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Date: Thursday 28 September 2023

Dear All

FULL COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY 4 OCTOBER 2023

I enclose, for consideration at the next meeting of the Full Council on Wednesday 4 October 2023, the following items that were unavailable when the agenda was published.

Agenda No	Item
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| a | <u>Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places</u> (Pages 2 - 69) |
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Kind regards,

Democratic Services

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Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

For Full Council on Wednesday 4 October 2023

Report date: 13 September 2023

Summary

Lead Member: Cllr Rob Wormington – Chairman of General Purposes Committee

Lead Director: William Benson – Chief Executive and Returning Officer

Head of Service (Interim): Andy Sturtivant – Interim Elections Manager

Report authors: Richard Beesley (AEA Consultant) and Andy Sturtivant (Interim Elections Manager)

Classification: Public document (non-exempt)

Wards affected: All

Approval timetable	Date
General Purposes Committee	Virtual consultation, September 2023
Full Council	Wednesday 4 October 2023

Recommendations

1. That Full Council agrees to the proposed polling districts and polling places as set out in this report.

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires the Council to conduct a review of the Borough's polling districts and polling places every five years. The Council is also required to keep polling arrangements under review. The last full review went to Full Council on 18 December 2019, and the next full review must be conducted between 1 October 2023 and 28 February 2025.
- 1.3 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has recently published its final recommendations for warding arrangements for the Borough. If approved by Parliament, these will take effect from the May 2024 elections. At this stage it is considered highly unlikely that the recommendations will not be approved by Parliament (they may only be accepted or rejected in full, and not amended). Given the need to ensure new polling arrangements are in place ahead of the election, a review of polling districts and polling places needs to start now.
- 1.4 In addition, the new Parliamentary Constituency boundaries have been developed by the Boundary Commission for England and published here: <https://www.bcereviews.org.uk> The new Constituencies will use the current (not new) wards as building blocks. Once published, it is the responsibility of the Government to prepare an order to implement the new Constituencies; they would then take effect from the next Parliamentary General Election thereafter.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 A **polling district** is a geographical area created by the sub-division of a UK Parliamentary constituency for the purposes of a UK Parliamentary election. Each parish is to be a separate polling district unless there are special circumstances. This means that a parish must not be in a polling district which has a part of either a different parish within it, or any un-parished part of the local authority area within it, unless special circumstances apply.
- 2.2 A **polling place** is the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the (Acting) Returning Officer. A polling place within a polling district must be designated so that polling stations are within easy reach of all electors from across the polling district.
- 2.3 A **polling station** is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place. Unlike polling districts and polling places which are fixed by the local authority, polling stations are chosen by the (Acting) Returning Officer for the election.

3. Requirements of the review

3.1 In conducting the statutory review, local authorities must follow the rules set out in the legislation, which are:

- The authority must publish a notice of the holding of a review.
- The authority must consult the (Acting) Returning Officer in a constituency which is wholly or partly in its area.
- The (Acting) Returning Officer must make representations to the authority which must include information as to the location of polling stations (existing or proposed).
- The local authority must publish the (Acting) Returning Officer's representations within thirty calendar days of receipt, in such manner as is prescribed.
- The authority must seek representations from such persons as it thinks have expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability. Such persons must have an opportunity to make representations and to comment on the (Acting) Returning Officer's representations.
- Any elector in a constituency situated in whole or in part in the authority's area may make representations.
- Representations made by any person in connection with a review of polling places may include proposals for specified alternative polling places.
- On completion of a review, the authority must give reasons for its decisions in the review and publish such other information as is prescribed.

3.2 As part of the review process, local authorities must:

- Seek to ensure that all electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
- Seek to ensure that as far as is reasonable and practicable the polling places are accessible to those who are disabled, and
- When considering or reviewing the designation of a polling place, have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.

4. Review process

4.1 The timetable for this review is as follows:

- Report and Notice of Review published – 18 July 2023
- Consultation period (six weeks) – 19 July to 1 September 2023
- Updated recommendations circulated to Members of the General Purposes Committee by mid-September
- Final recommendations presented to Full Council – 4 October 2023

4.2 Members are invited to note and agree the following important points:

- (1) The new Register of Electors will be published on 1 December 2023, and will usually be built upon the new polling districts. This ensures that the Register structure is finalised and in place ahead of the May 2024 elections, at which the new ward boundaries will be used. As such, final agreement on the new polling districts must be reached before 1 December 2023.
- (2) If the LGBCE Ward Review is terminated, noting this is highly unlikely, then any proposed polling district boundary and naming changes will be deferred for further refinement.
- (3) This Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places, necessitated by the new warding arrangements, shall also be the review required for Parliamentary election polling arrangements; a separate review will not be undertaken, hence involving a broad range of consultees during this review.

5. Development of draft proposals and consultation process

5.1 Officer-led preliminary review

5.1.1 Officers undertook an initial review, to highlight specific issues ahead of the public consultation. There is no presumption that every polling district will be changed, although any 'no change' decision must be fully justified as part of the overall proposals. This review considered lessons learned and feedback from electors, political candidates, and polling station staff from recent elections.

Polling districts

5.1.2 To accommodate the new parish wards created by the LGBCE Ward Review (in Southborough and Paddock Wood), new polling districts have been proposed. This ensures each parish ward is a separate and distinct polling district. Large parishes, parish wards, and unparished areas in the town centre remain split into more than one polling district, to ensure convenience for electors.

5.1.3 Where polling districts no longer serve a purpose, the proposal is to merge them as appropriate.

5.1.4 Every polling district has a unique code, used in the Register of Electors to uniquely identify individual electors. There are many different options for how letter codes can be determined. Previously, Tunbridge Wells has used letters A-Z, then AA onwards. However, there is the opportunity for letter codes to link directly to the areas they serve – this can make it easier to support electors and

political parties, noting that every code will need to change through this review in any case. The preliminary review therefore highlighted that each polling district should have a three-letter code:

- The first letter determines the new Borough Ward, starting at A (Cranbrook, Sissinghurst and Frittenden) through to P (St John's); letters I and O are excluded to avoid confusion with numbers.
- The second letter determines the polling district within the ward, starting with A for each ward.

Polling places

5.1.5 There are a number of factors which were considered when reviewing the existing polling places or when new polling places were assessed, these include:

- **Location:** is it reasonably accessible within the polling district? Does it avoid barriers for the voter such as steep hills, major roads, rivers, etc.? Are there any convenient transport links?
- **Size:** can it accommodate more than one polling station if required? If multiple polling stations are required, is the polling place large enough to accommodate all voters going into and out of the polling stations, even where there is a high turnout?
- **Suitability:** is the building readily available in the event of any unscheduled elections? Is there any possibility that the building may be demolished as part of a new development? Is the building accessible to all those entitled to attend the polling place?

5.1.6 The choice of polling places will often be a balance between the quality of a building (access, facilities etc.) and the proximity of the building to the electors. All factors have been taken into consideration during the preliminary review.

5.1.7 The schedule of delegated authority sets out that Council can determine the location of polling places, that this is also delegated to General Purposes, and that the Returning Officer may also use delegated authority to make changes. Legislation sets out that the Returning Officer may decide to locate a polling station somewhere other than the agreed polling place, without consultation, if necessary and there is insufficient time to consult. For the avoidance of future doubt, the final schedule of polling district and polling place arrangements is proposed to be taken to Full Council on Wednesday 4 October. However, to ensure flexibility when required, given the change in availability of venues often at short notice, each polling place is proposed to be prefixed with 'At or near...' as is usual practice in other local authorities. Thus, the Returning Officer shall place a polling station in the venue identified a polling place, when possible, but is not required to complete a full review if that venue is not available at short notice but another suitable venue is available nearby.

5.2 Consultation process

5.2.1 The initial proposals were sent, as part of the consultation process, to:

- All members of the Council
- Members of Parliament for Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone and the Weald
- The Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent
- Parish/Town Councils
- Members of the County Council
- All political groups who fielded candidates in the most recent Borough Council elections
- The local Access Group

5.2.2 The public consultation ran from 19 July to 1 September 2023.

6. Responses to the consultation

6.1 The Acting Returning Officers (ARO) for each of the constituencies that serve residents of the Borough submitted their responses to the consultation as set out below. These were published alongside the consultation documents on the council's website. Note that the ARO for the Tunbridge Wells constituency is also the Chief Executive of TWBC and therefore the draft proposals were developed in liaison with him.

- Acting Returning Officer for Maidstone and The Weald Constituency (based at Maidstone Borough Council):

“As the Acting Returning Officer, I have considered the outcome of the polling district review and the proposed changes to polling districts within the Borough of Tunbridge Wells as they relate to my constituency area. I agree with the suggested boundaries and polling places for the polling districts. I agree the changes align with the local population and will support elections in the area. As the Acting Returning Officer, I will work with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to ensure that polling stations are adequately staffed and accessibility is considered when establishing polling stations in the constituency.”

6.2 During the consultation period, Officers visited proposed new venues. As a result, it was determined that the use of the Marketing Suite at the Foal Hurst Green development in Paddock Wood would not be suitable for use as a polling station. It is therefore proposed to use the new Community Centre in Paddock Wood. The new Community Centre is easily able to accommodate three polling stations. Therefore, it is proposed to stop using St Andrew's Church and that both Paddock Wood West (FB) and Paddock Wood South (JE) are allocated to the new Community Centre as a polling place.

- 6.3 Further, Linden Park Cricket Club has been identified as a more suitable venue than St Paul's Church (serving BE: Culverden South) for accessibility reasons.
- 6.4 The current polling place for voters in the new Calverley (HA) polling district (St James Church) is now in a different polling district. Therefore, Officers worked to identify a suitable venue in the Calverley (HA) polling district. The Amelia Scott is within the Calverley (HA) polling district and will become the polling place for voters in that area.
- 6.5 During the public consultation, a total of six additional responses were received. These are included at **Appendix C**. To summarise:
- One respondent fully supported the proposals for Brenchley and Matfield.
 - One respondent felt the ward boundaries were incorrect and proposed a different warding configuration. To be clear, the warding arrangements have been determined by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) and amending them is outside of the scope of this review.
 - One respondent, echoed by the response from the local MP (**Appendix D**), advocated a new polling station to be placed at Skinners' Kent Academy on the basis that older people living in the Blackhurst Lane and Sandown Park area may face difficulties getting to the current venue (TN2 Community Centre). However, the electorate in that area does not justify an additional polling station given the logistical complexities of adding extra stations. The choice, therefore, becomes whether to move the polling place to Skinners' Kent Academy or to leave it at the TN2 Community Centre. If it were moved, a much greater number of electors would need to travel to Skinners' Kent Academy than currently travel from Sandown Park to the TN2 Community Centre. Whilst the (A)RO is legally able to require the use of schools for use as a polling station, and Skinners' Kent Academy have graciously supported the possibility of being used as a venue, current government guidance is to try to avoid using schools as far as possible. There are occasions and locations where that is not possible, but there is an underlying attempt to reduce use of educational facilities to minimise the impact on students. Whilst the challenges faced by electors in this area are noted, it is considered that in the best interests of most electors in that area, the polling place should remain at the TN2 Community Centre.
 - One respondent felt that polling district JA should be called 'Five Oak Green' to reflect where most electors in the polling district live. The polling place remains in Capel, hence the original name of the polling district. The name of the polling district is immaterial (some local authorities use codes, rather than names, and they are used only for internal reference). However, in the interests of reflecting local identities in the naming of polling districts, the final recommendation includes both Capel and Five Oak Green in the name to

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reflect the electorates and geography.

- One submission was a string of letters and not a valid submission. This submission is included in the appendix for completeness only.
- The final response, from the Tunbridge Wells Liberal Democrat Group, provided extensive suggestions and recommendations (included in full at **Appendix E**). These included suggestions for alternative polling district boundaries, alternative polling place locations, and suggestions for alternative naming of polling districts. The suggestions and recommendations are summarised in the table below (pages 9 to 11) with a response.

Ward	Comment	Response
Culverden	(1) BA to remain	Polling district BA will remain as per the draft proposals.
	(2) Combine BB, BC, and BD, then split into two new polling districts and rename	The total combined electorate is currently 4,643. Splitting into two equally sized polling districts would result in 2,321 per venue; current Electoral Commission guidance is for a maximum of 2,250 per station. Therefore, splitting this area into two polling districts would result in at least one and possibly two dual polling stations (that is, either three or four stations in two buildings). Whilst the cost of venue hire would be a little lower, there would be no corresponding reduction in staffing costs (and a potential increase), and the removal of one polling place would increase travel time and reduce accessibility for voters. On balance, retaining three polling districts is likely to be more beneficial for electors in this town-centre location.
	(3) Combine BE and BF then rename to Culverden South	<p>This makes sense and removes the small polling district (BE). The combined polling district will have a polling place at or near Linden Park Cricket Club; and will be renamed to Culverden South.</p> <p>As noted at 6.5 above, the names of polling districts are purely for internal reference. However, this renaming is a legitimate and valuable suggestion.</p>
Hawkhurst, Sandhurst and Benenden	(1) Combine DA and DB due to the close proximity of the polling places	In the draft proposals Benenden (DA) was already the merger of two existing polling districts, with a total electorate of around 1,072. The Iden Green polling district has an electorate of around 400 electors. Merging DA and DB would create a single geographically large polling district and increase throughput in a single polling station. Whilst the relatively close proximity of the two polling places may lend itself to combining the areas, doing so may cause problems for electors in Iden Green due to access issues (given it is realistically only accessible by driving). Given this, even though it is a relatively small number of electors who vote in Iden Green, removing pedestrian access for those electors appears unwise. The final recommendation is therefore to retain both Iden Green and Benenden polling districts.
	(2) Combine DC and DD due to close proximity of the polling places	Together DC and DD have an electorate of 3,868, so a combined single polling district would necessitate a dual station. Given this, it appears prudent to keep the two polling districts with distinct polling stations to serve the two parts of the parish, rather than combining into a single venue and splitting into a dual station.

Ward	Comment	Response
Pantiles	(1) Combine GB and GC, then redistribute part of GC to GD to regularise the boundary	The boundary between GC and GD does appear irregular on the map, but this is to ensure electors in side roads vote in the same polling place as their nearest neighbours on the main road, and to ensure, as far as possible, entire roads are in the same polling district. Polling district GC has around 2,000 electors; adding any from GB (circa 700) would exceed the maximum number for a single polling station. GD is already also at capacity. Thus, merging GB and GC would create the need for a dual station in one venue. It is easier for electors in GB to vote at St Marks C of E Primary School than to travel into GC (Number One Community Centre). Given this, it appears more viable to retain the two polling districts as per the draft proposal.
Park	(1) Merge HA, HB, and HC, then split into two polling districts	Between them these three polling districts have around 4,800 electors; split into two polling districts would result in the need to split polling places into dual stations. It is considered preferable to minimise dual stations as far as possible, making polling places closer to where electors live.
Pembury and Capel	(1) Merge JC and JD	Merging JC and JD (the entire of Pembury) would create a single large polling district with a large electorate. There are some areas where this approach is beneficial, such as if there is only one suitable polling place identified. However, both the Pembury Village Hall and Pembury Free Church are suitable premises to be used as polling places. Retaining two polling places also gives scope to further split into dual stations should the need arise (such as increasing electorates and/or complex combined polls). Given this and that neither of the current venues would have sufficient car parking spaces to accommodate all electors from both current polling district, the final recommendation is to keep these as two polling districts.
	(2) Identify a suitable alternative for JE (was to be the Marketing Suite at Foal Hurst Green)	This has been resolved, as set out above at 6.2, noting the unsuitability of the Marketing Suite.
	(3) Rename JA as Five Oak Green	As noted at 6.5 above, this is proposed to now be called 'Five Oak Green and Capel' to reflect the population base and the polling place location.

Ward	Comment	Response
Rusthall and Speldhurst	(1) Combined KC and KD	The split of Rusthall into two polling districts was a relatively recent change and was necessitated by the large electorate (around 1,500 in one polling district and over 2,000 in the other). Splitting the electorate into two polling districts has simplified the management of the election and made the voting experience easier for voters.
St James'	(1) Combine NC and ND, with the polling place for both at The Hub	Both NC and ND have around 2,100 electors at present, so a combined polling district would require a dual station. The Hub is not suitable for a dual station, given its size. The alternative proposed venue, the Sea Cadets Centre, does not have sufficient parking or step-free access for electors so is unlikely to be suitable.
St John's	(1) Combine PA and PB, with one polling place at St Luke's Church	Whilst this proposal would create a single large polling district, it brings the benefit to electors that they would all be voting within the ward, and to elections staff of not having voters in St John's Church voting for two separate wards. Therefore, the final recommendation takes forward this proposal.

7. Final recommendations

7.1 The final recommendations are shown in the table below (pages 11 to 14).

Ward	Parish / area	Polling district	Polling place
Cranbrook, Sissinghurst and Frittenden	Cranbrook and Sissinghurst	AA: Cranbrook	At or near Vestry Hall, Stone Street
		AB: Sissinghurst	At or near Sissinghurst Village Hall
	Frittenden	AC: Frittenden	At or near Frittenden Memorial Hall
Culverden	N/A	BA: Culverden North	At or near St John's Bowls Pavilion
		BB: Bishops Down	At or near Bishops Down Primary School
		BC: Culverden	At or near 3 Culverden Park

Ward	Parish / area	Polling district	Polling place
		BD: Holy Trinity	At or near Trinity Theatre and Arts Centre
		BE: Culverden South	At or near Linden Park Cricket Pavilion
		Note: combines BE and BF from the draft proposals	
Goudhurst, Lamberhurst and Horsmonden	Brenchley and Matfield parish	CA: Brenchley	At or near Brenchley Memorial Hall
		CB: Matfield	At or near Matfield Village Hall
	Goudhurst parish	CC: Curtisden Green	At or near Goudhurst Village Hall
		CD: Goudhurst	At or near Goudhurst Village Hall
		CE: Kilndown	At or near Kilndown Village Hall
	Horsmonden parish	CF: Horsmonden	At or near Horsmonden Village Hall
Lamberhurst parish	CG: Lamberhurst	At or near Lamberhurst Memorial Hall	
Hawkhurst, Sandhurst and Benenden	Benenden parish	DA: Benenden	At or near Benenden Village Hall
		DB: Iden Green	At or near Iden Green Pavilion
	Hawkhurst parish	DC: Hawkhurst	At or near Royal British Legion, High Street, Hawkhurst
		DD: Hawkhurst Moor	At or near King George V Field Sports Pavilion
	Sandhurst parish	DE: Sandhurst	At or near Sandhurst Village Hall
High Brooms	Southborough parish	EA: High Brooms	At or near St Matthew's Church
Paddock Wood	Paddock Wood parish	FA: Paddock Wood East	At or near Day Centre, Dowding House
		FB: Paddock Wood West	At or near Paddock Wood Community Centre
Pantiles	N/A	GA: Christ Church	At or near Christ Church, High Street, Tunbridge Wells
		GB: Ramslye	At or near St Mark's C of E Primary School
		GC: Showfields	At or near Number One Community Centre

Ward	Parish / area	Polling district	Polling place
		GD: St Marks	At or near St Mark's Hall, Bayham Road
Park	N/A	HA: Calverley	At or near The Amelia Scott
		HB: Dunorlan	At or near Salvation Army Hall
		HC: Grove	At or near Claremont Primary School
		HD: Hawkenbury	At or near Hawkenbury United Reformed Church
Pembury and Capel	Capel parish	JA: Five Oak Green and Capel	At or near Capel Community Centre
		JB: Tudeley	At or near Arnold Cooke Hall, All Saints' Church
	Pembury parish	JC: Pembury High Street	At or near Pembury Village Hall
		JD: Pembury Lower Green	At or near Pembury Baptist Church
	Paddock Wood parish	JE: Paddock Wood South	At or near Paddock Wood Community Centre
Rusthall and Speldhurst	Speldhurst parish	KA: Langton Green	At or near Langton Green Village Hall
		KB: Speldhurst	At or near Speldhurst Village Hall
	Rusthall parish	KC: Rusthall East	At or near The Rackliff Centre
		KD: Rusthall West	At or near St Paul's Church Centre
Sherwood	N/A	LA: Oak Road	At or near St Philip's Day Centre
		LB: Knights Park	At or near Skinners' Kent Primary School
		LC: Sherwood	At or near TN2 Community Centre
Southborough and Bidborough	Bidborough parish	MA: Bidborough	At or near Bidborough Village Hall
	Southborough parish	MB: Southborough North	At or near St Thomas Church Hall
		MC: Southborough South	At or near Community Centre, Crundwell Road
St James'	N/A	NA: Ferndale	At or near St James Church Hall

Ward	Parish / area	Polling district	Polling place
		NB: Grosvenor	At or near St John's Church Centre
		NC: Camden	At or near St Barnabas Church Hall
		ND: St James	At or near The Hub, Grosvenor and Hilbert Park
St John's	N/A	PA: St Johns Note: this combines PA and PB from the draft proposals	At or near St Luke's Church Hall

8. Implementation

- 8.1 Once approved by Full Council, the final polling districts and polling place arrangements will take effect at the republication of the Register of Electors on 1 December 2023, ahead of the May 2024 elections and new ward boundaries.
- 8.2 Members should note that, if the new ward boundaries do not go ahead, then Full Council will be presented with a revised set of proposals that reflect the current warding arrangements, along with any updated polling place arrangements.

