

# Crawley Borough Council

	Report No:LDS/33	<b>B</b>
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## Report to General Purposes Committee

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2011

### Review of Polling Districts

#### 1. Key Points

- 1.1 This report informs the Committee of the results of the review of Polling Districts, Polling Stations and Polling Places as required by the Electoral Administration Act 2006, advises Members on the outcome of the consultation on the current review, and seeks agreement to the polling arrangements arising from the review.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To recommend to the Full Council the polling arrangements set out at Appendix A.

Ann-Maria Brown  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

### **3. Background**

- 3.1. The Council has a duty to divide the Borough into polling districts and to designate suitable polling places within each district. The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a requirement to review these arrangements every four years.
- 3.2. When designating polling districts the authority must seek to ensure that all electors in the constituency have reasonable facilities for voting, and, as far as practicable, that the polling places are accessible to all electors.
- 3.3. When considering the designation of a polling place the authority must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled people. In addition the authority must seek representations from people or organisations that have expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different disabilities.
- 3.4. The last full review was held in 2007, although the arrangements made for polling have been continually under review, and changes have been made where necessary and when improvements have been possible. As a result the Returning Officer does not consider that any major changes are necessary. The Returning Officer's proposals are set out in Appendix A to the report. Alterations are recommended to the polling district boundary in Ifield East.
- 3.5. The Government has recently published draft legislation to change the timing of future reviews to coincide with five-year parliamentary terms. This would mean that the next review would have to be carried out within a 16-month period from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013.

#### **Electoral Processes Scrutiny Panel**

- 3.6. The 2008 Electoral Processes Scrutiny Panel considered the issue of the use of schools as polling places. Members recommended that the use of schools could be very disruptive and should be avoided wherever possible.
- 3.7. The use of schools has reduced over a number of years: Southgate Primary School, Barrington Road has been replaced by St Mary's Church Hall; Bewbush Primary School by the new Bewbush Centre; Northgate Primary School by the Northgate Community Centre; Crawley Pupil Referral Unit by St. Edward the Confessor Church Hall; Three Bridges Junior School by the Three Bridges Community Centre; and West Green Primary School by The Charis Centre. The remaining three schools that are used as polling places are considered necessary for the provision of reasonable facilities for voting.

### **4. The Review**

- 4.1. Public consultation began on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2011 and ended on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2011. A notice was placed in the local press, details included on the Council's website and invitations were sent to local disability organisations requesting comments from an access point of view. Copies of the existing Polling Scheme and maps were also sent to all Members, County Councillors and the MP for Crawley.

- 4.2 Each polling place is inspected by the Council's Electoral Services Manager and the Access Officer, who has particular expertise in access for people with disabilities. His comments are included in the Access Schedule at Appendix B.
- 4.3 A response was received from the Chairperson of Open Fields as follows "I have asked all the disabled members of Open Fields, and they are all very happy with either the access or they do postal voting."
- 4.4 A response was received from Councillor Brenda Smith regarding The Mill Primary School and polling districts LFA and LFB as follows:

"I do not think that it is necessary to have this polling station in Ifield. Ifield East has not increased in population by many since the 1970/80s when only one polling station was used at the Senior School. Total electors 4351 is a far smaller number than many wards with one polling station.

I also suggest that the same rational regarding the number of electors applies to Maidenbower LHA and LHB could be combined at LHA. Pound Hill South and Worth LKA and LKB. Combine at LKA. Three Bridges LMA LMB and LMC combine at LMA. Tilgate LNA and LNB combine at LNA."

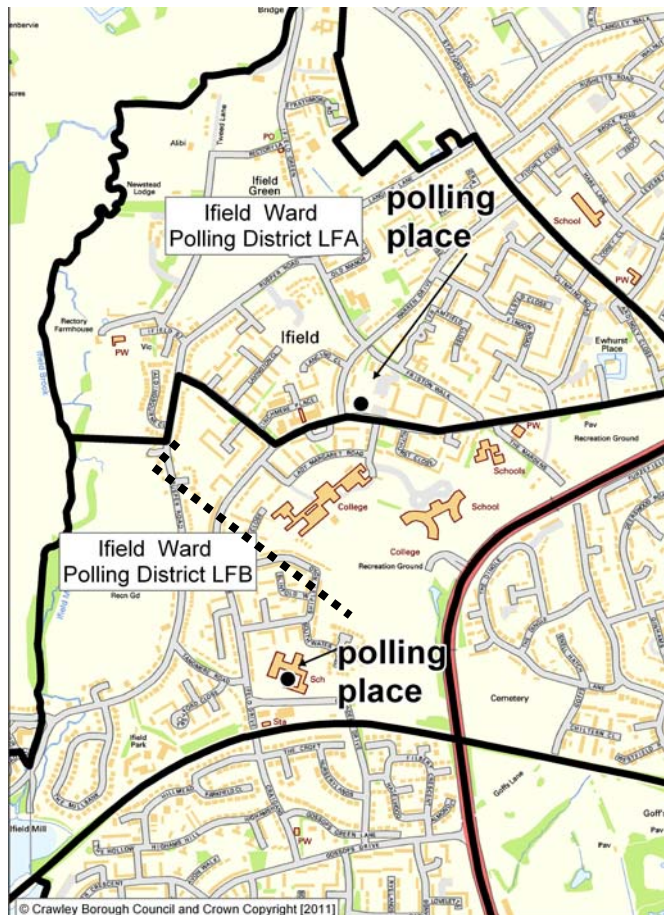
- 4.5 Polling for Ifield East was held at Ifield Community College for many years until its move to a new site. At the last review the Council agreed that polling should be at The Mill Primary School and at the Community Centre. Polling has operated without problem since then. The Ifield Ward Councillors have been consulted on this issue. Their views are set out below:

Councillor Denman objects to the proposal: "The community centre on Ifield Drive is not a central location in the way that ICC was. The Mill School is also perfectly placed to cater for the many Ifield residents who commute to work from Ifield train station. Voter turn out is already shamefully low and in my opinion making voting less convenient is not the way forward."

Councillor Oxlade supports the proposal: "1. I had a lot of feedback on election day from residents on the south side of Ifield Drive that it was along way to go to the Mill School, walking past another polling station at Ifield Community Centre. 2. The Mill seemed a lot quieter than the Community Centre (I think turnout was too). 3. A lot of people assumed they were voting at the Community Centre, but were sent to the correct polling station at the Mill 4. Ifield Community Centre is more central to all residents 5. It should save time and money."

Councillor Ali Burke objects to the proposal: "Ifield is a large ward geographically and we need to maximise the turnout at local elections to improve accountability and legitimacy. The catchment area served by The Mill School is too far away from the Ifield Drive Community Centre, and this will put people off from voting. This comment applies especially to the more vulnerable and less mobile members of the Ifield community, so in essence, I feel that removing the ability to vote at The Mill School would be a retrograde step and I would not support this proposal."

4.6 Whilst combining polling districts LFA and LFB would have the benefit of making it clearer which polling place voters in Ifield East should attend, the view of the Returning Officer is that these polling places have generally operated satisfactorily since 2007 and making a change may cause voter confusion. However, the boundary between the two polling districts is not ideally placed and results in some residents from the south side of Ifield Drive and adjoining roads having to walk past the Community Centre to get to The Mill School. It is therefore proposed to alter the boundary as shown below where the existing boundary is shown by a solid line and the proposed boundary by a dotted line.



4.7 This would result in the following movements from Polling District LFB to LFA:

Address	properties	electors
Millfield Court	53	58
Ifield Drive nos 21-83	32	52
Midhurst Close	18	33
Nuthurst Close	37	72
Lady Margaret Road	37	54
Lady Margaret Walk	12	19
The Mardens	7	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>298</b>

- 4.8 For Three Bridges ward, the Returning Officer is concerned that the increasing number of electors from Pembroke Park will increase the number of voters attending Three Bridges Community Centre and that combining voting in the Community Centre, which has a smaller hall, might lead to congestion at peak times. At Pound Hill South and Worth the Community Centre car park is narrow and there is a concern about congestion at peak times. At Tilgate the Returning Officer is concerned that the Community Centre is not in such a central location and it therefore is appropriate that this is complemented by continuing to use the Holy Trinity Church Hall.
- 4.9 Ward Members were consulted on whether it might be appropriate to combine voting for the Maidenbower polling districts at the Community Centre. Councillors Walker, Millar-Smith and Trussell all objected on the grounds that they considered that it would be a reduction in facilities for voting and lead to a lower turnout. The Returning Officer considers that Maidenbower is geographically a large ward and that it is suitable that it is served by two polling places. It is therefore not recommended to make any changes.

## **5. Ward Members' Views**

- 5.1. Ward Members' views are included in the report.

## **6. Staffing, Equalities, Financial and Legal Implications/Powers**

- 6.1 The creation or removal of polling districts and provision of additional polling places has financial implications in terms of the cost of staffing polling places, delivery and collection of equipment and hire of premises.
- 6.2 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 sets out a duty for the Council to carry out a Polling District Review by 31 December 2011, and states that representations must be made by the Returning Officer to the Council, and that the Council must actively seek representations from persons it thinks have expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons with different forms of disability.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed y

## **7. Risk Implications**

- 7.1 None.

## **8. Environmental Impacts**

- 8.1 None.

