

## PREFACE

This is the latest in a series of books to be issued which, when taken together, are intended to be a definitive source of statistics for Harrow elections.

The starting point for the current volume is the somewhat surreal Borough Election of 2002. The election had a strange air for most participants because of the almost complete absence of Liberal Democrat candidates. After the Lib Dem agent lodged their nomination papers, the Returning Officer ruled that 60 nominations were invalid because of an error when completing the forms. There was insufficient time left for the agent to arrange for the completion of new nomination papers. The mistake occurred because of the strict provisions of new legislation designed to stop the use of misleading party descriptions by candidates. The Liberal Democrats had been one of the first to suffer at the hands of such maverick candidates, when a "Literal Democrat" polled over 10,000 votes in the 1994 European Parliament Election in the Devon and Plymouth East constituency.

The 2006 Borough Election results are also recorded. 2006 was noteworthy because it was the first election since 1990 to bring success to Harrow's Conservatives: a combination of calamitous national headlines undermined Labour's attempt to run Harrow Council for a third term. First, the mortgage arrangements of Cabinet Minister Tessa Jowell came under examination. There were then claims that people lending money to the national Labour Party were being proposed for honours, such as a peerage. In the last week or so of the campaign two further issues dogged Labour. Newspapers revealed that Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott had been having an affair with a civil servant, and second it appeared that foreign nationals recommended for deportation upon completion of their prison sentence were in fact being released back into the community. In the circumstances Harrow's Labour Group may have been relieved to win 24 seats, more than Labour secured in the neighbouring boroughs of Hillingdon or Brent, for example.

The final group of council election results are for 2010, where unusually high turnouts were experienced on account of a Parliamentary General Election being held on the same day, the first time this has happened in Harrow's history. The higher turnout and an unusual split in Conservative ranks in Harrow on the Hill ward handed Labour a majority on the Council at the same time as the party lost over 90 seats in the General Election.

The job of collecting the statistics was made relatively straightforward because the Data Management and Analysis Group of the Greater London Authority publish in booklet form details of election results for all the London Boroughs. However, the data here are based on and expanded from local sources, ensuring the highest possible level of accuracy.

As always, I will be delighted to receive criticisms, suggestions or corrections.

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