

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY RETURNING OFFICER ON POLLING STATIONS WITH LOW USAGE

Since 2007 careful consideration has been given to the need to retain those polling stations that have few voters allocated to them, or where turnout is low. Following the review of polling districts and places held in 2010/2011, it was decided to discontinue two polling stations - the caravan at Wootton (BM polling district, Brockenhurst and Forest South East District Ward); and the Exbury Club (EX polling district, Brockenhurst and Forest South East District Ward). It was also decided that the continued use of the polling station at the Reading Room, Hinton Admiral, be kept under review. The cost of the provision of this polling station is set out below.

The Returning Officer has also taken the opportunity of highlighting below the cost of other low usage polling stations. The costs shown are the direct costs (polling station hire and payments to staff at the polling stations) that would be saved if the polling station is discontinued and voters assigned to alternative polling stations. There would be additional savings in other areas – for example, provision of notices and stationery to the polling stations, hire/delivery costs of polling equipment, visits by polling station inspectors and other administrative costs, but these would not be significant.

Cost is, of course, just one factor to be taken into account in determining whether a polling station should remain in use. The major consideration is “the provision of such reasonable and accessible facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances”. Polling stations in the rural areas will inevitably prove more expensive on a cost per voter basis because of the relatively small electorates in the rural communities and, where a polling station is used by a remote, distinct community, the Returning Officer does not recommend that it be discontinued. However, the following are polling stations where the cost per voter attending is more than three times the district average at the 2013 Hampshire County Council elections (£2.77 x 3 = £8.31), with two other polling stations where the cost was above £8.00 per vote cast. The Returning Officer seeks views on their continued use.

POLLING STATIONS WHERE COST OF PREMISES AND STAFF, PER VOTE CAST AT POLLING STATION, WAS MORE THAN THREE TIMES AVERAGE (that is, above £8.31)

Polling Station	Polling District/Ward	Cost – May 2013 (premises and direct staffing)	Electors allocated to polling station	Postal voters	No of voters voting at polling station	% Turnout at Polling Station	Cost per voter attending polling station (premises & direct staffing only)
Calmore Village Hall	NA – Ashurst, Copythorne South & Netley Marsh	£495	331	42	44	15%	£11.26
Valetta Barn, Fritham	BF – Bramshaw, Copythorne North & Netley Marsh	£352.80	152	14	41	30%	£8.60
Reading Room, Hinton Admirall	BG – Bransgore & Burley	£474	146	16	34	26%	£13.95
Bisterne Village Hall	RD - Ringwood South	£467	175	20	34	22%	£13.75
Average for District						26.56%	£2.77

POLLING STATIONS WHERE COST OF PREMISES AND STAFF, PER VOTE CAST AT POLLING STATION, WAS ABOVE £8.00

Polling Station	Polling District/Ward	Cost – May 2013 (premises and direct staffing)	Electors allocated to polling station	Postal voters	No of voters voting at polling station	% Turnout at Polling Station	Cost per voter attending polling station (premises & direct staffing only)
Thorney Hill Community Centre	BI – Bransgore & Burley	£485.60	222	42	60	27%	£8.09
Beaulieu Abbey Church Hall	DL, DM, DN, EX	£456	360	69	56	16%	£8.14
Average for District						26.56%	£2.77