

ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Arrangements Committee held on 27 October 2011 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. P Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Mrs A Hunter (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr. K S Bayley, Cllr. Mrs P Bosley, Cllr. R Brookbank,
Cllr Mrs J Davison, Cllr Ms M Lowe and Cllr. Mrs J Sargeant

Apologies for absence: Cllr. Mrs C Clark

1. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING MUNICIPAL YEAR

Resolved: That Cllr. Fleming be appointed Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

2. TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING MUNICIPAL YEAR

Resolved: That Cllr. Mrs. Hunter be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 SEPTEMBER 2010

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 September 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5. POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW

The Electoral Services Manager presented a report which advised the Committee that the Council was required to carry out a review of polling districts and polling places at least once every four years under the Electoral Administration Act 2006. The last review had been completed in 2007 and a review therefore had to be completed by the end of December 2011. The requirement to divide the district into polling districts for the purposes of elections and to provide a polling place for every district that was easily accessible to all electors, including those with disabilities, was highlighted. The report also explained the Council's practice of avoiding the use of school premises wherever possible to minimise disruption to school activities along with the intention that temporary stations should not be used on grounds of

expense and that no more than 1800 electors should be allocated to a polling station. The Polling Districts and Polling Places Review process was outlined along with the timetable for the conclusion of the review. As part of this notice of the review had been given as required in the regulations, the Returning Officer had provided comments on the existing polling station locations and there had been public consultation which had invited comments from a number of organisations including parish councils, District and County Councillors, local political associations and all local government electors. This consultation period had begun on 22 August and ended on 7 October 2011. The responses to the consultation were contained in Appendix A to the report.

The Electoral Services Manager explained that investigations had been carried out in six polling districts in an effort to secure permanent changes to existing venues and the options and recommendations in respect of each polling district and polling place were outlined, along with the reasons for the recommendations, in Appendix B to the report. Very few changes were proposed although it was recognised that not all locations were ideal but some were used due to lack of suitable alternatives or the non-availability of venues. It was proposed that the venues used for the 2011 elections should be retained with the exception of the East Hill and Knatts Valley Polling Districts where it was proposed to locate a double station at Woodlands Manor Golf Club where there were good parking facilities, and West Kingsdown (East) where the function room in The Portobello Inn would replace the Village Hall, which was no longer available. Enquiries had also been made about the possibility of returning to use Knole Academy East (the former Wildernesse School) as a polling place for Hillingdon and Wildernesse Polling Districts, which had not been available in 2011, and it had been confirmed that this venue could be used in future. It was therefore recommended that this should be included in the proposals contained in Appendix B to the report and the recommendations to be approved by the Council on 29 November 2011. The Electoral Services Manager stressed that the Council kept the position under review and that if more appropriate venues emerged in any of the polling districts these could be considered at any time and for this reason the review had not identified a need for many changes. It was accepted that polling arrangements in Birchwood and Kemsing West were not ideal but that these would be kept under review.

Councillor Brookbank expressed his concern at the polling arrangements made for Birchwood Polling District at the General Election but accepted that the arrangements applied at the 2011 Elections, when Birchwood electors polled at the White Oak Bowls Centre, had been better but still wondered whether a temporary polling station might be an option. Members noted that an approach had been made to the manager of the new hotel at Birchwood as a possible polling location but that this had been turned down. Councillor Mrs Hunter offered to contact the owners, Whitbreads, at a more senior level to see whether they might reconsider this position.

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that

- (1) the proposed polling scheme contained in Appendix B to the report, as amended and attached to these minutes, be approved; and

- (2) the timetable in paragraph 9 (in relation to the next phase of the review) be adopted.

6. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Electoral Services Manager advised the Committee that Government and Electoral Commission guidance recommended that District Councils should carry out a review of the boundary and electoral arrangements of the parishes within their areas every 10-15 years. With effect from February 2008 District Councils had taken on responsibility for carrying out these community governance reviews (formerly known as parish reviews). The last such review had been carried out in Sevenoaks in 1999 and it was proposed that a review should be carried out now both to meet the recommended timeframe and to take advantage of a small window of opportunity ahead of scheduled elections. The review would have to be completed within 12 months of the review commencing and it was proposed that the review should commence on 30 November and be completed by August 2012 with the publication of the Council's decisions in respect of parish boundaries and electoral arrangements. Any changes would take effect from the date of the next full parish council elections in May 2015. The timetable outlined in the report provided for widespread consultation to allow interested persons or groups the opportunity to input to the review including District and County Councillors, local parishes, known community groups and local MP's. Proposals could relate to the creation, merging, grouping, altering or abolition of parishes, or relate to the name of a parish or to the number of councillors or warding arrangements for parishes. It was noted that any changes to parish boundaries would have knock-on effects for neighbouring parishes and would require negotiation to gain the fullest backing of the local community and the parishes affected. The potential impact of the West Kent Cold Store development was discussed and it was noted that a development of this size could ultimately warrant the creation of a new parish.

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that

- (1) a community governance review be undertaken;
- (2) the terms of reference for the review set out in the Appendix to the report be adopted; and
- (3) the timetable for the review contained in paragraph 5 of the report be adopted.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.15 pm

Chairman

Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

Proposals by Sevenoaks District Council

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)	No. of polling stations	Reason
Ash (AA)	289	Ash Village Hall, The Street, Ash	In use at least since 1974 and well located in the village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Hodsoll Street & Ridley (AB)	452	Hodsoll Street & Ridley Village Hall, Hodsoll Street	In use at least since 1974 and situated in the heart of Hodsoll Street Village (though some distance from other community off the Gravesend Road).	1	Electorate warrants only one station
New Ash Green North West (AC)	2127	New Ash Green Youth Centre, Ash Road, New Ash Green	First used in 1981, replacing a mobile polling station situated elsewhere. Although located at one end of the polling district it is still close to all electors.	2	Electors exceed 1800
New Ash Green South East (AD)	2321	New Ash Green Village Hall, Centre Road, New Ash Green	Replaced school in 1976. Although located to one end of the polling district it is still close to all electors.	2	Electors exceed 1800

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Brasted (AE)	763	Brasted Village Hall, High Street, Brasted	Replaced school in 1977. Well located in village but poor parking. Tried pavilion at recreation ground (better parking) at 1997 by-election but, overall, this did not find favour.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Toys Hill (AF)	371	Toys Hill Hall & Chancel Kitchen, Puddledock Lane, Toys Hill	Venue for new polling district since 2003. Previously, part of Brasted polling district which meant a very long journey to the polling station. Poor access only marginally improved by setting up polling station in kitchen (so less steps) and providing hand rail. Not possible to install a ramp. Poll cards to electors state “Difficult access for disabled or infirm”.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Chevening (AG)	2350	Chevening Church Hall, Homedean Road, Chipstead	In use at least since 1974. Located at one end of main body of electors in Chipstead and Bessels Green. Suggestion of separate polling district for Bessels Green did not find favour locally in 2002.	2	Electors exceed 1800

