

Polling District and Polling Places Review

Consultation Comments

Consultee	Comment
Alison Bacon, Whittlesey Resident	Lattersey and South Ward I think that Lattersey Ward voters will find it easier to vote in Quinion Close and South Ward voters will find it easier to vote at the Leisure Centre.
Mark Southwood, Barnado's	March Child & Family Centre Venue has been successfully used in previous years. It is a suitable polling place and meets the requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location • Size and layout • Suitability • Accessibility • Availability.
Councillor Chris Boden	<p>Whittlesey East and Villages Ward In the new Whittlesey East & Villages Ward, new polling districts are proposed for that element of the new ward currently in Bassenhally Ward: the new polling places for the Birds Estate, The Avenues and Whittlesey Green are proposed to be the Straw Bear Public House and Willow Court, in the proposals being consulted on. The Polling Districts are WHE1 (Birds Estate) and WHE2 (The Avenues and Whittlesey Green). It's WHE2 where it is being suggested that Willow Court in Sorrell Avenue be the polling station.</p> <p>In my experience, Willow Court is not suitable as a polling place, and a better solution for polling district WHE2 would be a mobile polling station at the Straw Bear Car Park (with Alderman Jacob School as a back up location in case of emergency). This replicates the current arrangements for most of the area, where one polling district has the Straw Bear Public House as its polling place whilst the other polling district has the pub's car park as its polling place, where a mobile polling station is located. It is an arrangement which has worked well for several years.</p> <p>It is important to locate polling stations conveniently for voters, or else participation in elections will be reduced. We know that residents' and staff cars are already parking all day at the Willow Court car park, leaving few if any spare parking spaces there throughout the day, so access by car to vote there would be difficult – and few people from the Avenues would even know where Sorrell Avenue is! There are properly designated disabled parking spaces at the entrance to Willow Court, but those are often fully utilized given the mobility issues of many residents in Willow Court. This would leave very poor availability of convenient parking at Willow Court, if it were to be a polling place, for electors with disabilities seeking to access the polling station by car.</p>

	<p>From a local perspective, continuing to have two polling stations in or outside the Straw Bear provides continuity, provides ease of access and provides visibility of polling stations on election days.</p> <p>There are no reasonably close alternative polling places. As an emergency back-up, Alderman Jacob School is a solution which has been previously used, but the disruption caused by using the school as a polling place is considerable and undesirable. However, the next most location available location which is suitable to act as a polling place is the Ivy Leaf Club, and that is an undesirably great distance from these two polling districts.</p>
Headteacher, Cavalry Primary School	<p>Cavalry Primary School (alternative polling station)</p> <p>Cavalry Primary School do not have any part of the building where they can stop the public from wandering through into the classrooms except the school house and that does not have ramped access. Therefore, this site would not make a suitable alternative in its own right.</p>
Chatteris Town Council	<p>The King Edward Centre is no longer available as a back-up polling station for the Emmanuel Church and the Masonic Hall as it is fully booked every day of the week. It is recommended that either the community room at the Fire Station or the Salvation Army Fortress are considered as alternatives.</p>
Elena Chernozemska	<p>Wisbech North (existing polling district EG3)</p> <p>In last years County Council election, polling district EG3 voted at The Boathouse. It will be more convenient for electors living in (or off) Osborne Road to continue to vote at The Boathouse, as we did last year. The Boathouse is more easily accessible than the Oasis Centre.</p>
Elisabeth Clough, Whittlesey Resident	<p>Lattersey Ward</p> <p>I read the Fenland draft Polling Station and Polling Place Review with great surprise. Lattersey Ward has voted for many years at Quinion Close. The boundaries of the wards will, however, be changing. The FDC Review proposes that electors in Lattersey Ward will vote in the Manor Leisure Centre, whilst voters in South Ward will vote in Quinion Close. The reason given for this is that if electors in Quinion Close were to have to vote in (say) the Manor Leisure Centre, then electors would have to pass the Quinion Close polling station to get to their polling station. This argument is totally misguided. Whilst it is true that switching Quinion Close and the Manor Leisure Centre as the polling places for South Ward and Lattersey would mean that three households in Quinion Close would need to pass one polling station to vote in another, your proposals mean that more than half of all voters in Lattersey Ward would have to go past Quinion Close to travel onwards to vote in the Manor Leisure Centre. The Manor Leisure Centre is much closer to the centre of that polling district and is, therefore, a better location for the polling station for that district than Quinion Close. It is unreasonable to make residents here travel any further than needed to vote. I therefore propose that Lattersey Ward votes in Quinion Close and South Ward votes at the Manor Leisure Centre.</p>
Stephanie Brown, Business Manager, Coates Primary School	<p>Coates Primary School (alternative polling station)</p> <p>This is a school building and we have serious concerns for the safety of our children, therefore, would object to the school being used. Our school hall is a Thorofare for two parts of the school, so needs to be used by children and adults. We do have a mobile classroom on our playground, but again the children play outside and the gates must always be kept shut to keep our children safe. The village hall at the top of the road is usually used.</p>

