

**WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL
REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2018/2019**

Summary of representations and comments received

Polling District	Comments from	Comments Received	Acting Returning Officer's Response
Bardney		No comments received	No changes proposed
Caistor & Yarborough	Cllr Lawrence Cllr Bierley	Both Members are happy with the current arrangements	No changes proposed
Cherry Willingham		No comments received	No changes proposed
Dunholme & Welton	Cllr Rodgers Lissington Parish Meeting	No comments to make and does not think there is any need for change Please see attached sheet with comments from the Chairman of Lissington Parish Meeting	No changes proposed Please find attached response
Gainsborough East	Cllr Devine	Is in full agreements with current arrangements	No changes proposed
Gainsborough North		No comments received	No changes proposed
Gainsborough South-West		No comments received	No changes proposed
Hemswell		No comments received	No changes proposed
Kelsey Wold	Bigby Parish Council Cllr Strange	Happy with the current venue Highlighted the fact Searby-cum-Owmbly does not have a polling station and as such communities should be advised of their rights to have a postal vote	No identified problems or issues Anyone can apply for a postal vote, they are offered one every year via the Household Enquiry Form which is delivered to every property throughout the Autumn Canvass. Poll Cards are also delivered to each elector 2 weeks before an election

Polling District	Comments from	Comments Received	Acting Returning Officer's Response
			<p>advising of when and how to apply for a postal vote, giving them the opportunity to set up a permanent absent vote or just for a specific election. Application forms are also available on our website to download anytime.</p> <p>It is therefore proposed to keep the current arrangement</p>
Nettleham	Nettleham Parish Council	<p>Nettleham Parish Council considered the contents of the letter at their meeting of 16 October 2018 and Councillors Resolved the Parish Council recommend that the Old School be the polling place for Nettleham residents and for Grange de Lings to have their own polling station - unanimous</p>	<p>If the whole of Nettleham were to use the Old School as a polling station, this would mean over 3,100 potential electors and this doesn't include Riseholme or Grange de Ling. By using the Village Hall this takes away nearly a 1,000 electors from the Old School. It alleviates parking and also traffic onto and off Mill Hill through village.</p> <p>In October 2016 it was agreed following the parish council wishes to change the polling districts LD to go the Old School and LC to the Village Hall as this put electors in these areas to their nearest polling station.</p> <p>It is not financially viable (approximately £500 - £600) to expect Grange de Ling with an electorate of 32, 9 who have postal votes, to have their own polling station.</p> <p>No changes proposed</p>
Saxilby	Cllr Brockway	<p>This seems to be in order. The only thing I would raise is that there is a very large number of houses being built in Saxilby (over 400 have been passed) so resident numbers could easily have increased by about 800 or more within the next year or two.</p>	<p>The current polling place is Saxilby Village Hall, and at present has 2 polling stations within it, there is room there to have 3 polling stations. In the past we have used Saxilby Methodist Church on the High Street and this was a suitable venue when the village hall was unavailable.</p> <p>No changes proposed but situation to be monitored</p>

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Scampton		No comments received	No changes proposed
Scotter & Blyton		No comments received	No changes proposed
Stow		No comments received	No changes proposed
Sudbrooke		No comments received	No changes proposed
Torksey		No comments received	No changes proposed
Waddingham & Spital		No comments received	No changes proposed
Wold View		No comments received	No changes proposed

REQUEST TO RE-INSTATE A POLLING STATION IN LISSINGTON LN3 5AE
[Please place this complete statement, verbatim, in front of council members]

Background

Pre-2014. Within living memory, there was always a polling station in Lissington. It has been located in the Post Office, which no longer exists, private houses, and St John the Baptist Church - last used for the May 2013 elections. None of us remember the late 2013/early 2014 proposals to remove our long-standing polling station, and we cannot explain why the parish meeting did not respond then.

2014. In April 2014 WLDC decided to remove the polling station from Lissington. I have chaired the parish meeting since September 2014.

2016. The council refused our request to re-instate the polling station in Lissington.

2019. Our vicar (Rev Steve Johnson Market Rasen etc parishes) welcomed in 2016, and continues to welcome now, using the church as a polling station. He confirms that insurance is not an issue, so long as he can have sight of WLDC's public liability policy. Chris Anderson, landlord of the White Hart pub, continues to offer his pub pool room as an alternative location for the polling station.

The basis for the council's decisions

- 2014. Extracts from officers' submission, accepted by full council: "owing to ongoing difficulties in providing a polling station in Lissington,, the proposal is that polling facilities are no longer provided in Lissington". Celia Chapman told me that this might have referred to church insurance.
- 2016. The full council in 2016 decided to reject our request on the basis of cost per elector, and that electors unwilling or unable to drive to Wickenby, where we currently vote, could choose to vote by post.