9. Publication of materials

- 9.1 Legislation requires that the council publishes all information relevant to this Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places. The publication of this report, along with the attached appendices and minutes of the General Purposes Committee and Full Council, satisfy this requirement. A copy of these documents will be made available online and at the council offices, in line with both normal practice and the statutory requirements for this review.

10. Cross cutting issues

10.1 Legal

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires the Council to conduct a review of the Borough's polling districts and polling places every five years.

10.2 Finance and other resources

Establishing new polling stations will incur an increased cost with regards to hall hire. However, merging polling districts and using the same venue for more than one polling district will minimise this.

10.3 Staffing

No implications.

10.4 Risk management

Failure to conduct the review would result in a breach of legislation and fail to provide appropriate voting arrangements for electors at future polls.

10.5 Environment (inc. biodiversity) and sustainability

Not relevant to this review.

10.6 Community safety

Not relevant to this review.

10.7 Equalities

Polling places have been determined based on their accessibility for people with visible and invisible disabilities. Staff are trained to support electors as appropriate.

10.8 Data protection

Not relevant, as no personal data is involved in this review.

10.9 Health and safety

All venues are reviewed periodically, and all Presiding Officers are trained in relevant health and safety matters to ensure the ongoing safety of all staff and voters in their venues.

10.10 Health and wellbeing

Not relevant to this review.

Appendices

Appendix	Title
A	Notice of Review as published
B	Draft proposals as consulted upon
C	Responses to the consultation
D	Response to the consultation
E	Response to the consultation
F	Maps of the new proposed polling districts

Notice of Review

Polling Districts and Polling Places

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is conducting a review of polling districts and polling places. We must, by law, do this every five years. New wards for the Borough will take effect for the May 2024 elections, and new Parliamentary Constituency boundaries have been published for use at future General Parliamentary Elections. This review takes these changes into account.

Electors within the Borough of Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone and the Weald Constituency (Part) may make representations and the Returning Officer will make comments on existing and proposed polling stations.

Making representations

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council would welcome any person or body with expertise in access for persons with any type of disability to make a representation.

Any persons or bodies making representations should, if possible, give alternative places that may be used as polling places.

Representations must be received by 5pm on Friday 1 September 2023

The quickest and easiest way to submit your representation is using our online consultation portal.

Start now < <https://talkingpointtunbridgewells.uk.engagementhq.com/review-of-polling-districts-and-polling-places>>

You can also submit your representation by email to polling.review@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Or in writing to:

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places
Electoral Services
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Town Hall
Mount Pleasant Road
Tunbridge Wells
TN1 1RS

Information will be made available throughout the review for public inspection on our website < <https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/council/voting-and-elections/polling-review>> .

Review timetable

Activity	Date
Notice of Review issued	19 July 2023
Publication of draft proposals report	19 July 2023
Deadline for comments from consultation	1 September 2023
Final report to Full Council	4 October 2023
New arrangements come into force	1 December 2023

Dated: 19 July 2023

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

For General Purposes Committee on Tuesday 18 July 2023

18 July 2023

Summary

Lead Member: Cllr Rob Wormington – Chairman of General Purposes Committee

Lead Director: William Benson – Chief Executive and Returning Officer

Head of Service (Interim): Andy Sturtivant – Interim Elections Manager

Report author: Richard Beesley – AEA Consultant

Classification: Public document (non-exempt)

Wards affected: All

Approval timetable	Date
General Purposes Committee	18 July 2023

Recommendations

1. That the General Purposes Committee agrees to launch the public consultation on polling districts and polling places as set out in the report.
2. That the General Purposes Committee agrees that, following completion of the Review, Full Council shall receive and determine the final report for decision on 4 October 2023; Members of the General Purposes Committee shall receive the draft report and have the opportunity to respond prior to Council.

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires the Council to conduct a review of the Borough's polling districts and polling places every five years. The Council is also required to keep polling arrangements under review. The last full review went to Full Council on 18 December 2019, and the next full review must be conducted between 1 October 2023 and 28 February 2025.
- 1.3 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has recently published its final recommendations for warding arrangements for the Borough. If approved by Parliament, these will take effect from the May 2024 elections. At this stage it is considered highly unlikely that the recommendations will not be approved by Parliament (they may only be accepted or rejected in full, and not amended). Given the need to ensure new polling arrangements are in place ahead of the election, this review of polling districts and polling places needs to start now.
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- The (Acting) Returning Officer must make representations to the authority which must include information as to the location of polling stations (existing or proposed).
- The local authority must publish the (Acting) Returning Officer's representations within 30 calendar days of receipt, in such manner as is prescribed.
- The authority must seek representations from such persons as it thinks have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability. Such persons must have an opportunity to make representations and to comment on the (Acting) Returning Officer's representations.
- Any elector in a constituency situated in whole or in part in the authority's area may make representations.
- Representations made by any person in connection with a review of polling places may include proposals for specified alternative polling places.
- On completion of a review, the authority must give reasons for its decisions in the review and publish such other information as is prescribed.

3.2 As part of the review process, local authorities must:

- Seek to ensure that all electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
- Seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable the polling places are accessible to those who are disabled.
- When considering or reviewing the designation of a polling place, have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.

4. Review process

4.1 The timetable for this review is as follows:

- Report and notice of review published – 18 July 2023
- Consultation period (six weeks) – 19 July to 1 September 2023
- Updated recommendations circulated to Members of the General Purposes Committee by mid-September
- Final recommendations presented to Full Council – 4 October 2023

4.2 Members of the General Purposes Committee are invited to note and agree the following important points:

- (1) The new Register of Electors will be published on 1 December 2023. The Register will usually be built upon the new polling districts, so the Register structure is finalised and is in place ahead of the May 2024 elections that will be using new ward boundaries. As such, final agreement on the new polling districts must be reached before that date.
- (2) Timing of scheduled meetings means that Full Council can discuss and agree the outcome of this Review at their meeting on 4 October 2023. By so doing, Members of the General Purposes Committee will be provided with a draft copy of the report for consideration outside of the formal meeting process only.
- (3) If the LGBCE Ward Review is terminated, noting this is highly unlikely, then any proposed polling district boundary and naming changes will be deferred for further refinement with the end date of this Review being extended as required.
- (4) This Review, necessitated by the new warding arrangements, shall also be the review required for Parliamentary election polling arrangements; a separate review will not be undertaken, hence involving a broad range of consultees in this review.

4.3 A notice to formally commence the review is included at [Appendix A](#). Following approval by this meeting, the Notice shall be published, and the review starts. At the same time, the following shall be contacted and invited to respond to the consultation:

- All members of the Council
- Members of Parliament for Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone and the Weald
- The Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent
- Parish/Town Councils
- Members of the County Council
- All political groups who fielded candidates in the most recent Borough Council elections
- The local Access Group

5. Preliminary review

5.1 An initial review has been undertaken by officers, in order to highlight specific issues ahead of the public consultation. There is no presumption that every polling district will be changed, although any 'no change' decision must be fully justified as part of the overall proposals.

Polling districts

- 5.2 To accommodate the new parish wards created by the LGBCE review of wards (in Southborough and Paddock Wood), new polling districts have been proposed. This ensures each parish ward is a separate and distinct polling district. Large parishes, parish wards and unparished areas in the town centre remain split into more than one polling district, to ensure convenience for electors.
- 5.3 Where polling districts no longer serve a purpose, the proposal is to merge them as appropriate.
- 5.4 Every polling district has a unique code, used in the Register of Electors to uniquely identify individual electors. There are many different options for how letter codes can be determined. Previously, Tunbridge Wells has used letters A-Z, then AA onwards. However, there is the opportunity for letter codes to link directly to the areas they serve – this can make it easier to support electors and political parties, noting that every code will need to change through this review in any case. The preliminary review therefore highlighted that each polling district should have a two-letter code:
- The first letter determines the new Borough Ward, starting at A (Cranbrook, Sissinghurst and Frittenden) through to P (St John's); letters I and O are excluded to avoid confusion with numbers.
 - The second letter determines the polling district within the ward, starting with A for each ward.

Polling places

- 5.5 There are a number of factors which were considered when reviewing the existing polling places or when new polling places were assessed, these include:
- **Location:** is it reasonably accessible within the polling district? Does it avoid barriers for the voter such as steep hills, major roads, rivers, etc.? Are there any convenient transport links?
 - **Size:** can it accommodate more than one polling station if required? If multiple polling stations are required, is the polling place large enough to accommodate all voters going into and out of the polling stations, even where there is a high turnout?
 - **Suitability:** is the building readily available in the event of any unscheduled elections? Is there any possibility that the building may be demolished as part of a new development? Is the building accessible to all those entitled to attend the polling place?
- 5.6 The choice of polling places will often be a balance between the quality of a building (access, facilities etc.) and the proximity of the building to the electors. All factors have been taken into consideration during the preliminary review.

- 5.7 The schedule of delegated authority sets out that Council is able to determine the location of polling places, that this is also delegated to General Purposes, and that the Returning Officer may also use delegated authority to make changes. Legislation sets out that the Returning Officer may decide to locate a polling station somewhere other than the agreed polling place, without consultation, if necessary and there is insufficient time to consult. For the avoidance of future doubt, the final schedule of polling district and polling place arrangements is proposed to be taken to Full Council on 4 October 2023. However, to ensure flexibility when required, given the change in availability of venues often at short notice, each polling place is proposed to be prefixed with 'At or near...' as is usual practice in other authorities. Thus, the Returning Officer shall place a polling station in the venue identified a polling place, when possible, but is not required to complete a full review if that venue is not available at short notice but another suitable venue is available nearby.

6. Draft proposals for consultation

- 6.1 The draft proposals for consultation are shown below (pages 7 to 15). Members are invited to note that this includes merging of some polling districts, splitting polling districts, renaming polling districts, and otherwise altering them to ensure the new boundaries reflect the governance arrangements taking effect. Maps of the proposed polling districts by Ward are included at [Appendix B](#).
- 6.2 The consultation will ask for views on the proposed polling stations for these polling districts and ask if there are any other sites that may be suitable.
- 6.3 When establishing a new polling station, it is important to consider the access needs for different types of electors, including those with visible and invisible disabilities. Therefore, a review of any potential venues submitted will be conducted prior to implementation.

Ward	Parish / area	Polling district	Polling place
Cranbrook, Sissinghurst and Frittenden	Cranbrook and Sissinghurst	AA: Cranbrook Whilst Cranbrook and Sissinghurst are not separate parish wards, and will be within the same Borough Ward from 2024, it appears prudent to keep the two as separate polling districts. This is because the parish as a whole is quite large and dividing into two polling districts makes accessibility easier for electors. As such, this polling district is unchanged from the current polling district.	At or near Vestry Hall, Stone Street
		AB: Sissinghurst This polling district is unchanged from the current polling district.	At or near Sissinghurst Village Hall
	Frittenden	AC: Frittenden The entire parish of Frittenden.	At or near Frittenden Memorial Hall
Culverden	Notes: The new Culverden ward is significantly different from the existing ward, taking on parts of Broadwater and St John's wards.		
	N/A	BA: Culverden North This is the northern-most part of the new Culverden ward, which is currently in St John's old ward. The boundary remains unchanged. The polling district is to the west of St John's Road and north of Culverden Down.	At or near St John's Bowls Pavilion
		BB: Bishops Down This is unchanged from the current polling district.	At or near Bishops Down Primary School
		BC: Culverden This is unchanged from the current polling district.	At or near 3 Culverden Park
BD: Holy Trinity This is unchanged from the current polling district.		At or near Trinity Theatre and Arts Centre	

Ward	Parish / area	Polling district	Polling place
		<p>BE: Jubilee This is a new polling district, necessary as it is part of the new Culverden Ward but also part of Tunbridge Wells South County division. It is bordered on the east and south by the High Street, and west by the A26 then Vale Road.</p> <p>Care will be taken during a county election, with additional staff training, due to two divisions voting in the same venue. This happens in other local authority areas, and processes are put in place to minimise confusion, limit disruption, and ensure the voting process is easy, clear, transparent, and without any issues.</p>	<p>This is a small polling district, required only due to the interface between different layers of local government. There are no suitable premises in the area to host a polling place. The nearest current polling place, and the venue to which electors here will be most accustomed to attending is Christ Church on the High Street. However, given the most frequent election to take place will be Borough Council elections, and Christ Church is in a different Borough ward, it would be prudent for the electors from this new polling district to vote instead at Trinity Theatre along with BD voters. Care will be required during a County Council election, to ensure voters are issued with the correct ballot papers in this station.</p> <p>At or near Trinity Theatre and Arts Centre</p>

Ward	Parish / area	Polling district	Polling place
		<p>BF: Commons This is a new polling district, taking in the Tunbridge Wells Common, and the Nevill Park area; north of Eridge Road and The Spa Valley Railway, and south of Bishop's Down Road and Langton Road.</p>	<p>There are few venues in the polling district that could be suitable for use as a polling place. However, one building has been identified as potentially suitable – Linden Park Cricket Club Pavilion on Fir Tree Road. Enquiries are ongoing with the cricket club.</p> <p>At or near Linden Park Cricket Club</p>
Goudhurst, Lamberhurst and Horsmonden	Brenchley and Matfield parish	<p>CA: Brenchley Brenchley and Matfield parish has two distinct communities, and these have been served by separate polling districts and polling places. To maintain effective and convenient arrangements for electors, the two polling places should remain in place. This polling district is unchanged.</p>	At or near Brenchley Memorial Hall
		<p>CB: Matfield This polling district is unchanged from the current polling district.</p>	At or near Matfield Village Hall
	Goudhurst parish	<p>CC: Curtisden Green This is the parish ward of the same name and is unchanged from the current polling district.</p>	At or near Goudhurst Village Hall
		<p>CD: Goudhurst This is the parish ward of the same name and is unchanged from the current polling district.</p>	At or near Goudhurst Village Hall
		<p>CE: Kilndown This is the parish ward of the same name and is unchanged from the current polling district.</p>	At or near Kilndown Village Hall

Ward	Parish / area	Polling district	Polling place
	Horsmonden parish	CF: Horsmonden This is the parish of Horsmonden and is unchanged from the current polling district.	At or near Horsmonden Village Hall
	Lamberhurst parish	CG: Lamberhurst This is the parish of Lamberhurst and is unchanged from the current polling district.	At or near Lamberhurst Memorial Hall
Hawkhurst, Sandhurst and Benenden	Notes: Whilst the new ward will be split by the proposed Parliamentary Constituency, the existing parish boundaries remain unaffected.		
	Benenden parish	DA: Benenden This polling district contains the current 'Benenden' polling district (which had ballot box 21 in the 2023 elections) as well as the north-eastern tip of the parish (box 21-1). As the north-eastern edge has no suitable polling places and a small electorate, and they currently already vote in the same venue as the rest of Benenden, maintaining a separate polling district is unnecessary.	At or near Benenden Village Hall
		DB: Iden Green This polling district is unchanged.	At or near Iden Green Pavilion
	Hawkhurst parish	DC: Hawkhurst This polling district is unchanged.	At or near Royal British Legion, High Street, Hawkhurst
		DD: Hawkhurst Moor This polling district is unchanged.	At or near King George V Field Sports Pavilion
	Sandhurst parish	DE: Sandhurst This polling district is unchanged.	At or near Sandhurst Village Hall
High Brooms	Southborough parish	EA: High Brooms This is a new polling district, comprising the whole of the new High Brooms borough ward.	At or near St Matthew's Church

Ward	Parish / area	Polling district	Polling place
Paddock Wood	Notes: Paddock Wood is a large community, and too big to be served by a single polling district. It also has two parish wards (which will become three at the next scheduled elections), each of which must have its own polling district and electoral arrangements.		
	Paddock Wood parish	FA: Paddock Wood East This polling district is unchanged.	At or near Day Centre, Dowding House
		FB: Paddock Wood West This is the revised Paddock Wood West parish ward, formed from the existing parish ward excluding the new Paddock Wood South parish ward.	At or near St Andrew's Church Hall
Pantiles	N/A	GA: Christ Church Due to the reconfiguration of borough wards in this area, the new Christ Church polling district is significantly different from the previous polling district of similar name. Now, everything to the east of the railway is in a new ward and so excluded from this polling district. Instead, residents to the south (around The Nevill Ground) are now included in this area, with the southern boundary following Warwick Park. This makes the polling station more accessible for these residents, who previously voted the other side of the railway.	At or near Christ Church, High Street, Tunbridge Wells
		GB: Ramslye This is the remainder of the existing polling district, south of The Spa Valley Railway line, which is in the new Pantiles ward.	At or near St Mark's C of E Primary School
		GC: Showfields This polling district is unchanged.	At or near Number One Community Centre
		GD: St Marks This polling district is unchanged.	At or near St Mark's Hall, Bayham Road

