Wendell Park ward

Starch Green is one of the significant ward names in the history of Hammersmith.

Nowadays, its a tiny open space at the junction of Goldhawk Road and Askew Road, but Starch Green was the acres of fields that the whole of Wendell Park ward covers - and a fair chunk of Coningham too.

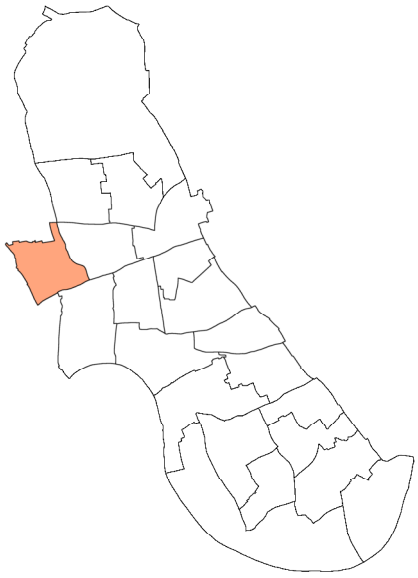
There was a Starch Green ward from the founding of Hammersmith Borough Council until 2002 though its boundaries ebbed and flowed - and today's Wendell Park is an exact replica of the Starch Green that existed from 1978 to 2002. It is a square of land bounded by Askew Road, Goldhawk Road and Stamford Brook Road, the borough boundary with Hounslow and Ealing - what used to be a railway line, and then behind the southern terrace of houses in Valetta Road.

It was the first ward in Hammersmith to elect a Labour councillor: William Davidson, in 1906 - perhaps surprisingly given that there were very much more deprived parts of the borough. It was often a very marginal ward, crucially electing two Tory councillors in 1978, and one in 1982 when the council hung.

Even in years when Labour won here more comfortably the ward typically swung away from them again the next election. But, like the borough as a whole, it began swinging away from the Conservatives in the 1990s and now looks a very secure Labour ward.

This is more of an "in-between" part of the borough than any other. It's not quite Hammersmith and it's not quite Shepherds Bush, though most of it has a W12 postcode. Some of it is W3. The Stamford Brook Road (southern) end feels like Chiswick. The Worple Road (northern) end feels like Acton. Chunks of it developed long after the rest of Shepherds Bush in a more arts and crafts suburban style atypical of the wider borough.

Starch Green/Wendell Park has leaned towards Labour to varying degrees depending on its precise boundaries since the mid 1930s; enticingly close enough for the Conservatives to fancy their chances - especially when the ward included the Ravenscourt Park area from 1964 to 1978, but normally beyond their reach.



Although nothing can take away the fact that Starch Green returned Labour's first ever Hammersmith councillor he won with just 21% in 1906 and it was only a heavily divided field of candidates that enabled Cllr Davidson to win that single seat (out of six).

After that success, Labour had to wait until 1919 to win here again (a full slate of six elected that year), then two seats in 1928, then all six again in 1934. After that it was Labour for thirty years until it split two Labour, one Conservative in 1964.

The original Starch Green spread east across Askew Road as far as Coningham Road - then the boundary with St Stephen's. It was this "Coningham" side of the road where Labour was stronger in the early years - not least because the side west of Askew Road had only been partially constructed: it stopped at the end of Bassein Park Road. Beyond was just the Green itself.

A lot of this area went by different names, initially. Most of Rylett Crescent was Fortesque Road; Curwen Road was Orchard Road and Starfield Road was Station Road; St Elmo Road was Rankin Street and Wilton Road West. Askew Road was originally called Starch Green, then became Victoria Road but the Royal Mail - overwhelmed by the number of streets being named after the Queen - pressed for a change, and so it was renamed after the principal land-owning family in the area: the Askews.

WEST LONDON OBSERVER, FRIDAY MAY 21, 1920

COUNCIL BY-ELECTION

CONTEST IN STARCH GREEN WARD.

VICTORY OF MUNICIPAL REFORM CANDIDATE.

Polling took place yesterday (Thursday) in the Starch Green ward to fill a vacancy on the Hammersmith Borough Council caused by Mr. G.T. Harris, a Labour member. There were two candidates - Mr. Thomas Charles Jones (M.R.) and Mr. Fielding Reginald West (Labour). From 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. electors recorded their votes at three County Council Schools. In the early part of the day a small number of votes were recorded, but matters livened up in the evening.

At the close of the poll the ballot boxes were conveyed to the Town Hall, and the votes were counted in the Council Chamber, a number of Councillors and supporters of both candidates attending.

