

# Crawley Borough Council

## Report to Governance Committee

28 November 2023

### Findings of the Reviews of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations (2023)

Report of the Chief Executive/Returning Officer (CEX/066)

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#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. To consider the Returning Officer's proposal for the polling arrangements for Crawley following the statutory required review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. The Committee is requested to endorse the proposed Polling Places and Polling Stations location and Scheme as detailed in Appendix 3, which proposes the continuation of all current locations, with the exception of Ifield Ward, where it is proposed to not use the Mill school as a polling Station.
- 2.2. To recommend to the Full Council that it adopt the new polling arrangements, with the Electoral Register amended to reflect new scheme commencing on 1 February 2024.

#### 3. Reasons for the Recommendation

- 3.1. To seek the Council's approval for the polling arrangements for Crawley following the statutory required review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations.

#### 4. Background

- 4.1. 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 2013 introduced a requirement to review these arrangements every five years. The last full review was in 2019.
- 4.2. Following the conclusion of the Boundary Commission for England 2023 Review, and as part of the next phase of the Election Act 2022 provisions, all Authorities must hold a full review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations during the compulsory review period of 16 months between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025, but should be complete so that they can be used for the next Parliamentary Election.

- 4.3. At its meeting held on 11 September 2023 the Governance Committee agreed the polling place and polling district review be held with the following timetable:

Monday 2 October 2023 Publish notice of review inviting comments on the suitability of existing polling arrangements.
<i>Sunday 5 November 2023</i> Deadline for comments and proposed changes.
<i>Tuesday 28 November 2023</i> Governance Committee to consider comments received and proposed scheme and Acting Returning Officer's comments and recommendation of final scheme to Full Council.
<i>Wednesday 13 December 2023</i> Full Council adopts final scheme.
<i>Thursday 1 February 2024</i> Electoral Register amended to reflect new scheme.

- 4.4. 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.
- 4.5. 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. The Election Act 2022 has emphasised that disabled access and generally accessible should be seen as a priority in all aspects of

## **5. The Review**

- 5.1. Public consultation began on 2 October 2023 including details on the Council's website and notice boards. Comments were also sought from local disability organisations requesting comments regarding accessibility. Copies of the existing scheme were also sent to all Councillors and the MP for Crawley, both in paper and electronic format.
- 5.2. By the close of the consultation on Sunday 5 November 2023, only two responses had been received and are set out below.
- 5.3. The comments were received from Sophie Gosden, Head Teacher, The Mill Primary Academy:

*"I would like to request that The Mill ceases to be a Polling Station. This is due to:*

*Safeguarding concerns about the number of strangers accessing school grounds within the daytime. The room used is within our school building leading onto a corridor. The carpark being in use, the pathways leading to the reception area pass nursery and our EYFS outside area and I wish to limit the access to the public on the grounds of safeguarding the children.*

*The demand on school staff when needing to chaperone voting volunteer staff and any voters who need to use the toilet is also high: They are working full time and a day spent allowing access into and off of site and use of toilets is something that is not manageable.*

*Previously litter has also been found the following morning near the café, including an empty vodka bottle and cigarette rubbish. The litter bin was also overflowing.*

*The space used is also now required daily for:*

- *A group teaching space*
- *Counselling*
- *SEND workshops*
- *Parent workshops*

*The only option I would have to ensure adequate safeguarding and manageability is to close the school for the day, which in the current climate of increased government expectations on improved attendance, is not ideal and very disruptive to families.”*

- 5.4. The second comment was received from Paula Knott, Partner Support Officer, Early Help Crawley, Broadfield Family Hub, in relation to the Creasys Drive polling place.

*“At the last election, as the Adventure Playground building itself was not used, and a temporary polling station was lifted in over the building. That building is next to the Early Help Family Hub. This meant that access to our service by families and key partners (health teams as well as our own team and the day nursery that occupies the same building) was disrupted on the day that the cabin was brought in, on polling day and the day the cabin was removed.”*

## **6. Rationale for the Proposals Including Consideration of the Consultation Responses**

- 6.1. To ensure that the venues were still fit for purpose and met the statutory requirements required for polling stations, during the consultation period the Electoral Services Team visited all of the currently polling stations. Each also had been inspected prior to the May 2023 election by the Council’s Electoral Services Team and the Council’s Safety, Health and Resilience Team, who has particularly focused on accessibility for those residents with disabilities and health and safety and access to the venues.
- 6.2. Having considered the low number of responses received to the consultation, it can be reasonably assumed that the majority of the polling districts and polling places are considered to be in the correct location for our residents. This also includes not changing the Polling District LMC boundary to include the Hawth but continuing the use of it as the polling place for that district, especially as no views had received from Three Bridges Ward members requesting such a change and at the Governance Committee 11 September 2023, there appeared to have no such appetite for that alteration.
- 6.3. Based on the response to the consultation responses there were two polling districts/ places that needed further consideration, namely Polling District LBB (Broadfield Ward) – Creasys Drive former Adventure Playground along with Polling Districts LFB and LFD (Ifield Ward) – the Mill School.

## **Broadfield Ward**

- 6.4. The Returning Officer recommends **no** change to the polling places for Broadfield including continued use of the former Creasys Drive Adventure Playground (CDAP) as a Polling Station for Polling District LBB.
- 6.5. Specifically, regarding CDAP as a polling station, the adventure playground has been closed since November 2019 and since then, the building has mainly stood empty and been regularly vandalised.
- 6.6. For the May 2023 Election the building was not able to be used due to vandalism on several occasions. A temporary building (portacabin) was hired and placed outside the building to allow for polling to take place in the same location as the building. On polling day there were several problems with the temporary building, which lead to complaints:
- From staff due to the noise and vibrations from the generator.
  - The Family Hub (the adjacent building) the disruption caused from the loss of parking and disruption of the delivery and removal of the portacabin as detailed in their response to the consultation.
  - A security company had to be hired for the nights the building was in situ.
- 6.7. After the election the Council's Safety, Health and Resilience Team did a report on the portakabin on health and safety grounds, stating that was not a suitable venue to base 'officers' in for a long period of time as the vibrations, and most importantly the noise of the generator, was at a level that was 'intrusive', and, should it be used again, further mitigation, such as ear protectors, may be required. Whilst there were toilet facilities provided, via a portaloos, there was no fresh water or kitchen facilities available on site.
- 6.8. However, the Council's amenities and built environment teams are in the process of finalising plans to change the use of the unused building into an amenities depot. The depot will provide amenities, such as toilet facilities, kitchen facilities and fresh water. As part of these plans consideration has been taken to ensure that the building can continue to be as a polling venue for future elections including the installation of a new public ramp access to the building that will help ensure that the venue meets the necessary DDA requirements, required of a Polling Place. currently the renovation would be completed in good time so that it can be used for the scheduled May 2024 elections, irrespective of the when the building starts being used as a depot which has no official start date.

## **Ifield Ward**

- 6.9. Currently Ifield is divided into four polling districts.
- 6.10. The Returning Officer recommends that The Mill School is no longer used as a polling station due to the comments received by the school and the accessibility onto the school grounds is not adequate for voters with disabilities. There is no parking on the road outside the polling station, limited access to the premises carpark and the distance from the entrance from the road to the entrance of the polling station all of which making voting difficult for the voter. The Elections Act 2022 states "Returning Officers have a general responsibility to take all reasonable steps to support voters with disabilities",
- 6.11. It is proposed to:
- Merge Polling District LFA and LFB together to make one polling district (LFA). Voting to take place at Ifield Community Centre, Ifield Drive.
  - Merge LFC and LFD together to make one polling district (LFB). Voting to take place at Wybourne Community Centre, Hyde Drive.

- 6.12. During Covid The Mill School was not used as a polling station. LFB went to Ifield Community Centre. As LFB was a different polling district to LFA, voters for LFB had to vote at a separate polling station so the Tennis Club room was used. Merging the two polling districts together would mean they would all vote in the same polling station in the main hall of the building which would allow a steady flow through the building. LFD went to Wybourne Community Centre. No issues arose from the change.

## **7. Appendices to the Report**

- 7.1. [Appendix 1](#) contains The Current Polling Scheme  
[Appendix 2](#) contains Turnout by polling station voters at the May 2023 Crawley Borough Council Elections  
[Appendix 3](#) contains The Proposed new Polling Places and Polling Stations Scheme including maps  
[Appendix 4](#) contains a map of the current Ifield Polling Scheme

## **8. Ward Councillor Views**

- 8.1. Ward Councillors have been consulted as part of the review and no responses were received.

