College Park and Old Oak

Part of North Pole Road falls within Hammersmith and Fulham. Appropriately enough, it can be found at the North Pole of the borough: in College Park and Old Oak ward.

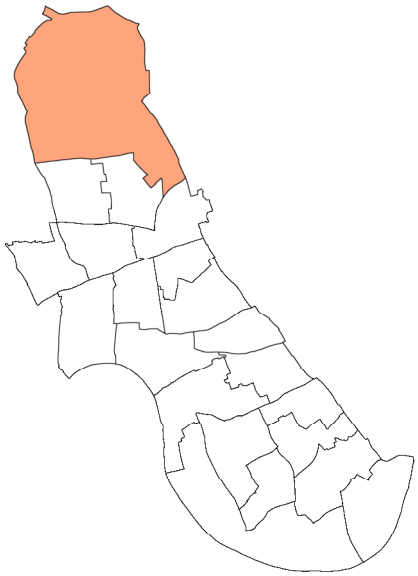
You can travel a long way past North Pole Road before you reach the far north of the borough and cross into Kensal Green and Harlesden, because College Park and Old Oak is one of the largest wards - geographically - in inner London. It stretches the one and a half miles from Harrow Road to White City; from East Acton to North Kensington.

In the midst of this vast sprawl is Wormwood Scrubs metropolitan open space - 200 acres bought for public use by the London County Council and the closest thing this borough gets to heathland. There's the Old Oak railway sidings - seemingly endless numbers of tracks to park trains, and the High Speed 2 Rail terminal being built there, the Hythe Road warehouse estate along the Grand Union Canal and, beyond that, yet more railway lines. The Paddington mainline slices through the ward.

The ward name encompasses just two of several neighbourhoods. College Park is in the far north-east of the ward: the Harrow Road end up near Kensal Green. Old Oak is as far as you can get from College Park and stay in the same ward: East Acton. There is only one road within the ward that connects the eastern and western sides of this disparate ward: Du Cane Road, and so what you end up with are a cluster of neighbourhoods separated from each other - sometimes by a couple of miles as the crow flies.

That makes this ward unique in Hammersmith and Fulham: everywhere else is based on one or two substantial neighbourhoods and derives its identity from that place: Sands End; the Brackenbury estate; Hurlingham and Bishops Park; West Kensington; Fulham Broadway; Wendell Park; Parson's Green; White City.

Because you cannot traverse the ward east to west, the population clusters run down each side: one down Scrubs Lane and Wood Lane; the other down Old Oak Lane and Old Oak Common Lane. This profile could follow the road layout but, instead, let's be contrary and go counter clockwise, starting in College Park.



College Park, so remote even from Shepherd's Bush, let alone Fulham or Hammersmith, that in the 1990s the Local Government Boundary Commission planned to transfer it to Brent. But in the 1990s Brent had a terrible "loony left" reputation, regularly in the news for mostly the wrong reasons, and College Park residents were having none of it. Already a little on the small side, losing College Park would also have cost the ward a councillor, so Labour was hardly keen on the idea either given it was one of their safest wards.

This area with its NW10, not W12 postcode; a small cluster of streets just by St Mary's Cemetery, gets its name from the fact that the land was sold by All Souls College, Oxford, in the late 1800s for development. It comprises just eight streets, plus a mews: Holberton, Kenmont, Letchford, Ponsard, Ridgeley, Trenmuir, Valiere and Waldo; modest but pleasant terraced streets with Kenmont Primary School in the middle. Plough Close - further towards Kensal Rise, was built around 2010: two modernist apartment blocks in a cul-de-sac.

The borough boundary with Brent has always been...opaque to put it mildly and here's an example because, while the Plough Close blocks are in Hammersmith and Fulham, the blocks built at the same time, either side of the entrance on Harrow Road are in Brent. It was decided the last time these boundaries were changed - the same review that wanted to move this whole area out of the borough, to run it to the south of Harrow Road behind the shops and houses.



But the boundary becomes more opaque when you move west towards Harlesden, past the end of Scrubs Lane. Here, Harrow Road curves northward and the boundary disappears into the sprawl of railway lines, across to Willesden Junction Station. Willesden Junction is not much closer to Willesden than Loughborough Junction is to Loughborough: this is actually the outskirts of gritty Harlesden.

Station Road, which Willesden Junction Station leads off, becomes Old Oak Lane as you head south. There are some somewhat Dickensian cottages lining this road, as remote from Shepherd's Bush as College Park is, and these were moved out of the borough into Ealing at that aforementioned review in the mid 1990s. Then you cross over the Grand Union Canal, Old Oak Lane forks and becomes Old Oak Common Lane, and suddenly you're in the Park Royal-HS2 regeneration zone.

Here is the Oaklands Rise development, one of those modern-day, extraordinarily high density, high-rise sites that are quickly coming to typify the Park Royal area with blocks up to 30-storeys. Oaklands is on what was Old Oak Farm, eventually buried beneath rail sidings and

industrial parks. I don't wish to overuse the description "isolated" but, at least until the HS2 terminus is open Oaklands Rise is near nothing, Willesden Junction station being about a kilometre away. Loverose Lane, the original road that runs around the outside of Oaklands, leads down to the reorganised Old Oak sidings: 33 docks for trains, immediately north of the HS2 station.

A BYE-ELECTION AT HAMMERSMITH

VACANCY ON THE BOROUGH COUNCIL.

