

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2013/14

Feedback from consultation process

Ward name and number	Polling Place	Comments
Ward 1 – Bo’ness and Blackness	Blackness Community Hall	<i>Heather Cullen, Acting Head Teacher, Blackness Primary School (8/10/13):</i> “Blackness Primary School uses the Community Hall daily for school dinners, however, we are able to ensure the children have their lunch in the school building. We can ask the children to bring a packed lunch from home on that day. We have two pupils who are entitled to free school lunches. We will inform the Grange Primary School of this and their school packed lunch will be brought down for them.”
	All other Ward 1 polling places	No comments received.
Ward 2 - Grangemouth	All Ward 2 polling places	No comments received.
Ward 3 – Denny and Banknock	All Ward 3 polling places	No comments received.
Ward 4 – Carse, Kinnaird and Tryst	Carron Primary School and Stenhousemuir Primary School	<i>Councillor C MacDonald (30/10/13):</i> Retain both schools as polling places. Not in favour of Carron and Carronshore Bowling Club as a polling place – not good to get to on foot as it is situated on a busy main road (Carronshore Road). Not ideal for elderly people to get to without transport.

		Not in favour of using St Bernadette's as a polling place. Too far from existing polling place (Stenhousemuir PS).
	All other Ward 4 polling places	No comments received.
Ward 5 – Bonnybridge and Larbert	Denny and District Polling Places (general)	<i>Mr A Waddell, Denny & District Community Council (1/11/13):</i> “I see nothing wrong with the current voting venues.”
	Torwood Primary School site (mobile unit)	<p><i>Councillor T Coleman (1/10/13):</i> Councillor Coleman had suggested using Torwood Scout Hall as a polling place but investigation by the Election Team had found that its location on a busy road outside the village of Torwood, with a pavement on one side of the road only, requiring pedestrians to cross the main road to reach the premises, and shared vehicular access with a private residential property adjacent to the hall, was not conducive to it being a suitable premise for polling purposes.</p> <p><i>Michael Matheson MSP (30/10/13):</i> “Torwood Polling Station is a long-established polling place which has served the village for a considerable number of years. Although the school previously used is no longer available, a temporary mobile polling station could be considered. I believe that it has been suggested that the Scout Hall in Torwood be used, which could be a suitable alternative to a temporary mobile unit as a polling station.</p> <p>If the Scout Hall was not considered, I would strongly urge Falkirk Council to maintain its present arrangements due to the distance for residents in Torwood to vote in Larbert.</p> <p>It would be my view that we should be doing all that we can to encourage greater participation in elections and the proposal to close both Torwood and Glen Village could, in my opinion, reduce voter turnout.”</p> <p>See details above in relation to Torwood Scout Hall.</p>