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Bough Beech (AH)	251	The Wheatsheaf at Bough Beech, Hever Road, Bough Beech	Venue since 2009 when Village Hall was no longer available. Central to the community and good parking facilities.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Chiddingstone Causeway (AI)	326	Chiddingstone Causeway Village Hall, Chiddingstone Causeway	To one end of polling district but no known alternative in rural area. Ramp provided by owners.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Chiddingstone Hoath (AJ)	168	The Rock Inn Public House, Chiddingstone Hoath	Replaced dilapidated hall in 1981. Access not ideal and site is to one end of polling district but no known alternative in rural area.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Chiddingstone Village (AK)	205	Chiddingstone Primary School, Chiddingstone Village	Well located. School prefers this arrangement to the alternative of adjacent parish hall as latter is used by school for meals.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Cowden (AL)	650	Cowden Memorial Hall, Chantlers Mead, Cowden	Replaced school (closed down) in 1983. Well located in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Crockenhill (AM)	1326	Crockenhill Village Hall, Stones Cross Road, Crockenhill	Replaced school in 1981. Quite central to the village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Dunton Green (AN)	1723	Dunton Green Village Hall, London Road, Dunton Green	Replaced school in 1979. A little way away from the main body of electors but no alternatives have been suggested.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Marlpit Hill (AO)	1551	St. Paulinus Church Centre, Hillcrest Road, Edenbridge	Replaced Men’s Club in 1979. Well located in main area of electorate.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Marsh Green (AP)	358	St. John’s United Reformed Church, Marsh Green	Venue for new polling district since review of Edenbridge polling arrangements in 1997. Located close to main area of electorate.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Pound Green (AQ)	1077	Edenbridge Sports Pavilion, Lingfield Road, Edenbridge	Venue for new polling district since review of Edenbridge polling arrangements in 1997. Located at edge of main body of electors but not aware of any alternative.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Spitals Cross (AR)	1194	Fircroft Tenants & Residents Association, Farmstead Drive, Edenbridge	Venue for new polling district since review of Edenbridge polling arrangements in 1997. Located at the heart of the main body of electors.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Stangrove & South End (AS)	1781	Edenbridge Scout HQ, Station Road, Edenbridge	New site in 2003 after changes to District Ward boundaries. Not quite central to elongated polling district. Small step access – purpose built ramp being provided.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Town (Edenbridge) (AT)	880	Edenbridge W.I.Hall, Station Road, Edenbridge	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1981. Quite well located within polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Eynsford (AU)	1461	Eynsford Village Hall, High Street, Eynsford	Replaced school in 1981. Central to village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Farningham (AV)	1088	Farningham Village Hall, High Street, Farningham	In use at least since 1974 and well located in the village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Fawkham (AW)	475	Fawkham Village Hall, Valley Road, Fawkham	Central within Parish. Good parking. Replaced school in 1977.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Halstead (AX)	1265	Halstead Pavilion, Station Road, Halstead	Replaced parish hall in 1997. Though not as central in village, it does provide better parking and facilities.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Hartley North (AY)	2219	Longfield & Hartley Scout HQ, Larkwell Lane, Hartley	Well located within polling district. First used in 1987 following boundary changes.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Hartley South (AZ)	2200	All Saints Church Centre, Ash Road, Hartley	Well located within polling district. Good parking. Replaced school in 1976.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Four Elms (BA)	459	Four Elms Village Hall, Ide Hill Road, Four Elms	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1981. Well located in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Hever (BB)	503	Hever Village Hall, Hever Road, Hever	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1981. Ramp provided by owners.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Hextable (BC)	3433	St. Peter’s Church Hall, College Road, Hextable	In use at least since 1974. Very well located.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Horton Kirby (BD)	974	Fighting Cocks Public House, The Street, Horton Kirby	Replaced school in 1995. Electors enter via rear of building; disabled access via the bar. Quite central to village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
South Darenth (BE)	1704	Horton Kirby & South Darenth Village Hall, Horton Road, South Darenth	Replaced fire station (poor facilities) in 1981. Although outside village, no known alternative.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Kemsing East & Kemsing West (BF/BG)	1700/1601	The St. Edith Hall, High Street, Kemsing	Replaced school in 1981. Good facilities but situated at eastern end of village. Second polling district created in 1999 for the western end and polling took place at the Town Church, Dynes Road, but Town Church pulled down in 2000. The Dynes Residential Care Home was used on one occasion but is no longer available. Retain two polling districts and continue to seek polling place for western end.	2	One polling station for each of the two polling districts
Knockholt (BH)	989	Knockholt Village Centre, Main Road, Knockholt	In use at least since 1974. Good parking. At edge of village but close to the main body of electors.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Leigh (BI)	1452	Leigh Small Village Hall, High Street, Leigh	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1977. Ramp provided by owners. Located in village; some distance from electors in the communities of Charcott and Powdermills but no known alternatives available in these rural areas.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Otford (BJ)	2673	Otford Village Memorial Hall, High Street, Otford	Replaced school in 1981. Centrally located, good facilities.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Fordcombe (BK)	591	Fordcombe Village Hall, Fordcombe	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1981. Well located in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Penshurst (BL)	764	Penshurst Village Hall, Penshurst	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1981. Good location in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Riverhead (BM)	1890	Riverhead Village Hall, Amherst Hill, Riverhead	Replaced school in 1979. Central site but no parking; not aware of any alternatives.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Seal – St. Lawrence (BN)	377	St. Lawrence Village Hall, Church Road, Stone Street	New site in 1991 after creation of new Parish Ward. Well positioned in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Seal (BO)	1323	Seal Village Hall, High Street, Seal	Replaced school (probably in 1979). Quite central to village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Underriver (BP)	271	Underriver Village Hall, Carters Hill, Underriver	Replaced school (probably in 1979). Situated in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Bat & Ball (BQ)	842	Sevenoaks Community Centre, Otford Road, Sevenoaks	This polling district was most recently altered in 2003 as a result of the Periodic Electoral Review (PER). This polling place has been used since 1984; good parking and access and close to main body of electors.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Bradbourne (BR)	1241	Sevenoaks Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks	Minimal change to polling district in 2003 following PER. Previous venue at a mobile classroom in the grounds of the former Bradbourne School (now Knole Academy West) was not suitable for voters with disabilities. In the absence of any alternative in the polling district, the offices of the Sevenoaks Town Council have been used since 2003. Whilst this venue is located outside the polling district, it is not much further for voters to travel than the former venue.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Greatness (BS)	1184	Greatness Club House, Mill Lane, Sevenoaks	Replaced St. John Ambulance Hall in 1993 (which had difficult access). Central to polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
