

From: Houlder, Ian <Ian.Houlder@westsuffolk.gov.uk>
Sent: 03 January 2023 11:46
To: Smith, Ben <Ben.Smith@westsuffolk.gov.uk>
Cc: westleyparish clerk <westleyparishclerk@gmail.com>
Subject: RE: Interim Polling Place review - Westley

Hi Ben,

This move is hardly convenient to the residents of Westley, having to take a car journey into the Westley estate, where access to car parking is never ideal. Perhaps a more local audit would ascertain those voters that are disabled in the village feel they cannot access the Westley Club unless they are supported, which no doubt they could be. They could of course be offered a postal vote.

The suggestion flies in the face of sustainability, applies another level of bureaucracy to the staff at the Westbury Club and potential confusion to the attending voter from Westley Village. Such a move is likely to deter people from exercising their democratic duty.

Please check there is a real problem here I would suggest there is not one that cannot be fixed locally at the Westley Club.

Best wishes, Ian

Councillor Ian Houlder
Councillor for Barrow
Chair of Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee
West Suffolk Council
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From: Smith, Ben <Ben.Smith@westsuffolk.gov.uk>
Sent: 19 December 2022 15:56
To: Houlder, Ian <Ian.Houlder@westsuffolk.gov.uk>
Subject: Interim Polling Place review - Westley

Dear Cllr Houlder,

I hope this email finds you well. As you know, we have recently undertaken an audit of all polling stations and at the Council meeting last Tuesday it was agreed that an interim review of polling places would be carried out for polling stations that do not provide electors with reasonable facilities for voting or are not accessible to electors who are disabled. Polling stations that are not available for the elections on 4 May 2023 are also included as part of this review. See item 10 of the agenda: [Agenda for Council on Tuesday 13 December 2022, 7.00 pm \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](#)

With regard to the Westley polling place, in Westley parish, the feedback from the audit and site visit was that the Westley Club is not accessible as there are two large steps at the front so a person in a wheelchair would not be able to access the building. It may also be difficult for someone with limited mobility. We do not believe that an alternative facility is available in Westley. It is therefore recommended that we combine with a polling station in a neighbouring polling district (Bury St Edmunds – Minden (Westbury)). This will future-proof our polling arrangements and provide better accessibility for all electors.

We would welcome your feedback regarding this proposal and if there are any suggestions as to alternative locations where a polling station could be held in Westley, then we would be pleased to receive details so that we could investigate this further.

When making comments or suggesting alternative venues, please consider that whatever arrangements we make, they should be accessible to disabled electors and provide reasonable facilities both for electors and polling staff.

The deadline for responses to the consultation is Friday 27 January 2023 and the revised polling arrangements will be published on 10 February 2023. We will notify you of the outcome.

Comments and representations can be submitted in the following ways:

Email: elections@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Post: Electoral Services, West Suffolk Council, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3YU

We have asked the parish for their views and asked that they assist with publicising the review so that residents may make representations and suggest alternative venues too. Details of the review can be found on our website, see here: [Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2022 \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](#)

We will also share details of the review on our social media pages, sharing to local community pages where available.

Your local knowledge and input with this process will be gratefully received and if you would like to discuss or suggest solutions then I'm available and happy to have a telephone call, teams discussion or meeting in person. I or a person from the team would also be willing to meet at an alternative facility if appropriate.

Kind regards

Ben

Ben Smith
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