	<p>Larbert Village Primary School</p> <p><i>Debbie Mitchell, Larbert Village Primary School Parent Council (31/1/12):</i> “I would like to request a change of polling station in Polling District FW510. Currently, Larbert Village Primary School is used as a polling station which ultimately means that the children miss a whole day’s education. Alternative venues within the local area would be Larbert Bowling Club or one of the Church halls, ie Larbert Old or Larbert West. The alternative venues are very close to the school and I am aware that bowling clubs and church halls are used as suitable venues elsewhere with the Falkirk area.”</p> <p><i>Councillor T Coleman (30/10/13) :</i> “I do not think that Larbert Bowling Club is an effective venue for a polling place as access to and egress from the A9 at Pretoria Road is problematic and dangerous given the proximity of the busy traffic light controlled crossroad around 30 metres to the south of this entrance. Access to the bowling club from Main Street, Larbert, via Victoria Street to Pretoria road is also problematic as it is a right turn against the traffic flow to get into these two streets and thence to the bowling club. This will be the access, both wheeled and pedestrian, which the majority of those proposing to vote will have to use.”</p> <p>Councillor Coleman further suggested the Baptist Church in Larbert as a polling place. This had been investigated by the Election Team but the church personnel were not in favour of this proposal.</p> <p><i>Michael Matheson MSP (30/10/13):</i> “I understand that Falkirk Council wish to move voters from Larbert Village Primary to Larbert Bowling Club. Whilst I understand the desire only to use schools as a last resort, Larbert Village Primary has been a well-established polling station for many decades. Your proposal to move the polling station to Larbert Bowling Club might seem attractive at first but there are logistical reasons in relation to the club, mainly relating to traffic in the Victoria Road/Pretoria Road area.</p>
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		Larbert Village Primary Polling Station is an extremely busy polling place, particularly in the early evening. It also has space in the playground to accommodate a large number of cars, which the bowling club does not and would result in traffic problems in that vicinity at certain periods.”
	Antonine Primary School and Bonnybridge Primary School	<i>Crawford Campbell, Education Services, Falkirk Council (4/11/13):</i> Antonine Primary School is being extended, with work scheduled to take place up until March 2015. It is suggested that the electors within this polling district be directed instead to Bonnybridge Community Centre. It is also suggested that, as Bonnybridge Community Centre is close to both Antonine and Bonnybridge Primary Schools, the Community Centre be used as a polling place for all three polling districts, thereby removing the need for the schools to be closed on polling day.
	All other Ward 5 polling places	No comments received.
Ward 6 – Falkirk North		
	Bainsford Community Centre	See comments below (New Carron Village area) from Cllr Meiklejohn and Provost Reid.
	Leishman Tower Club Room	<i>Provost P Reid (4/11/13):</i> Concerns regarding capacity at Leishman Tower and suggests checking the suitability of the library adjacent to the Club Room as additional space for polling purposes. <u>Note:</u> works currently ongoing at Leishman Tower will extend the Club Room, thereby creating extra space for polling purposes, including, if necessary, a second polling station.
	Woodlands Games Hall and Salvation Army Hall	<i>Councillor D Alexander (2/10/13):</i> “I would oppose the removal of Woodlands Games Hall and relocation to the Salvation Army Hall on the grounds of road safety given the parking situation being infinitely better at Comely Park (Woodlands) than it is at the Salvation Army Hall. The road network round about is also detrimental towards the Salvation Army, that location being much busier

		<p>than the entrance point to Woodlands Games Hall.”</p> <p><i>Councillor C Meiklejohn (14/10/13):</i> “I would oppose the discontinuation of use of Woodlands Games Hall and the relocation to the Salvation Army Hall, particularly on the grounds of parking which is significantly more accessible at the Games Hall than at the Salvation Army facility. Much of the parking at the Salvation Army Hall would be on-street parking and considering the volume and flow of traffic would make accessing the facility difficult.</p> <p><u>Note 1:</u> See also comments at Ward 7 below.</p> <p><u>Note 2:</u> the use of the Salvation Army Hall as a polling place has now been removed due to the premises being in use every day for out-of-school care and no longer available for election purposes.</p>
	New Carron Village area	<p><i>Councillor D Alexander (2/10/13):</i> “Every effort should be made to find a suitable location for a polling place at New Carron given the size of the development and recent turnouts at elections which have been very disappointing in this area.”</p> <p><i>Councillor C Meiklejohn (20/9/13 and 14/10/13):</i> “I would make a plea for consideration to be given to a voting facility for New Carron Village. It is a large community without facilities, however, if there were a unit within the Carron Co-op that could be utilised or a portable facility brought in, this would be very welcome and would, in my view, perhaps encourage people for that area to vote, as it has traditionally polled quite low.</p> <p>New Carron Village is a densely populated area of housing and currently poll is relatively low. I would therefore ask for consideration in finding a suitable polling place for New Carron Village and the Mungal Farm area considering the size of the developments therefore making it far more accessible to those within this particular area. I would therefore not</p>

		<p>consider changes to those within the Bainsford area as they should continue to vote within Bainsford Community Centre.”</p> <p><i>Provost P Reid (4/11/13):</i> Provost Reid favours the retention of Bainsford Community Centre but wishes potential polling places to be investigated in the Carron area. These could include vacant retail units or space in one of the existing supermarkets.</p>
	Weir Street area	<p><i>Councillor D Alexander (2/10/13):</i> “Efforts should also be made to find a location for a polling place to cover the Weir Street area. Please note that the previous arrangement when this area had its own polling place was for the Church Hall in Weir Street and perhaps this could be used again.”</p> <p><i>Councillor C Meiklejohn (14/10/13):</i> I would ask for consideration to be given to the town centre area, particularly Weir Street, as residents have to travel a significant distance currently to get to a polling facility. By having something that is closer to the town centre would again encourage those from this area to make the effort to go out and vote.”</p>
	All other Ward 6 polling places	No comments received.
Ward 7 – Falkirk South		
	Greenbank Court Meeting Room	<p><i>Councillor C Chalmers (1/10/13):</i> “I am strongly opposed to the proposal to abolish the polling station at Greenbank Court high flats. You will note that this polling station has one of the highest percentage turnouts within the Ward and the suggestion that residents of two high rise blocks populated predominantly by elderly and infirm residents should have to walk up a steep incline and over a busy road to vote in Tamfourhill is ludicrous. The Greenbank polling place serves not only both flats but a number of streets in the Summerford area. The polling place is in a central location and easily accessed by both</p>

		<p>communities. Abolishing this would lead to a lack of accessibility for both residents of the high flats and Summerford area, both alternative polling places Bantaskin Primary School and Tamfourhill are on steep inclines and are unsuitable for disabled and elderly residents. I therefore urge that the polling station requires to be retained.”</p>
	Woodlands Games Hall and Salvation Army Hall	<p><i>Depute Provost Patrick (4/11/13):</i> Happy to continue with Woodlands rather than the Salvation Army Hall.</p> <p><i>Councillor C Chalmers (1/10/13):</i> “I have no particular views on the proposal to relocate from Woodlands Games Hall to the Salvation Army Hall on High Station Road but would tend to agree that switching to the Salvation Army Hall is a good idea and will make it easier for residents, particularly of the four high flats, to access the polling place. It will also avoid residents of Oswald Street and Comely Place areas having to navigate a busy road and junction, therefore this aspect of the Review has my support.”</p> <p><u>Note:</u> the use of the Salvation Army Hall as a polling place has now been removed due to the premises being in use every day for out-of-school care and no longer available for election purposes.</p>
	Glen Village Bowling Club	<p><i>Councillor C Chalmers (1/10/13 and 31/3/10/13):</i> “The argument for the removal of Glen Village’s polling station is rather spurious to say the least; the village has a high proportion of elderly and infirm residents who would not be capable of walking the distance to Hallglen Sports Centre particularly as it is on an incline. Although it is noted that the former bowling club is now demolished, there is a large concreted area at the junction of Parkhead Road and Hallglen Terrace with ample safe parking surrounding it that can be used. I am aware that the land is under Council ownership and is large enough to accommodate at least one mobile unit with capacity existing for a second if required. The second justification for the removal of the polling station was the small electorate using it. However, as I pointed out, it is a valid option to redirect voters from the village of Lionthorn from Hallglen Sports Centre</p>

