



## **REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS & POLLING PLACES – ACTING RETURNING OFFICER’S FINAL PROPOSALS**

The London Borough of Merton has been conducting a review of polling districts and polling places in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013. The Acting Returning Officer (ARO) for the parliamentary constituencies of Mitcham & Morden and Wimbledon makes the following proposals regarding existing polling stations and polling stations likely to be used within Merton, based on proposed polling places.

### **Background**

The last statutory review of polling districts and polling places was conducted in 2019. However, another full review of all of Merton’s polling districts and polling places was conducted in 2021 as a result of the Local Government Boundary Commission’s review of Merton’s ward boundaries, ahead of the Merton Council elections in 2022.

However, in order to satisfy the requirements of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, the authority is required to complete another statutory review of all polling districts and polling places within a 16 month period from 1 October 2023. Reviews are required to be held within the period of 16 months that starts on 1 October of every 5<sup>th</sup> year after 1 October 2013, therefore this next compulsory review must be completed by 31 January 2025.

In conducting the review, the authority must seek to ensure that all electors have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances, and have regard to the needs of electors who are disabled.

### **Scope and Objectives of the Review**

The Review has examined all Polling Districts and Polling Places. Ward boundaries cannot be altered as part of this Review.

The ARO aims to provide Polling Districts in all Wards that conform to the following criteria:

- Meet Electoral Commission guidance regarding electorate size
- The area must allow for a Polling Place to be situated in a location that is accessible for all electors in the Polling District

Polling Places have been selected according to the following criteria:

- Compliance with Electoral Commission guidance
- Accessibility will be a central consideration
- Availability and cost – the ARO requires Polling Places that can be used for every election at a cost that is reasonable to the taxpayer
- No more than 2,250 electors should be allocated to each Polling Station – note that a Polling Place can accommodate multiple Polling Stations
- Where possible, electorate allocations to each Polling Station should be of roughly equal size within each Ward

## **Key Issues for the Proposals**

The Local Government Boundary Review of Merton's ward boundaries necessitated the Returning Officer to make significant changes to polling districts and polling places in 2021, ahead of the Merton Council elections in 2022.

Therefore to minimise voter confusion and inconvenience, the ARO has not altered allocated polling districts and polling places significantly from the 2022 Merton Council elections, except where necessary.

All new Polling Places have been assessed for accessibility, facilities and proximity to voters in that Polling District.

According to Electoral Commission guidance, no polling station should be allocated more than 2,250 electors. This excludes postal voters and those not eligible to vote. Where a polling district has been allocated more than 2,250 electors, the electorate is split between two polling stations in the same venue. This is known as a double polling station.

Physical barriers such as railway lines, parks, and main roads can prevent an easy division of electors to Polling Districts. The proposals must take these into account and regard the safety of electors travelling to and from their Polling Place.

Transport links in Polling Districts should be considered – they can improve accessibility for electors. Where changes are required the review will note the provision of bus stops and parking spaces.

When allocating electors to Polling Places and Stations the review will account for previous electoral turnout and the capacity of polling staff to deal with high turnouts.

## **The decision making process**

In general terms, the Council announces that a review is to take place and consults the Acting Returning Officer, who makes representations on existing and proposed polling arrangements. The Council publishes the Acting Returning Officer's proposals and invites comments.

These proposals will be considered at Standards and General Purposes Committee on 9 November 2023.

The arrangements will then come into force when the next revised voters list is published on 1 December 2023.

## The Acting Returning Officer's proposals

The following pages provide existing and/or proposed polling scheme details for every ward. All proposed changes are highlighted and accompanied by a clear explanation for the reasons for the change. For some wards there are no proposed changes.

This review covers the polling districts and places to be used for all types of elections and referendums within the London Borough of Merton; therefore local electorate figures, (excluding postal voters) have been used as the higher electorate figure. The local electorate figures used in this review are from the latest update to the electoral register on 2 September 2023.

### Lower Morden (A)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
AA	1227	St. Martin's Church, Camborne Road, Morden, SM4 4JL (in church hall)	permanent ramp
AB (2 PS)	2514	Morden Assembly Hall, Tudor Drive, Morden, SM4 4PG (in assembly hall)	permanent ramp
AC (2 PS)	2057	Emmanuel Church Hall, Dudley Drive, Morden, SM4 4QG (in church hall)	permanent ramp
AD	1113	Lawrence Weaver Institute, Green Lane, Morden, SM4 6SR (in main hall)	level

<b>Proposed arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
AA	1227	St. Martin's Church, Camborne Road, Morden, SM4 4JL (in church hall)	permanent ramp
AB (2 PS)	2514	Morden Assembly Hall, Tudor Drive, Morden, SM4 4PG (in assembly hall)	permanent ramp
AC (2 PS)	2057	Emmanuel Church Hall, Dudley Drive, Morden, SM4 4QG (in church hall)	permanent ramp
AD	1113	St Lawrence Church Centre, London Road, Morden, SM4 5QT	Level access

#### **ARO submission**

A need has arisen to find a replacement polling station for polling district AD, in Lower Morden ward, and polling district BA, in St Helier ward. The current polling station (the Lawrence Weaver Institute) is due to be demolished from late 2023, with a replacement facility planned for construction on the same site. The

proposed demolition and construction means that the building will be unavailable to hire for the next scheduled elections in Merton, taking place on 2 May 2024. The Lawrence Weaver Institute was itself a replacement for Morden Primary School, and was first used in 2019, when polling district AD was part of St Helier ward. Since then, the Local Government Boundary Commission has conducted a review of Merton's ward boundaries, which took effect from May 2022. Morden Primary School was a school that was historically required to close on polling day. To avoid going back to the school and selecting it as a replacement to the Lawrence Weaver Institute, a replacement polling station is required.

