.gov.uk/committees](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/committees)



## ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

### **Statutory Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Ashford Borough Council in pursuance of the powers conferred upon it by sections 18A to 18E of the Representation of the People Act 1983 shall undertake a review of the parliamentary polling districts and parliamentary polling places within its area.

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. The next compulsory review must now be started and completed between 1 October 2013 and 31 January 2015 (inclusive).

The consultation period for the review will commence on **Tuesday 22 April 2014** and end on **Monday 2 June 2014**.

We are looking for feedback on any aspect of polling districts and/or polling places currently used and invite representation and comments from interested persons.

Representations will be sought from the Acting Returning Officers for both Parliamentary constituencies. Local political parties and councillors will be consulted and views are invited from electors within the Ashford Borough Council Area as well as such persons as may have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability. Local community groups will also be consulted.

Although the review is of polling districts and polling places it is accepted that polling stations are inexorably linked to the review and comments are invited regarding those stations currently used and/or any suggested alternatives. Please note the review does not cover Ward and Parish boundaries.

Information regarding the current polling districts and places can be found on the Council's web site or from Electoral Services on the links below.

<http://www.ashford.gov.uk/maps>

<http://maps.ashford.gov.uk/imf/sites/EXTElections/jsp/launch.jsp>

Any revised arrangement will come in to effect when the register is published on 1 December 2014.

Comments and representations should be sent in writing to:

John Bunnett  
Chief Executive  
Ashford Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Tannery Lane  
Ashford  
Kent TN23 1PL

Tel: 01233 330402/330462

Email: [vote@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:vote@ashford.gov.uk)

Ashford Borough Council  
Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2014

Consultation responses

Chilham Parish Council would like to comment on the existing arrangements by making the complaint that the polling facility in Shottenden has been removed.

Please could you confirm receipt of this contribution.

Regards

Geoff Dear  
Parish Clerk

The only comment is, no complaint has been made to me  
Councillor George Koowaree

You will recall I took the initiative in the 2011 election to advise on Downs North Ward Optimisation.

There are no further modifications necessary

Thank you

Regards

Doug Marriott

My comments are:

- 1 Polling Stations should be better signposted, eg for the Tenterden by-Election there were claims that no signposts existed for motorists and pedestrians.
- 2 The rules for behaviour at Polling Stations needs to be emphasised, eg candidates have been seen entering them while wearing rosettes.
- 3 Although probably not under consideration, Double Wards create difficulties, particularly if the two Councillors are from different Parties. Also the Ward size usually means Parishes with completely different needs and interests are joined together in the Double Ward.
- 4 Otherwise my personal experience is that Polling Stations are well or reasonably placed and the Officers manning them do a good job.

Regards,  
Peter

Councillor Davison

**Ashford Borough Council's Review Schedule for Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations**

The Acting Returning Officer (ARO) for the Ashford Parliamentary Constituency considers that all polling stations represent the most suitable locations available to serve the electors of the polling districts. The Saxon Shore Borough Ward falls within the Folkestone & Hythe Parliamentary Constituency and the Acting Returning Officer for this constituency has been consulted with regard to this area, no response has been received. Unless indicated otherwise, all polling stations are generally accessible by voters with disabilities. Where polling stations are not wholly accessible to voters with disabilities, efforts will continue to encourage and support improvements to access where possible or to seek more suitable alternative accommodation. Please note that all polling places/stations were assessed for the elections held in May 2013 by the Elections team and we are currently reviewing information provided by Presiding Officers and Polling Station Inspectors from the elections held on 22 May 2014. Whilst every effort is made to ensure that polling stations are accessible and convenient to all electors, suitable premises are not always available within the surrounding area.

Ward	Parish	Polling District	Polling District Name	Polling Place / Station	Notes	Comparison Polling District Electorate 01-Jul-11	Polling District Electorate As at 12-Feb-14	Parish/Ward Electorate
Aylesford Green (Ashford)	No Parish	AG1	Newtown	Swan Community Centre, Turner Close, South Willesborough	No change	587	619	2528
	No Parish	AG2	Aylesford Green	The Scout Hut, Breadlands Road, Willesborough	No change	1122	1909	
	Boughton Aluph & Eastwell (Goat Lees Parish Ward)	BAE1	Boughton Aluph - Goat Lees	Goat Lees Community Hall, Trinity Road, Kennington	No change	1170	1189	
Boughton Aluph & Eastwell (Eastwell Parish Ward)	No Parish	BAE2	Eastwell (Part)	The Iron Room, Faversham Road, Boughton Aluph	No change	56	56	2455
	No Parish	BAE3	Kennington North	United Reformed Methodist Church, Faversham Road, Kennington	No change	492	519	
	Boughton Aluph & Eastwell (Boughton Aluph Parish Ward)	BAE4	Boughton Aluph (Part) The Village	The Iron Room, Faversham Road, Boughton Aluph	No change	324	328	
Boughton Aluph & Eastwell (Eastwell Parish Ward)	Boughton Aluph & Eastwell (Eastwell Parish Ward)	BAE5	Eastwell (Part) The Towers	Goat Lees Community Hall, Trinity Road, Kennington	No change	41	45	2455
	Boughton Aluph & Eastwell (Boughton Aluph Parish Ward)	BAE6	Boughton Aluph (Part) The Towers	Goat Lees Community Hall, Trinity Road, Kennington	No change	299	318	
	No Parish	BE1	Beaver	Beaver Green Nursery School, Cuckoo Lane, Ashford	No change	1431	1402	
Beaver (Ashford)	No Parish	BE2	Brookfield	South Ashford Baptist Church, Brookfield Road	No change	1452	1612	4219