Ward	Parish / area	Polling district	Polling place
Park	Notes: There is considerable change in Park ward, due to the reconfiguration of borough wards. New polling district names are proposed, based on the major parks and open spaces within each polling district, in keeping with the ward name.		
	N/A	HA: Calverley This is mainly the current 'Town Hall' polling district, but removes the confusion associated with the name as the polling place; the northern most edge is now part of a different ward, and the southern edge is adjusted so all of Grove Hill Road is in the new Grove polling district.	The current polling place for this area is now in a different ward and is therefore not ideal. The Amelia Scott has been identified as potentially suitable and discussions are ongoing to confirm this. At or near The Amelia Scott
		HB: Dunorlan This is unchanged from the current 'St Peters' polling district but links the name of the polling district to the new ward name.	At or near Salvation Army Hall
		HC: Grove This new polling district comprises the southern part of the ward, including what was Christ Church polling district and St Marks polling district, which are now part of this ward. In addition, the boundary is moved so is no longer south of Grove Hill Road but instead follows the southern edge of Calverley Park	At or near Claremont Primary School
		HD: Hawkenbury This polling district is unchanged.	At or near Hawkenbury United Reformed Church
Pembury and Capel	Capel parish	JA: Capel This polling district is unchanged.	At or near Capel Community Centre
		JB: Tudeley This polling district is unchanged.	At or near Arnold Cooke Hall, All Saints' Church

Ward	Parish / area	Polling district	Polling place
	Pembury parish	JC: Pembury High Street This polling district is unchanged.	At or near Pembury Village Hall
		JD: Pembury Lower Green This polling district is unchanged.	At or near Pembury Baptist Church
	Paddock Wood parish	JE: Paddock Wood South This is the new parish ward of Paddock Wood South.	At or near the Marketing Suite at Foal Hurst Green
Rusthall and Speldhurst	Speldhurst parish	KA: Langton Green This polling district is unchanged.	At or near Langton Green Village Hall
		KB: Speldhurst This polling district is unchanged.	At or near Speldhurst Village Hall
	Rusthall parish	KC: Rusthall East This polling district is unchanged.	At or near The Rackliff Centre
		KD: Rusthall West This polling district is unchanged.	At or near St Paul's Church Centre
Sherwood	N/A	LA: Oak Road This is the existing polling district of the same name, with the addition of Addison Road and Douglas Close from the old St James' ward that will now be part of Sherwood.	At or near St Philip's Day Centre
		LB: Knights Park This polling district is unchanged and serves the otherwise separated community in Knights Park.	At or near Skinners' Kent Primary School

Ward	Parish / area	Polling district	Polling place
		<p>LC: Sherwood This polling district merges the existing Sherwood North and Sherwood South polling districts (plus the small area moving from Park Ward – Willicombe Park, Quantock Close, Grampion Close and The Beeches). Both existing polling districts vote in the same venue (TN2). By merging the two polling districts, we anticipate there will continue to be two polling stations within the venue, but this gives greater flexibility to balance the number of electors between the two polling stations by the (A)RO.</p>	At or near TN2 Community Centre
Southborough and Bidborough	Bidborough parish	<p>MA: Bidborough This polling district is unchanged.</p>	At or near Bidborough Village Hall
	Southborough parish	<p>MB: Southborough North This polling district is unchanged.</p>	At or near St Thomas Church Hall
		<p>MC: Southborough South This is the existing Southborough West polling district, plus the northern half of the High Brooms polling district (which is now in Southborough South parish ward, and Southborough and Bidborough borough ward). Although for a few electors this will mean a longer journey to the polling station (compared to the current venue in High Brooms), for most the journey is no further.</p>	At or near Community Centre, Crundwell Road

Ward	Parish / area	Polling district	Polling place
St James'	N/A	NA: Ferndale This is a new polling district and is necessary as this small part of St James' ward is bisected by the existing county division boundary. With no suitable polling place within the polling district, electors here will vote at St James Church. This venue is close and convenient for voters.	At or near St James Church Hall
		NB: Grosvenor This polling district is unchanged, moving from Culverden ward to the revised St James' ward, ensuring the line follows the county division between this and Camden polling district.	At or near St John's Church Centre
		NC: Camden This polling district is unchanged.	At or near St Barnabas Church Hall
		ND: St James This polling district is unchanged, other than the area moving to Sherwood in the north.	At or near The Hub, Grosvenor and Hilbert Park
St John's	N/A	PA: St Johns This is unchanged but was previously known as St Johns East.	At or near St John's Church Centre This polling place is currently used by two different wards, and this arrangement is proposed to continue due to a lack of suitable alternatives in the area.
		PB: St Lukes This is unchanged.	At or near St Luke's Church Hall

7. Implementation

- 7.1 Following the conclusion of the consultation, the results will be reviewed, and a final report presented to Full Council on 4 October 2023. Once approved, the final polling districts and polling place arrangements will take effect at the republication of the Register of Electors on 1 December 2023, ahead of the May 2024 elections and new ward boundaries.
- 7.2 Members should note that, if the new ward boundaries do not go ahead, then Council will be presented with a revised set of proposals that reflect the current warding arrangements along with any updated polling place arrangements.

8. Cross cutting issues

8.1 Legal (including the Human Rights Act)

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires the Council to conduct a review of the Borough's polling districts and polling places every five years.

8.2 Finance and other resources

Establishing new polling stations will incur an increased cost with regards to hall hire. However, merging polling districts and using the same venue for more than one polling district will minimise this.

8.3 Staffing

No implications.

8.4 Risk management

Failure to conduct the review would result in a breach of legislation and fail to provide appropriate voting arrangements for electors at future polls.

8.5 Environment (inc. Biodiversity) and Sustainability

Not relevant to this review.

8.6 Community safety

Not relevant to this review.

8.7 Equalities

Polling places have been determined based on their accessibility for people with visible and invisible disabilities. Staff are trained to support electors as appropriate.

8.8 Data protection

Not relevant, as no personal data is involved in this review.

8.9 **Health and safety**

All venues are reviewed periodically, and all Presiding Officers are trained in relevant health and safety matters to ensure the ongoing safety of all staff and voters in their venues.

8.10 **Health and wellbeing**

Not relevant to this review.

Appendix A: Notice of review

NOTICE OF REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is conducting a review of polling districts and polling places. We must, by law, do this every five years. New wards for the Borough will take effect for the May 2024 elections, and new Parliamentary Constituency boundaries have been published for use at future General Parliamentary Elections. This review takes these changes into account.

Electors within the Borough of Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone and the Weald Constituency (Part) may make representations and the Returning Officer will make comments on existing and proposed polling stations.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council would welcome any person or body with expertise in access for persons with any type of disability to make a representation.

Any persons or bodies making representations should, if possible, give alternative places that may be used as polling places.

Representations should be made in writing to:

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places
 Electoral Services
 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
 Town Hall
 Mount Pleasant Road
 Tunbridge Wells
 TN1 1RS

polling.review@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Information will be made available throughout the review for public inspection on our website www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/polling-review

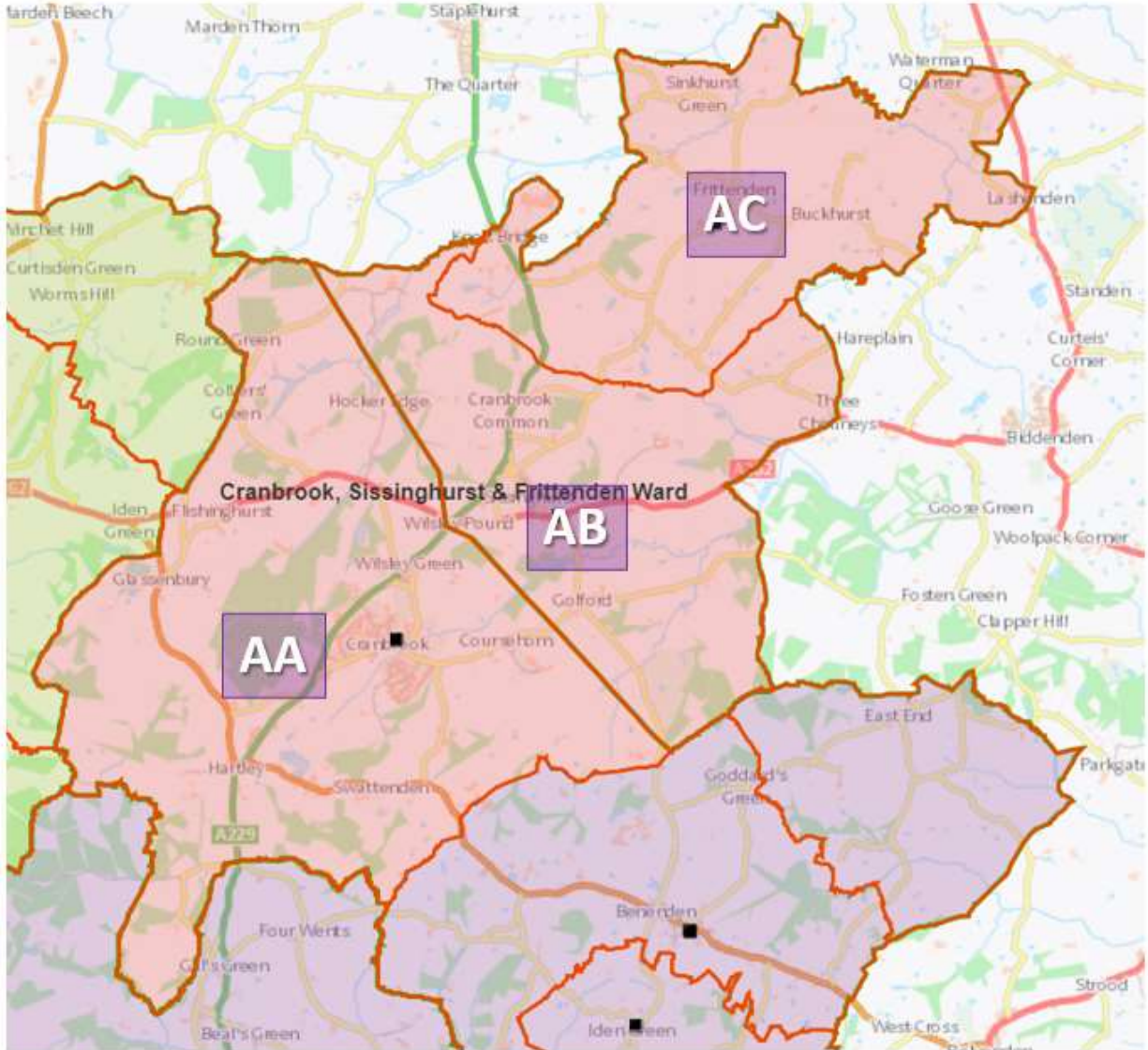
Timetable for this review:

Notice of start of review	19 July 2023
Publication of the draft proposals	19 July 2023
Deadline for comments from consultation	1 September 2023
Report to Full Council	4 October 2023
Arrangements come into force	1 December 2023