During the course of this review, the ARO originally considered the Morden Parish Church Hall, located in between Morden Primary School and the Lawrence Weaver Institute on Green Lane. However, this venue was rejected by ward Cllrs from both Lower Morden and St Helier wards due to the high step at the entrance to the building and the impracticability of installing a ramp which would lead out onto the pavement and possibly obstruct pedestrians. The Parish Hall also did not benefit from any parking facilities.

Cllr Kenny suggested that the ARO look at the St Lawrence Church Centre as a possible alternative venue. The Church Centre is located within polling district AD on London Road, almost directly opposite the Morden Primary School. The building has been visited by Electoral Services during the course of the review and has been assessed as meeting the requirements of a double polling station. The Church Centre has level access, with a hall and adjoining room that could be used for polling. The Centre also has external lighting. Residents from both polling districts would have to cross London road in order to reach the polling station, but the Church and Church Centre is accessed directly via a pedestrian crossing. The building does not have parking, although there is a large car park next door at the Harvester restaurant that voters could potentially use if they cannot walk to the polling station or use public transport. After Electoral Services reported their findings, Cllrs Kenny, Judge and Williscroft have now endorsed the proposal to use the St Lawrence Church Centre as a polling station.

A respondent to the online consultation was very satisfied with the polling station at St Martin's Church, in polling district AA.

## Polling districts AD and BA



## St Helier (B)

Existing arrangements			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
BA	709	Lawrence Weaver Institute, Green Lane, Morden (in main hall)	level
BB	1702	Congregational Church Hall, Green Lane, Morden, SM4 6SR (in church hall)	level
BC	1636	Farm Road Pavilion, Farm Road, Morden, SM4 6RA (in main hall)	permanent ramp

BD	1511	St Georges Church Hall, Central Road, Morden, SM4 5RJ (in church hall)	level
BE	725	Merton & Morden Guild, 34A Aberconway Road, Morden, SM4 5LF (in hall)	level

<b>Proposed arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
BA	709	St Lawrence Church Centre, London Road, Morden, SM4 5QT	level
BB	1702	Congregational Church Hall, Green Lane, Morden, SM4 6SR (in church hall)	level
BC	1636	Farm Road Pavilion, Farm Road, Morden, SM4 6RA (in main hall)	permanent ramp
BD	1511	St Georges Church Hall, Central Road, Morden, SM4 5RJ (in church hall)	level
BE	725	Merton & Morden Guild, 34A Aberconway Road, Morden, SM4 5LF (in hall)	level

#### **ARO submission**

As explained in the submission for Lower Morden, a need has arisen to find a replacement polling station for polling districts BA and AD. The Lawrence Weaver Institute (the current polling station for both polling districts) is due to be demolished from late 2023, with a replacement facility planned for construction on the same site. This means that the building will be unavailable to hire for the next scheduled elections in Merton, taking place on 2 May 2024. The Lawrence Weaver Institute was itself a replacement for Morden Primary School and was first used in 2019 for polling district BA, which then included polling district AD as part of its geographical boundary. This area was then moved to Lower Morden ward as part of the Local Government Boundary Commission's review of Merton's ward boundaries, which took effect from May 2022. Morden Primary School was a school that was historically required to close on polling day. To avoid going back to the school and selecting it as a replacement to the Lawrence Weaver Institute, a replacement polling station is required.

During the course of this review, the ARO originally considered the Morden Parish Church Hall, located in between Morden Primary School and the Lawrence Weaver Institute on Green Lane. However, this venue was rejected by ward Cllrs from both Lower Morden and St Helier wards due to the high step at the entrance to the building and the impracticability of installing a ramp which would lead out onto the pavement and possibly obstruct pedestrians. The Parish Hall also did not benefit from any parking facilities.

Cllr Kenny suggested that the ARO look at the St Lawrence Church Centre as a possible alternative venue. The St Lawrence Church Centre on London Road is

located just inside polling district AD, but is in easy reach of the residents of polling district BA, being situated almost directly opposite the Morden Primary School. The building has been visited by Electoral Services during the course of the review and has been assessed as meeting the requirements of a double polling station. The Church Centre has level access, with a hall and adjoining room that could be used for polling. The Centre also has external lighting. Residents from both polling districts would have to cross London road in order to reach the polling station, but the Church and Church Centre is accessed directly via a pedestrian crossing. The building does not have parking, although there is a large car park next door at the Harvester restaurant that voters could potentially use if they cannot walk to the polling station or use public transport. After Electoral Services reported their findings, Cllrs Kenny, Judge and Williscroft have now endorsed the proposal to use the St Lawrence Church Centre as a polling station.

