

**RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE LOCAL RETURNING OFFICER
TO NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

The following report outlines proposals for Polling Districts and Polling Places in Northampton following formal consultation with the public and interested parties.

The proposals attached are presented to the Council's General Purposes Committee for the Committee to resolve upon. These recommendations will then go to further consultation.

Attached appendices show the recommended Polling Districts and Polling Places. The following narrative explains the reasons for these recommendations.

General Comments

The structure of Polling Districts used in any election needs to take account of the legal requirements laid down in Statute and the requirements of the Electoral Commission.

In addition, polling districts need to be set in such a way that the Electoral Register can be structured to deliver any individual election. Polling Districts are the basic building block of the Register and therefore are always the smallest division of electors in the Register.

This means that the boundaries of Polling Districts are firstly determined by the boundaries of the Borough, Parliamentary Constituencies, County Council Divisions, and then by Borough Council Wards, Parish Councils, and Parish Council Wards where applicable. It is not possible to establish a Polling District that, for example, crosses the boundary of a County Council Division as this would mean that the Register would not be, as required, capable of delivering a County Council election in those Divisions.

As a result, many Polling District boundaries are effectively determined by these higher-ranking geographies. Areas which fall between these boundaries may be sub-divided into Polling Districts on the decision of the Borough Council (subject to the right to appeal to the Electoral Commission) and this should be considered with due regard to making Polling Places and Polling Stations accessible and convenient for voters in person. The exact shape or size of a Polling District can be affected by the availability of suitable Polling Places.

Polling Places are locations within which a Polling Station is to be established by the relevant Returning Officer for an election. Polling Places may, if possible, contain more than one Polling Station and serve more than one Polling District.

The Electoral Commission has guided that no Polling Station may have more than 2,500 voters in person assigned to it. This does not mean that a Polling District cannot be larger than 2,500, but if so then it will need a number of Polling Stations, which may of course be in the same Polling Place.

Appendix 1

As mentioned above, public consultation has been carried out in preparing these draft recommendations. All comments have been considered where relevant and a summary of the comments made is attached in the appendices to this document.

In addition, a programme of inspecting actual and potential Polling Places has been undertaken in order to inform these recommendations. As far as possible, alternative proposals have been subjected to inspection.

Proposals are presented, for ease of reference, Borough Council Ward by Borough Council Ward. Details of Polling District boundaries and projected numbers of voters in person are contained within the Appendices.

Abington Ward

Abington Ward currently has 6 Polling Districts. One Polling District falls within the Northampton South Constituency.

The current designated Polling Places are: Abington Avenue Reformed Church, Stimpson Avenue Academy (for 2 Polling Districts), Old Northamptonians, Barry Road School and Vernon Terrace Community Centre.

We received representations regarding Barry Road School. Following inspection it is proposed to use a Mobile polling station in the Co-op Car Park on Barry Road for polling district NNAB5. At present NNAB2 and NNAB3 vote at Stimpson Avenue Academy. We looked at including them in the mobile at Barry Road, however, the electorate would be too large to accommodate a triple station in the mobile. While Stimpson Avenue remains the designated polling station we will continue to seek an alternative venue if possible.

The proposed arrangements are considered to be the best possible in Abington Ward and are recommended on that basis.

Billing Ward

Billing Ward contains a number of Parish Wards. As a result there is limited discretion as to the arrangements within this Ward.

There are currently four Polling Districts and four Polling Places in this Ward and it is proposed to make no change to this.

The Polling Places are: the Institute in Great Billing, St. Andrew's CEVA Primary School, Bellinge Community Centre, and All Saints Church. All of these Polling Places are currently used at elections.

We received representations regarding the use of St Andrew's CEVA Primary School and suggestions to use The Bipin Brook. Following inspection of these premises it is proposed that this become the designated polling station for NSBL2

The proposed arrangements are considered to be the best possible in Billing Ward and recommended on that basis.

Boothville Ward

Appendix 1

Boothville Ward currently contains two Polling Districts with two Polling Places.

The Polling Places in this ward are: King's Meadow School and Boothville Community Centre, both currently in use at elections.

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

Brookside Ward

Brookside Ward currently contains three Polling Districts at three Polling Places.

The Polling Places are Lings Primary School, Lumbertubs Primary School and Arlbury Road Community Room.