## **9. Implications**

- 9.1. 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.
- 9.2. The Council is required to review polling district and places every five years. All authorities must hold a full Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations during the compulsory review period of 16 months between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025. 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.
- 9.3. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

## **10. Background Papers**

[Reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations \(electoralcommission.org.uk\)](https://electoralcommission.org.uk)

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**Appendix 1****The Current Polling Scheme**

<b>WARD</b>	<b>POLLING DISTRICT</b>	<b>POLLING PLACE</b>	<b>ELECTORS</b>	<b>POSTAL VOTES</b>
Bewbush & North Broadfield	LAA	Bewbush Centre, Dorsten Square	6132	1098
	LAB	Broadfield Scout Hut, Seymour Road	921	206
	LAC	Bewbush Centre, Dorsten Square	37	5
Broadfield	LBA	Broadfield Community Centre, Broadfield Barton	4585	905
	LBB	Creasy's Drive Adventure Playground, Creasy's Drive	2684	684
Furnace Green	LD	Furnace Green Community Centre, Ashburnham Road	4444	1141
Gossops Green & Northeast Broadfield	LEA	Gossops Green Community Centre, Kidborough Road	3863	899
	LEB	Broadfield Scout Hut, Seymour Road	794	280
Ifield	LFA	Ifield Community Centre, Ifield Drive	3525	805
	LFB	The Mill Primary School, Ifield Drive	783	235
	LFC	Ifield West Community Centre, Hyde Drive	2231	394
	LFD	The Mill Primary School, Ifield Drive	589	186
Langley Green & Tushmore	LGA	Langley Green Centre, Stagelands	5529	987
	LGB	Northgate Community Centre, Barnfield Road	508	110
Maidenbower	LHA	Maidenbower Community Centre, Harvest Road	2829	659
	LHB	The Brook School, Salterns Road	3904	1105
Northgate & West Green	LIA	Northgate Community Centre	3475	674
	LIB	The Charis Centre, West Green Drive	4136	877
Pound Hill North & Forge Wood	LJA	The Grattons Indoors Bowls Club, Grattons Drive	2912	712
	LJB	Wakehams Green Community Centre, Wakehams Green Drive	1685	305
	LJC	Forge Wood Community Centre, Somerley Drive	2477	577

Pound Hill South & Worth	LKA	Pound Hill Community Centre, Worth Road	2767	615
	LKB	St Edward The Confessor, Hillcrest Close	1131	282
	LKC	St Edward The Confessor, Hillcrest Close	2308	651
Southgate	LLA	St Mary's Church, Wakehurst Drive	3000	734
	LLB	Southgate West Community Centre, Ditchling Hill	2909	850
	LLC	Southgate West Community Centre, Ditchling Hill	648	195
Three Bridges	LMA	Montefiore Institute, Hazelwick Road	2759	703
	LMB	Three Bridges Community Centre, Gales Drive	1875	504
	LMC	The Hawth, Hawth Avenue	1323	267
	LMD	Town Hall, The Boulevard	590	104
Tilgate	LNA	Tilgate Community Centre, Shackleton Road	2358	507
	LNB	Holy Trinity Church, Titmus Drive	2049	379

## Appendix 2

### Turnout by polling station voters at the May 2023 Crawley Borough Council Elections

WARD	POLLING DISTRICT	Station	POLLING PLACE	Turnout %	Votes Verified
Bewbush & North Broadfield	LAA	1	Bewbush Centre, Dorsten Square	13	280
	LAA	2	Bewbush Centre, Dorsten Square	11	249
	LAA	3	Bewbush Centre, Dorsten Square	14	259
	LAB	4	Broadfield Scout Hut, Seymour Road	13	122
	LAC	5	Bewbush Centre, Dorsten Square	16	6
			POSTAL VOTES	59.47	775
			<b>TOTAL TURNOUT</b>	<b>24</b>	
Broadfield	LBA	6	Broadfield Community Centre, Broadfield Barton	11	260
	LBA	7	Broadfield Community Centre, Broadfield Barton	11	247
	LBB	8	Creasy's Drive Adventure Playground, Creasy's Drive	9	235
			POSTAL VOTES	61.08	970
			<b>TOTAL TURNOUT</b>	<b>23</b>	
Furnace Green	LD	9	Furance Green Community Centre, Ashburnham Road	24	546
	LD	10	Furance Green Community Centre, Ashburnham Road	24	527
			POSTAL VOTES	72.43	841
			<b>TOTAL TURNOUT</b>	<b>43</b>	
Gossops Green & Northeast Broadfield	LEA	11	Gossops Green Community Centre, Kidborough Road	19	365
	LEA	12	Gossops Green Community Centre, Kidborough Road	19	361
	LEB	13	Broadfield Scout Hut, Seymour Road	15	119
			POSTAL VOTES	65.18	775
			<b>TOTAL TURNOUT</b>	<b>35</b>	



Ifield	LFA	14	Ifield Community Centre, Ifield Drive	13	246
	LFA	15	Ifield Community Centre, Ifield Drive	16	272
	LFB	16	The Mill Primary School, Ifield Drive	15	117
	LFC	17	Ifield West Community Centre, Hyde Drive	17	378
	LFD	18	The Mill Primary School, Ifield Drive	14	84
			POSTAL VOTES	65.25	1050
			<b>TOTAL TURNOUT</b>	<b>30</b>	
Langley Green & Tushmore	LGA	19	Langley Green Centre, Stagelands	17	325
	LGA	20	Langley Green Centre, Stagelands	18	369
	LGA	21	Langley Green Centre, Stagelands	16	260
	LGB	22	Northgate Community Centre, Barnfield Road	12	63
			POSTAL VOTES	56.28	636
			<b>TOTAL TURNOUT</b>	<b>27</b>	
Maidenbower	LHA	23	Maidenbower Community Centre, Harvest Road	18	262
	LHA	24	Maidenbower Community Centre, Harvest Road	18	251
	LHB	25	The Brook School, Salterns Road	13	265
	LHB	26	The Brook School, Salterns Road	14	279
			POSTAL VOTES	65.13	1151
			<b>TOTAL TURNOUT</b>	<b>33</b>	
Northgate & West Green	LIA	27	Northgate Community Centre	16	284
	LIA	28	Northgate Community Centre	16	284
	LIB	29	The Charis Centre, West Green Drive	13	291
	LIB	30	The Charis Centre, West Green Drive	13	251
			POSTAL VOTES	63.54	985
			<b>TOTAL TURNOUT</b>	<b>27</b>	

Pound Hill North & Forge Wood	LJA	31	The Grattons Indoors Bowls Club, Grattons Drive	25	412
	LJA	32	The Grattons Indoors Bowls Club, Grattons Drive	26	331
	LJB	33	Wakehams Green Community Centre, Wakehams Green Drive	22	363
	LJC	34	Forge Wood Community Centre, Somerley Drive	14	364
			POSTAL VOTES	61.73	1002
			<b>TOTAL TURNOUT</b>	<b>35</b>	
Pound Hill South & Worth	LKA	35	Pound Hill Community Centre, Worth Road	18	501
	LKB	36	St Edward The Confessor, Hillcrest Close	19	220
	LKC	37	St Edward The Confessor, Hillcrest Close	21	474
			POSTAL VOTES	71.04	1114
			<b>TOTAL TURNOUT</b>	<b>37</b>	
Southgate	LLA	38	St Mary's Church, Wakehurst Drive	11	174
	LLA	39	St Mary's Church, Wakehurst Drive	14	196
	LLB	40	Southgate West Community Centre, Ditchling Hill	13	189
	LLB	41	Southgate West Community Centre, Ditchling Hill	13	185
	LLC	42	Southgate West Community Centre, Ditchling Hill	11	76
		POSTAL VOTES	65.44	1176	
			<b>TOTAL TURNOUT</b>	<b>30</b>	
Three Bridges	LMA	43	Montefiore Institute, Hazelwick Road	20	562
	LMB	44	Three Bridges Community Centre, Gales Drive	19	357
	LMC	45	The Hawth, Hawth Avenue	14	193
	LMD	46	Town Hall, The Boulevard	13	81
			POSTAL VOTES	65.21	1035
			<b>TOTAL TURNOUT</b>	<b>34</b>	

