

# Polling District Review 2014/15

## Representations

It is a legal requirement for the Returning Officer to publish all representations received and our responses. Below is a copy of each representation along with the response. They are listed in Ward order. Where necessary personal details such as telephone numbers or email addresses have been removed. All other information, including the exact wording, is verbatim.

### TULSE HILL WARD

#### **1A Representation from Councillor Mary Atkins, Tulse Hill Ward**

I note you have made no changes to Tulse Hill but residents complain on the west side of Tulse Hill; that to go to Holy Trinity school is too far to walk and quite a few of the don't know where it is. This mainly affects residents of Cressingham Gardens estate and the upper end of Tulse Hill where it is joined with Upper Tulse Hill.

It would be easier either to walk to St Martins estate or get a bus to Jubilee school. Have you had any other complaints /comments on this?

Best wishes

Mary Atkins  
Councillor, Tulse Hill Ward

#### **1B Response from Returning Officer**

Hi Councillor

Thanks for speaking to me on the phone just now. I would like to confirm in writing the details of our amended proposals:

- Cressingham Gardens estate comprises of approximately 300 voters
- St Martin's Community Centre is potentially closer for the voters but not by much, and may be equally hard to get and equally unknown to the residents
- Holy Trinity Church would be a better venue for these voters in the long term, however it is in another ward and another parliamentary constituency, so for the purposes of local and parliamentary elections it will not be possible for them to vote there

- We would like to review our arrangements for these residents again for the 2016 GLA elections as the use of Holy Trinity Church for these 300 voters may be better
- For 2015 we will contact all Cressingham Gardens voters with the details of their polling station, including a map, and with a postal vote application to ensure they are given the easiest possible way of casting their vote

Regards

Jamie

## BRIXTON HILL WARD

### **2A Representation from Councillor Martin Tiedemann, Brixton Hill Ward**

This is a question for clarification rather than a representation, although I am happy to turn it into a representation.

Is Sudbourne Primary happy to continue as a polling station? Following my by-election in 2013 there was some grumbling from the wider school community about it being closed (and I do think by-elections cause a particular stress normal elections don't). There had been some informal chatter about Olive Morris House being considered to replace the school but that won't be feasible for the whole cycle of coming elections.

Also Sudbourne is due to be extended in the next couple of years and, although the building will mostly be on the new site, there may be some disruption in 2016.

If Sudbourne have confirmed their approval and we can have an option to consider the new civic complex when it is completed (which will also mean 200 new homes in SQA) then I am happy to go with the ERO's recommendations.

When I make a formal representation in consultation with colleagues I'll mention SQB is likely to have 70 or so new homes by 2018 and is already substantially oversized but seems well set-up having been a SQB voter myself for the last few years.

Thanks,

Martin

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**Cllr Martin Tiedemann**

Labour & Co-operative councillor for Brixton Hill

Deputy Cabinet Member for Healthy Living

## **2B Response from Returning Officer**

Hi Councillor

Thanks very much for contacting me. The use of schools as polling places is an important issue. The Returning Officer has decided that Lambeth must make use of its public buildings in order to ensure the best possible access for voters as well as proving value for money (cheaper).

One strong theme that came from early discussions with councillors and local parties is that any change to a polling station venue can confuse voters and stop them voting. This station has been used for some time and is a good one.

We did strongly consider using OMH for 2015 but it has been ruled out. Registrars will be moving to the ground floor alongside the customer access centre, which is already a busy place. Adding a double polling station to the mix would cause significant problems for all 3 services (registrars, customer centre and the polling station) and would probably not represent an improvement for the voters.

In the long term you are definitely right that we should try to use part of the new buildings as a polling station. **To that end we should probably add a few lines to the final proposals to make that intention clear and with a date to review it every year until the buildings are ready. Would that be acceptable?**

Thanks

Jamie

## **2C Response from Councillor Martin Tiedemann, Brixton Hill Ward**

Thanks Jamie,

That amendment would be very helpful. As part of our regular contact with the three schools other issues may come up but I'm sure nothing you haven't already taken into account. I'll keep you updated.

Thanks,

Martin

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**Cllr Martin Tiedemann**

Labour & Co-operative councillor for Brixton Hill

### **3A Representation from James Cornish, resident, Brixton Hill**

I am very disappointed to see that Sudbourne School is to continue to be used as a polling station.

