

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE

16TH FEBRUARY 2017 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Chairman), C. Allen-Jones (Vice-Chairman), M. Glass, M. Thompson, L. J. Turner and M. J. A. Webb

Officers: Mr D. Whitney, Mrs T. Hurst and Ms R. Cole

1/16 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor J.M. L. A. Griffiths be elected Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

2/16 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor C. Allen-Jones be elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the ensuing municipal year.

3/16 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor L.C. R. Mallett.

4/16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

5/16 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee held on 17th March 2016 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee held on 17th March 2016 be approved as a correct record.

6/16 **POLLING PLACES ALTERATIONS 2017**

The Committee considered a report relating to the need for changes to be made to a small number of Polling Places in relation to the forthcoming County Council Elections only.

The Electoral Services Manager referred to the report which explained that the County Division Boundaries were not co-terminus in all cases with District Ward boundaries. The effect of this was that Electors from

two separate County Divisions would be voting at the same Polling Station which could lead to confusion at the Polling Stations concerned.

The report set out three potential options to resolve the matter and these were contained in section 3.5 of the report. The Electoral Services Manager explained the three options and indicated that option 3 was the solution which officers were recommending. This option would involve allocating the electors concerned to a different Polling Place where the same Division is voting. This would be for the County Council Election only.

The changes proposed were as follows:

- Polling District SMB would involve 7 electors voting at The Girl Guide Hut instead of The New Song Church;
- Polling District SSB would involve 8 electors voting at All Saints Church Hall instead of Finstall First School;
- Polling District NTD and NTB would involve 8 electors voting at The Wheel at St Catherine's Church instead of Lickey End First School.

Members considered any increased distances involved for electors attending the revised Polling Place. It was felt that whilst some of the electors in question already had postal votes, and it was open for the others to apply for postal votes should they so wish, it was important to ensure that those who wished to attend to vote in person should not be disadvantaged. Members also had in mind however the need to ensure that any confusion in relation to the Polling Places was minimised.

The Electoral Services Manager displayed a map illustrating the locations concerned and the distance of travel required. In the circumstances Members supported option 3.

It was therefore

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the electors concerned from Polling Districts SMB,SSB,NTD and NTB be moved to a different Polling Place for stand alone County Council elections;
- (b) that the temporary Polling Place for electors in Polling District SMB be the Girl Guide Hut, Kidderminster Road, Bromsgrove;
- (c) that the temporary Polling Place for electors in Polling District SSB be All Saints Church Hall, Burcot lane, Bromsgrove;
- (d) that the temporary Polling Place for electors in Polling Districts NTD and NTB be The Wheel, St Catherine's Church, St Catherine's Road, Blackwell; and
- (e) that the above decisions take effect immediately.

7/16

POLLING PLACES DELEGATION REPORT

The Committee considered a report in respect of a proposed delegation to the (Acting) Returning Officer to alter Polling Places outside the compulsory review period.

The Electoral Services Manager explained that whilst some procedural matters were delegated to the (Acting) Returning Officer, at present the matter the subject of the previous minute was not. If this report was approved, it was intended that the (Acting) Returning Officer would only exercise his delegated powers following consultation with the Ward Members concerned and the Portfolio Holder. If for some reason following consultation the (Acting) Returning Officer felt unable to exercise his delegation on a particular occasion then a meeting of this Committee would be called in the normal way.

Members debated the matter and agreed that it was important that local Ward Members were consulted on any proposed changes as they had detailed local knowledge. In addition, Members were concerned to ensure that any changes to Polling Places took account of the needs of electors with disabilities in terms of ease of access arrangements at the venue. The Electoral Services Manager stressed that the (Acting) Returning Officer would be taking into account the needs of voters with disabilities and was indeed required to do so by legislation.

Members also noted that the compulsory reviews of Polling Districts and Polling Places were matters for this Committee.

It was therefore

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the (Acting) Returning Officer, in consultation with the Ward Members concerned and the Portfolio Holder be authorised to alter Polling Places outside the compulsory review periods; and
- (b) that the above decision take effect immediately.

The meeting closed at 6.30 p.m.

Chairman