

Revised Proposals following the Initial Consultation- Fant Ward

(Acting) Returning Officer's proposals

As a result of the consultation it is proposed that the polling station at St Michaels School will close and those eligible to vote can do so at a relocated polling station at the Grange Moor Hotel.

During the preliminary consultation, 81 people responded to the proposal with 48 of those supporting the move

Feedback was received from Councillor Matt Boughton, a council member for Fant Ward. He is in favour of closing the polling station at the school and moving it to the hotel as 'it is not feasible for the school to host a polling station at every single election'.

An email was received from Councillor Paul Harper, also a council member for Fant Ward who was not in favour of the move as 'the hotel is not safe for access or for tellers'.

Although the access to the polling station is via the driveway to the car park, it was not found to be dangerous provided due care and attention was taken by both pedestrians and drivers.

However a detailed inspection of the site has highlighted areas for the tellers to operate outside or in the lobby of the premises; this will avoid problems in the driveway.

During the consultation some people were worried that the hotel should not be used for voting purposes, but being a business does not preclude its use as a polling station.

Councillor Boughton also raised the possibility of opening an additional polling station to serve electors in the area around Lockmeadow and Maidstone West station.

We will actively look into finding an appropriate venue for the future however it will not form part of this polling station review.

If the distance to the new polling station is an issue for those without transport, political parties will ferry electors to polling stations if a lift is requested. The elections office will be able to put voters in touch with the party of their choice to arrange transport.

Councillor Harper also suggested an alternative venue, St Michaels Church Halls opposite the Grange Moor Hotel.

Every effort has been made to evaluate the church halls as an alternative venue however our request was considered but declined.

If you wish to comment on the final proposals please respond by 28 October 2016 as the council will make the decision on 7 December 2016.

Further details can be found on our website – maidstone.gov.uk