## Appendix 3

### **Bewbush & North Broadfield Ward**

#### **Polling District LAA**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Bewbush Centre Dorsten Square.

**Electors:** 6132

**Postal Voters:** 1098

#### **Polling District LAB**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Broadfield Scout Hut, Seymour Road.

**Electors:** 921

**Postal Voters:** 206

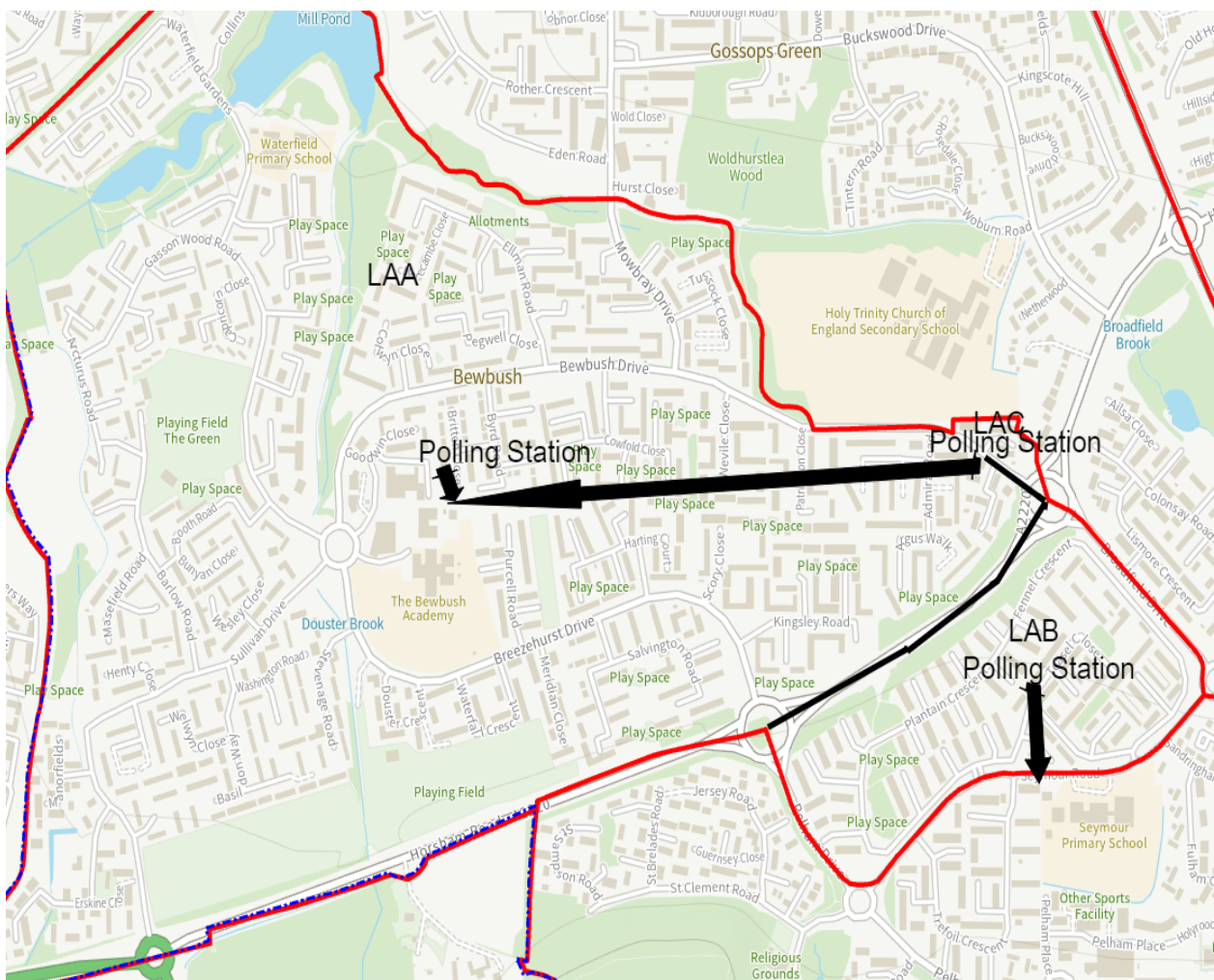
#### **Polling District LAC**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Bewbush Centre, Dorsten Square.

**Electors:** 37

**Postal Voters:** 5



**Broadfield Ward**

**Polling District LBA**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Broadfield Youth and Community Centre Broadfield Barton.

**Electors:** 4585

**Postal Voters:** 905

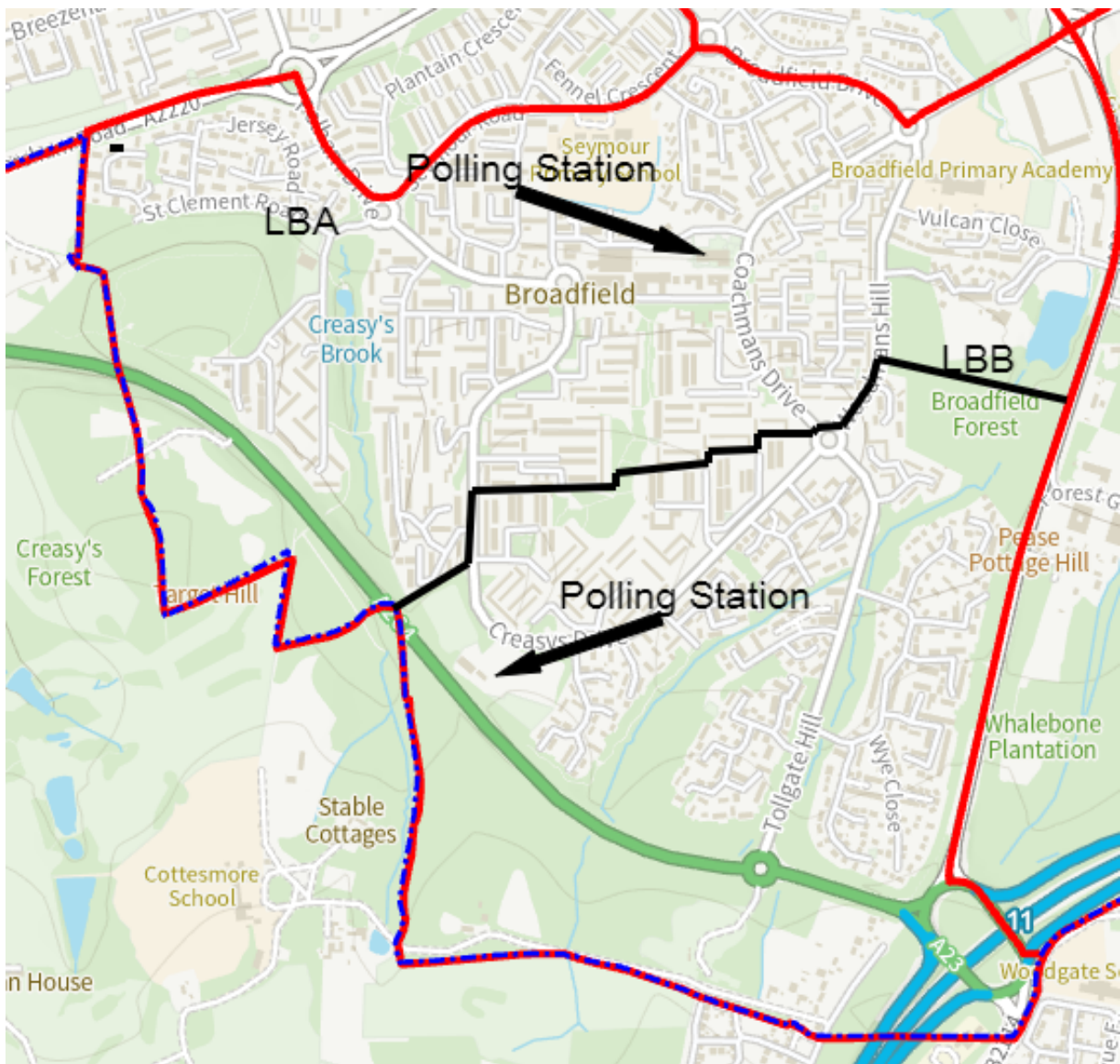
**Polling District LBB**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Creasy's Drive Adventure Playground, Creasy's Drive

**Electors:** 2684

**Postal Voters:** 684



**Furnace Green Ward**

**Polling District LD**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Furnace Green Community Centre,  
Ashburnham Road.

