

Brentford Ward

Green: John Bradley - JB  
ICG: Dave Cox – DC  
Conservatives: Gabriella Giles - GG  
Labour: Mel Collins - MC  
Liberal Democrats: Joe Bourke - Joe

JB

27 years in Brentford, like the community. 30 years in construction industry. Thinks most local councillors relatively honest. Should vote for more than individuals but for a philosophy. The environment should be preserved and you need to act at a local level to decide what is right for the local area. Large parties have grand ideas and high street major non-starter.

DC

Lived in borough for 40 years. Returned to bus driving this year after 8 years working with blind people in the borough. Need to be thinking about people now and people in 20 years. Flats currently going up are not for locals. Where's the infrastructure.

GG transfer professional skills into helping the people of Brentford, wants to see money ring-fenced for in Brentford High Street spent on high street, want decent school for boys in Brentford. Want infrastructure improvements. Been involved in politics for last 4 years. Would like to have voice as young person

Joe: thank Chamber for arranging; 10 point manifesto: support individuals and families, rather than vested interests such as; local politics should be run with less political partisanship; object to 3 line whip on development issues; Yes Minister is alive and well in local councillors

MC: moved 1945 in Brentford. Lived and worked in/around area all life. Sweeping changes to local government. Hounslow made number of promises and has kept most of them. One of proudest achievements is being governor of St Paul's school. In last 4 years have tried to go out and meet the community and take on board what is said. Proud to have been involved in appeal Reynard Mills; proud to have been involved in Lionel Road. Should be mixed accommodation. Parking issues round CPZ. Proud to have represented us in the last 4 years.

Q: how many stories high is suitable for building in Brentford?

JB: depends where it is, 4 or 5 stories on high street, to avoid canyon effect

DC: lives in block of flats, 7 stories high, think 7 is too high, look out on 22 stories, think they are an eyesore, 4-5 on high street, needs to look good and to last

GG: I don't know. Land is a commodity and it's up to the planning committee.

Joe: less concern about GWR, need quality architectural design and density of building are equally important as number of stories; Lionel Road is at maximum limit and wouldn't be suitable on the high street

MC: agree with GG, ball park figures difficult; density rather than height, Reynard Mills now down to 5 stories, would have preferred to 4; 17 is an extreme maximum

Q: why should I vote for any of you?

John: everyone should vote. You should vote for the person, who hasn't impressed you the least

DC: everyone should vote. If you don't vote it's a vote lost. Have spoken in the past on behalf of people who weren't able to speak directly. Developers don't have to live here. It's up to us to make things happen. Want to take notice of what local people want.

GG: what would impress you?

Q: action, not talk. Cllrs talk a lot and do little.

GG: if your representatives don't go out and talk to you, and you don't see what goes on in committees

Joe: are candidates competent to do the administrative duties required in council; has worked with BFC, Bees United etc.

MC: vote is most precious thing we have outside family life. Saddened that feel I've achieved nothing. Have visited estates, worked with CST, St Paul's Church, finding Age UK a new home and worked with many groups.

Q: South side of High Street. What is your vision of the future town centre.

JB: main problem is River. Other centres bring from north and south. