

**From:** Smith, Ben

**Sent:** 20 December 2022 11:36

**To:** beckrowparish council <beckrowparishcouncil@gmail.com>

**Subject:** RE: Interim Polling Place review - Beck Row, Holywell Row & Kenny Hill

Dear Jane,

Thank you for your email. Yes, we did undertake a site visit at the Holywell Row Methodist Church and unfortunately it did not meet accessibility requirements. Below is a summary of the concerns listed on the survey sheet:

- The access to a disabled entrance at the rear of the building is via a small footpath and also access to the door via the grassed area. This may cause difficulty, particularly if wet.
- The external lighting for the building is not adequate
- Space within the church is very tight (which is understandable given it is an operational church and a small building)

Combining the Beck Row Parish Hub polling station seems like a sensible suggestion to me.

Many thanks,

Ben

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Ben Smith  
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Legal and Governance Services  
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**From:** beckrowparish council <[beckrowparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:beckrowparishcouncil@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** 20 December 2022 10:59  
**To:** Smith, Ben <[Ben.Smith@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Ben.Smith@westsuffolk.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** Re: Interim Polling Place review - Beck Row, Holywell Row & Kenny Hill

[THIS IS AN EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hello Ben

Thank you for your email.

Could you firstly come back to me and confirm that the Baptist Chapel was also ruled out as an option for Holywell Row? I spoke to **Information redacted** and he said he showed someone around about 4 weeks ago and did say the chapel was available.

If this was infact ruled out as an option then clearly the Beck Row Parish Hub could serve as the combined polling station for our Parish - Beck Row, Holywell Row & Kenny Hill.

Do let me know.

Kind regards  
Jane

On Mon, 19 Dec 2022 at 15:55, Smith, Ben <[Ben.Smith@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Ben.Smith@westsuffolk.gov.uk)> wrote:

Dear Ms Spenser,

You may be aware that the Elections Act 2022 introduces changes which impact the voting process at polling stations and as a result West Suffolk Council has undertaken an audit of all polling station facilities to make sure they comply.

The feedback gathered has identified some polling stations which are not available at the next elections on 4 May 2023 and some polling stations which are not compliant as they do not provide electors with reasonable facilities for voting or are not accessible to electors who are disabled.

As a result, an interim polling places review and consultation is being undertaken and is focussed on changes to the polling scheme where venues are not available or are not suitable. The aims of this tailored review is to:

- seek to ensure that all electors have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances; and
- ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable, every polling place is accessible to electors who have a disability.

Details of the review can be found on our website, see here: [Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2022 \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/review-of-polling-districts-and-polling-places-2022)

With regard to the Holywell Row polling place, in Beck Row, Holywell Row & Kenny Hill parish, the feedback from the audit was that the Holywell Row Village Hall is not available due to building works. We do not believe that a suitable alternative facility is available in Holywell Row and that a permanent change could be considered. It is recommended that we combine with a polling station in a neighbouring polling district (Beck Row).

We would welcome your feedback regarding this proposal and if there are any suggestions as to alternative locations where a polling station could be held in Holywell Row, then we would be pleased to receive details so that we could investigate this further.

When making comments or suggesting alternative venues, please consider that whatever arrangements we make, they should be accessible to disabled electors and provide reasonable facilities both for electors and polling staff.

The deadline for responses to the consultation is Friday 27 January 2023 and the revised polling arrangements will be published on 10 February 2023. We will notify you of the outcome.

Comments and representations can be submitted in the following ways:

Email: [elections@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:elections@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

Post: Electoral Services, West Suffolk Council, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3YU

We would be grateful if you could publicise the review in your parish so that residents may make representations and suggest alternative venues too. Please direct them to our website where details of the review can be found, see here: [Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2022 \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk)

We will also share details of the review on our social media pages, sharing to local community pages where available, and with local ward councillors.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by email to [ben.smith@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:ben.smith@westsuffolk.gov.uk) or telephone 01284 757101.

Kind regards

Ben

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