**Electors:** 4444

**Postal Voters:** 1141



**Gossops Green & Northeast Broadfield Ward**

**Polling District LEA**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Gossops Green Community Centre,  
Capel Lane.

**Electors:** 3863

**Postal Voters:** 899

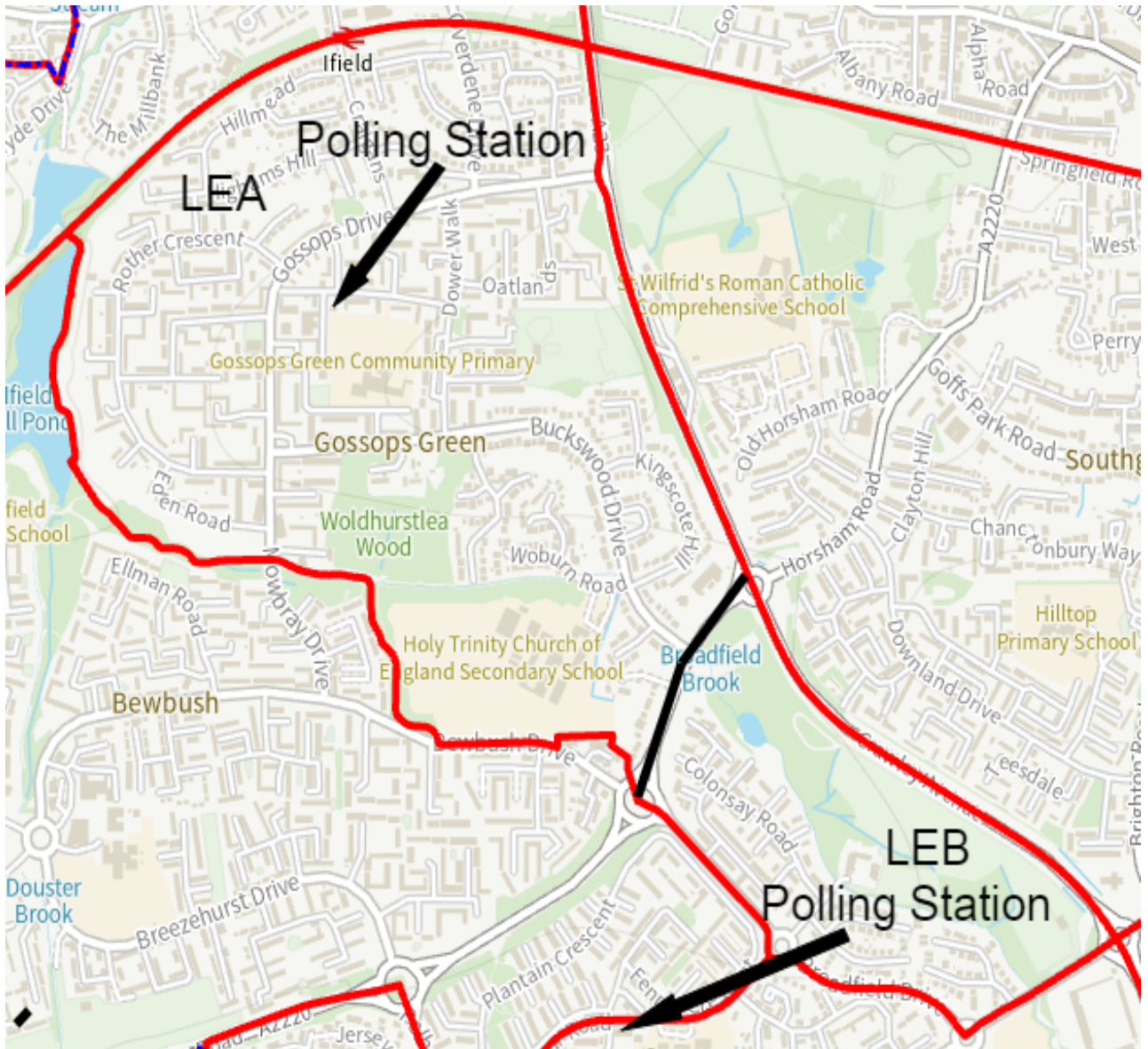
**Polling District LEB**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Broadfield Scout Hut, Seymour Road.

