

## **Parliamentary Polling District & Polling Places Review 2024**

This report was considered with the Constitution Working Group on Thursday 27 November ahead of submission to Full Council for approval.

The Acting Returning Officer received over 60 responses to the consultation, both via email and through a web-based survey. The consultation was open from 24 September to 4 November 2024.

### **Polling Premise Location**

1. Black Bourton Church
2. Shilton – Old School and Bradwell Village
3. Swerford Village Hall
4. Swinbrook Village Hall
5. Taynton Village Hall
6. Westwell, 5 Mitford Cottages  
Witney Summary and Plan of Polling Districts
7. Witney – Davenport Road Methodist Church
8. Witney – Methodist Church, High Street
9. Witney – Burwell Hall, Thorney Leys
10. Witney – Joint Army Cadet Centre and Windrush CE School Building
11. Witney – ATP Centre, Gordon Way
12. Witney – Windrush Quay (town ward)
13. Woodstock – Blenheim Estate Office/Town Hall
14. Woodstock – Bowls and Tennis Club

Summary of Polling District Review Changes

## **1) Black Bourton Church**

**Bampton and Clanfield Ward (Councillors – Alaric Smith and Alistair Wray)**

Polling District FF-Black Bourton (Current Electorate 230)

### **Consultation Comments:**

Black Bourton church has recently been refurbished with a toilet and kitchen, making it more of a community space. A sense of unity and tradition for the village to be able to vote locally. No buses available for Clanfield and the road is dangerous for walking or cycling. Alvescot has been mentioned as closer although the same reasons apply with no transport links. A fair proportion of elderly folk who would not be able to travel out of the village. To reiterate that the new facilities makes' this an ideal venue as a polling station

### **Recommendation:**

Further to the views and responses of the consultation, and the recent refurbishment of the Church to create a Community space, it would be recommended to retain the Church as a polling place for future elections.

## **2) Shilton – Old School and Bradwell Village**

**Brize Norton and Shilton Ward (Councillor – Rosie Pearson)**

Polling District HP-Shilton (Current Electorate 510) HP-Shilton 323 properties

Shilton village – 176 properties / Bradwell Grove – 147 properties

### **Consultation Comments:**

Mentioned that Shilton, Old School building is an excellent facility for a polling station venue, although it is someway from Bradwell Grove which is within Shilton polling district although a couple of miles away from the central village. Bradwell Grove has its own village hall with good amenities and parking.

### **Recommendation:**

Consideration was made with creating a further polling district to accommodate voters in Bradwell Grove. However, due to the ongoing consultation Local Government Boundary Review, it is recommended that the Old School, Shilton village remains the primary voting location and a further review is implemented following the conclusion of the LGBC.

## **3) Swerford Village Hall**

**Kingham, Rollright and Enstone Ward (Councillors Andrew Beaney and Alex Wilson)**

HX 127 voters

### **Consultation Comments:**

This will have a significant impact on the local population of Swerford. Great Tew is two miles away, busy main roads, impossible to walk and no transport links. Many residents are elderly and will potentially disenfranchise the community preventing the democratic process being available to all. Dangerous road, pressured into having a postal vote, disincentive to voting.

### **Recommendation:**

The response to the survey determined that Swerford Village Hall should remain as a polling place for future elections at this time.

#### **4) Swinbrook Village Hall**

**Brize Norton and Shilton Ward (Councillor – Rosie Pearson)**

HY Number of electors 128 (Asthal 224)

**Consultation Comments:**

None

**Recommendation:**

Swinbrook Village Hall is scheduled to have works carried out during the 2025. It is recommended that Asthal Village Hall is used as a dual polling premise for 2025 election owing to both parishes being within the same District ward.

Although these are small villages' they both have strong community uses for their respective village halls and would not recommend that they are merged for voting in one premises for future polls.

#### **5) Taynton Village Hall**

**Burford Ward (Councillor Hugo Ashton)**

JA Number of electors 82

**Consultation Comments:**

No parking available at the village hall, very few voters in the village. Many residents have postal votes in place

**Recommendation:**

There were no objections received to moving Taynton voters (JA) to vote at the polling premise in Burford, Warwick Hall. It is recommended to make this change for 2025 onwards.

#### **6) Westwell, 5 Mitford Cottages**

**Alvescot and Filkins Ward (Councillor Edward James)**

46 voters for Westwell (JC); 35 voters for Holwell (GS)

**Consultation Comments:**

Westwell is a short walk from Holwell, or a shorter drive. Many of our residents are elderly and could not get to Filkins.