Dated: 19 July 2023

Appendix B: Proposed Polling District maps by Ward

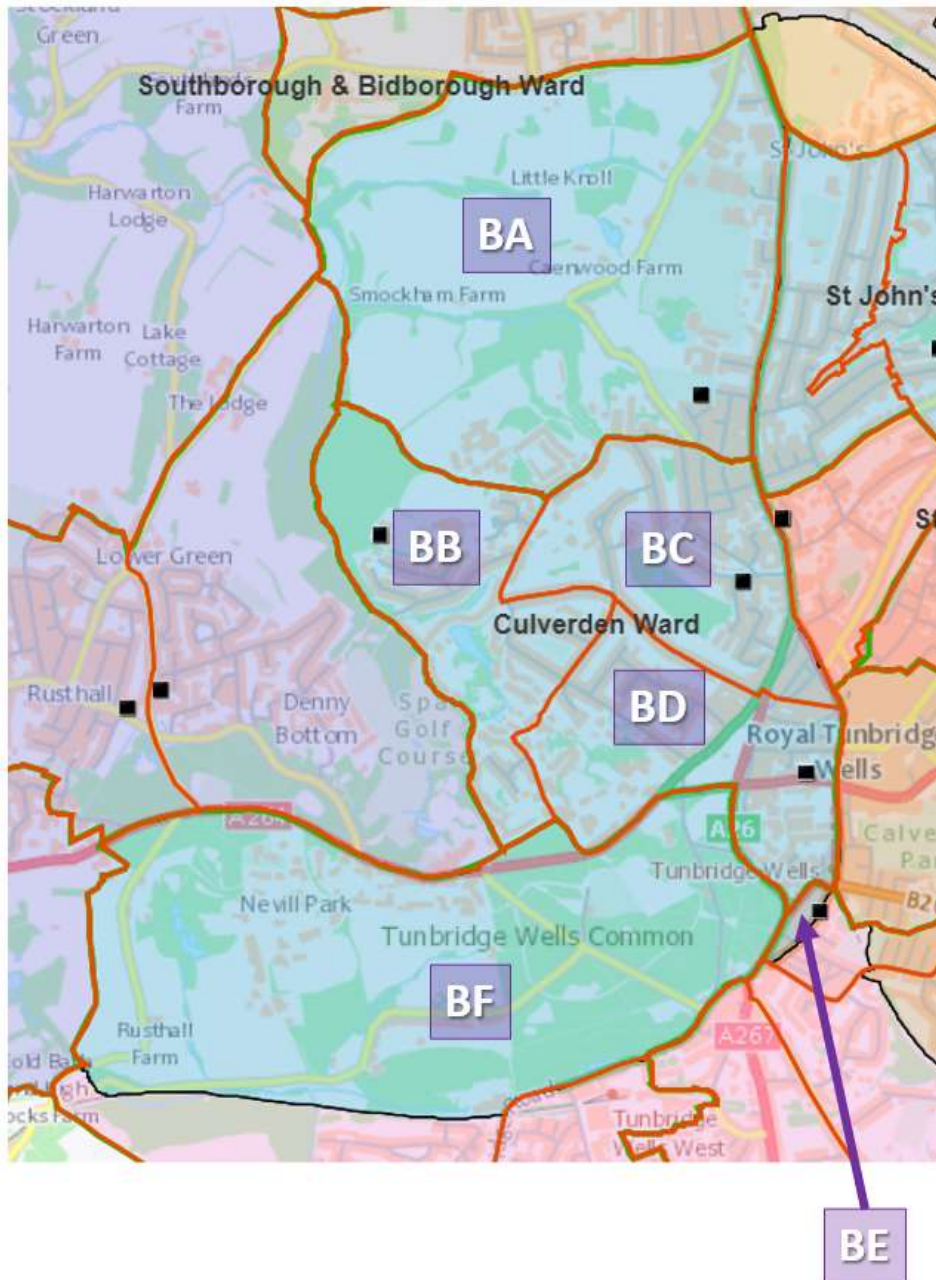
Cranbrook, Sissinghurst and Frittenden



Polling districts

- AA – Cranbrook
- AB – Sissinghurst
- AC – Frittenden

Culverden



Polling districts

BA – Culverden North

BB – Bishops Down

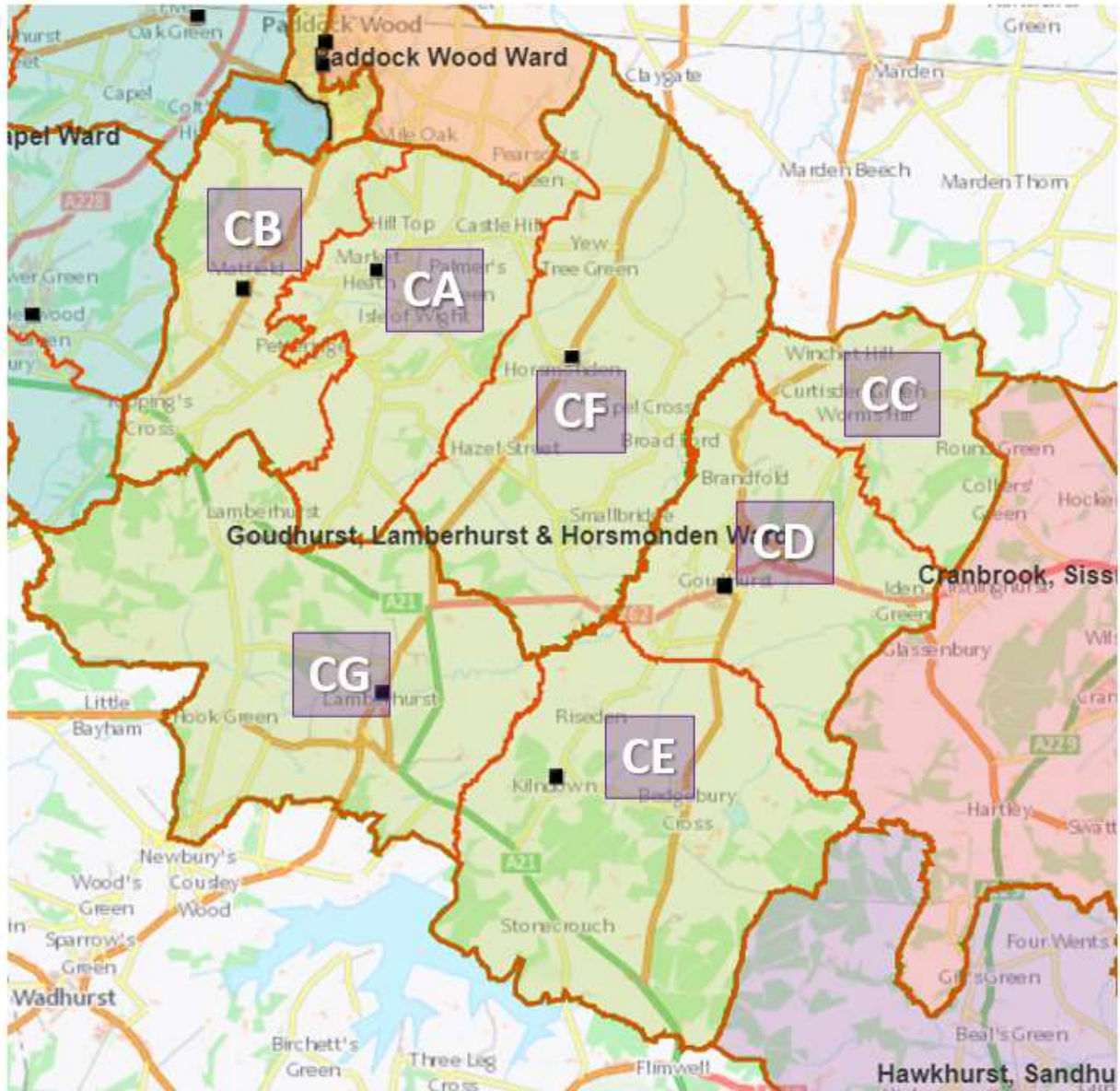
BC – Culverden

BD – Holy Trinity

BE – Jubilee

BF – Commons

Goudhurst, Lamberhurst and Horsmonden



Polling districts

CA – Brenchley

CB – Matfield

CC – Curtisden Green

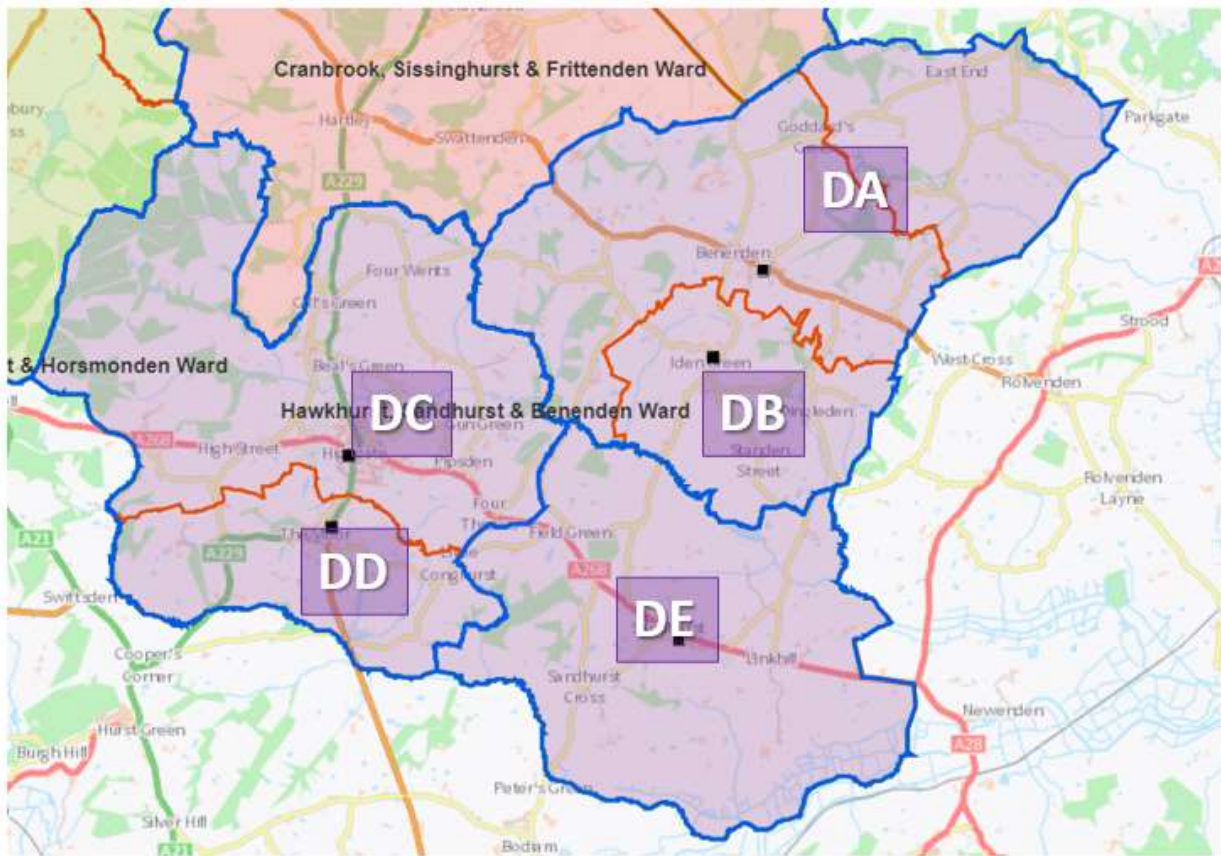
CD – Goudhurst

CE – Kilndown

CF – Horsmonden

CG – Lamberhurst

Hawkhurst, Sandhurst and Benenden



Polling districts

DA – Benenden

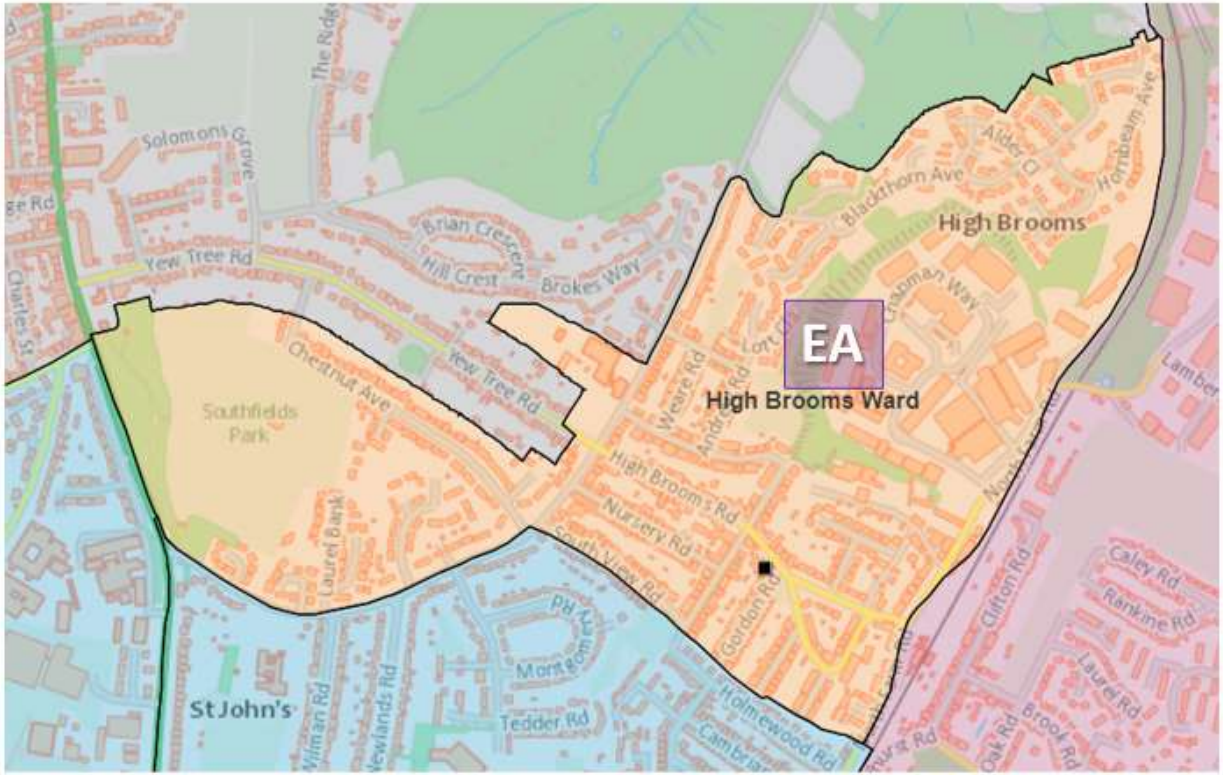
DB – Iden Green

DC – Hawkhurst

DD – Hawkhurst Moor

DE – Sandhurst

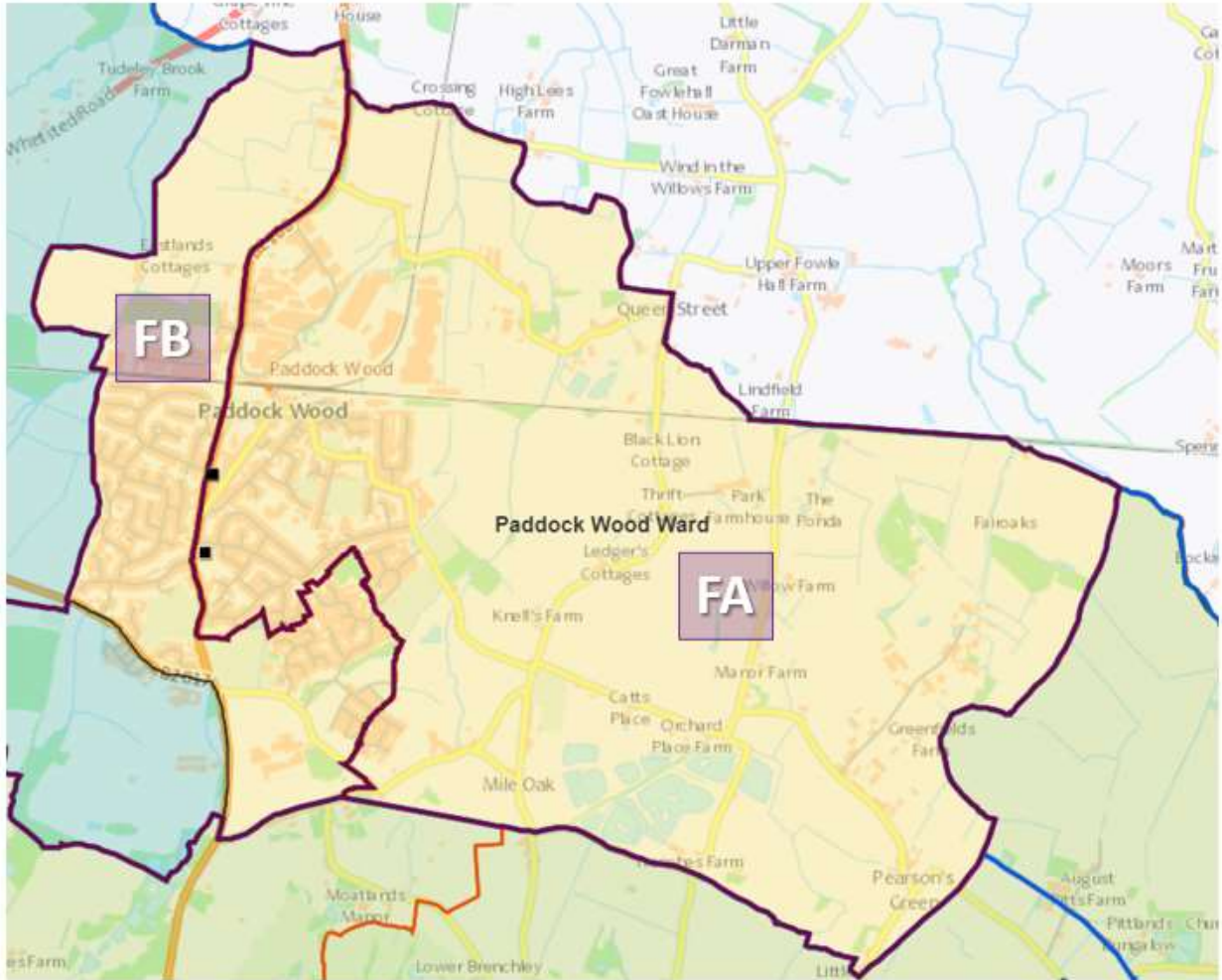
High Brooms



Polling districts

EA – High Brooms

Paddock Wood

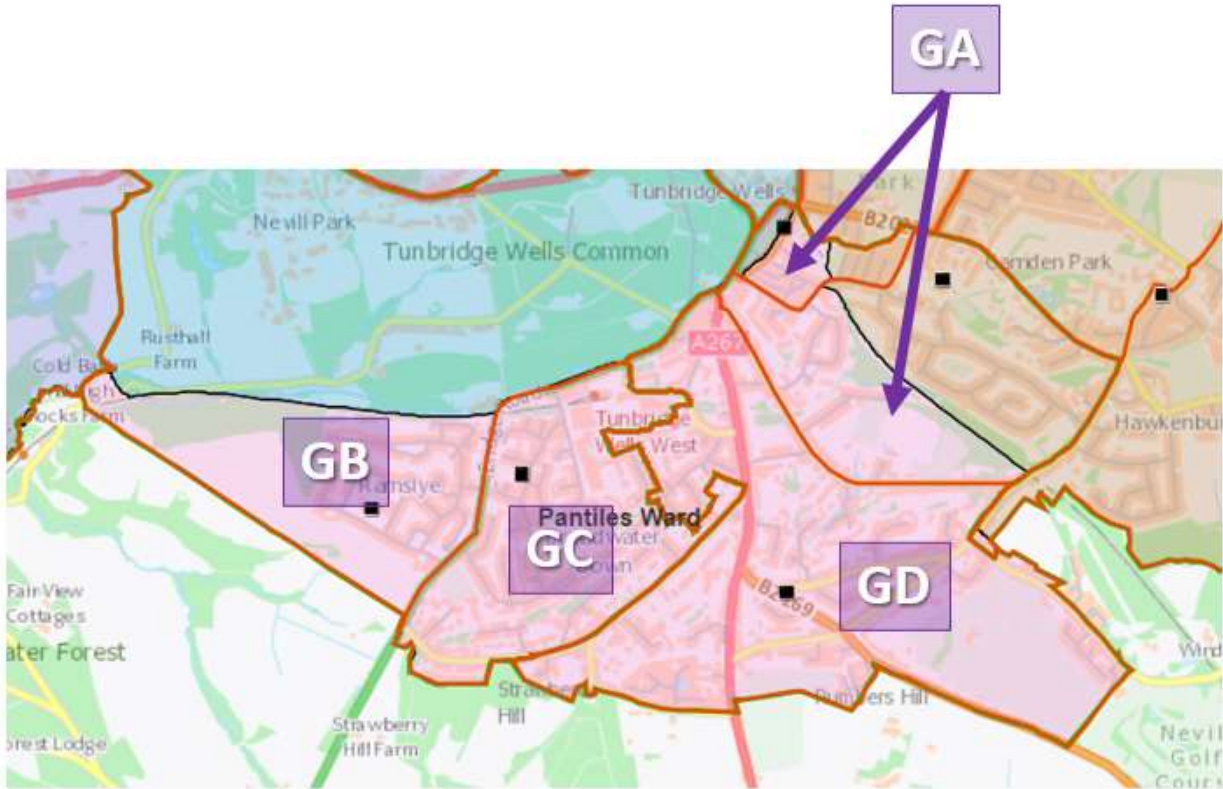


Polling districts

FA – Paddock Wood East

FB – Paddock Wood West

Pantiles



Polling districts

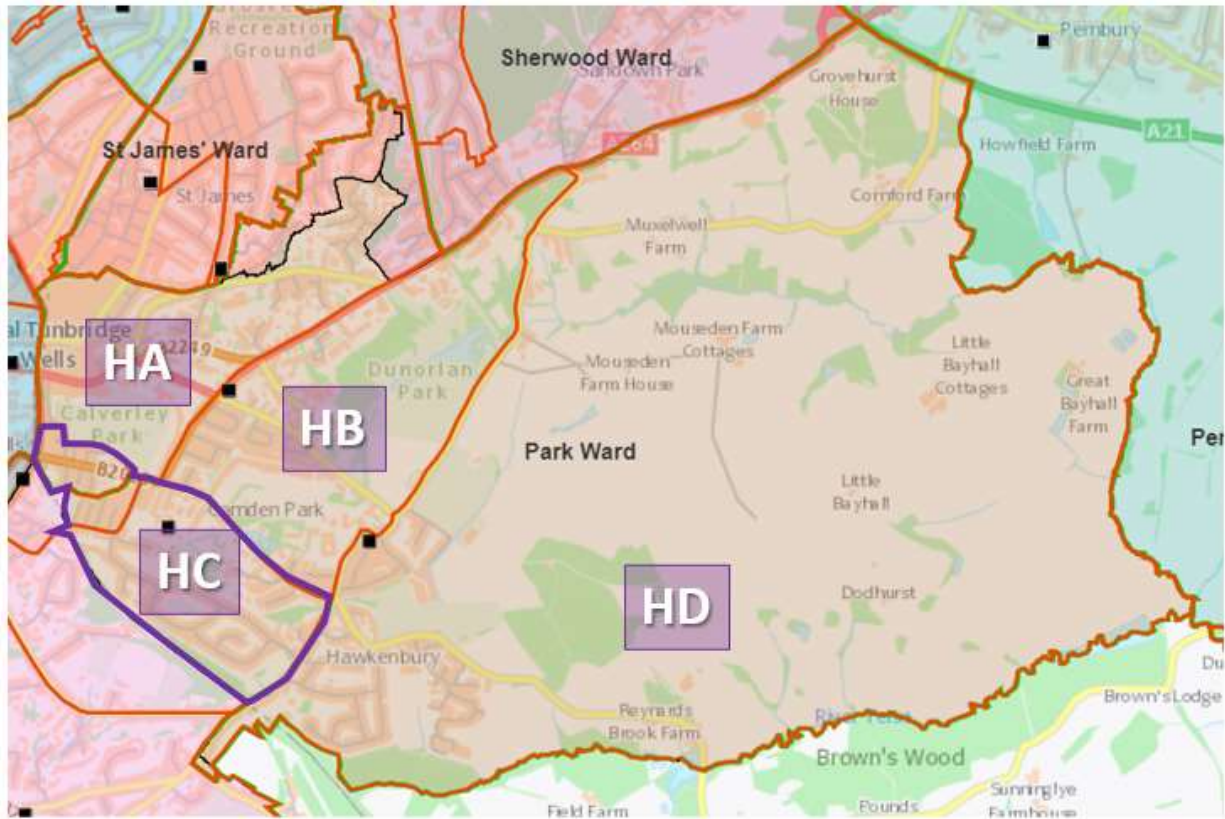
GA – Christ Church

GB – Ramslye

GC – Showfields

GD – St Marks

Park



Polling districts

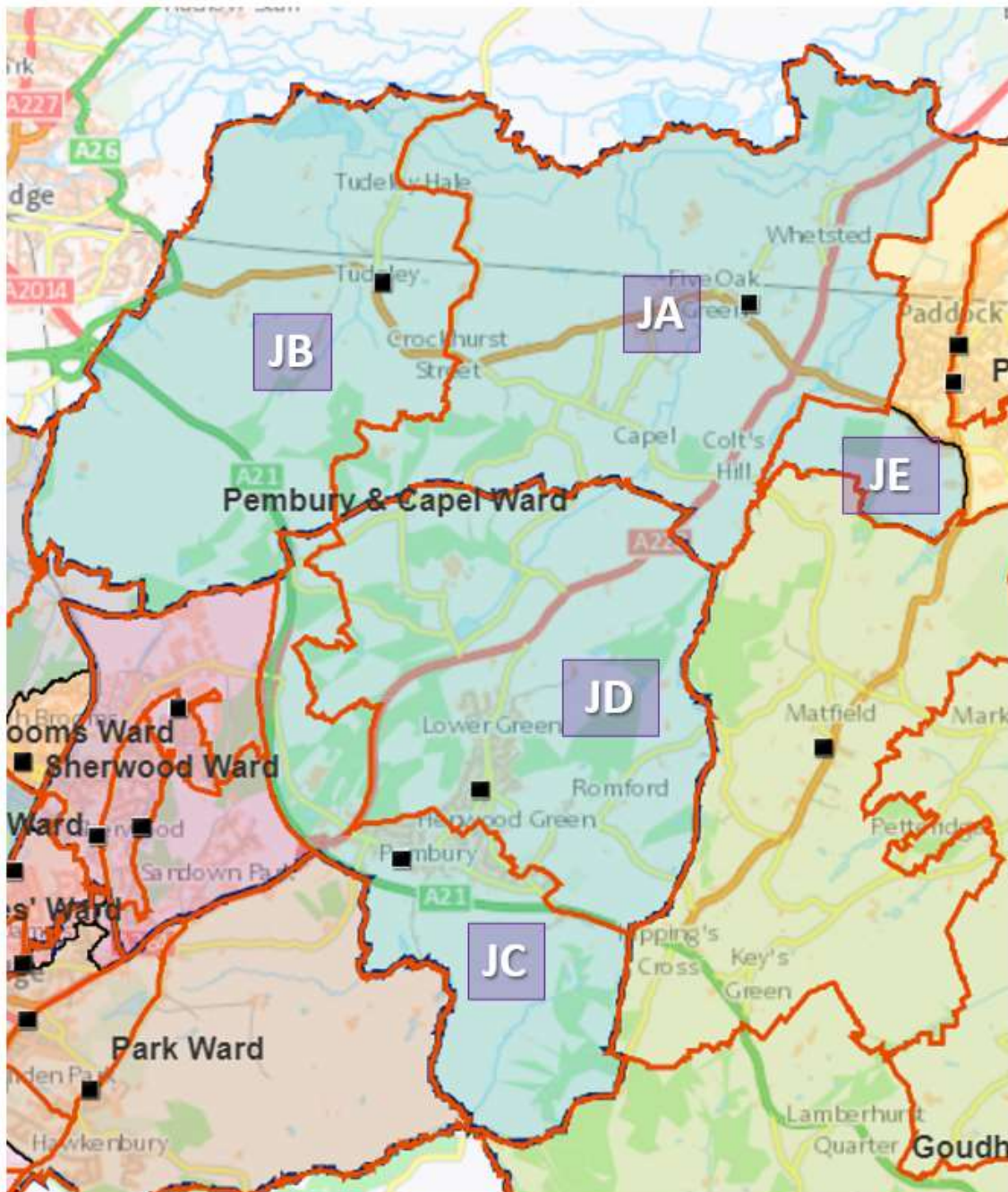
HA – Calverley

HB – Dunorlan

HC – Grove

HD – Hawkenbury

Pembury and Capel



Polling districts

JA – Capel

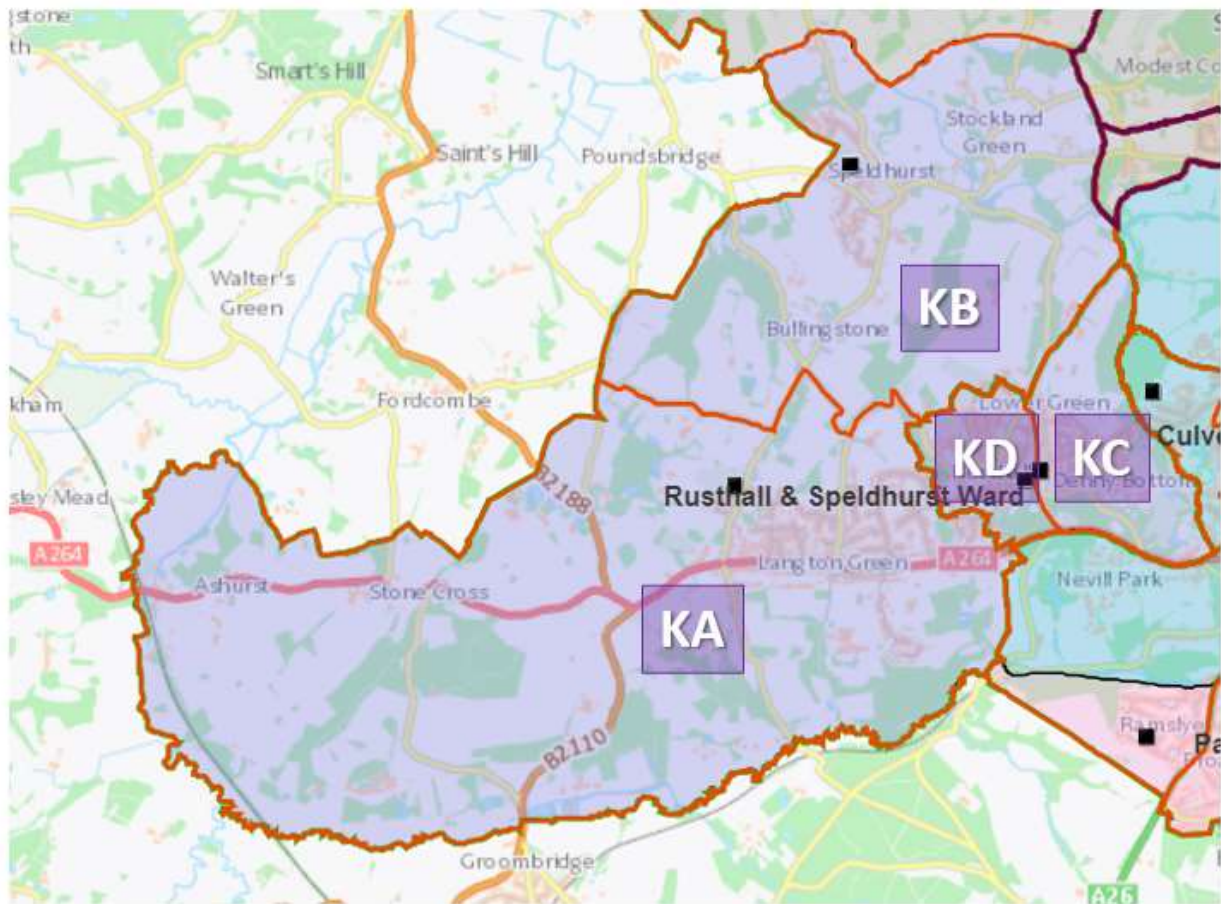
JB – Tudeley

JC – Pembury High Street

JD – Pembury Lower Green

JE – Paddock Wood South

Rusthall and Speldhurst



Polling districts

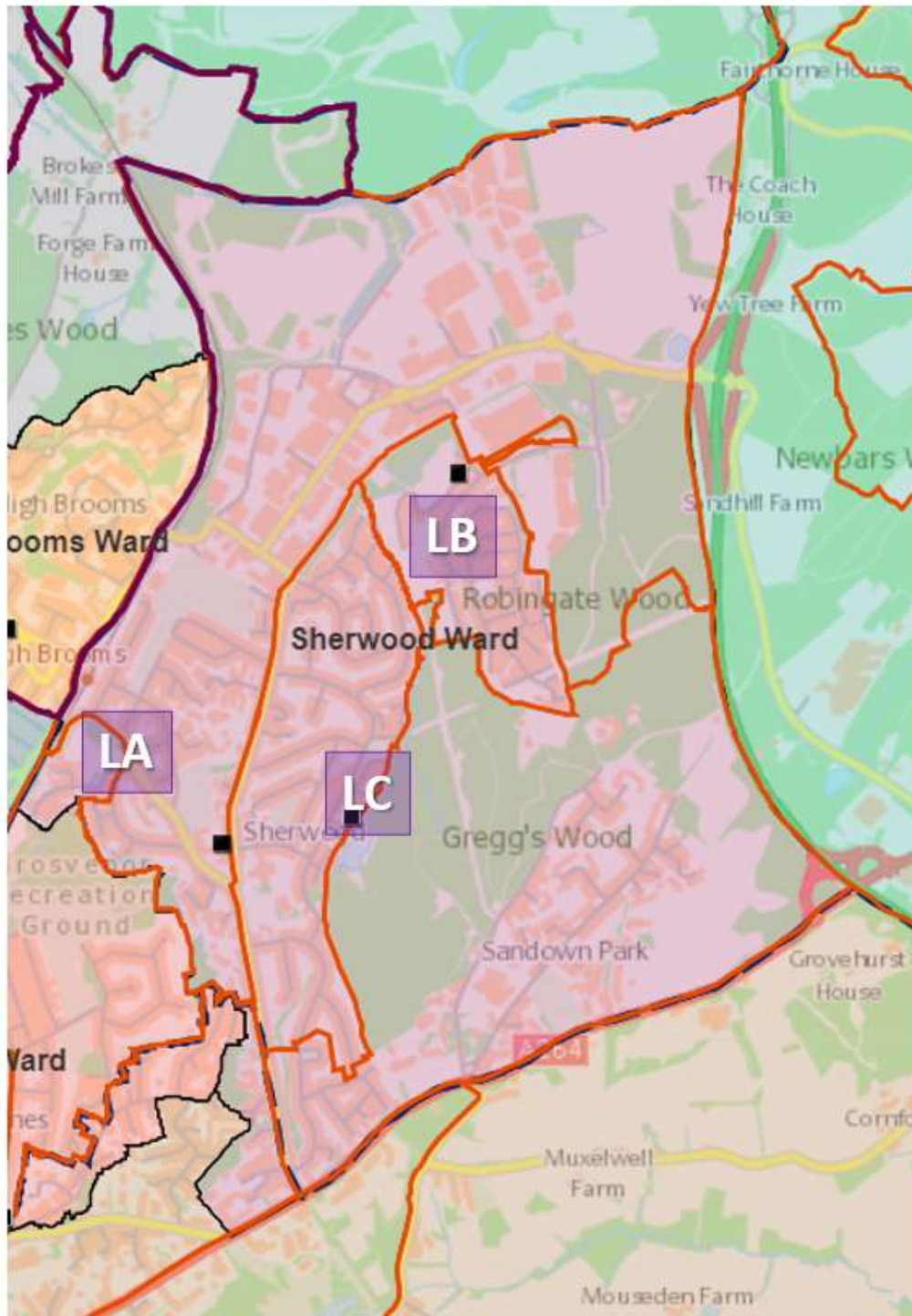
KA – Langton Green

KB – Speldhurst

KC – Rusthall East

KD – Rusthall West

Sherwood



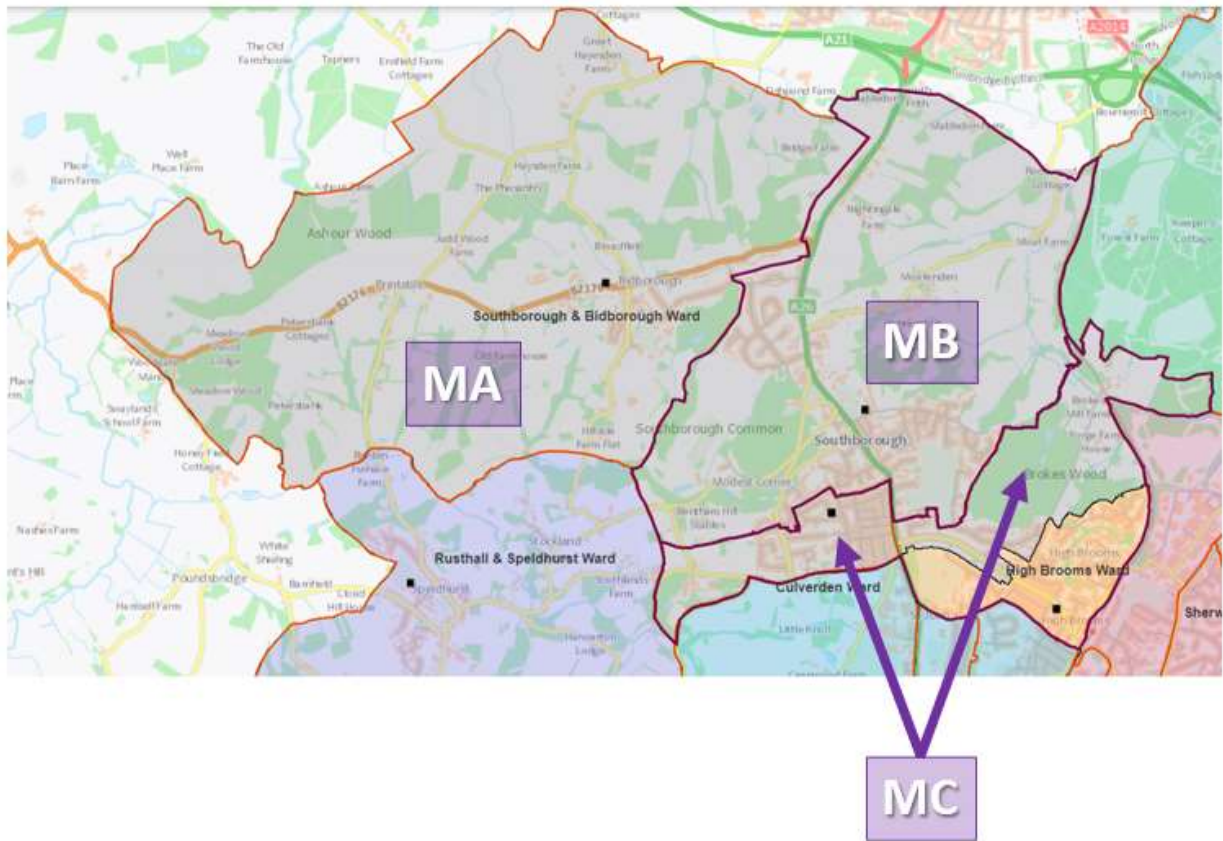
Polling districts

LA – Oak Road

LB – Knights Park

LC – Sherwood

Southborough and Bidborough



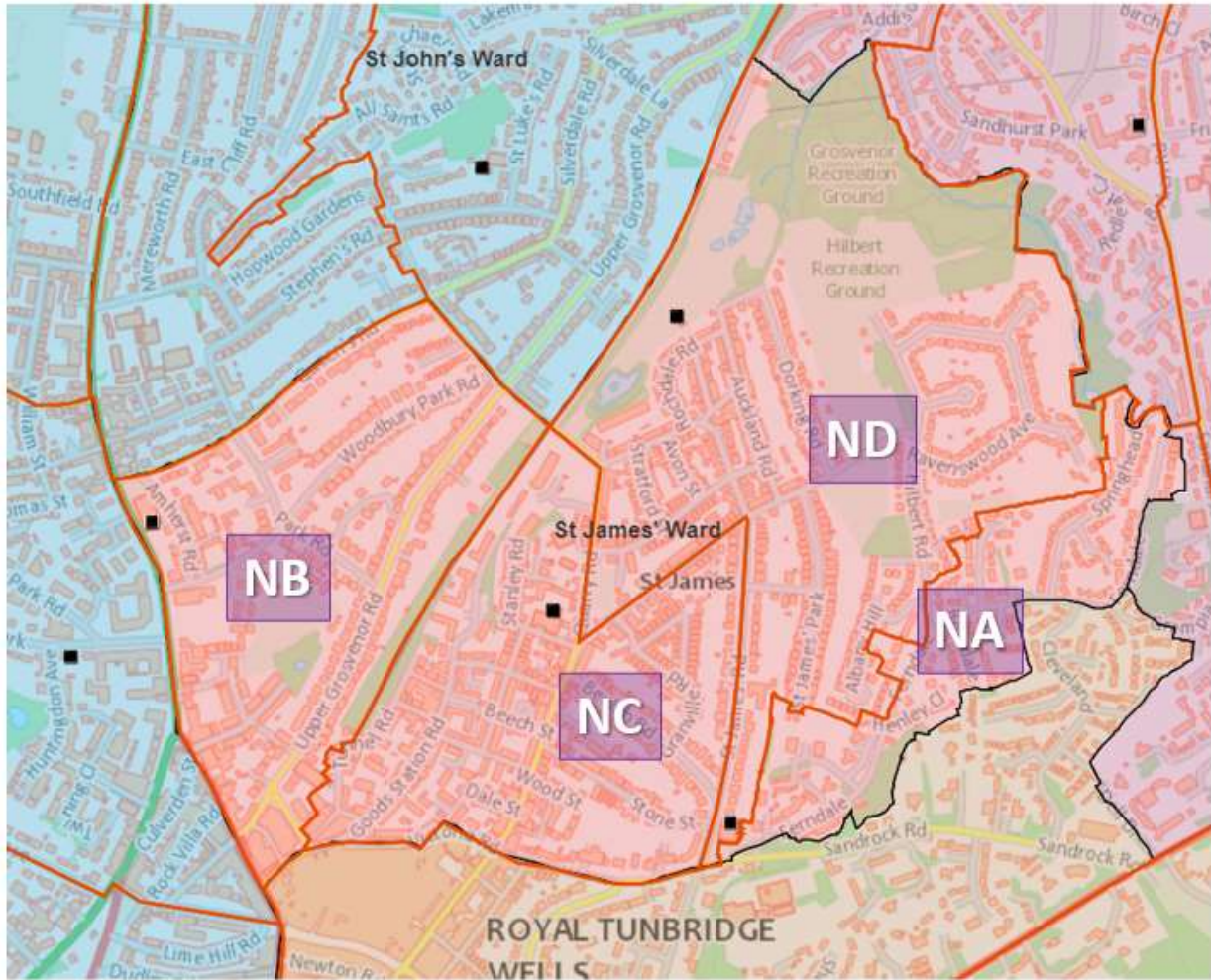
Polling districts

MA – Bidborough

MB – Southborough North

MC – Southborough South

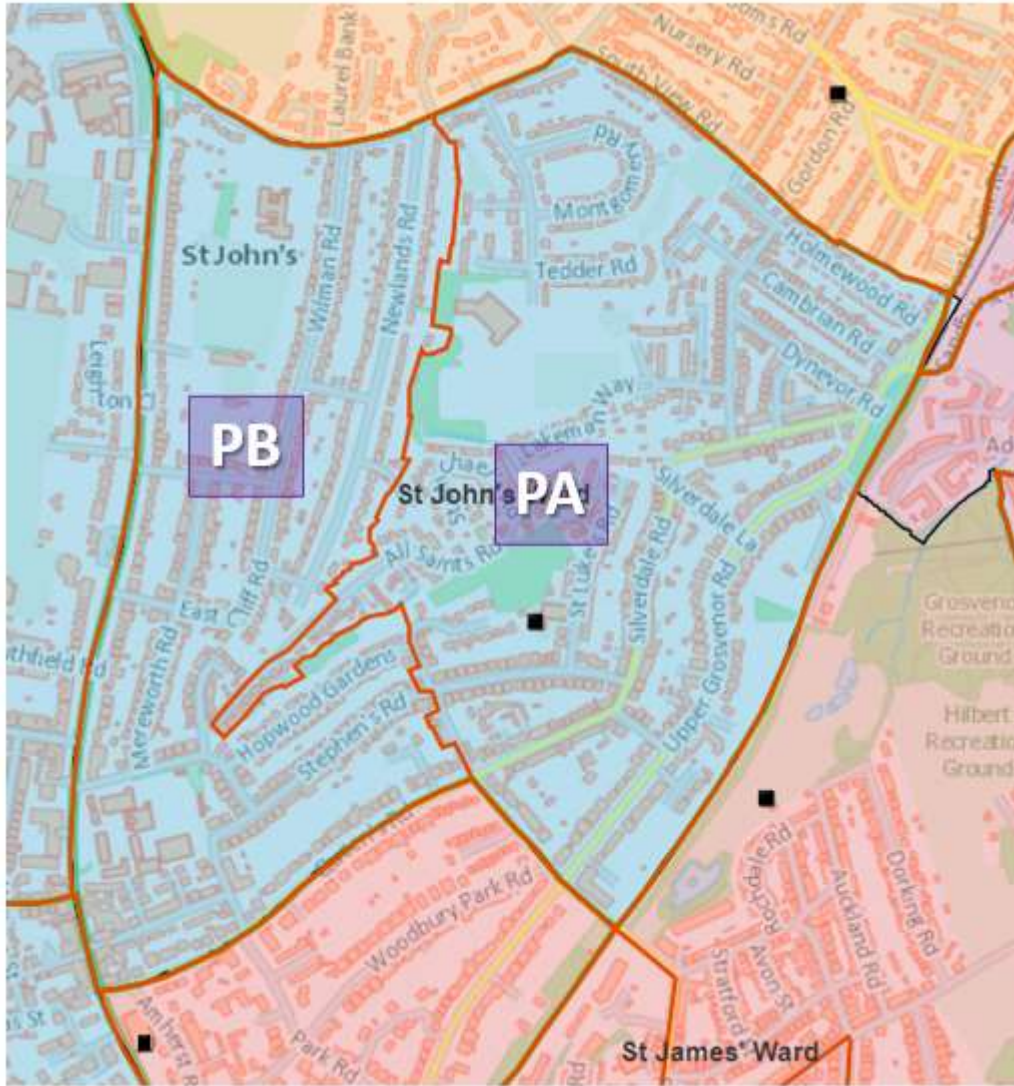
St James'



Polling districts

- NA** – Ferndale
- NB** – Grosvenor
- NC** – Camden
- ND** – St James

St John's



Polling districts