<p>Averil Cosstick, Whittlesey Resident</p>	<p>South Ward Quinion Close is not convenient for most electors to vote in Whittlesey South Town Council Ward. There are lots of public locations more convenient and more central in the polling district, such as Peel House or the Leisure Centre. Please change your proposal so that South Ward voters can vote somewhere more convenient for the vast majority of the electors. Otherwise the election turnout will be even lower than usual.</p>
<p>Diane Cutler</p>	<p>Parson Drove Village Hall Easy to locate, large hall with easy access and parking, disabled access, kitchen, toilets</p>
<p>Returning Officer East Cambridgeshire District Council</p>	<p>As the review is covering the Fenland ward areas and polling stations, has no comments.</p>
<p>Pauline Edge, Whittlesey Resident</p>	<p>Bassenhally Ward I live in the Birds Estate which is that part of Whittlesey north of Drybread Road. There are many bungalows in this area, and there are many residents who are elderly or who have mobility issues. It would be unreasonable to make residents here travel any further than needed to vote. I therefore agree with the proposal that the Straw Bear Public House (or its car park) are retained as our local polling station.</p>
<p>Sue Karwowski, Emmanuel Church</p>	<p>Emmanuel Church Hall Happy with current arrangements.</p>
<p>Colin Minister, Friday Bridge Tower Hall</p>	<p>Friday Bridge Tower Hall No problems using Tower Hall</p>
<p>Michael Humphrey, Gorefield Playing Field Association</p>	<p>Gorefield Community Hall Confirm that Gorefield Community Hall is available.</p>
<p>Councillor Samantha Hoy</p>	<p>Rosmini Centre (alternative polling station) I do not think that the Rosmini Centre should be used as a reserve polling place for Octavia Hill. We haven't had it there before and it is so far away from a large amount of the ward. If a reserve is needed it should be at the Salvation Army where we have polled before.</p>
<p>Pam Manley, Leverington Village Hall</p>	<p>Leverington Village Hall Suitable, with easy access, right size, easy to locate and on site parking. Leverington Village Hall has been used as a polling station for many years and has been suitable and available when required.</p>
<p>Rev Andrew Smith, March Churches</p>	<p>St Peters Church, St Johns Church Hall, St Wendreda's Hall and St Mary's Hall I can confirm that we are happy to have polling stations at the above locations. As far as other parts of the review, I doubt if it makes geographical sense to link Benwick with March. Benwick ought to be linked with Doddington.</p>
<p>Ann Mason, Whittlesey Resident</p>	<p>South Ward It will be more convenient for people living in your proposed polling district WHS2 to vote at the Manor Leisure Centre rather than Quinion Close. Quinion Close is right on the edge of the polling district, the Manor Leisure Centre is in the middle of it and is far more convenient for most electors.</p>