An enthusiastic meeting of the College Park and Latimer Ward branch of the Hammersmith Conservative and Constitutional Association were held at 2a, Brewster Gardens, on Tuesday evening, Mr. G. Alan Payne presiding.

On the motion of Mr. P. Tinckham, seconded by Councillor H. R. D. Hooper it was unanimously resolved that Mr. G. Alan Payne be nominated as a candidate to fill the vacancy on the Borough Council for the College Park and Latimer Ward, caused by the resignation of Mr. S. R. Pomeroy.

Mr. G. Alan Payne, in replying, thanked the members, and referred to his past long services in Municipal work, going back for 20 years on the old Vestry. The members present then formed themselves into an Election Committee.

THE NOMINATIONS.

On Wednesday, Mr. H. Thompson, the Town Clerk, received the nominations of two candidates for the vacancy in the College Park and Latimer Ward.

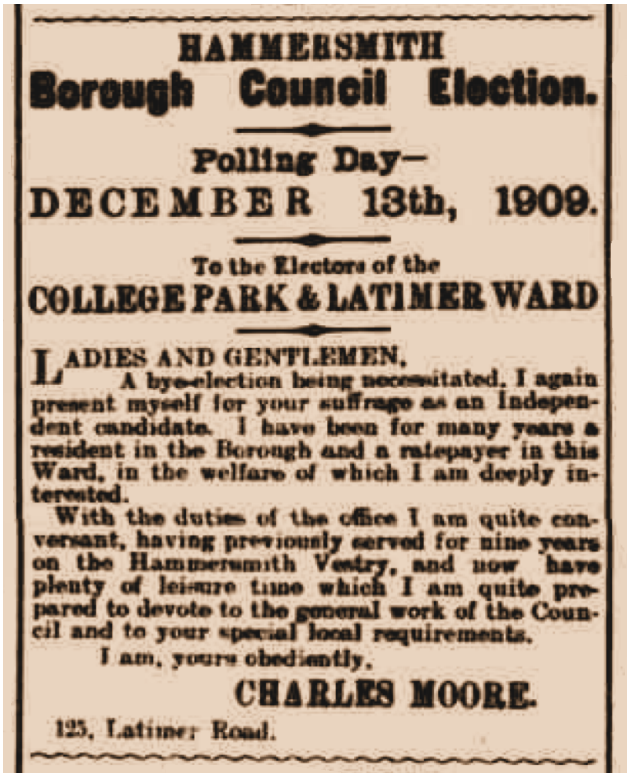
Mr. G. Alan Payne, dyer, of 7, Dalgarno Gardens, was proposed by Messrs. P. Tinckham, J. R. Bedford, and Holmes, and seconded by Messrs. J. Hooper, J. J. Knight, and Walter Shaw.

Mr. Edward Chas. Rawlings, solicitor, and Mayor of Hammersmith, of 4, Rivercourt Road, Hammersmith, and 6, Gunnersbury Avenue, Ealing Common, had for his proposers Messrs. G. P. Murfitt and F. Heighes, and his seconders Messrs. D. W. Manners and J. Broach Lawrence.

Come back out onto Old Oak Lane and you get the very strange juxtaposition of old Old Oak and new: right on the corner of Loverose Lane is an old-style London workers caff: the Nova Cafe (which has had a bit of a makeover since everything started being reconstructed around there), an MOT testing centre, a couple of business units and Nadi Park Royal, which bills itself as an events centre, in another tired 1950s tenement block, again surely about to be swept away by progress.

Continue on down the lane, and just past Wells House Road is the main entrance to the HS2 station: 14 platforms, almost half a kilometre long, which will connect the high speed line to Heathrow Express and the Elizabeth Line: the key section of the regeneration of the area. There's no additional housing planned for this site but it may kick-start the plans for the wider area - especially Hythe Road.

Anyhow, once past this end of the railways land, under the rail bridge, past this side of Wormwood Scrubs and you reach Wulfstan Street. This is the start of the Old Oak estate.



HAMMERSMITH

Borough Council Election.

Polling Day—

DECEMBER 13th, 1909.

To the Electors of the

COLLEGE PARK & LATIMER WARD

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

A bye-election being necessitated, I again present myself for your suffrage as an Independent candidate. I have been for many years a resident in the Borough and a ratepayer in this Ward, in the welfare of which I am deeply interested.

With the duties of the office I am quite conversant, having previously served for nine years on the Hammersmith Vestry, and now have plenty of leisure time which I am quite prepared to devote to the general work of the Council and to your special local requirements.

I am, yours obediently,

CHARLES MOORE.

125, Latimer Road.

The Old Oak estate: the first London County Council estate built in Hammersmith just before the outbreak of the First World War, is the largest population centre in the ward: over 3,000 residents live here. This cottage estate, inspired by Ebenezer Howard's Garden City Movement with front and back gardens, unusually angled streets with plenty of grass verges and communal green spaces around road junctions, has its twin in the Wormholt estate south of the Westway. East Acton tube station is right in the midst of the Old Oak estate: the Central Line is one of the many physical boundaries carving up this ward.

I'm trying to liven things up says the Liberal

THE 'WHISPERING' ELECTION

VOTING for a borough councillor took place in Hammersmith's "whispering" by-election yesterday. It was a straight fight between Labour and Liberal for the College Park and Latimer Ward. Conservatives did not put up a candidate.

The vacancy was caused by the resignation last year of Labour Councillor T. A. Keating.