**Electors:** 794

**Postal Voters:** 280



## Ifield Ward

### **Polling District LFA**

**Polling Place:** Ifield Community Centre, Ifield Drive.

**Electors:** 4308

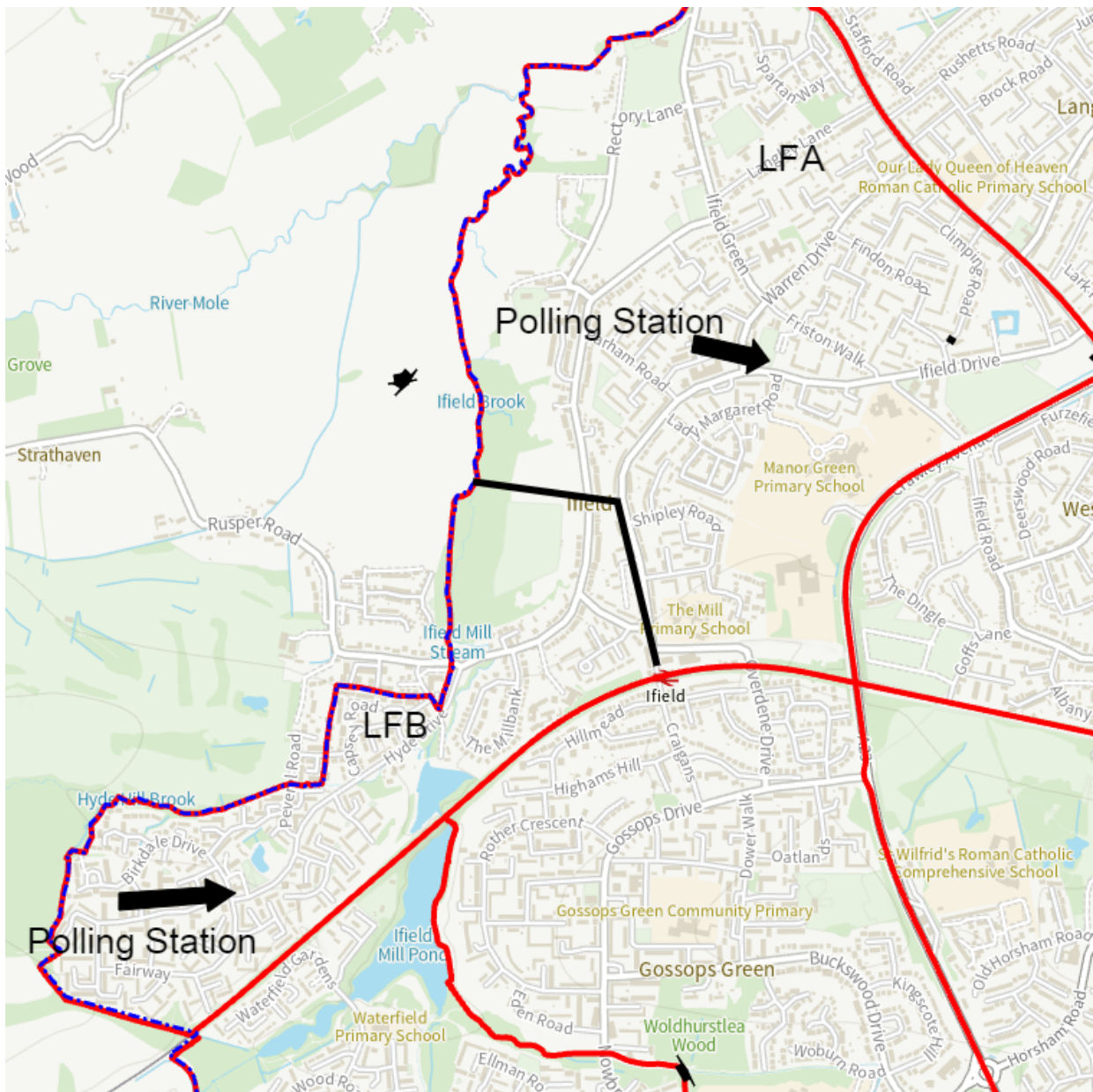
**Postal Voters:** 1040

### **Polling District LFB**

**Polling Place:** Wybourne Community Centre, Hyde Drive.

**Electors:** 2820

**Postal Voters:** 580



## Langley Green & Tushmore Ward

**Polling District LGA**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** The Langley Centre, Stagelands.

**Electors:** 5529

**Postal Voters:** 987

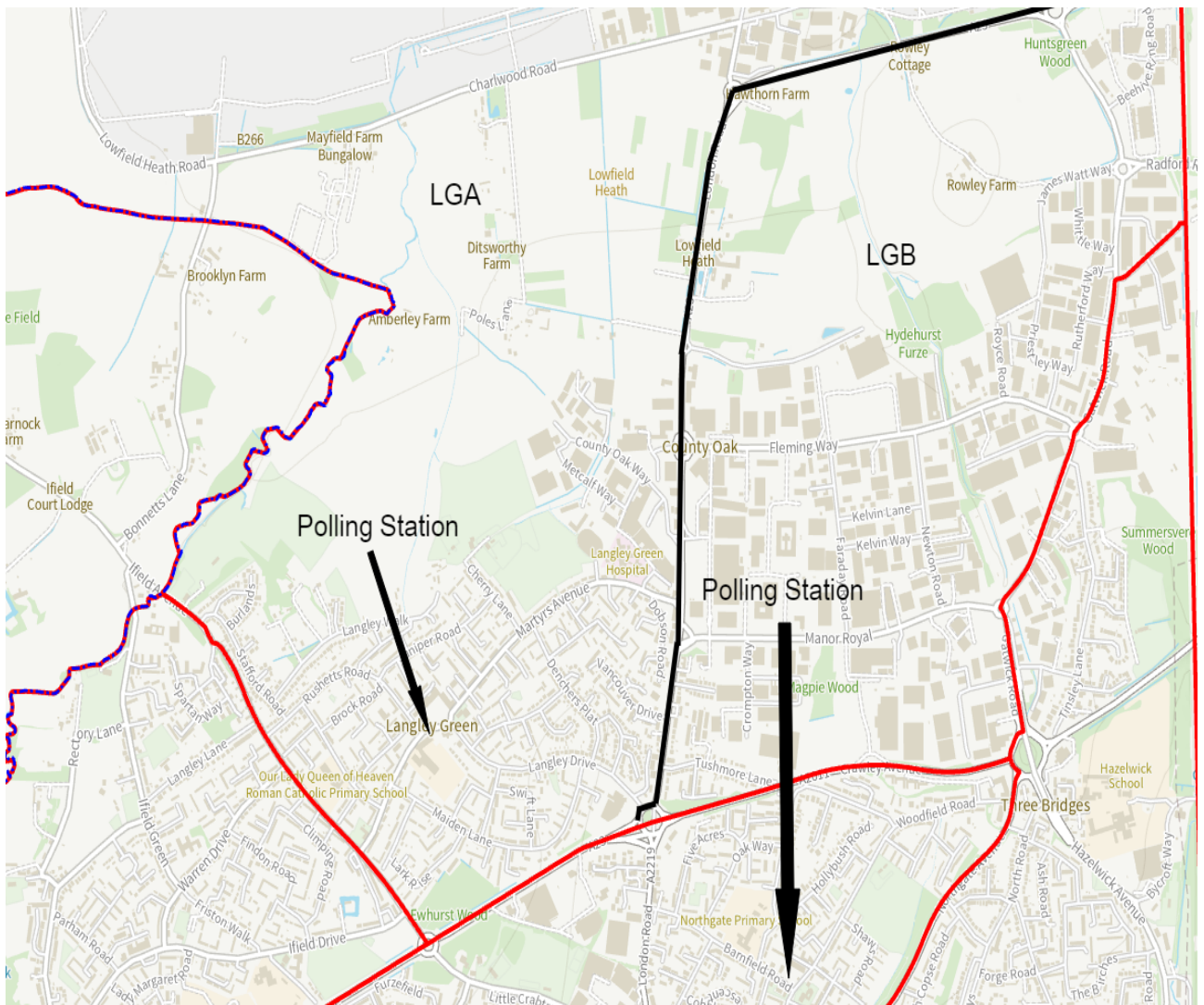
**Polling District LGB**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Northgate Community Centre, Barnfield Road.

**Electors:** 508

**Postal Voters:** 110





**Maidenbower Ward**

**Polling District LHA**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Maidenbower Community Centre,  
Harvest Road.

**Electors:** 2829

**Postal Voters:** 659

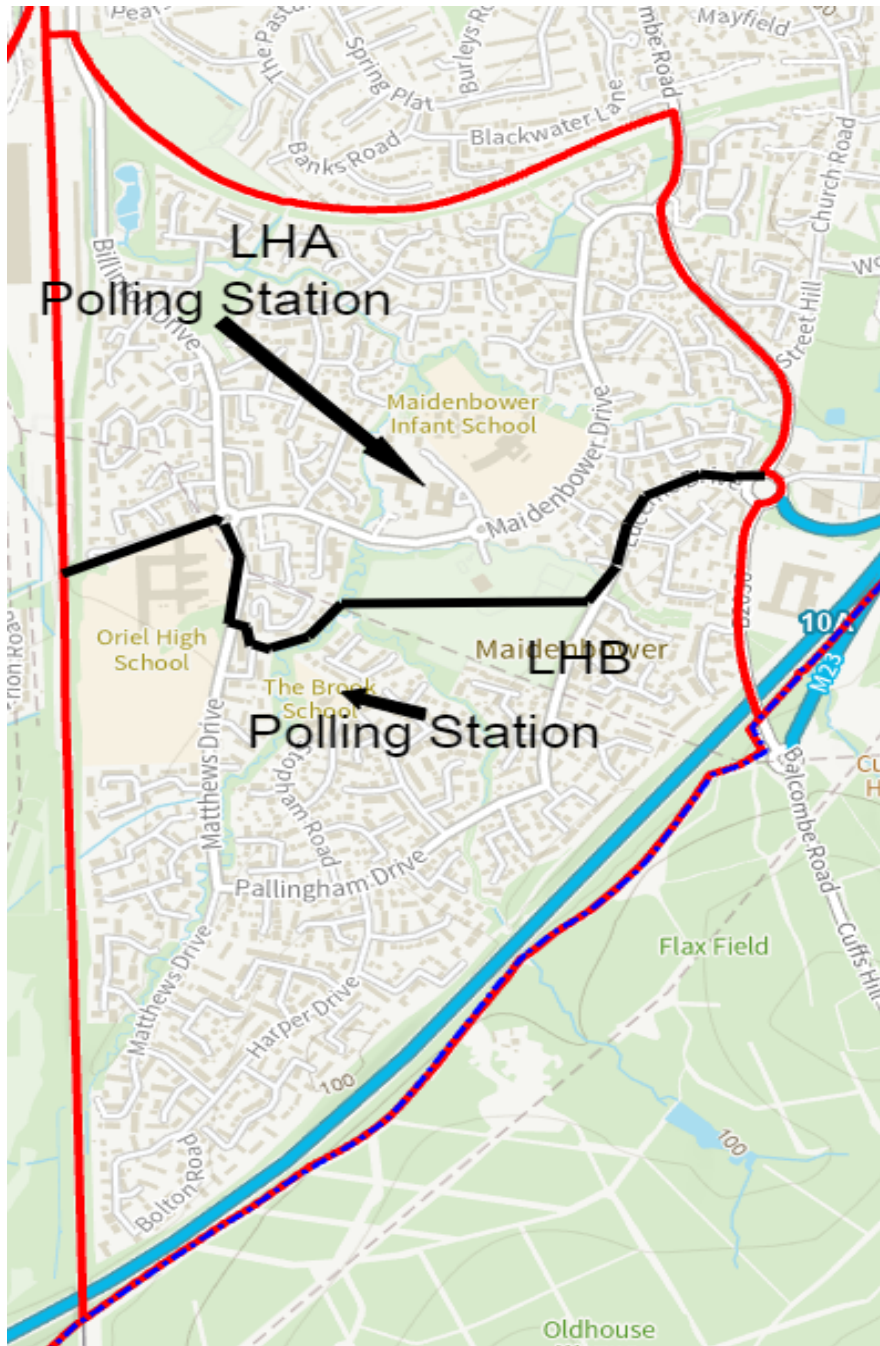
**Polling District LHB**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** The Brook School, Salterns Road.