## Colliers Wood (C)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
CA (2 PS)	1708	Colliers Wood Community Centre, 66-72 High Street, Colliers Wood, SW19 2BY (in hall)	level
CB	1634	St. Joseph's Church Hall, 63 High Street, Colliers Wood, SW19 2JF (in church hall)	permanent ramp
CC	1365	Christ Church Hall, Christchurch Road SW19 2NW (in church hall)	temporary ramp
CD	1056	Togetherness Centre, Taylor Road, Mitcham, CR4 3JR (in communal area)	level
CE	1255	Togetherness Centre, Taylor Road, Mitcham, CR4 3JR (in communal area)	level
<b>ARO submission</b>			
<p>A member of MCIL who uses a mobility scooter, responded to the consultation and commented on the polling station at St Josephs Church Hall in polling district CB. They remembered attending a few years previously when the polling station was not fully accessible and having to complete a ballot paper outside. They have been informed that there is now a permanent ramp at the polling station.</p> <p>A few days before the end of the review, Cllr Attawar raised the issue of residents in Polling district CE having to travel to the Togetherness Centre in Taylor Road to vote, and the fact that whilst this venue is not a long distance away from polling district CE, electors do have to go a 'round about way' to get to it. Prior to the 2022 council elections, electors in polling district CE voted at the Abbey Orchard Community Rooms. Clarion then informed Electoral Services that the council would</p>			

no longer be able to use the Community Rooms at Abbey Orchard as they were being turned into residential units.

Due to the lack of alternative options in polling district CE, Electoral Services decided to allocate electors in polling district CE to the Togetherness Centre in Taylor Road, which although located in polling district CD, is nearby to the former Abbey Orchard Community Rooms, and is large enough to house two polling stations. Electoral Services kept polling district CE as a separate entity in the hope that Clarion would perhaps provide another community space on the estate.

After Cllr Attawar got in contact, Cllr Neaverson informed Electoral Services that he believed that work had not yet begun on the community rooms, and that perhaps the venue could still be used as a polling station for the 2024 elections.

Electoral Services have undertaken to work with Clarion in the next few months to attempt to identify a space on the estate that could be used as a polling station, whether that is the community rooms or an outside area where a portacabin or marquee could be housed.

As the review has now closed, the ARO proposes that the Committee approves the polling places as is, so that polling districts and places can be agreed prior to the publication of the new register of electors on 1 December 2023. This particular polling place can then be revisited if an alternative solution becomes available before the May 2024 elections.

## Lavender Fields (D)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
DA (2 PS)	2682	South Mitcham Community Centre, Haslemere Avenue, Mitcham, CR4 3PR (in hall )	level
DB (2 PS)	2776	Lavender Steers Mead Children's Centre, Steers Mead, Mitcham, CR4 3HL	level
DC	1095	Bond Primary School, Bond Road, Mitcham, CR4 3HG (in school hall)	temporary ramp

<b>Proposed arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
DA (2 PS)	2682	South Mitcham Community Centre, Haslemere Avenue, Mitcham, CR4 3PR (in hall )	level



DB (2 PS)	2776	Lavender Steers Mead Children's Centre, Steers Mead, Mitcham, CR4 3HL (temporary marquee erected outside the pavilion)	level
DC	1095	Bond Primary School, Bond Road, Mitcham, CR4 3HG (in school hall)	temporary ramp

### ARO submission

The ARO is proposing a minor amendment at the polling place currently allocated for polling district DB, the Lavender Park Pavilion, (also known as the Lavender Steers Mead Childrens Centre). Prior to the 2022 elections, the ARO was informed that the centre could no longer accommodate housing a polling station on the ground floor of the building, so Electoral Services used a smaller room on the first floor of the children's centre as a polling station. After reviewing the effectiveness of polling stations at the 2022 elections, Electoral Services have come to the conclusion that this was a sub optimal solution, which could result in queues occurring at elections that have a higher turnout.

There is a lack of alternative options for polling places within the polling district, so the ARO is proposing that the council continues to use the children's centre site as a polling station, and to erect a temporary marquee on the grassy area in front of the building. The site is well known to electors, and the area in front of the building has enough space to accommodate a marquee large enough to house a double polling station. Electricity supply and lighting will be provided by running a cable from the main building. A welfare unit including a kitchen and toilet will be provided along with the marquee. Limited parking will be available in the children's centre car park.

Bond Primary School (the allocated polling place for polling districts DC and HE), is a school that has previously closed on polling day. The ARO has previously considered the Mitcham Library as an alternative venue. Unfortunately, the hall that the library has available to hire isn't large enough to accommodate the amount of electors that are currently assigned to Bond Primary School, with the venue also acting as a polling station for polling district HE (1070 electors). Therefore the ARO proposes that the school continues to be used as a polling station.