Councillor David Mason	<p>South Ward</p> <p>As the District Councillor for St Andrews Ward and the Town Councillor for St Andrews and St Marys North Ward, please take the following observations into account:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For the new WTC South Ward, the proposed polling place at Quinion Close is sub-optimal because it is right at the edge of the polling district and it has insufficient parking facilities to deal with the large number of electors in South Ward who would need to access the polling station by car because of the distance between where they live and the polling station. A better, more accessible polling place for the new polling district WHS2 would be the Scaldgate Family Centre or the Manor Leisure Centre. It would be undesirable that several hundred electors from the Ramsey Road area would need to get to Quinion Close to vote. 2. There is no advantage to be gained by maintaining a separate polling district for King's Delph. No suitable polling place is anywhere near that polling district so they will need to travel across the railway line into Whittlesey to vote. There are fewer than 100 potential voters in person. I suggest merging polling districts WHS2 and WHS4 into one polling district.
Lauraine Mean, Whittlesey Resident	<p>South Ward</p> <p>Quinion Close is not convenient for most electors to vote in Whittlesey South Town Council Ward. There are lots of public locations more convenient and more central in the polling district, such as Peel House or the Leisure Centre or the Library. Please change your proposal so that South Ward voters can vote somewhere more convenient for the vast majority of the electors. Otherwise the election turnout will be even lower than usual.</p>
Councillor Jason Mockett	<p>Lattersey Ward</p> <p>It is important to locate polling stations conveniently for voters, or else participation in elections will be reduced. For Lattersey Ward voters, the most convenient place available to vote is the Quinion Close Residents Community Room. To suggest that Lattersey voters should have to travel all the way to the Manor Leisure Centre to vote is unreasonable and will result in fewer people voting. I support Quinion Close as the Lattersey Ward polling place with the Manor Leisure Centre serving South Ward's electors.</p>
Christine Carr, Murrow Village Hall	<p>Murrow Village Hall</p> <p>This is a community facility with all necessary facilities and good access for all. The village hall is a very suitable building to accommodate a polling station. The alternative place listed is The Bell, but this pub is no longer open so could not be used for a polling station. The one time it was used it was not an ideal venue. The only other alternative in the village is Murrow Village School or Pre-School on the same site.</p> <p>Because of the way the parish boundary runs there are houses in Mill Road which are in Parson Drove parish, and Back Road is spilt with the even numbered side of the road in Wisbech St Mary parish and the odd numbers in Parson Drove which does not seem logical for voting purposes.</p>
David Boyce, Clerk Parson Drove Parish Council	<p>Parson Drove Village Hall</p> <p>The Council agreed that the best place for the polling station is to remain at the Village Hall.</p>

Boryana Pehlivanova	<p>Wisbech North (Existing Polling District EG3)</p> <p>In last year's County Council election, polling district EG3 voted at The Boathouse. It will be more convenient for electors living in (or off) Osborne Road to continue to vote at The Boathouse, as we did last year. The Boathouse is more easily accessible than the Oasis Centre.</p>
Sheila Otter Robert Hall Center	<p>Robert Hall Centre</p> <p>The centre has been used as a polling station for many years and it is hoped the Council will continue to use the premises as it has proved very appropriate for many years. It has ramps at the entrances, a fitted kitchen, good toilet facilities including a special loo for those with disabilities.</p>
Bart Woodbine, Skylark Garden Centre	<p>Skylark Garden Centre (alternative polling station)</p> <p>We would like to put our name forward but during school holidays the business is extremely busy and as such we would not be able to host a polling station during this time.</p>
Rosemary Fuller, Church Warden St Wendredas Church	<p>St Wendreda's Church Hall</p> <p>No changes needed at this time</p>
Jakki Racey, Whittlesey Library	<p>Whittlesey Library</p> <p>Easy to locate, suitable polling place as closed on Thursdays, disabled access and toilets, public car park behind library and everything on one floor.</p>
Councillor Julie Windle Whittlesey Town Council	<p>South Ward</p> <p>I am Town Councillor for St Andrews and St Marys North Ward. Polling Stations should be located conveniently for electors to vote. Asking voters in Briggate Crescent, Ashline Grove and The Limes to vote in Quinion Close is bizarre, given that there are so many more central and more convenient polling places available such as the Library, or Peel House, or Manor Leisure Centre to name but a few. Please do not force electors from the new South Ward to have to travel further than necessary to vote – please remove Quinion Close as the South Ward polling place and replace it with a more central location for the polling district.</p>
Jaynie Lynch, Headteacher, Wisbech St Mary Church of England Academy	<p>Wisbech St Mary Church of England Academy (alternative polling station)</p> <p>As a school, it is not suitable to use this location as the disruption to pupils and the local community would be excessive. There is also an existing polling station in the village (the community centre). Aside from the reasons noted above, it would not be possible to properly safeguard the child if the school was used as a polling station. There is no space available within the school to act as a polling station as all available space is being used for teaching and pupil space, including mealtime provision. There is no need to use the school as a polling station given that there is a more appropriate location (the Wisbech St Mary Community Centre) which is adjacent the school. As a community facility, this would be a more logical location for a polling station going forward. Indeed it has fulfilled this function in the past. Should the school have to be used, you would be required to produce a robust risk assessment and safeguarding policy and procedures to safeguard my children, staff, and members of the public ahead of the school being used as a polling station.</p>