**Ashford Borough Council's Review Schedule for Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations**

Ward	Parish	Polling District	Polling District Name	At or near Polling Place / Station	Notes	Comparison Polling District Electorate 01-Jul-11	Polling District Electorate As at 12-Feb-14	Parish/ Ward Electorate
	No Parish	BE3	Woolreeds	St Francis Church, Cryol Road	No change	1179	1205	
Biddenden	Biddenden	BI1	Biddenden	Biddenden Clubhouse, (Old Hall), Tenterden Road, Biddenden	No change	2079	2051	2051
Bockhanger (Ashford)	No Parish	BO1	Grosvenor Hall	Bockhanger Community Centre, Bybrook Road, Kennington	No change	1468	1486	1892
	No Parish	BO2	The Warren	Furley Hall, Maidstone Road	No change	362	406	
Bybrook (Ashford)	No Parish	BY1	Bybrook	Bockhanger Community Centre, Bybrook Road, Kennington	No change	1975	1977	1977
Charing	Charing (Charing Parish Ward)	CH1	Charing	Charing Parish Hall, Station Road, Charing	No change	2041	2039	2039
Downs North	Chilham	DN1	Dane Street and Stotterden	Chilham Village Hall, Maidstone Road Chilham	No change	799	858	
	Chilham	DN2	Old Wives Lees	Old Wives Lees Village Hall, Long Hill Old Wives Lees, Canterbury	No change	495	506	
	Molash	DN3	Molash	Molash Village Hall, Pound Lane, Molash	No change	224	205	2022
	Godmersham	DN4	Godmersham	Godmersham & Crundale Recreation Hall, The Street, Godmersham	No change	300	304	
	Crundale	DN5	Crundale	Godmersham & Crundale Recreation Hall, The Street, Godmersham	No change	156	149	
Downs West	Hothfield	DW1	Hothfield	Hothfield Village Hall, Park Drive, Hothfield	No change	618	652	
	Westwell	DW2	Westwell	Westwell Village Hall, Gold Hill, Westwell	No change	555	601	2003
	Challock	DW3	Challock	Small Hall, Ground Floor, The New Memorial Hall, Blind Lane, Challock	No change	743	750	

**Ashford Borough Council's Review Schedule for Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations**

Ward	Parish	Polling District	Polling District Name	Polling Place / Station	Notes	Comparison Polling District Electorate 01-Jul-11	Polling District Electorate As at 12-Feb-14	Parish/ Ward Electorate	
Great Chart with Singleton North	Great Chart with Singleton (Great Chart with Singleton North Parish Ward)	GCS1	Great Chart (Village)	Great Chart Village Hall, The Street, Great Chart	No change	705	705	2698	
	Great Chart with Singleton (Great Chart with Singleton North Parish Ward)	GCS2	Great Chart (Buxford Mill)	Singleton Village Hall, Hoxton Close, Singleton	No change	1976	1993		
Godington (Ashford)	No Parish	GO1	Repton	RCCG City of Redemption Parish, Apsley House (Beside St Mary's CE School)	No change	2207	2336	4738	
	No Parish	GO2	Godinton Park	Godinton Village Hall, Loudon Way	No change	2000	2402		
Highfield (Ashford)	No Parish	HI1	Highfield	W1 Hall, Church Road, Willesborough	No change	1696	1664	1904	
	Mersham & Sevington (Sevington North Parish Ward)	HI2	Sevington North	W1 Hall, Church Road, Willesborough	No change	229	240		
		Kenardington	IO1	Kenardington	Kenardington Village Hall, The Wish, Kenardington	No change	193		220
		Appledore	IO2	Appledore	Appledore Village Hall, 76 The Street, Appledore	No change	629		803
Isle of Oxney	Stone-cum-Ebony	IO3	Stone	Stone-cum-Ebony Memorial Hall, The Street, Stone-cum-Ebony	No change	390	386	2160	
	Wittersham	IO4	Wittersham	Wittersham Village Hall Clubroom, The Street, Wittersham	No change	960	951		
	No Parish	KE1	Kennington Lees	W1 Hall, Favensham Road, Kennington	No change	544	561		
	No Parish	KE2	Downs View	St Mary's Church Hall, Church Road, Kennington	No change	1269	1315		
Little Burton Farm	No Parish	LBF1	Little Burton Farm	Mobile Polling Station, Little Burton Centre Shops Richmond Meach Drive, Kennington	No change	1437	1480	2247	

