Sands End ward

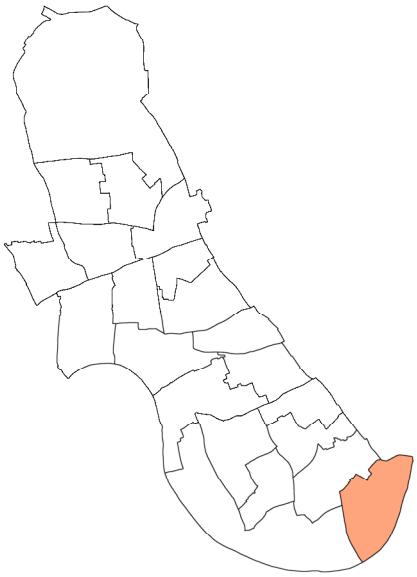
After a 2008 by-election in Sands End, which the Conservatives won by over a thousand votes, it looked very much as though we had reached the end of history of this remarkable ward, once one of Labour's safest. A neighbourhood that had gone from market gardens and artists' studios to the industrial heart of Fulham, then a derelict wasteland with considerable deprivation, and then a place of exclusive steel and glass residential towers. Nowhere in this borough has Sands End's story.

If Munster is the ward that epitomises Fulham's transformation from Labour to Conservative, Sands End's Townmead Road is the street that marks that transformation. This is the road on which Fulham Power Station and the industrial wharves stood. At the end of Townmead Road was a coal yard with a huge dock next to Chelsea Creek; beyond that yet another power station in Lots Road.

Today the very last of those industrial sites: the Albert, Swedish and Comeleys Wharves by Wandsworth Bridge, are being converted into the latest set of luxury apartments. Fulham Power Station closed in 1978 and, other than its boundary wall on Townmead Road, is long gone. A third of the Sandford Manor site on which the Imperial Gas, Light and Coke plant was built is now "Chelsea Creek" - the rest is the emerging "King's Road Park". The coal yard by Chelsea Creek is now split between "Chelsea Harbour" and "Chelsea Waterfront". There are yet more of these innovative, absurd and geographically awry names to come.

That is the potted history of one road, but that road has a significance for the whole of Sands End. The terraced streets north of Townmead Road were built to house the manual labourers, the gas technicians, the power station electricians, the dockers and the engineers who kept Sands End's industry churning. Around 20,000 people were employed by the Imperial Gas Light and Coke Company alone - and that was just one of the many industrial employers in this area. This was a huge working class community.

Fulham Borough Council which built and ran the power station even had its own fleet of flatiron coal ships, replete with their own grey and black "FBC" colours, to transport coal for the power station from Falkirk. The jetty where the ships docked on the Sands End riverside is still standing.



Over a very short period of time in the late 1800s, Sands End was transformed by the industrial revolution. William De Morgan, one of the arts and crafts movement's key figures - was based here (hence De Morgan Road) and then displaced from here as the neighbourhood became a non conducive environment.

There has been a Sands End ward in Fulham right from the founding of the borough. Large tracts of this ward were undeveloped when the vestry made way to the borough council: almost all of what would become known as the Sulivan side was fields or nurseries. No housing existed south of Stephendale Road, though there were wharves either side of Wandsworth Bridge. There was a tarmac plant at the end of where Glenrosa Street would be built, Britannia Wharf creating a canal to the Thames from its edge. The gas works was established east of Imperial Road.

In the beginning the ward included everything east of Peterborough Road and south of New King's Road.

Before the Labour Party established itself, working class neighbourhoods - especially ones founded on heavy industry in inner London, tended to vote Progressive, or Liberal. Sands End elected Progressive councillors in 1900 and 1903 - and probably would have in 1906 had Labour's emergence not split the non-Conservative vote.

Progressives won Fulham council in 1900: as well as Sands End they won Lillie, Munster and Walham, plus a

seat in Margravine for 21 seats to the Moderates' 14 and an independent. They kept control in 1903 despite losing their majority. But the Moderates swept every seat in 1906 and 1912, and all but three seats in 1909. After Margravine, Sands End was just about the weakest Conservative ward in the borough.

But it was still not until the end of the First World War that Labour first captured Sands End. But they couldn't hold it throughout the 1920s or 1931: a dire decade for the Labour Party. But they eventually won again in 1934 - and managed to hold onto it for a slightly longer period from then on: 72 years (bar one council term: 1968-1971).

Unsurprisingly, environmental concerns have been critical to Sands End over the years. By the 1940s Fulham Power Station, Lots Road Power Station, Battersea Power Station and the heavy industry lining the Fulham and Wandsworth riverfront were pumping so much smoke into the atmosphere that it was claimed twelve tonnes of grit was falling on Fulham every day.

Residents began campaigning for a grit-arresting plant that would filter out the particulate from the power station chimneys. But in the economic climate following the Second World War, Chancellor of the Exchequer Sir Stafford Cripps vetoed the plans because there was insufficient steel to build it. "Cripes: Cripps gets to grips with grit gripes" was a headline the Fulham Chronicle sadly never ran with.

A by-election occurred here in 1947 right in the midst of this furore over the grit problem but, by now, Labour was so entrenched that the best efforts of Conservatives, Communists and the Fulham Residents Association couldn't much dent the majority.

In the end, local pressure and improving steel availability enabled the plant to be built, which may have resulted in less obvious pollution coating Sands End in grime but did little for the invisible impact on health of emissions over the area.

When Fulham amalgamated with Hammersmith in 1964 Sands End became Sandford ward, stretching north to the District Line and including the Moore Park area. Labour won almost three quarters of the vote in the first contest in 1964, lost it in 1968 by just five points, and then won it back in 1971.

