

Polling Places Review

173 responses

Survey live from Friday 20 October to Sunday 19 November

1. Are you responding as			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	A Wokingham borough resident	95.38%	165
2	An elected borough councillor	0.58%	1
3	A town or parish councillor	0.58%	1
4	Representing an organisation	0.58%	1
5	Completing the survey for someone else	0.00%	0
6	Other (please specify):	2.89%	5
		answered	173
		skipped	0
Other (please specify): (5)			
1	N/A		
2	Child attends Oaklands School		
3	Wokingham Without Resident - Oaklands Junior School		
4	My child goes to school in Wokingham Borough		
5	As both a Wokingham Borough Resident and an Election Agent for Woodley and Whitegates Labour Party		

3. Which polling place are you providing comments on?			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Arborfield Green Community Centre	0.60%	1
2	Arborfield Village Hall	0.00%	0
3	Barkham Village Hall	1.80%	3
4	Beech Lodge	0.60%	1
5	California Ratepayers Hall	2.99%	5
6	Charvil Village Hall	1.20%	2
7	Christchurch Hall	1.80%	3
8	Civic Offices (Shute End)	1.20%	2
9	Coronation Hall	0.00%	0
10	Crazies Hill Village Hall	0.60%	1
11	Earley Crescent Resource Centre	2.99%	5
12	Earley Home Guard	0.60%	1

3. Which polling place are you providing comments on?				
13	Earley St Peters Church Hall		2.40%	4
14	Emmbrook Village Hall		2.99%	5
15	Emmanuel Church Centre		1.20%	2
16	FBC Centre		1.20%	2
17	Finchampstead Sports Pavilion		0.00%	0
18	Hurst Village Hall		0.00%	0
19	Loddon Hall		0.60%	1
20	Lower Earley Library		0.60%	1
21	Maiden Place Community Centre		0.60%	1
22	Methodist Church Hall		0.00%	0
23	Norreys Evangelical Church		3.59%	6
24	Radstock Community Centre		4.19%	7
25	Remenham Village Hall		0.00%	0
26	Riseley Memorial Hall		1.80%	3
27	Salvation Army Hall		2.40%	4
28	Shinfield Parish Hall (School Green Centre)		2.99%	5
29	Shinfield Player's Theatre		1.20%	2
30	Spencers Wood Pavilion		1.20%	2
31	Stanlake Pavilion		2.40%	4
32	St Crispin's Sports Centre		2.99%	5
33	St James' Church Centre		4.19%	7
34	St John Ambulance HQ		1.80%	3
35	St Mary's Hall		1.20%	2
36	St Nicholas Church Hall		2.40%	4
37	St Paul's Parish Rooms		1.80%	3
38	St Sebastian's Memorial Hall		30.54%	51
39	Swallowfield Village Hall		0.60%	1
40	The Victory Hall		0.60%	1
41	Three Mile Cross Church Centre		0.00%	0
42	Twyford Room, Loddon Hall		1.20%	2
43	Wargrave Pavilion		0.00%	0
44	Whiteknights Primary School		0.00%	0
45	Winnersh Community Hall		1.80%	3
46	Woodford Park Leisure Centre		0.00%	0
47	Woodley Airfield Centre		2.40%	4
48	Woodley Baptist		2.40%	4
49	Wokingham Methodist Church Hall		1.20%	2
50	Woosehill Community Church		1.20%	2

3. Which polling place are you providing comments on?

	answered	167
	skipped	6

4. Do you support using this polling place?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	81.29%	139
2	No	18.71%	32
		answered	171
		skipped	2

5. Do you think this polling place meets accessibility requirements?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	79.88%	135
2	No	20.12%	34
		answered	169
		skipped	4