		<p>to Glen Village. This would also boost the electorate using the polling station and ensure its long term necessity. As well as this, it should be noted that Glen Village is a distinct community separate from Hallglen and residents have long been resistant to repeated attempts by the Council and other bodies to homogenise both communities. The distinction between both villages should be upheld. I would also point out that the village of Torwood has a similar size of electorate yet retains its polling station.</p> <p>“I am extremely disappointed by the decision to propose the removal of the Glen Village polling station and believe there has been an agenda to close this polling place for the last few years. The size of the electorate in this location and the turnout is equally comparable with the size of the electorate serving Greenbank Court polling station and Torwood mobile unit serving Ward 5. The assertion that no suitable alternative location or suitable parking exists within the village is neither true nor is it a credible argument. As the polling station only serves the residents of Glen Village, there is no requirement for parking as electors only have to walk a short distance to access the polling place. There is also ample room for the mobile unit to be erected on the tarmac parking area at the bottom of Parkhead Road on the junction of Hallglen Terrace or indeed for it to remain in its present location. The real motivation for the removal of this polling station is financial rather than maintaining and supporting the ability for residents to access facilities. Glen Village has a high proportion of elderly and mobility-impaired residents just like the Greenbank Court polling place, it is unreasonable to expect residents to walk all the way to Hallglen which is up a hill and over a busy road. It is important that we ensure all residents have equality of access to polling places and this proposal proves categorically that a financial motive exists in this instance to remove the polling station without consideration to the needs and aspirations of the community of Glen Village.”</p> <p><i>Councillors D and G Goldie (8/11/13):</i></p> <p>“In response to this review, we have suggested as an alternative that a</p>
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		<p>polling place be located in a lay-by or on the grassed area adjacent to the swing park in Parkhead Road near the junction with Hallglen Terrace. This would negate any difficulty that parents of young children and the elderly and infirm would experience if they were forced to cast their votes at the Hallglen Sports Centre.”</p> <p><i>Depute Provost Patrick (4/11/13):</i> “On no account should we continue to have a polling place at Glen Village. Numbers are low and pedestrian access to Hallglen Sports Centre is more direct than it is to Glen Village.”</p> <p><i>Glen Village Neighbourhood Watch Group (received 14/11/13):</i> “I write on behalf of Glen Village Neighbourhood Watch Group to formally object to this proposal (removal of the polling place in Glen Village). The polling station in Glen Village provides ease of access for the large proportion of elderly residents within the village. It is unreasonable to expect elderly and infirm residents to walk the incline up to Hallglen Sports Centre, the removal of the polling station will weaken local democracy and act as a barrier to electors and may very well lead to voters failing to cast their ballot at the various elections. The size of the electorate and turnout is comparable to Greenbank Court polling station and the mobile unit in Torwood, neither of these locations is faced with the prospect of losing their voting place. As the polling place in Glen Village serves only the immediate community, there is no requirement for car parking provision, there is also ample space in the village for a mobile voting unit at either its existing location in the former bowling club’s car part or on the concreted parking area at the junction of Hallglen Terrace and Parkhead Road.”</p> <p><i>D Hampson, Secretary, Falkirk South Community Council (received 25/11/13):</i> “It has recently been brought to our attention that following the annual review of polling places and districts, it is the intention of the Council to abolish the polling place within Glen Village. I write on behalf of Falkirk</p>
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		<p>South Community Council to formally object to this proposal. The polling station in Glen Village provides ease of access for the large proportion of elderly residents within the village, it is unreasonable to expect elderly and infirm residents to walk the incline up to the Hallglen Sports Centre. The removal of the polling station will weaken local democracy and act as a barrier to electors and may very well lead to voters failing to cast their ballot at the various elections. The size of the electorate and turnout is comparable to Greenbank Court polling station and the mobile unit in Torwood, neither of these locations is faced with the prospect of losing their voting place. As the polling place in Glen Village serves only the immediate community, there is no requirement for car parking provision, there is also ample space in the village for a mobile voting unit at either its existing location in the former bowling club's car park or on the concreted parking area at the junction of Hallglen Terrace and Parkhead Road. I trust that in the light of the above you will ensure that the polling place within Glen Village is retained."</p> <p>See also comments from Michael Matheson MSP at Torwood Primary School site (Ward 5 above).</p>
	Camelon Education Centre	<p><i>Councillor C Chalmers (4/11/13):</i> Possible internal works to be undertaken in Camelon Education Centre in the future. Suggests checking this out in advance of long-term polling arrangements being made.</p>
	All other Ward 7 polling places	No comments received.
Ward 8 – Lower Braes		
	Polmont polling places (general)	<p><i>Kay Burnett, Secretary, Polmont Community Centre (31/10/13):</i> "Polmont Community Council expressed the view that it had no issue with the polling stations locally".</p>
	Greenpark Community Centre	<p><i>Rosemary Taylor, Chair, Polmont Community Council (30/10/13):</i> "We at Polmont are quite happy with the polling arrangements at the stadium (Polmont Sports Centre) and Greenpark Centre."</p>