At half past nine Mr. Leslie Gordon, the Town Clerk, who officiated as returning officer, declared the result as follows:-

Mr. T.C. JONES (M.R.) 1,071
Mr. F.R. WEST (Labour) 1,027

Majority for M.R. candidate ... 44

The return of Mr. Jones, who was an unsuccessful candidate at the last election, is a gain for the Municipal Reformers.

The new Councillor proposed a vote of thanks to the Town Clerk and his staff, which was seconded by Mr. West, and agreed to.

In replying, the Town Clerk said the percentage of voters for a by-election was comparatively high; almost 25 per cent of the electors had gone to the poll. Nearly 50 per cent of those who voted were women. Only 5 voting papers had been spoilt.

Askew Road curves and bends not because it is askew but because it follows the twists and turns of a tributary of Stamford Brook - one of those rare lost London rivers that weren't turned into sewers by Bazalgette. This stream fed Starch Green pond at the foot of Askew Road which used to be in a roundabout at that slightly fraught junction where Askew, Goldhawk and Paddenswick Roads meet. The stream still feeds the lake in Ravenscourt Park with clean water.

Askew Road became important as both the centre point of the community - especially for those appreciating a drink or two as there were multiple pubs along the road, but also as a delineation between different neighbourhoods envisioned by developers and land-owners.

To the east of Askew Road the area was being constructed as long streets of big houses, most of them converted into several flats - meeting the needs of a rapidly expanding capital city. There was no open space planned in this neighbourhood: just a claustrophobic grid that packed residents in at a density that probably would not be permitted today.

To the west, architects were more creative with the street plan: again, far more suburban in layout and to a much lower housing density. There's the arc of Becklow Road as it becomes Gayford Road where it meets Cobbold Road, the grand Ashchurch neighbourhood and a grid of streets that then stopped at Rylett Crescent - beyond nothing but meadows until the railway line that ran behind what is now Emlyn Road.

STARCH GREEN WARD BY-ELECTION

DECISIVE VICTORY FOR EX-SERVICE CANDIDATE OVER 700 MAJORITY.

SECOND DEFEAT FOR SOCIALIST PARTY.

Considerable interest was taken in an election which took place in the Starch Green ward on Saturday to fill up the vacancy on the Hammersmith Borough Council, caused by Mr. G. Thomas, one of the Labour members having gone to Canada to take up an appointment there.

Two candidates were nominated. Mr. Edward Stephen Morris, who served as a lieutenant during the war, was put forward by the Shepherd's Bush Branch of the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers, and also obtained the support of Municipal Reformers, Progressives and members of the Hammersmith and Shepherd's Bush Ratepayers' Protection Association and the Hammersmith branch of the Middle Classes Union. The other candidate was Mr. William Henry Church, the Labour and Socialist nominee.

POLLING STATIONS

Polling took place from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Cobbold Road L.C.C. School, the Victoria L.C.C. School in Becklow Road, Westville Road L.C.C. School and St Mary's Church Room, Stamford Brook.

Not much literature was issued during the contest. Placards were circulated with the heading of the Shepherd's Bush branch of the Sailors' and Soldiers' Federation, asking electors to "Vote for Ted Morris, the Independent ex-Servicemen's candidate for Constitutional local government, in the workers and ratepayers' interests." On his red, white and blue polling cards were the words: "A real, live ex-Serviceman, he will be practical in every matter that affects the workers' and ratepayers' interests." Printed in red ink, bills were displayed in some of the windows in Cobbold Road and other streets, asking electors to "Vote for Will Church, the Labour candidate," and on his polling leaflets he was described as "a worker for the workers."

In the morning only a small number of voters took the trouble to exercise the franchise, but in the afternoon and evening there was more animation, though there was very little excitement over the fight for Municipal honours. In many instances, married couples recorded their votes at the same time. Up to 5 o'clock about 800 votes had been recorded at the polling station at St Mary's Church Room, Stamford Brook; at one station in Cobbold Road School, 298; and up to 4 o'clock at Victoria School, 672. Three hours later the number was over 800.

