



ELECTORAL REVIEW SUB COMMITTEE AGENDA

**THURSDAY 9 JANUARY 2020 AT 7.30 PM
M2:18 - THE FORUM**

The Councillors listed below are requested to attend the above meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

Membership

Councillor Williams (Leader)
Councillor Anderson
Councillor Douris

Councillor Stevens
Councillor Hollinghurst
Councillor Griffiths

For further information, please contact Corporate & Democratic Support on 01442 228209.

AGENDA

1. MINUTES (Pages 2 - 5)

To agree the minutes from the previous meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An opportunity for members of the public to make statements and ask questions in accordance with the rules as to Public Participation.

5. POLLING PLACES REVIEW (Pages 6 - 8)

Agenda Item 1

MINUTES

ELECTORAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

9 JANUARY 2019

Present:

Cllr Anderson
Cllr Douris
Cllr Harden (Substitute for Cllr Marshall)
Cllr Hicks
Cllr Williams (Chair)

Also Present:

Cllrs Maddern and Tindall.

Officers:

S Marshall	Chief Executive
M Anderson	Electoral Registration Team Leader
J Doyle	Elections Team Leader

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Cllrs Fisher and Marshall.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

4. POLLING PLACES

The committee considered the current and proposed provision of polling stations in four polling districts: Boxmoor Ward, polling district AGB; Tring East Ward, polling district DAA; Nash Mills Ward, (polling districts BA, BAA, and BAB); and Adeyfield West Ward, Polling District AC.

Boxmoor Ward, polling district AGB

After acknowledging the closure of the current venue at Alston Road; maps of the area; and the various options; the members discussed the merits of each option and decided that the administrators of the Church Hall, St Mary and Joseph, on St John's Road be approached to host the Polling Station. Members had considered the option of using Camelot RFC though they agreed that the rough parking and its location away from the population centres of the ward meant that this option was a

Chairman:

good fall back if the Church hall (which had been a polling station in the past) should not prove suitable.

1. Resolved:

That the administrators of the Church Hall, St Mary and Joseph, on St John's Road be approached to host the Polling Station Boxmoor Ward, polling district AGB. In the event of the Church Hall not being available then Camelot RFC be confirmed as the temporary Polling Station for the AGB District for the election on 2 May 2019.

Tring East Ward, polling district DAA

The committee considered issues that had arisen with the use of Grove Road School as the current polling station. They viewed maps of the area and considered views of the access to the proposed venue at the Scout Hut, 200 metres along Grove Road. In addition the committee considered a submission from the Head Teacher of the school setting out reasons in support of moving the polling station away from the school.

While the committee were sympathetic to the move of the polling station, many concerns were expressed about the road access to the parking at the proposed venue which is on a 'fast' section of the road. The prevailing feeling was however that if measures to control the speed of the cars on the road and the provision of bollards to control parking at the entrance could be agreed with the police then it was worth trialling the Scout Hut for the forthcoming local elections.

2. Resolved;

- a That the polling station for Tring East Ward, polling district DAA, be moved from Grove Road Primary School to the Scout Hut, Grove Road.
- b That the Returning Officer include traffic control issues in the risk assessment for the forthcoming local elections and liaise with the SPOC on measures to control speed and parking around the polling station on the day of the election.

Nash Mills Ward, (polling districts BA, BAA, and BAB)

The committee considered the current location of the polling station in Nash Mills C of E School and a submission from the head teacher setting out the safeguarding issues and the difficulties involved in using the school as a polling station. There was a good deal of opposition to moving this polling station due to the need to avoid setting a precedent for all the other schools used as polling stations; a suggested drop in voter turnout; the central location of the current station; and the situation of the proposed station near the boundary of the polling district. However members were of the opinion that the good parking around the proposed polling station; the increased population at the south east end of the ward and the lack of disruption to children's education outweighed the disadvantages and agreed to move the polling station.

4. Resolved;

That the polling station for the Nash Mills Ward, polling districts BA, BAA, and BAB, be moved from Nash Mills C of E School to Nash Mills Parish Village Hall, Lower Road, Nash Mills.

Communal Hall, Adeyfield – Polling District AC

Chairman:

The committee were made aware of the possibility that, due to renovation work being carried out at the venue, the Communal Hall Old House Road, may not be available for elections in May 2019. It was made clear by the committee that any temporary move of the polling station should ensure that the electorate use separate doors at Adeyfield Community Centre in order to lessen the chances of confusion for the electorate. Some members were of the opinion that the move to Adeyfield Community Centre should be made permanent due to its size, availability and location. However, the convenience offered by Communal Hall was set against the poor parking at Queens Square and the committee elected to remain at Communal Hall. The CE advised that officers will consult with those managing the renovation and stress the need for the station to be made available for 2 May this year.