## 9. Links to the Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Plan

9.1 The proposals contained in this report relate to the following key areas of the Sustainable Community Strategy

Community Cohesion	y	Community Safety	n
Young People and Children	y	Health and Well Being	n
Older People	y	The Environment	n
The Local Economy	n	Social Inclusion	y

The following key principles are applicable:-

(i) Working together	y
(ii) Dignity, respect and opportunities for all	y
(iii) Involving People	y
(iv) Making it last	y

The report relates to the following areas in which the Council operates to enhance the town and the quality of life of local people:-

(i) Prosperity	y
(ii) Community	y
(iii) Environment	y
(iv) Value for Money	y

## 10. Reasons for the Recommendation

10.1 To seek the Committee's recommendation to Full Council on the Polling District Review.

## 11. Background Papers

Electoral Administration Act 2006

Responses to Polling District Review consultation

Contact Officer:- Andrew Oakley  
Direct Line:- 01293 438346

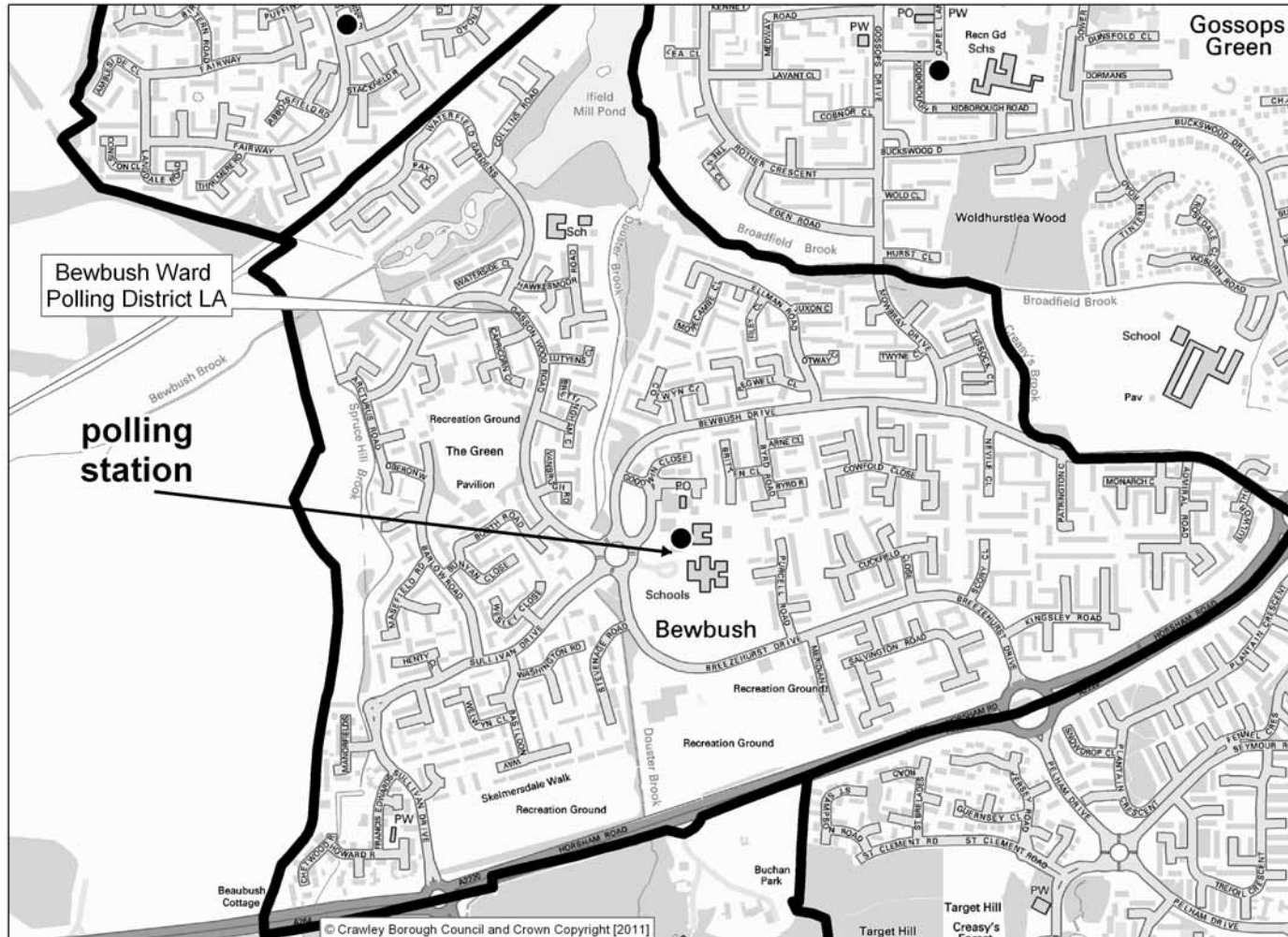
# Bewbush Ward

## Polling District LA

Polling Station:

Bewbush Centre,  
Dorsten Square.

Electors: 6227  
Postal Voters: 843



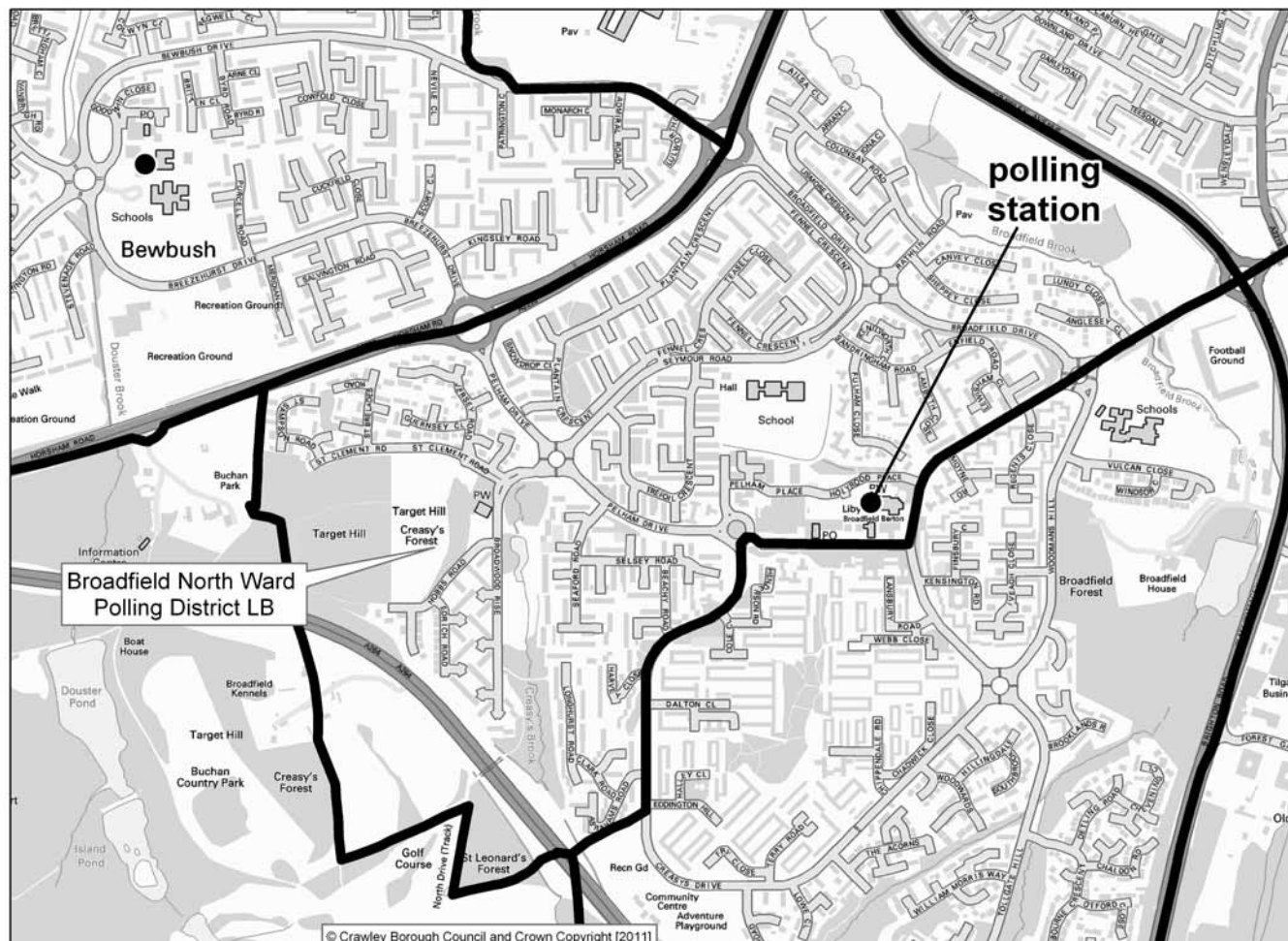
# Broadfield North Ward

## Polling District LB

Polling Station:

