

CHANGES TO POLLING STATION LOCATION WITHIN A POLLING PLACE

1. NEW BRIGHTON WARD

i. Polling District UD:-

The current polling place is Liscard Primary School [Withens Lane] and the polling station where voting takes place is a temporary unit block that is used as classrooms and out of school activities.

The Electoral Services Manager has received communication from the School Business Manager requesting that an alternative building within the school complex be considered for use as the polling station so that the school can remain open.

When considering requests of this nature, the school is visited to identify whether the alternative building within the school complex can be isolated for our use without posing a danger to the children or impacting on the school. The integrity and smooth running of the poll is paramount and changes are only agreed where it's not detrimental to the voters.

Because the temporary unit block is used as classrooms and out of school activities, the school makes the decision to close on polling day which results in the loss of teaching and learning for pupils and causes inconvenience for parents/carers. This has led to a number of complaints to the school from parents/carers. There have been no such complaints made to the Returning Officer.

A similar request was made, and agreed, in 2009 to move the polling station from the school Hall to the current location. Again this was to enable the school to remain open. However, the school has subsequently chosen to further utilise the building for out of school activities and revert back to closing the school on polling day.

The alternative building to be considered for use as the polling station is the School Lodge which is the old caretakers house situated at the main gates into the school. After inspection by the Electoral Services Manager, it is considered unsuitable due to it being too small and not having adequate disabled access.

Another suggestion is to hire a mobile porta cabin and site it at the top of the school parking area. This would have implications for the Returning Officer each time an election was held both logistically and financially as there is the potential risk of a porta cabin not being available and it would incur a cost of approximately £1,000.

The cost for using Liscard Primary School remains free of charge to the Returning Officer other than for heating and lighting costs.

There are no other suitable buildings within polling district UD to be considered for use as a polling place.

Recommendation:

That the current arrangement remains the most suitable for voting purposes and that the status quo should continue.

2. BIDSTON & ST JAMES WARD

i. Polling District AE:-

The current polling place is Our Lady & St Edwards Primary School [Price Street] and the polling station where voting takes place is the school Hall.

The Headteacher has requested that an alternative building within the school complex be considered for use as the polling station so that the school can remain open.

The alternative building to be considered for use as the polling station is a temporary unit block situated within the school complex on the Old Bidston Road side of the school. After inspection by the Electoral Services Manager, it is considered to be a suitable building with disabled access, a foyer area to accommodate tellers and good facilities for staff and voters. Entrance to the building would be accessed from Old Bidston Road and not Price Street.

Recommendation:

That the polling station venue be relocated to the temporary unit block for all future elections/referenda.

3. BIRKENHEAD & TRANMERE WARD

i. Polling District BD:-

The current polling place is Woodlands Primary School [Hollybank Road] and the polling station where voting takes place is the Community Hall.

The School Office Manager, on behalf of the Headteacher, has requested that an alternative room within the school complex be considered for use as the polling station due to reconstruction work carried out on the Community Hall creating two rooms and resulting in them being too small for use as a polling station.

The alternative room to be considered for use as the polling station is the nursery block situated within the school complex. After inspection by the Electoral Services Manager, it is considered to be a suitable building with its own entrance from Hollybank Road, a foyer area to accommodate tellers and good facilities for staff and voters. A small temporary ramp for disabled access will be required.

Recommendation:

That the polling station venue be relocated to the nursery block for all future elections/referenda.

CHANGE TO POLLING PLACE WITHIN A POLLING DISTRICT

1. WALLASEY WARD

i. Polling District VB:-

The current polling place is New Brighton Day Nursery [Mount Pleasant Road].

This building was previously New Brighton Children's Centre and was owned by Wirral Borough Council allowing the whole building to be isolated for use. The building was sold in 2017 and is now privately owned.

During the recent UK Parliamentary General election, the building manager agreed for the building to remain as the polling place but only allowed the use of a small room as the polling station rather than closing the nursery and allowing use of the whole building. During the post-election review it was determined that this arrangement has resulted in the building no longer being the most suitable venue for use as a polling place.

An alternative venue is Jubilee Church (formerly All Saints Church) [Hosese Road]. This building was previously used as a suitable polling place when it was All Saints Church but was changed during the 2011 Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places due to the building closing down.

The building is now owned by Jubilee Church and remains a suitable venue for polling purposes. Use of the building would incur a hire fee of £300.

This proposal is supported by all Ward members.

Recommendation:

That the polling place be relocated to Jubilee Church for all future elections/referenda.

ii. Polling District VF:-

The current polling place is St Georges Primary School [St Georges Road].

The Headteacher has requested that an alternative venue be considered as the school has to close for polling.

A suggested alternative building is Wallasey Village Library [St Georges Road]. This venue is situated approximately 161m from the school and is considered suitable for use as a polling place. The library is closed on Thursdays and so there would be minimal disruption for its use. There is parking available, full disabled access and a foyer area to accommodate tellers. There are good facilities for staff and voters.

The cost for using Wallasey Village Library would be free of charge to the Returning Officer other than for heating and lighting costs.

This proposal is supported by two Ward members.

Recommendation:

That the polling place be relocated to Wallasey Village Library for all future elections/referenda.

2. MORETON WEST & SAUGHALL MASSIE WARD

i. Polling District YA:-

The current polling place is Christchurch C of E Primary School [Upton Road].

The Headteacher has requested that an alternative venue be considered as the school has to close for polling.

A suggested alternative building is Christ Church Parish Centre [Upton Road]. This venue is situated approximately 321m from the school towards Moreton Cross and is considered suitable for use as a polling place. There is parking available both at the front and rear of the building, full disabled access and a foyer area to accommodate tellers. There are good facilities for staff and voters.

The hire cost for using Christ Church Parish Centre as a polling place would be approximately £300 but this is to be confirmed once a decision has been made.

The cost for using Christchurch C of E Primary School remains free of charge to the Returning Officer other than for heating and lighting costs.

Councillor Chris Blakeley has raised concerns for consideration regarding changing the venue:-

Dear Kate

Further to my email of yesterday. I have now had the opportunity to measure the distance between the current polling station, Christ Church School and the proposed alternative at Christ Church Parish Centre.

You quoted a distance of some 200 metres the actual distance is I estimate slightly over 300 metres, and that could prove a real barrier to people actually making the effort to bother to

come out and vote, particularly those who are elderly and infirm who still like to vote in person.

The proposed polling station would also be sited on the extremity of YA, with some voters having to travel over a mile to cast their vote.

If you are minded to recommend this alternative to the Licensing H&S GP committee would you please make sure that your report contains correct measurements and my comments so that the committee can make a decision based on accurate information.

Regards

Chris Blakeley

Councillor for Moreton West and Saughall Massie Ward

Recommendation:

That the polling place be relocated to Christ Church Parish Centre for all future elections/referenda.