Mr. Morris had his Committee room at 169 Askew Road and Mr. W.I. Baxter, Secretary of the Shepherd's Bush branch of the Sailors' and Soldiers' Federation acted as his election agent. Amongst those who gave help in bringing up voters were Mrs Glenister, Mrs. T.C. Jones, Mrs Percy, Miss Burnett, Miss Pearce, Mrs Dodsworth, Mr D. Cawdron, L.C.C., Councillor C. Pascall, Councillor J.N. Claydon, Messrs E. Chapman, Sandlin, T.C. Moore, Franks, A.J. Ross, A.E. Hibberd, Piper, T.J. Brunsden, W. Winn, Collett (Middle Classes Union), Greenwood, Miles, Oates, Mussett, W.J. Johnson, Handley Jones, and a number of members of the Sailors' and Soldiers' Federation.

Motor cars were lent by Councillor L.O. Glenister, Captain Beatty, Messrs Clifton, Matthews and Wheeler.

The Committee room of Mr. Church was at the headquarters of the Labour Party, at 154, Goldhawk Road, and Mr. C.F. Greengrass officiated as his election agent. Amongst the workers on behalf of Mr. Church were Councillor W.H. Harding, Councillor and Mrs. J.P. Gardner, Councillor Mrs. Newhouse, Mrs. Mallinson, Mr. and Mrs. F.R. West, Mr and Mrs. Stevens, Messrs. L.H. Potter, Cheney, Morris, Goff, W. Turney, Dallimore, G. Barnes, E.E. Woods, and R. Batchelor. The Labour candidate had no vehicles lent him to fetch voters.

Mr Leslie Gordon (the Town Clerk) was the returning officer, and had Mr. E.W. Francis for his chief lieutenant in carrying out the arrangements for the polling.

DECLARATION OF THE POLL

At the close of the poll, the ballot boxes were removed to the large hall at the Town Hall, where men are employed on redecoration work. Counting of the votes was commenced shortly after half past eight. There was a good attendance of ratepayers interested in ascertaining the result of the contest, amongst those present being the Mayor (Councillor Marshall Hays), Alderman F. Mayle, L.C.C., Alderman H. Wright, Councillors I. Akehurst, L.O. Glenister, J. Bewsher, C. Pascall, J.P. Gardner, W.H. Harding, I.N. Claydon, and J.Y. Westcott, Capt W.I. Burns, Messrs W.I. Baxter, C.F. Greengrass, W. Sankey, Cecil Smith, Collett, Brunsden, A.J. Ross, West etc.

A large number of persons occupied the gallery, including several supporters of the Labour candidate.

Mr. Morris was present during the whole of the counting, and Mr. Church came into the hall at quarter past nine. About a quarter of an hour later, the Town Clerk, having checked the votes, declared the votes as follows:-

Mr. E.S. MORRIS (ex-Service nominee)	1,733
Mr. W.H. CHURCH (Labour)...	980
Majority ...	753

The Town Clerk said he had to declare Mr. Morris duly elected a member of the Borough Council for the Starch Green ward.

Vociferous cheers were given by supporters of the successful candidate, come of whom waved their hats. Counter cries were shouted from the gallery.

When silence had been restored, Mr Morris mounted a table, and said that it had fallen to his lot to propose a vote of thanks to the Town Clerk, who was the returning officer, and his staff, for the able and courteous way in which they had conducted this short but strenuous by-election. He could only say that he had no complaints to make. He had vindicated the existence of the ex-Servicemen's organisation in that contest. He should endeavour to be straight and honest for the good of the borough in which he lived, and when the time came when his tenure was ended, believe him he would not be ashamed of what he had attempted to have done. (Applause).

Mr. Church, who stood in front of the table received with applause from supporters in the gallery, with waving of hats, said there was no need for him to get upon the table. There were times when defeat was more honourable than victory. (Applause in the gallery). It was the first time he had sought any honour from the citizens of Hammersmith, and he took his defeat that night the same as had taken anything in the Trade Union and Labour movement; that was, as a man. (Applause).

His duty was to second the vote of thanks to the returning officer and his staff. He was very pleased that he had got the opportunity of thanking Mr. Gordon. Hammersmith was one of the places which took the lead during the time Mr. Morris and himself were answering the country's call from 1914 to 1918.

During that election he (Mr. Church) had not made any plea with regard to his military record. He simply appealed to the voters as a citizen. He could tell Mr. Morris as a soldier and as a member of the Federation if he did not know that the powers of Borough Council were extremely limited as to what they could do for the ex-Serviceman. He (Mr. Church) thanked everybody for the courteous way (not forgetting the Press) for the courteous way they had treated him.