6. Tell us why you don't think this polling place is suitable.

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	32
1	This is outside of the population centre. To access requires a significant walk by most voters and the crossing of a very busy nine mile ride junction. Driving- severe lack of parking places.		
2	Parking is awful		
3	because I walk and it means crossing the nine mile ride where there are no crossings and the road is busy and will be even more busy on polling day. As a pedestrian you cannot see the traffic coming from Wokingham as its obscured by the bend in the rd by the roundabout. I should be able to walk to my polling station especially if we are reducing our carbon footprint as a borough.		
4	The hall is on a busy nine mile ride junction with limited parking and right on the outskirts of the village meaning many people will not walk there.		
5	Insufficient parking and remote from bulk of residents		
6	Not enough parking		
7	This is on the edge of the area and very few people are in a sensible walking distance of it. Access by car is difficult with access from a busy main road and egress onto a country lane with a poor junction back onto the same busy road. There is insufficient parking and what is there is cramped so not suitable for the number of people that will need to come and go during the day.		
8	Not enough parking, will result in parking on a dark country lane which is not wide enough for two cars to pass comfortably. HGVs also drive down this road regularly		
9	Honey Hill running down the side of the hall is totally unsuited for parking and will cause a traffic jam.		

6. Tell us why you don't think this polling place is suitable.

10	Oaklands school is within walking distance of a large portion of Crowthorne residents. St sebs does not have the same catchment, ultimately I would expect that fewer people will turn out and vote.
11	Not centrally located which means more people will have to drive, there's very little parking to accommodate this and Honey Hill can be a road with limited visibility
12	Insuff
13	On the edge of the heavily populated part of the borough rather than in the centre. Many will drive to get there and there is insufficient parking.
14	<p>Oaklands Junior School was not available to select on the previous page. Why is this the case?</p> <p>As a parent and a local resident, the use of this school is detrimental to the to the local community. It is unbelievable that the local officials feel that it is acceptable for our children to lose out on vital learning when their education has been so disrupted over the last 3 years. The staff, parents and children are doing so much to "catch-up" from the disruption and should not be penalised just because the local elected officials fail to consider an appropriate alternative. It is not just one school that is disrupted, it is 3, the Juniors, the Infants and the Nursery. This is around 400-450 pupils, which easily means over 600 families are impacted by continued use of this venue (number of which are being financially penalised, including myself, as they are having to take time off work for childcare - how is this acceptable?). I'm certain that I read something from the Education Secretary advising that local authorities needed to examine use of school venues and take all steps to avoid disruption to pupils. Feels like this has fallen on deaf ears?!</p> <p>I understand that the venue has to have easy access however, have any of you checked the local roads on election days? It is absolute carnage. The school is too close to a parade of local shops, so the congestion in the area is horrific. This is a safety aspect that is being ignored and again poses a risk to our children, as they are likely to be outside playing because they cannot attend school due to this exercise.</p>
15	<p>Why is Oaklands Junior School not available for selection?</p> <p>I have lived in Crowthorne for over 30 years however, for the last 7 years (although I suspect it has been longer), the local authority has chosen to use our local school as a polling station. This is unacceptable due to the significant disruption it causes for our children. They have lost out on a tremendous amount of education time over the last 3 years and adding to this disruption for the benefit of local councillors is completely unacceptable. Over 400 children have to miss out on a days education and I fail to see why an alternative venue cannot be sourced - the school was never used when I was a pupil.</p> <p>I also live close to the school - adjacent road to Butler Road, and the traffic chaos on polling day is absolutely horrific. I've not been able to exit my drive on a number of occasions and I've seen a number of near miss collisions over the years. The roads around the school are congested on a normal school day, but add to this with the number of local residents, all of which tend to drive and not walk to the venue creates sheer carnage.</p>
16	This is removed from the population centre. Access is limited. Walking you have to cross the busy nine mile ride by a busy junction. The venue has limited parking spaces.
17	The polling place is fine for voters who live in SWW1 but less so for voters who live in SEW. The longest walking time for voters in SEW is 33 minutes, much of it along the Basingstoke Rd, where the pavement is narrow. Only 2 houses are within 20 minutes' walk. So I imagine that almost every voter drives to this polling place, unless they have a postal vote.
18	this location is poorly lit, is difficult to use if you have any mobility issues as the car park is uneven, often floods and is full of pot holes and trip hazards and has limited parking available. Events at the church, school and collection from after school clubs causes frequent problems with parking. I collect my children from brownies and guides at this location and frequently have issues with access and parking
19	<p>The Quinquennial Review of Polling Places held in 2018 exhaustively considered every possible alternative to using Oaklands Junior School Hall and reluctantly concluded that no other location met the requirements of the Electoral Commission for polling places. As basically nothing has changed in the Electoral Commission requirements, or the various halls in the ward, it is difficult to understand why this change is proposed apart from the wish not to close schools for elections, something that I am very willing to endorse in principle.</p> <p>St Sebastian's Memorial Hall is on the fringe of the mass of housing in the Wokingham Without ward where well over 95% of the electorate lives south of Nine Mile Ride. Although the Memorial Hall has step free access it located in an awkward position on the north side of Nine Mile Ride which is a busy east-</p>

