

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2018/20

Summary of feedback from consultation process – Stages 1 and 2

Ward name and number	Polling Place	Comments (summarised)
Ward 1 – Bo’ness and Blackness	Salvation Army Hall, Bo’ness (LE121)	<p><i>Member of public:</i> Why are you not using municipal buildings? How much are you paying the Salvation Army? We have the Public School and Bo’ness Town Hall that can be used free of charge.</p> <p>Note: a charge would be levied for the use of Bo’ness Town Hall.</p>
	Kinneil Primary School (LE127)	<p><i>Parent Council, Kinneil Primary School:</i> Ongoing concerns with the school continuing to be used as a polling station. Outlined a few other venues that could be used including Bo’ness United Ground, mobile library vans, St Mary’s Chapel and Bo’ness Chemical Workers’ Social Club. Numerous options that could be deemed more suitable than closing a school and impacting on children’s education.</p> <p>May be feasible to use part of the school, ie the foyer, for voters, closing off the rest of the school, with the children using other access doors for lunch etc.</p> <p>There seems to have been a significant increase in the number of elections that require the school to be closed. Not acceptable for the whole school to lose two days’ education over a seven week period where there is no possibility of the planned learning being made up (May/June 2017).</p>

		<p>Falkirk Council are not looking at the wider impact of their actions in closing the school. There will be some children who are reliant on free school meals who will miss out on those when the school is closed. There will be additional childcare impacts, including costs, for working parents, on top of the disruption to children's education.</p> <p><i>Angus MacDonald MSP:</i> Contact from one constituent, the concern being the amount of time off that the children already get with in-service days and holidays. The constituent as a working parent has to cover any costs for childcare provisions while the school is closed and enquired as to whether alternative venues for polling stations can be sought. Suggestions made were Bo'ness Town Hall, St Mary's Chapel Hall, Kinneil Bowling Club and Bo'ness Recreation Centre.</p> <p><i>Martyn Day MP:</i> Contact from a constituent noting the difficulty and inconvenience caused by the use of Kinneil Primary School as a polling place. Constituent's child was displaced twice in two months for electoral events (Scottish Parliamentary elections and EU Referendum, 2016). This places considerable pressure on parents in terms of childcare and associated costs. Request that careful consideration be given to alternative venues, for example St Mary's Church Hall.</p>
	<p>Deanburn Primary School (LE135)</p>	<p><i>Parent:</i> Children attending Deanburn Primary School lose two days of education in one term due to elections (2016). Not all schools are used as polling stations therefore the children at Deanburn are receiving less education days than other pupils in the Falkirk Council area. There are plenty church/community halls/public buildings that could be used instead. The Council/Government are quick to judge parents when they take children out of school during term time but it seems that it doesn't matter when it suits them (Council/Govt).</p>

	All other Ward 1 polling places	No comments received.
Ward 2 - Grangemouth	Dundas Resource Centre (LE221)	<i>Manager, Dundas Resource Centre:</i> Unable to offer Dundas as a polling place as we have amalgamated service users from two Day Service facilities, now closed, to Dundas. Therefore, the facilities are now used for activities on a daily basis. Suggest using Kersiebank Community Project, which is at the side of the Dundas Resource Centre.
	All other 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 (FE412)	<i>Councillor Flynn:</i> Stenhousemuir Sports Centre – limited parking but plenty through the underpass. Would like confirmation that the Sports Centre can no longer be used (change of use to gymnastics centre with fixed apparatus and sprung floor). Use of the Sports Centre would reduce the traffic flow and allow children to attend school on polling days. <i>Councillor Murtagh:</i> No other options in the polling district. <i>Parent:</i> Firm believer in having the opportunity to use their democratic vote at easily accessible venues, however there is no equity in Falkirk Council as my child continually loses out on precious education days whilst other children attending different schools in the area do not. Work full time and have to pay for childcare on the day of the election – and referendum in June (2016). Child was displaced at after-school club as the room used was being set up for the election. This resulted in after-school care walking the group of children from

