

Agenda



Contact: Steven Corrigan, Democratic Services
Manager

Telephone number 07717 274701

Email: steven.corrigan@southandvale.gov.uk

Date: 5 February 2021

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

A meeting of the **Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee**

will be held on Monday 15 February 2021 at 7.00pm

as a

Virtual Meeting

To watch this virtual meeting, follow this link to the council's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTj2pCic8vzucpzlaSWE3UQ>

Members of the Committee:

Councillors

Ron Batstone (Chair)

Paul Barrow

Alison Jenner

Sarah Medley (Vice-Chair)

Mike Pighills

Janet Shelley

Alternative formats of this publication are available on request. These include large print, Braille, audio, email and easy read. For this or any other special requirements (such as access facilities) please contact the officer named on this agenda. Please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Reed".

Margaret Reed
Head of Legal and Democratic

Agenda

Open to the public including the press

1. Apologies for absence

To record apologies for absence and the attendance of substitute members.

2. Minutes

(Pages 4 - 9)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2019 - attached.

3. Declarations of interest

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

4. Public participation

To receive any questions or statements from members of the public that have registered to speak.

5. Urgent business and chair's announcements

To receive notification of any matters which the chair determines should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances which have made the matters urgent, and to receive any announcements from the chair.

6. Temporary changes to polling stations due to Covid 19

(Pages 10 - 14)

To consider the report of the head of legal and democratic – attached.

7. District wide community governance review

At its meeting on 22 October 2019, the committee considered, and agreed, a proposal to commence a district wide community governance review in Spring 2020 to allow for any changes to be implemented for the 2023 elections. The committee requested that officers submit a timetable for the review.

Before work began on the review, it became clear that the government intended to publish a Devolution White Paper which was expected to set out proposals for local government reform including unitary authorities. A community governance review would therefore have been premature. The current Covid pandemic has also impacted on resources to undertake such a review. A Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper is now expected

Vale of White Horse District Councils

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee agenda - Monday, 15 FEBRUARY 2021

in Autumn 2021.

Officers therefore propose bringing forward a timetable to the committee once there is greater clarity on the government's proposals. The committee is asked to endorse this approach.

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

held on Tuesday 22 October 2019 at 6.30 pm

Meeting Room 1, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, Abingdon,
OX14 4SB

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Ron Batstone (Chair), Sarah Medley (Vice-Chair), Alison Jenner, Mike Pighills, Max Thompson and Janet Shelley

Officers: Susan Baker, Steven Corrigan and Margaret Reed

Also present: Neil Fawcett, Cabinet member for legal and democratic

Number of members of the public: 0

1. Apologies for absence

Councillor Paul Barrow submitted an apology for absence with Councillor Max Thompson attending as his substitute.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2018 as a correct record and agree that the chair signs them as such.

3. Declarations of interest

None.

4. Urgent business and chair's announcements

None.

5. Public participation

No members of the public had registered to address the committee.

6. Report of the Returning Officer on the delivery of the May 2019 district and parish elections

The committee considered the report of the returning officer on the delivery of the May 2019 Vale of White Horse District Council elections and parish council elections for the Vale area and set out a number of action points.

In response to questions, the committee was advised that the delivery of the elections was a priority for the council and there was therefore an expectation that services across the council would provide support. There would have been no impact on the delivery of other council services to customers. The timetable and process for postal vote applications is governed by national legislation. It was therefore not possible to amend a person's choice to vote by postal vote after the statutory deadline to take account of, for example, the non-receipt of a postal vote. However, the returning officer undertook to work with Communications to further improve the publication of deadline dates and anticipated posting dates. Officers would discuss further options for recruiting staff for election duties via social media including LinkedIn.

The committee welcomed the report and agreed that the elections had run smoothly. The committee further endorsed the action points set out in paragraph 31 of the report.

RESOLVED: to

1. note the report of the returning officer on the delivery of the May 2019 district and parish elections to the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 22 October 2019;
2. endorse the action points in paragraph 31 of the report of the returning officer to the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 22 October 2019.

7. Polling district and polling places review

The committee considered the report of the head of legal and democratic on proposals for polling districts and polling places following a periodic review required by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

The committee was advised of a late representation from Charney Bassett Parish Council which endorsed the continued use of the Village Hall as a polling place. The committee was further advised of an error in appendix C of the report. The polling place for polling district SAC1 should be the Boundary Park Pavilion and not Harwell Village Hall.