But the 1970s was the decade when Sands End began to change rapidly again. Economic and industrial havoc to an extent at least as sudden and violent as that which devastated coal-mining communities in the 1980s, hit this community.

In 1972 the discovery of North Sea Oil made the Imperial Gasworks uneconomical: it closed in 1975. Fulham Power Station was decommissioned in 1978.

Unemployment in Sands End sky-rocketed and a mass exodus began as people followed the jobs they desperately needed out of Fulham. Townmead Road went from being the engine of Sands End to being an almost never-ending route through boarded-up wasteland.

But what the area had that more depressed northern areas did not was a central London location - and a

The West London Observer
Friday April 10, 1925

Fulham Borough Council

"DOUBLE" FOR LABOUR IN SANDS END

Polling took place on Saturday for the three seats on the Fulham Borough Council which became vacant as a result of the resignation of Messrs. Jacob, Malpas and Gantlett.

There were straight fights in both wards. Sands End was captured by Labour, who had two strong representatives in the field in Mr. L.A. Hill (the ex-Mayor) and Mr. J.A. Groves. Walham ward was held for the "M.R.'s" by Mr Alfred Davis, but a protest was entered by his opponents on the grounds that the names were no placed in alphabetical order on the ballot papers. Results:-

WALHAM WARD.

Elected.

Davis, Alfred	685

Not Elected.

Browning, John Murrie ...	494

SANDS END WARD.

Elected.

Groves, John Albert ...	1,251
Hill, Louis Albert ...	1,201

Not Elected.

Redfearn, Wm. Maunder ...	1,041
Minute, Arthur ...	1,027

Fulham Chronicle

No. 3,129 | With which is incorporated the WEST LONDON ADVERTISER | FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 1948 | Entered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper | PRICE THREEPENCE

TOWN'S MEETING OVER GRIT NUISANCE

Sir Stafford Cripps declined invitation to attend

TO BE ASKED TO WITHDRAW BAN ON ARRESTING PLANT

HEADED by the Mayor of Fulham (Cllr. J. T. Horton), a deputation is to seek an interview with Sir Stafford Cripps to try to persuade him to reverse his decision banning the installation of grit-arresting plant at Fulham Power Station because of the steel shortage.

This was the plan of action adopted by resolution at the town's meeting on the grit nuisance, called by the Mayor at the Town Hall.

Members of the deputation will be the leader of the borough's council (Ald. A.F. Coomber), leader of the opposition (Cllr. R.J.P. Cussen), chairman of the electricity committee (Cllr. J. W. Perotti), four Sands End residents elected from the body of the hall (Mrs. Margaret Welburn, Kilkie Street; Mr P.C. Strange, Furness Road; Mr. H. Oliver, Lindrop Street; and Mr C. Kendall, Cranbury Road), and a Hurlingham resident, Colonel G. S. Brighten, who was also elected by the meeting.

The Mayor stated that the deputation will meet in a few days' time to commence preparation of their case, suggestions for which are the compilation of health statistics (with particular reference to eye and pulmonary troubles) and an investigation into the borough's scrap steel in the hope that Fulham can find some to help towards the 1,200 tons required for the grit-arresting plant.

Coming to Fulham in July

The Mayor revealed that an endeavour to get Sir Stafford Cripps to the meeting had failed. But, he added, "I have a firm promise that he will come to Fulham some time in July."

At the end of the meeting Mr. F. V. Jacoby, who recently organised a conference on the grit problem, complimented the Mayor. "It think we can say he's got grit" said Mr. Jacoby. "It has been a very good meeting. Thank you, sir, very much."

Both Mr. Michael Stewart M.P. and Dr. Edith Summer-skill M.P., who approached Sir Stafford Cripps personally to urge the installation of the plant, were present, but only Mr. Stewart was called upon to speak.

Amount of steel revealed

The East Fulham M.P. referred to Sir Stafford Cripps's letter to him of Jan. 14 and revealed the amount of steel involved. Sir Stafford wrote: "The modified Fulham scheme would require 1,200 tons of steel, most of it sheet steel and medium place, which are both in particularly short supply. We could only go forward with the Fulham scheme by cutting still further really vital uses of steel. I am sure your constituents will understand that by this further sacrifice of their comfort for a little long they will be contributing materially to our recovery. As soon as ever the circumstances of the steel supply allow of it we shall, of course, encourage the progress with the work."

A well-balanced case

"It seems to me we shall have to take hold of that last sentence," said Mr. Stewart. "I shall see that whatever facts and evidence that can be collected are kept continually in the minds of my colleagues in the Government. I hope Sands End residents will see their case is presented, not just in bits and pieces, but as a solid well-balanced case. It is on those lines we are most likely to reach success over the power station part of the problem. Important as this power station problem is, it must be kept in proportion to the whole of the problem."

When the Mayor opened the meeting cries of approval greeted his remark. "I anticipate there will be only one opinion - that the nuisance is intolerable and that pressure should be resumed to get something done to remedy it."

Uproar

There were continual interruptions, amounting at times to uproar, when Cllr. J. W. Perotti, the chairman of the electricity committee, maintained that the majority of the nuisance did not come from the Fulham power station. "Lots Road power station has grit-arresting plant in operation," he said, "but in spite of it you will find it does not arrest the whole of the grit from the station. I submit that only a small proportion, in comparison, of the nuisance comes from Fulham power station."

Mr. Perotti had great difficulty in continuing his speech. From all parts of the hall people voiced contradictions.