He made an allusion to extremists being referred to in the Press, when there was an outburst of singing of "Tell me the old, old story" from a few of the supporters of the successful candidate. Mr. Church, in conclusion, said he was very glad to have had the opportunity of making his first appearance at a municipal election, and judging by the support he had had that night, he gave them the assurance that it would not be his last. (Applause).

The motion having been agreed to, the Town Clerk returned thanks for the hearty vote of thanks to the staff and himself, and interesting political speeches. With regard to the conduct of the Starch Green ward election there was one point which might interest them. The electorate on the present register was 8,968.

At the last by-election the number was 8,683; on that occasion 2,103 electors went to the poll. On this occasion 2,719 went to the poll. The increase was somewhere like 6 per cent. There was one variation this time, and they were rather anxious to see the result. They had put down an additional polling station to help electors to go to the poll.

There was the interesting question whether Thursday or Saturday was the most convenient day for a poll. From the returning officer's point, taking into consideration that 30.3 per cent voted; the question now was whether it would be better to have elections on Sunday.

Both candidates were cheered on leaving the Town Hall. Mr Church made a speech to his supporters outside the building, after which they joined in singing "The Red Flag."

Mr Morris, on leaving the Town Hall, proceeded to the Federation Institute in Goldhawk Road, and made a speech in which he thanked his supporters.

At the by-election in Starch Green ward last May, when Mr. T.C. Jones defeated Mr. F.R. West, the percentage of the poll was 24.2.

This was the field that was Starch Green. The green was used for drying laundry but the name predates the large-scale laundering services that employed many of the wives of the brick-makers who populated the area. So the field did not derive its name from the use of starch in the laundering process; just as Eel Brook Common didn't derive its name from a brook full of eels. The name appears to be a derivation of Storkes Tenement.

Even only half developed, this is clearly a different type of area; a mix of modest, more densely packed terraces in the north; and more grand villas in the south. And the reason it developed like that was that the south, just across from Ravenscourt Park, was more desirable and therefore attractive to the wealthy. Developers responded by building larger, more prestigious homes.

The economics that buying undeveloped, outlying land was a far cheaper undertaking than in the populated inner neighbourhoods also led Hammersmith Council to buy up land for housing estates.

There were three in this area: Emlyn Gardens, Kelmscott Gardens and Becklow Gardens, now on the Coningham side of the ward. Both these estates are in broadly the same style as the White City estate though nowhere near as large: long tenement blocks of five storeys.

The Emlyn Gardens estate, occupying almost half of the western side of Emlyn Road provided homes for about 270 families. But, just like White City, while building homes on the outskirts cost less, it also left residents isolated from their family and old community.

Very little got spent on the estate once built, so it became run down to the extent that it was eventually renovated in 1981 it cost over £14,000 per flat to fix the backlog.

As Starch Green developed its electorate grew from 2,608 in 1900 to 3,463 by 1912; 8,258 when the franchise was expanded after the First World War and nearly 12,500 by 1945.

TORIES WIN—BUT LOSE 700 VOTES

HAMMERSMITH Tories held their firm grip on the Starch Green Ward on Thursday, but not without a drop of 700 in their majority.

Carrying yet another Tory banner into the Council Chamber will be Mr. Victor Dessimone, 53, of Paddenswick Road, Shepherds Bush.

He polled 1,118 votes to beat Socialist Mrs. Rosie Johnson, of Emlyn Road, who had 651 votes.

For Mr. Dessimone, Thursday's result was the realisation of a life-long ambition.

Speaking at his home on Saturday, he said: "I am happy at the confidence shown again in the Tory party and the confidence shown in me."

Second try

Mr. Dessimone, who is in personnel management has worked in the borough for over 30 years.

He was an active member when Starch Green was the old Ravenscourt Ward before the change over of the boundary structure in 1964.

Issues he is most concerned about include housing and the lack of parking facilities in the Starch Green Ward.

This is his second stab at getting on the council. Many years ago he stood unsuccessfully in Coningham Ward.

Starch Green has always been a relatively safe Tory seat.

Even in 1964, when Labour popularity was at its height, they won one of the three seats.

But on Saturday, Mr. Frank Ing, Labour party agent for North Hammersmith, said that if the by - election had been held in any of the previously "safe Labour seats" such as Old Oak, St. Stephens or Forest Park, they would have won.

"Somewhere along the line the Tories lost 700 voters. This shows a movement — if slight — back to us," said Mr. Ing.

Mr. Richard Booker, Tory agent for North Hammersmith and Fulham said: "This was an absolutely first rate result."

He said the high poll of 26.5 per cent showed the effectiveness of the two political machines in their canvassing campaign.