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Ward	Parish	Polling District	Polling District Name	Polling Place / Station	Notes	Comparison Polling District Electorate	Polling District Electorate	Parish/Ward Electorate	
						01-Jul-11	As at 12-Feb-14		
Ashford	No Parish	LBF2	Little Burton Farm - Kennington	Mobile Polling Station, Spearpoint Pavilion Car Park, The Ridge, Kennington	No change	790	767	2070	
			Hampten	United Reformed Methodist Church, Cade Road, Ashford	No change	1145	1175		
Norman (Ashford)	No Parish	NO2	Whitfield	Christchurch Hall, Christchurch Road, Ashford	No change	847	895	3970	
			No Parish	Mobile Polling Station, Jnct of Blackwall Road South & Kennington Road, Willesborough	No change	1243	1180		
North Willesborough (Ashford)	No Parish	NW2	Hythe Road	Christchurch Hall, Ablemarle Road, Willesborough	No change	2659	2790	2537	
			Kingsnorth (Westhawk Parish Ward)	Mobile Polling Station, Millbank Road, adj to Augustus Walk, Kingsnorth	No change	918	935		
Park Farm North	Kingsnorth (Park Farm North Parish Ward)	PFN2	Park Farm North	Park Farm Recreation Centre, Field View, Park Farm	No change	1557	1602	2104	
			Park Farm South	Park Farm Recreation Centre, Field View, Park Farm	No change	2077	2104		
Rolvenden & Tenterden West	Tenterden (Tenterden West Town Ward)	RTW1	Tenterden West	The Glebe Hall, Church Road	No change	595	661	2038	
			Newenden	Newenden Village Hall, Lossenham Lane, Newenden	No change	182	172		
			Rolvenden (Rolvenden Streyte Parish Ward)	Rolvenden	Rolvenden Village Hall, High Street, Rolvenden	No change	842		864
			Rolvenden (Rolvenden Layne Parish Ward)	Rolvenden Layne	31 Maytham Road, Rolvenden Layne	No change	329		341
Stanhope	Stanhope (Stanhope Central Parish Ward)	SH1	Stanhope Central	Stanhope Parish Rooms, Otterden Close	No change	1695	1998	2157	

**Ashford Borough Council's Review Schedule for Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations**

Ward (Ashford)	Parish	Polling District	Polling District Name	At or near	Notes	Comparison Polling District Electorate	Polling District Electorate	Parish/ Ward Electorate	
						01-Jul-11	As at 12-Feb-14	2707	
Singleton South	Stanhope (The Limes Parish Ward)	SH2	Stanhope The Limes	Stanhope Parish Rooms, Otterden Close	No change	156	159		
	Great Chart with Singleton (Singleton South Parish Ward)	SI1	Singleton	Singleton Village Hall, Hoxton Close, Singleton	No change	2280	2418	2418	
St Michaels	Tenderden (St Michaels Town Ward)	SM1	St Michaels	St Michaels Hall, Grange Road, St Michaels	No change	1911	1874	1874	
	Brook	SS1	Brook	Brook Village Hall, The Street, Brook	No change	260	257		
	Hastingleigh	SS2	Hastingleigh	Evington Hall, The Street, Hastingleigh	No change	202	207		
	Brabourne	SS3-1	Brabourne	Brabourne Village Hall, Lees Road, Brabourne	No change	371	374		
	Brabourne	SS3-2	Brabourne Lees	Brabourne Baptist Church Hall, Plain Road Smeeth,	No change	755	743		
	Smeeth	SS4	Smeeth	Brabourne Baptist Church, Plain Road Smeeth,	No change	725	721		
	Saxon Shore	Aldington & Bonnington (Aldington Parish Ward)	SS5	Aldington	The Fraser Room, Aldington Village Hall, Goldwell Lane, Aldington	No change	923	972	
		Aldington & Bonnington (Bonnington Parish Ward)	SS6	Bonnington	The Fraser Room, Aldington Village Hall, Goldwell Lane, Aldington	No change	83	93	4221
		Bilsington	SS7	Bilsington	Bilsington Village Hall, Newchurch Road, Bilsington	No change	225	255	
		Ruckinge	SS8	Ruckinge	Ruckinge Village Hall, Hamstreet Road, Ruckinge	No change	227	238	
Ruckinge		SS9	Upper Ruckinge	Bromley Green Hall, Bromley Green Road, Upper Ruckinge	No change	364	361		
No Parish		ST1	Northbrooke	Furley Hall, Maidstone Road	No change	2093	2134		

