

BLenheim PARK WARD

Polling District: WV

Suggestion: Relocate Polling Place / Polling Station from St James the Great Church, Elmsleigh Drive to Trafford House, Manchester Drive

From: Councillor Helen Boyd

Comments: A suggestion has been received from Councillor Boyd that Trafford House, in Manchester Drive would be a better venue as an alternative to St James the Great Church, Elmsleigh Drive for polling district WV within Blenheim Park Ward. This is on the grounds that many elderly people do not like the trek up to St James the Great Church.

The polling place for this polling district has been located at St James the Great Church, Elmsleigh Drive for approximately 10 years. Before this, the polling place was situated at Trafford House. Initially, the polling station was located in a portable building on the car park area of the premises. This was subsequently moved to the lounge at Trafford House, with the entrance to the polling station being from the single set of sliding doors fronting the building. It should be noted that we would require exclusive use of the room made available for a polling station on election day from 6.00 a.m. to 10.30 p.m. The lounge would, therefore, not be available for use by the residents/tenants at any time on election day, and this may not be acceptable for its residents. As a result of such concerns in 2014, the polling station was relocated to St. James the Great Church.

The use of portables is an extremely expensive option and are not particularly user friendly. They should only really be considered where there are no other suitable alternatives available. There is also currently no provision for mains power supply to a portable building at this site. The cost of installing this would need to be borne by the Council. The only suitable place to locate a portable polling station would either be at the front of the main entrance to Trafford House or in its car parking area. Portable buildings are in situ for up to one week which may inhibit residents or visitors to Trafford House.

Enquiries have been made with South Essex Homes about the availability of the premises as a polling place and where a polling station could be located. These discussions are ongoing. St James the Great Church is, however, now well established as the polling station for this polling district and has a good amount of off-street parking. Any voters with mobility issues do also have the ability to either request a postal vote or a proxy vote.

Recommendation: The current location of the polling place / polling station be retained for the polling district WV.