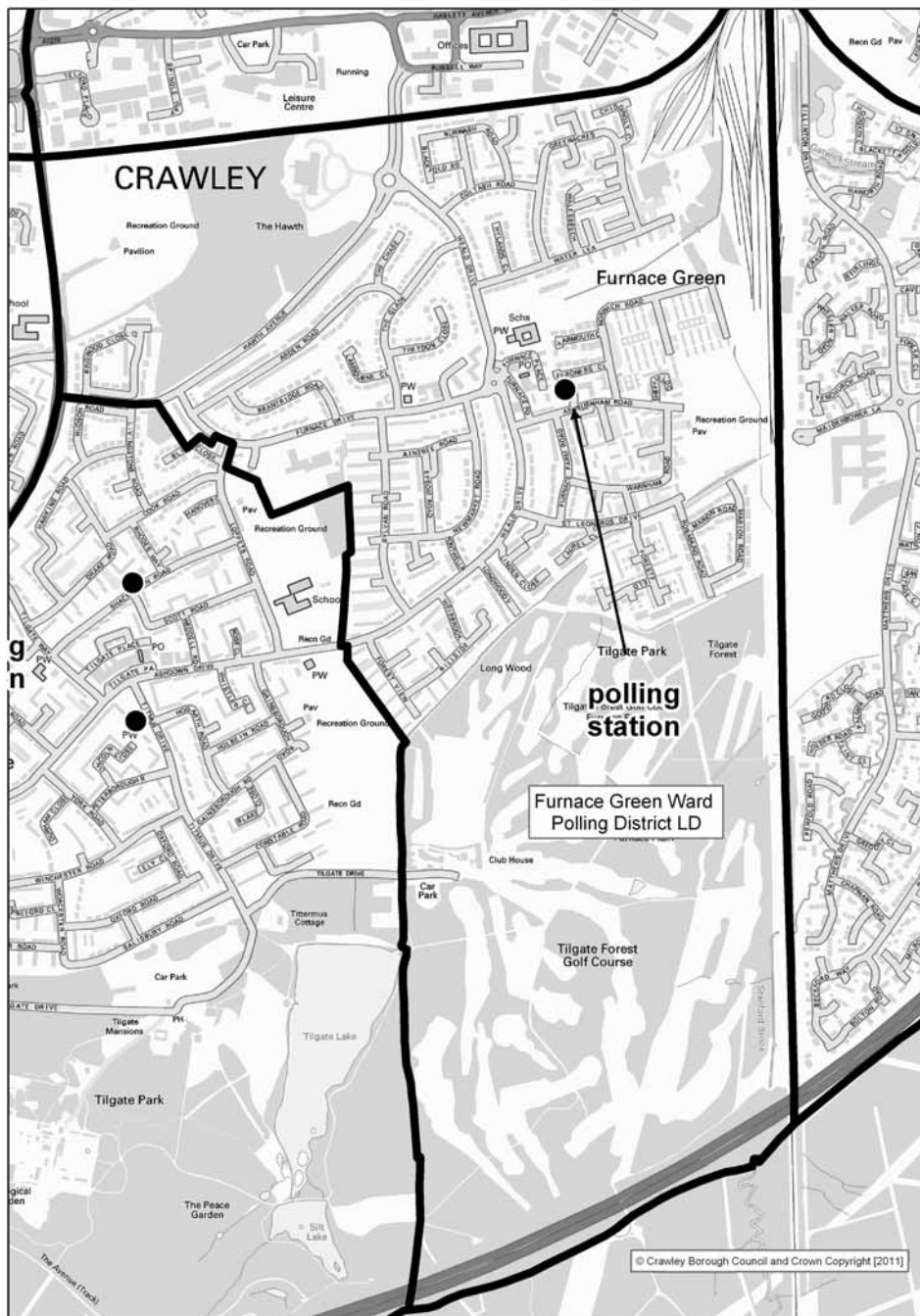
Broadfield Youth and  
Community Centre  
Broadfield, Barton.

Electors: 4318  
Postal Voters: 661









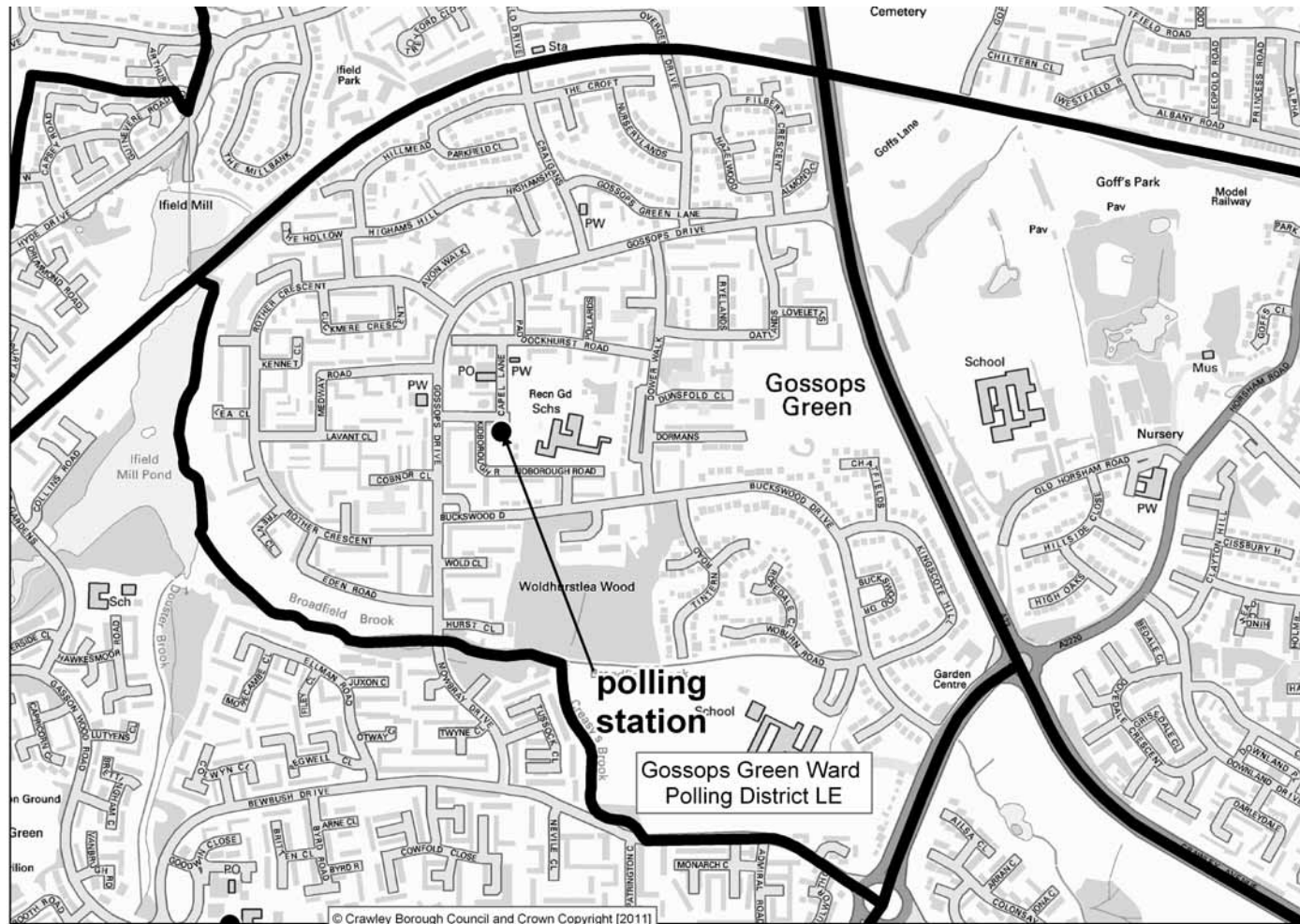
## Furnace Green Ward

### Polling District LD

Polling Station:

Furnace Green Community Centre,  
Ashburnham Road.

Electors: 4234  
Postal Voters: 741



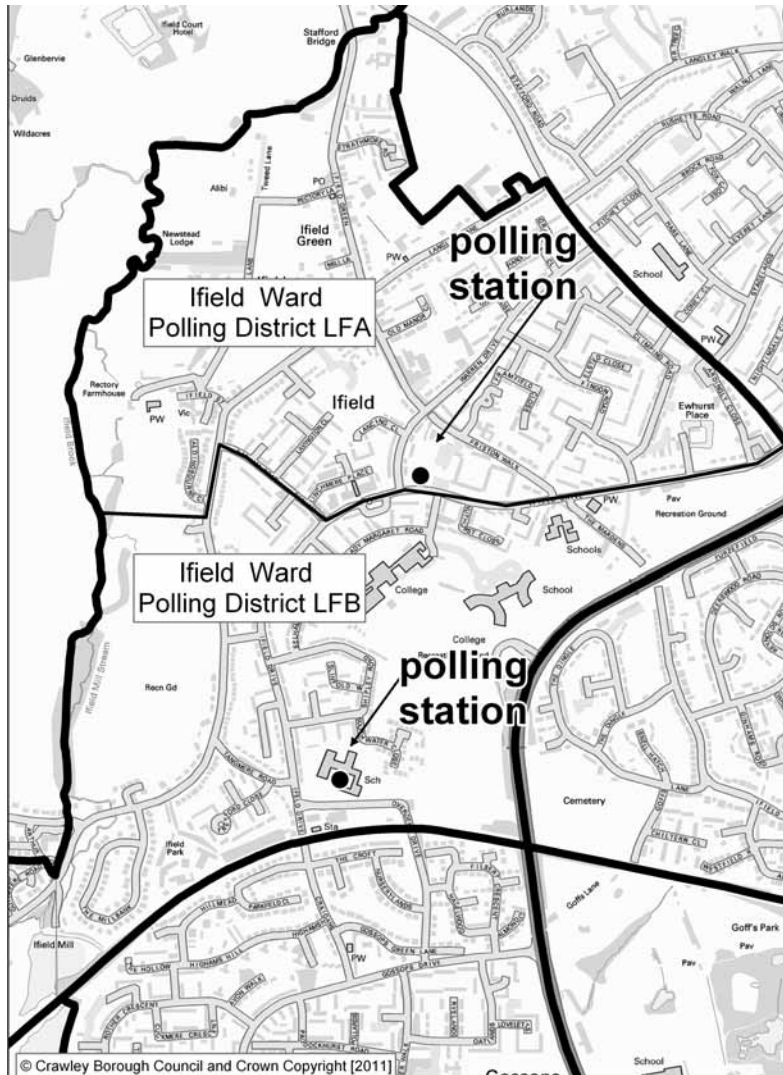
## Gossops Green Ward

Polling District LE

Polling Station:

Gossops Green Community Centre,  
Capel Lane.