Canvassing was stepped up on Tuesday and Wednesday by the Liberal candidate, Mr. George Bender, who toured the ward in a loudspeaker van.

"I'm trying to liven things up," he said on Tuesday. "So far its been an extremely quiet campaign. Many people didn't even know about the election."

No fuss

Mr. Bender a chiropodist of 30, Westwick-gardens, Hammersmith, accused the Labour Party of trying to "push" their candidate without any fuss.

"They knew the Conservatives were not contesting the ward and they did not expect a fight from the Liberals. It came as a great shock to them when we did. Moreover we pipped Labour by starting our election campaign a day before they did.

"We would like to know why they tried to make it such a hush-hush campaign. It might well be called a whispering by-election. But I intend to change all that.

"There is a great need for some fresh thinking on the council. The other two parties seem to be bogged down in a quagmire of complacency and apathy.

"A Liberal voice on the council won't be able to dictate policy but at least it would be able to bring to the surface some of the hidden problems and difficulties confronting ratepayers."



Mr. Bender . . . why so hush-hush?

A policy

Mr. Bender says it's poppycock to say that Liberals have no policy. "We have got a policy but not a programme. People are inclined to confuse the two.

His opponent is Mr. Thomas Deely, of 80, Wormholt-road, Shepherds Bush. He has been a member of the Labour Party for over 15 years.

Commenting on the Liberal candidate's remarks on Tuesday, Mr. J. W. Singleton, Labour Agent for North Hammersmith said: "You can always expect amateurs to make all kinds of fantastic statements."

Conservative Agent Mr. W. Good said that the officers of his association considered it would be wrong for the ratepayers to waste £250 for a by-election that is worth nothing.

Another thing that infused their decision not to put up a candidate was the Government's drive to curb inflation and the fact that the election has come so near the end of the financial year. "To put up a candidate would be wrong and unfair to the ratepayers," he said.

NO HOME FOR TOM AND DOLLY

SHELL fish merchant Joe Green will lose his two horses, "Tom" and "Dolly," unless he can find a new stable by May.

Mr. Green, who is 58 years old, has been selling shrimps and winkles in West London for over 40 years. But now his stable in East Acton-lane is to be demolished under a development scheme promoted by Acton Council.

"The council offered me alternative accommodation in Osborne-road," said Mr. Green, "but when I went there I was told by the owner that they haven't had stables there for 10 years.

HIS SEARCH

"I went back and told the council, but they said they could not help me anymore, and that I would have to find a place myself."

Mr. Green has searched all over Chiswick, Hammersmith and Acton, but he has not been able to find accommodation.

"If I'm still without a place by May I will have to sell my horses," he said. "But I can't bear the thought of losing them. And I'm sure they'll pine for me. It's worrying me to death."

His oldest horse, "Tom," a 14-year-old gelding, has won numerous medals and cups at horse shows. "Dolly," a roan, hasn't been entered in any yet because "she's still only a youngster, but she has the makings of a winner," says Mr. Green.



At this end you can travel east-west through the ward, either along Du Cane Road, past Wormwood Scrubs Prison or the Westway, before its elevated section through Kensington. Westway is the southern boundary of the ward but a cluster of homes face this terribly busy, noisy and polluted road, and there are some three closes behind squeezed between it and the bank of the Central Line.

There is Bentworth Road (with Maurice Street and Terrick Street); Heathstan Road; and Primula Street.

There are also a couple of streets: Norbrooke and Hilary just before Savoy Circus and Old Oak Common Lane, leading back to the core Old Oak estate. Little pathways: Begonia Walk, Cactus Walk take us back to Du Cane Road. Once you pass under the diagonal Central Line bridge you pretty quickly leave the Old Oak end of the ward behind.

You are almost instantly on the edge of the Wormwood Scrubs Prison estate; the staff car park, a set of austere tenements built to house prison staff, the visitors centre

Labour romp home in ward election

LABOUR on Thursday won the College Park and Latimer Ward by-election with a majority of 819. The Liberal candidate polled 172. Conservatives did not contest the seat.

The figures were:

T. Deely (Lab.)	991
G. Bender (Lib.)	172
Soc. majority	819

There was a 23 per cent poll —which was described as exceptionally low by a town hall official.

This means that roughly one-fifth—1,163 out of 5,143—people voted.

'NOTORIOUS'

Mr. Bender, the Liberal candidate, said last week that the College Park and Latimer Ward was "notorious" for its low polling.

Mrs. J. S. Greenfield, secretary of the Liberals, said after the election that it was a shockingly low poll. "They just don't seem to care. But we're going to keep on trying."

Labour agent, Mr. J. W. Singleton, said: "The result is only what we expected under the circumstances. As for low polling, a lot depends on the opposition. If we had a lively organization against us they would have helped to engender interest."

and then the well-known gatehouse with its busts of John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, the Victorian prison reformers. This is somewhat ironic given the criticism the prison routinely attracts by the leagues founded by them.

The presence of the prison is, pardon the pun, inescapable: Du Cane Road itself is named after the Director of Convict Prisons, Edward Du Cane, who designed it.

Beyond that is the vast Imperial College NHS Trust which includes Queen Charlotte's and Hammersmith Hospitals, and then the laboratories and research facilities of the university. Behind them is the Linford Christie Stadium. But also, across Du Cane Road, where previously there had just been the Central Line railway embankment, there are now quite new tenement blocks of flats; originally built by Du Cane Housing Association but now managed by the much larger Octavia (Hill) Housing Association. O'Driscoll, King, Galen, Daley and Dorothy Hodgkin Houses, plus newer blocks like Christie House further towards Wood Lane provide accommodation for Imperial students and key workers.