We received representations regarding the use of Lings Primary School and suggestions to use Brookside Hall. Following inspection of these premises it is proposed that this become the designated polling station for NNBR2.

The proposed arrangements are considered to be the best possible in Brookside Ward and recommended on that basis.

Castle Ward

Castle Ward currently contains seven Polling Districts and five Polling Places.

The current Polling Places are: Castle Community Hub, The Guildhall, Victoria Road Congregational Church, Mounts Baths, Northampton Music and Performing Arts Trust (for 3 Polling Districts)

The Castle Community Hub is no longer available and it is proposed that Spring Boroughs Hub will become the designated polling station for NSCT1.

The proposed arrangements are considered to be the best possible in Castle Ward and recommended on that basis

Delapre and Briar Hill Ward

Delapre and Briar Hill Ward currently contains of eight Polling Districts served by six Polling Places with a total of seven Polling Stations.

Delapre and Briar Hill is a geographically dispersed and large ward. The area to the west of Briar Hill is a distinct Polling District with a more local Polling Place. This can only be achieved by the use of a mobile unit, and the location of this is at the junction of Hunsbarrow and Ironstone Road. The area to the east will continue to be served by Briar Hill Community Centre.

The area to the south of the ward has Polling Places of Gloucester Avenue Nursery School and a Polling District with a Polling Place at The Abbey Primary School

To the north-east of the ward is served by a Polling Place at a mobile unit in Asda's Car Park on London Road/Ransome Road.

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The remaining three Polling Districts are served by a Polling Place at Far Cotton Recreation Centre. Whilst the Centre could accommodate four Polling Stations it is not considered likely that this will be needed before next review.

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

East Hunsbury Ward

East Hunsbury Ward contains six Polling Districts with five Polling Places.

The current Polling Places are Collingtree Golf Club, Blackymore Community Centre (2), East Hunsbury Primary School and Abbey Centre Baptist Church(2)

In relation to the Polling Station at Collingtree Golf Club, we have identified Greens Restaurant as a suitable venue. The Polling Place will remain as Collingtree Golf Club to give flexibility in the event the restaurant is not available.

The polling district currently at East Hunsbury Primary School will be allocated to Blackymore Community Centre.

The proposed arrangements are considered to be the best possible in East Hunsbury Ward and recommended on that basis.

Eastfield Ward

Eastfield Ward has three Polling Districts served by two Polling Places.

Two Polling Districts are served by St Albans Jubilee Hall which sits on the boundary between the two Districts, as the Polling Place.

The other Polling District is served by Eden Close Community Room as the Polling Place.

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

Headlands Ward

Headlands Ward has two Polling Districts served by two Polling Places.

The current arrangements in this ward are Headlands United Reformed Church and Abington Community Centre.

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

Kings Heath Ward

King's Heath Ward has two Polling Districts served by two Polling Places.

One Polling District covers the King's Heath Estate and Dallington Heath. The other covers the Ryehill area. These arrangements match the topography of the area and the location of the Polling Place on the Estate is a good central location for that District.

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The two Polling Places are Montague Crescent Community Room and King's Heath Community Centre, both of which are currently used. The Polling Station at Kings Heath can be split into two Polling Stations if this becomes necessary.

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

Kingsley Ward

Kingsley Ward currently has three Polling Districts operating from three Polling Places.

This Ward contains an area that falls in a different County Division. The land involved is currently undeveloped and expected to remain so. This Polling District will therefore have no voters in person and for technical purposes only will be allocated to the Polling Place at the Pioneer Public House.

The three Polling Places are: The Pioneer Public House, Kingsley Primary School and Kingsley Park Methodist Church.

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

Kingsthorpe Ward

Kingsthorpe Ward currently consists of two Polling Districts at two Polling Places. The boundary between these Polling Places is determined by a County Council Division boundary.

It is proposed to retain the current arrangements until a further review is done for the Unitary Authority with the facility to have two Polling Stations at Kingsthorpe Community Centre if necessary at any election. The other Polling Place is The Pastures Community Centre.

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

Nene Valley Ward

This ward is geographically widely spread. It currently contains six Polling Districts with three Polling Places and five Polling Stations.

For Parish election reasons, and for accessibility, there are Polling Districts at Hardingstone and at Collingtree which will need to remain in place.