**Ashford Borough Council's Review Schedule for Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations**

Ward	Parish	Polling District	Polling District Name	At or near	Notes	Comparison Polling District Electorate 01-Jul-11	Polling District Electorate As at 12-Feb-14	Parish/ Ward Electorate
Stour (Ashford)	No Parish	ST2	Knatchbull	Ashford North Youth Centre, Mableton Avenue, Ashford	No change	1717	1758	3892
	No Parish	SW1	South Willesborough	The Salvation Army Hall, 115 Cudworth Road, South Willesborough	No change	2545	2559	2559
South Willesborough (Ashford)	No Parish	SW1	South Willesborough	The Salvation Army Hall, 115 Cudworth Road, South Willesborough	No change	2545	2559	2559
	Tenterden (Tenterden North Town Ward)	TN1	Homewood	Trinity Baptist Church Hall, Ashford Road, Tenterden	No change	727	745	
Tenterden North	Tenterden (Tenterden North Town Ward)	TN2	East Cross	Trinity Baptist Church Hall, Ashford Road, Tenterden	No change	638	644	1887
	Tenterden (Tenterden North Town Ward)	TN3	West Cross	The Glebe Hall, Church Road, Tenterden,	No change	496	498	
Tenterden South	Tenterden (Tenterden South Town Ward)	TS1	Tenterden South	Rainbow Room, Tenterden Leisure Centre, Recreation Ground Road, Tenterden	No change	1956	2007	2007
	No Parish	VI1	Watercross	Mobile Polling Station, Ford Way, Ashford	No change	1123	1118	
Victoria (Ashford)	No Parish	VI2	Town Centre	The Parish Hall, The Church Yard, Ashford	No change	791	889	3939
	No Parish	VI3	Station	Evangelical Church Hall, Francis Road, Ashford	No change	1922	1932	
Washford	Kingsnorth (Washford Farm Parish Ward)	WA1	Washford Farm	Mobile Polling Station, Junction of Langney Drive and Stanhope Road, Washford Farm	No change	1162	1181	
	Stanhope (Stanhope Speidhurst Parish Ward)	WA2	Stanhope Speidhurst	Mobile Polling Station, Junction of Langney Drive and Stanhope Road, Washford Farm	No change	332	357	2556
	Kingsnorth (Brisley Farm Parish Ward)	WA3	Brisley Farm	Mobile Polling Station, Land at Merino Way,	No change	955	1018	
	High Halden	WC1	High Halden	High Halden Memorial Hall, Ashford Road, High Halden	No change	1321	1440	
Bethersden	WC2	Bethersden	Bethersden Village Hall, Forge Hill, Bethersden	No change	1246	1264		

**Ashford Borough Council's Review Schedule for Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations**

Ward	Parish	Polling District	Polling District Name	At or near	Notes	Comparison Polling District Electorate 01-Jul-11	Polling District Electorate As at 12-Feb-14	Parish/Ward Electorate								
Weald Central	Pluckley	WC3	Pluckley	Pluckley Village Hall, Fir Toll, Station Road, Pluckley	No change	893	882	4122								
									Little Chart	WC4	Little Chart	Little Chart Village Hall, The Street, Little Chart	No change	196	197	
Weald East	Mersham & Sevington (Mersham Parish Ward)	WE1	Mersham	The Mountbatten Hall, The Forstal, Mersham	No change	896	893	2204								
									Mersham & Sevington (Sevington South Parish Ward)	WE2	Sevington South	The Mountbatten Hall, The Forstal, Mersham	No change	93	40	
	Kingsnorth (Kingsnorth Village Parish Ward)	WE3	Kingsnorth Village (Part)	Kingsnorth Village Hall, Church Hill, Kingsnorth	No change	907	1271									
									Egerton	WN1	Egerton	The Games Barn, Rock Hill Road, Egerton	No change	878	882	1982
Weald North	Smeden	WN2	Smeden	Hop Pocket, Smeden Charter Hall, Chessenden Lane, Smeden	No change	1069	1100									
									Orlestone	WS1	Orlestone	Victory Hall, Ruckinge Road, Hamstreet	No change	1125	1132	
																Warehorne
Weald South	Shadoxhurst	WS3	Shadoxhurst	Shadoxhurst Village Hall, Hornash Lane, Shadoxhurst	No change	992	981	4374								
									Woodchurch	WS4	Woodchurch	Woodchurch Village Hall Annexe, Front Road, Woodchurch	No change	1641	1716	