GAZETTE AND POST Thursday, October 20, 1983

Problems for Labour at the town hall

Petra quits council seat to get married



● Petra Luxton and daughter Sian

LABOUR councillor Petra Luxton is to quit her seat at Hammersmith Town Hall.

She has represented College Park and Old Oak since the 1982 local elections and is to resign because she is getting married and leaving the area.

She said: "I am getting married and moving away. It would be possible for me to carry on by coming in to meetings but I couldn't in all conscience."

A by-election will have to be held at her Shepherds Bush seat, but with an 800 majority it should be safe for Labour.

Ms Luxton, who has two children from a previous marriage, is to wed a member of the council's housing department. The couple plan to live in Hemel Hempstead.

She is a member of the housing policy committee and Labour spokesman on the housing executive committee. She resigned from social services two weeks ago to be replaced by Cllr Tony Powell.

Her resignation will be offered at the next full meeting at the council at the end of November.

She said she was sad to be leaving the council and added: "I would like to do it again."

Ms Luxton also added that the Labour group leadership were unhappy to accept her resignation and said it had been suggested she should come in for council meetings.

Labour leader Cllr Stephen Clark said: "When she leaves will be a matter for discussion between her and the Labour group."

He added the Labour party was not in favour of councillors living outside the borough they represent.

Her resignation will leave the Labour group on Hammersmith with 24 seats and the ruling Liberal and Tory group with 25.

Group calls for return of Labour's ex-planning chief

A COMMUNITY group has called for a rebel Labour councillor to be re-instated as opposition planning chief at Hammersmith Council.

The Hammersmith and Fulham Community Forum has written to Labour leader Stephen Clark protesting at the sacking of Frances Kelly from the planning applications committee.

Miss Kelly, was thrown off the committee last year after internal wranglings within the Labour Group.

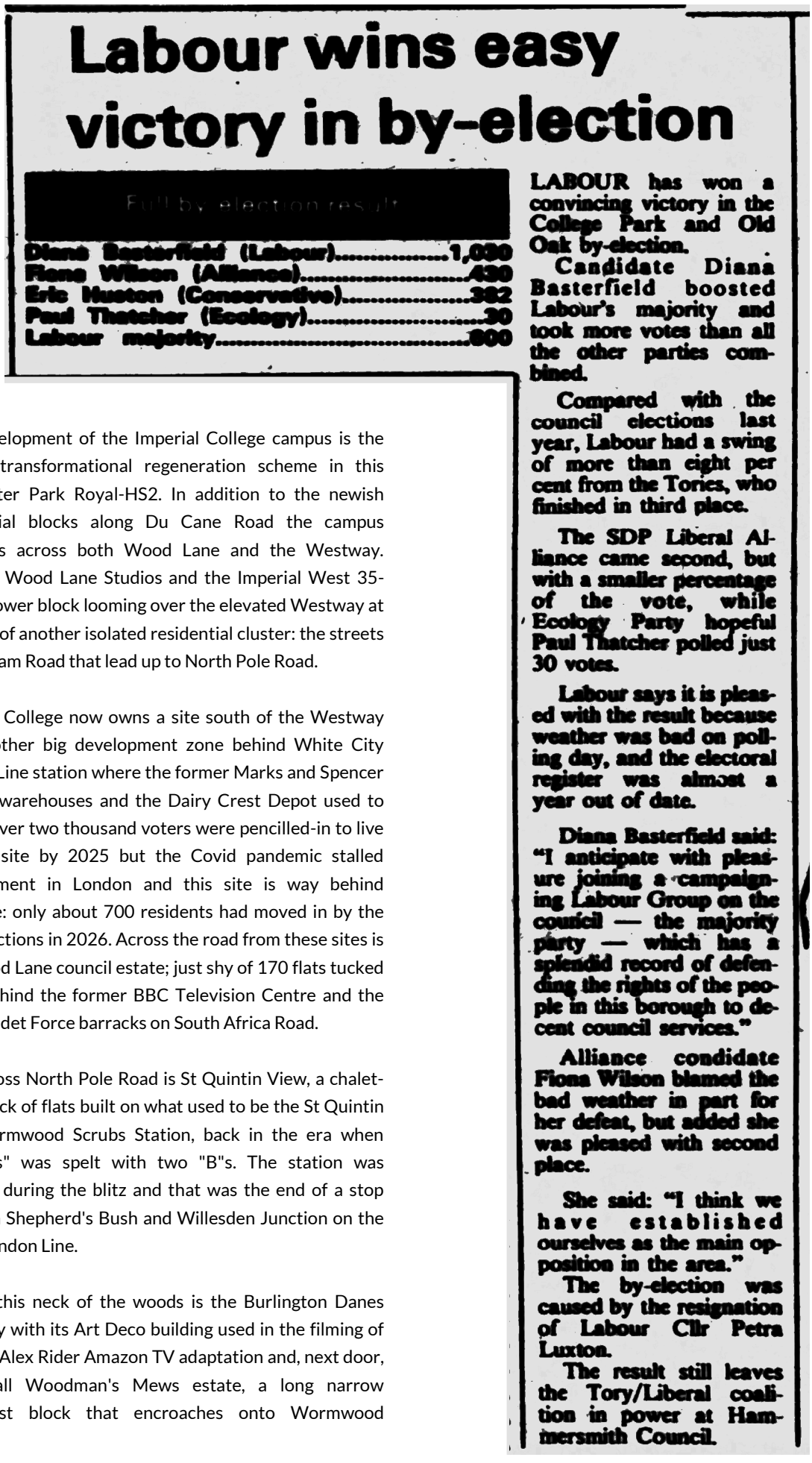
She and two other councillors, Ian Gray and Peter DeGory, refused to give an undertaking that they would vote in line with the Labour group.