5. Resolved:

That, in the event that Communal Hall is not available, electors in polling district AC will be redirected to the temporary Polling Station in Adeyfield Community Centre; where they will be admitted through a separate entrance.

Resolved to Recommend

1. **That Council confirm the following Polling Stations for the elections to be held on 2 May 2019:**
 - a. **That the administrators of the Church Hall, St Mary and Joseph, on St John's Road be approached to host the Polling Station Boxmoor Ward, polling district AGB. In the event of the Church Hall not being available then Camelot RFC be confirmed as the temporary Polling Station for the AGB District for the election on 2 May 2019.**
 - b. **That the polling station for Tring East Ward, polling district DAA, be moved from Grove Road Primary School to the Scout Hut, Grove Road.**
 - c. **That the polling station for the Nash Mills Ward, polling districts BA, BAA, and BAB, be moved from Nash Mills C of E School to Nash Mills Parish Village Hall, Lower Road, Nash Mills**
 - d. **That, in the event that Communal Hall is not available, electors in polling district AC will be redirected to the temporary Polling Station in Adeyfield Community Centre; where they will be admitted through a separate entrance**
2. **That the above polling arrangements be included in a revised Polling Places Order to be presented at a future Council Meeting.**

5 2018 PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW

The committee considered and noted the final recommendations of the 2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies (began in 2016), which were reported to Government in September 2018. As the report has now been before parliament it can be viewed on the Boundary Commission's website:

<https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/2018-review/>.

The committee noted the addition of the areas around Hunton Bridge and West Abbots Langley which would be included in the Hemel Hempstead Constituency should the recommendations make it through both houses of Parliament.

The committee commented on the recommendations purely in electoral administration terms and discussed the implications for the organisation of elections.

The Meeting ended at 21:05

Agenda Item 5



Report for:	Electoral Review Committee
Date of meeting:	9 January 2020
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	POLLING PLACE REVIEW
Contact:	<p>Cllr Williams: Leader of the Council</p> <p>Responsible Officer: Sally Marshall, Chief Executive in the role of Returning Officer. Mark Brookes – Solicitor to the Council</p> <p>Author: J Doyle: Elections Team Leader</p>
Purpose of report:	To consider the various options for the arrangement and re-designation of Polling Stations and to consider the results of the consultation on these issues with the various stakeholders
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the transfer of the polling station for Tring Central Ward, (polling district DBAA), from Bishops Wood C of E Primary school to Nora Grace Hall be agreed. 2. That the suggested alternative polling stations for Tring West & Rural Ward (currently Goldfield infants school) be considered for suitability as the polling station for polling district DCAA. 3. That arrangements be finalised for the polling station for Boxmoor Ward, polling district AGB. 4. That the proposed amendments be included in an updated Polling Places Order 2020.
Corporate objectives:	<p>The holding of elections contributes to the Council's community leadership role and fosters public engagement in the democratic process.</p> <p>The responsibility for the good conduct of elections falls on the Electoral Registration Officer, who for all Local Government Election matters is the Chief Executive</p>

Implications:	<u>Financial</u>
'Value for money' implications	The re-allocation of some polling stations could result in additional costs. The cost of the alternative hall hire is to be confirmed <u>Value for money</u> The provision of Polling Stations for elections is reviewed on a regular basis and the funding is overseen by the Electoral Commission and the Elections Claims Unit.
Risk implications	Electoral matters require continual review to ensure that the democratic process operates effectively. A failure to provide polling places would result in huge reputational damage.
Consultees:	The Returning Officer; Election Agents, Parish Councils, Ward councillors; Polling Station Caretakers/Payees; Heads of designated Schools.
Background papers:	Bishops Wood School submission (supported by local correspondence) Goldfield School submission (supported by local correspondence)
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	PH - Portfolio Holder EC – Electoral Commission. ECU – Elections Claims Unit

BACKGROUND

1. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. The current compulsory review was due to be started and completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020 (inclusive). Following this requirement, Dacorum's Polling Places Review carried out during November and December 2019. The availability and suitability of the various polling stations to be used for future elections in Dacorum Borough were confirmed and reviewed. The review included consultation with all of the Political Party Agents, Councillors, Caretakers, Booking Agents and School Heads. Each venue organiser/booking agent was asked to complete a questionnaire regarding the facilities provided at each station and confirm its suitability for use by people with disabilities.
2. As a result of this review Polling Stations in the following locations were identified as no longer suitable or a more suitable option considered.