PA – St Johns

PB – St Lukes

Appendix C

No.	Contribution
1	I support the proposals for Brenchley and Matfield's polling stations to remain unchanged
2	<p>I live in Rusthall and i have read the new boundary changes which will merge it with Speldhurst making it one large ward Rusthall and Speldhurst . This seems sensible. However the boundary of this new ward seems to go long the A264 which is the Langton Road. This then cuts the Parochial Parish of Rusthall- St Paul's church of from its Village and its war memorial of those who fell in both world wars and later conflicts of the village and community and puts them in the new Culverden West ward. It also cuts off Tea Garden lane - postal address Rusthall and Happy Valley a local area of outstanding natural beauty in Rusthall and again puts them in Culverden West.</p> <p>There is a second road that runs parallel with the A264 and would it be possible if the boundary could be moved to there between Culverden West and Rusthall and Speldhurst wards - this would then place St Paul's Church. Rusthall, it's churchyard and war memorial and the places i have mentioned back in the ward of Rusthall. I think local residents would be much happier with this.</p> <p>Kind regards [NAME REDACTED]</p>
3	Given the difficulty of getting from Blackhurst Lane and Sandown park, especially for older people, to Sherwood I would recommend an additional polling station at Skinners Kent Academy.
4	<p>JA polling district should be called Five Oak Green (or at the very least Five Oak Green and Capel) to reflect where the vast majority of voters there live.</p> <p>Suggest both sides of Sherenden Road are in the Tudeley polling district as northern end of the road is a long distance from Capel Village Hall.</p>
5	ffff



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places
Electoral Services
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Town Hall
Mount Pleasant Road
Tunbridge Wells
TN1 1RS

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for the opportunity to provide representations to the Review of polling districts and places.