The Community Forum believes discussion on major issues has suffered since Miss Kelly was removed.

Forum secretary Charles Tylee said Miss Kelly was widely respected in the borough for her knowledge on planning.



● Frances Kelly



Labour wins easy victory in by-election

Full by-election result

Diana Basterfield (Labour)	1,030
Fiona Wilson (Alliance)	430
Eric Huston (Conservative)	382
Paul Thatcher (Ecology)	30
Labour majority	600

LABOUR has won a convincing victory in the College Park and Old Oak by-election.

Candidate Diana Basterfield boosted Labour's majority and took more votes than all the other parties combined.

Compared with the council elections last year, Labour had a swing of more than eight per cent from the Tories, who finished in third place.

The SDP Liberal Alliance came second, but with a smaller percentage of the vote, while Ecology Party hopeful Paul Thatcher polled just 30 votes.

Labour says it is pleased with the result because weather was bad on polling day, and the electoral register was almost a year out of date.

Diana Basterfield said: "I anticipate with pleasure joining a campaigning Labour Group on the council — the majority party — which has a splendid record of defending the rights of the people in this borough to decent council services."

Alliance condidate Fiona Wilson blamed the bad weather in part for her defeat, but added she was pleased with second place.

She said: "I think we have established ourselves as the main opposition in the area."

The by-election was caused by the resignation of Labour Cllr Petra Luxton.

The result still leaves the Tory/Liberal coalition in power at Hammersmith Council.

The development of the Imperial College campus is the second transformational regeneration scheme in this ward after Park Royal-HS2. In addition to the newish residential blocks along Du Cane Road the campus stretches across both Wood Lane and the Westway. There is Wood Lane Studios and the Imperial West 35-storey tower block looming over the elevated Westway at the foot of another isolated residential cluster: the streets off Eynham Road that lead up to North Pole Road.

Imperial College now owns a site south of the Westway too: another big development zone behind White City Central Line station where the former Marks and Spencer storage warehouses and the Dairy Crest Depot used to stand. Over two thousand voters were pencilled-in to live on this site by 2025 but the Covid pandemic stalled development in London and this site is way behind schedule: only about 700 residents had moved in by the local elections in 2026. Across the road from these sites is the Wood Lane council estate; just shy of 170 flats tucked away behind the former BBC Television Centre and the Army Cadet Force barracks on South Africa Road.

Just across North Pole Road is St Quintin View, a chalet-style block of flats built on what used to be the St Quintin and Wormwood Scrubs Station, back in the era when "Scrubbs" was spelt with two "B"s. The station was bombed during the blitz and that was the end of a stop between Shepherd's Bush and Willesden Junction on the West London Line.

Also in this neck of the woods is the Burlington Danes Academy with its Art Deco building used in the filming of the first Alex Rider Amazon TV adaptation and, next door, the small Woodman's Mews estate, a long narrow modernist block that encroaches onto Wormwood Scrubs.

If you keep heading north up Scrubs Lane, once past St Quintin's View it suddenly feels very rural: Wormwood Scrubs to your left, Little Wormwood Scubs to the right - nothing but a tree-lined verge until you pass under yet another railway bridge, then over the Grand Union Canal and the Paddington mainline and you're almost back to College Park.



St Quintin and Wormwood Scrubbs Station

Already you can see the beginnings of the third regeneration area around the entrance to the Hythe Road industrial estate. Again there is the incongruity of these modern high-rise buildings either side of Scrubs Lane in between the entrance to the Powerday metals recycling yard with articulated lorries coming and going behind the blocks, across a level crossing and back into an entirely different area.

Hythe Road is the next turning off, running beneath the railway into the CarGiant mecca of near endless warehouses and showrooms and garages and the odd cafe to feed those who work here. Even though nobody lives here (yet), this is a neighbourhood all on its own with a maze of streets dissected by railway lines.

There were plans to build a living neighbourhood here around the focal point of a 40,000 seat QPR stadium there as their Loftus Road ground is hemmed in and impossible to expand. That would have shunted the club much closer to the neighbourhood it's named after on the edge of Kilburn, but CarGiant decided they could do something more lucrative with Hythe Road and the plans died.

Looking across these three vast regeneration sites: Park Royal-Oak Oak, Imperial College and Hythe Road, and you can see how, by the time of the next scheduled boundary review - around 2040, College Park and Old Oak could have undergone so much new development that it may be split into two - maybe even three - new council wards.

However it is then drawn it will be literally new and so nothing can be predicted about its future. But it has an interesting political history.

It's been split before. When Hammersmith borough was founded in 1900 College Park was part of a ward that meandered down Scrubs Lane and into chunks of what is now in Kensington around Latimer Road: College Park and Latimer ward. Everything else - though very little housing existed here then - was part of a huge Wormholt ward. In 1949, College Park and Latimer survived. But Wormholt, with the building of the Old Oak and Wormholt estates, had over 20,000 voters so was reduced to broadly the area it occupies nowadays and a new Old Oak ward was formed.