At the boundary review in time for the 1949 elections, Starch Green got reduced to the area west of Askew Road. The new Coningham ward east of Askew Road was much more comfortably Labour than Starch Green from the start. Labour only edged the first election on these new boundaries 53-47%, though 1949 was not a great year for the party. They opened up a more comfortable lead in 1953: 58-42, but were hauled back again in 1956: 46-39 with 11% for independents and 4% for a Communist.

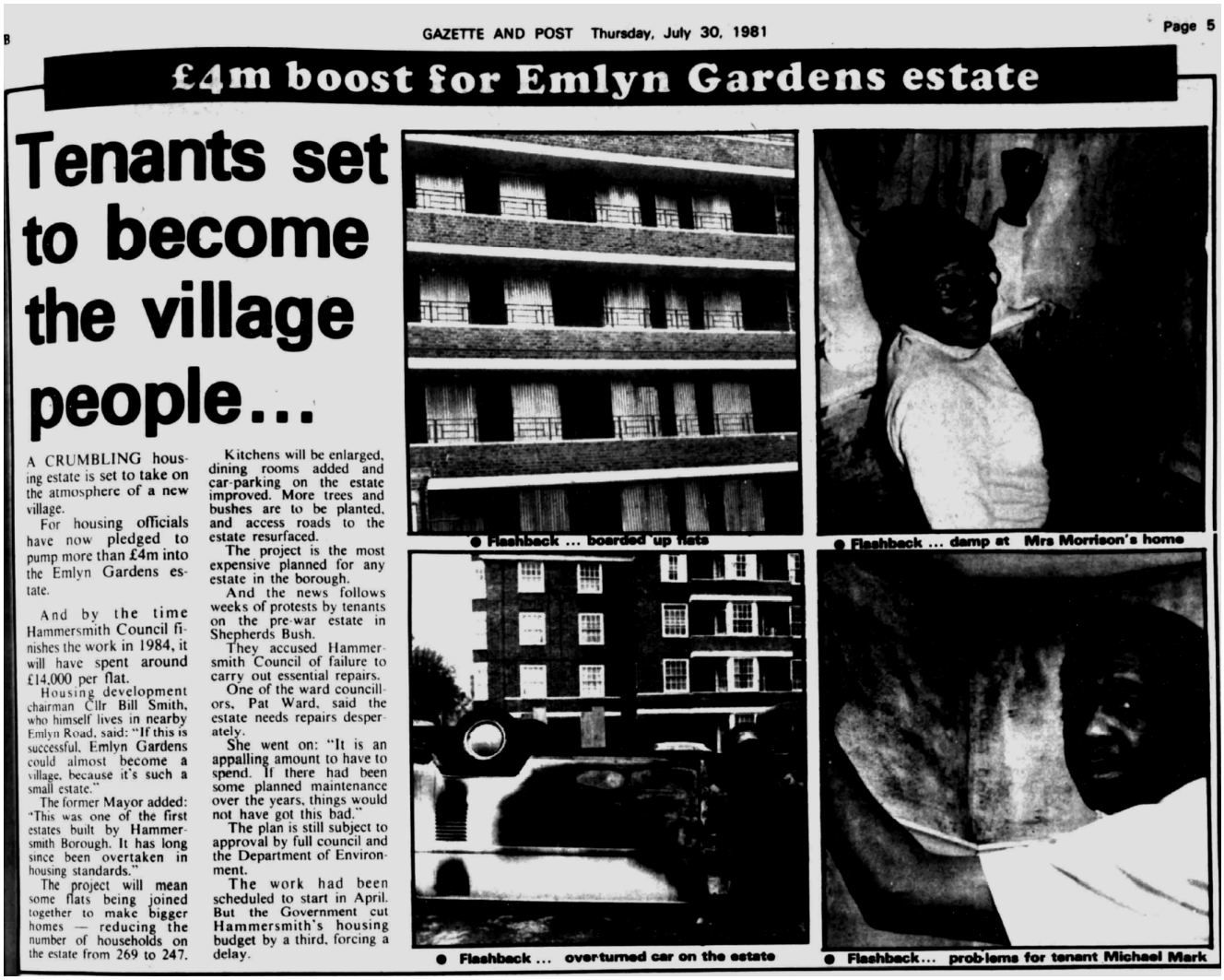
A new Starch Green was drawn when Hammersmith amalgamated with Fulham in 1964. All of the old ward was included but it extended south across Goldhawk Road, incorporating Ravenscourt Park down to the District Line. This added about 1,600 new voters from abolished Ravenscourt, which in 1962 voted 60-40 in favour of the Conservatives.