High Street (Sevenoaks) (BT)	1331	The STAG Community Arts Centre (Plaza Suite), London Road, Sevenoaks	Replaced St. Nicholas Parish Hall (demolished) in 1997. Good access and well located within polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Hillingdon (BU)	1295	To be confirmed.	The former Wildernesse School, in use at least since 1974. Classroom used, so school able to function. Since 2003 PER, situated outside polling district but after extensive consultation, agreed that voters should continue to use this venue. As Knole Academy East, not available in 2011 but discussions have resumed to try to identify suitable accommodation on the site.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Holly Bush (BV)	1777	St. John’s C.E.P. School, Kennedy Gardens, Sevenoaks	In use at least since 1981. School able to function. After 2003 PER, preferred option over St. John’s Church Hall (St. John’s Hill/Quakers Hall Lane).	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Kippington North (BW)	1094	Christ Church United Reformed Church, Littlecourt Road, Sevenoaks	Revised polling district in 2003 (following PER) to accommodate as many electors as possible. Venue used for the first time in 2003. Access and parking o.k.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Kippington South (BX)	1149	Kippington Community Centre, Kippington Road, Sevenoaks	Revised polling district in 2003 (following PER) to accommodate as many electors as possible. Venue in use at least since 1981; newly built in 2004. Good access and parking.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Lower St. John’s (BY)	881	British Red Cross Centre, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks	New polling district following 2003 PER. Venue in use since 2003; good access and parking and well located.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Sevenoaks Common (BZ)	1458	Solefield School, Solefields Road, Sevenoaks	In use at least since 1974. Classroom used, so school able to function. There are steps and a narrow entrance which makes access less than ideal.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Tubs Hill (CA)	1254	St. Luke’s Church Hall, Eardley Road, Sevenoaks	New polling district following 2003 PER. Venue in use since 2003; good access and well located.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Upper St. John’s (CB)	1404	United Reformed Church, St. John’s Road, Sevenoaks	New polling district following 2003 PER. Venue in use since 2003; good access, only on-street parking. Located slightly to one side of polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Wilderness (CC)	308	To be confirmed.	The former Wilderness School, in use at least since 1974. Classroom used, so school able to function. As Knole Academy East, not available in 2011 but discussions have resumed to try to identify suitable accommodation on the site.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Sevenoaks Weald (CD)	974	Weald Memorial Hall, Long Barn Road, Sevenoaks Weald	Venue in use since 1983, replacing school. Centrally located within village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Badgers Mount (CE)	537	Badgers Mount Memorial Hall, Orpington-By-Pass, Badgers Mount	In use at least since 1974. Close to main body of voters.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Shoreham (CF)	894	Shoreham Village Hall, High Street, Shoreham	Replaced school in 1977. Good access and well located.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Well Hill (CG)	215	Well Hill Mission Church, Well Hill	New polling district following 2003 PER. Venue in use since 2003; Residents’ Association preferred location over public house alternative. Not the best access to the building or into the building but preferable to voters journeying long distances into Shoreham village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Ide Hill (CH)	525	Ide Hill Village Hall (Wheatsheaf Room), Ide Hill	Replaced school in 1985. Quite close to village; good parking.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Sundridge (CI)	1002	Sundridge Village Hall, Main Road, Sundridge	In use at least since 1974. Quite central to village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Birchwood (CJ)	1023	White Oak Bowls Centre, Garrolds Close, Swanley	Two former venues (Birchwood School and Birchwood Public House) are both closed. White Oak Leisure Centre was used in 2010 but was not popular. New hotel at Birchwood not available/not suitable. In 2011, White Oak Bowls Centre was used; propose to continue this arrangement until a suitable site is found within the polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Christ Church (CK)	2038	Christ Church Centre, Kingswood Avenue, Swanley	Replaced school in 1981. Good location; separate polling booth provided for voters with disabilities so as to avoid steps inside the building. Limited on-street parking opposite with a two hour waiting restriction; blue badge holders can park outside hall.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
High Firs (CL)	2100	High Firs Primary School, Court Crescent, Swanley	In use at least since 1981. Classroom used, so school able to function. Good location.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
St. Mary’s (CM)	3238	Swanley Youth Centre, St. Mary’s Road, Swanley	In use since 1985. Located to one end of polling district but no known alternative closer to a central point.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Swanley Lane (CN)	1633	Swanley ACF Hall, Swanley Lane, Swanley	In use at least since 1974. Located at the extremity of the polling district but convenient for voters on their way to the station and shops. Rough ground on approach to hall. No alternative within the polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Swanley Village (CO)	342	The Lamb Inn, Swanley Village Road, Swanley Village	In use since 2005. Located a little to one end of village, quite good access, some parking.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
White Oak (CP)	2062	White Oak Bowls Centre, Garrolds Close, Swanley	In use since 1999. Quite well located, good access, parking available.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Crockham Hill (CQ)	584	Crockham Hill Village Hall, Crockham Hill	In use since 1997, after demolition of WI Hall. Located close to main body of voters with good access and parking.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Westerham (CR)	2899	Westerham Hall, Quebec Avenue, Westerham	In use at least since 1974 (excepting for a few years during re-construction and because of prior bookings). Quite central to village, good access and parking.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800