In its earliest days, Henry Hooper, who won as a Moderate, a Municipal Reformer and an Independent, was a mainstay of College Park and Latimer ward - one of those councillors known widely, who handed out sweets to kids on election day (something that would get him prosecuted these days, and possibly not just for election offences).

College Park and Latimer wasn't the first ward to elect Labour councillors, despite covering some quite desperately poor "slum" neighbourhoods around where the Edward Woods estate now stands. Before the poorly-built, damp and overcrowded houses were built this was part of the area of the Notting Hill Potteries and Piggeries; an area lacking sanitation where drainage holes and slurry pits were dug but soon overflowed with the most rancid filth. At least one person is known to have slipped into one at night and drowned, but even when a better-planned neighbourhood was built with sewers and sanitation it was still run-down, unhealthy and unsafe.

So perhaps it's surprising that the ward didn't go Labour until 1922. That Labour won in 1922 but not 1919 (to be fair they couldn't have: they didn't stand!) is a little remarkable as that was the first election of a decade of epic Labour defeats. Very few wards anywhere were held, let alone gained by Labour in 1922. However, once it elected Labour - and one of its councillors was the aforementioned Edward Woods, the council leader for much of Labour's time in power - it was rock solid: their only Hammersmith ward in 1922, 1925 and 1931.

College Park and Old Oak inherited that mantle when the boroughs were amalgamated in 1964 (though it lost the Latimer section, which was split between White City and

Narrow win in by-election

Fred holds ward for Labour

LABOUR scraped home in a surprisingly close fought by-election in one of their safest seats.

The College and Old Oak Ward in Shepherds Bush, Hammersmith was won by Frederick Inniss, 58.

The unemployed father-of-five narrowly fought off a surprise surge of support for the new centre alliance, the Social and Liberal Democrats.

The SLDP rocked the Labour vote in what should have been an easy victory.

The combined vote of



Frederick Inniss

the SLDP and the Owenite SDP candidates actually outnumbered Labour's total, whose 1986 majority was reduced from 1,000 to just 150.

Mr Inniss polled 829 votes, with SLDP candidates Martin Bryant coming second with 677. Tory David McCraith trailed in third with 329 votes, while the SDP's Ian McCourt came fourth with 183.

The by-election was called after the sudden death of Cllr Melvyn Silverman.

New councillor, Inniss blamed the result on a low poll. He said: "People assumed this was a foregone conclusion."

A staunch trade unionist, Cllr Inniss has held top posts in the transport union, the TGWU, and wants to set up a committee for the disabled. His wife, Poppy, was bedridden after an operation went tragically wrong.

Runner-up Martin Bryant said: "It was a very good result for us, but it would have been sensational if the SDP candidate had not confused the voters."

Reprieve for war widows

WAR pensioners and servicemen's widows will still be entitled to housing benefit after a last-minute reprieve by the town hall.

Hammersmith Council has been forced to scrap other schemes.

leviate the suffering facing the poorest of our members."

St Stephen's). But it can also be highly volatile. In 1964, for example, it voted Labour 88% and Conservative 12%, but in 1968 a 42% swing turfed out its three Labour councillors. In 1971 Labour got it back on a 29% swing, but they almost lost here again in 1978 on a 34% swing.



College Park and Old Oak ward swings

Then, in a 1988 by-election caused by the death of long-standing mercurial councillor Melvin Silverman, just after the SDP Liberal Alliance had collapsed and the then-named Social and Liberal Democrats were flat-lining at barely 4% in the national polls. Yet this new party pulled off a 26% swing to almost win the seat.

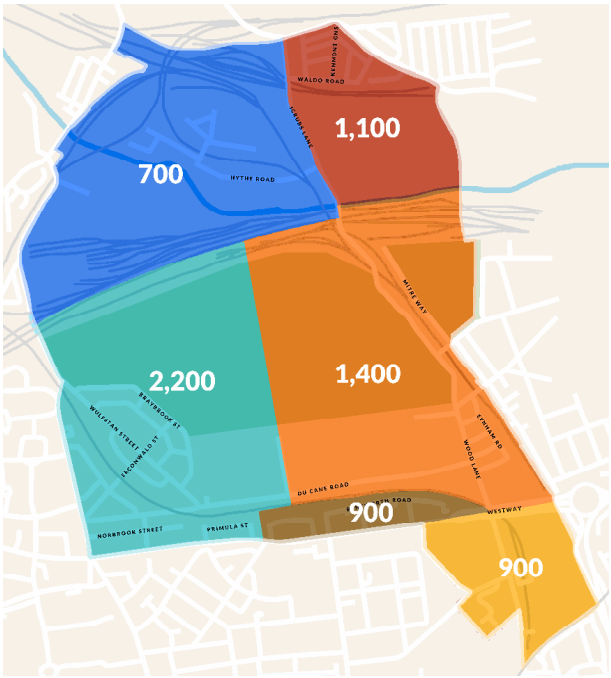
The swing to the Conservatives in 2006 would probably have been far bigger than 13% were it not for an independent (who later stood for the Tories there) who took 17%. If his vote had gone to the Conservatives it'd have been a 21% swing.