Restoring order, the Mayor said, "If we are going to get anything done we must act like responsible people. I am not going to let this meeting by smashed up by irresponsible people. If you want to say something for goodness' sake come up to the platform at the right time and say it." (Appl.)



Here is Mrs. Alice Claydon, of No. 23, Clancarty Road, with the reply she received from Buckingham Palace after she had written to the Queen about the grit nuisance.

'Cleanest chimneys in this part of London'

"The Fulham power station chimneys are the cleanest in this part of London," continued Mr. Perotti. "The majority of the nuisance comes from surrounding factories and coal dumps. The borough surveyor and medical officer of health have been given the task of collecting evidence on behalf of the people of Fulham and the most important diagnosis they have made with reference to the grit falling in Sands End is that the majority of it has a large content of coal dust. There is no coal dust or unburned gases leaving Fulham power station stacks."

With many interruptions Mr. Perotti went on to refer to gas works coal dumps that were continually on the move whereas, he said the dumps at Fulham power station were for storage. He maintained that the majority of the nuisance was from coal rather than grit.

Residents' views

Then came a long series of short speeches from Fulham residents. Among the points made were:

Col. G. S. Brighten: we are not discussing coal dust, but cinder grit.. Twelve tons a day of it falls on Fulham on the admission of borough officials. I am not going to admit that is the minor part of the nuisance.

Mr. Tom Monahan: I claim that the T.B. rate in Sands End is abnormally high.

'Exhibits' of grit

Mrs. Margaret Welburn, Kilkie Street (handing a glass jar of grit to the mayor): I sent another jar to the Minister of Health last year and had a reply that something would probably be done by the spring of this year. I got so fed up a fortnight ago I wrote to Sir Stafford Cripps and registered a parcel of grit off to him at No. 11, Downing Street. I am just fed up with living in much."

Mr Lester, Edenvale Street (handing in a brown paper bag of grit): To-night I went into the children's bedroom and swept that off their bed.

Mr. E. C. Clements: I think the present quality of the coal is a lot to do with the situation.

property market attracting the relatively wealthy priced out of Chelsea and looking for a nearby alternative. So began the rapid gentrification of Sands End.

When the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) demolished the power station in the early 1980s, it managed to release huge clouds of deadly blue asbestos dust into the skies over Sands End. This resulted in intense air quality monitoring by the borough council and a House of Commons debate in 1983 led by Tooting Labour MP Tom Cox - once a Fulham councillor and CEGB employee, whose father (also called Tom) was a long-time Sands End councillor.

The West London Observer
Friday July 1, 1927

Fulham Borough Council

M.R.'S BYE-ELECTION SUCCESS

MAJORITY OF 34 AT SANDS END.

MR. G.R. RENTON ELECTED

Polling took place on Saturday in the Sands End ward for a seat on the Fulham Borough Council, the bye-election being necessary as a result of the resignation of Councillor Pratt.

The candidates were Mr. Louis Albert Hill (Labour) and Mr. George Rudolph Renton (M.R.) and a fairly busy day was put in by both "camps". There was a last minute rush of voters, and it was considered that the fight would be a close one.

The county took place in the evening and before the result was announced, it was clear that a very narrow margin would separate the candidates. The Returning Officer read out the figures as follows:-

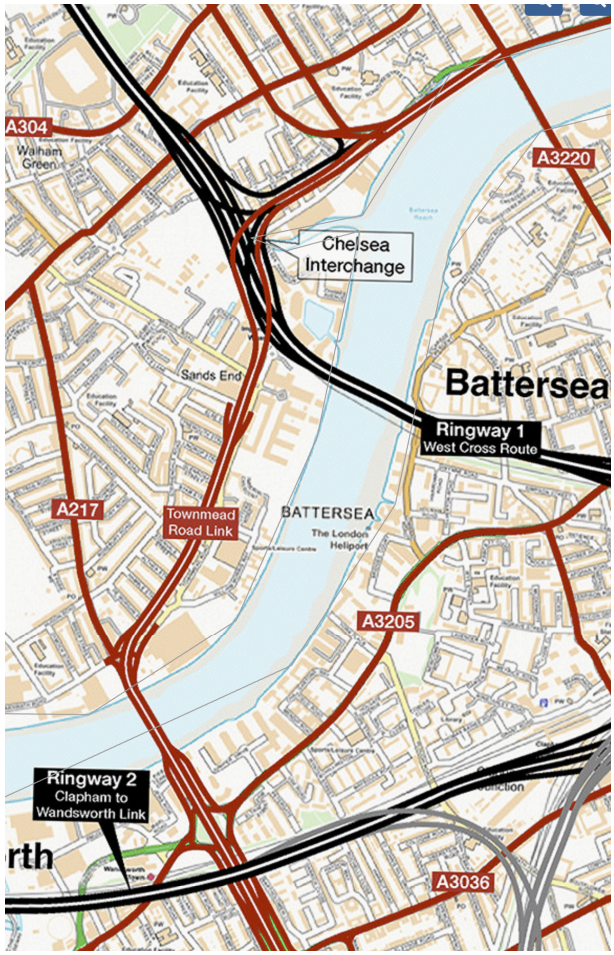
	Elected.	
G. R. Renton	... ...	1,781
	Not Elected.	
L. A. Hill	... ...	1,747

There was great excitement when it was realised that the Municipal Reformers had retained the seat by the very narrow majority of 34 votes.

At the meeting of the Fulham Borough Council on Wednesday evening, Councillor Pritchard introduced the new member. He had much pleasure in doing so, he said, because he had known Mr. Renton for many years. He had rendered excellent service to the borough in various capacities.

