

Candidates quizzed ahead of election

RESIDENTS' were deprived of their chance to quiz the Wanstead by-election candidates after the Labour party refused to share a platform with the BNP.

Ross Hatfull pulled out of the event at the last minute and organisers The Counties Residents Association, The Wanstead Society and Counties Neighbourhood Watch were forced to cancel the

DESPITE the cancellation of the Wanstead by-election hustings, candidates were still quizzed on six hot topics, a selection of which are featured below, with answers.
The candidates – John Evans (BNP), Alex Wilson (Conservative),

event amid fears he would persuade the other candidates to pull out.

The CRA said: "The hijacking of our meeting robbed our community of taking part in one of the best debated and informed by-elections which Wanstead has had in years. Local hopes and concerns have been cast aside by national party politics.

"Whilst we may find some people's politics distasteful or even offensive, we live in a democratic society, where all legitimate political parties have the right to be heard and to explain themselves to those who they are

seeking to represent."

Green Party candidate Ashley Gunstock said he was annoyed by Mr Hatfull's decision. UKIP candidate Nick Jones said the move was counter productive. Mr Hatfull said: "It's generally a Labour Party policy that we don't share a platform with the BNP because they preach a message of hate based on skin colour which is not acceptable."

John Evans, representing the BNP, said: "I was prepared to go along and probably be criticised by every party but this idiot did not want to share a platform. A sad, sad world."

Ashley Gunstock (Green party), Ross Hatfull (Labour), Kate Garrett (Liberal Democrats), and Nick Jones (UKIP) were asked to submit their answers to these questions.

1. Do you have any ideas as to measures or changes that could

reinvigorate our High Street and stop the slide towards more and more clone shops and ugly empty premises?

2. What can you say to us and do to ensure that Telford's planning application to develop the Chep-

stow site is defeated?

3. How would you campaign to keep Wanstead Police Station open?

4. What is your view on the future of Wanstead development, if any you would like to see in future?

ROSS HATFULL – LABOUR



1. The high street has in recent years become completely cluttered with too much ugly modern signage and unnecessary street furniture. I want all the unnecessary signage removed or replaced with features more in keeping with the heritage of the area. The shops should also conform to a united colour scheme and frontage design so they look less disunited.
2. The Chepstow development is out of keeping with the local area, it doesn't fit in with the arts and crafts houses, and provides yet more ugly flats which Redbridge doesn't need. I will do everything I can to stop the inappropriate development.
3. I am 100 per cent committed to Wanstead keeping its own police station. I will work behind the scenes to ensure the police are constantly reminded how important it is. I would assemble a broad cross party coalition of residents, community organisations, MP's, and other public bodies to push for dedicated policing in Wanstead.
4. We have a shortage of three and four bedroom housing but all that ever gets built are inappropriate studio flats. If development has to take place I would like to see decent affordable family housing.

ALEX WILSON – CONSERVATIVE



1. We need to make sure the High Street retains and enhances its range of interesting and high quality independent shops. Conservative councillors are already looking at whether it would be possible to use the Sustainable Communities Act to give the council powers to help maintain a proper retail mix. The council can help by making sure the local environment is clean, safe and attractive. I want to review charges for short term parking to help independent shops compete.
2. The new Wanstead Grove & Counties Conservation Area is excellent news and strengthens the case against Telford's plans considerably. I will work closely with residents to make sure that the strongest possible representations are made in opposition to Telford's proposals.
3. The campaign needs to demonstrate to the Metropolitan Police Authority that an actual police station with proper opening hours is required if the area is to be kept safe.
4. There are few, if any, sites locally which I think are suitable for anything like large scale development. If there is to be residential development it should take the form of family homes. Ideally the Evergreen Field should be incorporated into Christchurch Green where it can be used and enjoyed.

KATE GARRETT – LIB DEM



1. Redbridge Council must open consultations with residents, communities and businesses to put forward ideas for our area. The council must introduce special planning measures for the High Street, and ensure it is safe, clean and attractive.
2. I will fight to ensure that the council resists inappropriate over-development of the site and will work to ensure that the Regulatory Committee makes it clear to the Planning Inspectorate that the application should be rejected, especially in light of the newly-formed conservation area. I want to work with residents and community groups to ensure our case on Chepstow is presented in the strongest and most effective way.
3. I will work with the community and my colleagues on the GLA to keep Wanstead Police Station open.
4. Any residential development in Wanstead should favour family houses rather than apartments and I would like to see fewer houses split up into separate apartments. I will also be supporting the Liberal Democrat campaign for a change in planning laws to prevent private gardens from being deemed "brownfield sites" as they are at the moment.

ASHLEY GUNSTOCK – GREEN



1. We must do all that we can to stop chain stores taking over empty units by encouraging local independent traders to set up shop, with the offer of lower business rates. Diversity should be promoted.
2. The unique character of Wanstead should not be undermined by ridiculous development proposals, such as the one put forward by Telford for the Chepstow site. I suggest that my colleagues of the Green group at the GLA would be interested in opposing this scheme.
3. I would campaign to keep Wanstead Police Station open by again working with the local press, as I successfully did four years ago.
4. Pedestrianisation of part, if not all, of the High Street (save for bicycles and buses) would have many tremendous and long lasting benefits for the area. The Evergreen Field site would be a great asset to the community if it was developed into a play space, where young mothers and perhaps grandparents could take babies and small children.

NICK JONES – UKIP



1. It is important to make it easier for people to visit the area with good public transport and better parking. I am not a fan of state funding of so-called community projects as a means of saving high streets.
2. I do not agree with building on every square inch of Redbridge in order to meet the government's targets for millions of new homes in the south east. It is wrong to build blocks of flats making the area ever more crowded and I would vote against planning permission for the proposed Telford development.
3. Opposition to the Wanstead Police station proposals is pretty well universal so it is difficult to understand why they still want to go ahead. The council should sit down with the Police Authority and try to talk some sense into them.
4. It is important to preserve the character of Wanstead and any future development should reflect that.

JOHN EVANS – BNP



1. No answer.
2. It is essential to draw up a project plan for each one. Of course, such plans should be tailored to the degree of complexity involved, for example, the "Chepstow Microsite" discussions began a number of years ago. I would become au fait with the general case history including discussions with all concerned.
3. The remaining issues should be treated with the same general approach, i.e. discussions and views with all parties using questionnaires if practical/appropriate. Any costs should be assessed realistically and funding considered. Any opportunities to contain costs should be explored. Trained policemen should only be involved with "police work", not admin duties. A zero tolerance attitude should be taken regarding crime.
4. The design of the new buildings must be in keeping with the surrounding area.

WANSTEAD residents can choose from three polling stations to cast their vote in tonight's (Thursday) by-election: Snaresbrook Football and Cricket Club, Nutter Lane, Wanstead Leisure Centre, Redbridge Lane West and Aldersbrook Primary School, Harpenden Road. The polling stations are open from 7am until 10pm.

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