## Cricket Green (E)

Existing arrangements			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
EA	1609	2010 Club, 247-259 Church Road, Mitcham, CR4 3BH	temporary ramp
EB (2 PS)	1740	Mitcham Parish Church, Church Road, Mitcham, CR4 3BE	level
EC	1332	Vestry Hall, 336 London Road, Mitcham, CR4 3UD	lift

ED	1380	11th Mitcham Scout & Guide Headquarters, Mitcham Park, Mitcham, CR4 4EN (in scout hall)	temporary ramp
EE	566	Mitcham Garden Village, Mitcham, CR4 4HE (in marquee)	level
EF	220	Age UK Merton, 277 London Road, Mitcham, CR4 3NT (in ground floor meeting room)	permanent ramp
<b>ARO submission</b>			
No proposed changes , the existing arrangements are acceptable.			

## Ravensbury (F)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
FA	624	Ravensbury Residents Room, Ravensbury Grove, Mitcham, CR4 4DL (in the club room)	permanent ramp
FB	1184	Watermeads Residents Room, 90 Rawnsley Avenue, Mitcham, CR4 4BX (in the tenants' rooms)	level
FC	1318	Portacabin, Gifford House, 67C St. Helier Avenue, Morden, SM4 6HY	permanent ramp
FD	1282	Malmesbury Primary School, Malmesbury Road, Morden, SM4 6HG (in school hall)	permanent ramp
FE	1138	St Theresa's Church Hall, 250 Bishopsford Road, Morden, SM4 6BZ	level

<b>Proposed arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
FA	624	Ravensbury Residents Room, Ravensbury Grove, Mitcham, CR4 4DL (in the club room)	permanent ramp
FB	1184	Watermeans Room, 90 Rawnsley Avenue, Mitcham, CR4 4BX (in the tenants' rooms)	level
FC	1318	Gifford House, 67C St. Helier Avenue, Morden, SM4 6HY (in lobby of building)	permanent ramp
FD	1282	Malmesbury Primary School, Malmesbury Road, Morden, SM4 6HG (in nursery)	permanent ramp
FE	1138	St Theresa's Church Hall, 250 Bishopsford Road, Morden, SM4 6BZ	level
<b>ARO Submission</b>			

The ARO is proposing a minor amendment to the polling place currently allocated for polling district FC. The portacabin at Gifford House that has been used as a polling station for previous elections is now out of commission. Therefore, to minimise inconvenience for electors, the ARO proposes keeping the polling place at Gifford House and using the lobby area as a temporary alternative solution. The building has been visited by Electoral Services during the course of the review and has been assessed as meeting the requirements of a polling station. Gifford House also has disabled access, and ample parking. The site is well known to electors in the polling district. This is not a permanent solution, as the council has made the decision to sell the land on which Gifford House sits. Once the land is sold and a timeline is in place for redevelopment, the ARO will explore alternative options. This will most likely mean a re-drawing of polling district boundaries, as there are no immediate alternative polling station options in polling district FC.

Malmesbury Primary School (the allocated polling place for polling district FD) is not required to close on polling day.

## Graveney (G)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
GA (2 PS)	1966	Church of the Assumption, Links Road, Tooting, SW17 9ER	level
GB (2 PS)	2402	St. Barnabas Church, Thirsk Road, Mitcham, CR4 2BD (in the rear of the church)	level
GC (2 PS)	1751	Beecholme Primary School, Edgehill Road, Mitcham, CR4 2HZ (in school hall)	level
GD	858	Gorringe Park Primary School, Sandy Lane, Mitcham, CR4 2YA (in school hall)	level
<b>ARO Submission</b>			
<p>No proposed changes , the existing arrangements are acceptable.</p> <p>A member, of MCIL, who uses a mobility scooter, previously visited Beecholme Primary School as a polling station, (the allocated polling place for polling district GC). However, they no longer felt safe in the alleyway that some electors have to use to access the school and has decided, therefore, to vote by post in the future. The ARO will investigate whether there is sufficient external lighting on access and egress at Beecholme Primary School ahead of the next scheduled elections.</p> <p>Beecholme Primary School is required to close on polling day. The ARO has previously considered using the North East Mitcham Community Centre on Woodland Way, which would require a redrawing of polling district boundaries. However, the centre could only offer up their smaller hall which unfortunately isn't large enough to accommodate the amount of electors that are assigned to this</p>			

polling district. Therefore the ARO proposes that the school continues to be used as a polling station.

Gorringe Park Primary School (the allocated polling place for polling districts GD and HB) is not required to close on polling day.