Councillor Driver supported, and the Mayor extended a hearty and cordial welcome to Councillor Renton on behalf of the whole Council.

Yet again environmental issues were at the fore in Sands End. And then again at the end of the 1980s when the government resurrected plans from the 1950s to complete the London orbital ringroad, which would have continued the West Cross Route from Shepherds Bush south to Sands End. It would then branch off in three directions: south, across Battersea rail bridge, east along Lots Road to Cheyne Walk, and west, turning Townmead Road into - at least - a dual carriageway to Wandsworth Bridge.



Had that idea ever been made real Sands End would have been blighted to an even greater extent than de-industrialisation had caused. But huge campaigns by the councils, residents groups and MPs eventually compelled the Department for Transport to again return those plans to the dusty filing cabinets they had been contained within since the Abercrombie Plan first decided motorways mattered more than residential neighbourhoods.

Despite all the Sands End homes changing hands at ever-rising prices, the area was still derelict as the 1980s rolled on. But the demolition of the power station enabled the CEGB to sell the land, upon which the first of the riverside residential complexes was built.

HAMMERSMITH FULHAM & SHEPHERDS BUSH
Gazette
Friday March 30, 1990 25p



SAFE-HANDS BEASANT BLOCKS BORO 62-64

Families celebrate scrapping of road plans

Victory!

By MIRIAM RODELL

THOUSANDS of families were celebrating this week after Transport Secretary Cecil Parkinson scrapped two massive road building plans for West London.

The announcement in the Commons on Tuesday afternoon was met with jubilation by campaigners in Shepherds Bush, Hammersmith, Fulham and Chiswick, many of whom said they would fight on for more investment in public transport.

Up to 200 homes in Sands End, Fulham, were threatened with demolition under one of the schemes recommended by Government consultants.

WEIR – the Western Environmental Improvement Route – was designed to end the traffic jams in Earls Court but the plan caused uproar among Londoners living on or near the proposed route.

The Sweeney family live in Kilkie Street in Fulham, one of the streets under threat. Although there was a strong chance their house would be demolished they decided to go ahead with plans to buy their home from the council.

The day after the announcement Jane Sweeney said: "I slept much easier in my bed last night and the rest of family feel great. My husband works from home so it's all worked out really well for us. It's wonderful news."

Fulham campaigner Tommy Hanley, a member of the pressure group All London Against the Road Menace (Alarm) said: "It's a great victory for London because Londoners have got together more quickly and reacted more strongly than ever before. I'm over the moon."

Turnaround

The decision to scrap WEIR, a dual carriageway running from Shepherds Bush to the Thames, represents a major turnaround for the Government. Although Ministers always said its future was dependent on the outcome of the latest consultation it was clear the road had top level backing.

It was only this time last year that Peter Bottomley, then Transport Secretary, described WEIR as a 'unique opportunity' to relieve traffic congestion in Earls Court.

In Chiswick the anti-roads campaign had centred on plans for a new south circular relief road from Barnes linking with the M4 at the Chiswick roundabout. That scheme was rejected by Mr Parkinson last December, at the same time that he announced consultation would go ahead on plans for a new road tunnel from Chelsea to Chiswick emerging at a huge new junction on Kew Bridge Road.

In February Tory MP Sir Barney Hayhoe presented a petition to Parliament against the scheme signed by 13,400 protesters.

With local elections looming the Government must have seen the road schemes as a political liability. It is understood road issues were top of the agenda when London MPs met Mrs Thatcher a month ago and that a group of Tory MPs met Mr Parkinson last week to argue that new roads would not solve London's traffic problems.

Regent on River was Fulham's answer to the sort of blocks going up in Docklands in the East End of London.

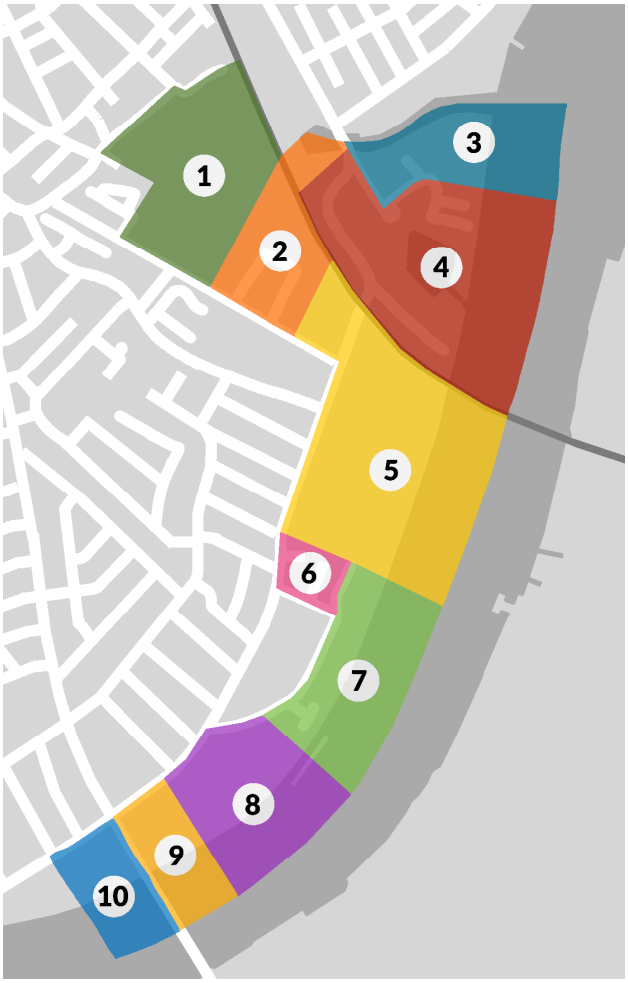
That site also brought the first of the "out of town" supermarkets to Sands End: a massive Sainsbury's store, replacing the much smaller one in North End Road. The council worked with London Transport, as it then was, to create a new "Hoppa" bus service that ran from Craven Cottage to this new supermarket in Sands End, zig-zagging through the Fulham backstreets on a hail-and-ride operation.