In response to a comment from a committee member officers confirmed that Denman College in Marcham would be considered as an alternative polling place if the designated polling place is unavailable.

The committee noted that the arrangements had worked well in recent elections.

RESOLVED: to

1. note the consultation responses and the officer comments set out in appendix A of the report of the head of legal and democratic to the meeting of the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 22 October 2019;
2. note the Acting Returning Officer's comments attached at appendix B of the report of the head of legal and democratic to the meeting of the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 22 October 2019;
3. approve the schedule of polling districts and polling places attached to these minutes;
4. authorise the head of legal and democratic, acting in her capacity as the council's returning officer, to make changes to polling districts and polling places where circumstances dictate that this is desirable, having first consulted with members of the committee and the local councillor(s).

8. District wide community governance review

The committee considered a proposal, set out on the agenda, to commence a district wide community governance review in Spring 2020 which would allow for any changes to be implemented for the 2023 elections.

Officers confirmed that the Great Western Park Residents' Association would be included as a consultee during the review.

RESOLVED: to request that officers submit a timetable for a community governance review to the committee for a review to commence in Spring 2020.

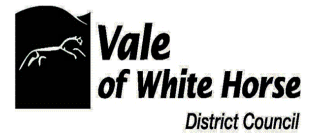
The meeting closed at 7.10pm

Polling District Reference	Parish/Parish Ward/Polling District	District Ward	Proposed Polling Place	Comments	
XAA1	Abingdon No.1 (Caldecott)	Abingdon Caldecott	Preston Road Community Centre		
XAA2	Abingdon No.2 (Caldecott)	Abingdon Caldecott	St. Johns Ambulance HQ, Caldcott Road		
XAA3	Abingdon No.3 (Caldecott)	Abingdon Caldecott	Trinity Hall , Conduit Road, Abingdon	Polling place is in adjacent parish ward	
XAB1	Abingdon No.4 (Fitzharris Ock)	Abingdon Fitzharris	Stonewater (Jephson Common Room), Bridges Close		
XAB2	Abingdon No.5 (Fitzharris Ock)	Abingdon Fitzharris	Trinity Hall , Conduit Road, Abingdon		
XAB3	Abingdon No.6 (Fitzharris Wildmoor)	Abingdon Fitzharris	Northcourt Centre, Northcourt Road, Abingdon	Polling place is in adjacent parish ward	
XAC1	Abingdon No.7 (Abbey)	Abingdon Abbey Northcourt	The Guildhall, Abbey Close, Abingdon		
XAC2	Abingdon No.8 (Northcourt)	Abingdon Abbey Northcourt	Northcourt Centre, Northcourt Road, Abingdon		
XAC3	Abingdon No.9 (Northcourt)	Abingdon Abbey Northcourt	All Saints Methodist Church, Appleford Drive		
XAD1	Abingdon No.10 (Peachcroft)	Abingdon Peachcroft	Hadland Road Community Centre		
XAD2	Abingdon No.11(Peachcroft)	Abingdon Peachcroft	North East Abingdon Community Centre		
XAE1	Abingdon No.12 (Dunmore)	Abingdon Dunmore	All Saints Methodist Church, Appleford Drive	Polling place is in adjacent parish ward	
XAE2	Abingdon No.13 (Dunmore)	Abingdon Dunmore	Long Furlong Community Centre, Boulter Drive		
XAE3	Abingdon No.14 (Dunmore)	Abingdon Dunmore	2nd Abingdon Scout Hut, Farm Road		
SQA	Appleford	Sutton Courtenay	Appleford Village Hall		
XAE	Appleton with Eaton	Thames	Appleton Village Hall		
SIA	Ardington	Hendreds	Loyd Lindsay Rooms, High Street, Ardington		
STA	Ashbury	Watchfield & Shrivenham	Ashbury Village Hall		
SOA	Baulking	Stanford	Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall, Uffington	Polling place is in adjacent parish	
XEB	Besselsleigh	Thames	Appleton Village Hall	Polling place is in adjacent parish	
SAA	Blewbury	Blewbury & Harwell	Blewbury Village Hall		
STB	Bourton	Watchfield & Shrivenham	Bourton Village Hall		
SRA	Buckland	Thames	Buckland Memorial Hall		
STC	Buscot	Watchfield & Shrivenham	Buscot Village Hall		
SKA	Charney Bassett	Kingston Bagpuize	Charney Bassett Village Hall		
SMA	Childrey	Ridgeway	Childrey Village Hall		
SAB1	Chilton No.1	Blewbury & Harwell	Chilton Fields Community Room,Horsa Lane		
SAB2	Chilton No.2	Blewbury & Harwell	Chilton Village Hall		
STD	Coleshill	Watchfield & Shrivenham	The Hall Coleshill		
STE	Compton Beauchamp	Watchfield & Shrivenham	Ashbury Village Hall	Polling place is in adjacent parish	
XCA1	Cumnor (Farmoor)	Cumnor	Farmoor Village Hall		
XCA2	Cumnor (Dean Court)	Cumnor	St Andrews Church Hall, Orchard Road, Dean Court		
XCA3	Cumnor (Cumnor Village)	Cumnor	Cumnor Village Hall		
XCA4	Cumnor (Cumnor Hill)	Cumnor	Cumnor Village Hall	Polling place is in adjacent parish ward	
SPA	Denchworth	Steventon & the Hanneys	Denchworth Village Hall		
SFA	Drayton	Drayton	Drayton Village Hall		
SMB	East Challow	Ridgeway	East Challow Village Hall		
SPB	East Hanney	Steventon & the Hanneys	Hanney War Memorial Hall, East Hanney		
SJA	East Hendred	Hendreds	Snells Hall, East Hendred		