In 2026 the Greens polled their third best vote here, taking 25%; it was also Reform UK's best Hammersmith and Fulham ward - they took 15% (a third more than their borough average). Because the Greens didn't stand here in 2022 we can't) calculate a swing. But let's assume they had stood and polled so badly in 2022 they didn't even get 0.1% of the vote. That'd be a 27.5% swing. Labour fell from 72% to 42% - there were wards where they collapsed by similar amounts but that was the largest. It shows just how entrenched Labour is that they could lose that much and still win pretty comfortably.

Because this has been, essentially, a very safe Labour ward for the vast majority of its existence there have been some very long-serving councillors aside from Edward Woods the earlier mentioned Melvyn Silverman, William Church, Frank Ing, Margaret Fenelon and Wesley Harcourt to name five.

But it's also been a ward for councillors who have just been passing through. When Gordon Prentice, the Labour Opposition leader, was deselected by Gibbs Green ward prior to the 1986 elections, he made his way north to College Park and Old Oak - in turn he was deselected by this ward's members in 1990 and ended up standing in, and losing, marginal Crabtree ward.

Lester Holloway, who had made a bit of a name for himself as a schoolboy by organising a campaign to save Scrubs Wood, became councillor from his home patch in 1994 but was somewhat detached from the Labour group to the extent he didn't even know he'd been deselected before the 1998 elections. He later became a Lib Dem councillor in Sutton before rejoining Labour under Jeremy Corbyn.



How the electorate of College Park and Old Oak is distributed

For a ward with Wormwood Scrubs Prison in its midst it is perhaps appropriate that one reason College Park and Old Oak has been such a volatile ward on occasion may has been law and order. On Braybrook Street, on the edge of the Scrubs there's a memorial stone there in honour of three policemen, murdered at that spot by Harry Roberts and two accomplices in 1966, who the policemen had felt were acting suspiciously in close proximity to the prison. They were behaving suspiciously, but not planning a jailbreak: instead an armed robbery. When the policemen went to question them Roberts shot them dead.

This was one of the most sensational and horrific murders of policemen on duty and Roberts was only released in 2014 such was his notoriety. It was fortunate for them that the death penalty had only just been abolished as they'd have hanged, such was the outcry.

And it had a political impact in the exceptional 42% swing to the Conservatives in this ward in 1968, two years after the murder.



Daily Mirror

MASSACRED

4d. Saturday, August 13, 1966 No. 19,483

IN THE LINE OF DUTY

TWO dead detectives lie in a street . . . still, silent symbols of the worst crime London has known this century.

18,000 JOIN HUNT FOR KILLERS OF 3 POLICEMEN

Keener

Story: Mirror Crime Squad Pictures: Mirror cameramen

That remains the highest swing to any party ever in this borough. 1968 saw a huge national swing to the Conservatives after Labour devalued the pound having repeatedly promised not to - but that swing got an extra kick in this specific ward. Labour went from 88% to 46% and then back to 75% in 1971 - almost as though nothing had happened in the intervening election.

The second big swing that occurred, in 1978, came at a time of significant social unrest in the UK: the era of strikes, power black-outs, soaring inflation, IMF bailouts and significant racial tensions. College Park and Old Oak was, in that election, one of three wards targeted by the National Front with its authoritarian law and order platform (the fabulously-named Horace Mullett being one of their candidates). The NF received their highest, albeit very poor, vote of 6% here.

The impact of the National Front on the 1978 elections is is looked at more in the Wormholt ward profile but, had they not stood in this ward, and making the tenuous assumption that NF voters would have been second-choice Conservatives, the Tories may well have won one of the College Park and Old Oak seats: their highest candidate was only 88 votes short.

Summary of results for College Park and Old Oak ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
1900	67.0	33.0			
1903	62.7	37.3			
1906	52.0				
1907 By					
1909					
1909 By					
1912	49.0				
1919	50.9		49.1		
1922	34.9	45.1			
1925	36.2	63.8			
1928	37.8	62.2			
1931	44.4	51.9			
1934		73.3			
1937		58.2			
1937 By		86.1			
1940 By		Unop			
1945		Unop			
College Park and Latimer ward					
1949	30.7	69.3			
1953	23.1	76.9			
1956	11.6	88.4			
1959	13.5	86.5			
1962	16.1	83.9			
Old Oak ward					
1949	29.4	70.6			
1953	22.1	77.9			
1956	9.7	90.3			
1959	14.4	85.6			
1962	9.3	90.7			
1964	11.6	88.4			
1968	53.6	46.4			
1971	24.7	75.3			
1974	13.2	86.9			
1978	43.7	50.5			
1982	28.6	46.5	25.0		
1983 By	20.4	55.0	23.0	1.6	
1986	21.8	69.6	8.5		
1988 By	16.2	40.9	33.4		9.5
1990	15.4	57.4	27.1		
1993 By	20.4	72.7	6.9		
1994	13.1	76.5	10.4		
1998	10.0	74.1	15.9		
2002	15.3	67.2	17.5		
2006	19.7	45.7	18.3		16.3
2010	21.3	53.5	13.7		
2014	18.0	58.3	7.0		
2018	19.3	74.5	6.2		
2022	14.4	72.0	13.7		
2026	8.1	42.4	10.0	25.4	14.1

College Park and Old Oak is today a very much more diverse ward than it was in 1968 or 1978 - and a lot of that diversity has happened quite recently; just 26% of the ward today is white British when the vast majority would have been that in the 1960s. The proportion was 49% in the 2001 census. Reform did well in the cottage estate sections of the ward: the Old Oak and Westway areas, which are also the whitest.