This decision should be reconsidered immediately.

To deny children a day of education is fundamentally wrong. It also creates chaos for parents.

Council buildings next door would serve equally well. Church buildings too.

To continue with the status quo is irresponsible and unacceptable.

You say: *'The current polling districts and electorate distribution already meet our requirements.'*

Well, they don't meet the requirements of the community you serve, however convenient the arrangements might be.

Best wishes

James Cornish

### **3B Response from the Returning Officer**

Dear Mr Cornish

Thank you for contacting electoral services on this matter. Whilst we agree that a school being closed for a day is disruptive for parents, teachers and pupils, we are not of a mind to change the venue of this polling place for this election. Our reasons are:

- The school is located in the centre of the polling district, is incredibly accessible, and offers the best possible facilities for voters
- The only viable alternative site we have found is the council building, Olive Morris House, located on Brixton Hill
- Due to the council office moves Olive Morris House will already be heavily over-subscribed with other services – registrars, customer services, democratic services etc. As such, there will not be enough space to accommodate a polling station. It is also on the edge of the polling district, further away for most voters
- Finally, some residents may be put off by visiting a council site, and would prefer a school due to the implicit neutrality

I have spoken to the head teacher of Sudbourne School to offer any assistance we can to enable him to keep the school open. Unfortunately, due to the layout of the school there is no way to do that without compromising their duty to safeguard the children. Presently, the head teacher has taken the decision to close the school for polling day and use the day for professional development of the staff. Most schools will close for one day per term for this purpose.

It is the decision of the Council for which buildings we will use as polling places at election time. The quality and consistency of the venues is important. Changing locations every year

has been shown to disrupt voters and decrease turnout. In our democracy, elections are a significant cornerstone and the Council gives it the required priority. Parliamentary Elections are arguably the most significant of our elections, and as they only come about every 5 years (sometimes less), we need to do all we can to ensure all eligible residents are able to participate. On top of that we need to ensure we run the elections according to the legislation and within the confines of limited resources. Schools are significant public buildings that for one day per year, (often less), can provide a service to the whole community enabling them to participate in democratic decision making.

We have again considered changing the venue of this polling station and unfortunately have decided to continue to use Sudbourne School, at least until the new council buildings are completed.

Yours faithfully

Jamie

## STREATHAM WELLS WARD

### **4A Representation from Councillor Amelie Treppass, Streatham Wells Ward**

Representation of behalf of Streatham Wells Councillors: Cllr Clark, Cllr Seedat & Cllr Treppass

As the review document sets out, we agree that for Streatham Wells SUE, moving the polling station back from Uplands Care home to Julian's primary school is in our opinion more accessible for residents.

Additionally we would like to make case for exploring a move of polling station in Streatham Wells SUA to the new Dunraven Primary School. We acknowledge that this may cause disruption for parents and children of the school through closure of the school on polling day. However, the current location Hitherfield Children's centre is at the far end of the polling district, on a steep slope and not straight forward to find. Dunraven Primary would be more central to the polling district, easy to find and easily accessible. Around a third of residents in SUA live on Adare Walk, Mountearl Gardens and Streatham Close and it would arguably be easier for them to access Dunraven Primary. In the 2014 local elections we experienced problems with residents not knowing where the SUA polling station was. If a move is not possible, then a much better map on the SUA polling cards is needed which shows all the roads in SUA so that people can navigate themselves. Additionally better signage to the SUA polling station would help, for example on Mountearl Gardens and Mount Nod Road.

Best regards

Amelie

Cllr Amelie Treppass  
Streatham Wells Labour

**4B Response from Returning Officer**

Dear Councillors

Thanks very much for this representation. We will definitely investigate Dunraven Primary School. Your points are noted regarding the station should it not be changed.

Regards

Jamie

## STREATHAM SOUTH WARD

**5A Representation from Cathy Harvey, resident Streatham South**

Dear Jamie,

It's not clear from the web site if I'm out of time on this or not, so my apologies if I am. This submission is from me in a personal capacity, not as a Labour Party representative.

The only point I want to make is about the current boundary separating polling districts SWA and SWB along the middle of Buckleigh and Kempshott Roads.

Please is it possible to make both sides of the road in the same polling district? I think this would mean approximately 110 electors moving from SWB to SWA, and would seem to make much more sense.