As Regent on River was being completed the shipping giant P&O bought the old coal wharf by Chelsea Creek: an area cut off from the rest of Sands End by the West London rail-line. Planning permission for a huge new residential scheme was granted in April 1986 just a month before Labour regained the council. Labour would probably have negotiated a rather different planning agreement for not a single affordable home was included in what was to become Chelsea Harbour.

Chelsea Harbour is a mix of high-end residential apartments; principally the 77 metre Belvedere Tower, and huge retail and office development, notably the Design Centre with its huge glass triple-domed roof, all built around a marina.

The biggest Thames-side development of all though was Imperial Wharf: the riverside between Regent on River and Chelsea Harbour.

After years of working out the viability of the site, cleaning it of all the leftover pollutants from the industry that had gone before, planning permission for 1,800 homes was granted. A Labour council struck a hard bargain for hundreds of affordable homes: 400 housing association rented units, another 400 shared ownership units and 40 sheltered housing units. The development also paid for a new riverside park and a station for Sands End on the West London Line.



How the Sands End Industrial sites have been redeveloped

1. Kings Road Park | 2. Chelsea Creek | 3. Chelsea Waterfront
4. Chelsea Harbour | 5. Imperial Wharf | 6. Chelsea Botanica
7. Regent-on-River | 8. Fulham Riverside | 9. Albert and Swedish Wharf
10. Hurlingham Wharf

Further huge residential developments were given planning consent in the early 2000s: Chelsea Creek, Chelsea Waterfront, King's Road Park, Fulham Riverside above the rebuilt Sainsbury's off Townmead Road, Hurlingham Waterfront and Albert and Swedish Wharf, either side of Wandsworth Bridge; and the bizarrely named Chelsea Botanica on Watermeadow Lane. These sites pretty much complete four decades of regeneration of Sands End - change that has completely remade this neighbourhood.

Let's just catch up with the electoral history. In 2002, new boundaries helped Labour cling onto Sands End. There was a 7% swing to the Conservatives but Labour also added 300 votes to their 1998 total, presumably mostly from the two council estates that came in from the abolished Sulivan ward: Sulivan Court and the Townmead estate.

As a consequence, Sands End stayed Labour - just. The third seat went Conservative by three votes but because of mistakes made by polling officials not stamping ballot papers correctly Labour was able to petition the High Court for a re-run in that one seat. The two Labour seats had been won by large enough majorities that the outcome would not have been altered by the unstamped ballot papers being discounted.
In the by-election, Labour's Colin Pavelin regained by four votes the seat he had lost by three two months earlier.

But this close result meant the writing was on the wall for Labour. They'd have lost in 2006 come what may, but the scale of their defeat was epic. Labour lost 200 votes but the Conservatives added more than 600, creating a 16% swing - the largest of that election. A 2008 by-election held on the same day as Boris Johnson's first London mayoral victory entrenched the Tories further: they won by 1,100 on a 50% turnout.

The gap, in percentage terms, narrowed slightly in 2010 but only because the Tories lost more to the Lib Dems than Labour did. This should have put the seal on Sands end becoming a solidly Tory ward, the way Sulivan had and Town had and Colehill/Munster had. But then confounding results started to occur.

In the upset election of 2014, Sands End very nearly became the icing on Labour's cake: a 7% swing brought them to within 60 votes of the Conservatives. Was it a fluke result?

Apparently not. Another of the ward's Tory councillors, Robert Largan, resigned in 2017 after being selected to fight the Bury South parliamentary seat (he lost but in 2019 became MP for High Peak in Derbyshire, before losing in 2024). With another remarkably high turnout: 63.5%, Conservative Jackie Borland won 2,845 votes and Labour's Ann Rosenberg 2,669. Huge votes for both.


IMPERIAL ROAD
HARBOUR AVENUE
PEARSCROFT RD
BAGLEY'S LANE
TOWNMEAD ROAD
BROUGHTON RD
HAZLEBURY RD
BYAM ST
ROSEBURY RD
STEPHENDALE RD
WILLIAM MORRIS WAY
DE MORGAN RD

Jackie Borland was a councillor for just eleven months because, at the 2018 council elections, Labour recaptured all three seats in Sands End and one of the winners was Ann Rosenberg, the loser of the by-election. Jackie Borland later returned as a Palace & Hurlingham councillor.

But how had Labour recovered? There were the usual national reasons: the EU referendum, the Conservatives appealing less to the sorts who might have voted for Cameron but not May, the splits in her party as she tried to get her version of Brexit, worse than remaining in many ways, through parliament.

But there were two significant factors unique to Sands End. The first was exceptional turnout of Labour voters from the Townmead and Pearscroft estates. In an election where turnout across Sands End was just 39%, on those two estates it was 73%. On Sulivan Court it was 50%; on Philpott Square, one of the smaller Sulivan-side estates it was 57%. Labour voters were clearly energised to vote at the same time as Conservative voters were demotivated.

The second factor was, surprisingly, the completion of the Imperial Wharf development. Remember the planning deal the then Labour council had done for an almost 50-50 split between full market price housing and public housing? That 50-50 split in units did not translate into a similar split of voters.