**Electors:** 3904

**Postal Voters:** 1105



## Northgate & West Green Ward

**Polling District LIA**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Northgate Community Centre, Barnfield Road.

**Electors:** 3475

**Postal Voters:** 674

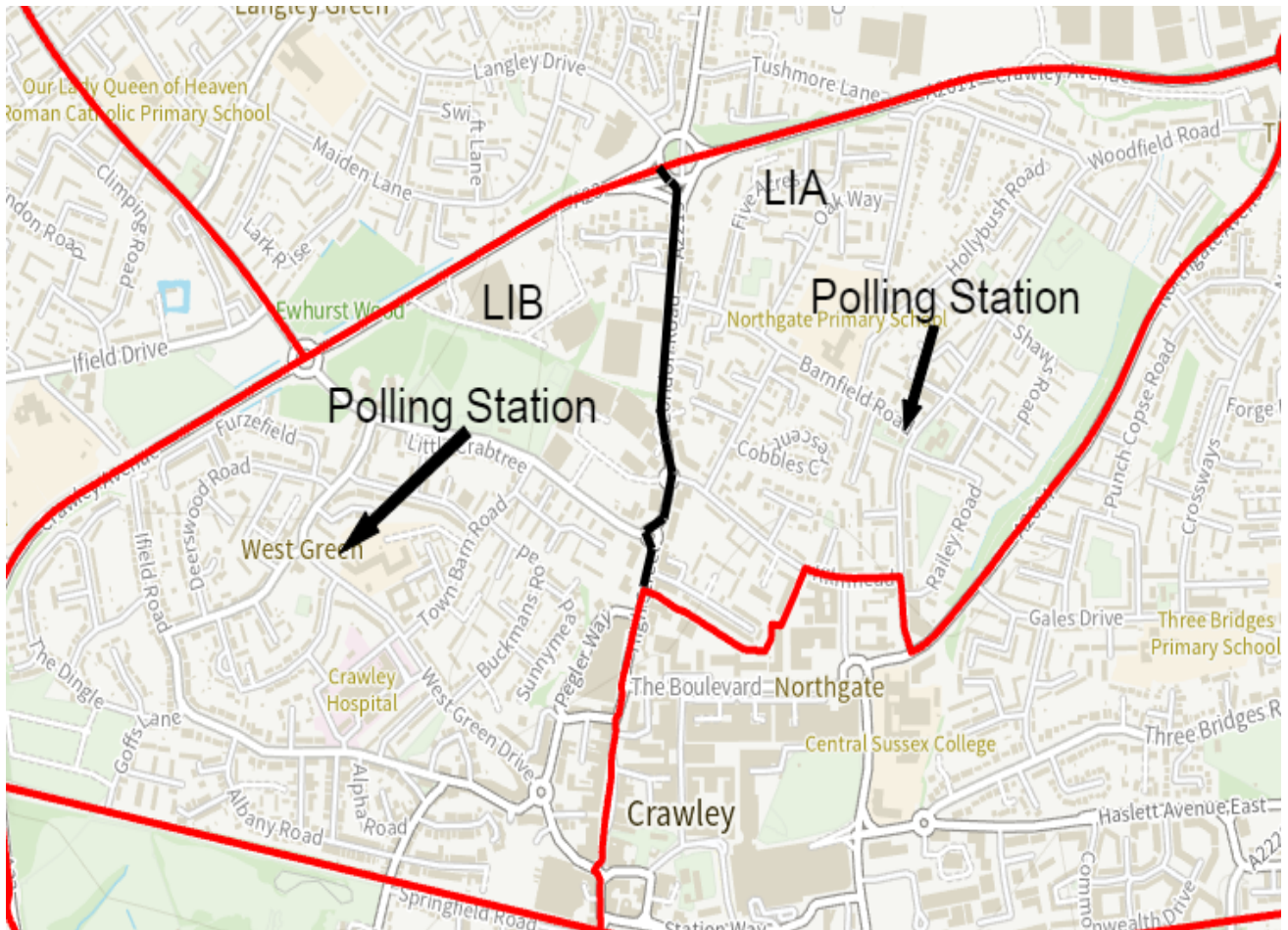
**Polling District LIB**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** The Charis Centre, West Green

**Electors:** 4136

**Postal Voters:** 877



## Pound Hill North & Forge Wood Ward

### **Polling District LJA**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Grattons Indoor Bowls Club, Grattons Drive.

**Electors:** 2912

**Postal Voters:** 712

### **Polling District LJB**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Wakehams Green Community Centre,  
Wakehams Green Drive.

**Electors:** 1685

**Postal Voters:** 305

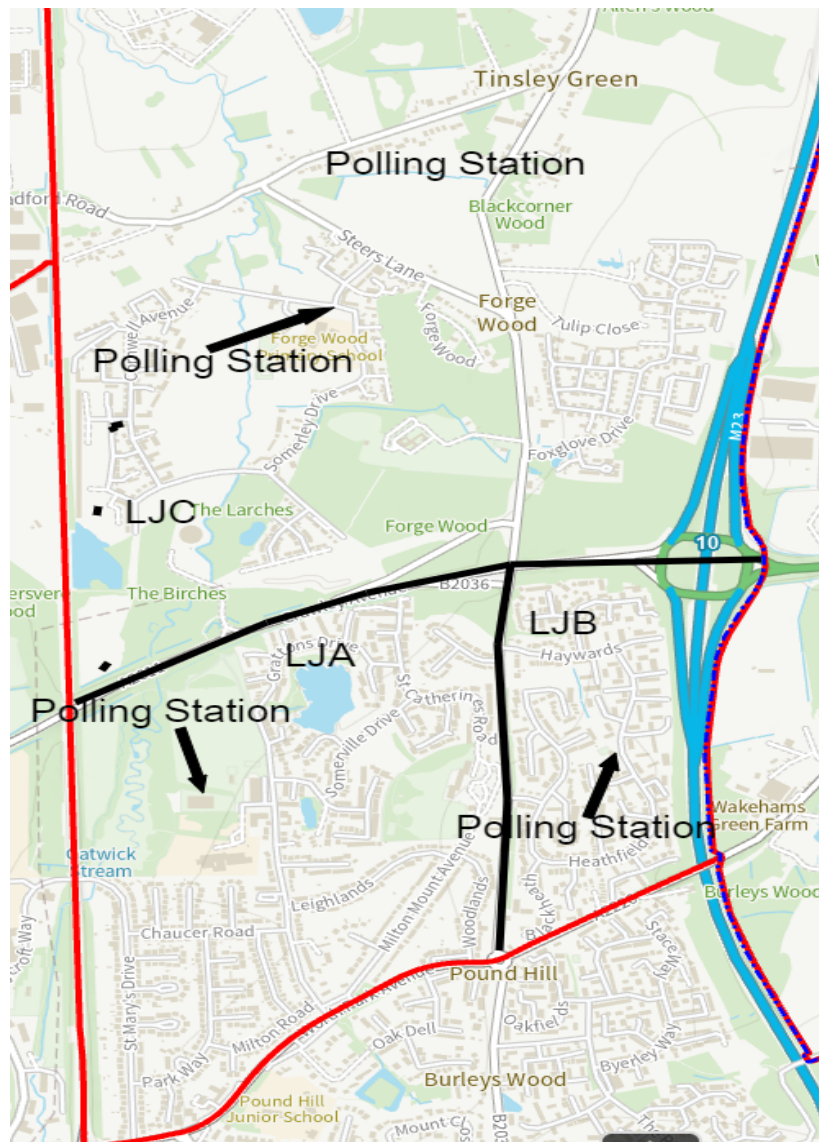
### **Polling District LJC**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Forge Wood Community Centre, Somerley Drive

**Electors:** 2477

**Postal Voters:** 577



## Pound Hill South & Worth Ward

### **Polling District LKA**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Pound Hill Community Centre, Worth Road.

**Electors:** 2767

**Postal Voters:** 615

### **Polling District LKB**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** St. Edward the Confessor Church Hall,  
Hillcrest Close.