6. Tell us why you don't think this polling place is suitable.

	<p>west route through the ward and has no street lighting to the east of the hall.</p> <p>Vehicle parking is restricted and any polling place should be able to cope with the greater turnout at a general election as well as being suitable for one held in winter with short hours of daylight. For a general election, 3 polling stations would be required for the current electorate in Wokingham Without, each having a Presiding Officer and 2 polling clerks who are all likely to have cars making 9 in total that would then fill half the parking spots.</p> <p>The busiest time (late afternoon and early evening) for polling coincide with the heaviest traffic on the roads and that is particularly true on Nine Mile Ride. All it needs is to have one car manoeuvring to park in the limited spaces and traffic will be held up in both directions on Nine Mile Ride, with cars waiting access to park. This even applies to those turning up for a pilates class so illustrates what is likely to happen if used as a polling place.</p> <p>There is no convenient on street parking adjacent to the hall; Honey Hill has no street lighting and is narrow. The speed limit at that point on Nine Mile Ride is 40 mph and eastbound cars on Nine Mile Ride often approach the Honey Hill junction indicating left with the indicators not cancelling after the New Wokingham Road roundabout, when in fact they are continuing along Nine Mile Ride, making a hazard for the unwary trying to turn out of Honey Hill.</p> <p>Being on the fringe of the housing area in the ward will reduce the numbers walking and cycling to the polling place, increase those trying to drive to it and is likely to reduce turnout in elections contrary to Electoral Commission aims.</p> <p>There are footpaths through to Royal Oak Drive, Queens Ride, Hatch Ride and Holmbury Avenue but all are unlit, mainly through woodland, which will largely negate use after dark.</p> <p>In summary if a Risk Assessment were to be carried out this is likely to identify 4 risks as follows:</p> <p>Congestion in parking leading to hold-ups in Nine Mile Ride and the possibility of minor bumps in parking - especially after dark.</p> <p>Congestion and a higher risk of collision resulting from turning into the St Sebastian's Memorial Hall car park and in turning out of Honey Hill.</p> <p>Increased hazards to voters crossing Nine Mile Ride twice - particularly with increased car movements.</p> <p>A reduced turnout of voters primarily because of the location on the fringe of housing in the ward (compared with the central position of Oaklands Junior School) although I appreciate that there are many variables affecting turnout so that judgement will be subjective. However, as the aim of a Polling Station Review is to identify the most suitable locations to help drive up turnout, the Council's recommendation to move from Oaklands Junior School is surely wrong</p>
20	St Sebastian's Hall is on the very edge of the population centre of the ward and for many voters is a considerable walk which ends with having to cross the busy Nine Mile Ride where there's no crossing provision. The result of this is that more voters will drive, there is limited parking and potential traffic congestion making crossing the road even more dangerous. I think it is also likely that turnout will be reduced as some voters will not bother or be able to make the journey.
21	This is so disruptive to the children not being able to attend the school. After Covid every school day matters. There is very limited parking which means the streets are very congested.
22	Oaklands Junior school is not suitable as it means closing 3 educational facilities each time, Acorns under 5's, Oaklands Infants & Oaklands Juniors.
23	Because it's in the Church, not the hall and some people (probably for religious reasons) don't want to go into an Anglican Church.
24	lighting
25	Want it in Keephatch, feel very vulnerable walking to this polling station. St crispins leisure centre or All Saints church would be better
26	St Sebastians Hall is on the edge of the polling area. Whilst it is good to remove it from Oaklands school, to keep it open, most people will have to use a car to access this. There will not be enough parking at St Sebastian's.
27	Not enough parking: There just aren't enough parking spaces. When it gets busy, voters might struggle to find a spot. With parking restrictions on the Nine Mile Ride, some might end up parking far from the polling

