

Representations made by Councillor Dodd and Councillor Mooney

First of all I would like to make a note of thanks to the Chair and Committee members for agreeing to hold this meeting to once again discuss the location for a polling station in WE. This meeting has been organised at our request after some serious concerns were raised about the last meeting.

As far as the two Labour Councillors were concerned the decision at the last meeting was between Liscard Primary School and Between2Worlds. Written representations were sent to the committee, after discussions with the legal department, to this effect. It was only after the meeting that it became apparent that a third location, the Masonic Lodge, had been investigated in secret without the knowledge of Labour Councillors. This was presented to the Committee on the night with committee members not being told that 2 out of 3 ward Councillors had no knowledge of this and had not been invited to make representations on the suitability of the Masonic Lodge.

I am pleased that the Committee is now able to look again at this in a way that is fair to all three Ward Councillors.

I was pleased to see that an untruth about the Between2Worlds property was dispelled by a proper inspection of the site. It had been suggested that the owners of the site were Labour Party Members – a claim that has been disproven by both myself and by the owners themselves.

The Between2Worlds property is situated right in the middle of the Polling District in a Densely Populated part of WE. It is easily accessible on foot and by car by everyone in WE. There is sufficient parking for anyone who wishes to drive.

In my experience the majority of people in this area walk to the Polling Station. The Between2Worlds location is much more suited to this than the Masonic Lodge. The location of the Masonic Lodge is tucked away in the top corner of what is a long and narrow Ward – making it much more difficult for many people to walk to it. I know this because I had to give more lifts to the Polls in WE than anywhere else in Wallasey in both 2010 and 2011. Moving the Polling station to the Masonic Lodge will make it much harder for people to walk there than at the YMCA.

I appreciate that the Committee may have been swayed by the fact that the Masonic Lodge is only 100 Metres up the hill from the previous location (the YMCA). I understand that this may have been a deciding factor for some committee members. However I believe that the YMCA was already unsuitable as a location given its geographic location. I would have been raising these same issues if the Polling Station was still located there.

It seems clear to me that the Between2Worlds is better located; is in a densely populated area; is easier to access; has sufficient parking and is the much better choice than the Masonic Lodge.

I would urge the Committee to use Between2Worlds as the Polling Station for WE.

Cllr Darren Dodd

Cllr Bernie Mooney