This is one of the dilemmas of so-called regeneration in so-called deprived areas: you can alter the profile of an area by building vast new developments aimed at graduates and professionals so that a ward appears more affluent. Yet nothing at all changes for its longer-standing residents other than their neighbourhood gets shiny new buildings towering over it. They still work in lower-paid jobs or end up on benefits which take a greater toll on their life chances and long term health, just amidst an area with lots of new people resident whose lives are far-removed from theirs.

Bringing Imperial College to Hammersmith and Fulham is clearly a coup and a mark of prestige for the borough, but it does very little for the ward's existing residents - other than perhaps creating a few extra cleaning, caretaking or laundering jobs. In time, as this older population fades out that regeneration does almost nothing for what you might call the indigenous population may become irrelevant.

The projected population and electorate growth in College Park and Old Oak gifted Labour an extra seat in 2022 - the one that had been abolished in the previous boundary review.

The influx of voters - a large number of whom apathetic students - lack the political strength for now to influence the results here even if we assume they might want to.

Just 31% of the ward turned out in 2026 - and that was up from 27% in 2022. Partly that's because the ward has been so safe for Labour that the political parties targeted their resources elsewhere in the borough. But the Greens could have done much better focussing here -trying to turn out more of that significant student voting bloc that now exists, instead of wasting time in White City.

Having so big a collapse in 2026, and because the ward is changing so rapidly, Labour has to keep an eye on College Park and Old Oak in a way they haven't really had to for decades. They have threats from both left and right: from students who want a more aggressively radical political agenda, and from the diminishing white population that showed, without the party doing any work here, that they were receptive to a Reform message.

And that assumes that another tranche won't switch to the Conservatives (once again) after the government has compelled the council to raise Council Tax astronomically. But 2026 marked 55 years of College Park and Old Oak electing Labour councillors - 104 years since it first started doing so. That's a lot of history to offset a somewhat less clear future.

Aerial view of the HS2 terminal construction and the wider industrail zone in the north of College Park and Old Oak



Rollcall of College Park and Old Oak ward councillors

including College Park and Latimer ward (1900-1962) and Old Oak ward (1949-1964)

2026
- Wesley Harcourt
- Bora Kwon
- Alexandra Sanderson

2022
- Wesley Harcourt
- Bora Kwon
- Alexandra Sanderson

2018
- Wesley Harcourt
- Alexandra Sanderson

2014
- Wesley Harcourt
- Elaine Chumnery

2010
- Wesley Harcourt
- Elaine Chumnery

2006
- Wesley Harcourt
- Reg McLaughlin

2002
- Wesley Harcourt
- Reg McLaughlin

1998
- Wesley Harcourt
- Reg McLaughlin
- Melanie Smallman

1994
- Wesley Harcourt
- Lester Holloway
- Reg McLaughlin

1993B
- Patricia Migdal

1990
- Fred Inniss
- Hilda McCafferty
- Guy Rubin

1988B
- Fred Inniss

1986
- Diana Basterfield
- Gordon Prentice
- Melvyn Silverman

1983B
- Diana Basterfield

1982
- Margaret Fenelon
- Petra Luxton
- Melvyn Silverman

1978
- Margaret Fenelon
- Frank Ing
- Melvyn Silverman

1974
- Alan Breeze
- Margaret Fenelon
- Frank Ing

1971
- Margaret Fenelon
- Frank Ing
- Tony Powell

1968
- Rodney Bowler
- Katherine Broughton
- Frank Cherry

1964
- Frank Ing
- Robert Oak
- Melvyn Silverman

Old Oak ward

1962
- Frang Ing
- Robert Oak
- Jo Richardson

1959
- George Byrne
- Frank Ing
- Robert McArthur

1956
- Frank Ing
- Robert McArthur
- Thomas Morris

1953B
- Robert McArthur

1953
- Reginald Buckingham
- Ena Freeman
- Eric Gosling

1949
- G. Blenkin
- Ena Freeman
- Alan Martin

College Park & Latimer ward

1962
- James Bull
- J. Farndale
- M. Kemp

1959
- G. Byrne
- Frank Ing
- Robert McArthur

1958B
- T. Deely

1956
- Frank Ing
- Robert McArthur
- Thomas Morris

1953
- Reginald Buckingham
- Ena Freeman
- Eric Gosling

1951B
- Augustus Mingaye

1949
- G. Blenkin
- Ena Freeman
- Alan Martin

1945
- A. Miles
- Thomas Morris
- H. Thatcher

1939B
- Thomas Morris
- William Stanton

1937
- William Church
- A. Miles
- Edward Woods

1934
- William Bowerman
- William Church
- Edward Woods

1931
- William Bowerman
- William Church
- Edward Woods

1928
- William Church
- C. Symes
- Edward Woods

1925
- William Church
- W. Parish
- Edward Woods

1922
- William Church
- Wilfrid Turney
- Edward Woods

1919
- Charles Moore
- G. Murfitt
- Clara Pickett

1912
- Charles Moore
- Thomas Morris
- G. Murfitt

1909B
- Charles Moore

1909
- Henry Hooper
- Thomas Morris
- E. Rawlings

1906
- Henry Hooper
- Thomas Morris
- S. Pomeroy

1903
- Henry Hooper
- Edward Lock
- Thomas Morris

1900
- Henry Hooper
- Thomas Morris
- T. Rutter