6. Tell us why you don't think this polling place is suitable.

	<p>station, or they might not vote at all because it's just too much trouble.</p> <p>Too much traffic: The polling station is near a road that gets really busy, especially during rush hour. More cars coming in for voting could make the traffic jams even worse.</p> <p>It could be dangerous: The increase in cars could make the roads around the polling station more dangerous. The roads aren't built for a continuous stream of voters driving in and out all day. Plus, with folks needing to walk and cross the street from nearby houses, the risk of accidents is higher.</p> <p>In a nutshell, the chosen spot could lead to parking problems, bad traffic, and safety risks. Finding a different place with more parking and away from the busy roads, or improving the current spot by managing traffic better and adding more parking, would make voting easier and safer for everyone.</p>		
28	Lacking of parking and in a dangerous accessible location		
29	Close to electorate good parking		
30	<p>There is insufficient parking, which means some people will park in the small access road at the top of New Wokingham Road. They and the people who walk will have to cross the busy Nine Mile Ride at a point where visibility is limited.</p> <p>Also, as the aim is to have the maximum participation at elections, this site is on the edge of the polling area, well removed from the main housing areas. This does not encourage participation.</p>		
31	It's more than twice the distance from my house than my current polling place. There aren't clear enough directions to this new polling place for people who don't live in Arborfield Green		
32	It's not suitable for students on the university campus, who live in EFWb, because it is too far away.		
		answered	32
		skipped	141

7. What alternative venue would you suggest?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	31
1	<p>Bigshotte park pavillion. This is at the centre of the population. There is a car park. Most will walk. Large enough and accessible. Already owned by WBC and vacant.</p>		
2	Any		
3	The existing venue of oaklands school. It always has been used is walkable and i dont understand why the school has to close as it didnt close for polling when I was there.		
4	Continue to use Oaklands School (or use Hatch Ride School perhaps)		
5	St Sebastians Playing Field Hall		
6	Oaklands School		
7	Until a better location is found then use of Oaklands school should continue. School have been used as polling stations for many years and I would suggest that issues which have been tolerated are only now becoming difficult due to other issues caused by lack of funding and shortage of staff at the school.		
8	At Sebastians cricket club		
9	St Sebastians Cricket Pavilion		
10	Oaklands school.		
11	Stick with Oaklands school		
12	Oaklands School.		