**Recommendation:**

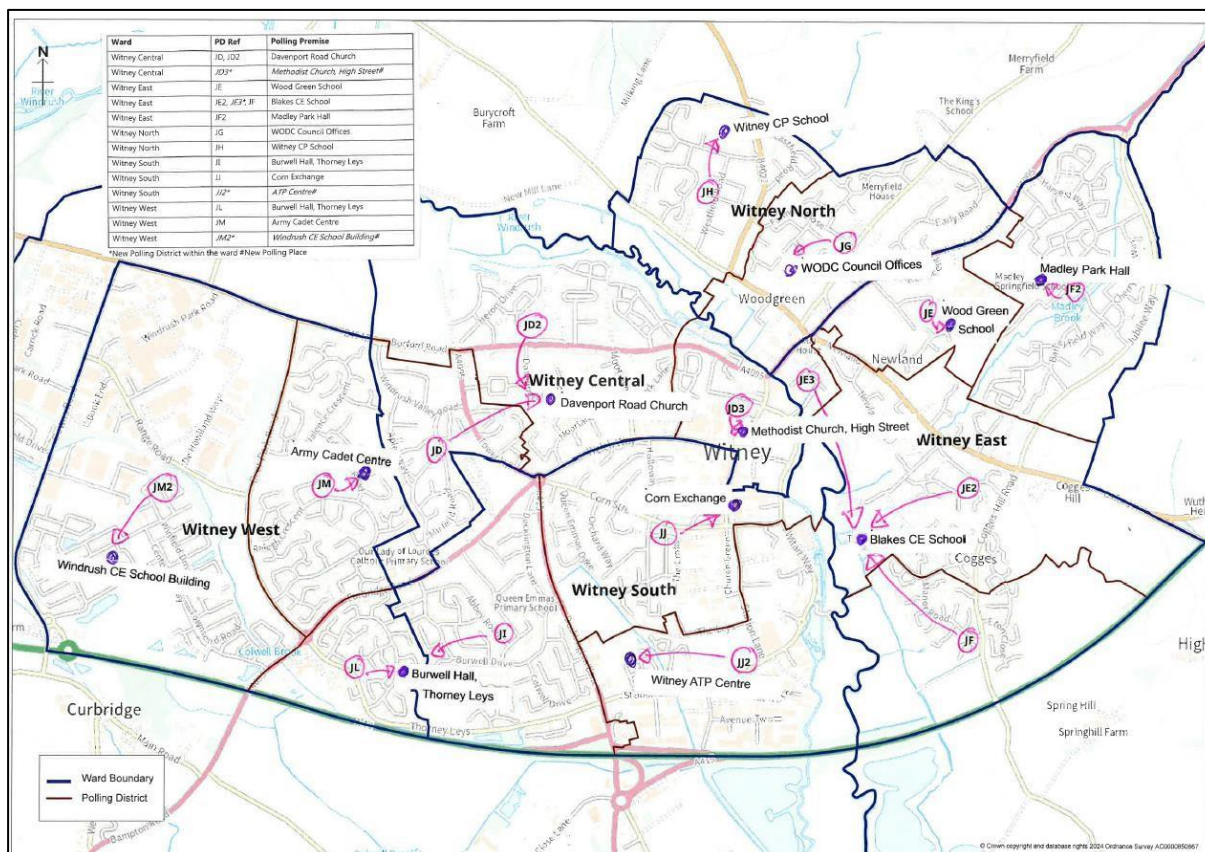
The current polling premise is a residential dwelling which is no longer be available. Alternative accommodation within the village were unable to be sourced. It is recommended to move voters for Westwell and Holwell (JC/GS) to the Filkins Carter Institute as the host polling place.

It is recommended that a further review is implemented following the conclusion of the Local Government Boundary Commission consultation.