		<p>Carron Primary to Carronshore Primary School. The child is 6-years old. Walking children to a different school is outwith the Council's control. It is, however, within the Council's control to set up for the election after 6pm after all children have been collected by parents. Suggest using Stenhousemuir Sports Centre, which is opposite Carron Primary. Why is the Council not pursuing the use of community centres and other venues rather than primary schools? This is an easy option for Falkirk Council as this is a historic set-up. Stirling Council does not use primary schools due to the number of parental complaints about their children losing days and the cost implications for childcare. Falkirk Council are not progressive in their strategic planning to identify appropriate polling stations.</p> <p><i>Parent:</i> Why is it that the Council uses the school as a polling place when there is the Stenhousemuir Sports Complex directly opposite? The closure of the school impacts on the children's attendance and learning and also often causes childcare issues for working parents.</p> <p><i>Chair – Parent Council (2014/15):</i> Concerns that the school is forced to close to pupils on polling day. The use of the school is completely unnecessary and an equally usable Council building is available. Stenhousemuir Sports Centre is in the right location, almost adjacent to the school, and is accessible with a dedicated car park. Further concerns that polling took place in two classrooms at the recent elections. This meant that the public had direct access to children's names and some details/ photographs/work which may be displayed. Request that, if an alternative building is not to be used, a written explanation is given to the Parent Council. Further request that polling is held in the open areas of the school and not in classrooms.</p>
--	--	---

		<p><i>Chair – Parent Council (2015/16):</i> Carron Primary has been used as a polling place for a number of years. There has been a recent increase in elections so we now find ourselves in the situation with our school being closed to pupils on an annual basis. This is very disruptive to our children and causes parents difficulty with childcare. Stenhousemuir Sports Centre is adjacent to the school and would be a very suitable venue.</p> <p><i>Parent:</i> Concerns about Carron Primary being closed on the Friday, Monday and Tuesday of the bank holiday weekend, then closed again for the election on the Thursday. Suggest using Stenhousemuir Sports Centre “that no-one goes to anyway”.</p> <p><i>Note: Stenhousemuir Sports Centre is now used permanently as a gymnastics centre and is no longer available for polling purposes.</i></p>
	<p>Stenhousemuir Primary School (FW426)</p>	<p><i>Councillor Flynn:</i> St Bernadette’s – good area, more central to the community and away from the cluster of other polling places. Good venue, smaller school, less busy than the access route to Stenhousemuir Primary.</p> <p><i>Councillor Murtagh:</i> St Bernadette’s – better parking and better access than Stenhousemuir Primary.</p> <p><i>Parent:</i> School closes for elections whether local or general. The schools in the area are never swapped for elections. Why is it always Stenhousemuir Primary? Astonished that, in this day with the Scottish Parliament’s hugely educational drive, schools have to be closed anyway. Both myself and my wife are working parents and</p>

		<p>find it hard enough to cover the school holidays without adding other days into the equation. Why is there no contingency plan for pupils who suffer the down-time in education when the schools are closed?</p> <p><i>Parent:</i> Complaint regarding Stenhousemuir Primary being used as a polling place when there are alternative venues nearby.</p>
	Bothkennar Community Hall (FE440)	<p><i>Councillor Flynn:</i> Bothkennar and Carronshore Parish Church Hall is acceptable. Other option is Carronshore (no venue specified) but this would mean a 2-mile journey for electors.</p> <p><i>Councillor Murtagh:</i> Concerns about the Church Hall being used. Dangerous road, no crossing, not a safe route to walk. Would prefer to use the school, if kept as a community asset. Suggests Dutch Inn as an option.</p>
	All other Ward 4 polling places	No comments received.
Ward 5 – Bonnybridge and Larbert	Larbert Village Primary School (FW511)	<p><i>Councillor Grant:</i> Larbert Village Primary School is in an ideal spot but does not have good parking. Proposed use of Larbert Old Parish Church Hall – might need transport, although it has better parking. Concerns about the cost of the Hall hire (approx. £240 for 16 hours – February 2019).</p> <p><i>Parent:</i> Can you explain why the school is still being used as a polling place when there are numerous halls locally, including Larbert Old Church Hall and the hall at Larbert Bowling Club? Not only is the school being closed detrimental to children’s education but it is also very inconvenient to working parents who have either to use holidays or pay for childcare.</p>