STF	Eaton Hastings	Watchfield & Shrivenham	Buscot Village Hall	Polling place is in adjacent parish	
SGA	Faringdon	Faringdon	Faringdon Corn Exchange		
STG	Fernham	Watchfield & Shrivenham	Longcot Methodist Chapel	Polling place is in adjacent parish	
SKB	Frilford	Kingston Bagpuize	Evangelical Chapel, Kingston Road, Frilford		
SRB	Fyfield and Tubney	Thames	Mobile Unit White Hart, Main Road, Fyfield		
SKC	Garford	Kingston Bagpuize	Garford Village Hall		
SKD	Goosey	Kingston Bagpuize	Charney Bassett Village Hall	Polling place is in adjacent parish	
STH	Great Coxwell	Watchfield & Shrivenham	Reading Room, Great Coxwell		
SHA	Grove No1. (North)	Grove North	Old Mill Hall, School Lane, Grove		
SSA	Grove No.2 (Brook)	Wantage & Grove	Grove Methodist Church, Main Street, Grove		
SAC1	Harwell No.1	Blewbury & Harwell	Boundary Park Pavilion		
SAC2	Harwell No.2	Blewbury & Harwell	Harwell Village Hall		
SJB	Harwell No.3 (Harwell Oxford Camp)	Hendreds	Harwell Village Hall		
SOB	Hatford	Stanford	Stanford in the Vale Village Hall	Polling place is in adjacent parish	
SRC	Hinton Waldrist	Thames	Hinton Waldrist Village Hall		
XDA1	Kennington No.1	Kennington & Radley	Kennington Village Hall		
XDA2	Kennington No.2	Kennington & Radley	Kennington Village Hall		
SKE	Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor	Kingston Bagpuize	Kingston Bagpuize & Southmoor Village Hall		
SMC	Kingston Lisle	Ridgeway	The Bungalow Village Hall, Kingston Lisle		
SMD	Letcombe Bassett	Ridgeway	Letcombe Basset Village Hall		
SME	Letcombe Regis	Ridgeway	Letcombe Regis Village Hall		
STI	Little Coxwell	Watchfield & Shrivenham	Little Coxwell Village Hall		
SRD	Littleworth	Thames	Reading Room, Littleworth		
SJC	Lockinge	Hendreds	Loyd Lindsay Rooms, High Street , Ardington	Polling place is in adjacent parish	
STJ	Longcot	Watchfield & Shrivenham	Longcot Methodist Chapel		
SRE	Longworth	Thames	Longworth Village Hall		
SKF	Lyford	Kingston Bagpuize	Charney Bassett Village Hall	Polling place is in adjacent parish	
SLA	Marcham	Marcham	Marcham Sports & Social Club Anson Field	Not available until May 2020. Returning Officer to designate alternative venue for election(s) prior to this date.	
SFB	Milton No.1 (Village)	Drayton	Milton Methodist Church		
SJD	Milton No 2 (Heights)	Hendreds	Milton Community Centre, School Lane, Milton Heights		
XBA	North Hinksey	Botley & Sunningwell	The Church Hall of St Peter and St Paul		
SRF	Pusey	Thames	Buckland Memorial Hall	Polling place is in adjacent parish	
XDB	Radley No.1	Kennington & Radley	Site Office, Pebble Hill Mobile Home Park, Radley		
XDE	Radley No.2	Kennington & Radley	Radley Village Hall, Gooseacre, Radley		
SOC	Shellingford	Stanford	Shellingford Community Hall		
STK	Shrivenham	Watchfield & Shrivenham	Shrivenham Memorial Hall		
SBB 1	South Hinksey (Hinksey Hill)	Botley & Sunningwell	South Hinksey Village Hall	Polling place is in adjacent parish ward	
SBB 2	South Hinksey (Village)	Botley & Sunningwell	South Hinksey Village Hall		