Ashford Borough Council's Review Schedule for Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

Ward	Parish	Polling District	Polling District Name	At or near Polling Place / Station	Notes	Comparison Polling District Electorate 01-Jul-11	Polling District Electorate As at 12-Feb-14	Parish/ Ward Electorate
	Kingsnorth (Stubbs Cross Parish Ward)	WS5	Stubbs Cross	St Francis of Assisi Mission Hall, Maple Hall Road, Stubbs Cross	No change	219	238	
Wye	Wye with Hinxhill	WY1	Wye with Hinxhill	Wye Village Hall, Bridge Street, Wye	No change	1841	1845	1845
<b>Total Electorate:</b>						<b>87961</b>	<b>91565</b>	<b>91565</b>

## Polling Places & Polling District Review 2014 Timetable

Notice of Review (Commencement)	Tuesday 22 April 2014
End of consultation period Deadline for representations	Monday 2 June 2014
Parish & Polling District Review Task Group	This would have to be arranged by member services once they see our timetable. (About 3 weeks before)
Ready for agenda	1 October 2014
Selection & CR	9 October 2014
Council Meeting	16 October 2014
Publication of review result (Subject to Council approval)	
Publication of the register	Monday 1 December 2014



## **Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places Guidance**

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### **Appendices**

- Appendix A Extract from the RPA 1983 (as inserted by Section 16 of the EAA 2006)
- Appendix B Extract from Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 2965

## **1. What is the difference between a polling district, a polling place and a polling station?**

A polling district is a geographical sub-division of an electoral area, i.e. a UK Parliamentary constituency, a European Parliamentary electoral region, a ward or an electoral division.

A polling place is a geographical area in which a polling station is located. However, as there is no legal definition of what a polling place is the geographical area could be defined as tightly as a particular building or as widely as the entire polling district.

A polling station is the actual area where the process of voting takes place, and must be located within the polling place designated for the particular polling district.

## **2. Polling districts**

### **2.1 Who is responsible for designating polling districts?**

Every relevant authority in the UK is responsible for dividing its area into polling districts for UK Parliamentary elections for so much of any constituency as is situated in its area, and for keeping the polling districts under review.

For European Parliamentary elections, the same polling districts as designated for UK Parliamentary elections are to be used unless the relevant authority considers that there are special circumstances that make alternative designations appropriate.

For local government elections, a local authority may divide its designated electoral areas (i.e. wards or electoral divisions) into polling districts.

Although there is no requirement to sub-divide local government electoral areas into polling districts, it is recognised good practice to do so. When doing so, every effort must be made to ensure that the polling district scheme for local government elections mirrors as closely as possible that agreed for parliamentary elections.

### **2.2 What is the definition of a relevant authority?**

- a) In England, the council of a district or London borough;
- b) In Scotland, a local authority; and
- c) In Wales, the council of a county or county borough

### **2.3 What are the rules?**

When designating polling districts, relevant authorities must seek to ensure that all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.

In addition, and unless there are special circumstances that lead the authority to determine otherwise, each parish in England and each community in Wales must be in a separate polling district.

Similarly in Scotland, each electoral ward must be divided into two or more separate polling districts.

### **2.4 What is the Electoral Registration Officer's responsibility?**

Where a relevant authority makes any alterations to the polling districts within its area, the Electoral Registration Officer must amend his or her register of electors accordingly.

The changes to the register take effect on the date that the Electoral Registration Officer publishes a notice stating that the adaptations have been made.

It is recommended that alterations to polling districts be timed to coincide with the annual revision of the register of electors. This will help to avoid confusion both for electoral professionals and other recipients of the register.

However, there may be instances where alterations must be made at other times of the year.

### **3. Polling Places**

#### **3.1 Who is responsible for designating polling places?**

Every relevant authority in the UK must designate a polling place for every polling district in the parliamentary constituency unless the size or other circumstances of the polling district are such that the situation of the polling station does not materially affect the convenience of the electorate.

The relevant authority must also keep the polling places under review.

#### **3.2 What are the rules?**

Relevant authorities must:

a) Seek to ensure that all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;

b) Seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled, and when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.

In addition, the polling place for a polling district must be within the area of the district unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area either wholly or partly outside of the polling district.

The polling place must also be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the polling district how they will be able to reach their designated polling station.

Should a relevant authority fail to designate a polling place, the entire polling district will be classed as the polling place for that district.

### **4. Polling Stations**

#### **4.1 Who is responsible for designating polling stations?**

The Returning Officer for the particular election must provide a sufficient number of polling stations, and allot the electors to those polling stations in such manner as he or she thinks the most convenient. They will take in to consideration any guidance provided by the Electoral Commission.

#### **4.2 What are the rules?**

Polling stations must be located within the polling places designated by the relevant authority.

