

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE

17TH MARCH 2016 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Chairman), C. J. Bloore, K.J. May,
P.L. Thomas, M. Thompson and L. J. Turner

Observers: Councillor S. R. Colella

Officers: Mrs. C. Felton, D. Whitney, Mrs. T. Hurst and Ms. A. Scarce

7/15 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. Allen-Jones, H. J. Jones and L. C. R. Mallett. Councillor P. Thomas was present as a substitute for Councillor Allen-Jones and Councillor C. J. Bloore as a substitute for Councillor Mallett.

8/15 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest, however Councillor L. J. Turner asked for it to be noted that he was the Ward Councillor for Wythall East.

9/15 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Matters committee held on 6th October 2015 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee held on 6th October 2015 be approved as a correct record.

10/15 **POLLING PLACE ALTERATIONS 2016 REPORT**

The Electoral Services Manager introduced the report and in so doing highlighted the following:

- The notice of election was due to be posted on 21st March and therefore agreement was needed in respect of the polling places highlighted in the report.
- The full boundary review which had been carried out in 2014 and the areas where potential problems had been identified.
- The New Song Community Church was already used as a polling station and could accommodate the additional electors that currently attended the Masonic Hall, which was scheduled for demolition prior to the May election.

- This would be reviewed once the planned retirement village was up and running.
- In the 2014 review a number of electors were moved from Park Hall polling place to the Woodrush Youth Centre at Shawhurst Lane. The Youth Centre no longer existed and therefore alternative arrangements needed to be put in place.
- The Youth Centre had moved to the Woodrush Academy Community Hub which shared an entrance and some car parking facilities with St Mary's Wythall Parish Church Hall.
- The proposal was for the central hall at the Community Hub to be used.
- The relevant Members had been consulted and concerns had been raised in respect of car parking facilities and whether these would be able to cope with both electors from the Hub and St Mary's.
- Plans with the relevant areas highlighted were provided for clarity, together with details of the number of those who would be affected and estimated distances that they would need to travel.

Following presentation of the report Members discussed a number of points in detail:

- The ongoing problems of parked cars on Shawhurst Lane during the day time and particularly during school drop off and pick up times. It was believed that moving such a large number of electors to the Community Hub would only exacerbate this.
- Whether consideration had been given to closing the school during polling day.
- The use of the Community Hub due to the Coppice School been unavailable.
- Whether the staff had visited the site at particularly busy times to assess the traffic problems.
- The option to reinstate Park Hall as a polling place for at least 2 of the areas which would be affected by the changes proposed.
- The car parking facilities at Park Hall and whether they were suitable as it was understood that the car park was in need of resurfacing.
- The need to ensure that all those who were entitled to vote were able to do so in a reasonable manner with easy access to a polling place.
- The possibility of electors having to go to 2 different polling places for 2 elections in a short period of time.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the polling place for the electors in Polling District SAC be moved to New Song Community Church and reviewed once the retirement village is completed;

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- (b) that the polling places for electors in Polling districts DRA and HWA be at Park Hall and WTC be moved to Woodrush Academy Community Hub and reviewed after the 5th May poll;
- (c) that the review to be carried out and agreed by the (Acting) Returning Officer and Ward Members; and
- (d) that the decisions of the Committee take effect immediately.

The meeting closed at 5.37 p.m.

Chairman