

POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS REVIEW 2023



RECOMMENDATIONS

This document contains the final recommendations for the polling districts, polling places and polling stations in the Folkestone & Hythe District Council area.

Please note the following points before reading this document:

- Electoral Commission guidance recommends a maximum polling station electorate of 2,500.
- The electorate figures in this report have been reduced by 21% to accommodate the average amount of postal voters in an area. Postal voters do not attend a polling station to vote.
- Any polling district, polling place or station not mentioned in this document does not have a recommendation for change, therefore current polling arrangements used at previous elections will remain in place.
- Identified housing developments carry an average of 2 electors per household, this has been considered for future electorate calculations.
- Natural population growth is set at 1.07% in line with the national average for areas without large housing developments.

Paul Butler
Democratic Services and Elections Lead Specialist

Initial Draft: 06 December 2023

Ward: Broadmead

Polling districts: BR1

Polling district	Current electorate	Potential electorate (over next 4 years)	Current polling place	Proposal
BR1	2,431	2,601	Grace Taylor Hall	To keep Broadmead as one polling district and to change the polling place from Grace Taylor Hall to Folkestone Sports Centre

Comments:

- The electorate for Broadmead has not grown substantially in the past twelve years.
- A small housing development is being built but it is not substantial enough to warrant splitting the polling district.
- Broadmead was split in the past to BR1 and BR2 but was later made back in to one, whole polling district.
- Grace Taylor Hall has been used as a polling place for many years and the staff and booking agents have always been more than helpful in an election timetable.
- Grace Taylor Hall does not meet some accessibility criteria.
- Broadmead polling district contains other venues that satisfy accessibility requirements, so an investigation had to take place.
- Folkestone Sports Centre has disabled parking, a car park, is close to 3 bus stops at different areas of Broadmead, has a large, ramped door and has an area that can be allocated for a polling station.
- No representations or comments have been received either for or against this proposal in the Acting Returning Officer's statement.

Ward: Cheriton

Polling districts: CH2

Polling district	Current electorate	Potential electorate (over next 4 years)	Current polling place	Proposal
CH2	1,794	1,814	1 st Cheriton Scout Hut	To move the polling place from 1 st Cheriton Scout Hut to the Shorncliffe Pavilion when it is up and running.

Comments:

- The Scout Leader at the 1st Cheriton Scout Hut has been such a great booking agent for past elections and will be missed.
- Staff and elector feedback has led the elections team to seek a different venue for the CH2 polling district.
- The Scout Hut is in CH3 polling district and has very limited access for electors from Hawkins Road when the turnout is high for an election.
- Electors from the CH3 polling district have attend the Scout Hut thinking it was their polling station.
- The Shorncliffe Pavilion has parking, disabled parking, and adequate rooms to accommodate holding a polling station there.
- Comments have been received in favour of this proposal in the Acting Returning Officer's statement.

Ward: Hythe Rural

Polling districts: HR1 and HR2

Polling district	Current electorate	Potential electorate (over next 4 years)	Current polling place	Proposal
HR1	798	806	Win Pine House	To keep HR1 and HR2 intact.
HR2	1730	1851	Palmarsh Hall	To keep Win Pine House as the polling place for HR1 electors.

Comments:

- **The housing development at Nickolls quarry will not have an immediate impact on these polling districts that requires them to change now. This can be reviewed on an interim basis, or at the next review.**
- **Win Pine House was used as a polling place for the May 2023 elections.**
- **The polling station is part of the communal lounge that has its own access, keeping residents separate from polling station activities.**
- **The building is accessible with unrestricted, on-street parking.**
- **Win Pine House is opposite the previous polling place of the Football Club and its car park.**
- **There is no proposal to change Palmarsh Hall as the polling place for HR2.**
- **No representations or comments have been received about this proposal in the Acting Returning Officer's statement.**

Ward: Romney Marsh

Polling districts: RM2

Polling district	Current electorate	Potential electorate (over next 4 years)	Current polling place	Proposal
RM2	270	272	Dymchurch Village Hall	To keep Dymchurch Village Hall as the polling place for RM2 electors.

Comments:

- **The Neptune could no longer accommodate us for future elections, so Dymchurch Village Hall was used as a double polling station serving electors in RM2 and RM3 for elections in 2023.**
- **As part of our process in finding another venue for the RM2 area, we visited and checked:**
 - **Sandy Bay (couldn't do it),**
 - **Eastfleet Caravan Park (not suitable/accessible),**
 - **Newbeach/Neptune owned by the same company that could no longer offer a venue for elections and could not guarantee space for the future,**
 - **Environment Agency at Willop Depot (couldn't do it); and**
 - **Jehovah's Witness Hall is occupied on Thursdays.**
- **The polling district boundary lines for RM2 start from the sluice gates just past Sandy Bay and end at the sluice gate near the Willop Depot.**
- **Appointing a polling place in a neighbouring polling district for RM2 will confuse electors in that neighbouring polling district. They will have to travel past that one to get to their own polling station.**
- **The turnout difference between the 2021 poll (at The Neptune) and 2023 (at the Village Hall) was down 4% which can be attributed to more than just the location of a polling place. 2021 was the first set of combined elections since Covid-19 lockdowns. In 2023, the elections were for local and parish seats which carry the lowest turnout of all types of elections. Dymchurch Parish Council election was also uncontested in 2023 which meant the elections in Dymchurch were not combined.**
- **One comment was received objecting to the permanent move.**

Ward: Romney Marsh

Polling districts: RM1

Polling district	Current electorate	Potential electorate (over next 4 years)	Current polling place	Proposal
RM1	154	155	Burmarsh Church Hall	To move the polling place from Burmarsh Church Hall to The Shepherd and Crook Inn.

Comments:

- **An original proposal to move the polling place to Fallow Fields campsite will not be pursued.**
- **I would like to include a note of thanks to the staff at Fallow Fields for offering their venue and space to us.**
- **10 comments were received objecting to the proposal for Fallow Fields in the Acting Returning Officer's statement.**
- **Most of the suggestions received from the public included The Shepherd and Crook Inn as a suitable replacement for the Church Hall**
- **The Shepherd and Crook Inn is opposite the Church Hall, accessible and can provide suitable facilities to both staff and electors for future elections.**
- **The owners at the Shepherd and Crook Inn are very helpful and keen to assist for future elections.**