

Review of polling districts and polling places 2024

Acting Returning Officer's comments

The Returning Officer for the Vale of White Horse District Council and Acting Returning Officer for Oxford West and Abingdon and Didcot and Wantage (Part) parliamentary constituencies, has examined the current polling arrangements and comments on the current scheme are set out in this document. It is important to note that Vale of White Horse District Council is currently the subject of an electoral review which is being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. The electoral review is looking at the district council's wider electoral arrangements including the number of councillors, the number of wards, the ward boundaries and the ward names. The electoral review is entirely separate and independent of the council's review of polling districts and polling places.

The Commission's electoral review is expected to be completed in late 2024 for implementation at the May 2027 elections. There will be changes to the ward boundaries which in turn will have an impact on the council's scheme of polling districts and polling places. Therefore, a further comprehensive review of polling districts and polling places will be required to take account of the new ward arrangements.

Reviews of polling districts and polling places have already been undertaken proactively, since the previous compulsory review completed in October 2019, including prior to the district and parish elections in May 2023 and prior to the Police and Crime Commissioner and Parliamentary elections in 2024, to ensure that the council's polling arrangements are kept up to date. I welcome this proactive approach to ensure issues are addressed as they arise and to ensure voters and election staff have suitable venues. I note there are a few proposals for change suggested to the existing arrangements but that for the majority no changes are proposed. Comments on the proposed changes are set out by ward in the following pages.

Steven Corrigan, Returning Officer for Vale of White Horse District Council and Acting Returning Officer for the Oxford West and Abingdon and Didcot and Wantage (Part) Parliamentary Constituencies

October 2024

Polling district / Parish	Issue	Proposal	RO comments
SJD – Milton (Heights)	St Blaise C of E school has been unavailable to book for scheduled elections and safeguarding concerns have been raised regarding its usage as a polling place.	Re-designate the polling place for SJD to Milton Hill Bowls Club.	Support. The venue has been successfully used at recent elections on a temporary basis.
SOC - Shellingford	Shellingford Community Hall requires closure of the attached school in order to be used as a polling place.	No change.	Support the continued use of the community hall. I note that the headteacher has not objected to the use of the school on election days.
SOF - Woolstone	Merestones is no longer available to hire as the designated polling place for this polling district.	Re-designate the polling place for SOF to Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall.	Support. The venue has been successfully used at recent elections on a temporary basis.
SSC1 - Wantage No.3 (Charlton)	The Beacon is currently the designated polling place for polling districts SSB1 and SSB2 (Wantage Segsbury parish ward) as well as SSC1 (Wantage Charlton ward), which creates a risk of cross-contamination between ballot boxes for the different district and parish wards.	Re-designate the polling place for SSC1 to Wantage Methodist Church.	Support. The argument to provide an additional polling place is sensible.
TGA - Faringdon	The Corn Exchange is no longer suitable as the only designated polling place for the entirety of the Great Faringdon (TGA) polling district, and the polling district would benefit from subdivision due to the size of	Split TGA Faringdon geographically into three separate polling districts – TGA, TGB, and TGC	Support. Faringdon covers a large geographical area and the provision of additional polling places across the parish should be welcomed providing more convenient polling stations and address congestion both in the

	the electorate in the current polling district (<7100).	<p>Designate The Corn Exchange as the polling place for polling district TGC</p> <p>Designate Faringdon United Church as the polling place for TGB.</p> <p>Designate Faringdon Leisure Centre as the polling place for TGA.</p>	town and at The Corn Exchange on election days.
TRB - Fyfield and Tubney	The mobile unit at the White Hart is not a suitable venue for staff, and there are accessibility concerns within the mobile unit.	No change.	Agree – there are no suitable alternative venues in the polling district and travel to a neighbouring polling district would not be convenient for electors.
TTG - Fernham	Longcot Methodist Chapel is no longer available to hire as the designated polling place for this polling district.	Re-designate the polling place for TTG to St Mary the Virgin (Longcot) Community Hub.	Support. The venue has been successfully used at recent elections on a temporary basis.
TTJ - Longcot	Longcot Methodist Chapel is no longer available to hire as the designated polling place for this polling district.	Re-designate the polling place for TTJ to St Mary the Virgin (Longcot) Community Hub.	Support. The venue has been successfully used at recent elections on a temporary basis.
XAA2 - Abingdon No.2 (Caldecott)	St Johns Ambulance is no longer available to hire as the designated polling place for this polling district.	Re-designate the polling place for XAA2 to Abingdon Carousel Family Centre.	Support. The venue has been successfully used at recent elections on a temporary basis.

<p>XAB1 - Abingdon No.4 (Fitzharris Ock)</p>	<p>Stonewater is no longer available to hire as the designated polling place for this polling district.</p>	<p>Re-designate the polling place for XAB1 to Preston Road Community Centre.</p>	<p>Support. Preston Road Community Centre has recently been used as a polling place and is able to accommodate an additional polling station.</p>
<p>XBA - Botley and North Hinksey</p>	<p>St Peter and St Paul's Church is no longer the most suitable location in this polling district, due to issues around lack of parking, and the polling district would benefit from subdivision due to the size of the electorate in the polling district (<4200).</p>	<p>Split XBA Botley and North Hinksey geographically (using the A34) into two polling districts – XBA1 and XBA2.</p> <p>Re-designate the polling place to Seacourt Hall for properties west of the A34 (XBA1).</p> <p>Designate Botley Women's Institute Hall for properties east of the A34 (XBA2).</p>	<p>Support the idea of providing a polling place in each area of the parish divided by the A34. Suggest this is kept under review. Seacourt Hall was previously successfully used as a polling place prior to the development works.</p>
<p>XDB - Radley No.1</p>	<p>The Site Office at Pebble Hill is not a suitable venue due to accessibility concerns and poor facilities for staff.</p>	<p>Re-designate the polling place for XDB to Radley Church Room</p>	<p>Radley Church Room has been successfully used at recent elections on a temporary basis. Suggest this is kept under review.</p>