Given the difficulty of getting from Blackhurst Lane and Sandown Park, particularly for older people, I would recommend a polling station at Skinners Kent Academy.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'G'.

I am submitting the following representation on behalf of the Tunbridge Wells Liberal Democrat Council Group. In formulating our proposals we have kept three objectives in mind: 1) saving council resources by reducing the number of polling districts where possible 2) making the task of officials in polling stations as straightforward as possible by reducing the number of polling places shared by multiple wards 3) recognising that rural areas are geographically dispersed and that polling places will often need to be provided in each village, even if small. All of our proposals are designed to achieve at least one of these three objectives.

We have also suggested alternative names for a few polling districts, which we feel better reflect the nature of the areas.

Cranbrook, Sissinghurst and Frittenden:

We agree with the proposals laid out in the report.

Culverden:

BA: must remain as is, given KCC Division Boundaries

BB, BC, BD: Could be combined into two polling districts, with the border running down Culverden Down and Molyneux Park Road. The BB polling place could remain as is for the westerly district and either the BC or BD polling place could serve for the easterly district.

BE, BF: Could be combined into a single polling district, as they are both part of the KCC TW South Division. Ideally this polling district would use the Linden Park CC Pavillion for its polling place.

The new polling districts formed out of BB, BC and BD should be renamed Culverden East and Culverden West

BE should be renamed Culverden South

Goudhurst, Lamberhurst and Horsmonden:

We agree with the proposals as laid out in the report.

Hawkhurst, Sandhurst and Benenden:

We feel that the polling districts should follow the Parish Council boundaries

DA, DB: Given the current close proximity of the polling places, we feel that these two polling districts could be merged. The Polling place would likely be in Beneden, which we believe is the larger of the two settlements.

DC, DD: Given the current close proximity of the polling places, we feel that these two polling districts could be merged. The polling place would likely be in Hawkhurst.

DE: We agree with the proposals as laid out in the report.

High Brooms:

We agree with the proposals as laid out in the report.

Paddock Wood:

We agree with the proposals as laid out in the report.

Pantiles:

GA: We agree with the proposals as laid out in the report.

GB, GC: We believe that these two polling districts are close enough together and of a reasonable size to be combined, perhaps with some of GC going into GD to create a clearer border and rebalance the sizes, possibly along Broadwater Lane and Broadwater Rise. The polling place for this revised polling district should be at Number One Community Centre

GD: Largely we think this should remain as proposed, perhaps with the alteration we have suggested above to the western border, which is currently very irregular

Park:

HA, HB, HC: We believe this area could be more effectively divided into two polling districts, with Calverley Road and Bayhall road marking the border between them. The northern most of these polling districts could use the Salvation Army as its polling place and the lower could use Claremont school.

HD: We agree with the proposals as laid out in the report.

Pembury and Capel

We believe that polling districts JC and JD could be combined into a single district, with the polling place somewhere central in Pembury. The other polling places should remain as is, given the rural nature of the rest of the ward and the changes to Paddock Wood.

A more appropriate polling place should be found for the JE polling district, long term.

JA polling district should be called Five Oak Green, as this is where the majority of the housing in this polling district is.

Rusthall and Speldhurst:

KA, KB: We agree with the proposals as laid out in the report.

KC, KD: We believe that these two polling districts could be combined, so that Rusthall parish is served by one PD, in the same way as the other two parishes in the ward are. The polling place could be at either of the two existing polling locations, given how close together they are to each other and the centre of the village.

Sherwood:

We agree with the proposals as laid out in the report.

Southborough and Bidborough:

We agree with the proposals as laid out in the report.

St James':

Appendix E

NA, NB: We agree with the proposals as laid out in the report, given that they sit in different KCC Divisions.

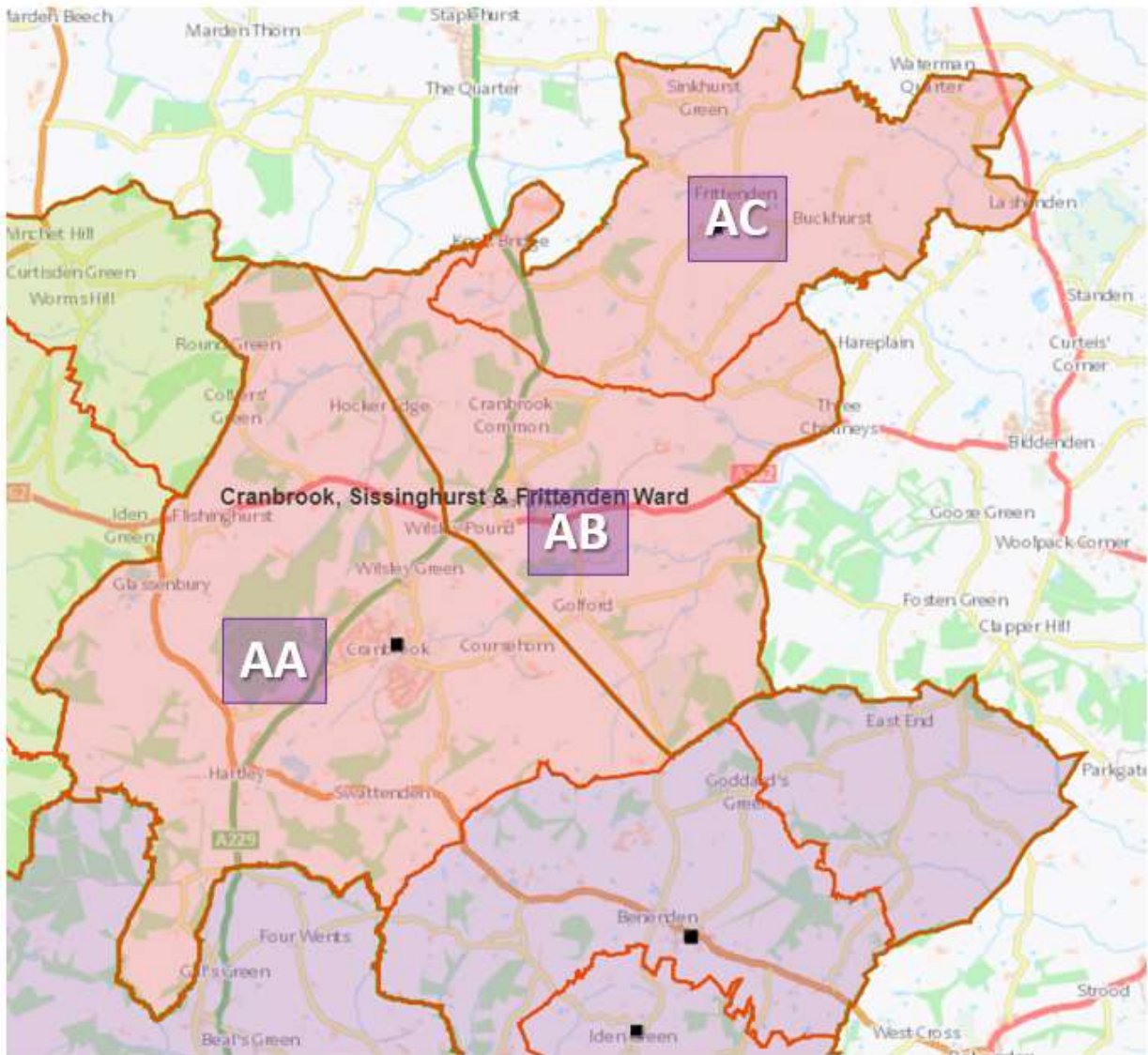
NC, ND: We believe that these two polling districts could be effectively combined. The polling place could be at the Hub (G&H park is generally accessible from most of the ward) or alternatively, if use can be obtained, the Sea Cadets Centre on Albion Road would be ideally placed for the whole of the proposed PD.

St John's:

We believe this ward could be covered by a single polling district, with the polling place at St Luke's Church Hall. As well as saving costs by reducing the number of polling stations, it would also avoid the complication of having two wards using the same polling place, as is currently the case at St John's Church.

Appendix F: Maps of the new proposed polling districts

Cranbrook, Sissinghurst and Frittenden



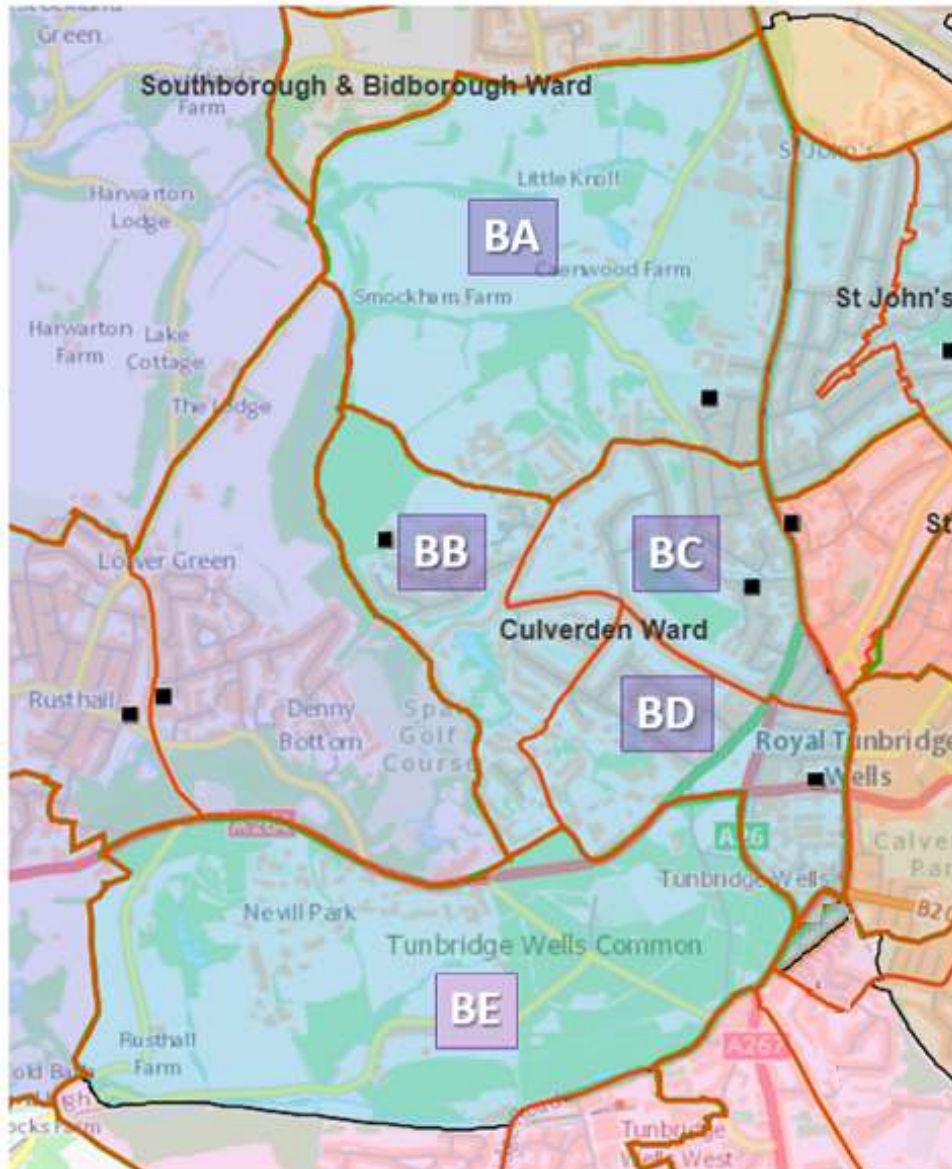
Polling districts

AA – Cranbrook

AB – Sissinghurst

AC – Frittenden

Culverden



Polling districts

BA – Culverden North

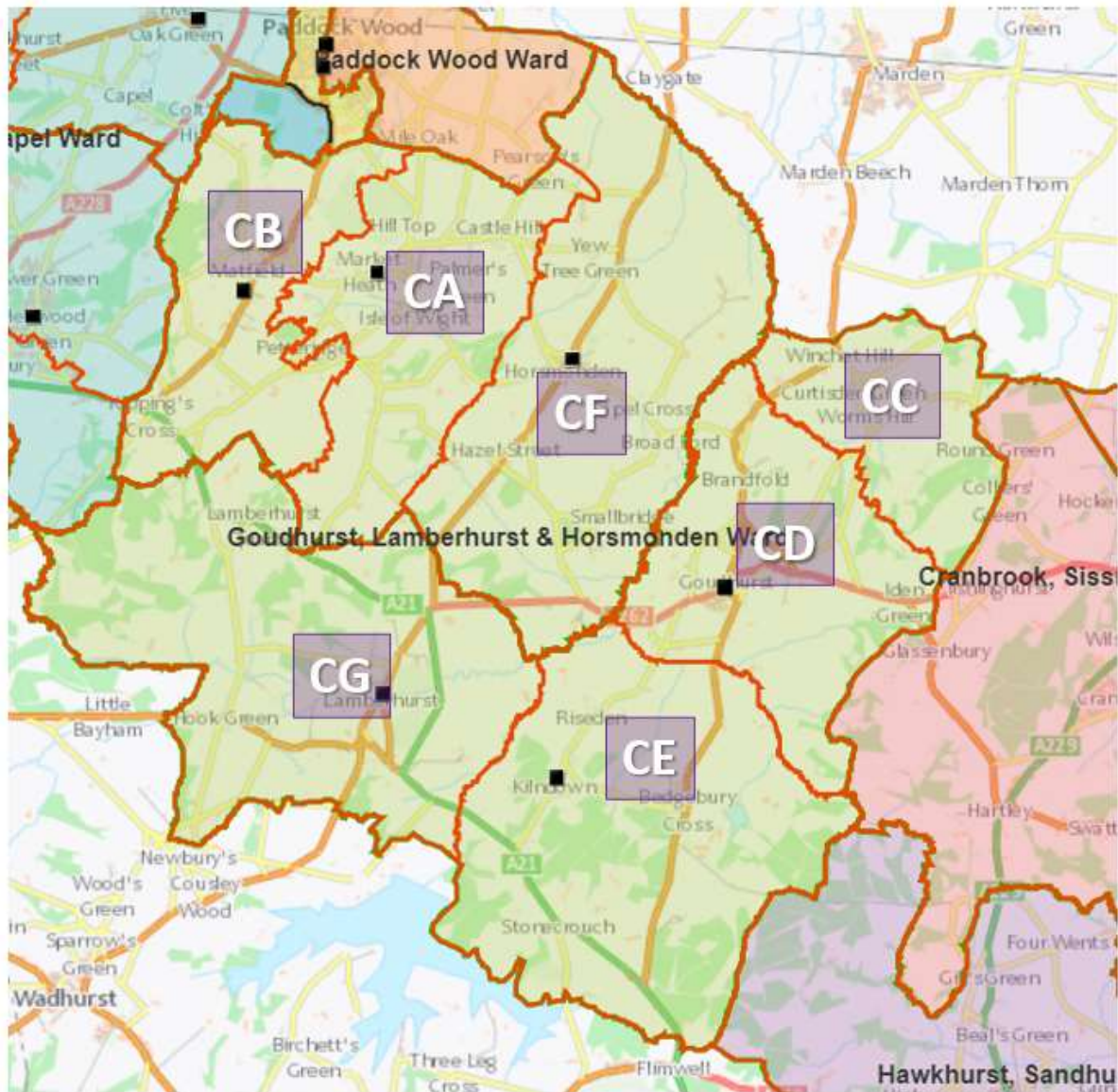
BB – Bishops Down

BC – Culverden

BD – Holy Trinity

BE – Culverden South

Goudhurst, Lamberhurst and Horsmonden (Rural Tunbridge Wells)