**Electors:** 1131

**Postal Voters:** 282

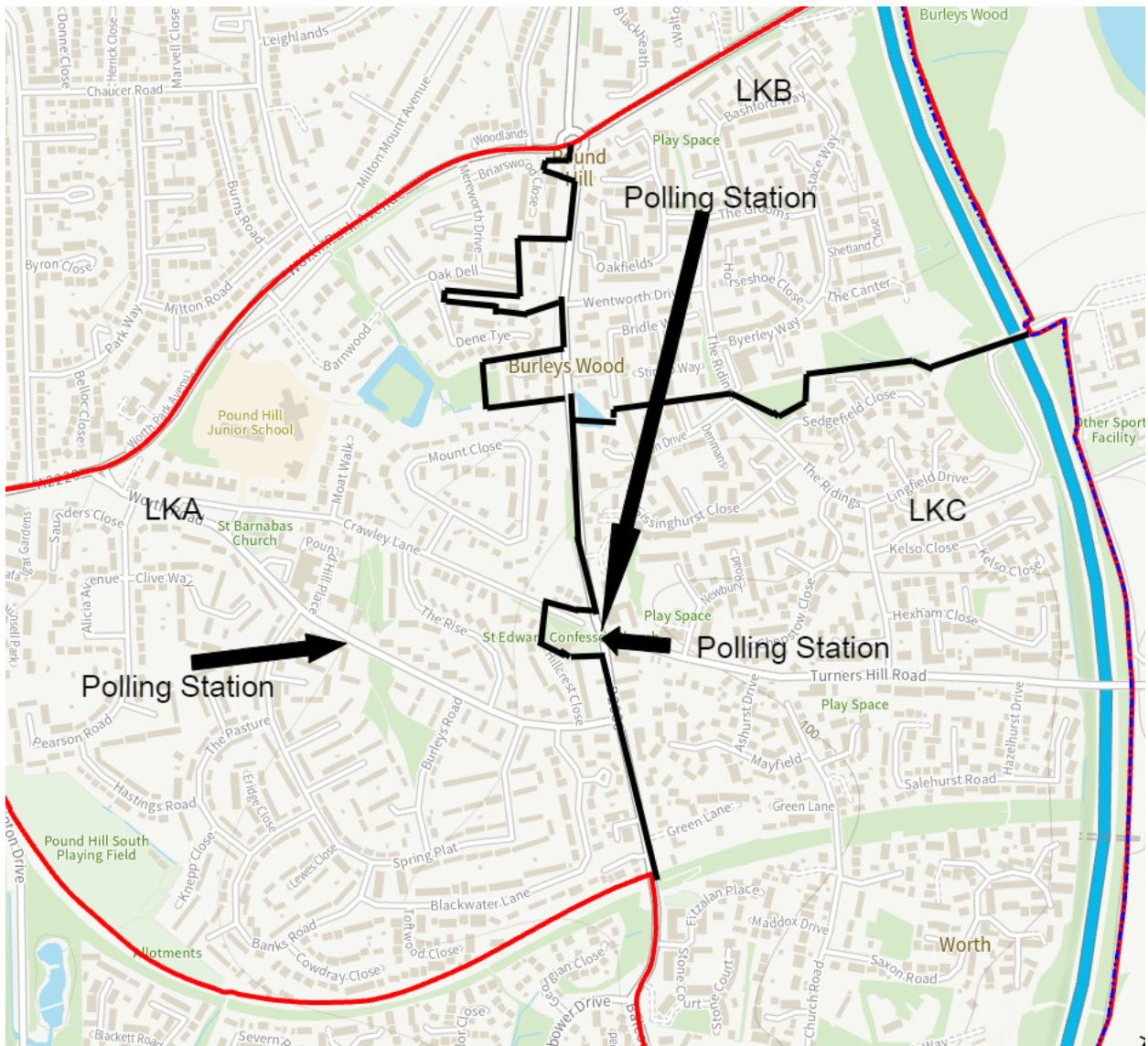
### **Polling District LKC**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** St. Edward the Confessor Church Hall,  
Hillcrest Close.

**Electors:** 2308

**Postal Voters:** 651



## Southgate Ward

### **Polling District LLA**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** St Marys Church Hall, Wakehurst Drive.

**Electors:** 3000

**Postal Voters:** 734

### **Polling District LLB**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Southgate Community Centre, Ditchling Hill.

**Electors:** 2909

**Postal Voters:** 850

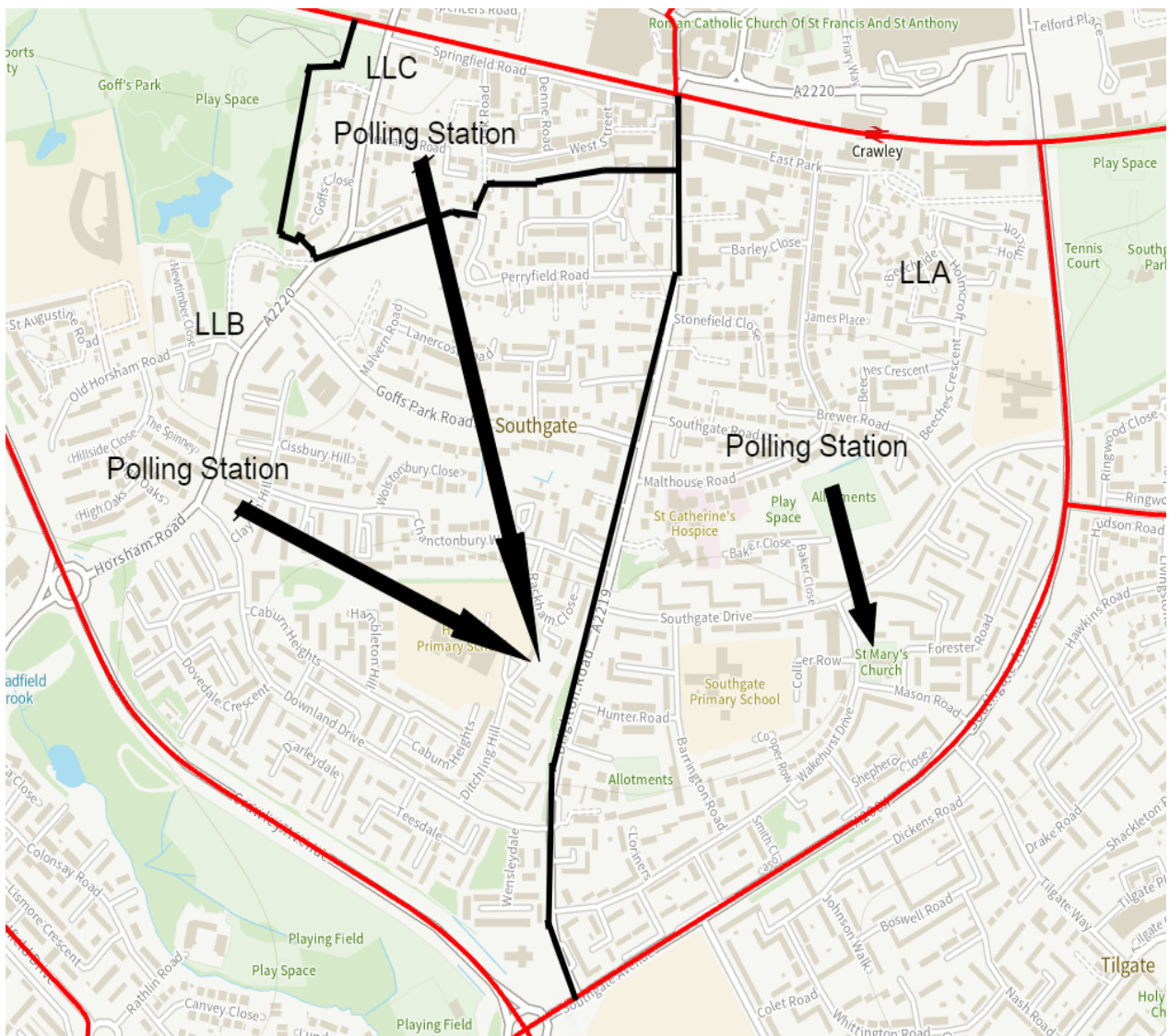
### **Polling District LLC**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Southgate Community Centre, Ditchling Hill.

**Electors:** 648

**Postal Voters:** 195



## Three Bridges Ward

### **Polling District LMA**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Montefiore Institute, Hazelwick Road.

**Electors:** 2759

**Postal Voters:** 703

### **Polling District LMB**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Three Bridges Community Centre, Gales Place.