Electors: 3919  
Postal Voters: 574



## Ifield Ward

### Polling District LFA

Polling Station:

Ifield Community Centre, Ifield Drive.

Electors: 2715

Postal Voters: 465

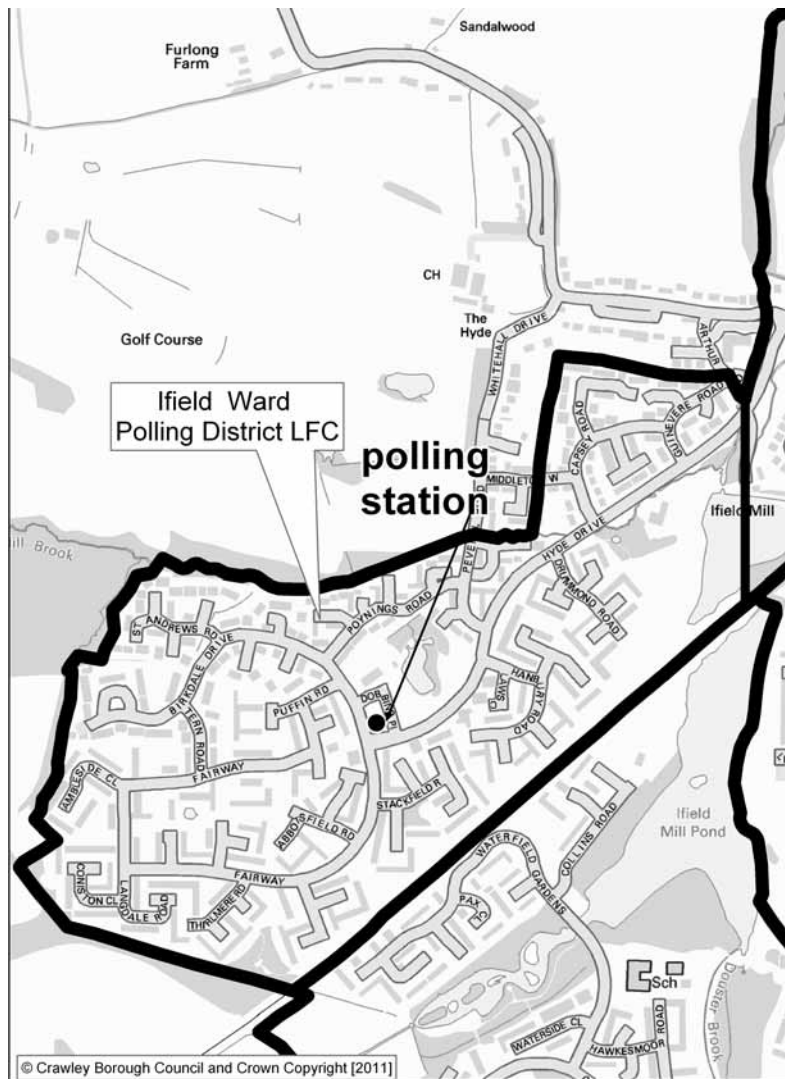
### Polling District LFB

Polling Station:

The Mill Primary School, Ifield Drive.

Electors: 1636

Postal Voters: 372



## Ifield Ward

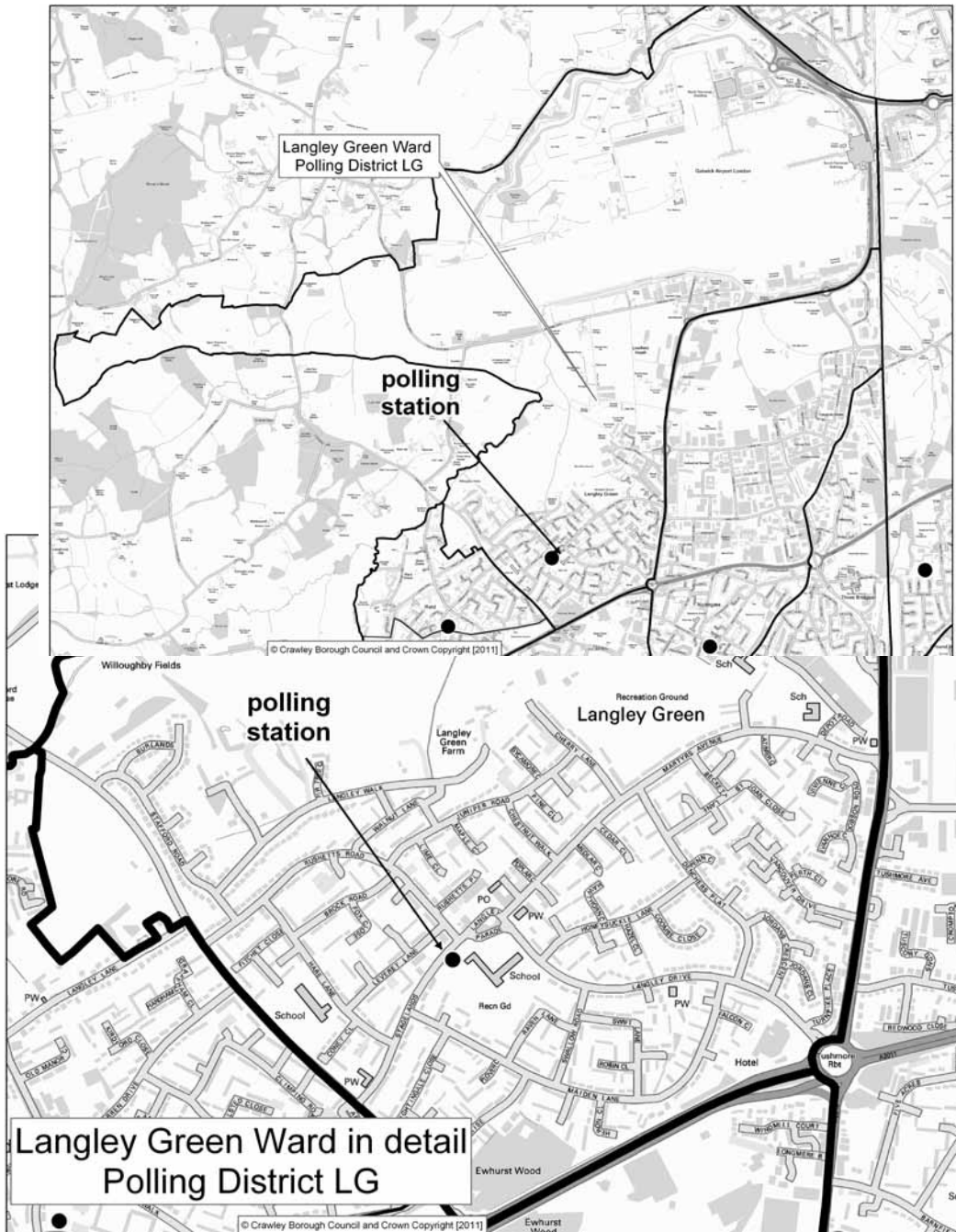
### Polling District LFC

Polling Station:

Wybourne Community Centre, Hyde Drive.