In a UK Parliamentary constituency in Scotland that comprises the whole or any part of more than one local government area, there must be at least one polling station in each of those local government areas.

The election rules permit the Returning Officer to provide one or more polling stations within the same room, and must supply each with a sufficient number of voting compartments.

### **5. Review of polling districts and polling places**

#### **5.1 General background**

Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a number of changes to the Representation of the People Act 1983 in respect of the way in which reviews of polling districts and polling places must be undertaken.

## **5.2 Reviews**

Following the first review which took place in 2011, the relevant authority must then complete a further review of every polling district and polling place before the end of the period of four years starting with the completion of the previous review.

It is important to note that if it wishes to do so, the relevant authority may undertake reviews of all or some of the designated polling districts and polling places at any time, but must undertake a review of each within four years of the previous review.

For administrative convenience, it would seem sensible to review all polling districts and polling places on a regular four-yearly cycle, regardless of whether or not a particular polling district or polling place has been reviewed for some reason e.g. because of an influx of electors in an area or the non availability of a building designated as a polling place in the intervening period.

This will help in ensuring that a consistent approach is taken across the relevant authority's area.

## **5.3 The role of the Returning Officer**

The relevant authority is required to consult the Returning Officer for every parliamentary election held in a constituency that is wholly or partly within its area.

The Returning Officer is required to make representations to the relevant authority, which must include information as to the location of polling stations (both existing and proposed) within polling places (both existing and proposed).

Within thirty calendar days of their receipt, the relevant authority is required to publish the Returning Officer's representations as a minimum:

- at the relevant authority's office;
- at least one other conspicuous place in the area; and
- on the relevant authority's website

## **6. Other representations**

In reviewing polling places, the relevant authority is required to actively seek representations from such persons as it thinks have particular expertise in relation to:

- access to premises; or
- facilities for persons who have different forms of disability

Such persons must be given the opportunity to make representations and to comment on the representations made by the Returning Officer.

## **7. Evaluating the suitability of potential polling places**

Regardless of the expert advice the relevant authority is required to seek, it is important that the accessibility needs of all voters are considered when designating polling places.

There are a number of steps that can be taken to facilitate this process):

Consider the location of the polling place:

- is it located close to where most of the electors in the polling district live?
- is it at the top or bottom of a steep hill?
- does it have suitable access from a road?

- if there is a pavement, does it have a dropped kerb close by?
- are there any convenient public transport links?
- Availability of parking:
- are there adequate parking facilities close to the entrance of the building?
- If not, is there anywhere close by that could be used for parking just on polling day?
- how far do electors have to walk from the car park to the polling station?
- is there a designated disabled parking space, or could one be provided?
- is there a dropped kerb from the parking area to the polling station?

All approaches should:

- have a hard, smooth, non slip surface, without steps, potholes, broken slabs, etc. – graveled surfaces can present difficulties to wheelchair and buggy users;
- not have any severe gradients; and
- be well lit.

Entrance:

- does the building have a level entrance?
- are there any steps to the entrance of the building?
- are the stairs highlighted in any way?
- is there a handrail by the steps?
- is a permanent ramp provided?
- if not, could a temporary ramp with a suitable gradient be provided safely, or is there another entrance which people with disabilities or other electors could use?
- is the door wide enough for a wheelchair user to gain access?
- how heavy are the doors for a frail or elderly person to open? Would they need to be propped open?

Inside the building:

- are there any internal steps or barriers for electors to negotiate?
- are the door mats level with the floor? If not, can they be removed?
- are there any other trip hazards?
- is there a suitable non-slip floor covering? Would it become slippery when wet?
- are there any corridors which may be difficult to negotiate for any electors using wheelchairs or those who find walking difficult?
- in terms of the layout of polling equipment in the room to be used as a polling station, is there enough space in the room for staff, polling equipment and a number of electors, including a wheelchair user?
- is there adequate lighting in the room? Switch on all the lights available to test this;
- is there any need for additional lighting?
- movable mats, heavy curtains trailing on the floor, a mix of carpet and wooden flooring with edging lips in between, and highly polished floors can all be potential hazards.

If the premises has any of these features, can anything be done to remove or improve them?

Another key factor to consider when assessing the suitability of a particular building or location is the facilities available to polling station staff.

It must not be overlooked that staff will be on duty for approximately sixteen hours, and not permitted to leave the premises. Their basic human needs must not be discounted.

Issues to consider include the provision of:

- adequate toilet facilities;
- a kitchen, or at a minimum, access to tea and coffee making facilities;
- adequate heating/cooling;
- a separate area adjacent to the polling station where breaks could potentially be taken;
- a telephone;
- comfortable adult chairs.