**Electors:** 1875

**Postal Voters:** 504

### **Polling District LMC**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** The Hawth, Hawth Avenue.

**Electors:** 1323

**Postal Voters:** 267

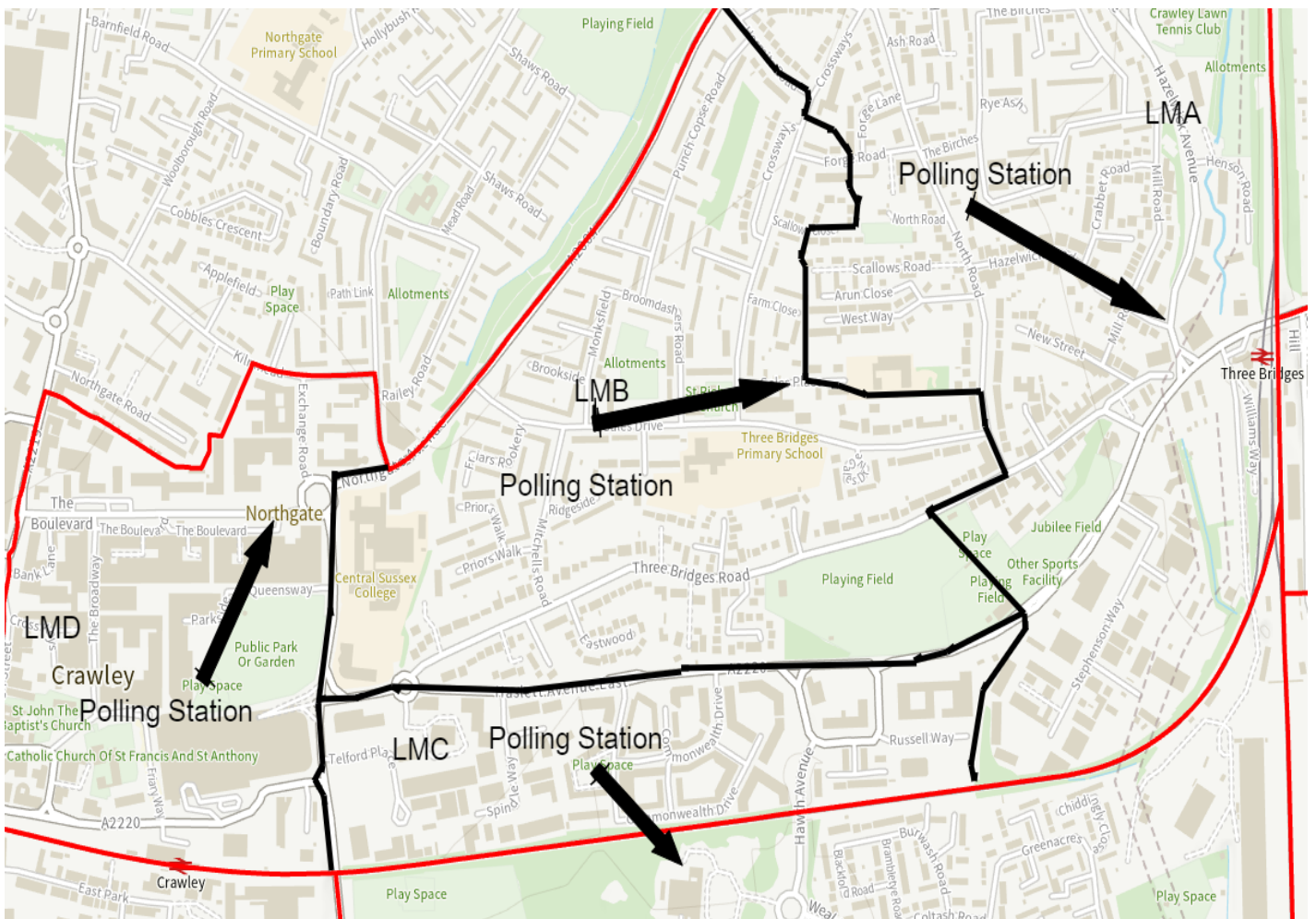
### **Polling District LMD**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Town Hall, The Boulevard

**Electors:** 590

**Postal Voters:** 104



## Tilgate Ward

**Polling District LNA**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Tilgate Community Centre, Shackleton Road.

**Electors:** 2358

**Postal Voters:** 507

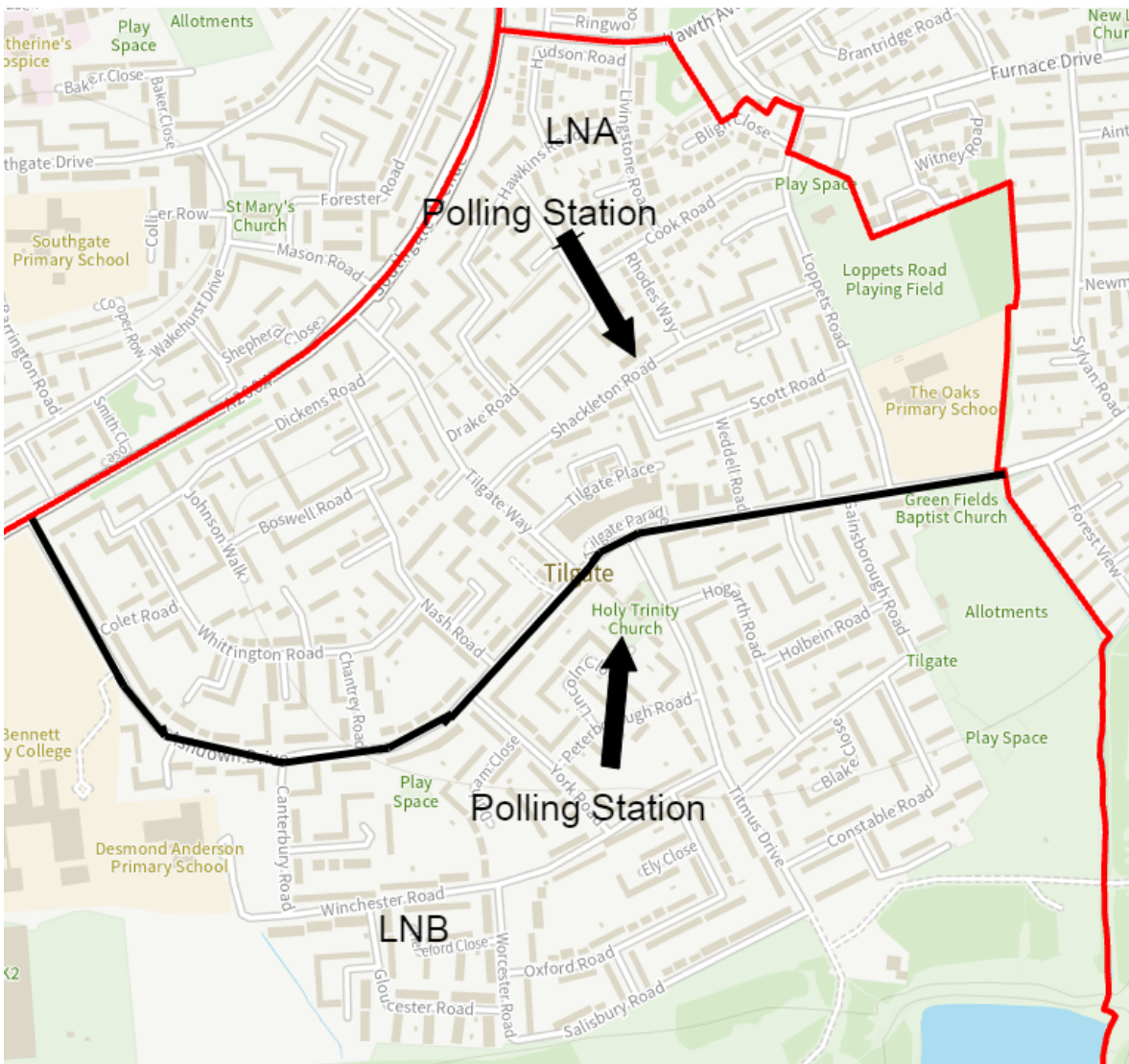
**Polling District LNB**

***No Change Proposed***

**Polling Place:** Holy Trinity Church Hall, Titmus Drive.

**Electors:** 2049

**Postal Voters:** 379



**Ifield Ward – Current Scheme**

**Polling District LFA**

**Polling Place:** Ifield Community Centre, Ifield Drive.

**Electors:** 3525

**Postal Voters:** 805

**Polling District LFB**

**Polling Place:** The Mill Primary School, Ifield Drive.

**Electors:** 783

**Postal Voters:** 235

**Polling District LFC**

**Polling Place:** Wybourne Community Centre, Hyde Drive.

**Electors:** 2231

**Postal Voters:** 394

**Polling District LBD**

**Polling Place:** The Mill Primary School, Ifield Drive.

**Electors:** 589

**Postal Voters:** 186

