



# Electoral Review Committee



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<b>Report for:</b>	Electoral Review Committee
<b>Title of report:</b>	Polling District & Polling Place Review
<b>Date:</b>	31 October 2023
<b>Report on behalf of:</b>	Councillor Symington, Portfolio Holder for Corporate & Commercial Services
<b>Part:</b>	I
<b>If Part II, reason:</b>	n/a
<b>Appendices:</b>	n/a
<b>Background papers:</b>	n/a
<b>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</b>	

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<b>Corporate Priorities</b>	Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery
<b>Wards affected</b>	All of Dacorum
<b>Purpose of the report:</b>	1. To note the outcome of the Polling District & Polling Place review and the consultation responses.
<b>Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):</b>	1. That the following polling district amendments are implemented:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polling District BAB (Nash Mills Ward) to move to Polling District BAA (Nash Mills Ward)</li> <li>• Nash House to move from polling district AFAA (Apsley and Corner Hall ward) to move to Polling district BA (Nash Mills Ward)</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. That the Polling District boundary for ALB is slightly amended to accommodate the whole of Woodfield Road in Leverstock Green</li> <li>3. That the polling station in Chipperfield is relocated to the Village hall</li> <li>4. That a new polling place is created at the Hemel Hempstead Methodist Church to accommodate the AGBA Boxmoor Polling District</li> <li>5. That Council note the outcome of the Polling District &amp; Polling Place Review 2023 and approve the amended Polling District &amp; Polling Place Order</li> </ol>
<b>Period for post policy/project review:</b>	Every 5 years

## 1 Introduction/Background:

Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the council has a duty to divide its area into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each district.

The following definitions may be helpful when reading the report.

- “Polling districts” are geographical electoral areas into which wards and constituencies may be sub-divided.
- “Polling places” are the buildings or areas designated by the council where electors in a polling district go to vote in person.
- “Polling stations” are the number of issuing desks in the building or area that is the designated polling place.

The Electoral Administration Act 2006, as amended, introduced a duty on all local authorities in Great Britain to review their polling districts and polling places at least once every five years.

The intention of the legislation was reviews would be completed by the January before a UK parliamentary general election. However, since the repeal of the Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011, there is no longer any certainty as to when the next general election will be.

The Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Act 2022 means:

- the UK Parliament can be dissolved by the King on request of the Prime Minister, at any time within the 5 years of the life of the Parliament
- the next general election must take place before Tuesday 28 January 2025, but it could happen at any point before then

These issues mean it is important that the polling district and places review is carried out as early as possible, so that Dacorum Borough Council has agreed polling districts and places to be used for the next parliamentary election [as well as the scheduled Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May 2024] and has a polling scheme in place which reflects the new constituencies.

## 2 Consultation responses

### ➤ Ward Councillors

'Thank you for your e mail. The proposal seems very sensible, I think this change should be supported.'

➤ **County Councillor**

'The number of people voting in person has been declining for years and the introduction of ID reqs will probably drive more to postal votes.

The small hall has been the venue for decades now and whilst I agree with the suggested points (and well made) the Small Hall Youth Club is right next to the school, is a decent size and does have a kitchen.

I have never received a complaint about it being too small!

As a consideration to the play group who are the regular weekday user and it's an all-day use, I wonder if switching to the village Hall would be less disruptive to parents and the nursery provision. The points about access are true although a one way system is achievable as it has two doors!

I think it is finely balanced and would be happy to support the suggestion, if that is the consensus view. It should also be born in mind that the village hall will also have to stop all its activities as well.'

➤ **Nash Mills Parish Council**

'NMPC discussed the review last night and determined that they had no comments to add as our venue remains unchanged'.

➤ **Boxmoor Ward Councillors**

It's much sensible then voters going to Warners end. Thank you for bringing this change.

Thank you for asking us. I have no issue with this proposal which seems sensible and saves money

It is unfortunate that a site cannot be found in the southern part of the ward to spread the accessibility more evenly. Last time this was looked into, there was talk of using the Catholic Church hall. Did that idea come to nothing? If there is no alternative, then I suppose the methodist church is the best alternative. *(the question raised here has been responded to)*

➤ **Electoral Services**

The Electoral Services team have looked through the register and have identified the following anomalies which if moved, will tidy up the electoral register and streamline the registers required for polling day. This will have no effect on the electors as they will remain in their existing wards

- **26 Properties in Chambersbury Lane and 4 Properties in Silverthorn Drive in Polling District BAB (Nash Mills Ward) to move to Polling District BAA (Nash Mills Ward)**

Polling District BAB is a small polling district of 30 properties, the properties can be combined with Polling District BAA as both are within the same ward. As a result polling district BAB can be deleted.