7. What alternative venue would you suggest?

13	<p>I fail to understand why other central, easy access venues such as venues at Pinewood (like Scout huts) could not be used. Equally venues in the village, such as Crowthorne Parish Hall, or the hall connected to St John the Baptist Church cannot be used.</p> <p>If these are not big enough (although I would say that they are equal to the hall at the Junior School), then why cannot funding be assigned to hold this at a venue such as Wellington Sports Centre.</p> <p>All of these venue have step free access and there is parking available.</p>
14	<p>Morgan Rec was used when I was younger. Whilst I accept that it has steps to the hall, I fail to see why a temporary ramp could not be installed. This has parking directly to the venue. Other venues in the village such as the Parish Hall of one of the church halls could also be considered as they could easily accommodate this exercise. A number of venues at Pinewood would provide a suitable alternative. There is an abundance of parking and all of these venues have step free access.</p>
15	<p>Bigshotte Park Pavilliun. It is currently vacant. Has a car park. Near the poulation centre. Easily accessible.</p>
16	<p>Spencers Wood Library. Although it is not quite within SEW, it is very close. I would say there are at least 240 properties within a 10-minute walk. The longest walking time from most properties in SEW would be 16 minutes. There are about 9 properties from which it would take 19 minutes. People voting on their way somewhere else would be more likely to pass this place. There is parking; the building is owned by WBC. The only inconvenience is that the Library is normally open on a Thursday. I would like to see more use of this public building.</p>
17	<p>Pinewood scout hut - lots of parking, good access and level, easy access</p>
18	<p>The obvious solution is to retain the Oaklands Junior School Hall as the polling place for the ward. It is central to the mass of housing in the ward, it is residential roads with on-street parking (even though there are school hour parking restrictions in Butler Road that could be lifted on polling days)and all the roads have streetlighting with 30 mph limits. Being central this encourages walking and cycling to access the polling place.</p> <p>I appreciate that Wokingham Without is unusual in only having a single polling place for what was and will be a 3 councillor ward with some 6,300 electors currently. It would be possible to split the ward into 3 or more PDs to enable other polling places to be used. But this has not been carried out because, quite simply, it has previously been decided that there is no other location suitable for use as a polling place.</p> <p>There are currently planning permissions granted for some 1,750 in the South Wokingham SDL area south of the Wokingham to Bracknell railway and it is understood that there are plans for about another 1,000 within the SDL. It is also understood that there are plans for a community centre which will presumably have a hall suitable as a polling place and it would seem then to be logical to designate that are as a separate PD. However, as houses are likely to be occupied well ahead of the construction of any community centre they would need to use the existing polling place and, while Oaklands Junior School could take extra electors arguably St Sebastian's Memorial; Hall could not without causing gridlock on Nine Mile Ride.</p> <p>Parking within the school grounds is adequate for those voting and for polling staff. I appreciate that the closure of the schools for polling day is unpopular particularly with working parents and that the additional bank holiday this year for the King's Coronation meant that there were 3 bank holidays in May plus a closure for use as a polling place. I see no reason why the Acorns Pre--school need close: that could use the Ellis Road entrance. The schools could mitigate the inconvenience for parents by holding Inset days concurrent with polling days with the Infant School playground being used for school staff parking.</p>
19	<p>Oaklands School appears to be the only alternative available. I realise that it is not ideal as it causes a school closure for the day but due to the unusual nature of Wokingham Without, almost all the community facilities are outside the Ward. The Pinewood Centre is another option, but is arguably less accessible than St Sebs, although the parking wouldn't be an issue.</p>
20	<p>Share across the various school, for example Hatch Ride. Could venues such as St Sebastian Hall be used or the un used community hall at Bucklers Park which is very close to the polling area.</p>
21	<p>Pinewood scout Hall, or at the very least alternative with Hatchride school.</p>
22	<p>St Mary's Church HALL</p>
23	<p>Earley St Peter's.church hall</p>
24	<p>All Saints Church new hub</p>

7. What alternative venue would you suggest?

25	It might need to stay at Oaklands. Both my daughters went to this school and it did not impact their education.		
26	Maintaining the current school as the polling station is a sensible choice. It's positioned away from the busier main roads in a residential area, providing a safe and quiet environment that reduces the risk of traffic-related issues. The parking facilities are ample and similar to those at the proposed new location, which ensures convenience for voters. Additionally, the school's easy accessibility could encourage a higher voter turnout among local residents. If we could align voting day with an Inset day, it would prevent any disruption to children's education. This approach offers a balanced solution that prioritises both community safety and educational needs.		
27	Oaklands school or Hatchride school		
28	None		
29	Either continue to use Oaklands School, which is around the middle of the housing area and has served the area well for many years. Alternatively, put a temporary polling station building on one of the roads around Oaklands School.		
30	Keep current polling place - Finchampstead Sports Pavilion		
31	One of the university's buildings on the campus.		
		answered	31
		skipped	142