Electors: 2204

Postal Voters: 275



# Langley Green Ward

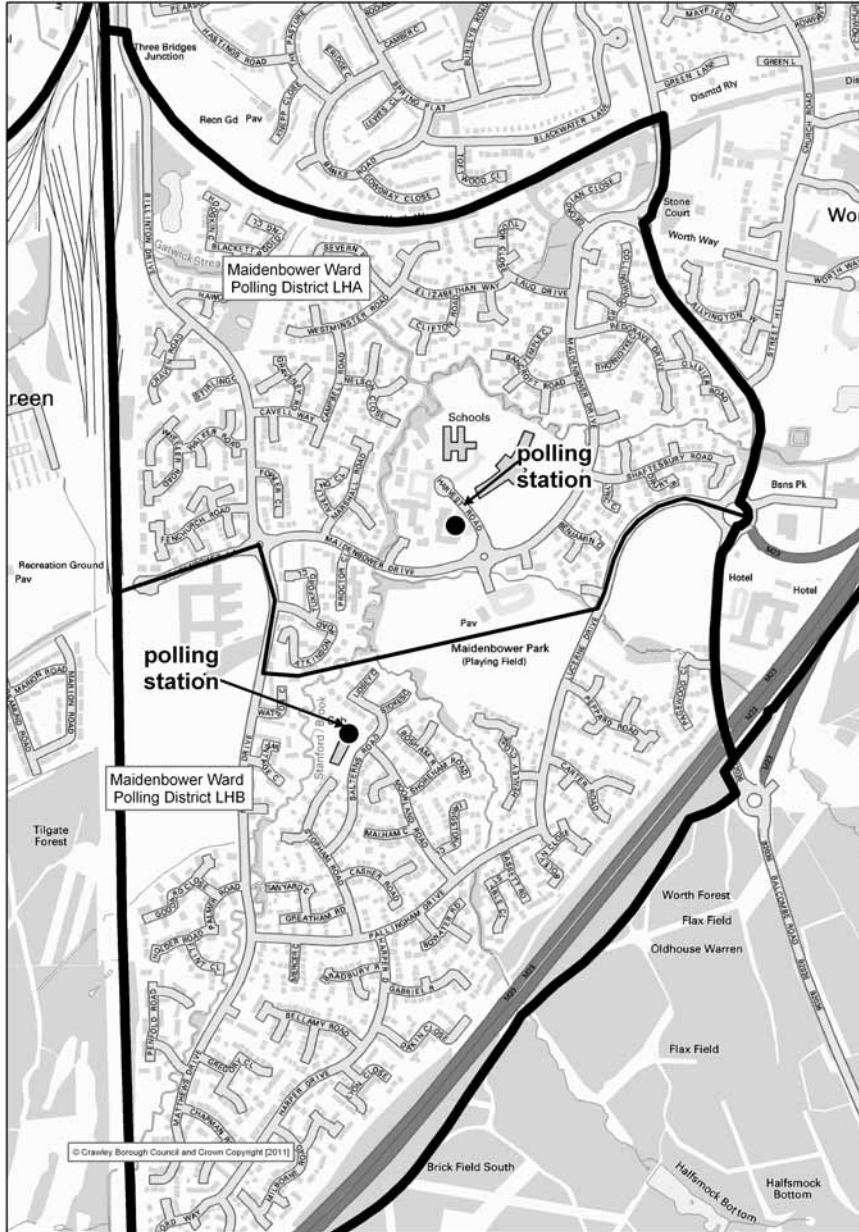
## Polling District LG

Polling Station:

The Langley Centre, Stagelands.

Electors: 5752

Postal Voters: 737



## Maidenbower Ward

### Polling District LHA

Polling Station:

Maidenbower Community Centre,  
Harvest Road.

Electors: 2704

Postal Voters: 469

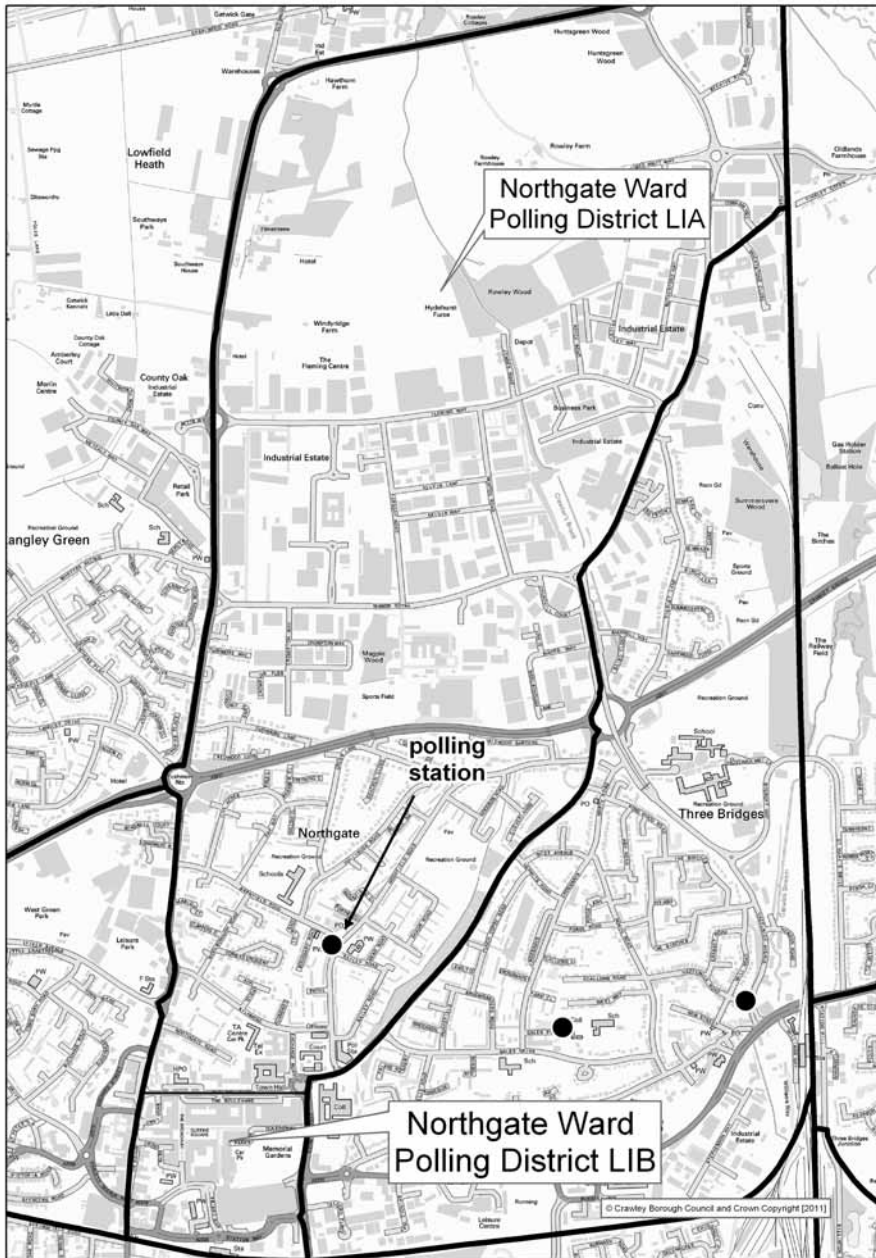
### Polling District LHB

Polling Station:

The Brook School, Salterns Road.

Electors: 3716

Postal Voters: 660



## Northgate Ward

### Polling District LIA

Polling Station:

Northgate Community Centre, Barnfield Road.

Electors: 3720

Postal Voters: 537

### Polling District LIB

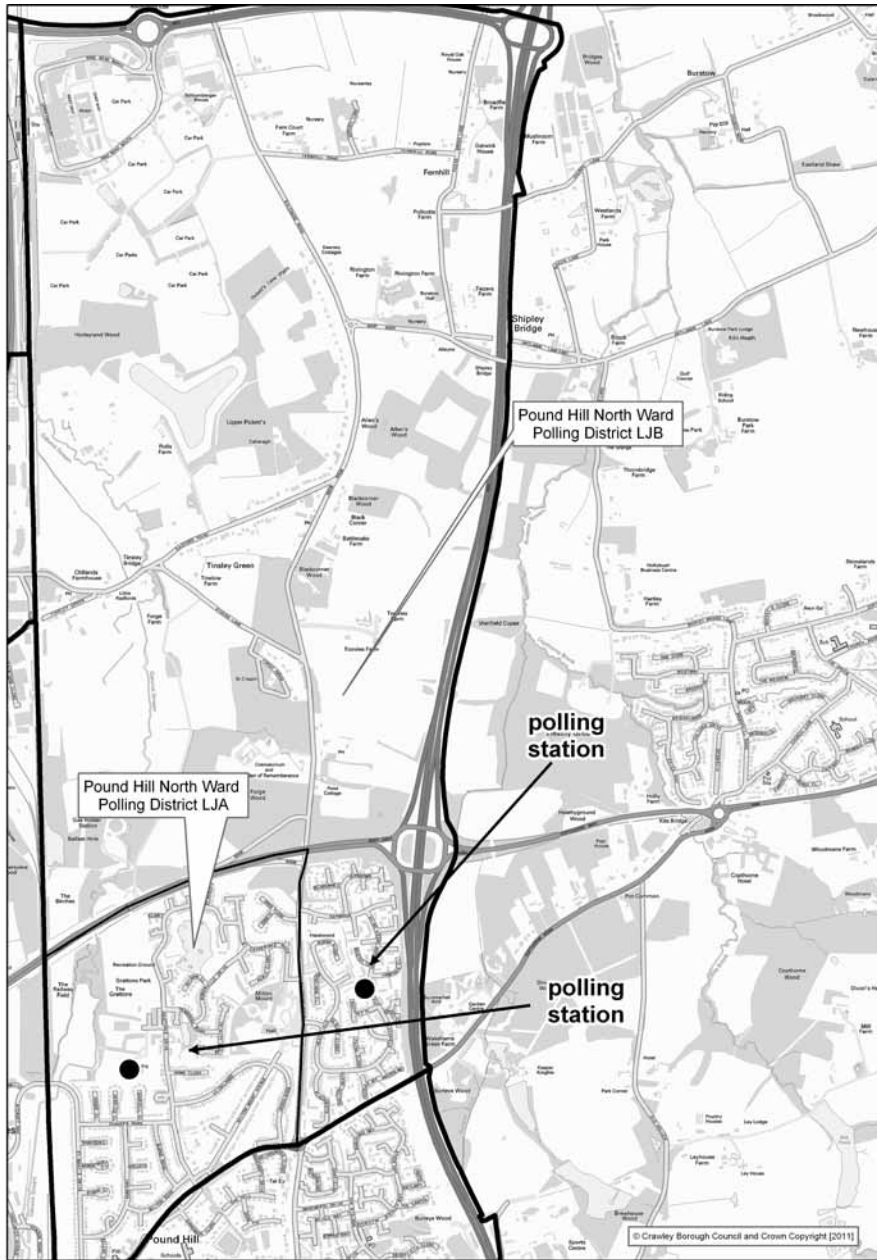
Polling Station:

Northgate Community Centre, Barnfield Road.