## **8. Completion of the review**

On completion of a review, the relevant authority is required to give reasons for its decisions in respect of the designation of both polling districts and polling places

In addition, the authority must publish:

- all correspondence sent to a Returning Officer in connection with the review, and
- all correspondence sent to any person whom the authority thinks has particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability;
- all representations made by any person in connection with the review;
- the minutes of any meetings held by the authority where details of the review have been considered;
- details of the actual designations of polling districts and polling places agreed as a result of the review; and
- Details of where the results of the review have been published.

Schedule A1 does not specify in what manner the relevant authority is required to publish this notice, but it would seem reasonable to follow the principles set out in the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006 for the publication of a Returning Officer's representations.

## **9. The role of the Electoral Commission**

The Electoral Commission has no role in the review process itself, although guidance has been issued to assist relevant authorities in the administration of the reviews.

However, the Commission has an extremely important role in respect of considering representations and observations made that a relevant authority has not conducted a review so as to:

- meet the reasonable requirements of the electors in the constituency, or a body of them (i.e. the reasonable requirements of a particular area of the authority have not been satisfactorily met); or
- take sufficient account of the accessibility to disabled persons of polling stations within a designated polling place

### **9.1 Who may make representation to the Electoral Commission?**

Section 18D (1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 sets out who may make representations to the Electoral Commission, namely:

- in England, any parish council which is wholly or partly situated within the constituency (or parish meeting where there is no such council);
- in Wales, any community council which is wholly or partly situated within the constituency;
- not less than thirty registered electors in the constituency (although electors registered anonymously cannot make such a representation)
- any person (except the Returning Officer) who made representations to the authority when the review was being undertaken; and
- any person who is not an elector in a constituency in the authority's area who the Commission feels has sufficient interest in the accessibility of disabled persons to polling places in the area or has particular expertise in relation to the access to premises or facilities of disabled persons.

In addition, the Returning Officer may make observations on any representations made to the Commission

## **9.2 Review held by the Electoral Commission**

The Electoral Commission is required to consider any such representations and observations, and after doing so, may direct the relevant authority to make any alterations it sees necessary to the polling places designated by the review

Should an authority fail to make the alterations within two months of the direction being given, the Commission may make the alterations itself.

## **10. Non-compliance**

It is important to note that the outcome of an election cannot be questioned simply because a relevant authority, an Electoral Registration Officer, a Returning Officer or the Electoral Commission fails to comply with any or all aspects of a review process

## Appendix A

Extract from the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as inserted by Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006)

### 18A - Polling districts at parliamentary elections

- (1) Every constituency is to be divided into polling districts.
- (2) A relevant authority must—
  - (a) divide its area into polling districts for the purpose of parliamentary elections for so much of any constituency as is situated in its area, and
  - (b) keep the polling districts under review.
- (3) The following rules apply—
  - (a) the authority must seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in its area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
  - (b) in England, each parish is to be a separate polling district;
  - (c) in Wales, each community is to be a separate polling district;
  - (d) in Scotland, each electoral ward (within the meaning of section 1 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2004) is to be divided into two or more separate polling districts.
- (4) Subsection (3) (b) to (d) does not apply if, in any case, there are special circumstances.
- (5) If an alteration of polling districts in an area is made under this section—
  - (a) the registration officer who acts for the area must make such adaptations of his register of parliamentary electors as are necessary to take account of the alteration, and
  - (b) the alteration is effective on the date on which the registration officer publishes a notice stating that the adaptations have been made by him.

### 18B Polling places at parliamentary elections

- (1) A polling place is to be designated for each polling district in a constituency.
- (2) But subsection (1) does not apply if the size or other circumstances of a polling district are such that the situation of the polling stations does not materially affect the convenience of the electors or any body of them.
- (3) A relevant authority must—
  - (a) designate the polling places for the polling districts in its area, and
  - (b) keep the polling places in its area under review.
- (4) The following rules apply—
  - (a) the authority must seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in its area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
  - (b) the authority must seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled;
  - (c) the authority must have regard to the accessibility to disabled persons of potential polling stations in any place which it is considering designating as a polling place or the designation of which as a polling place it is reviewing;
  - (d) the polling place for a polling district must be an area in the district, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the district;
  - (e) the polling place for a polling district must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the district how they will be able to reach the polling station.
- (5) If no polling place is designated for a polling district the polling district is to be taken to be the polling place.

### 18C Review of polling districts and places

- (1) Each relevant authority must complete a review under sections 18A and 18B of all of the polling districts and polling places in its area before the end of the period of 12 months starting with the date on which section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 comes into force.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not apply in the case of a polling district or polling place (as the case may be) which is designated for the first time during that period.
- (3) In such a case, the first review of the polling district or polling place must be completed before the end of the period of four years starting with the date on which that designation is made.