SMF	Sparsholt	Ridgeway	Griffin Memorial Hall, Sparsholt		
XFC	St Helen Without No.1 (Dry Sandford)	Marcham	Scout Hall, Lashford Lane, Dry Sandford		
SLB	St Helen Without No.2 (Shippon)	Marcham	Shippon Village Hall		
SOD	Stanford-in-the-Vale	Stanford	Stanford in the Vale Village Hall		
SPC	Steventon	Steventon & the Hanneys	Steventon Village Hall		
XBC	Sunningwell	Botley and Sunningwell	Sunningwell Village Hall		
SQB	Sutton Courtenay	Sutton Courtenay	Sutton Courtenay Village Hall		
SOE	Uffington	Stanford	Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall		
SAD	Upton	Blewbury & Harwell	Upton Village Hall		
SSB1	Wantage No.1 (Segsbury)	Wantage & Grove Brook	The Beacon, Portway, Wantage	Officers to assess St Mary's Convent's suitability as a polling place following renovation works and to continue to seek an alternative venue. The most affected electors will need to travel a further 0.5 miles.	
				Officers to assess St Mary's Convent's suitability as a polling place following renovation works and to continue to seek an alternative venue.	
SSB2	Wantage No.2 (Segsbury)	Wantage & Grove Brook	The Beacon, Portway, Wantage		
SSC1	Wantage No.3 (Charlton)	Wantage Charlton	The Beacon Portway, Wantage		
SSC2	Wantage No.4 (Charlton)	Wantage Charlton	Scout HQ, Springfield Road, Wantage		
SSC3	Wantage No.5 (Charlton)	Wantage Charlton	Wantage Silver Band Hall, Reading Road, Wantage		
STL	Watchfield	Watchfield & Shrivenham	Watchfield Village Hall		
SMG	West Challow	Ridgeway	West Challow Village Hall		
SPD	West Hanney	Steventon & the Hanneys	Hanney War Memorial Hall, East Hanney	Polling place is in adjacent parish	
SJE	West Hendred	Hendreds	West Hendred Village Hall		
SOF	Woolstone	Stanford	Merestones, Woolstone		
XFA	Wootton	Wootton	Wootton and Dry Sandford Community Centre		
XBD	Wytham	Botley & Sunningwell	Wytham Village hall		

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee



Report of head of legal and democratic

Author: Steven Corrigan

Telephone: 07717 274704

E-mail: steven.corrigan@southandvale.gov.uk

To: Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

DATE: 15 February 2021

Temporary changes to polling stations due to Covid 19

Recommendation: That the Committee

1. approves the temporary proposed changes to polling places set out in paragraph 5 of this report for the forthcoming elections to be held on 6 May 2021;
2. notes the temporary polling place changes agreed by the returning officer under delegated powers set out in paragraphs 6 and 7 of this report for the forthcoming elections to be held on 6 May 2021;
3. authorises the returning officer, in consultation with committee members and the ward councillors, to allocate appropriate polling places where the need arises for the elections on May 6 2021;
4. authorises the returning officer, in consultation with committee members and the ward councillors, to allocate appropriate polling places where the need arises for any other elections, by-elections, referendums and polls during 2021.

Purpose of Report

1. This report sets out proposed changes to polling places for the May 2021 elections to provide a more Covid 19 secure environment, asks the committee to note those polling places designated by the returning officer under delegated powers as alternatives for those not available at these elections and seeks a delegation to make any further changes to polling places necessary to provide a secure voting environment for these and any other elections, by-elections, referendums and polls during 2021.

Strategic Objectives

2. The report does not specifically relate to any of the council's strategic objectives, but agreement of the recommendations (amended if the committee sees fit) will ensure compliance with the law.

Background

3. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places every four years. The last compulsory review was completed in October 2019. However, it is now necessary temporarily to review polling places which are not suitable in the current circumstances.