Simply put, while the market side of the development is either occupied by singles or couples, or indeed by foreign nationals ineligible to vote or simply left void as corporate investments, the affordable side was filled with large families. There are over 950 voters in the affordable side of Imperial Wharf; less than 550 in the market side. It's simplistic to suggest that all public housing tenants vote Labour and all leaseholders or private renters vote Conservative, but not so simplistic as to be misleading as to where Labour's renewed vote came from.

SANDS END CONTEST

Four Candidates For Borough Council Seat

THE PROSPECT OF THERE BEING FIVE CANDIDATES IN THE FULHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL BY-ELECTION IN SANDS END WARD ON DECEMBER 5 HAS NOT MATERIALISED

THE I.L.P. HAVE DECIDED NOT TO NOMINATE MR F. SCRIVENER THUS LEAVING ONLY FOUR ASPIRANTS TO THE SEAT.

THEY ARE:—
MRS. EDITH M. CLARK (CONS.);
MRS. LILY COOMBER (LAB.);
MR. FRANK HASKELL (COM.); AND
MR. J. H. RUSSELL (RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION).

The by-election has arisen through the election of Mr. A F. Coomber ,the leader of the Borough Council, as an alderman. His wife is one of the candidates.

I.L.P. NOT TO CONTEST

After intimating that they would be nominating a candidate, the Independent Labour Party have decided not to contest the by-election.

In a letter to the "Fulham Chronicle" the divisional organiser, Mr. G. W. Stone, gives this explanation: "Many issues of extreme importance particularly that of permanent conscription, have become matters of vital and immediate concern, therefore the I.L.P. has decided to forego this municipal contest in order to mobilise all its forces on the larger issues."

Ratepayers' Candidate An Ex-Marine

The Fulham Ratepayers' Association candidate, Mr. J. H. Russell, of No 6, Edenhurst Avenue, Hurlingham, is making his second attempt to secure a seat on the borough council

He unsuccessfully contested Lillie Ward as a ratepayers' candidate in the council elections last November.

Born in Sands End, Mr. Russell, who is a company director, property manager and estate surveyor, has lived in the district for 20 years, his parents being Kilkie Street residents. Before the war he served in the Royal Marines for two years. He left the service after an accident.

During the war, in the Fulham Home Guard, he rose to the rank of Major, finally commanding the headquarter's company.

A noted athlete, he won a Royal Marines' swimming championship

Conservatives' Choice

The Conservative candidate is Mrs Edith M Clark, of No 57, Wandsworth Bridge Road, chairman of the women's branch of Sands End Ward Conservatives and organiser of the "Reveller's" Concert Party.

At the Borough Council election a year ago Mrs. Clark polled most votes among the defeated Conservative candidates in Sands End.

She has lived at Wandsworth Bridge Road 27 years, and is a member of the local children's after-care committee, and of the Fulham Children's Invalid Aid Society.

A member of the W.V.S., she did invaluable work during the air-raids She is a schools manager of No 2 group (Langford Road Hugon Road, Harwood, and Peterborough Schools)

Labour's Selection

Six prospective candidates were considered by the East Fulham Labour Party, and the final voting was in favour of Mrs. Coomber who lives at No 11, King Edward's Mansions.

In the recent by-election in Barons Court Ward she was defeated by the Conservative candidate, Lt.-Col. E J P. Cussen, who obtained 2,695 votes to her 1,274.

Mrs Coomber was Mayoress of Fulham 1941-42.

Communist Nominee

The Communist Party announced some weeks ago that their candidate would be Mr. Frank Haskell.

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of the contents of the box, and this sum has been paid in at the fund headquarters.

Consultation promised over 40 acres of shopping and housing

Massive development on run-down gas site

By RUTH HUGHES

THOUSANDS of Fulham residents will be asked to give their views on proposals for a 40-acre shopping, housing and leisure development on a run-down British Gas site next to the Thames.

Plans and models of the site at Imperial Wharf in Sands End are to be unveiled by British Gas in October.

There will be a meeting to assess public opinion before Hammersmith and Fulham Council's environment committee considers the outline planning application in December.

There are currently 11 commercial properties on the site, including warehouses, a timber yard and a haulage company. Under the plans they will all be demolished. Tenants were notified in April to quit the site when their leases expire. British Gas will send a newsletter detailing its plans to 6,000 homes early next month. The company says it will ask residents for their views.

The council is defying pressure from British Gas to make a decison on the application by the Government's deadline on October 2, in order to consult residents fully.

Town hall chiefs are concerned about poor road and public transport access, the height and scale of the buildings planned, and land contamination as a result of its former use as a gas works.

The Association of Residents in Sands End (Arise) is keen for the project to involve the community.

Chairman Tommy Hanley said: "We are in favour of the development as long as it is in the interests of the community.

"There needs to be a lot of consultation and a new approach to prevent cramming too much on the site.

"It is far too big a development to rush. It is probably the biggest site to come up for redevelopment since Canary Wharf."

Mr Hanley, along with other members of the Sands End consultative committee, which is made up of residents and representatives from businesses and churches, is meeting council planners on September 2 to discuss the proposals.

The council's environment director Bill Myers said the development would undoubtedly have a massive effect on the area.

"Clearly the council is keen to have a comprehensive development which fits in with the community," he said.

"No-one doubts that the site has been underused for many years, however such a large undertaking in a part of the borough which does not currently enjoy good public transport links will need careful planning if it is to be succesful."

A British Gas spokesman said: "We're hoping to forge good relations with the council. British Gas is not trying to force the council's hand and is not expecting it to reach a decision within eight weeks."