# Witney

Ward	PD Ref	Polling Premise
Witney Central	JD, JD2	Davenport Road Church
Witney Central	<i>JD3*</i>	<i>Methodist Church, High Street#</i>
Witney East	JE	Wood Green School
Witney East	JE2, <i>JE3*</i> , JF	Blakes CE School
Witney East	JF2	Madley Park Hall
Witney North	JG	WODC Council Offices
Witney North	JH	Witney CP School
Witney South	JL	Burwell Hall, Thorney Leys
Witney South	JJ	Corn Exchange
Witney South	<i>JJ2*</i>	<i>ATP Centre, Gorgon Way#</i>
Witney West	JL	Burwell Hall, Thorney Leys
Witney West	JM	Army Cadet Centre
Witney West	<i>JM2*</i>	<i>Windrush CE School Building#</i>

\*New Polling District within the ward #New Polling Place TBC



## 7) Witney - Davenport Road Methodist Church

## **Witney Central Ward (Councillors Andrew Coles and Andrew Lyon)**

Current JD 1384 electors and JD2 3189 electors

### **Consultation Comments:**

It is difficult to park both at Tower Hill School and the Church. Further to walk for those with mobility problems. Agree with the proposal to move from the School to the Church.

An additional polling station made available for voters in JD2. For residents, this polling district is more central to the town centre, the Corn Exchange would be easier and closer for JD2 voters.

### **Recommendation:**

To retain the use of the Davenport Road Methodist Church as a polling station which is welcomed by the Tower Hill School and community. This will also help with parking issues around the Church if a new polling district is created as explained below.

## **8) Witney Methodist Church Meeting Room**

Witney Central ward (new JD3) (Councillors Andrew Coles and Andrew Lyon)

### **Consultation Comments:**

I would very much welcome this proposal as it would make life significantly easier for people living in the immediate vicinity who currently have to travel all the way up to the Davenport Road Methodist Church to cast their vote.

### **Recommendation:**

To divide the polling district JD2 creating a new polling district within the Witney Central Ward. This would allow for electors who live closer to the High Street to be within a more local vicinity to vote. Contact has been made with the Church with the view of using their adjacent meeting room as a polling station in the future.

## **9) Witney - Burwell Hall**

Witney South (JI) and Witney West (JL) (Councillors Michael Brooker; Rachel Crouch; Stuart McCarroll and Councillors Thomas Ashby and Jane Doughty)

### **Consultation Comments:**

None

### **Recommendations:**

Following the Oxfordshire County Council LGBC review, the JK (Burwell Meadow) has been amalgamated back into the polling district JI. This administratively removes the complications of voting for Burwell Hall, although they are still two different wards, and two different electoral divisions, there will no longer be the additional separate Burwell town ward.

There are no local viable alternative polling places at this time, no comments or suggested alternatives have been received during the consultation.

It is recommended that the current polling premise and polling districts remains unchanged.

## **10) Witney – Joint Army Cadet Centre, Edington Road and new polling premise Windrush CE School Building**

## **Witney West ward (JM and new JM2) (Councillors Thomas Ashby and Jane Doughty)**

Current JM voter numbers 4000

### **Consultation Comments:**

Edington Road Hall never seems to be full, it is quite a trek from Windrush Place.

The only building in the area is Windrush Place/Spring Meadow is the School. Unless a community hall is built.

Windrush Primary School on the Windrush Estate would serve this development and also Colwell Green (Ducklington ward), and the proposed housing development to the south of the golf course.

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended to create a new polling district to accommodate the electors of 'Spring Meadow' to the west of Deer Park estate.

It is expected that a new Sports pavilion will be constructed and will potentially be available as a polling premise in the future. In the interim the new Windrush CE School has been approached requesting that electors within this new polling district can vote at the school.

With regard to the Colwell Green development in Curbridge (Ducklington ward), this will need to be reviewed again after the Local Government Boundary Commission consultation is complete.

## **11) Witney ATP Centre, Gordon Way**

**Witney South ward/Town Council Witney Leys ward (new JJ2) (Councillors Michael Brooker; Rachel Crouch; Stuart McCarroll)**

### **Consultation Comments:**

There is an opportunity to add further stations for the Windrush Quay and Leys wards, for example the ATP in Gordon Way for the latter.

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended to create a new polling district to align with the newly created town ward named Witney Leys consequent to the OCC LGBC consultation/review. It is expected that the premise named ATP sports pavilion will be able to accommodate electors within the Witney Leys polling district in the future.

## **12) Witney Windrush Quay Town ward**

**Witney East ward (new JE3) (Councillors Joy Aitman, Duncan Enright and Ruth Smith)**

### **Consultation Comments:**

Blake's C of E School (JE2/JF) highlights the lack of community facilities in all three areas and electoral officers should think creatively for new locations. There is an opportunity to add further stations for the Windrush Quay and Leys wards, for example the ATP in Gordon Way for the latter.

