

## Polling station scheme and Returning Officer's Proposals

### East Brighton Ward, Kemptown Constituency

Polling District	Electorate (1 Feb 2012)	Existing Polling Place	Number of polling stations
DS	1256	Valley Social Centre, Whitehawk Way	1
DT	1024	Valley Social Centre, Whitehawk Way	1
DU	1980	Whitehawk Inn, Whitehawk Road	1
DV	1525	St Mark's CE Primary School, Manor Road	1
DW	1149	TS Nautilus, 39a Chesham Road	1
DX	1872	Kemp Town Crypt Community Centre, St George's Road	1
DY	490	Craven Vale Resource Centre, Craven Road	1
DZ	646	Bristol Estate Community Centre, Donald Hall Road	1

The Headteacher of St Mark's CE Primary School, Manor Road, has raised concerns about the use of the school as a polling station, because of the disruption caused to the school timetable and children's education. Although the Returning Officer is entitled to use schools as polling stations<sup>1</sup>, it is reasonable to look for alternative premises if they object to being used.

The Returning Officer's staff visited the Manor Gym, Manor Road, and consider this to be a suitable venue for polling. It is in the same road next to St Mark's CE Primary School. It is also close to local conveniences and public transport. Access to the Gym is very good, and there are suitable facilities for voters.

### Responses

Two consultees responded with their approval of the use of the Manor Gym, including the Headteacher of St Mark's Primary who responded on behalf of the school. It was also suggested that St Marks' Chapel be considered, however this is not suitable as it is outside the voting area.

It is recommended that the polling station for DV, East Brighton Ward, be changed from St Mark's CE Primary School to the Manor Gym.

<sup>1</sup> Rule 22, Election Rules, Schedule 1, Representation of the People Act 1983

**Hangleton & Knoll Ward, Hove Constituency**

<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Existing Polling Place</b>	<b>Number of polling stations</b>
PU	2173	St Richard's Community Centre, Egmont Road	1
PV	1673	Oasis Christian Fellowship Hall, Hangleton Way	1
PW	1732	St Helen's Church Hall, Hangleton Way	1
PX	1689	West Blatchington Infant School, Hangleton Way	1
PY	1325	West Blatchington Windmill North Barn, Holmes Avenue	1
PZ	2129	Hounsom Memorial Church Hall, Nevill Avenue	1

The Headteacher of West Blatchington Infant School, has raised concerns about the use of the school as a polling station, because of the disruption caused to the school timetable and children's education. Although the Returning Officer is entitled to use schools as polling stations<sup>2</sup>, it is reasonable to look for alternative premises if they object to being used.

The Returning Officer's staff have visited Hangleton Community Centre, Harmsworth Crescent, and consider this to be a suitable venue for polling. It is not far from the school. It is also close to local conveniences and public transport. Access to the Community Centre is very good, and there are suitable facilities for voters.

**Responses**

One consultee responded with their approval of the use of Hangleton Community Centre. It is recommended that the polling station for PX, Hangleton & Knoll Ward, be changed from West Blatchington Primary School to the Hangleton Community Centre.

---

<sup>2</sup> Rule 22, Election Rules, Schedule 1, Representation of the People Act 1983

**Hove Park and Goldsmid Wards, Hove Constituency**

<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Existing Polling Place</b>	<b>Number of polling stations</b>
OX	3652	Hove Park Upper School, Nevill Road	2
OY	1863	St Peter's Church Hall, Hangleton Road	1
OZ	2336	Cottesmore St Mary's RC Primary School, The Upper Drive	1
NV	3784	Somerhill Junior School, Somerhill Road	2
NW	2011	All Saints Church Hall, Eaton Road	1
NX	2016	Vallance Community Centre, Sackville Road	1
NY	1714	Cottesmore St Mary's RC Primary School, The Upper Drive	1
NZ	1553	Avondale Centre, Montefiore Road	1

The Headteacher of Cottesmore St Mary's RC Primary School, has raised concerns about the use of the school as a polling station, because of the disruption caused to the school timetable and children's education. Although the Returning Officer is entitled to use schools as polling stations<sup>3</sup>, it is reasonable to look for alternative premises if they object to being used.

The Returning Officer's staff have approached a range of alternative premises, which are either unavailable or not suitable, including Mowden (Lancing College Preparatory) School, Cardinal Newman Catholic School, the Pavilion and Avenue Tennis Club, Brighton & Hove School for Girls, and Hove Rugby Club.

It was therefore proposed that Cottesmore St Mary's RC Primary School be retained as the polling station for the OZ and NY polling districts.

**Responses**

There has been one response to the consultation, objecting to the proposal of retaining Cottesmore St Mary's RC Primary School as a polling station. The consultee suggested the TA Centre or Booth Museum on Dyke Road should be considered as alternatives, or the use of a portacabin on Hove Recreation Ground.

The TA Centre and Booth Museum are both situated in Preston Park Ward, and the Brighton Pavilion constituency, and so are considered to be too far out of the relevant voting area.

<sup>3</sup> Rule 22, Election Rules, Schedule 1, Representation of the People Act 1983

The use of portacabins as polling stations does not appear to be popular, due to their limited facilities, accessibility and expense.

In the absence of an ideal alternative, it is recommended that Cottesmore St Mary's RC Primary School be retained as the polling station for NY/OZ, Hove Park and Goldsmid Wards.