- **Flats 1-11 Nash House Polling district AFAA (Apsley and Corner Hall ward) to move to Polling district BA (Nash Mills Ward)**

Flats 1-11 Nash House were incorrectly addressed by Royal Mail. They were given the street name of Dickinson Quay which is in the AFAA polling district Apsley and Corner Hall ward, when the property clearly sits in the BA (Nash Mills) polling district. The Address Management team undertook a site visit with a member of the Electoral Services team and liaised with the property developer and Royal Mail and have changed the street name to Dickinson Square and the properties have been moved to the correct Nash Mills polling district.

**3 Moving a Polling District boundary**

Three roads across the Nash Mills and Leverstock Green Wards are subject to a boundary line running straight through the middle of them (shown in blue below). This has resulted in half of the road being in the Leverstock Green ward and the other half in the Nash Mills ward.

It is therefore suggested that the boundary line is moved from the centre of the streets to behind the row of houses (shown in red below), which runs along Bunkers Park:



By moving the boundary line (shown above in blue), the following properties would be moved from polling district BA (Nash Mills) to ALB (Leverstock Green), to join the rest of the street:

Woodfield Drive		Woodfield Gardens		Bedmond Road	
Properties	Electorate	Properties	Electorate	Properties	Electorate
1	3	1	2	52	1
3	2	2	2	54	4
5	1	3	1		
7	1	4	1		
9	4	5	1		
11	2	6	1		
15	2	7	3		
2	0	15	3		
4	2				
6	2				
<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>

Totals: 20 Properties 38 Electors  
 Figures as at: 27.9.23

#### 4 Changing a polling station in Chipperfield.

The current polling station used in Chipperfield is the Chipperfield Youth Club.

The current venue is a nursery during the day, which is a small venue with a single door in and out and a very small kitchen area. There is no immediate parking by the youth club, and electors need to park across the road.

Therefore it has been suggested that we use Chipperfield Village Hall, which is located next door to the Youth Club. The benefits of this change would include:

- The entrance is flat with 2 double doors therefore highly accessible

- There is parking outside the door for approximately 5 cars with cones available to mark disabled parking spaces and safe parking for the staff
- There is a vestibule which is very large, has seating and large public toilets – this could be a space for tellers that would not interrupt the entrance to the polling station and would be great in inclement weather
- The large hall gives space for the polling staff to set up the area with plenty of space for wheelchairs and buggies
- There is a separate kitchen and toilets that can be set up for staff use only
- There are several sets of double doors leading from the main hall should a one-way system need to be put in place
- Along with the 5 parking spaces immediately outside there is also additional parking very close-by which is nearer than parking across the road
- It has been reported that the village hall is under-used by the community, this would be a great way of showcasing the building to local residents
- Using the village hall would mean that there would be no need to disrupt the nursery day, by having to close due to an election.

Ward Councillors, the relevant County Councillor and the Parish Council have been consulted on this. Any responses received are listed above.

