

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2013/14

Designation of Polling Districts and Polling Places arising from the Review

New Forest District Council has completed its third review of polling districts and polling places required under Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006. As a result of the review, the following changes have been made to polling districts and polling places within New Forest District Council's area. Reasons for decisions are provided.

1. BH, BI and BJ Polling Districts (Bransgore & Burley District Ward)

Decision:

1.1 Polling Districts

With effect from the publication of the December 2014 register of electors:

- (a) the existing BI polling district (approximately 264 electors) will be transferred to BH polling district
- (b) the properties on the south side of Betsy Lane, and all properties south of Betsy Lane in the area bounded by Betsy Lane, Ringwood Road and Burnt House Lane (approximately 184 electors) will be transferred from BH to the current BJ polling district;
- (c) the enlarged BJ polling district will be renamed BI

These are shown on the attached map "***Bransgore 1***"

1.2 Polling Places

For the new BH polling district - BH & BI polling districts

For the new BI polling district – the whole of the polling district

1.3 Polling Stations

BG polling district – Reading Rooms, Hinton Admiral

BH and BI polling districts – Bransgore Village Hall

Use of the Thorney Hill Community Centre as a polling station will cease.

1.4 Reasons for Decision:

Bransgore Parish had two polling stations that were identified as low usage – the Reading Rooms at Hinton Admiral and the Thorney Hill Community Centre. There are a further two polling stations located within the Bransgore Village Hall. Bransgore was the only parish in the District which had two low usage polling stations. It was considered that one of these should be discontinued. While the Council appreciated the importance of providing facilities for voting in close proximity to residents' homes, they considered that, with the availability and popularity of postal voting on demand, the cost of the provision of polling stations had to be taken into account.

The Council considered that, of the two polling stations, voters allocated to the Thorney Hill Community Centre would find it less inconvenient to visit the alternative polling station at the Bransgore Village Hall than those voters allocated to the Reading Rooms at Hinton Admiral. Thorney Hill voters regularly visit Bransgore Village Centre for amenities such as the shop, post office and medical centres, and the polling station at the Bransgore Village Hall is a short distance from the Village Centre. Voters allocated to the Reading Room, Hinton Admiral, travel to other population centres such as New Milton and Christchurch for shopping and other amenities and were unlikely to make special journeys to Bransgore Village Hall to vote.

The changes to the polling districts are consequent upon the change in the polling stations, and are intended to ensure an even allocation of voters to the two polling stations currently located within the Bransgore Village Hall.

2. RD, RE, RF and RG Polling Districts (Ringwood South District Ward)

Decision:

2.1 Polling Districts

With effect from the publication of the December 2014 register of electors:

- (a) the existing RD (approximately 175 electors) and RE (approximately 1,549 electors) polling districts be amalgamated as a single RD polling district; and
- (b) the existing RF (approximately 1,941 electors) and RG (approximately 1,155 electors) be renamed RE and RF respectively.

These are shown on the attached map "***Ringwood 1***".

2.2 Polling Places

For the new RD polling district - RD and RE polling districts

For the RE polling district - RE polling district

For the renamed RF polling district - RF polling district

2.3 Polling Stations

RD and RE polling districts – Trinity Centre, Christchurch Road
RF (renamed) polling district - Scout Hall, Eastfield Lane

2.4 *Reasons for Decision:*

Voters in the former RD polling district were allocated to vote at the Bisterne Village Hall. At £13.75 per vote cast at the 2013 Hampshire County Council elections, this was an expensive polling station to provide. While the Council appreciated the importance of providing facilities for voting in close proximity to residents' homes, they considered that, with the availability and popularity of postal voting on demand, the cost of the provision of polling stations had to be recognised.

The 175 voters allocated to this polling station live within a scattered community, and the large majority travel to the polling station by car. Most travel north towards Ringwood for facilities such as shops, post office, doctors' surgeries and other amenities, as well as to reach the A31, a main commuter route. The Council therefore considered that the closure of the polling station at Bisterne Village Hall and the re-allocation of voters to the Trinity Centre, Christchurch Road (close to the Ringwood Town Centre) where there are already two polling stations, would be appropriate.

The changes in the polling districts are consequent upon the closure of the Bisterne Village Hall polling station. The inclusion of former RD voters in RE polling district will result in a more even spread of electors over the two polling stations located within the Trinity Centre.

3. Other Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

- 3.1 The Council has decided to make no further changes to polling districts, polling places or polling stations. The Council appointed a Working Party to oversee the review. The Working Party made recommendations to the Council's General Purposes and Licensing Committee and to the Cabinet, before the conclusions were considered by the Council.
- 3.2 The Council was satisfied that most of the voting arrangements previously in place remain appropriate and no changes, other than those set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 above, have been agreed. While low usage and consequent high costs were matters taken into account in the decisions to close two polling stations, cost was not an over-riding consideration. Numerous polling stations that serve isolated communities that are expensive to provide but where there is no identifiable alternative centres to which voters could be expected to travel to vote have been retained.