	Dobbie Hall (FW506)	<p><i>Dobbie Hall Trust:</i> Dobbie Hall strategically placed to serve the polling district. The hall provides a clean, warm place for voters and polling staff alike, with good facilities and availability from early morning until later at night with staff cover.</p>
	Torwood School Site/Scout Hall (FW515)	<p><i>Councillor Grant:</i> Scout Hall is a good location but the polling district has a low electorate and low turnout. Consider merging with Larbert at Larbert Village Primary School/Larbert Old Parish Church Hall.</p>
	Bonnybridge Primary School (FW520)	<p><i>Councillor Grant:</i> Great school, good polling place. Keep the school open for polling and close it to children on polling day. Church is too far away for polling purposes.</p> <p><i>Parent:</i> Unhappy that Bonnybridge Primary School closes for elections. Would like to know why there is no alternative venue, what the teachers do on the day the election is taking place and if the children's "missed school day" will be made up at some other point in the academic year. Schools should not be forced to close to pupils due to an election. It is not acceptable that children miss a day that will not be made up at any other time.</p>
	Antonine Primary School (FW530)	<p><i>Parent and Parent Council Member:</i> Concerned about the use of Antonine Primary School being used for two elections in a few weeks (2017). Understands that, in other areas and authorities, polling stations alternate between schools, churches, community centres etc. Couldn't Antonine and St Joseph's Primary share as polling places, or use the Church Hall to avoid further days off school?</p> <p>Note: Antonine Primary School is no longer closed on polling days. Polling is restricted to the annexe only, enabling the school to remain open.</p>

	All other Ward 5 polling places	No comments received.
Ward 6 – Falkirk North	Carron Centre/New Carron (FW611)	<p><i>Councillor Meiklejohn:</i> Historically, the number of people voting from the New Carron village area has been poor, their designated polling place (formerly) being Bainsford Community Centre. There was no provision for community facilities within the master planning for the area as part of the planning process nor any planning gain monies to support the provision of such a facility within what is a very large residential area that has continued to grow over the last 10 years. The addition of a portable unit and subsequently a disused retail unit has increased the number of people from this area participating in the democratic process. I would therefore wish to put on record that wherever possible that there continues to be a dedicated polling place for New Carron as close to the community and should there be no retail unit available, continued use of a modular unit be considered and that a potential site be identified, perhaps within the housing estate itself. We have a presumption wherever possible to not use schools and would be very much against returning to having this area polling at Bainsford Community Centre as I would see this as a diminution of the democratic process.</p> <p><i>Councillor Alexander:</i> Agree with Councillor Meiklejohn’s comments above.</p>
	All other Ward 6 polling places	No comments received.
Ward 7 – Falkirk South	Woodlands Games Hall and Leishman Tower Club Room (FW731, FW760 and FW765)	<p><i>Councillor Reid:</i> Could some attention be given to Arnot Street, Falkirk, whereby at present a street with around 20 properties has three polling places, harking back to old Ward boundaries which no longer exist? Note: FW731 (Woodlands Games Hall) has 10 properties and 15 electors; FW760 (Leishman Tower) has four properties and five</p>

		<i>electors; FW765 (also Woodlands Games Hall) has 12 properties and 18 electors. Figures accurate at 1/12/18.</i>
	All other Ward 7 polling places	No comments received.
Ward 8 – Lower Braes	All Ward 8 polling places	No comments received.
Ward 9 – Upper Braes	California Community Hall (LE925)	<i>Councillor Kerr:</i> Happy with mobile unit at Hall site or use of the hall if available.
	Brightons Community Centre (FE950)	<i>Councillor Kerr:</i> Note that there are no electors in this polling district but that Brightons Community Centre would be the polling place if there were any.
	All other Ward 9 polling places	No comments received.
General comments and feedback received		
All Wards	All polling places	<i>Member of public:</i> We have enough community halls or sports halls in our area that could be used for polling stations and prevent the need for school closures.