## **5 Create a new polling place in Boxmoor Ward**

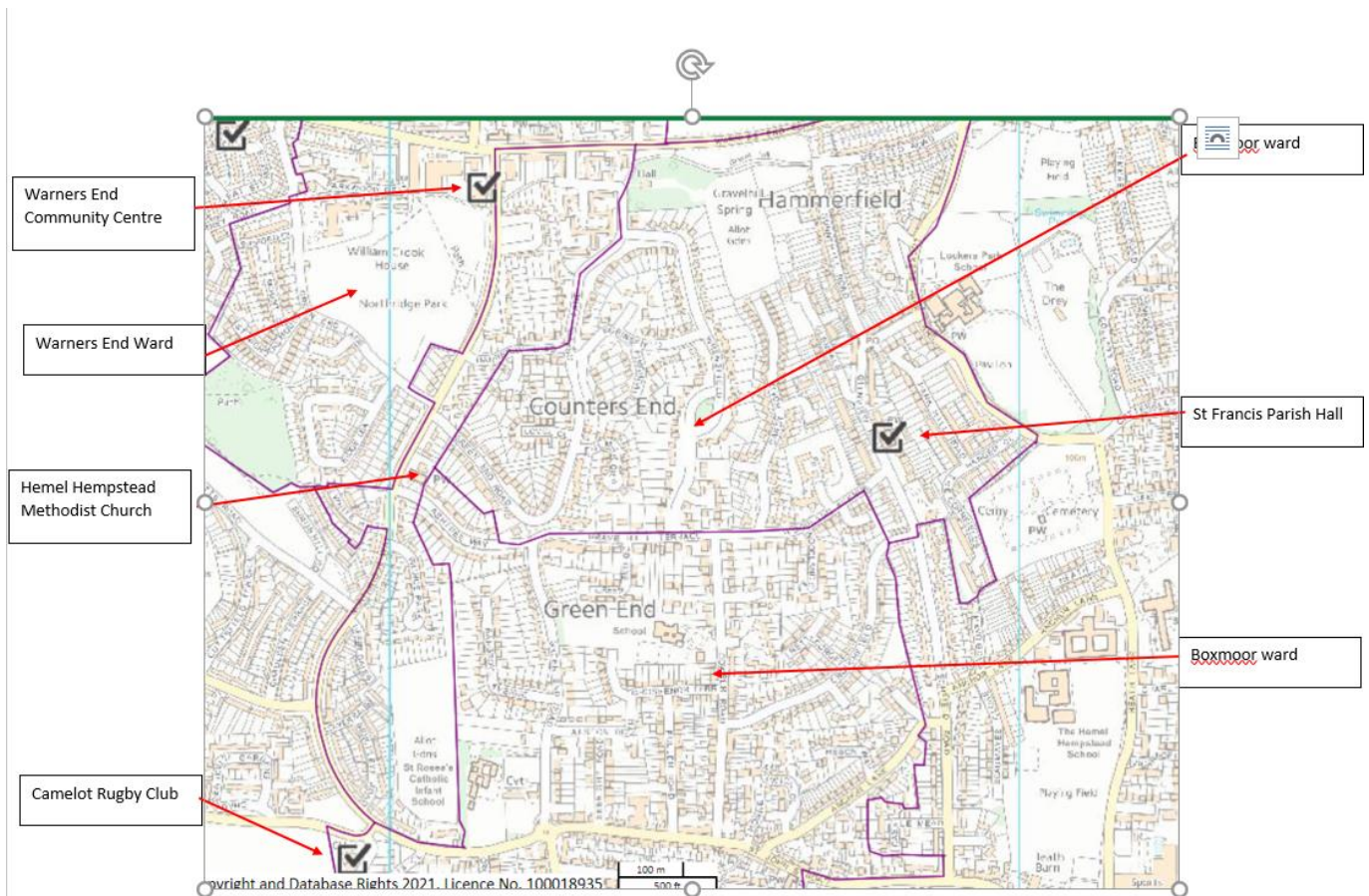
Many years ago an existing polling station was demolished to be rebuilt. Therefore the electors within polling district AGBA in Boxmoor, were temporarily relocated to a polling station in Warners End Community Centre (Chaulden & Warners End ward). This affects around 600 electors.

Best practice is to have electors from a polling district voting in a station located in the same ward and not crossing into a different ward.

Therefore the proposal is to create a new polling place at the Hemel Hempstead Methodist Church on Northridge Way (in the same location as the previously demolished polling station). The electors within polling district AGBA, Boxmoor would then be voting within their correct ward of Boxmoor.

The polling station they will be moving from, will continue to be a polling station for electors in the Chaulden & Warners End ward, however the cost of hire would reduce by around £440

The relevant Ward Councillors have been consulted on this. Any responses received are listed above.



## 6 Consultation

The Returning Officer; Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services, All councillors; Parish Councils, DBC Consultation website, DBC website

## 7 Financial and value for money implications:

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.

## 8 Legal Implications

Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the council has a duty to divide its area into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each district. This must be reviewed every five years.

## 9 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.

## 10 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

There are no equalities or community impacts arising directly from this report. Polling stations have been fully assessed and are deemed fully accessible for all members of the public.

## 11 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

There are no sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

## 12 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

There are no council infrastructure implications arising directly from this report.

## 13 Conclusions:

After consideration, the above recommendations are deemed appropriate amendments to the councils Polling Districts and Polling places. A revised Polling Place Order will be approved by Full Council.