	Laurieston Community Hall and Laurieston Primary School	<p><i>Councillor S Jackson (30/10/13 and 4/11/13):</i></p> <p>“I am totally against the withdrawal of the polling place at the Community Building in Park Place. Laureston has a large number of pensioners who live in the bottom area in Laurieston and they will not go to the proposed polling place (Laurieston Parish Church Hall) as it is too far for them to go. I know this as I have surgeries at the school and I don’t get anyone from across the main road and when I am at the Old People’s Hall I don’t get anyone from the top area. I do not agree with the view that there is sufficient parking at the Church Hall. I have attended several functions there and the cars are parked all the way back up the street which cannot cope with the numbers. I would request that the polling place remains at the original place.”</p> <p><i>Councillor M Nicol (11/11/13):</i></p> <p>“I strongly support the retention of the polling station at the Thrums (Laurieston Community Hall). This hall serves a largely elderly population, many of whom would have difficulty in negotiating the busy Polmont Road to get to any station on that side. I would also support the retention of Laurieston Primary School as a station in preference to the Church Hall due to the almost non-existent parking at the Hall. However, I do understand the desire to move away from using schools so am open to persuasion here. However, the retention of the Thrums as a polling place is very important.”</p>
	Maddiston Community Centre	See comments at Ward 9 below.
	Polmont Sports Centre	<p><i>Rosemary Taylor, Chair, Polmont Community Council (30/10/13):</i></p> <p>“We at Polmont are quite happy with the polling arrangements at the stadium (Polmont Sports Centre) and Greenpark Centre.”</p>
	Reddingmuirhead Institute	<p><i>Sandy Whyte, Reddingmuirhead Hall Committee (10/10/13):</i></p> <p>I know of no complaints regarding this and, both as a member of the public who uses the polling station and as committee member for the hall, have to state that I think the premises are ideal for this use. The main hall is of reasonable size, being slightly larger than a badminton court, and on the opposite side of a wide entrance lobby there are two fair sized meeting</p>

		rooms and a large kitchen. There are five toilets, two of which are modern disabled units, and the access to the main door also caters for the disabled or unsteady as there is a ramp. The car park to the front is easily accessed from the main thoroughfare and can accommodate about 20 cars. The premises are well maintained and clean at all times.”
	All other Ward 8 polling places	No comments received.
Ward 9 – Upper Braes		
	Maddiston Old Folks’ Hall and Maddiston Community Centre	<p><i>Mrs J Hunter, Keyholder (7/10/13):</i> No objections to the hall continuing to be used as a polling place. No changes planned to the premises.</p> <p><i>Councillor G Hughes (7/11/13):</i> “I don’t believe that a satisfactory argument as justification for the closing of the polling place in the Old Folks’ Hall, Maddiston, has been made. The stating of better facilities as the reason for moving the polling place to the Maddiston Community Centre without giving a comparison on what is expected in relation to facilities isn’t really an argument but merely a statement. Maddison has expanded rapidly over a relatively short time putting pressure on limited infrastructure. The Maddiston Community Centre and Maddiston Old Folks’ Hall are both needed in an expanding area. The Falkirk Council Local Development Plan highlights future house building eg 1,500 houses – the current electoral register will probably have 2,770 voters combined in the polling places, however the new electoral register has not yet been collated. If an additional 1,500 houses are added over time, potentially Maddiston Community Centre would need to accommodate a minimum of 4,270 electors – this only accounts for one elector per new house – meaning that the better facilities would be under severe pressure and would put an extra burden on surrounding streets as the car park would not be fit for purpose with the number of cars likely to need parking facilities. I believe that this proposal to close Maddiston Old Folks’ Hall (as a polling place) is short sighted and in financial terms isn’t a large saving to the Council.”</p>