As a result Starch Green became even more marginal, electing a Conservative alongside two Labour councillors. The Conservatives then won by a landslide in 1968, Labour regained it comfortably in 1971 and then clung on to it by their fingernails in 1974: Les Wicks winning his seat by 16 votes.

Those 1964 boundary changes were reversed in 1978, returning the Ravenscourt Park area to a re-created Ravenscourt ward. Labour, whose idea this was, presumably thought this would make Starch Green safe for them again. But they were wrong.

The Conservatives easily won Ravenscourt in 1978 but they also snatched Starch Green, 54-46. There were wards Labour missed by less: Eel Brook and Addison to name two, but this was the only Shepherds Bush ward to elect Conservative councillors.

The 1982 contest, saw the Conservatives far more damaged by the debut of the SDP-Liberal Alliance than Labour. Labour lost nearly nine points of support but the Conservatives fell by sixteen. That was enough for Labour to recapture one of the seats but Pat Ward held on to the other by just 22 votes.



B GAZETTE AND POST Thursday, July 30, 1981 Page 5

£4m boost for Emlyn Gardens estate

Tenants set to become the village people...

A CRUMBLING housing estate is set to take on the atmosphere of a new village.

For housing officials have now pledged to pump more than £4m into the Emlyn Gardens estate.

And by the time Hammersmith Council finishes the work in 1984, it will have spent around £14,000 per flat.

Housing development chairman Cllr Bill Smith, who himself lives in nearby Emlyn Road, said: "If this is successful, Emlyn Gardens could almost become a village, because it's such a small estate."

The former Mayor added: "This was one of the first estates built by Hammersmith Borough. It has long since been overtaken in housing standards."

The project will mean some flats being joined together to make bigger homes — reducing the number of households on the estate from 269 to 247.

Kitchens will be enlarged, dining rooms added and car-parking on the estate improved. More trees and bushes are to be planted, and access roads to the estate resurfaced.

The project is the most expensive planned for any estate in the borough.

And the news follows weeks of protests by tenants on the pre-war estate in Shepherds Bush.

They accused Hammersmith Council of failure to carry out essential repairs.

One of the ward councillors, Pat Ward, said the estate needs repairs desperately.

She went on: "It is an appalling amount to have to spend. If there had been some planned maintenance over the years, things would not have got this bad."

The plan is still subject to approval by full council and the Department of Environment.

The work had been scheduled to start in April. But the Government cut Hammersmith's housing budget by a third, forcing a delay.

● Flashback ... boarded up flats

● Flashback ... damp at Mrs Morrison's home

● Flashback ... overturned car on the estate

● Flashback... problems for tenant Michael Mark



Son Rotimi Adegoke was at his mother's death bed

Mayor's tragic secret



Mayor Janet Adegoke

A SON has spoken of his mother's suffering during the last hours of her life.

Rotimi Adegoke, son of the Mayor of Hammersmith Janet Adegoke, was at his mother's hospital bedside when she died last Thursday evening.

He has revealed she was too weak even to speak at the end, as the cancer she had fought against for months finally overcame her.

Cllr Adegoke, the first black woman mayor in London, was admitted to Hammersmith Hospital, Du Cane Road, on September 28 and died three days later aged 45.

She had been receiving treatment for cervical cancer since July but kept the seriousness of her illness secret even from her two sons and daughter.

The grieving children, Rotimi, 22, Jumoke, 19 and Kunle, 17, are still coming to terms with their mother's death.

Rotimi said: "I had no idea she was going to die. I think it was only when we saw her in hospital that it really dawned on us what might happen."

He said: "Right up to the end she was concerned only with helping other people. Perhaps that is what kept her going."

By COLIN TREGEAR

Flowers, cards and tributes have been flooding into the Adegoke home in Brent Court, Emlyn Gardens, Shepherds Bush, ever since Janet Adegoke's sudden death.

The mayor will be buried in Nigeria, fulfilling her wish to be placed alongside her mother. But a funeral service is being held today at St Saviour's Church, Cobbold Road, Shepherds Bush, for close friends and relatives.

The council will also be holding a special memorial service, although no date has been fixed.

Cllr Joseph Mirwitch will step up from deputy mayor to fulfil the duties of the Mayor until councillors have a chance to elect a successor to Cllr Adegoke.

