

Electoral Review Committee

MINUTES OF THE ELECTORAL REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2023 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Ashley O'Neill (Chairman), Cllr Gavin Grant (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cllr Allison Bucknell, Cllr Ernie Clark, Cllr Ian McLennan, Cllr Paul Oatway QPM and Cllr Stuart Wheeler

Also Present:

Cllr Bill Parks

46 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from:

Cllr Ian Thorn

The Committee noted that Cllr Jacqui Lay was in attendance virtually (non-voting) and that Cllr Paul Oatway was in another meeting and would arrive late. He arrived at approximately 1.45pm.

47 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2023 were presented for consideration, and it was,

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes as a correct record.

48 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

49 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

50 **Public Participation**

No questions or statements were submitted.

Councillor Bill Parks was present to speak in relation to proposed changes to the Warminster area during the next item.

51 **Polling District and Polling Place Review**

Caroline Rudland, Electoral Services Specialist Manager, presented a report on the Polling District and Polling Place Review, which commenced on 2 October 2023.

The Committee was asked to approve a final polling district and polling place scheme which would come into force from 1 December 2023, when the electoral register was revised.

The Committee considered the comments received during the consultation period which ran from 2 October to 31 October 2023, during which, a total of 53 representations were received. All of the comments from the review were included within Appendix A.

Of the 98 Unitary Divisions in Wiltshire, 61 changes had been recommended.

The Committee was presented with 3 categories to consider for approval, these were:

- a. Unitary Divisions where no changes were proposed to polling districts and there are no relevant comments to be considered from the public consultation. Any proposed changes in this category relate to polling stations only.
- b. Unitary Divisions where changes were proposed to the polling districts.
- c. Particular consideration and discussion to be given to the two Unitary Divisions of Sherston and Warminster North & Rural.

During discussion the Committee received clarification on why one larger ward area was divided into two separate polling districts. The Committee also discussed and noted that any Community Boundary Review (CGR) changes approved since 2021 were not included as part of this this Polling District and Polling Place Review which was based on current electoral boundaries. The CGR boundary changes approved since will not take effect until the 2025 elections and will be reviewed at a later date.

The Officers were asked to take into consideration additional areas for possible change, such as in Calne South, MT2 where the polling station was quite a significant distance from the electors.

The Committee noted the comments in relation to MT1 and MT2, Marden House community space and queried what happened when a venue no longer wished to host an election. The Elections Team in these instances sought alternative suitable locations in the area.

It was suggested that in areas where there was difficulty in finding a suitable replacement location, the community involved could be approached as they often had the best local knowledge.

Other polling districts to be looked at by the Elections Team were noted as XB1 (Hillcott Village Hall no longer existed), and OB3 and OB4 (Activity Zone/Riverside Centre). Committee Members were asked to email details of each request to the Officer for consideration.

Merging Polling Districts

The Committee discussed the proposal to merge two polling districts in Luckington, noting a comment received had indicated an elector's preference not to merge.

The Committee noted the two distinct villages involved, the proximity between them and the cost implications of having two separate polling districts for such few electors and supported the recommendation to merge the two polling districts.

Warminster Rural

The areas of Warminster North and Warminster Rural, were described as two distinct areas (IC1 and IC2), which currently both used the Warminster Garrison as a polling venue.

Councillor Bill Parks, Division member for Warminster North and Rural suggested the arrangements would be better suited if the electors in IC2 were able to use the Civic Centre, noting that it was nearer and more accessible for most electors in IC2, due to its location in the town and not within the camp. He recognised that implementing these changes may move it out of the division and asked whether this was possible.

It was confirmed that there were no issues with having a polling venue out of division, however such a change would require the approval of the Committee.

The Committee agreed to support the proposal to move the polling venue of IC2 to Warminster Civic Centre.

At the conclusion of discussion, Councillor Ashley O'Neill moved the motion in line with the above discussion. This was seconded by Councillor Stuart Wheeler.

It was;

Resolved

To approve:

- **The Unitary Divisions where no changes were proposed to polling districts and there are no relevant comments to be considered from**

the public consultation. Any proposed changes in this category relate to polling stations only, as set out in the report.

- The Unitary Divisions where changes were proposed to the polling districts as set out in the report
- To merge the 2 polling districts of Luckington parish, within the Sherston Division.
- a separate polling place for electors in polling district IC2 outside of Warminster North and Rural Division

52 **Parish Name Change Review**

The Committee considered the proposals to change the name of the parish of Lea & Cleverton, as requested by the parish of Lea & Cleverton, which was located east of Malmesbury, within the Electoral Division of Brinkworth. The reason for the request was:

To properly represent the three habited areas that make up our parish

The Committee agreed to the proposal, noting the suitability, given there were three communities involved.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was;

Resolved

To recommend Full Council, to approve the following name changes:

The Parish of Lea & Cleverton be changed to the Parish of Lea, Garsdon, & Cleverton.

53 **Date of the Next Meeting**

The Committee note the date of the next meeting which was scheduled for 13 December 2023 at 10:00am.

54 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 1.30 - 2.07 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Lisa Alexander of Democratic Services, direct line 01722 434560, e-mail lisa.alexander@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line 01225 713114 or email communications@wiltshire.gov.uk