

**From:** Mildmay-White, Sara <sara.mildmay-white@westsuffolk.gov.uk>

**Sent:** 21 December 2022 15:06

**To:** Smith, Ben <Ben.Smith@westsuffolk.gov.uk>

**Cc:** Bull, Carol <carol.bull@westsuffolk.gov.uk>

**Subject:** RE: Interim Polling Place review - Bradfield St Clare

Dear Ben, Thank you for this. Whilst I do understand the thought behind this. It is so typical of today, trying to shoe horn everyone into a one size fits all. In this case 130 people are going to have to get in cars or remember to apply for a postal vote in the interest of a non-existent wheel chair user, who if there was one, may prefer to use a postal vote themselves, rather than go to the trouble of getting in a car or wheel themselves down the road. In addition, given the few supposedly inaccessible polling stations in WS it would be unnecessary to assign a wheel chair using election officer to those particular polling stations. It is simply not true to say that moving the polling station to Bradfield St George will provide better accessibility to all electors. This will only be accessible to those electors with cars and disenfranchise all the others. Given the configuration of the village, at present, a great number of electors simply walk to Bradfield St Clare village hall. It is a social outing for many and has served the village well for years and years. The village is wonderful and very inclusive, looking after all their residents. I am particularly sad that this proposed change will impact on so many of them to the benefit of no one.

I spoke about this with some members of the village and the parish council chairman when I was attending their community café last Saturday. No one knew of anyone in the village who is a wheel chair user. Like me, they understand the reasoning behind this but all question why 130 people should be inconvenienced and have to waste petrol for the sake of a non-existent wheel chair using elector.

The only other public building is Bradfield St Clare Church, which I don't think has a lavatory or any refreshment facilities but please check this with the parish council chairman. In addition, the parking is very restricted and it is fairly isolated from the main part of the village so once again most people would need a car to get there. We all felt that a double whammy like this change, on top of the identity check will have a serious impact on, what is essentially an elderly population's ability and willingness to vote in person as they have done for all their adult lives.

Early publicity and a guide to applying for a postal vote will be essential if the electors are not going to be disenfranchised by these proposed changes. Please don't forget that many of these more elderly residents will not have internet access.

Please contact the parish council chairman **information redacted** to discuss this further. I am more than happy to help with getting out any information. Please can you give us a break down in the timing for applying for a postal vote which we can then get out into the parish magazine asp and start to call on parishioners to explain the changes.

Happy Christmas and kind regards, Sara

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Councillor Sara Mildmay-White  
Councillor for Rougham

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