<p>Sarah Bligh, Parish Clerk Wisbech St Mary Parish Council</p>	<p>The recommendations for polling places in the parish are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wisbech St Mary – Wisbech St Mary Community Centre • Murrow – Murrow Village Hall • Guyhirn – the new Guyhirn Community Room on the playing field • Thorney Toll – Thorney Toll Village Hall
<p>David Dobson, Club Secretary, Wisbech Rugby Club</p>	<p>Wisbech Rugby Club (alternative polling station) Unsuitable as club has regular bookings on polling days. The clubhouse is already booked for regular use on a Wednesday evening and Thursday afternoon. We have previously been informed that another activity cannot take place in the clubhouse on polling day.</p>
<p>Alison Mason, Treasurer, Wisbech Town Cricket and Hockey Club</p>	<p>Wisbech Town Cricket and Hockey Club Previously used with success and is easy to locate. At some stage in the future the pavilion/ location will be unavailable as it is to be completely rebuilt. We do not have a definite time schedule for this as yet, but it will not be before September 2023. Once building works begin it is likely to take 12 months. Once the new building is in place we would very much like to continue to provide the facilities long term for the district as a polling station. We may have a temporary portacabin style building available during the period of the works but cannot guarantee this would be suitable until more details are known.</p>
<p>Unknown Whittlesey Resident</p>	<p>Lattersey and South Ward I think that Lattersey Ward voters will find it easier to vote in Quinion Close and South Ward voters will find it easier to vote at the Leisure Centre.</p>

Received after deadline for response:

Councillor Dee Laws	<p>Whittlesey North West Ward</p> <p>The new ward of Whittlesey North West comprises the whole of the existing Stonald Ward (which I represent on the District and Town Councils) and part of the existing Bassenhally Ward. The ward requires two polling places.</p> <p>The best polling place within the ward is the Baptist Church on Gracious Street. Unlike the Ivy Leaf Club, the Baptist Church is not accessed directly from the B1040. I have often seen problems for cars attempting to access or exit the Ivy Leaf Car Park from or to the B1040 at busy times, but there are no such traffic problems when accessing or exiting the car park of the Baptist Church. In the last elections, the Baptist Church worked very well as a polling station.</p> <p>I recommend the St John Ambulance Station on Plough Road as the second polling place for the ward. It is tried and tested.</p> <p>The current DD polling district (Stonald Ward) really has too large an electorate to remain a polling district. I accept that it needs to be reduced in size. It is important, however, to ensure that the boundaries of each polling district are most conveniently drawn to minimize the difficulties any voter may have in getting to a polling station.</p> <p>Accordingly, I propose switching the properties listed in Appendix A from polling district WHNW1 to WHNW2. I furthermore advocate moving the properties listed in Appendix B from polling district WHNW2 to WHNW1. With the Baptist Church as the polling place for WHNW1, and the St Johns Ambulance Station as the polling place for WHNW2, this will maximise the convenience for voters of the arrangements of polling districts and polling stations in the ward.</p> <p>Appendix A – Pattens Close, Bowker Way, Commons Road, Mandalay Park, Stonald Avenue, Northgate Close, Northgate, Reidy Gardens, Sudbury Court, Stonald Road (32-154 evens)</p> <p>Appendix B – Low Cros (even numbers), Reubens Yard, Harpers Close, Wittel Close, Gilbert Close Oldfield Gardens, Windmill Street, Monks Close, Searles Court, George Gardens, Delph (odd numbers), Claygate, Hailward Gardens, Gracious Streets (37-95 odds, 32-64 evens, St Marys House, Orchard Street (odd numbers), Whitmore Street (22-62 evens), Stonald Road (11-49 odds)</p>
Wisbech Town Council	Wisbech Town Council supports most of the proposal outlined in Fenland District Council's current consultation reviewing polling districts and polling places in the town.

