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| **Polling Districts, Places and Stations Review 2024** |  |

**Spital Ward**

| **Date** | **Polling Station** | **Ward** | **Comments** | **Acting Returning Officer's comments** |
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| 09/09/24 | Flax Hill Junior Academy | Spital | Would prefer another location was used as it means a school has to shut.  **What is your alternative to the suggestion for a polling station?** A local church building. | Schools are informed of scheduled polls several years in advance thus allowing ample time to plan for a Teacher Training Inset Day. This should help keep disruption and inconvenience to a minimum. Whilst schools must provide the Returning Officer with a suitable room to facilitate voting it is not the Returning Officer who chooses to close the school. This is a decision taken by the school and in fact several schools that are used as polling stations throughout the borough remain either fully or partially open on polling days.  Schools are required under statute to be made available for voting purposes. This is partly because as a public building the access must meet all requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010. Accessibility for disabled voters is a very important issue and ensuring that polling stations are suitable for all sorts of disability is essential. Statistics state that there are approximately 7,000 people within the borough who have mobility issues and an unknown number of people with other impediments. We must be very careful about not accidentally disenfranchising an elector as they are unable to access voting facilities easily. Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 has placed a requirement on the local authority to review the accessibility of all polling stations. A review is undertaken at every poll and a polling station questionnaire is available for completion by electors. No complaints have been received at any of the recent elections regarding accessibility at this venue. Therefore, no changes are proposed. |
| 11/09/24 | Anker Valley Primary Academy | Spital | Although easy to find, I don’t feel that primary schools are suitable for polling stations, it is negatively affecting our children’s education.  **What is your alternative to the suggestion for a polling station?** Church halls, community centres, bars, restaurants. | Please see first comment above regarding the use of school buildings. |
| 13/09/24 | Flax Hill Junior Academy | Spital | They’re schools which interrupts with child education. You have plenty of empty building such as the Coton Centre which could be made better use of. You use the incorrect buildings. Schools should not be accessible for anyone outside of schooling age or their parents or guardians.  **What is your alternative option (if any) to the above polling station(s)?** Coton Centre. | Please see first comment above regarding the use of school buildings.  The Coton Centre is not within the borough boundary and therefore cannot be allocated as a polling station for this polling district. |
| 13/09/24 | Flax Hill Junior Academy | Spital | Children are kept out of school. Needs to be different places like pubs or social clubs not school.  **What is your alternative option (if any) to the above polling station(s)?**  Social clubs  Church halls | Please see first comment above regarding the use of school buildings.  No alternative venue has been specifically identified by the submission. |
| 13/09/24 | Flax Hill Junior Academy | Spital | Other premises available to use rather than closing schools. I would rather schools were not used.  **What is your alternative option (if any) to the above polling station(s)?** Coton Centre could be used. | Please see first comment above regarding the use of school buildings.  The Coton Centre is not within the borough boundary and therefore cannot be allocated as a polling station for this polling district. |
| 13/09/24 | Flax Hill Junior Academy | Spital | My child is missing out on her education and there are plenty of other places you can use. Children's education is important and there are plenty of other buildings you could use.  **What is your alternative option (if any) to the above polling station(s)?** Spital tennis club, church halls, local pubs. | Please see first comment above regarding the use of school buildings.  No alternative venue has been specifically identified by the submission. |
| 13/09/24 | Flax Hill Junior Academy | Spital | Children are losing out on education when there are more suitable premises nearby. I do not understand why a school would be chosen this is detrimental to the children who attend this school. Surely a local building that is not in use for such important work would be a better location. Necessary but need to be more practical in location.  **What is your alternative option (if any) to the above polling station(s)?**  St Francis Church - Masefield Drive  Leyfields Community Centre - Masefield Drive  St Andrew’s Methodist church - Milton Ave  Coton Centre - Comberford Road | Please see first comment. |
| 13/09/24 | Flax Hill Junior Academy | Spital | I don’t think it’s appropriate to keep disturbing children’s education time when there are plenty of appropriate spaces to use as polling stations like churches and postal voting is also available. My view is that it is not ok for government to keep talking about the importance of children’s attendance and but then also say well it’s fine for schools to close for polling. There are other buildings available, such as churches for example St Francis Church on Masefield Drive and the Spital Church on Ashby Road also alternative buildings such as the tennis and bowls club on Wigginton Road and the community centre once it’s back up and running on Masefield Drive.    **What is your alternative option (if any) to the above polling station(s)?** All local churches could be used in the area, there are St Andrews which I know is already used but also St Francis, the Spital Chapel but there is also the Coton Centre and the community centre or children’s centre on Masefield Drive. The tennis and bowls club on Wigginton Road. Maybe some local pubs would happily allow function rooms to be used such as the Wigginton Arms and the Tam O Shanter. |  |
| 13/09/24 | Flax Hill Junior Academy | Spital | It’s a school. Therefore, it has to shut to pupils which means they lose a day’s education but yet we as parents get fined for taking them out of school or low attendance. It isn’t acceptable. There are plenty of other local building that could be used for example church, pubs etc. They shouldn’t be held in schools. Majority will and can do it online  **What is your alternative option (if any) to the above polling station(s)?** No comment left. | Please see first comment above regarding the use of school buildings.  Currently there is no provision within electoral law to allow for online voting. Every elector has the choice to cast their vote in person at a polling station or by applying for an absent vote e.g. postal vote.  No alternative venue has been specifically identified by the submission. |