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East Hill (CS)	266	Woodlands Manor Golf Club, Tinkerpot Lane, West Kingsdown	New - For several years East Hill electors have had to poll at Woodlands Church Hall, Tinkerpot Lane, the same venue as Knatts Valley electors. As most electors will have to travel by car in order to vote, it is important to have car parking facilities and there are none at the current venue. Woodlands Manor Golf Club, also in Tinkerpot Lane, has ample car parking and is willing to accommodate a polling station.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Knatts Valley (CT)	216	Woodlands Manor Golf Club, Tinkerpot Lane, West Kingsdown	New – sensible for Knatts Valley electors to also attend these premises as using both the Woodlands Church Hall and the Golf Club would cause elector confusion.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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West Kingsdown East (CU)	1205	The Portobello Inn, London Road, West Kingsdown	New – West Kingsdown Village Hall no longer available. The Portobello Inn, London Road (at the junction with Fawkham Road) are willing to accommodate a polling station in their Function Room. Access will be from the car park and a ramp will be provided to assist electors with disabilities, if appropriate.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
West Kingsdown – Hever (CV)	2718	The Pavilion, London Road, West Kingsdown	In use since 1999. Not well located, being on the opposite side of the A20 from most voters, but provides a solution after many years of poor provision for this polling district. We provide temporary outside lighting.	1	Although electorate warrants it, there is insufficient space to provide 2 polling stations. Instead, extra polling staff are appointed to share out duties. Due to a potential triple poll in 2011, a second polling station was set up in the adjacent Library for the evening period of polling and this is a solution in similar future circumstances.