Electors: 58

Postal Voters: 6





## Pound Hill North Ward

### Polling District LJA

Polling Station:

Milton Mount Primary School, Grattons Drive.

Electors: 2808

Postal Voters: 511

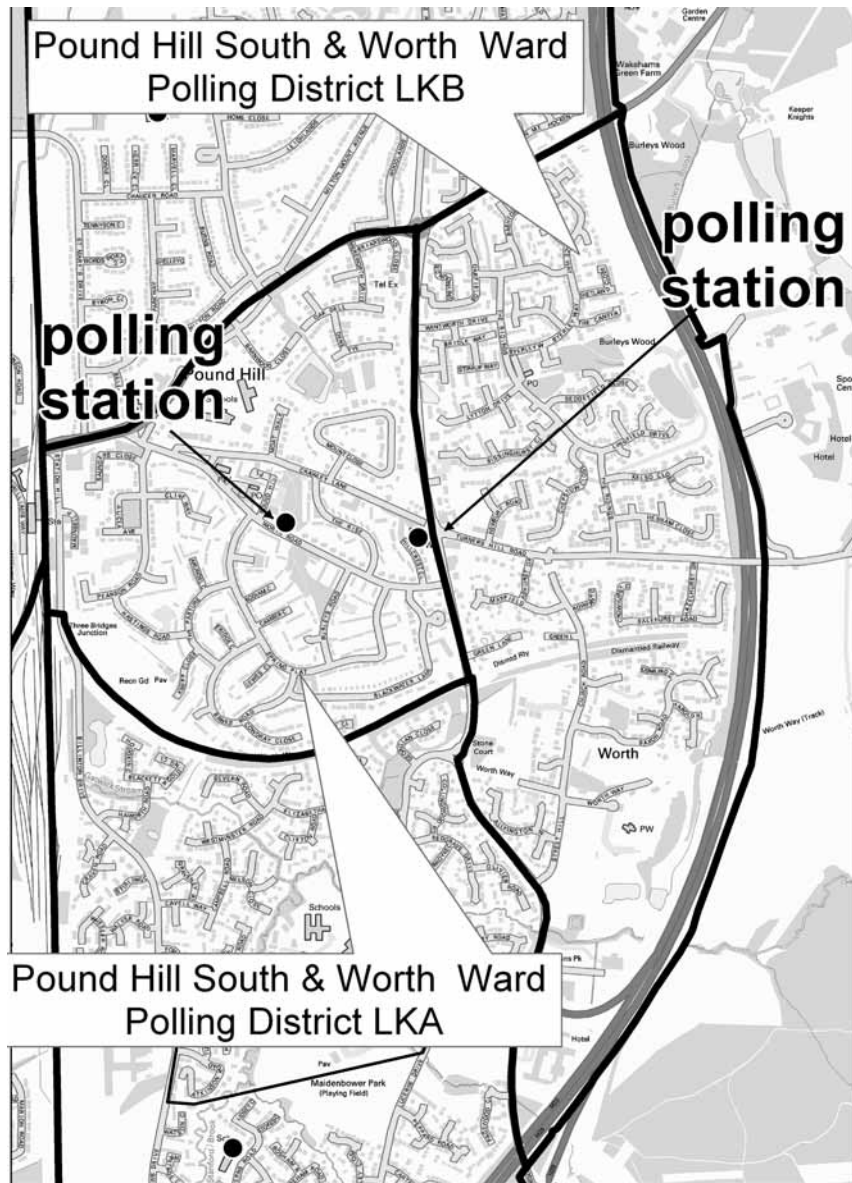
### Polling District LJB

Polling Station:

Wakehams Green Community Centre, Wakehams Green Drive.

Electors: 2141

Postal Voters: 278



## Pound Hill South & Worth Ward

### Polling District LKA

Polling Station:

Pound Hill Community Centre, Worth Road.

Electors: 2706

Postal Voters: 383

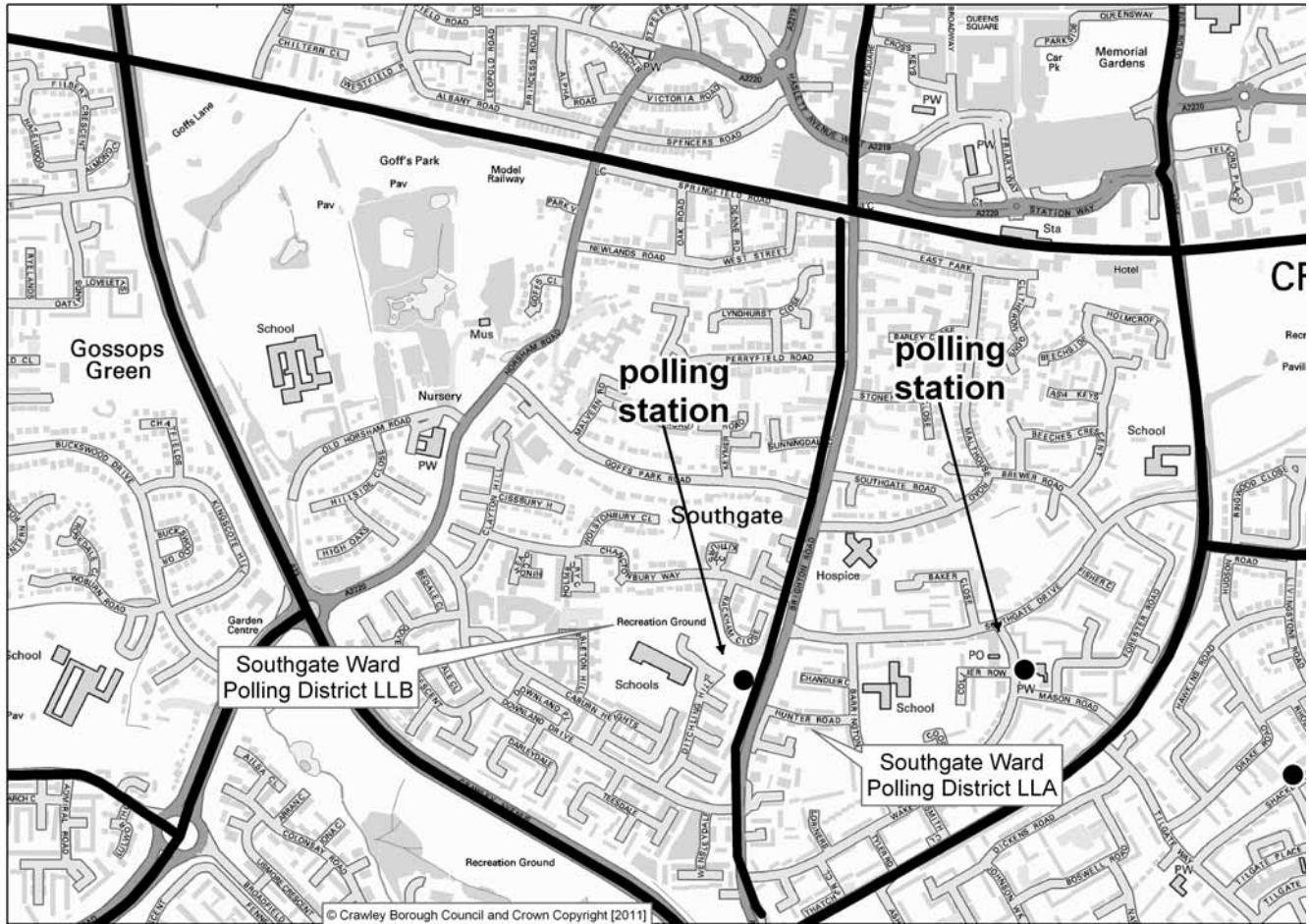
### Polling District LKB

Polling Station:

St. Edward the Confessor Church Hall, Hillcrest Close.

Electors: 3585

Postal Voters: 700



## Southgate Ward

Polling District LLA

Polling Station:

St Marys Church Hall, Wakehurst Drive.