Polling districts

CA – Brenchley

CB – Matfield

CC – Curtisden Green

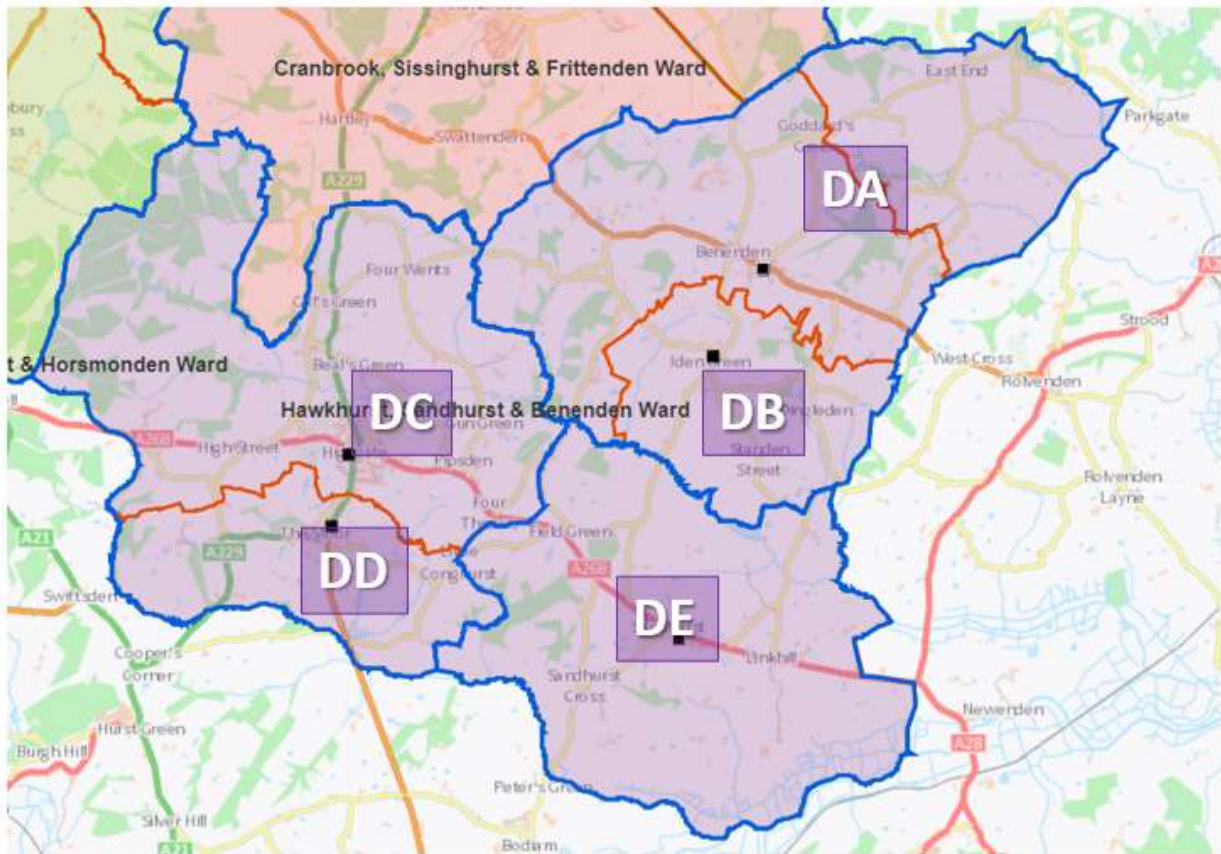
CD – Goudhurst

CE – Kildown

CF – Horsmonden

CG – Lamberhurst

Hawkhurst, Sandhurst and Benenden



Polling districts

DA – Benenden

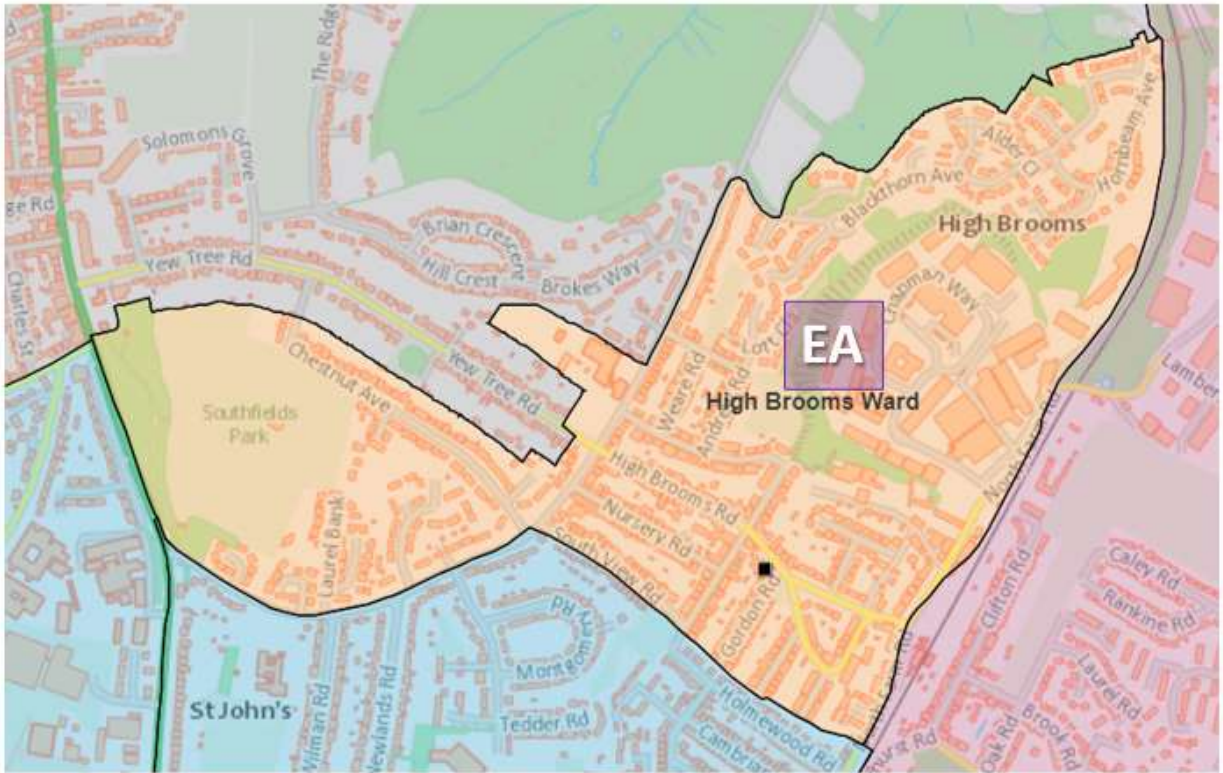
DB – Iden Green

DC – Hawkhurst

DD – Hawkhurst Moor

DE – Sandhurst

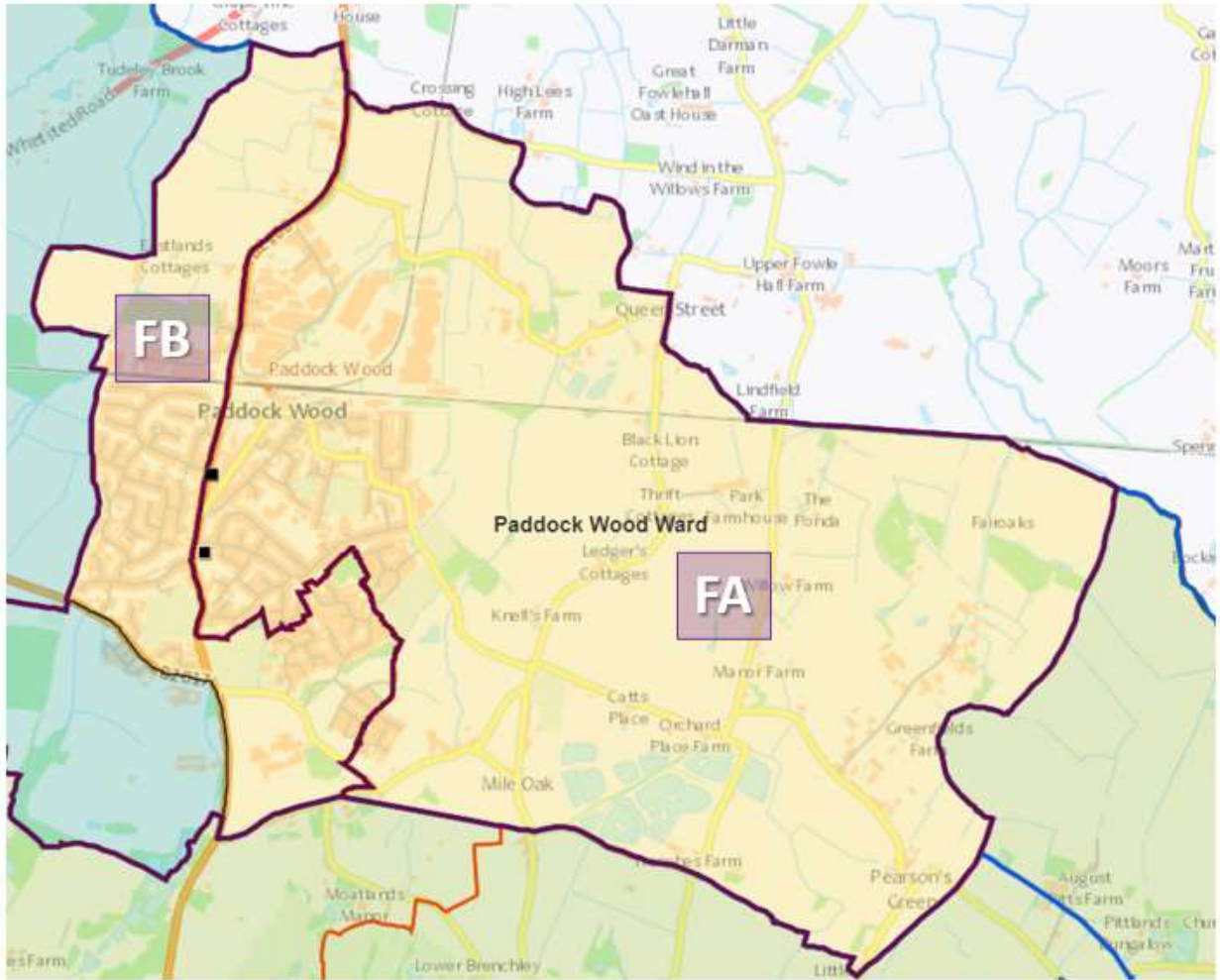
High Brooms



Polling districts

EA – High Brooms

Paddock Wood

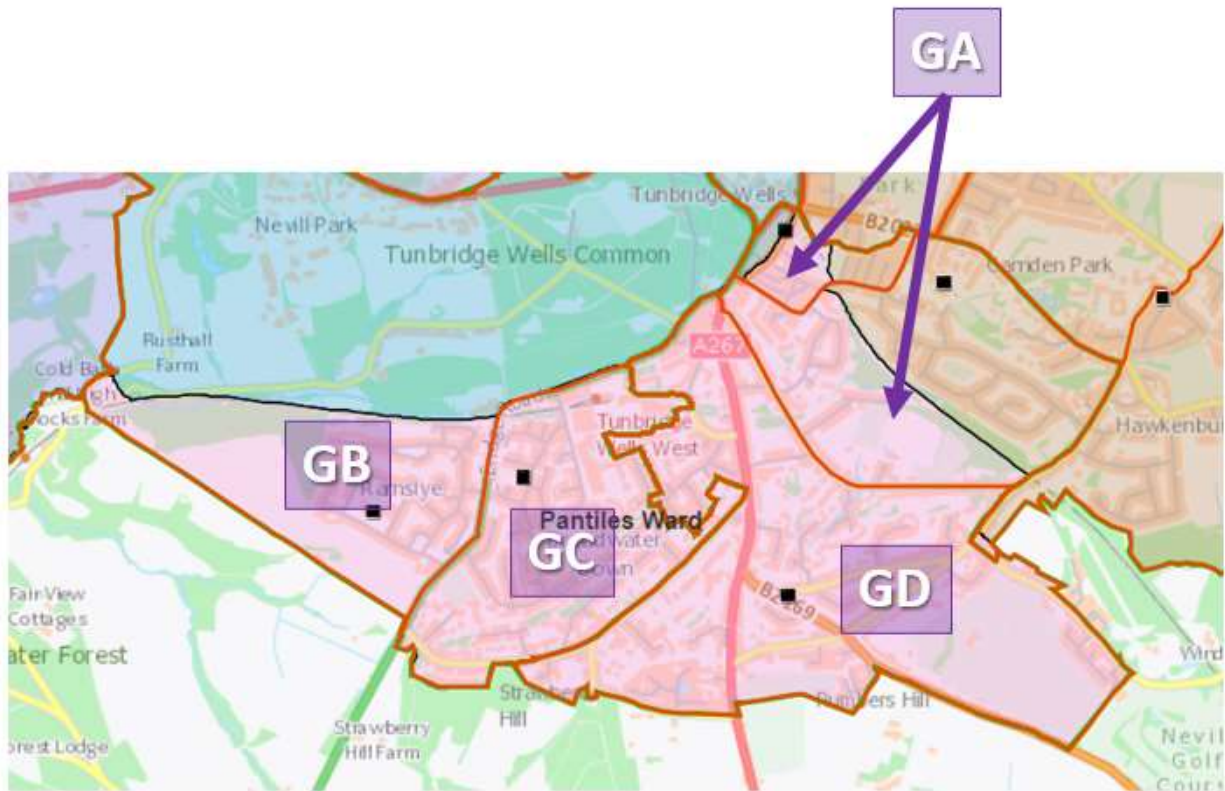


Polling districts

FA – Paddock Wood East

FB – Paddock Wood West

Pantiles



Polling districts

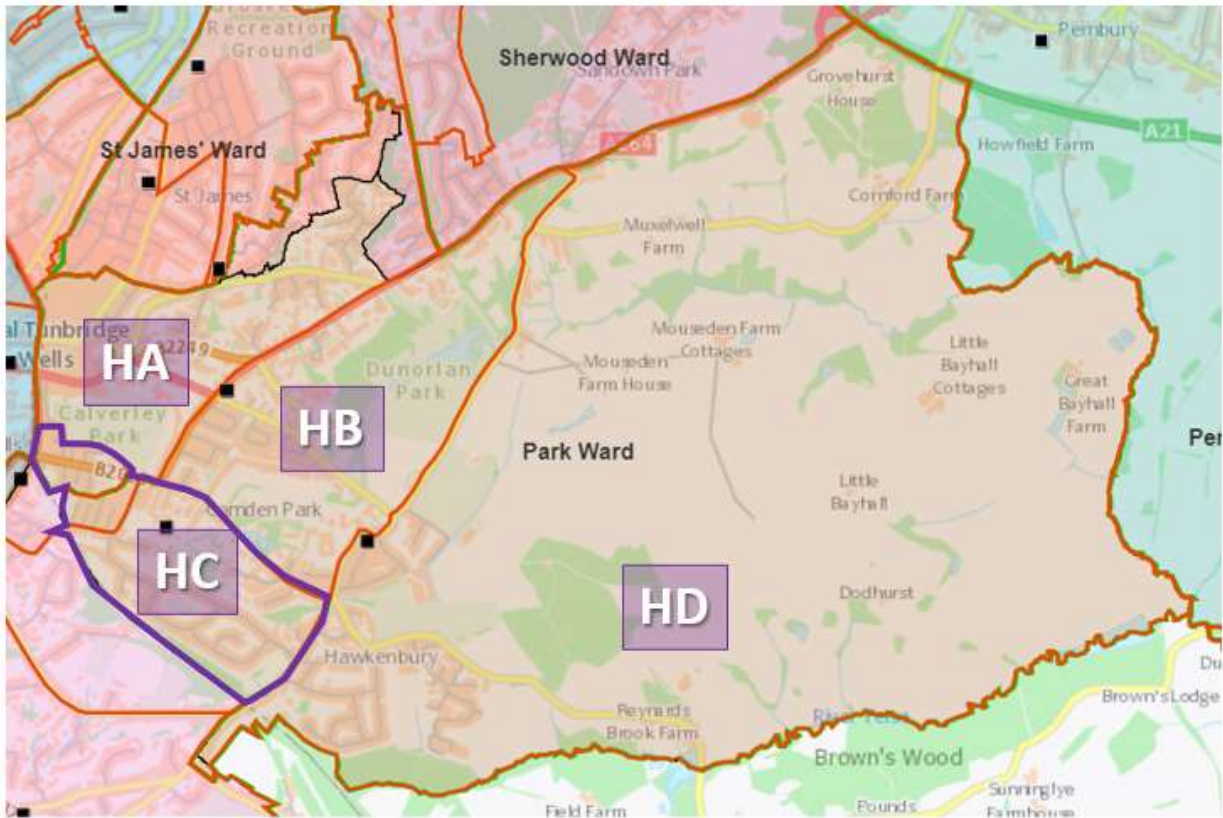
GA – Christ Church

GB – Ramslye

GC – Showfields

GD – St Marks

Park



Polling districts

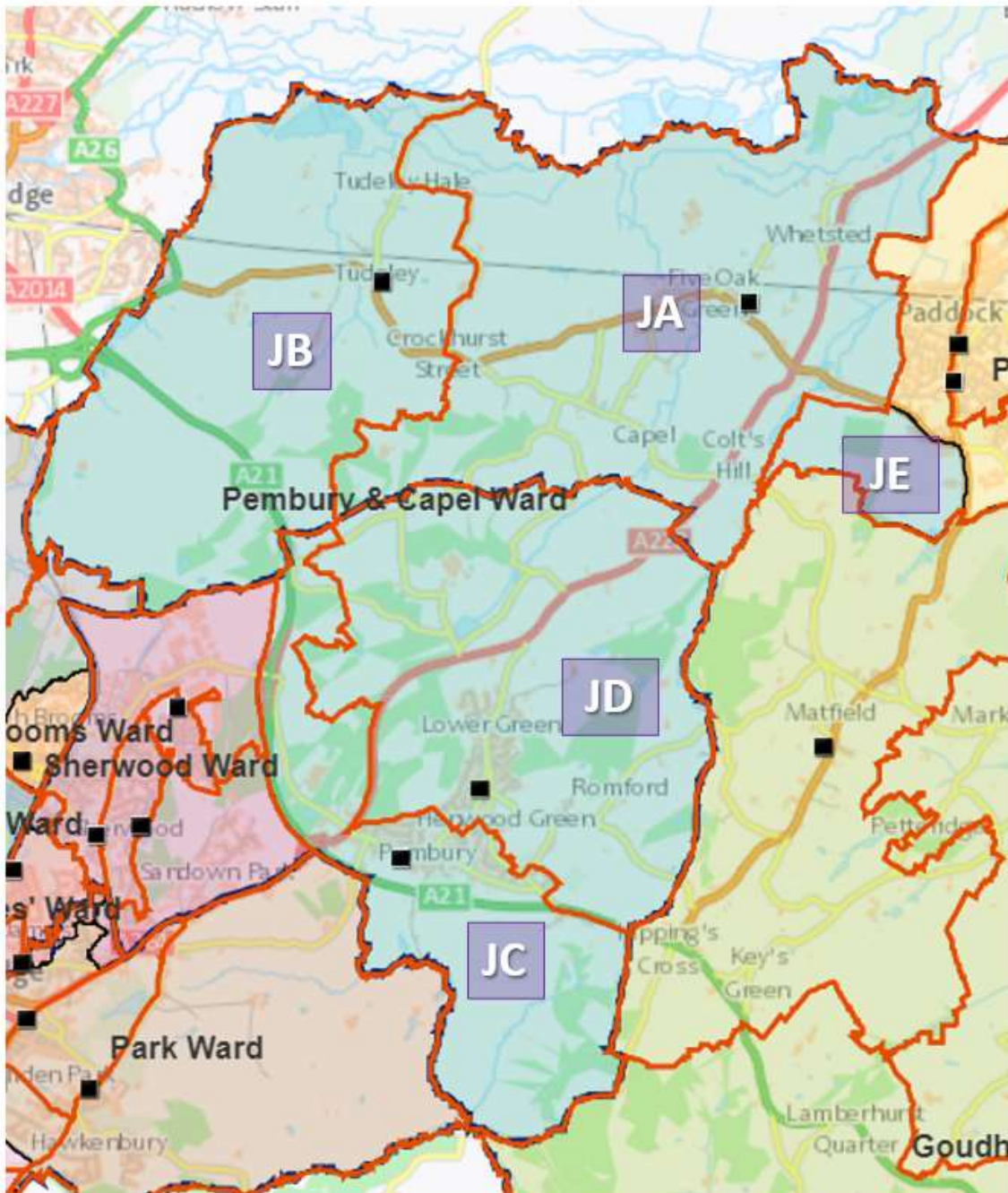
HA – Calverley

HB – Dunorlan

HC – Grove