## Figge's Marsh (H)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
HA	460	Age UK Merton, 277 London Road, Mitcham, CR4 3NT (in ground floor meeting room)	permanent ramp
HB	1353	Gorringe Park Primary School, Sandy Lane, Mitcham, CR4 2YA (in part of the school hall)	permanent ramp
HC (2 PS)	1862	St. Mark's Church Hall, St Mark's Road, Mitcham, CR4 2LF (in the church hall)	permanent ramp
HD	1600	Acacia Adventure Playground, Acacia Centre, 230 Grove Road, Mitcham, CR4 1SD (in the hall)	level
HE	1070	Bond Primary School, Bond Road, Mitcham, CR4 3HG (in school hall)	level
<b>ARO submission</b>			
<p>No change, the existing arrangements are acceptable.</p> <p>Gorringe Park Primary School (the allocated polling place for polling districts GD and HB) is not required to close on polling day.</p> <p>Bond Primary School (the allocated polling place for polling districts DC and HE) is a school that is required to close on polling day. The ARO has previously considered the Mitcham Library as an alternative venue, but the hall that the library has available to hire isn't large enough to accommodate the amount of electors that are currently assigned to Bond Primary School, with the venue also acting as a polling station for polling district DC (1095 electors). Therefore the ARO proposes that the school continues to be used as a polling station.</p> <p>A member of MCIL responded to the consultation and found the polling station at St Marks Church Hall in polling district HC to be accessible.</p>			

## Longthornton (I)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
IA	1311	Streatham Vale Baptist Hall, Leonard Road, SW16 5SY (in the church hall)	permanent ramp
IB	1080	Elmwood Tennis Club, Rear of 337 Tamworth Lane, Mitcham, CR4 1DL (in the main space)	temporary ramp
IC	1337	Stanford Primary School, Chilmark Road, SW16 5HB (in the school hall)	level
ID (2 PS)	2154	St. Olave's Church, Church Walk, SW16 5JH (in the church hall)	permanent ramp
IE	831	Acacia Centre, 230 Grove Road, Mitcham, CR4 1SD (in the hall)	level
<b>ARO submission</b>			
<p>No proposed changes , the existing arrangements are acceptable.</p> <p>Stanford Primary School (the allocated polling place for polling district IC) is not required to close on polling day.</p>			

## Pollards Hill (J)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
JA (2 PS)	2464	New Horizon Centre, South Lodge Avenue, Mitcham, CR4 1LT (in the hall)	level
JB	611	Elmwood Tennis Club, Rear of 337 Tamworth Lane, Mitcham, CR4 1DL (in main space)	temporary ramp
JC (2 PS)	2390	Sherwood Park Hall, Recreational Ground, Abbots Road, London, CR4 1JP (in hall)	Level
JD	1409	Pollards Hill Housing Office, 50 Montgomery Close, Mitcham, CR4 1XT (room on ground floor of office)	permanent ramp
<b>ARO submission</b>			
<p>No proposed changes , the existing arrangements are acceptable.</p>			

## Village (K)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
KA	1166	St. Mary's Garden Hall, 30 St Mary's Road, SW19 7BP (in the garden hall)	level
KB	1127	Christ Church Hall, 2A Cottenham Park Road, SW20 0RZ (in the church hall)	temporary ramp
KC (2 PS)	1606	Village Hall, 26 Lingfield Road, London, SW19 4QD (in the hall)	separate level entrance
KD	805	19th Wimbledon Scout Group Hall, 106 Cottenham Park Road, Wimbledon, SW20 0SX (in main hall)	level
KE	728	Cottenham Park Recreation Ground Pavilion, Melbury Gardens, London, SW20 0DH (in hall)	temporary ramp
KF	983	Christ Church Hall, 2A Cottenham Park Road, London, SW20 0RZ	temporary ramp
<b>ARO submission</b>			
No proposed changes , the existing arrangements are acceptable.			
A respondent to the online consultation was very satisfied with the polling station arrangements at the 19 <sup>th</sup> Wimbledon Scout Group Hall, in polling district KD.			

## Raynes Park (L)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
LA (2 PS)	2501	Raynes Park Library, 21 Approach Road, Raynes Park, London, SW20 8BA (in the hall)	Permanent ramp
LB (2 PS)	2142	Lantern Methodist Bond Hall, 195/205 Worples Road, London, SW20 8RA (in the church hall)	temporary ramp
LC	932	Wimbledon College Sports Ground, 183 Coombe Lane, London, SW20 0RG (in the hall)	temporary ramp
LD	1518	Raynes Park Sports Ground, Taunton Avenue, SW20 0BH (in the main hall)	permanent ramp

<b>Proposed arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
LA	1059	Raynes Park Library, 21 Approach Road, Raynes Park, London, SW20 8BA (in the hall)	Permanent ramp
LB (2 PS)	1864	Lantern Methodist Bond Hall, 195/205 Worple Road, London, SW20 8RA (in the church hall)	temporary ramp
LC	932	Wimbledon College Sports Ground Pavilion, 183 Coombe Lane, London, SW20 0RG (in the hall)	temporary ramp
LD	1518	Raynes Park Sports Ground, Taunton Avenue, SW20 0BH (in the social space)	permanent ramp
LE (2 PS)	1731	Dundonald Church, 577 Kingston Road, London, SW20 8SA	Permanent ramp

### **ARO submission**

In Raynes Park ward, the ARO initially proposed a re-drawing of the boundaries of polling district LA, and the creation of a new polling district named LE. The reason for this proposed change was the availability of Dundonald Church (which has previously been used as a polling station in this area), now refurbishment work has been completed. Using Dundonald Church as an additional polling station allows Electoral Services to reduce the number of electors allocated to Raynes Park Library, (which is a fairly small space for a double polling station) and to re-allocate these electors to Dundonald Church, a much larger venue. The building has been visited by Electoral Services during the course of the review and has been assessed as meeting the requirements of a polling station.