Best wishes

Cathy Harvey  
Streatham Labour Party

**5B Representation from Cathy Harvey and Dave Malley, residents Streatham South**

Jamie,

Further to my earlier email, an additional suggestion from former South councillor Dave Malley.

Cathy

Cathy

Agree plus

- Ekaya House in Buckleigh is stranded in WB whereas its neighbours are in WA.
- consider moving William Court to WB because Barts is nearer than Immanuel. Boundary could run down middle of Green Lane.

Added to your suggestion effect on poll numbers should be near neutral.

Regards

Dave

## **5C Response from Returning Officer**

Hi Cathy

Thanks very much for these comments and the ones in the second email. It seems like a sensible suggestion to me. The only potential issue I can see is that some of these electors may not spot the change in venue until polling day when they turn up to their old polling place, and then be put off voting as a result. With such a small number of voters I don't think that is a significant problem, and the benefits for people being allocated to a more logical polling station seem quite convincing.

If the councillors are happy with the suggestion then I will advise the RO to put these into the final proposals...

Thanks

Jamie

## **5D Representation from Councillor Clair Wilcox, Streatham South**

Hello Jamie

Just to add to this, former councillor Dave Malley has also suggested that the following two suggestions might be looked at too:

Ekaya House - in Buckleigh Rd, apparently stranded in WB when neighbours are in WA.

Moving William Court to WB because they are nearer to St Bartholomew church than Immanuel & St Andrew. Dave suggests that the boundary could run down the middle of Green Lane.

Is there any extra communication that goes to voters whose polling station changes?

I do not have strong feelings about these as it has not been raised with me by residents but would say that the suggestions made seem sensible.

Kind regards

Clair

## **5E Response from Returning Officer**

Thanks Councillor

All of those suggestions will be put to the RO, and considering it has support from the councillors, and no counter-representations, it is highly likely we'll put them in the final proposals. I'm due to have them finalised by the end of this week, and we will publish them next week.

For all electors who are allocated a station that is different to last year – the details will be highlighted on their poll card. We will put up posters at venues we will no longer be using as well. We're considering a separate write-out to all electors affected as well, and I am juggling items in the budget to see if that will be affordable. If we can combine it with our registration campaign then it should be possible.

Regards

Jamie

## **THURLOW PARK WARD**

### **6A Representation from Councillor Anna Birley, Thurlow Park Ward**

We have discussed the proposals and are broadly supportive of the proposal's aims of making it easier for Peabody residents to vote - many have complained to us previously that it was very inconvenient going up the hill to the hall, or vice versa, and there are a number of older and more vulnerable residents for whom that simply wasn't possible.

I assume that the Lower Peabody residents voting at Rosendale School will be moving into NLC polling district, which is already quite large, and that you're confident of the school's capacity to manage that number of voters? And that the cost of running a polling station on Peabody Hill for a much smaller pool of voters is sustainable in the long term?

Best wishes,

Anna



## **6B Response from Returning Officer**

Hi Councillor

Thanks for the response. Rosendale School is definitely able to cater for more voters. We'd turn the station into a double, which will give us the extra capacity we need in terms of staff and booths etc. For the remaining 500 or so voters that will use the smaller station it is true that the cost per voter will be greatest here than anywhere else in the borough. However, this situation is not uncommon and is repeated in most other local authorities. I hope this reassures you and that it results in a decent turnout in both parts of the estate. If any of you would like us to reconsider the proposals please let me know.

Thanks

Jamie

## **KNIGHT'S HILL WARD**

### **7A Representation from Councillor Jackie Meldrum, Knight's Hill Ward**

St Luke's outdoor space and kerbs on Knights Hill will be sorted in January so I would prefer to keep NMA at St Luke's church.

Have you looked at new fire station 210 Knights Hill for NMC ? If no good can we stick with Baptist church and ask them for a bit more space?

Best wishes

Jackie

### **7B Response from Returning Officer**

Hi Councillor

Thanks for the suggestions. Consistency of venues is a priority so I think keeping at St Luke's is a good idea, and the improvements should make that decision easier.

I've not been to the new fire station yet but have heard good things about it. The location is very good. I've never used one before - I assumed they wouldn't be available but I'll contact them to discuss.

Thanks

Jamie