

PETITION - Supporting Information

Polling Station for the Holmlands Estate, Oxton

In considering the attached Petition we ask the Licensing and General Purposes Committee to consider the following supporting information.

The boundaries for the DB Polling District include over 35% of the electorate of Oxton Ward.

Reference to the Electoral Register shows the electorate in Oxton Polling districts are distributed as follows :

Polling District	DA (McAllester)	DB (St Saviours)	DC (St Josephs)	DD (Christchurch)
Electorate	1633	3820	2748	2616
%	15.10%	35.30%	25.40%	24.20%

This clearly demonstrates the inequality in the split between the DA and DB districts, with a grossly disproportionate number of electors directed to St Saviour's School. This creates an unnecessary workload for Officers, and congestion outside the premises and on the adjacent road.

The location of the Polling Station at St Saviours school does not reflect the geographical distribution of the electorate

Reference to a map of the Polling District shows :

- St Saviours School is located at the extreme boundary of the District served, surrounded on three sides by open spaces and playing fields;
- Adjacent houses at The Knoll and flats at Ingestre Court (which overlook the Polling Station) are included in the DC district;
- The distribution of housing in the DB District is heavily weighted towards the Holmlands Estate, with properties included that are over a mile from the Polling Station.

The location of this Polling Station is a disincentive to a substantial majority of the electorate who still prefer to cast their votes in person on the day of the election.

The distance and uphill slope from the Holmlands are obstacles for the elderly or infirm, and for those with parental responsibilities who are required to remain at home to care for young children. This latter group increases on election days if schools are closed for use as Polling Stations.

It is appreciated that the cost of providing and staffing an additional Polling Station to serve the Holmlands Estate may be an considered unreasonable expense.

It is therefore proposed that :

1. **An alternative Polling Station** is identified for the DB District in a location appropriate to the distribution of housing. Possible venues include Townfield Lane Primary School and Bethany Chapel. To avoid closing the school, the preferred option is the Bethany Chapel on Holmlands Drive, adjacent to shops and car parking.
2. **A revised boundary** be established for an equitable split between the DA and DB districts, moving properties between Shavington Avenue and Talbot Road (approx 870 voters) to the DA district. This transfer would result in DA and DB Districts having approximately 23% and 27% of the Oxton Ward electorate respectively.