Electors residing in Abbott Avenue, Bowling Green Mews, Bronson Road, Bushey Road, Chase Side Avenue, Chestnut Road, Dorien Road, Dupont Road, Edna Road, Kingston Road (exc 582A-620D), Longmans Mews, Lower Downs Road, Oxford Avenue, Sydney Road, and Wellsborough Mews will be allocated to the new polling district LE, and will visit Dundonald Church to vote.

Electors residing in Approach Road, Aston Road, Carlton Park Avenue, Clifton Park Avenue, Gore Road, Grand Drive, Kingston Road (582A-620D), Prince Georges Avenue and Vernon Avenue are being allocated to polling district LA. These electors will experience no change in polling station, and will continue to visit Raynes Park Library.

Kevin Clarke, a local resident, responded to the consultation as follows: 'I have mixed feelings over the creation of the new eastern polling district. While Dundonald Church is closer, the Kingston Road is a busy "London Distributor" road and crossing facilities are currently inadequate. There is also likely to be additional cost from renting the church versus the council owned library.'

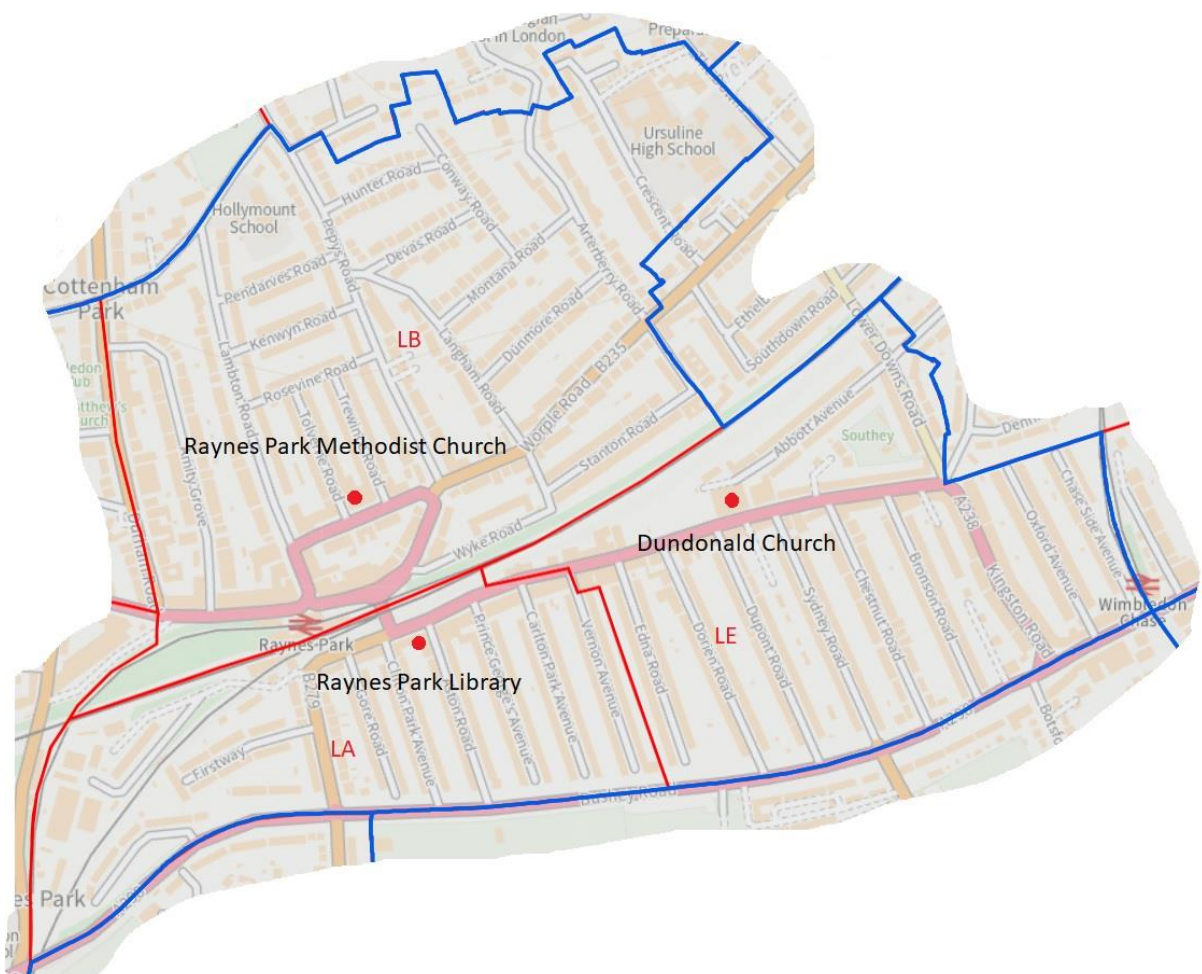
The ARO acknowledges the point regarding crossing facilities on Kingston Road, however this must be weighed against the benefit of having an additional polling station venue available in the polling district the size of Dundonald Church. This

allows the ARO to reduce the numbers of electors visiting Raynes Park Library, thereby easing the pressure on that venue, and hopefully enhancing the polling experience for all electors in LA/LE. The Dundonald Church have agreed to the hire for a nominal fee, so the additional cost will not be substantial.