2.1. Tring Central Ward – Polling District DBAA

At the moment the polling station for Polling District DBAA (Tring Central Ward – Bunstrux Parish) is Bishops Wood C of E Primary School. The current electorate is 1230. The actual Polling Station is in the main school building and accessed from the main gate to the school. At present on polling days, the electors access the school using the same entrance as the students.

The school's representatives, parents and Head Teacher have expressed serious reservations about the use of the site as a Polling Station, mainly on safeguarding grounds, and there are recorded incidents of teaching staff being abused by visitors to the polling station. Instances of this abuse were highlighted during the recent UK Parliamentary Election (see the Head teacher's e-mail at Annex B.) We have received written complaints from four parents concerning the disruption to their child's education; and the child-care difficulties and inconvenience caused by the closure of a school.

As an alternative, the school, parents, and a Borough councillor for Tring have suggested the nearby Nora Grace Hall, Faversham Close, HP23 5BA. Officers have visited the building and the facilities are very suitable for use as a Polling Station.

The site also has extensive off-road parking provision (See attached Map and Nora Grace Hall website: <https://www.tringtogether.org.uk/nora-grace-hall> .

The hall providers have been contacted and are amenable to its use as a Polling Station.

However, the Nora Grace Hall is not in polling district DBAA but is in polling district DBBB. In order to use this venue for polling district DBAA, the boundary between the two polling districts will have to be altered. This can be achieved without moving any electors but residents in and around Faversham Close may then ask why they have to pass a polling station on their doorstep to go the polling station for district DBBB at Tring Community Centre. An option would be to move the DBAA polling district boundary to encompass these (44 properties with approx. 66 electors) residents/electors. Conversely, residents at the Tring town centre side of the polling district may well ask why they have to pass the polling station they have used for many years to get to the new venue.

Tring Town Council have been consulted on this issue and dealt with it at their December meeting. Their response to a request from Bishop Wood School not to be used as a Polling Station was that they are happy to support the request as there are suitable alternatives nearby.

2.2 Tring West & Rural Ward - Goldfield Infants School

Many of the same issues as above are experienced at Goldfields Infants School and they too have requested that DBC investigate the use of the Scout hut on Longfield Road or Old Church House on Western Road as alternatives. Whilst there is limited parking at both sites, there is parking available for those with limited mobility and this would involve a shorter and easier walk than is currently the case at Goldfield School. The results of a preliminary investigation will be reported verbally at the meeting.

2.3 Boxmoor Ward - Camelot Rugby Club

Since the last meeting of this committee in January 2019, DBC has used Camelot Rugby Club, Chaulden Lane, Hemel Hempstead for the three elections held during 2019.

Although on the edge of the ward, this site has a substantial amount of parking spaces and as a purpose built sports club has access suitable for all.

At the last meeting members expressed a preference to use one of the halls at St Mary and St Joseph's church, which is more central to polling district AGB.

However, on three occasions since the last meeting, prior to all of the 2019 elections, the church administrators were contacted with a view to using the halls but they have been unable to accommodate any election due to existing bookings which they were not prepared to move or postpone. This could cause issues in the future in the event of a by-election or another snap national event.

While the facilities and parking at Camelot Rugby Club have proved suitable for its use as a polling station there have been a number of complaints made to the local Dacorum Borough councillor regarding the position of the polling station on the edge of the ward and access issues in the approach to the site along Chaulden Lane.

3. While this committee has the authority and power to make the changes/decisions suggested in this report they will also be reported to the January 2020 Council meeting as part of a Polling District Order.

Annex A – Head Bishop Wood School Letter

Annex B – Abuse e-mail

Annex C – Bishop Wood School Map



Bishop Wood C of E Junior School

Frogmore Street
Tring
HP23 5AU

Tel: 01442 822024
admin@bishopwood.herts.sch.uk
www.bishopwood.herts.sch.uk
@bishopwoodtring

Mr G Stanley, Headteacher

Dear Sir/Madam

Please be advised that Bishop Wood School no longer wishes to be used as a Polling Station for any elections, with immediate effect.

Whilst we understand that the school has been a polling station for many years, the recent flurry of elections has had an adverse impact on school attendance figures and the ability for working parents to secure childcare for their children. As an important part of the Tring community, we must put our children and families first.

We have been informed that the local Nora Grace Hall would be delighted to become a polling station. Should this be of interest, please contact them via:

Nora Grace Hall
Faversham Close
Tring
HP23 5BA
01442 828920

vivianne@tringtogether.org.uk

Please could you reply to confirm that you have removed us from the list of polling stations.

Yours faithfully

Gary Stanley
Headteacher

Huw Bellis
Chair of Governors



Jim Doyle

From: Head <head@bishopwood.herts.sch.uk>
Sent: 12 December 2019 14:45
To: Jim Doyle
Cc: Bishop Wood Church of England Junior School External
Subject: Polling Station Update

Jim

We have just had an incident of a member of the public being aggressive and using unacceptable language towards a member of my staff when she asked him to leave his dog outside.

