

Merry Hill/Penn and Penn

This is the proposal document for Penn, with one proposal having implications for Merry Hill. Within this document there is district and ward data relating the number of registered voters (ward/district context), and the reasons for two proposals.

There are currently 10083 electors registered to vote in Penn ward. A station operates at its optimum level at approximately 2500 voters. Therefore to operate at an optimum level, in numerical terms this ward requires no more than 5 stations. There are currently 9 stations and 7 buildings in the ward, which is not an optimum use of resources. Reduction of a station would make a saving of £500 per election.

Ward/District Context

The table below ranks the polling stations in Penn according to the proportion of the registered electors in the ward that use the stations. The percentage is colour coded according to the performance quartile the station fits into across the City.

- Lowest quartile: **0% - 11.03%**
- Lower middle quartile: **11.30% -14.40%**
- Upper middle quartile: **14.47% – 17.17%**
- Upper quartile: **17.21%- 31.18%**

Ward	Polling District	Station	Registered Electors	Ward Size	Proportion of ward
Penn	QCA	Penn Christian Centre, Warstones Road	624	1008 3	6.19%
Penn	QKA	St Bartholomew's Church Hall, Vicarage Road	721	1008 3	7.15%
Penn	QEA	Woodfield Junior School, Woodfield Avenue	903	1008 3	8.96%
Penn	QBA	Springdale Methodist Church Hall	1,219	1008 3	12.09%
Penn	QAA	Warstones Primary School, Warstones Road	1,299	1008 3	12.88%
Penn	QDA	Penn United Reformed Church Hall, Penn Road	1,430	1008 3	14.18%
Penn	QJA	Penn United Reformed Church Hall, Penn Road	1,613	1008 3	16.00%
Penn	QFA	x2 - St Aidan's Church, Mount Road	2,274	1008 3	22.55%

Merry Hill / Penn

See Merry Hill – Proposal Map and Penn – Proposal Map

- Merge the QCA and QBA boundaries, to create one district (QBB)
- Remove the Springdale Methodist Hall (QBA) polling station
- Create a joint polling station at Springdale Methodist Hall, used by QCA, QBA and OJA in Merry Hill.

Polling Districts affected in Penn	Number of registered voters	Proportion of ward registered to vote
QCA – Penn Christian Centre QBA – Springdale Methodist Hall	624 1219 = 1853	6.19% 12.09%
Polling Districts affected in Merry Hill	Number of registered voters	Proportion of ward registered to vote
OJA – Penn Christian Centre	1174	12.53%

Reason

There are a relatively small number of registered electors at QCA and it would be a better use of resources for this district to merge with another, namely QBA. As can be seen from the 0.5 miles walking distance map, having both QCA and QBA is somewhat unnecessary as for many residents the two stations are virtually equidistant. Performance in this part of the ward would be significantly improved as a result of this change, representing better value for money.

Whilst Electoral Services initially proposed to remove Springdale Methodist Church and use Penn Christian Centre as a joint QCA/QBA polling place due to its central location, Penn ward Councillors have commented that the facilities at Penn Christian Centre are less favourable than Springdale Methodist Hall. This is an accurate assessment: Springdale is better equipped to cope with an increase in registered voters, noting its superior parking and access. On reflection this does outweigh the benefits of a more central station.

As part of this proposal there would be an impact on voters in OJA of Merry Hill who would be allocated a new polling place; namely, Springdale Methodist Hall rather than Penn Christian Centre. However, there is no suggestion of reducing numbers of stations in Merry Hill.

Evidence would suggest that in terms of distance this proposal would be more than feasible, with the vast majority of voters in the OJA district falling within 0.5 miles walking distance of the station – national guidelines by SCOPE suggest that one mile would be reasonable. Similarly it is also felt that the significantly improved access, parking and facilities at Springdale will also make the voting process smoother for residence, as arguably the station would be an upgrade.

Proposal Penn 2

See Penn – Proposal Map

- Redraw the QKA and QJA boundaries to make one district (QKB)
- Remove the St Bart’s Church Hall (QKA) polling place.

Polling Districts affected in Penn	Number of registered voters	Proportion of ward registered to vote
QKA – St Bart’s Church Hall QJA – Penn United Church	721 1613 = 2334	7.15% 16.00%

Reason

There are a small number of electors at QKA for whom it would not be unreasonable to expect to travel to QJA to vote. Significantly there are large parts of QKA that do not have inhabitants, such as the cemetery. Given that there are already people in QJA who would travel as far to reach Penn United Church, it would be logical for the residents in QKA to vote there as well. This would make the turnout at QJA almost optimum level and very good value for money. There is a need to reduce the number of stations in the ward and this would be relatively uncomplicated to change to make. Whilst St Bart’s was used by South Staffordshire Council at the last election, there was no joint agreement in place with the City of Wolverhampton Council.