Raynes Park ward Cllrs had no objection to the re-drawing of polling district LA and creation of polling district LE, and with the designation of the Dundonald Church as a polling station. They did however ask if Firstway and Bushey Court/surrounds could also be included in polling district LA, rather than polling district LB. Their reasoning was as the numbers attending Raynes Park Library have been reduced, it would be more convenient for these electors to attend this polling station rather than having to travel to the Lantern Methodist Church. The ARO agreed with the Raynes Park ward Cllrs proposal. Therefore electors residing in Bluebird Close, Bushey Road, Bushey Court, Firstway and Grand Drive will now visit Raynes Park Library in order to vote. Polling districts LA, LB and LE have been re-drawn as such. (Please see map included below for details).

A respondent to the online consultation was satisfied with the polling station at Raynes Park Sports Ground, in polling district LD.

### Polling Districts LA, LB and LE





## Hillside (M)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
MA (2 PS)	1872	Sacred Heart Parish Hall, Edge Hill, SW19 4LP (in the parish hall)	temporary ramp
MB (2 PS)	1656	St. Mark's Hall, Compton Road, SW19 7QD (in the church hall)	level access
MC	1290	Drake House, 44 St. George's Road, SW19 4ED (in the main hall)	permanent ramp
<b>ARO submission</b>			
<p>No proposed changes, the existing arrangements are acceptable.</p> <p>Cllr Holden responded to the consultation stating that he was satisfied with the Hillside polling station locations.</p>			

## Wimbledon Park (N)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
NA	1686	Wimbledon Park Primary School, Havana Road, SW19 8EJ (in the school nursery)	level access
NB (2 PS)	2510	Christ The King Church Hall, The Crescent, SW19 8AW (in the church hall)	temporary ramp
NC	1042	Bethel Oasis Church Hall, 2A Kohat Road, SW19 8LD (in the church hall)	permanent ramp
ND	1151	Marchard Hall, Rear of Coronation Hall, Ashcombe Road, SW19 8JR (in the hall)	level access
<b>ARO submission</b>			
<p>No proposed changes , the existing arrangements are acceptable.</p> <p>Wimbledon Park Primary School (the allocated polling place for polling district NA) is not required to close on polling day.</p>			

## Wandle (O)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
OA	1038	Bethel Oasis Church Hall, 2A Kohat Road, SW19 8LD (in the church hall)	level
OB	1110	Shree Ghanapathy Temple, 125-133 Effra Rd, Wimbledon, SW19 8PU (in entrance hall)	level
OC (2 PS)	2110	All Saints Church Hall, Norman Road, London, SW19 1BT (in church hall)	level
<b>ARO Submission</b>			
No proposed changes , the existing arrangements are acceptable.			

## Wimbledon Town and Dundonald (P)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
PA (2 PS)	1707	Dundonald Recreation Ground Pavilion, Dundonald Road, SW19 3QH (in the main hall)	lift
PB	1452	St. Andrew's Church, Herbert Road, SW19 3SH (in the hall)	level
PC	1143	Everyday Church, 28-30 Queen's Road, London, SW19 8LR (in the hall)	level
PD	1422	Holy Trinity Church Hall, 234 The Broadway, London, SW19 1RY (in hall)	level
PE	921	St. Mary's Church Hall, Church Path, London, SW19 3HJ (in hall)	level
PF	548	Shree Ghanapathy Temple, 125-133 Effra Rd, Wimbledon, London, SW19 8PU (in entrance hall)	level
<b>ARO Submission</b>			
No proposed changes , the existing arrangements are acceptable.			
Kevin Clarke, a local resident, responded to the proposals for Wimbledon Town and Dundonald as follows: 'I welcome the proposal to leave existing arrangements in place. If there was any possibility to use the Art School that should be investigated. I			

am glad that Wimbledon Chase Primary School is not being considered as that would impact many children and parents in adjoining wards.'

Cllr Simon McGrath also responded to the proposals on behalf of the Merton Liberal Democrats: 'The proposal is that voters in PE should continue to use St Mary's Church Hall. That may have made sense when this was part of Merton Park ward, but it is not very convenient nor does it naturally 'fit' with people voting on their way to or from work. It may also cause confusion with people about which ward they are in. We would prefer a polling station on the same side of the Kingston Road. This could possibly be at the Art College or an additional one at Dundonald Recreation Ground Pavilion.'