The Polling Place at Hardingstone is the Village Hall, and at Collingtree the Village Room. Both are currently used.

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

New Duston Ward

Appendix 1

New Duston Ward currently has seven Polling Districts, the boundaries of which are largely determined by Parish and County Council boundaries, served by five Polling Places.

It is proposed to retain the Polling Districts in their current configuration. This reflects the different boundary requirements and also the geography of the ward.

The Polling Places are: Mobile Unit on Errington Park (2 Districts), Mobile Unit at Bordeaux Close, Mobile Unit at Park Lane Island, Duston Community Centre, and Duston Eldean Primary School (2 Districts).

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

Obelisk Ward

Obelisk Ward contains two Polling Districts served by two Polling Places. One District, is determined by County Council Division boundaries.

The current polling places are Reynard Way Evangelical Church and Sunley Conference Centre.

Reynard Way Evangelical Church is a very well located and accessible central point in the Polling District that includes it. The Polling Place can take two Polling Stations and this may be necessary at some elections.

The other Polling Place was the Sunley Management and Conference Centre at the University which has been demolished. It is proposed to use All Saints CEVA Primary School for this polling district, they are able to provide a room that doesn't involve the closure of the school.

The proposed arrangements are considered to be the best possible in Obelisk Ward and recommended on that basis.

Old Duston

Old Duston Ward currently has five Polling Districts, the boundaries of which are largely determined by Parish and County Council boundaries, served by three Polling Places.

The current polling stations are Duston Community Centre, Chiltern Primary School, Duston United Reformed Church and Lyncrest Primary School.

The Polling District NSOD5 served by Lyncrest Primray School is defined by County Council Division and Parish boundaries, and is bounded by major roads. The only premises identified in this District are those at the Primary School.

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

Park Ward

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Spring Park Ward currently has two Polling Districts served by two Polling Places.

The current Polling Places St Peter's Church Hall, and Bridgewater Primary School.

It is proposed to retain these arrangements

Parklands Ward

Parklands Ward currently has three Polling Districts served by three Polling Places.

One Polling Place is Boothville Community Centre as there are no suitable alternatives within the District.

The two other Polling Places are Parklands Community Centre and Parklands Nursery School and Childrens Centre. It is proposed to use Parklands Learning and Care Centre instead of the Nursery School which will mean the school are able to stay open. The groups normally in the Care Centre on polling day will be covered by the school.

The proposed arrangements, which involve minimal change, are considered to be the best possible in Parklands Ward and recommended on that basis.

Phippsville Ward

Phippsville Ward is divided into two Polling Districts with the boundary between them determined by a County Council Division. These are served by two Polling Places.

The Polling Places are: St Matthew's Parish Centre, and Cedar Road Primary School. There was representation that the school should not be used due to disruption to its operation but no suitable alternatives have been identified.

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

Rectory Farm Ward

Rectory Farm Ward is currently made up of three Polling Districts. One is determined by Parliamentary Constituency boundaries. These are served by two Polling Places.

Two Polling Districts are served by Rectory Farm Community Centre as their Polling Place.

The other Polling Place is Growing Together Blackthorn Good Neighbours.

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

Riverside Ward

Riverside Ward currently consists of three Polling Districts served from a single Polling Place, Standens Barn Community Centre.

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

Rushmills Ward

Rushmills Ward is currently divided into four Polling Districts. One District is determined by the Parish of Great Houghton and a Parliamentary Constituency boundary. These are served by four Polling Places. The ward is geographically widespread.

The current polling places are Bridgewater Primary School, Mobile Unit Old Scouts and Vernon Terrace Community Centre.

The Polling Place at Great Houghton is Parsons Memorial Hall.

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

Semilong Ward

Semilong Ward currently contains four Polling Districts, significantly affected by Parliamentary Constituency and County Council Division boundaries. These are served by three Polling Places.

The Polling Places for Semilong Ward are Holy Trinity Church Hall (2 Districts), Semilong Community Centre and Alliston Gardens Youth and Community Centre.

We had a suggestion of a mobile unit in either ASDA or ALDI Car Park, however, ASDA was not suitable due to the incline and ALDI have refused to accommodate. Northgate School, as a special needs school are unable to close and are unable to accommodate us with the school open

It is therefore proposed to retain the existing arrangements.