For the children the mayor leaves behind, life will never be the same again.

Choking with emotion, Rotimi said: "She has given us all so much. Living with her day to day I just didn't realise how much she was doing for us and the community.

"I only hope I can put as much back into the community as she did.

"I am so proud of what she achieved."

The family have asked people not to send flowers to the funeral but would welcome contributions to Hammersmith MENCAP or Hammersmith Hospital for research into sickle cell anaemia.

Starch Green produced one of the Alliance's best results of that election, giving them a quarter of the vote - only ten points behind the tied Labour and Conservative parties.

Labour won both seats in their landslide of 1986 pretty comfortably. There was almost no change in the Alliance share in third: this was a direct swing from Conservatives to Labour. Though no-one knew it then, this was the end of Conservative representation in Starch Green.

One of the winning councillors, Janet Adegoke, was vice chair of the Emlyn Gardens Tenants Association. Janet became mayor of the borough in 1987 and the first woman of African origin to be elected mayor in the whole of the United Kingdom. But in the autumn of that year she died - apparently suddenly: she had been keeping a cancer diagnosis secret even from her family.

This led to a December 1987 by-election, just six months after Labour had been badly beaten in the general election. The result was close: the Conservatives cut Labour's majority to just 58 as the Tory voters that switched to the Alliance in 1982 returned to the fold. Labour's vote was down just one point; the Conservatives rose twelve.

In the 1990 election - the election that saw a considerable swing back to the Conservatives following the Rate Swaps scandal - the council ended up 28 Labour, 22 Tories. To get to 26 seats the Tories would have needed to win Grove and then Starch Green. But while seats in Fulham were falling to the Conservatives on big swings, in Starch Green the party managed to close the gap with Labour by 6%. Labour held on by about 10%.



Summary results for Wendell Park ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
1900	51.9		48.1		
1903	18.5	17.0	25.6		38.9
1906	17.5	17.0			65.5
1909		39.4			60.6
1912	40.0	30.8			29.1
1919	33.6	46.7	19.8		
1920B	51.0	49.0			
1921B		36.1			63.9
1922		33.0			67.0
1925		45.0			55.0
1928		49.5			50.5
1931		37.0			60.3
1934		55.3			44.7
1937		57.8			42.2
1939B		55.0			45.0
1945	24.2	61.6			14.2
1949	47.4	52.6			
1953	41.8	58.2			

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
1956	39.0	46.2			14.8
1959	43.0	57.0			
1962	37.7	62.3			
1964	49.3	50.7			
1968	68.7	31.3			
1968B	61.0	39.0			
1971	46.1	53.9			
1974	42.6	45.4	12.0		
1978	53.6	46.4			
1982	37.6	37.6	24.9		
1986	29.6	46.4	24.0		
1987B	41.9	45.1	13.0		
1990	38.8	52.1	9.1		
1994	30.2	53.9	15.9		
1998	26.9	56.9	16.2		
2022	19.8	62.6	17.6		
2026	15.6	47.7	7.8	21.3	7.6

From then on, Labour increased its Starch Green majorities substantially. The Conservative vote in the south of Starch Green hadn't faded but it was evidently no longer sufficient to keep them competitive.

So, in the 2000 boundary review, the Tories proposed splitting Starch Green in half and putting that strong southern half into Ravenscourt ward. The boundary they persuaded the Commission to implement was dodgy from Labour's perspective and ingenious from the Conservatives. It carefully excluded Emlyn Gardens and Kelmscott Gardens.

The key argument for warding this western side of Hammersmith in this way was that Askew Road was not a boundary but a hub for both sides of this neighbourhood, just as Ravenscourt Park was a hub for all the streets surrounding it; including the Starch Green side.

Arguments over whether a road is a boundary or a focal point are the currency of these reviews, though of course they can be both. Askew Road does draw people living either side of it because of its shops, the library and bus routes. But it's also clearly a more consequential boundary - because it's a busy main road - than residential backstreets like Ashchurch Grove and Wendell Road.

It was that argument, along with the area west of Askew Road being perfectly sized for a 2-councillor ward, that got Starch Green on its relatively square boundaries resurrected for a second time in the review prior to 2022. It was renamed Wendell Park: a more identifiable name.

In the 1998 elections; the last before it was abolished, Starch Green voted Labour 57%, Conservative 27%. In 2022 Wendell Park voted Labour 63%, Conservative 20%. The underlying swing from the Tories hadn't diminished and the ward was now indistinguishable from the other Labour Shepherds Bush strongholds.