Terminology

- **Polling District:** a geographical area created by the sub-division of a UK Parliamentary constituency or ward into smaller parts within which a polling place can be located which is convenient to electors. By and large each parish is a polling district in its own right and has its own polling place or places. Exceptions are where parishes are sub-divided into electoral wards or split between district wards which necessitates the creation of additional polling districts
- **Polling place:** the building(s) within each polling district that will house polling stations.
- **Polling stations:** the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place. The number of polling stations within each polling place is a matter for the returning officer and is not covered in this report.

Proposed temporary changes

4. The temporary changes seek to address and comply with social distancing measures introduced by government. The venues set out below are considered wholly or partly unsuitable polling places for the May 2021 polls for the following reasons:
 - Social distancing difficult to maintain
 - Polling station staff unwilling to work if placed in a high risk environment
 - Failing electors expectations of feeling safe when voting
5. The table below sets out the current arrangements and proposed temporary changes.

Parish	Issue	Proposal
Faringdon	The Corn Exchange, Faringdon currently accommodates three polling stations. This is a very busy polling place and not suitable for three polling stations in the current circumstances.	To sub-divide the polling district to provide for a polling place and one polling station at The Corn Exchange with additional polling places with a single

		polling station at Faringdon Leisure Centre and Sudbury House Hotel.
Abingdon (Peachcroft)	North East Abingdon Community Association currently accommodates two polling stations.	Designate an additional polling place at Peachcroft Christian Centre to provide an additional venue. This venue is next door to the existing polling place at North East Abingdon Community Association
Radley	A polling place is currently provided for at the Site Office, Pebble Hill Mobile Home Park. This venue is very small and not considered suitable in the current circumstances.	To designate Radley Church Room as an alternative. Whilst the venue is not as convenient for electors it is more convenient than the alternative venue in Radley Village.

Temporary change to be agreed under delegated powers

6. The Beacon in Wantage is currently designated as a polling place accommodating three polling stations (two for the Wantage and Grove Brook ward and one for Wantage Charlton). However, The Beacon will be unavailable for the elections.. The scheme of delegation provides for the returning officer to designate an alternative polling place if the designated polling place becomes unavailable for a particular election. The returning officer has identified Wantage Baptist Church and Wantage Methodist Church for Wantage and Grove Brook and Wantage Town Football Club for Wantage Charlton as temporary alternatives.
7. The schedule approved by the committee in October 2019 designated Marcham Sports and Social Club as the polling place for Marcham. Due to the lack of availability of the venue the Baptist Church and Denman College have served as polling places at recent elections. The Sports and Social Club no longer exists having been demolished as part of a planning application for houses and community facilities including the Marcham Centre. The Marcham Centre offers excellent facilities for a polling place and as such the returning officer intends to designate it for use at the forthcoming elections.

Delegation to returning officer

8. Officers within the elections team continue to review the safety of polling places for the forthcoming elections. In order to address any concerns with venues, the

committee is asked to authorise the returning officer to designate further alternative and additional polling places to address any safety concerns.

Publicising the changes

9. In March, poll cards will be issued to eligible electors. These will highlight any temporary changes to polling stations.
10. Officers will work with colleagues in communications to advertise the changes via social media, press releases and parish councils. The location of polling stations will also be published on the website.

Financial Implications

11. There are costs associated with running additional polling places and there will be additional costs associated with Covid secure measures.. For the forthcoming elections these will be split between Oxfordshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner election and any by-elections or neighbourhood planning referendums because polling places will host multiple elections at the same time. Cost, however, should not be a prime consideration in determining the designation of a polling place, particular in the current circumstances.

Legal Implications

12. The Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) (Section 18C (5) and Section 31) allows a local authority to conduct a review of any polling district, polling place or polling station within its area, outside of the timescales for a compulsory review.

Risks

13. By designating alternative and additional venues we will be able to minimise the risk of spreading coronavirus to our staff and electors. Dependant on the building one way systems will be operated through polling stations. Risk assessments of polling stations will be carried out and these, along with national and internal guidance, will determine Covid secure measures required.

Conclusion

14. The council met its legal requirement to complete a review of polling districts and polling places in October 2019. To address concerns relating to the current pandemic, the committee is requested to agree alternative and additional polling places to provide a secure voting environment for electors and staff. The committee is also invited to note the changes agreed under delegated powers and to authorise the returning officer to make any further changes required to address safety concerns.