### **Recommendation:**

There is no visible alternative premise that can be located within the Witney East polling district for JE2, JE3 and JF. Witney Mills cricket club is a consideration, although it is on the main bus road with small facilities and car parking, it would not be a suitable venue and would require

a further polling district to be created within Witney East.

It is recommended to retain the use of the Blake School for the new polling district JE3.

### **I3) Woodstock Town Hall / Blenheim Estate Office**

**Woodstock and Bladon Ward (FH, JN and JP) (Councillors Julian Cooper and Elizabeth Poskitt)**

#### **Consultation Comments:**

It is inappropriate to use a commercial facility for a public democratic purpose. Those who manage Blenheim Estate like to give the impression it is a community facility whose purpose is to provide a service to local people and visitors. This is not the case the Estate is a business designed to maximise profit. Using the Estate Office as a Polling Station is effectively endorsing the Estate and its commercial activities, including the promotion of Botley West Solar Farm and the extra 1000 houses it would like to develop in Woodstock in addition to those for which is already has planning permission. WODC needs to retain independence from Blenheim Estate. It is its regulator in many activities.

#### **Recommendation:**

To retain the flexibility of voting in the main primary polling venue of the Blenheim Estate Office and if necessary, to hold any ad hoc town vacancies at the Town Hall should the Estate Office be unavailable at that time.

### **I4) Woodstock Bowls and Tennis Club**

**Woodstock and Bladon Ward (JO and JQ) (Councillors Julian Cooper and Elizabeth Poskitt)**

#### **Consultation Comments:**

People have to walk from Old Woodstock which is quite a way. Alternative venues suggested as The Marlborough School, and the Town Hall.

#### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended to retain the polling districts JO and JQ as they are and use the Bowls and Tennis Club as a central polling place for both polling district areas. There is no advantage to creating further polling districts for a small number of electors to vote at the Marlborough School. The polling premises are better being retained centrally in the town.

Electoral Services Manager

November 2024

## Summary of Polling District Review changes:

Premise	Polling District and Ward	Conclusion	Cost Saving	Change/Action
Black Bourton Church	FF Bampton and Clanfield ward	Retain	None	None
Bradwell Grove Village Hall / Old School House SHILTON	HP Brize Norton and Shilton ward	Retain	None	None
Swerford Village Hall	HX Kingham, Rollright and Enstone ward	Retain	None	None
Swinbrook Village Hall	HY Brize Norton and Shilton ward	HY voter to Asthal for 2025 only	£500	One off expected while essential works are taking place in Swinbrook Village Hall.
Taynton Village Hall	JA Burford ward	JA voters to Burford	£600	Plan for 2025
Westwell, Mitford Cottages	JC/GS Alvescot and Filkins ward	JC/GS Voters to Filkins Carter Institute	£550	Plan for 2025
Witney - Davenport Road Church	JD/JD2 Witney Central ward	Proportion of voters to a new polling district as shown below.	None	None
Witney Methodist Church (possible)	JD3 Witney Central ward	Create new polling district and source new polling premise venue	Additional cost for building hire and staff. IRO £550	Create a new polling district JD3 to be more central, accessible for voters
Witney Blakes School	JE2/JF/JE3 Witney East ward	Retain	None	Create a new polling district JE3 for the defined Windrush Quay town ward. No change to voting location.



Burwell Hall	Jl Witney South ward AND JL Witney West ward	Retain	None	Unable to source a further/alternative venue. With the removal of the JK Witney Burwell town ward, voting will be simpler.
Witney ATP Centre (possible)	JJ2 Witney South (Witney Leys town ward)	Create new polling district and source new polling premise venue	Additional cost for building hire and staff. IRO £550	Create a new polling district JJ2 for the defined Windrush Leys town ward. This will be a new voting location.
Witney - Army Cadet Hall	JM Witney West ward	Retain for JM Voters (Deer Park Estate)	None	No action
Windrush CE School (possible)	JM2 Witney West ward	Create new polling district and source new polling premise venue	Additional cost for building hire and staff. IRO £550	New polling district to be created JM2 which will incorporate voters registered in Spring Meadow. The Deer Park Road creates a natural boundary for the two areas.
Woodstock Town Hall and Blenheim Estate Office	JN, JP, FH Woodstock and Bladon ward	Retain	None	No Action
Woodstock Bowls and Tennis Club	JO, JQ Woodstock and Bladon ward	Retain	None	None This is central to the town and is accessible to JO and JQ voters.