Electors: 2852

Postal Voters: 576

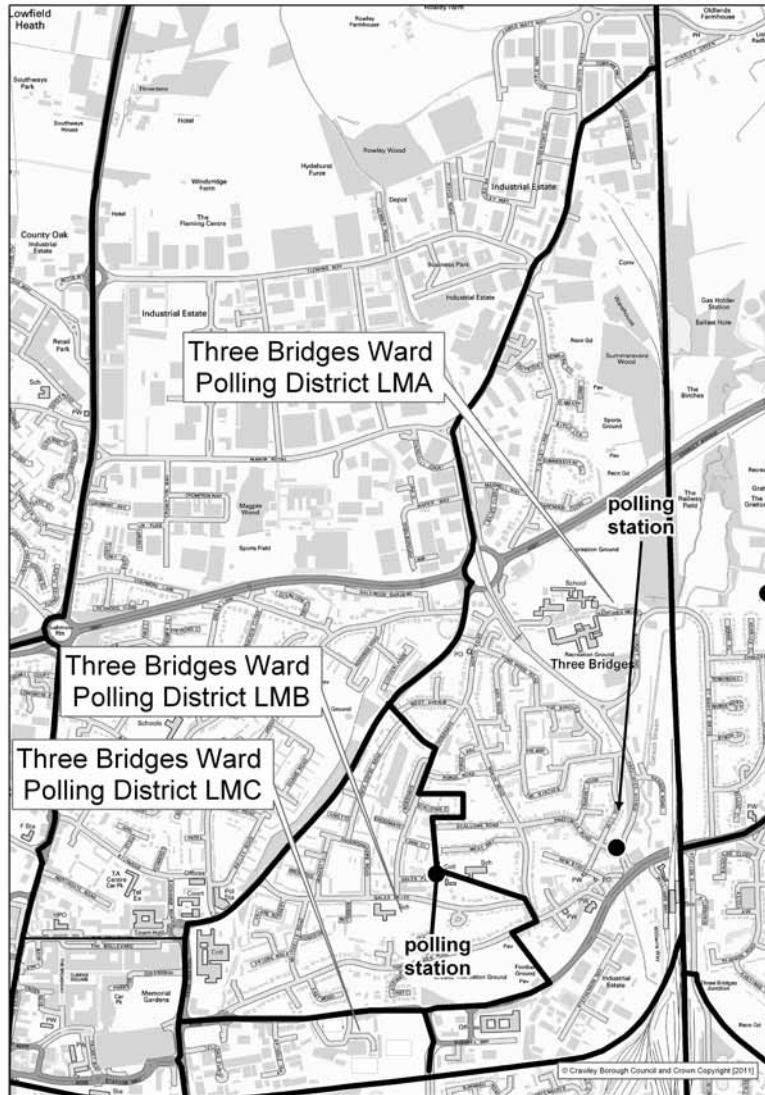
Polling District LLB

Polling Station:

Southgate Community Centre, Ditchling Hill.

Electors: 3362

Postal Voters: 729



## Three Bridges Ward

### Polling District LMA

Polling Station:

Montefiore Institute, Hazelwick Road.

Electors: 2649

Postal Voters: 440

### Polling District LMB

Polling Station:

Three Bridges Community Centre, Gales Place.

Electors: 1713

Postal Voters: 250

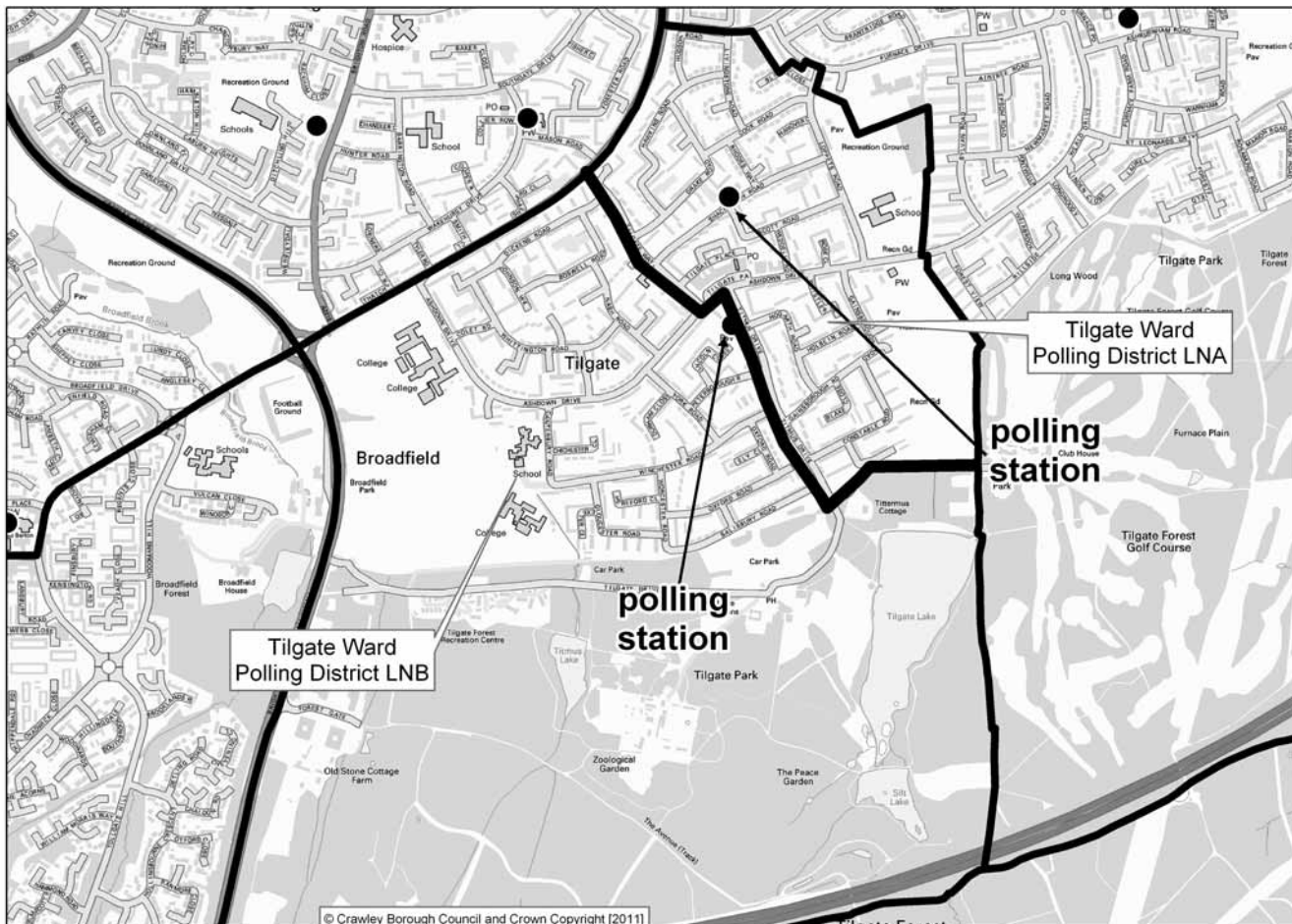
### Polling District LMC

Polling Station:

Three Bridges Community Centre, Gales Place.

Electors: 819

Postal Voters: 100



## Tilgate Ward

### Polling District LNA

Polling Station:

Tilgate Community Centre,  
Shackleton Road.

Electors: 2173

Postal Voters: 287

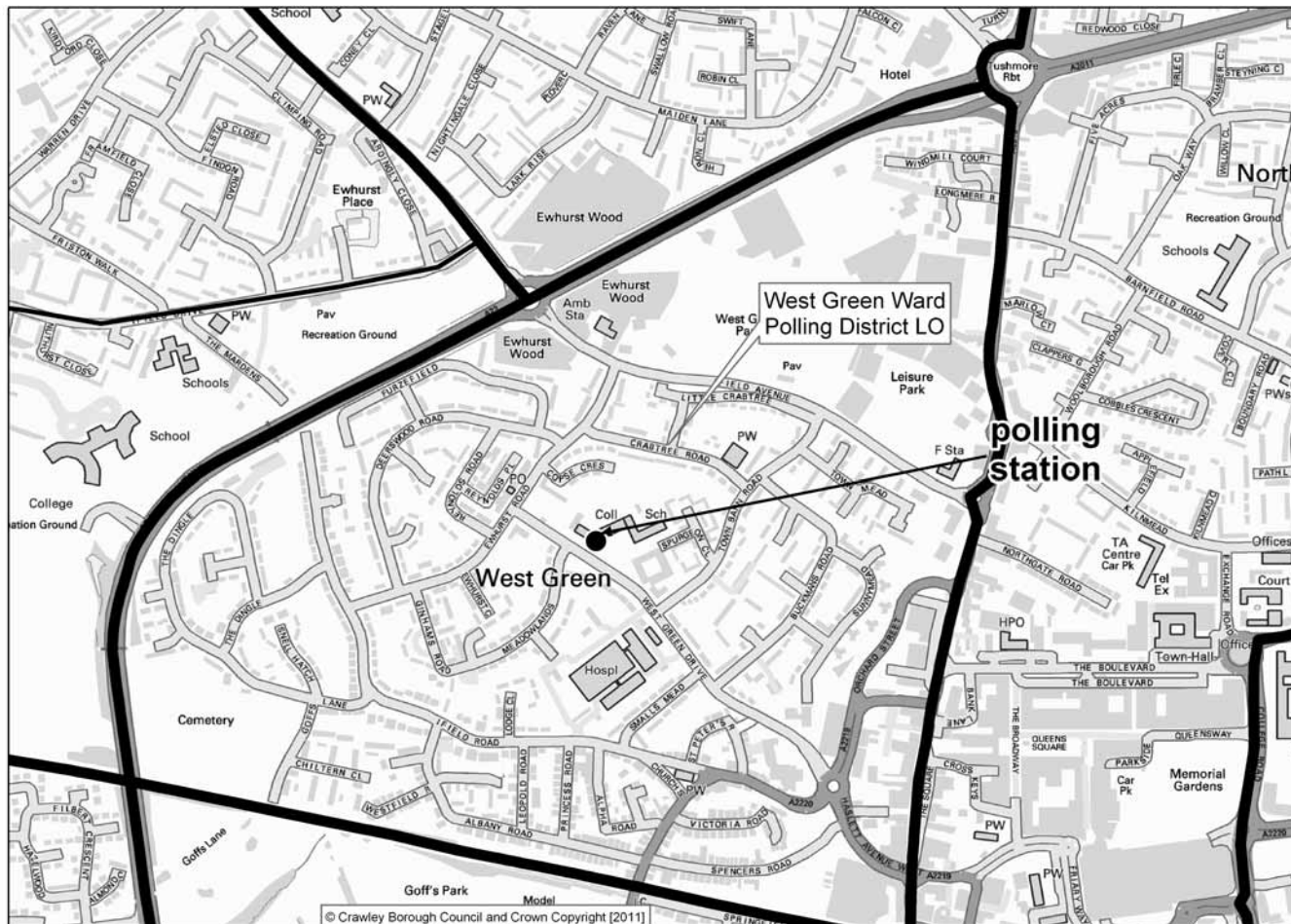
### Polling District LNB

Polling Station:

Holy Trinity Church Hall,  
Titmus Drive.