- (4) The authority must complete a further review of each polling district and polling place in its area before the end of the period of four years starting with the completion of the previous such review.
- (5) Subsections (1) to (4) do not prevent a relevant authority carrying out at any time a review of a particular polling district or polling place.
- (6) Schedule A1 has effect in relation to a review.

#### 18D Review of polling districts and places: representations to Electoral Commission

- (1) This section applies if in relation to a constituency in the area of a relevant authority a relevant representation is made to the Electoral Commission by—
  - (a) an interested authority in England and Wales;
  - (b) not less than 30 electors in the constituency;
  - (c) a person (other than the returning officer) who has made representations under Schedule A1;
  - (d) a person who is not an elector in a constituency in the authority's area but who the Commission think has sufficient interest in the accessibility of disabled persons to polling places in the area or has particular expertise in relation to the access to premises or facilities of disabled persons.
- (2) A relevant representation is a representation that a review under section 18A or 18B has not been conducted by a relevant authority so as to—
  - (a) Meet the reasonable requirements of the electors in the constituency or any body of those electors, or
  - (b) Take sufficient account of the accessibility to disabled persons of polling stations within a designated polling place.
- (3) The returning officer for the constituency may make observations on representations made under this section.
- (4) The Electoral Commission must consider such representations and observations and may if they think fit—
  - (a) Direct the relevant authority to make any alterations to the polling places designated by the review which the Commission thinks necessary in the circumstances;
  - (b) If the authority fails to make the alterations before the end of the period of two months starting on the day the direction is given, make the alterations themselves.
- (5) Alterations made by the Electoral Commission under subsection (4) have effect as if they had been made by the relevant authority.
- (6) An interested authority in relation to a constituency in England and Wales is -
  - (a) In England, the council of a parish, or where there is no such council the parish meeting of a parish, which is wholly or partly situated within the constituency;
  - (b) In Wales, the council of a community which is so situated.
- (7) The reference in subsection (1) (b) to electors does not include persons who have an anonymous entry in the register of parliamentary electors or local government electors.

#### 18E Sections 18A to 18D: supplemental

- (1) This section applies for the purposes of sections 18A to 18D.
- (2) No election is to be questioned by reason of -
  - (a) any non-compliance with the provisions of those sections, or
  - (b) any informality relative to polling districts or polling places.
- (3) Each of the following is a relevant authority -
  - (a) in relation to England, the council of a district or London borough;
  - (b) in relation to Scotland, a local authority;
  - (c) in relation to Wales, the council of a county or county borough.
- (4) The following do not apply to Northern Ireland -
  - (a) section 18A (2) to (5);
  - (b) section 18B (2) to (5);
  - (c) sections 18C and 18D,

and in Northern Ireland the polling districts and polling places are those for the time being established under the law relating to local elections within the meaning of section 130 of the Electoral Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1962.

#### SCHEDULE A1 (Section 18C)

#### REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

- (1) The relevant authority must publish notice of the holding of a review.

- (2) The authority must consult the returning officer for every parliamentary election held in a constituency which is wholly or partly in its area.
- (3)
  - (1) every such returning officer must make representations to the authority.
  - (2) The representations must include information as to the location of polling stations (existing or proposed) within polling places (existing or proposed).
  - (3) The representations must be published in such manner as is prescribed.
- (4)
  - (1) The authority must seek representations from such persons as it thinks have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability.
  - (2) Such persons must have an opportunity -
    - (a) To make representations;
    - (b) To comment on the returning officer's representations.
- (5) Any elector in a constituency situated in whole or in part in the authority's area may make representations.
- (6) Representations made by any person in connection with a review of polling places may include proposals for specified alternative polling places.
- (7) On completion of a review the authority must -
  - (a) Give reasons for its decisions in the review;
  - (b) Publish such other information as is prescribed.

## Appendix B

Extract from Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 2965

The Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006  
Citation, commencement and extent

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006 and shall come into force on 1 January 2007.
2. These Regulations extend to England and Wales and Scotland only.

Manner of publication of representations

3. A relevant authority must, within 30 days of receipt, publish representations made by a returning officer for the purposes of the review of polling districts or polling places -
  - (a) by posting a copy of them at its office and in at least one conspicuous place in their area; and
  - (b) if the authority maintains a website, by placing a copy on the authority's website.

Information to be published on completion of a review

4. On completion of a review the authority must publish the following -
  - (a) all correspondence sent to a returning officer in connection with the review;
  - (b) all correspondence sent to any person whom the authority thinks has particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability;
  - (c) all representations made by any person in connection with the review;
  - (d) the minutes of any meeting held by the authority to consider any revision to the designation of polling districts or polling places within its area as a result of the review;
  - (e) details of the designation of polling districts or polling places within its area as a result of the review;
  - (f) details of the places where the results of the review have been published.