For obvious reasons, we can't allow dogs inside the building. Technically, they are not even allowed on the school site. It was not an assistance dog.

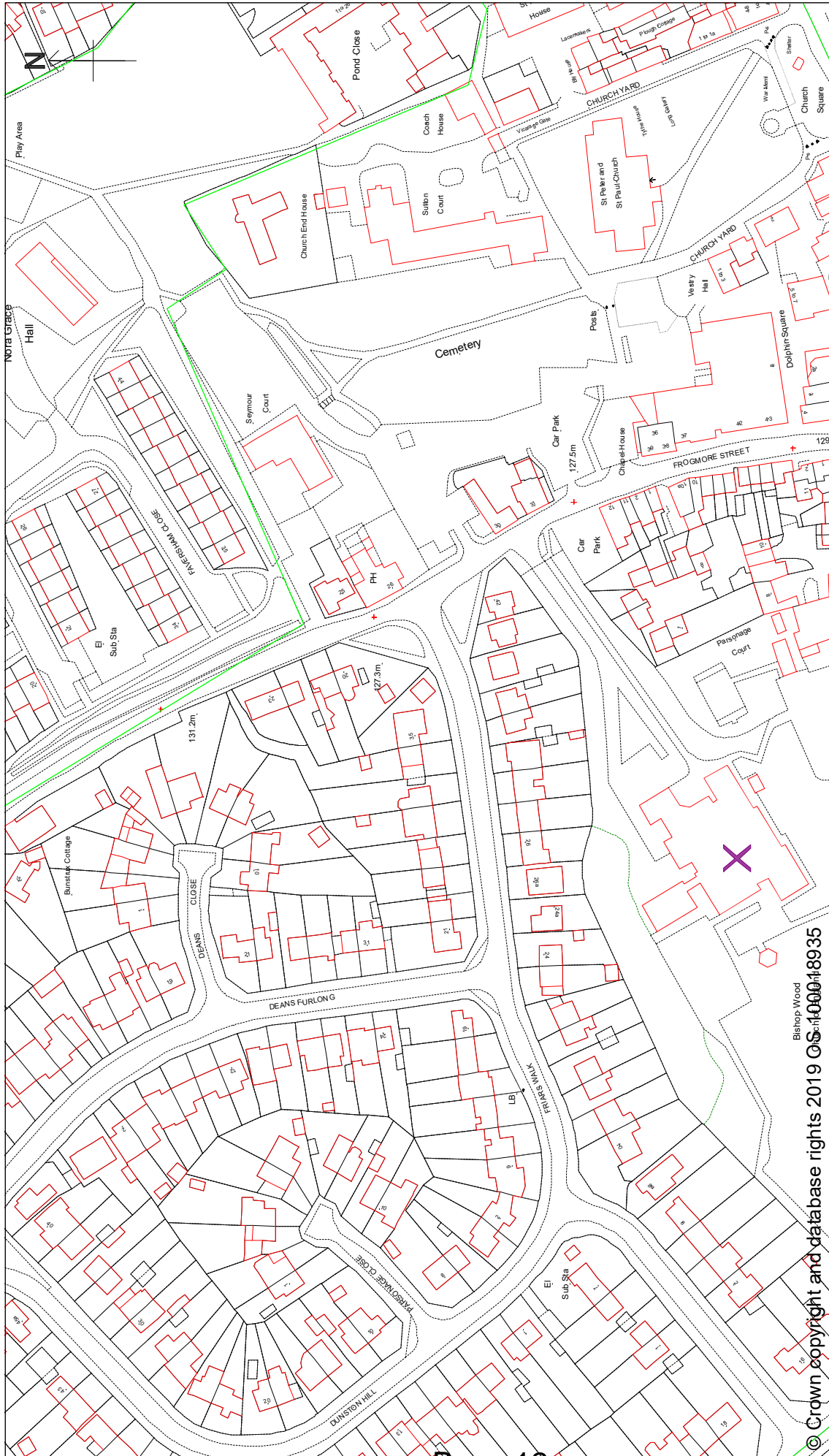
We have also had some constituents being very vocal about 'getting rid of the foreigners' and some use of the term 'darkies' to describe members of minority groups. I do not think that anybody should be exposed to such commentary, least of all the children of Bishop Wood.

Please could these issues be taken into consideration during the upcoming review.

Thanks

Gary

Sent from my iPhone



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Dacorum Borough Council
The Forum
Marlowes
Hemel Hempstead
HP1 1DN