It is stated clearly by the Electoral Commission that a polling place should be designated within a polling district unless there are strong reasons to do otherwise. This is to ensure that as many electors as possible may be able to vote as conveniently as possible.

There are several proposals within the consultation document where the principle at 2 above has not been followed.

a) Wisbech Town Council notes that it is proposed that the polling place for both the Claremont and Clarence Town Council Wards (polling districts WR1 and WR2) will be located outside of the boundaries of those wards. The Town Council recognises that there are no suitable locations for a polling place within either of these very small wards and, therefore, supports the consultation document proposal to designate the Robert Hall Centre in Lynn Road as the polling place for these two polling districts, being the most convenient and accessible location for both polling districts.

b) Similarly, the council notes the proposal to make the Oasis Centre the polling place for polling district WWW1, even though the Oasis Centre is located both in a different polling district and in a different ward. The principle of ensuring that as many voters as possible in a ward should be able to vote as conveniently as possible would be better fulfilled if the polling place for polling district WWW1 were to be the Kingdom Hall on Tinkers Drove, which is located within the WWW1 polling district. The council notes that the Kingdom Hall is considered in the consultation to be suitable as an alternative polling place, so the council can see no reason why it should not be the proposed polling place for that polling district. Accordingly, Wisbech Town Council recommends that the Kingdom Hall in Tinkers Drove be designated as the polling place for polling district WWW1.

c) For polling district LWR1, the council notes that the proposed polling place, Wisbech Cricket & Hockey Club in Chapel Road, is located outside the boundaries of the polling district. Wisbech Town Council is of the opinion that it would be better if Barton Road Pavilion, which is within the polling district, were to be designated the preferred polling place for polling district LWR1. However, the council recognises that the pavilion is not currently in a fit state to act as a polling place. These polling places and polling districts may well be applicable for elections for many years ahead, not just for 2023. Wisbech Town Council, therefore, proposes that, whilst Barton Road Pavilion should be designated as the polling place for polling district LWR1, with the Wisbech Cricket and Hockey Club being designated as an alternative polling place for the polling district; a note is made in the report that for the scheduled election in 2023 the alternative polling place for the polling district shall be utilised because of the current state of repair of the Barton Road Pavilion.

d) In Wisbech North Ward, Wisbech Town Council notes the proposal to create a single polling district, WN. However, the Westernmost existing polling district for that area, EG3, had the Boathouse as its polling place in the most recent local elections last year, and this proved to be far more convenient for the residents of that polling district than voting at the Oasis Village Centre. Voter convenience is a major factor in ensuring high voter participation in elections, and Wisbech Town Council sees no reason to change the successful current arrangements. Wisbech Town Council, therefore, recommends that Wisbech North Ward be divided into two polling districts, WN1 and WN2, with those properties currently in polling district EG3 being placed within the new WN1 polling district. Polling district WN2 would contain the Oasis Village Centre, and that should be the polling place for that polling district. Polling district WN1 would not contain any location that would be suitable as a polling place but, in following Electoral Commission advice, the most convenient location for the voters in that polling district should be chosen as the polling place for that polling district, and that would be the Boathouse

This would have the advantage of retaining the most convenient polling place for that part of North Ward whilst not increasing the total number of polling places, as the Boathouse could accommodate a dual station.

4. Within the Wisbech South Ward, Wisbech Town Council supports the proposed polling places in all three polling districts. However, as the alternative polling place for polling district WS1, the council believes that it would be more convenient for the alternative polling station to be closer to The College of West Anglia Campus than the Rosmini Centre. This would be consistent with the Electoral Commission's advice that the choice of polling place should be such as to advise voters as to the practicality, desirability or necessity of seeking to exercise their right to vote using an absent vote, rather than voting in person. Accordingly, Wisbech Town Council recommends that the alternative polling place for polling district WS1 should be either the Salvation Army Citadel or Ramnoth School.

Finally, Wisbech Town Council strongly supports the consultation recommendations that the Boathouse and Meadowgate Academy be used as the polling places for polling districts WR3 and WWW3 respectively, as each site provides the best possible access for electors in those polling districts.