After the council reaches a decision, the plans could still face being 'called in' by the Environment Secretary, John Gummer, for a public inquiry.

The plans are to build:

- 900 new homes, including 15 per cent affordable housing;
- A 255 room hotel;
- A public park of between three and five acres;
- A new road parallel to Townmead Road from William Morris Way to the Townmead Road/Imperial Road roundabout. Traffic calming measures would be installed in Townmead Road;
- A river walk to Chelsea Harbour;
- A supermarket;
- Light industry units;
- A leisure centre;
- Offices;
- A bus terminal.



A model of the proposed development at the Imperial Wharf site in Sands End

Again, there was a turnout differential in 2018: residents of the Imperial affordable housing turned out at 64%; the rest of the development at barely 30%. So, extraordinarily, this vast new riverside development became not another vat of Conservative votes as expected, but a brand new Labour enclave.

To prove that 2018 result wasn't a fluke, Labour won Sands End again in 2022 after boundary changes removed the section west of Wandsworth Bridge Road. This Sands End was like 1978 to 2002 Sands End, minus the area north of Sandilands Road and with three councillors instead of two.

The changes were broadly politically neutral: that Sulivan section very slightly lent Conservative but not by much.

Labour held all three seats in Sands End on a 2% swing to them. Turnout was down a lot, and the ward was over 2,000 electors smaller. Labour's third councillor won with 1,098 votes. In 2018 the third Labour winner had won with 1,714 an, of course these were both a far cry from that 2,669 Ann Rosenberg had lost with in 2017. Still, it was the most vulnerable Labour ward - honestly the only one the Conservatives looked like having any chance of winning in 2026.

Labour was not doing much to win friends at this end of the borough - at least the vocal ones. There were growing problems with traffic in the ward with all the new housing that had been constructed.

There were very few ways of getting into the ward and those limited roads bore a weight of traffic. Labour tackled this by, essentially, banning all non-residential traffic - which included taxis and delivery vans: so issues of convenience and residents' safety getting home at night arose.

In Wandsworth Bridge Road for reasons best known to traffic planners, huge wooden planters had been placed in the road forcing cyclists out into the path of traffic. It's possible that those complaining were either non residents or Conservative voters. But the noise created suggested that Labour would struggle to hold the ward in 2026. All three Labour councillors stood down as well.

And Sands End did switch sides again - or at least two of the three seats did. Labour hung onto the third by 19 votes. Those two seats were the only Conservative gains in 2026 and they occurred despite the Tories not gaining any votes compared to 2022.

It was not an impressive performance by either main party. The Conservatives won with just 32.6% - down almost 7 percentage points on their 2022 loss and their worst share of the vote since 1986. Labour, though, fell nearly twenty percentage points, of which 16 appear to have gone Green: they didn't contest Sands End in 2022.

Winning seats is the primary aim of an election so, on that, measure the Conservatives sort of did alright. But winning when your vote falls - a lot - is almost a pyrrhic victory, and to return to the sort of vote shares they last won before all the steel and glass went up along the riverside seems very odd.

Summary of election results for Sands End ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
Sands End ward					
1900	34.4		52.1		13.5
1903	33.0	17.3	49.6		
1905B	23.5	18.8	57.7		
1906	52.4	21.9	30.6		6.2
1909	53.2		46.8		
1912	51.5	10.3	38.2		
1919	27.5	52.5	20.0		
1922	40.3	34.3	13.2		12.2
1925B	45.8	54.2			
1925	56.1	43.9			
1927B	50.5	49.5			
1928	51.9	43.0			
1931	68.0	28.3			3.7
1934	38.5	61.5			
1937	40.8	59.2			
1945	26.0	60.1			13.8
1946B	35.3	53.8			10.8
1949	45.1	54.9			
1953	35.3	59.5			5.2
1956	32.3	64.5			3.2
1959	29.3	66.7			4.0
1962	31.2	63.6			5.2
Sandford ward					
1964	16.8	74.2			
1968	52.5	47.5			
1971	28.7	71.3			
1974	32.7	67.3			
1975B	35.6	54.1	10.3		
Sands End ward					
1978	36.3	60.9			2.9
1982	32.7	50.8	14.8		1.7
1986	26.2	52.2	21.6		
1990	37.5	51.9	6.9		3.7
1994	39.1	51.1	9.8		
1998	37.3	52.4	10.3		
2002	44.6	48.3	7.1		
2002B	44.9	45.1	9.9		
2006	60.0	32.3	7.7		
2008B	57.5	29.2	13.2		
2010	51.1	30.2	18.7		
2014	38.9	31.9	6.3	10.8	12.1
2017B	46.5	43.6	9.8		
2018	42.2	49.4	8.4		
2022	39.4	49.8	10.8		
2026	32.6	30.4	8.1	16.3	12.6



Double act: Twins Brendan and Tony Bird start their campaign trail for the local council elections
Picture by **SHANE DEMPSEY**

Double trouble for parties as twins enter fray

COULD it be double trouble for the Tories and Liberals at next month's elections when twins Brendan and Tony Bird try to land two seats for the Labour Party?

Brendan and Tony are standing in the neighbouring wards of Sands End and Sulivan, respectively.

The 44-year-old brothers share several common interests.

They both work in housing and play in the same football team.

Asked if they have a psychic link, Tony said: "I don't really believe in that sort of thing, but I once bought a rare record when I was visiting the South West, and when I got back, Brendan had bought the same one!"