		<p><i>Mr J Wotherspoon, Maddiston Community Council (8/11/13):</i></p> <p>“On behalf of the Maddiston Community Council, I would object to the proposal to move from the Old Folks’ Hall to the Community Centre on the grounds that (a) the facilities in the existing Community Centre are already stretched; (b) the facilities at the Old Folks’ Hall are good, with adequate parking, access for the disabled, well decorated and good modern services arguably better than the Community Centre; (c) it lies in the heart of the community, and (d) with the planned growth for the village, the two stations need to be retained.”</p>
	Reddingmuirhead Community Centre	See comments at Ward 8 above.
	All other Ward 9 polling places	No comments received.
General comments and feedback received		
All Wards	All polling places	<p><i>Inspector Douglas Hamilton, Police Scotland (7 and 30/10/13):</i></p> <p>Police Scotland Forth Valley Division have no concerns regarding the suitability of any of the polling places utilised from an operational policing perspective. Changes of venue will make no difference to policing of elections. Amalgamation of polling places reduces the number to be visited.</p>
On-line Survey Responses	Summary	<p>23 responses received. All 23 respondents identified their current polling places, namely:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Bowhouse Community Centre Carron Primary School (2) Dawson Centre (3) Dobbie Hall Dundas Resource Centre (8) Glen Village (Mobile Unit) Kinneil Primary School</p>

		<p>Larbert Village Primary School Laurieston Community Hall Leishman Tower Club Room Limerigg Community Hall Thornhill Community Centre Westfield Community Centre</p> <p>In response to the question “Is this polling place convenient to you, 18 responded “Yes” and five responded “No”.</p> <p>Of the five who responded “No”, four respondents suggested an alternative polling place. In all four cases, Grangemouth Stadium was proposed as an alternative to Dundas Resource Centre, Oxbang Road, Grangemouth. The reasons given for this proposed change were that the polling place was not easy to find and that public transport convenience was very poor.</p> <p>The majority of responses in relation to rating various aspects of the polling places were Excellent, Good and Satisfactory. The details are available for inspection from the Election Office on request.</p> <p>Ten additional comments were received, as undernoted:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dundas Resource Centre, Oxbang Road, Grangemouth (6): “If you are not familiar to the town, it is very difficult to find and the bus route is a short walk which disabled folk might find difficult.” “The polling place is well away from the main roads and if you do not have local knowledge, you will not find it. It is also not near a bus stop. If you are disabled or have mobility problems, this polling place isn’t suitable if you use public transport.” “This place is tucked behind shops and houses and you need local knowledge to find it. It is also a wee bit away from the bus stop
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		<p>and folk with mobility problems would find it difficult to use this polling place.”</p> <p>“This place is hard to find if you do not have local knowledge. It is also a 5 minute walk from the bus route so folks with mobility problems might not be able to get there.”</p> <p>“This building is very hard to find. It is also a wee walk from the bus stop so if you have mobility problems it is hard to get to. You need good local knowledge to find this place.”</p> <p>“I can’t find this polling place so I have to use a postal vote.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glen Village (Mobile Unit): It is vital that a polling station is retained in Glen Village.” • Kinneil Primary School: “It would be good if somewhere like the Chemical Workers Club in Linlithgow Road could be used as this is also well equipped and accessible and would prevent interruption to teaching and learning at the school.” • Laurieston Community Hall, Thrums, Laurieston: “Although ‘poor’ for the transport question, the location of the polling station is ideal for the elderly and those with mobility problem living nearby. If it was closed, they would have to negotiate a steep hill to the Primary School.” • Limerigg Community Hall, Slamannan Road, Limerigg: “Query over distance from bus stop location to the polling centre for those with mobility issues”.
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