The ARO has again investigated the possibility of using the Wimbledon College of Art as an alternative polling station for polling district PE, but has received no reply from the school despite repeated contact attempts. The Dundonald Recreation Ground Pavilion already houses a double polling station and does not have enough space for an additional polling station. The ARO also considered using the Dundonald Church on Kingston Road as a possible alternative polling place for polling station PE. However, this building is located in Raynes Park ward, so the decision was taken to create a new polling district in Raynes Park in order to reduce the amount of electors using Raynes Park Library.

The Local Government Boundary Review of Merton's ward boundaries necessitated the Returning Officer to make significant changes to polling districts and polling places in 2021, ahead of the Merton Council elections in 2022. Therefore, one of the key principles of this review has been to not alter allocated polling districts and polling places significantly from the 2022 Merton Council elections, (except where necessary), to minimise voter confusion and inconvenience. Electoral Commission guidance also states that the polling places that voters are familiar with are not changed unless there is a strong need to do so.

Bearing all this in mind, and that fact that electors residing in the roads contained in polling district PE have been visiting the St Marys Church Hall for many years now, the ARO proposes that the Committee approves the polling places as is, so that polling districts and places can be agreed prior to the publication of the new register of electors on 1 December 2023. This particular polling place can then be revisited if the Wimbledon School of Art or an alternative solution becomes available before the May 2024 elections.

A respondent to the online consultation was satisfied with the polling station at St Marys Church Hall in polling district PE.

## Abbey (Q)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
QA (2 PS)	1747	Salvation Army Hall, 109 Kingston Road, SW19 1LT (in the main hall)	level
QB (2 PS)	1605	South Wimbledon Community Centre, 78 Victory Road, London, SW19 1HN (in main hall)	level
QC	1172	Elim Pentecostal Church, 76/78 Kingston Road, London, SW19 1LA (in the main hall)	level
QD	1618	St John the Divine Church Hall, High Path, SW19 2JY (in main hall)	Temporary ramp
<b>ARO Submission</b>			
No proposed changes , the existing arrangements are acceptable.			

## Merton Park (R)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
RA	860	Cricket Pavilion, John Innes Recreation Ground, Cannon Hill Lane, London, SW20 9ES (in the main room of the pavilion)	level except slight lip at entrance
RB	1434	St. Mary's Church Hall, Church Path, London, SW19 3HJ (in the church hall)	permanent ramp
RC (2 PS)	2603	Morden Baptist Church Hall, 36 Crown Lane, Morden, SM4 5BL (in the church hall)	level
<b>ARO Submission</b>			
No proposed changes , the existing arrangements are acceptable.			
Respondents to the online consultation were very satisfied with the polling station at St Marys Church Hall in polling district RB and satisfied with the polling station at Morden Baptist Church, in polling district RC.			

## Cannon Hill (S)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
SA	1122	Merton Park Baptist Church, Bushey Road, London, SW20 8TE (in main hall)	level
SB	1352	Endeavour Club, 190 Martin Way, Morden, SM4 4AJ (in the hall)	level
SC (2 PS)	1758	Eastway Day Centre, 44 Eastway, Morden, SM4 4HW (in the hall)	level
SD/SE (2 PS)	1535	Central Ward Residents and Sports Club, Between 55-57 Ashridge Way, Morden, SM4 4ED (in the function room)	permanent ramp
<b>ARO Submission</b>			
No proposed changes , the existing arrangements are acceptable.			

## West Barnes (T)

<b>Existing arrangements</b>			
<i>Polling district</i>	<i>Electors (exc. postal voters)</i>	<i>Polling place (polling station)</i>	<i>Disabled access</i>
TA (2 PS)	1925	Sacred Heart (RC) Primary School, Burlington Road, New Malden, KT3 4ND (in the school hall)	permanent ramp
TB (2 PS)	2384	St. Saviour's Hall, Church Walk, London, SW20 9DL (in the church hall)	level
TC (2 PS)	1711	Holy Cross Church Hall, Adela Avenue, New Malden, KT3 6HT (in the church hall)	permanent ramp
<b>ARO Submission</b>			
<p>In an effort to find a replacement for Sacred Heart Primary School, the ARO previously enquired about the possibility of using the Ray Dawson Jujitsu Academy as a polling station, but unfortunately this venue was not available to hire for this purpose. The ARO also considered using the 22<sup>nd</sup> Scout Group Hall on Arthur Road, which would serve well as a polling station but was ruled out because of its location, with electors from polling district TA having to walk a significant distance and cross the railway line in order to reach the polling station. The ARO also considered redrawing polling districts TA and TC but the presence of the railway line as a natural boundary makes this very difficult and would mean a polling district boundary which crosses the railway line and dissects various roads. Therefore the ARO proposes that Sacred Heart Primary School remains as a polling station venue. After a visit to the school to explore the possibility of whether it could remain open on polling day, both Electoral Services and the school itself have reluctantly come to the</p>			

joint conclusion that the school will need to be closed due to issues with safeguarding for children attending the school.

Hannah Doody  
Acting Returning Officer

Civic Centre  
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Morden  
SM4 5DX

1 November 2023