Councillors' 2016 opinions - refuted.

- 19 Oct 2016. Extracts from Cllr Di Rodgers' email re Lissington church path: "... no external lights, rough and uneven". **Incorrect!** The tarmac church path is smooth and there are lights at the middle and the top of the path.
- 21 Oct 2016. Extracts from Cllr England's email. "... not happy with any sort of council business being conducted in a public house .." We note that the West Lindsey November 2016 list of polling places shows 6 churches and one pub.

WLDC's decision-making. The ground rules keep changing. Each time we try to make our case, we face different arguments, which we find confusing and unfair.

- 2014 Review. Lack of response, "difficulties providing polling station".
 - The proposed removal of a long-standing polling station is serious and significant. We would have expected WLDC to make multiple attempts to check that the lack of the requested response from the parish meeting was intentional. The lack of a reply in such cases should not be taken to indicate agreement, but WLDC appear to have assumed that Lissington's non-response indicated that the parish was content

not to have a polling station in Lissington. WLDC also assumed that unsupported rumours about “difficulties” in polling station provision were accurate. We have seen no evidence of any extraordinary attempts by WLDC to contact the parish meeting to try to obtain a substantive response from the village on this important matter.

- The council’s decision in Feb 2014 was therefore based on incorrect information. In 2014, as in 2013, there was no difficulty in providing a suitable venue or venues in Lissington, despite what was quoted inaccurately in the submission sent to council.
- 2016 Interim Review. Cost per elector, accuracy of cost estimates.
 - We were told that cost was not recorded as a factor in the 2014 decision, and we understood that it would not be an issue in 2016.
 - We were therefore shocked and disappointed to be told that the rejection decision was based mostly on the cost per elector.
 - The cost estimate provided to council in Nov 2016 included hire of portaloos, which is irrelevant to the pub option.
- 2019 Review. We believe that cost should not in 2019 be a factor affecting our democratic right to vote, in a situation where it was not an issue pre-2014.

Issues and Conclusions

Equality of treatment for communities. Susworth and Riby each have fewer registered electors than Lissington but each still has a polling station, apparently because they are more “remote”. In our opinion, all journeys to polling stations which are beyond a realistic walking distance should be considered equivalent. For equality and transparency, the only criterion determining which communities qualify for polling stations should be whether their total number of voters, the total being taken from the latest electoral register, reaches the threshold of a prescribed minimum number of electors, regardless of “remoteness” or other qualification.

Postal voting. The officers’ 2016 submission to council stated that a polling station in Lissington was unnecessary because Lissington electors unable to get to the Wickenby polling station could vote by post. This treats Lissington electors as second-class citizens. Postal voting should be a free choice, not be imposed. If all electors were treated in this way, everyone would be issued with a postal vote and there would be no polling stations. That is not how UK currently does elections.

Conclusions. We believe that voting in person at a conveniently located local polling station is our traditional and well-tried right, demonstrating democracy at work, and should be available to all electors.

What was until 2013 the right of Lissington electors to vote in Lissington has been removed by WLDC. Nothing significant has changed in terms of facilities available in Lissington since 2013. Until HMG or WLDC formally change the law or the rules, we request that we be treated fairly and equitably and be given back our polling station.

Martin Wilkinson

31 December 2018

Chair Lissington Parish Meeting



Response to Re-instate a Polling Station in Lissington

Electorate for Lissington as at January 2019 – 113. 22 of which are postal.

The Old Post Office was used last in 2011 followed by White Lodge, Wickenby Road in 2012 and 2013.

In 2014 I believe it was the Church Hall we used. Following on from this the Deputy Returning Officer, at the time, was informed this would no longer be possible as insurance for the building could not be obtained.

Enquiries were made regarding the public house, but the building did not have a separate entrance to the room and therefore deemed unsuitable.

The only public house used as a polling station is the Woodcocks on Burton Waters which has a separate entrance and room for our purpose. The electorate for this area is 643 of which 143 are postals. This costs approximately £2 per elector.

At present we use 5 churches, 3 of which have toilet and kitchen facilities the remaining 2 have a portaloo. We have a duty of care to our staff and are moving away from premises without reasonable facilities. Staff are at the polling stations for over 15 hours so they need to be comfortable.

If a response is not received to any of our communications then we have nothing to act upon. We do not have resources to follow up non responders.

Unfortunately in 2019 costs have to come into the equation. With a 50% turnout there would be no more than 46 electors attending the polling station which would cost approximately £13 per elector, this includes £100 for a portaloo at the church and an approximate fee of £100 for the polling station hire, Presiding Officer £195, Poll Clerk £120 and training fees for all staff £80.

Conclusion

The distance to travel to Wickenby is 1.8 miles and as always postal votes are available to anyone. It is therefore my proposal to keep the current arrangement.