| 13/09/24 | Flax Hill Junior Academy | Spital | Invisible disruptive to pupils to close the school, there are enough polling stations close enough without disturbing the school. They should be a least disruptive to the community as possible.  **What is your alternative option (if any) to the above polling station(s)?** St Andrews, QEMS as they have out buildings. | Please see first comment above regarding the use of school buildings.  QEMS is already utilised as a polling station. |
| 13/09/24 | Flax Hill Junior Academy | Spital | I do not believe that schools should be used as a polling station. My son attends this school and causes several difficulties when arranging childcare to look after him.  This also will/may have a negative impact on his educational development. And speaking on behalf of some families. This may cause a negative impact on their finances as they may have to take unpaid special leave with their employment and/or pay excessive childcare fees.  It’s very frustrating when I know there is a poll coming up knowing that my son’s school is being used.  I completely disagree with schools being used based on the above points that I have raised. I get there has to be a vote. However, I feel in my opinion that there is no respect for the families that are encouraged to vote. The people that vote are those whose lives are impacted by those who are voted into office. It seems like there’s no respect in that sense due to families being financially and mentally, impacted by the situation of closing the school for the purpose of voting.  **What is your alternative option (if any) to the above polling station(s)?** Firstly, if schools are to be used then this should be done out of school hours.  Secondly, I’m sure there are numerous halls/ offices that be used instead of affecting children’s education.  The college whereby childcare isn’t necessarily an issue.  Setting up gazebo’s in the town centre/castle grounds.  I’m sure that there are numerous other options that should be considered before impacting all those people’s lives whereby raising a child is hard enough. | Please see first comment above regarding the use of school buildings.  The hours of poll are set in legislation as 7am to 10pm. Unfortunately, there is no way that these can be amended. It is similar with polling days. Local elections always take place on the first Thursday in May. All other elections, including by-elections and unscheduled polls such as Parliamentary elections have a defined timescale of 25 days in which to set up and run the poll.  The location of polling stations should be within the polling district unless there are no suitable venues within it. It is not possible to use locations such as the Castle Grounds or other locations within the town centre. Tamworth College is in the process of being decommissioned from its current site and is therefore not a suitable location. |
| 14/09/24 | Flax Hill Junior Academy | Spital | Because it is a school and therefore it is forced to close resulting in our children missing out on education, yet the government can fine us for taking our children on holiday. So therefore, I think the school shouldn’t be used. I think schools should not be used for these days as there is other places that can be used.  **What is your alternative option (if any) to the above polling station(s)?** There are other places such as St Francis Church and other buildings that has nothing in when polling is going on. | Please see first comment above regarding the use of school buildings.  Contact will be made with Staff Francis Chapel to see if this would be viable for use as a polling station. |
| 15/09/24 | Flax Hill Junior Academy | Spital | You continue to use schools for polling stations when there are plenty of other free alternatives such as community centres or churches.  This results in the children being out of school unnecessarily and additional pressure placed on working parents to take a day off work or find alternative childcare arrangements.  **What is your alternative option (if any) to the above polling station(s)?** Find alternative locations - churches/community centres/council offices anything other than schools!! | Please see first comment above regarding the use of school buildings.  No alternative venue has been specifically identified by the submission. |
| 15/09/24 | Flax Hill Junior Academy | Spital | The fact that 3 schools close within a two-mile radius that I know of. Is far in excess of what is required as far as I’m concerned. Not only do we have to find childcare for inset days after school holidays (personally they should be done in the school holidays) but also polling days. We have a child at Ashcroft so I’d rather that remain open too. Why not utilise church halls, community centres or the use of portacabins for example? Therefore, keeping all schools open!! Better for the children and better too for parents.  **What is your alternative option (if any) to the above polling station(s)?** Portacabins, church halls and community centres are a simple solution. | Please see first comment above regarding the use of school buildings.  No alternative venue has been specifically identified by the submission. |
| 15/09/24 | Flax Hill Junior Academy | Spital | Because children are missing days of education. I don’t agree with having them in schools as there are plenty of halls and churches.  **What is your alternative option (if any) to the above polling station(s)?** The church near by. | Please see first comment above regarding the use of school buildings.  No alternative venue has been specifically identified by the submission. |
| 16/09/24 | Flax Hill Junior Academy | Spital | This is a school. If we take a child out school for 1 day it effects their education however a day off school for voting don't seem to affect their education my son’s grandma passed away and he lost attendance to go to her funeral after having 100% attendance however he can have a day of for people to vote it's very hypocritical.  **What is your alternative option (if any) to the above polling station(s)?** Leyfields family hub or churches in the area. | Please see first comment above regarding the use of school buildings.  Contact will be made with Staff Francis Chapel and Leyfields Community Centre to see if these would be viable for use as polling stations. |
| 20/09/24 | Flax Hill Junior Academy | Spital | There are plenty of other places that could be used to vote, local pubs with function rooms/ separate entrance, local churches etc. I think it’s appalling that a school has to close for the day due to safeguarding issue as it’s open to the public. Please stop closing schools for voting stations.  **What is your alternative option (if any) to the above polling station(s)?** Local pubs, churches, centres etc. | Please see first comment above regarding the use of school buildings.  No alternative venue has been specifically identified by the submission. |
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