12. What town or parish do you live in?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Arborfield and Newland	0.00%	0
2	Barkham	1.41%	2
3	Charvil	1.41%	2
4	Earley	14.08%	20
5	Finchampstead	6.34%	9
6	Hurst	0.00%	0
7	Remenham	0.00%	0
8	Ruscombe	0.00%	0
9	Shinfield	5.63%	8
10	Sonning	0.70%	1
11	Swallowfield	2.11%	3
12	Twyford	4.23%	6
13	Wargrave	0.70%	1
14	Winnersh	2.82%	4
15	Wokingham	16.90%	24
16	Wokingham Without	27.46%	39
17	Woodley	12.68%	18
18	Don't know	1.41%	2

12. What town or parish do you live in?

19	Outside Wokingham borough		2.11%	3
			answered	142
			skipped	31

13. What sex/gender do you identify as?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Female	65.25%	92
2	Male	31.91%	45
3	Transgender	0.00%	0
4	Prefer not to say	2.13%	3
5	Other (please specify):	0.71%	1

14. How old are you?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	17 or younger	0.00%	0
2	18-20	0.00%	0
3	21-29	0.00%	0
4	30-39	6.38%	9
5	40-49	14.18%	20
6	50-59	23.40%	33
7	60 or older	56.03%	79
		answered	141
		skipped	32

15. What race or ethnicity best describes you?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Arabic	0.00%	0
2	Asian/British Asian: Bangladeshi	0.00%	0
3	Asian/British Asian: Chinese	0.00%	0
4	Asian/British Asian: Indian	0.70%	1
5	Asian/British Asian: Pakistani	0.00%	0

15. What race or ethnicity best describes you?

6	Black/British Black: African		0.00%	0
7	Black/British Black: Caribbean		0.00%	0
8	White: British		90.14%	128
9	White: Other		4.93%	7
10	Mixed race		0.70%	1
11	Gypsy/Traveller		0.00%	0
12	Prefer not to say		3.52%	5
13	Other (please specify):		0.00%	0
			answered	142
			skipped	31

16. What do you consider your religion to be?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Buddhism		0.00%
2	Christianity		46.10%
3	Hinduism		0.00%
4	Islam		0.00%
5	Judaism		1.42%
6	Sikhism		0.00%
7	No religion		41.13%
8	Prefer not to say		10.64%
9	Other (please specify):		0.71%
		answered	141
		skipped	32
Other (please specify): (1)			
1	Jainism		

17. Which of the following terms best describes your sexual orientation?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Asexual		1.48%
2	Bisexual		1.48%
3	Gay		0.74%
4	Lesbian		0.00%
5	Heterosexual/Straight		79.26%

17. Which of the following terms best describes your sexual orientation?				
6	Prefer not to say		14.81%	20
7	Other (please specify):		2.22%	3
			answered	135
			skipped	38
Other (please specify): (3)				
1	N/A			
2	Irrelevant			
3	Pan sexual			

18. Have you undertaken any form of sex/gender reassignment?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		0.00%	0
2	No		87.59%	120
3	Prefer not to say		12.41%	17
			answered	137
			skipped	36

19. Are you currently pregnant or have you given birth within the last year?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		0.72%	1
2	No		71.94%	100
3	Not applicable		19.42%	27
4	Prefer not to say		7.91%	11
			answered	139
			skipped	34

20. Do you have a disability, long-term illness or health condition?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		15.83%	22
2	No		73.38%	102
3	Prefer not to say		10.79%	15
			answered	139
			skipped	34

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