Labour lost fifteen points of support in 2026. Like the other W12 wards, the Greens polled strongly: 21% here, having not stood in 2022. But, essentially, no different to the periods when the Alliance and Lib Dems had polled well here. There is evidently a sizeable not-Labour, not-Conservative vote in this neck of the woods.

Labour's decline here was less than in surrounding wards and so the ward rose up the rankings within the Labour firmament: it's now the safest of the wards north of Goldhawk Road. The Conservatives fell too: down to barely 15%, while Reform won a paltry 7.6%. This ward is too close to the Chiswick firmament for Reform to thrive.



Labour loses seat in narrow victory

Victorious Labour party supporters cracked open the champagne to celebrate a narrow by-election success.
They breathed a sigh of relief as their candidate Jane Sheehan was elected the new member for the Starch Green ward in Shepherds Bush, last Thursday.
Labour held the ward despite a strong challenge from the Tory opposition who reduced the majority to a mere 58.
At the council elections in May last year, the Labour Party enjoyed a cushion of more than 300 votes.

The election was held following the tragic death of former mayor, Cllr Janet Adegoke.
The winner, Jane Sheehan, 28, admitted she faced a daunting task following in the footsteps of such a popular figure.
She said: "The people in Starch Green had a great respect for Janet. But they voted for me and I am very pleased to have won."
She admitted the result was close, but said Starch Green was a well-known marginal area and the December date had caused many voters to stay at home.

Rollcall of Wendell Park ward councillors

including Starch Green ward (1900-2002)

2026
- Rebecca Harvey
- Asif Siddique

2022
- Rebecca Harvey
- Asif Siddique

1998
- Julian Hillman
- Greg Wilkinson

1994
- Tim Stanley
- David Williams

1990
- Tim Stanley
- David Williams

1987B
- Jane Sheehan

1986
- Janet Adeqoke
- Tim Sedgwick-Jell

1982
- Leslie Jones
- Patricia Ward

1978
- Eric Hutson
- Patricia Ward

1974
- Leonard Freeman
- Rosina Johnson
- Leslie Wicks

1971
- Leonard Freeman
- Rosina Johnson
- Leslie Wicks

1968B
- Victor Dessimore

1968
- Patrick Perry
- Myra Sexton
- William Smith

1964
- Alan Breeze
- John Collins
- Maria Havelka

1962
- Leonard Freeman
- Violet Grant
- Edith Woods

1959
- Leonard Freeman
- Fred Wiliams
- Edith Woods

1956
- Leonard Freeman
- Fred Williams
- Edith Woods

1953
- Jack Cohen
- Leonard Freeman
- Edith Woods

1949
- Leonard Freeman
- J. Hayes
- Edith Woods

1945
- Edith Woods
- J. Blenkin
- J. Blennie
- Percy Clelland
- A. Maycock
- Jack Pearce

1939B
- J. Smith

1937
- William Adams
- P. Andrews
- R. Bowen
- Elizabeth Cox
- Samuel Full
- Alexander Maycock

1934
- William Adams
- Percy Clelland
- Elizabeth Cox
- Samuel Full
- Harold Howe
- Gertrude Shand

1931
- Thomas Brunsden
- Joseph Clark
- Edward Morris
- John Perry
- Robert Twitchett
- George Vine

1928
- Thomas Brunsden
- James Gardner
- Molly Gardner
- Harry May
- John Morton
- Robert Twitchett

1925
- Thomas Brunsden
- Harry May
- John Morton
- John Perry
- Robert Twitchett
- George Vine

1922
- Horace Durrant
- Thomas Jones
- Harry May
- Edward Morris
- John Morton
- Robert Twitchett

1919
- Leonard Akehurst
- William Booker
- James Gardner
- George Harris
- George Thomas
- Robert Twitchett

1912
- John Adams
- William Branson
- Ellis Davies
- Francis Henning
- John Herbert
- Robert Safell

1909
- James Boyle
- Albert Brooks
- Thomas Davies
- Thomas Hodgson
- Harry May
- Robert Wallace

1906
- James Boyle
- William Davidson
- Thomas Davies
- Thomas Hodgson
- Harry May
- Robert Wallace

1903
- William Davidson
- Ellis Davies
- Herbert Hicks
- Thomas Hodgson
- Harry May
- Arthur Norris

1900
- John Andrews
- Charles Cramp
- William Davidson
- Ellis Davies
- Thomas Hodgson
- Arthur Norris