Brendan has replaced ex-council leader Mike Goodman who has an increasingly busy work schedule as director of the charity Release. His co-runner in Labour-held Sands End will be Nadeem Aftab while the Tories field Michael Brennan and Stephen Greenhalgh and the Liberal Democrats, Mary McNamee and Gabrielle Minken.

In Sulivan Tony and Jeff Kenner – who has transferred from the virtually impregnable Addison ward – will be up against the Leader of the Conservative Group Gerald Wombwell and fellow Tory stalwart Jonathan Maiden. The Liberal Democrats add Joan Bonser and Peter Crystal to the equation.

For more election news turn to page 15.

That they could only increase their council group to twelve seats in a year of deep Labour government unpopularity and with seemingly some emotive local issues to make mileage out of speaks to the rut they are also in. True, they managed to put in play two wards north of Sands End: Walham Green and Lillie, and are not completely out of the picture in Avonmore and Brook Green, but they are still far from a straightforward path back to challenging for power at borough-level.

Reform UK almost certainly cost the Conservatives that third seat: they won 12.6%. That's only fractionally more than UKIP won in 2014: and that year all their vote appeared to come from the Conservatives.

Likely not every Reform voter was a 2022 Conservative but let's assume the majority were. Instead of 33%, the Conservatives could maybe have expected to poll 40%.

Also: why is turnout so low in what should be Conservative strongholds: the ladder of streets between Stephendale and Townmead; the Hever estate ("Bury triangle") and Broughton Road? Why aren't they getting decent turnouts from "new Sands End" along the river?

If the Conservatives cannot find a way to get at least a sizeable minority of public housing tenants supporting them, they likely cannot win this borough ever again - and will continue struggling to win Sands End too.

Rollcall of Sands End ward councillors

including Sandford ward (1964-1978)

2026
- Rob Harris
- Libby Hart
- Roseanne Meacher

2022
- Paul Alexander
- Ashok Patel
- Ann Rosenberg

2018
- Lucy RIchardson
- Ann Rosenberg
- Matt Uberoi

2017B
- Jacqueline Borland

2014
- Steven Hamilton
- Robert Largan
- Jane Law

2010
- Steven Hamilton
- Alexandra De Lisle
- Jane Law

2008B
- Alexandra De Lisle

2006
- Jeanette Bentley
- Steven Hamilton
- Jane Law

2002B
- Colin Pavelin

2002
- Brendan Bird
- Steven Hamilton
- Jenny Vaughan

1998
- Brendan Bird
- Colin Pavelin

1994
- Nadeem Aftab
- Brendan Bird

1990
- Nadeem Aftab
- Michael Goodman

1986
- Michael Goodman
- Tony Powell

1982
- Tony Powell
- Clive Wisbey

1978
- Joseph Feely
- Tony Powell

1975B
- Joseph Feely

1974
- Michael Finn
- Jack Ireland
- Nick Raynsford

1971
- Jack Ireland
- Alf Little
- Nick Raynsford

1968
- Ernest Ibbott
- Terence Moody
- Sheira Trehearne

1964
- Percy Barton
- John Browning
- Phyllis Cooper

1962
- Percy Barton
- John Browning
- Malcolm Hall
- Phyllis Cooper
- Leonard Fenton
- Dennis Liardet

1959
- Percy Barton
- John Browning
- Alfred Coomber
- Phyllis Cooper
- Leonard Fenton
- Dennis Liardet

1956
- Percy Barton
- Alexander Chaplin
- Phyllis Cooper
- William Fraser
- Jack Ireland
- William Thom

1953
- Percy Barton
- Alexander Chaplin
- Phyllis Cooper
- Thomas Cox
- William Fraser
- Percy Fenne

1949
- Percy Barton
- Alexander Chaplin
- Alfred Coomber
- Phyllis Cooper
- Thomas Cox
- Percy Fenne

1946B
- Lily Coomber

1945
- Percy Barton
- Alexander Chaplin
- Alfred Coomber
- Phyllis Cooper
- Charles De Winter
- Percy Fenne

1937
- Percy Barton
- Richard Cook
- Alfred Coomber
- Thomas Cox
- Charles De Winter
- Solomon Vanderhook

1934
- Percy Barton
- Richard Cook
- Alfred Coomber
- Thomas Cox
- Charles De Winter
- Solomon Vanderhook

1931
- Albert Baggs
- Arthur Minute
- Rosina Pavitt
- George Renton
- Thomas Richardson
- Thomas Tombs

1928
- Arthur Driver
- Arthur Minute
- George Renton
- Thomas Richardson
- Donald Van Den Bergh
- George Waldron

1925
- Albert Baggs
- Arthur Driver
- Charles Fryer
- Arthur Minute
- Ernest Pratt
- Donald Van Den Bergh

1922
- Albert Baggs
- William Clarke
- Alfred Gantlett
- Stanley Malpass
- Ernest Pratt
- Donald Van Den Bergh

1919
- Thomas Cox
- Daniel Creed
- Joseph Dickinson
- John Groves
- Joseph Hayward
- Robert Wadman

1912
- Henry Crew
- James Edwards
- A. Howell
- W. Middleton
- Henry Norris
- Frederick Shaw

1909
- William Allen
- Henry Crew
- William Brooks
- James Edwards
- Henry Norris
- Aldred Sadler

1906
- Frank Boynton
- Henry Crew
- Henry Norris
- Aldred Sadler
- Frederick Shaw
- William Whitty

1903
- Alfred Baxter
- Robert Davies
- Thomas Oakey
- John Rosevear
- James Comben
- John Palmer

1900
- Alfred Baxter
- Robert Davies
- Thomas Oakey
- John Rosevear
- William Serjeant
- Charles Steel