**St Peter's & North Laine Ward, Pavilion Constituency**

<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Existing Polling Place</b>	<b>Number of polling stations</b>
KS	842	Friends Centre, Brighton Junction, Stroudley Road	1
KT	1970	St Paul's CE School, St Nicholas Road	1
KU	1607	West Hill Hall, Compton Avenue	1
KV	2177	Calvary Evangelical Church Hall, 72 Viaduct Road	1
KW	937	Downs Infant School, Ditchling Road	1
KX	3079	Wagner Memorial (St Martin's) Hall, Lewes Road	2
KY	1145	Brighton & Hove Foyer, Pelham Street	1
KZ	1550	Brighthelm Church and Community Centre, North Road	1

The polling district KS was created in 2008, to cater for the new development and increased population. The polling place used for this district was St Bartholomew's CE Primary School, Ann Street.

On 1 February 2011, the council designated the Friends Centre, Brighton Junction, Stroudley Road, as the polling place for KS, as an alternative to St Bartholomew's CE Primary School.

The Friends Centre is not available for the elections on 15 November 2012. As the voters in the district are already familiar with St Bartholomew's School, it was proposed that the school be reinstated as the polling place for KS.

**Responses**

Ward Councillors responded that they would prefer an alternative to the school to found if at all possible. The Headteacher of St Bartholomew's has responded on behalf of the school and governors, that the change in the school's status as a polling station is confusing and disruptive for the school and particularly parents. They feel strongly that the use of the school causes disruption to the school timetable and children's education. They have suggested that two alternatives be considered – the Clarendon Centre or City College.

City College is outside the voting area, and not an ideal venue for polling, with the only available room being on the 1st floor.

The Clarendon Centre has a suitable room for hire, on the ground floor, via the main entrance. There is good disabled access and facilities. There is no parking for voters, except for disabled parking at the rear of the building. The Centre is very willing to accommodate a polling station for the next, and future elections, which would bring more stability for voters. All Ward Councillors are in favour of the use of the Clarendon Centre.

It is therefore recommended that the Clarendon Centre be designated as the polling place for KS, avoiding school closure and disruption to children's education.

**Wish Ward, Hove Constituency**

<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Existing Polling Place</b>	<b>Number of polling stations</b>
SV	2048	St Leonard's Church Hall, Glebe Villas	1
SW	1389	Aldrington Recreation Ground Pavilion, Saxon Road	1
SX	1369	Aldrington Recreation Ground Pavilion, Wish Road	1
SY	1396	Children's Centre, West Hove Infant School	1
SZ	782	Sanders House Communal Room, Ingram Crescent West	1

The Pavilion at Aldrington Recreation Ground, Saxon Road, is not available for use as a polling station because it has been leased to a private playgroup. This is a new lease, which does not allow the Pavilion to be used on polling days.

In the absence of alternative premises, it was proposed that a portable polling station be sited on the recreation ground near the pavilion, subject to a site visit by the portacabin company.

**Responses**

One consultee approved of the proposal.

Several Councillors and Committee Members raised concerns about the use of a portacabin, particularly the expense, and the impact on the community open space.

Another consultee commented that the Council should not have let the Saxon Road Pavilion without reserving the option for its continued use for elections, or without establishing how it could be accessibly replaced. They commented that Wish Ward has a high proportion of elderly people, and that disabled voters should be able to vote in person. They argued that any portacabin replacement must be fully accessible for people with disabilities.

As suggested during the consultation, Saxon Court has been approached to see if they have a room to hire. The premises are not considered to be suitable for use as a polling station.

A few respondents suggested that consideration be given to the option of using the Wish Road Pavilion as a double station, for electors from SW as well as SX polling districts. This is a viable option, and is large enough to accommodate the number of voters. One Ward Councillor has objected to the use of the Wish Road Pavilion as a double station, as voters would have further to travel. But it is difficult to continue to propose the use of a portacabin, where there are real concerns about the expense and the impact on the community.

It is recommended that the Pavilion at Aldrington Recreation Ground, Wish Road, be used as a double station for the voters for SW and SX, Wish Ward, due to the unavailability of the Saxon Road Pavilion.

**Withdean Ward, Pavilion Constituency**

<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Existing Polling Place</b>	<b>Number of polling stations</b>
IU	2193	Church of the Good Shepherd Hall, Dyke Road	1
IV	1953	Minor Club House, Withdean Sports Complex	1
IW	1872	The Ascension Church Hall, Westdene	1
IX	1422	Varndean College, Surrenden Road	1
IY	989	Balfour Junior School, Balfour Road	1
IZ	2155	Knoyle Hall, Knoyle Road	1

The Headteacher of Balfour Primary School has raised concerns about the use of the school as a polling station, because of the impact of the infant and junior schools merging and the disruption to the school.

The Returning Officer's staff looked at a range of alternative premises, including the option of using Varndean College as a double station or the IY polling district as well as the IX polling district.

It was proposed that Dorothy Stringer High School was the most suitable option, which is very close to Balfour Junior School. Access to the High School is very good, and there are suitable facilities for voters. The High School is happy to accommodate a polling station, and after assessing the risks would be minded to close the school, and build election day into their school timetable as a teacher training day.

## **Responses**

One consultee responded that Dorothy Stringer School was rather near to Varndean College, and that the use of Varndean High School be considered. Varndean High School is not happy to accommodate a polling station.

It is recommended that the polling station for IY, Withdean Ward, be changed from Balfour Primary School to Dorothy Stringer High School.