HD – Hawkenbury

Pembury and Capel



Polling districts

JA – Five Oak Green and Capel

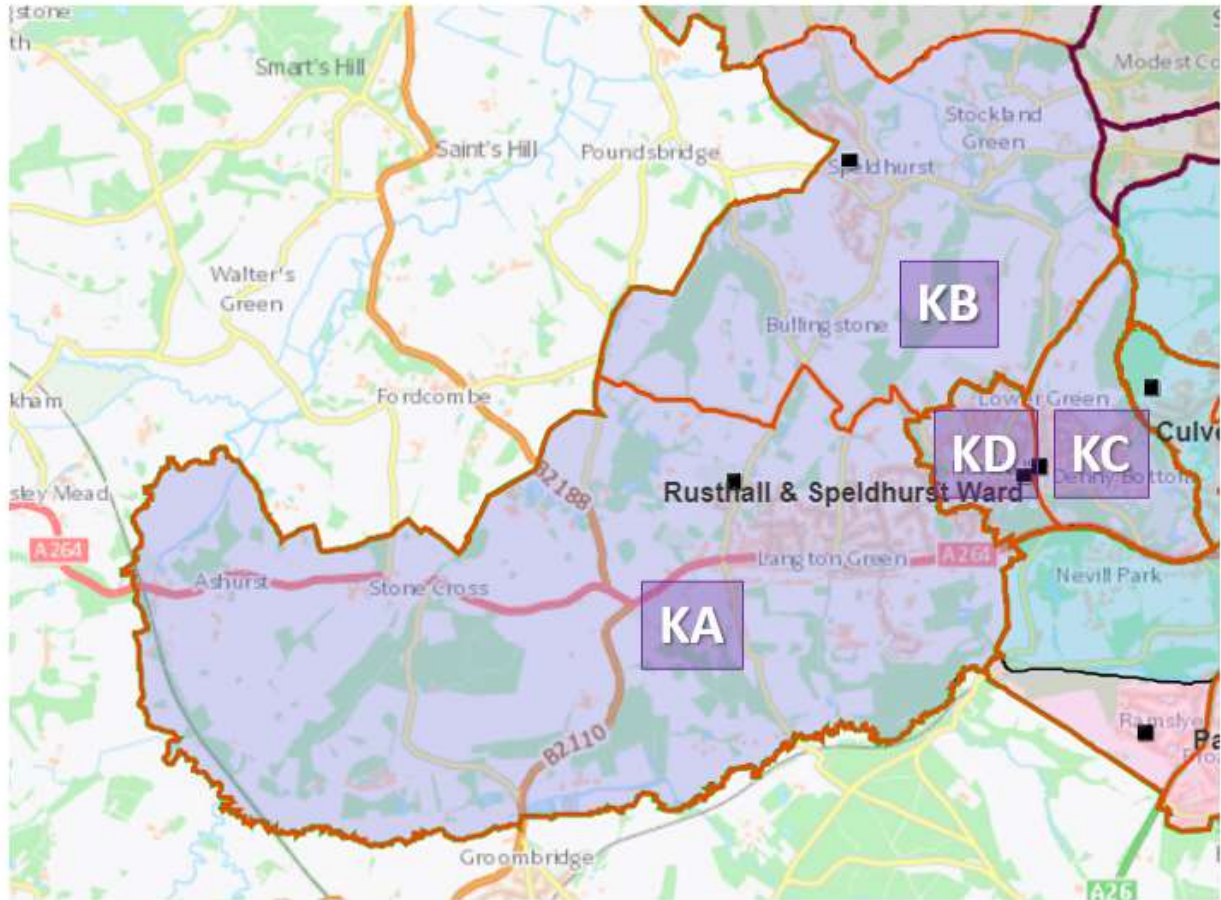
JB – Tudeley

JC – Pembury High Street

JD – Pembury Lower Green

JE – Paddock Wood South

Rusthall and Speldhurst



Polling districts

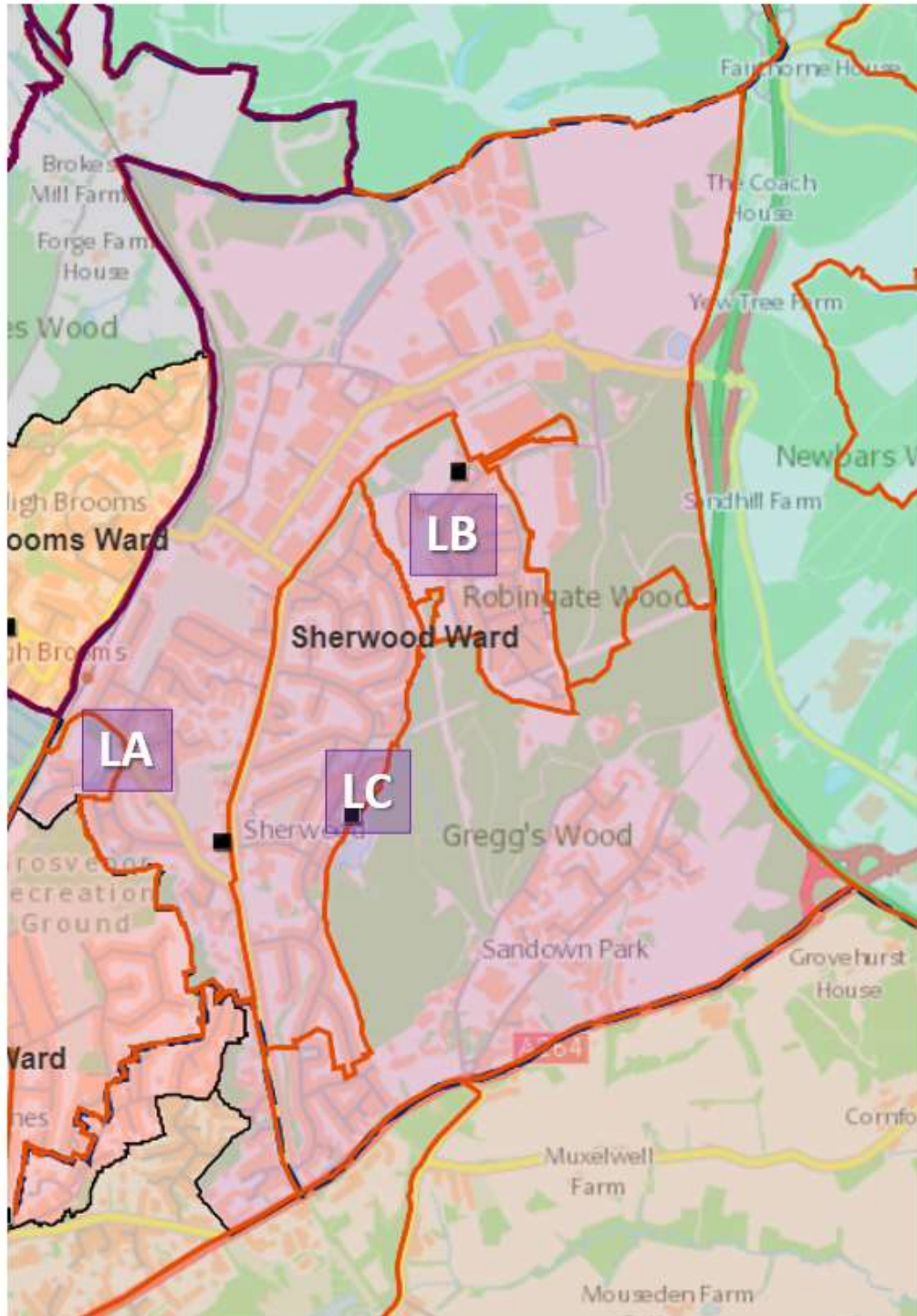
KA – Langton Green

KB – Speldhurst

KC – Rusthall East

KD – Rusthall West

Sherwood



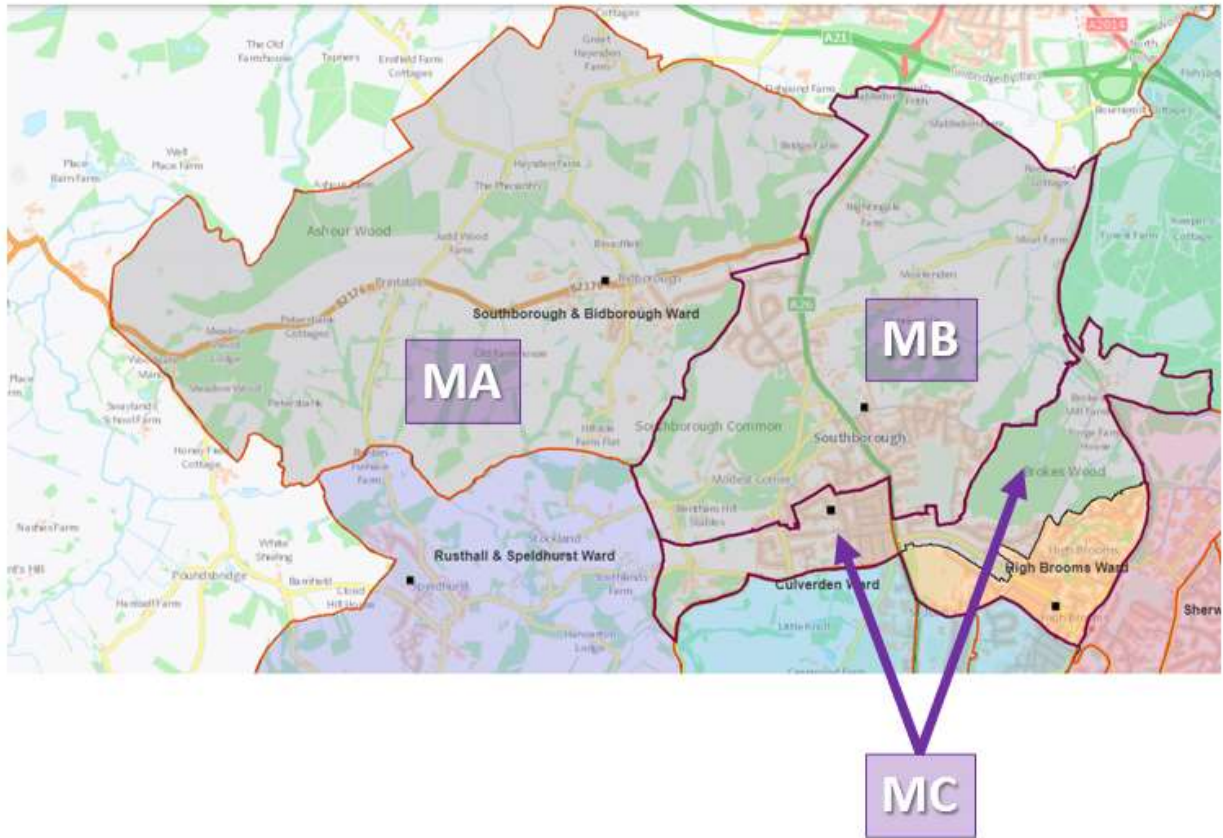
Polling districts

LA – Oak Road

LB – Knights Park

LC – Sherwood

Southborough and Bidborough



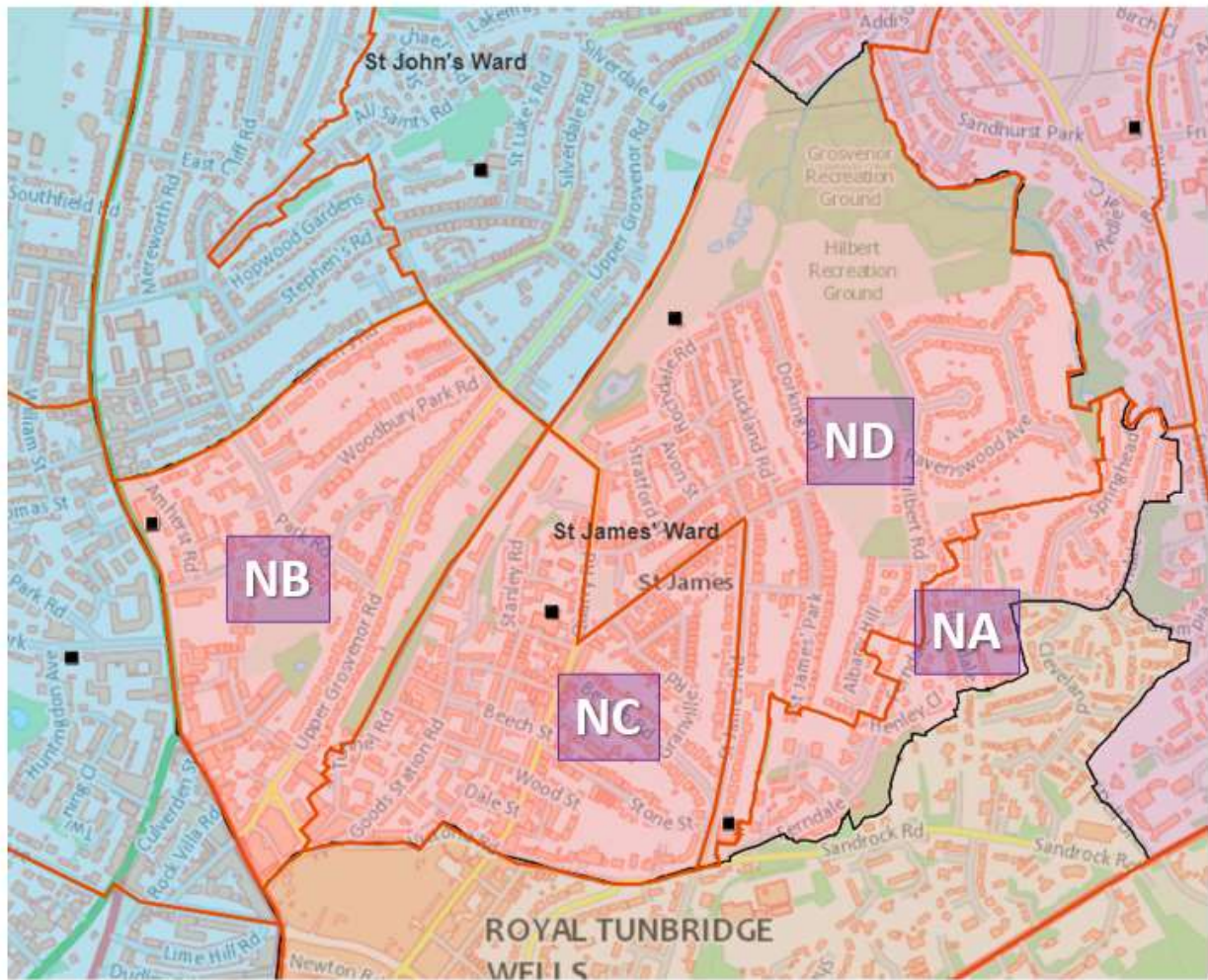
Polling districts

MA – Bidborough

MB – Southborough North

MC – Southborough South

St James'



Polling districts

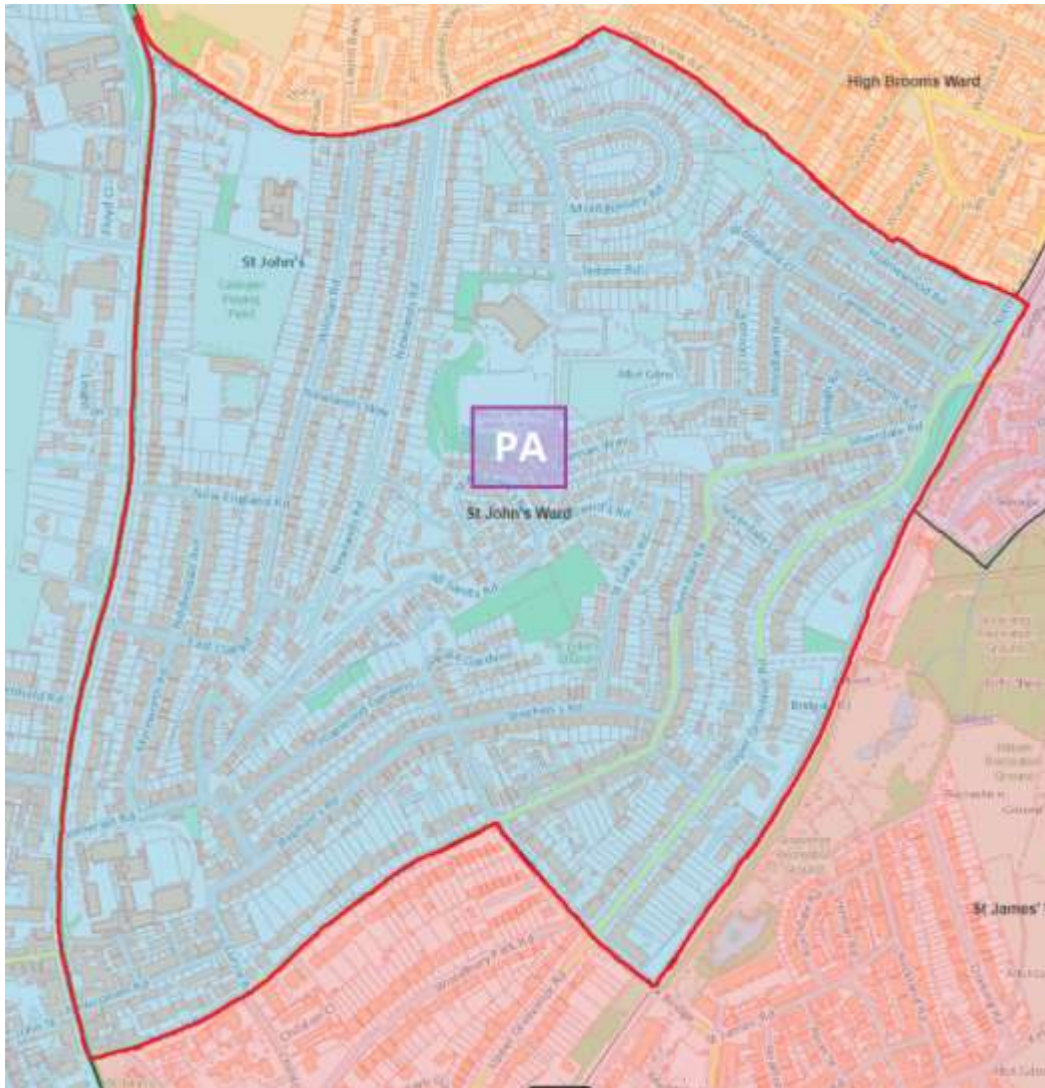
NA – Ferndale

NB – Grosvenor

NC – Camden

ND – St James

St John's



Polling districts

PA – St Johns