Electors: 2358

Postal Voters: 354



## West Green Ward

### Polling District LO

Polling Station:

The Charis Centre, West Green Drive.

Electors: 3554

Postal Voters: 596

## Access Guide to Crawley Borough Council's Polling Stations Autumn 2011

(Items in italics have yet to be inspected this year. Any changes to the details will be reported at the meeting)

Ward	Venue/Address	Transport Links	Accessible Parking	Accessible Toilet	Potential Access Issues
Bewbush	Bewbush Community Centre	Bus No 1,23, 24, 200 and 10 (50 metres from the main entrance)	4 accessible parking bays with posts indicating where they are	Two accessible toilets on site	None to note
Broadfield	Broadfield Youth and Community Centre	Bus No. 20, 10, 1 at Shopping Parade or Bus 20 on Coachman's Drive	5 accessible parking bays at Broadfield Barton (400 metre walk away), 5 partially accessible bays at rear of centre	Two accessible toilets on site	Steep downhill path (40 metres long) going down to centre if approaching from Broadfield Barton, however there is more level access from Coachman's Drive, but a longer walk from the Barton to the centre
Furnace Green	Furnace Green Community Centre	Bus No 2 and 273, 300 metre walk to venue.	There are 2 accessible bays on site	There is an accessible toilet	No access issues except distance from public transport

Ward	Venue/Address	Transport Links	Accessible Parking	Accessible Toilet	Potential Access Issues
Gossops Green	Gossops Green Community Centre	Bus No 1 and 200 (bus stop is 200 metres from the entrance)	There are 2 accessible bays	There is an accessible toilet	Car park at the Centre is on a slight slope  There is a camber in the pavement next to the shopping parade car park on the way from the bus stop to the centre.
<i>Ifield</i>	<i>The Mill Primary School</i>	<i>Bus No 2, 200 is 100 metres from main entrance and Ifield station is nearby</i>	<i>There 2 accessible bays</i>	<i>One accessible toilet on site</i>	
Ifield	Ifield West	Bus No 2 (by Hyde Drive shops) 10 metres to the main entrance	There are 3 accessible parking bays	One accessible toilet on site	No access issues identified.
Ifield	Ifield Drive Community Centre	Bus No 2, 200 (by Hyde Drive shops) 10 metres to the main entrance	There are 3 bays but no hatching or sign posting indicating their location.	One accessible toilet on site	Large kerbs from the bus stop to the Community Centre (10 metres in front of Rose Glow Laundrette).  The accessible route is round



Ward	Venue/Address	Transport Links	Accessible Parking	Accessible Toilet	Potential Access Issues
					the back of the car park serving the shops.
Langley Green	Langley Green Community Centre	Bus No. 200 and 300 100 metre walk to venue	3 bays at Langley Green Parade, 2 bays within the Langley Green Community Centre car park	One accessible toilet on site	Limited access to Centre's car park (due to having to go through Doctor surgery's car park which is only open during surgery open hours)
Maiden-bower	Maiden-bower Community Centre	Bus No 100 is 150 metres from the main entrance.	There are 7 accessible bays	One accessible toilet on site	Accessible toilet has a baby changing unit inside, which may make side transfer difficult for some wheelchair users
<i>Maiden-bower</i>	<i>Brook School Salterns Road</i>	<i>No bus routes nearby. Bus stop at Palmer Road, which is a very long walk to the school</i>	<i>No accessible bays marked out but ample parking</i>	<i>One accessible toilet on site</i>	<i>Slight lip on the door entering hallway</i>
Northgate	Northgate Community Centre	Bus number 100, 100 metres away	There are 2 accessible bays	One accessible toilet on site	No access issues identified.

Ward	Venue/Address	Transport Links	Accessible Parking	Accessible Toilet	Potential Access Issues
<i>Pound Hill North</i>	<i>Milton Mount Primary School Grattons Drive</i>	<i>Bus No 4 outside Peterhouse Parade (towards Pound Hill) 150 metres to school gate Bus No 5 away from Pound Hill (150 metres to school gate)</i>	<i>There is ample parking in the school playground. No accessible bays marked out.  There is a 100 metre walk from the car park to the hall.</i>	<i>There is no accessible toilet but one is planned within the next 12 months.  The staff toilet which is currently used does not have grab rails for ambulant disabled people</i>	<i>The pedestrian entrance (between staggered barriers) is very tight and uneven for wheelchair users/scooters and people who require adequate width should use main entrance via Peterhouse Parade  Many turns to get from the entrance to the venue, visually impaired people may need assistance</i>
Pound Hill North	Wakehams Green Community Centre  Wakehams Green Drive	Bus No.4 and 5 stop 200 metres away	There are 2 accessible bays	There is an accessible toilet	There is a 6cm lip down into the venue and no visual indicator that trip hazard is there (disabled people may find it hard to get out of building independently). Large pot holes in car park

Ward	Venue/Address	Transport Links	Accessible Parking	Accessible Toilet	Potential Access Issues
Pound Hill South	Pound Hill Community Centre  Worth Road	Bus No 5 and 272 stops at Pound Hill Parade which is 250 metres from the entrance	There is one accessible bay	There is a partially accessible toilet.	No further access issues identified.
Pound Hill South	St Edwards the Confessor Church	No bus routes coming from where voters live	2 accessible bays	Partially accessible toilet (smaller than best practice recommendations)	One accessible parking bay required a kerb to be negotiated to get into venue. Venue also has a small lip to negotiate (may be difficult for independent wheelchair or scooter users)
<i>Southgate</i>	<i>St Mary's Church Hall</i>  <i>Wakehurst Drive</i>	<i>Bus No 1 towards Bewbush (Southgate Avenue) is 80 metres from the venue.</i>  <i>Bus No 1 (to Tollgate Hill) is 100 metres from the venue</i>	<i>There is no Accessible bay outside the venue but 2 bays in Wakehurst Road 40 metres from the</i>	<i>There is one accessible toilet (and baby changing unit)</i>	<i>There are no major access issues with this venue.</i>

Ward	Venue/Address	Transport Links	Accessible Parking	Accessible Toilet	Potential Access Issues
			<i>venue in front of the shops</i>		
Southgate	Southgate West Community Centre	This venue does not have any bus services running nearby	There are 2 accessible bays	The accessible toilet door is heavy to open and opens inwards	There is a steep up hill section to get from Downland Drive, up Ditchling Hill to the venue
<i>Three Bridges</i>	<i>Montefiore Institute</i>  <i>Hazelwick Road</i>	<i>Three Bridges train station nearby. Bus No 20 (towards 3 bridges) 100 metres away, also bus No 4,5,100 at Bus Stop A.</i>	<i>One small bay outside venue on main road, ample parking spaces to the rear.</i>	<i>There is a toilet for use but the dimensions are very small and potentially problematic for wheelchair users</i>	<i>Main entrance has 2 large steps, however there is level access into the venue via Hazelwick Avenue</i>
Three Bridges	Three Bridges Community Centre	Bus number 7, 20, 801 150 metres to bus stop	There is one accessible bay	There is one accessible toilet on site	The accessible toilet may not be easy to lock for people with manual dexterity issues. Potholes in car park.

Ward	Venue/Address	Transport Links	Accessible Parking	Accessible Toilet	Potential Access Issues
Tilgate	Tilgate Community Centre	Bus No 2 bus stop is located 400 metres away from the venue.	There are 2 accessible bays	There is an accessible toilet	No access issues identified.
Tilgate	Holy Trinity, Tilgate	Bus No.2 300 metres from main entrance	An accessible bay will be marked out on day of elections, loose gravel	One accessible toilet on site	Poor access into the hall, narrow entry, then sharp left turn into hall (unsuitable for scooters and large wheelchairs)
West Green	The Charis Centre	Bus number 2 150 metres from entrance	Accessible parking bay will be marked out on day of elections	One on site	Accessible toilet door opens inwards rather than outwards. Voters parking at rear car park may need assistance to open interior fire doors to get to the main hall where they can vote.