Spencer Ward

Spencer Ward currently contains three Polling Districts, two using Spencer Dallington Community Centre as the Polling Place and mobile polling station at Dallington Park Road

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

Spring Park

Spring Park Ward currently contains two Polling Districts served by two Polling Places.

This Polling District is served by The Pastures Community Centre and if necessary at elections in the future will have two Polling Stations. No changes to boundaries or Polling Places are proposed. The other Polling District is served by St Mark's Church Hall.

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

St David's Ward

St David's Ward currently contains three Polling Districts each based at one Polling Place.

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The current polling places are Kingsthorpe Grove Primary School, St David's Church Room and The Liburd Rooms

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

St James Ward

St James Ward currently consists of two Polling Districts at two Polling Places.

The current polling places are Heroes Room, Franklin Gardens and the Doddridge Center

It is proposed to retain these arrangements

Sunnyside Ward

Sunnyside Ward currently consists of three Polling Districts served by two Polling Places. One Polling District is determined by the County Council Division boundary.

Representations were made that the Polling Place at Hinton Road Community Rooms was too small and inaccessible at the time of the elections. The Sunley Centre at the University has now been demolished.

The proposal is that Polling District NNSU1 and NSSU2 would vote at Hinton Road Community Centre and NNSU3 at Green Oaks School. NNSU1 previously voted in Obelisk Ward, the new arrangements will keep them voting within the correct ward.

The proposed arrangements are intended to provide more accessible voting arrangements for electors in Sunnyside Ward and are recommended on that basis.

Talavera Ward

Talavera Ward currently consists of six Polling Districts served by six Polling Places. One Polling District is required to meet Parliamentary Constituency boundaries and the Ward is also affected by County Council Divisions.

The current polling stations are Thorplands Primary School, Southfields Primary School, Lodge Farm Community Centre, Mobile Unit Goldings Shopping Centre, Growing Together Blackthorn Community Centre and a Mobile at Rectory Farm.

Lodge Farm Community Centre there are concerns with the recent anti-social behavior including boarded up windows and overgrown surroundings. We have contacted Community Spaces to see if this can be addressed. We also visited Woodvale Primary Academy however due to safeguarding issues they would need to close the school and this would impact on their statutory timetable. We will continue to investigate a possible alternative to Lodge Farm in the next consultation period and will report this back in the final report in November.

The only change proposed at this time in this ward is that NSTV6 will vote in Rectory Farm Community Centre not the mobile outside.

The proposed arrangements are intended to provide more accessible voting arrangements for electors in Talavera Ward and are recommended on that basis.

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Trinity Ward

Trinity Ward currently consists of two Polling Districts served by two Polling Places.

The current Polling Places are: The Newton Building at the University Avenue Campus, and Holy Trinity Church Hall

The Newton Building have already told us that it will not be available in May 2020 and we have had issues with availability at previous elections.

It is proposed that Bethany Homestead be used instead of the Newton Building.

The proposed arrangements, are considered to be the best possible in Trinity Ward and recommended on that basis.

Upton Ward

Upton Ward currently consists of five Polling Districts served by four Polling Places. The boundary of one Polling District was affected by a Parish boundary. The polling Districts of SNUP1 and SNUP2 are now both in Hunsbury Meadows Parish

The existing polling places are Mobile Unit, Banbury Lane, The Elgar Centre, St Crispin Retirement Village and St Crispin Social Club.

It is proposed to use Pineham Barns Primary School at Hunsbury Meadows for polling district SNUP2 instead of the mobile unit at Banbury Lane.

The proposed arrangements are intended to provide more accessible voting arrangements for electors in Upton Ward and are recommended on that basis

West Hunsbury Ward

West Hunsbury Ward consists of two Polling Districts served by Parsons Mead Community Room and a mobile unit at Ladybridge Park.

It is proposed to retain these arrangements.

Westone Ward

Westone Ward currently consists of three Polling Districts served by three Polling Places.

To improve accessibility it is proposed to assign James Lewis Court, Community Hub instead of Headlands United Reformed Church as the polling station for NNWT2, thus all the polling stations are within in the Westone Ward.

The other Polling Places are: Weston Favell Parish Hall, and a Mobile Unit at Northampton College.

The proposed arrangements are intended to provide more accessible voting arrangements for electors in Westone Ward and are recommended on that basis.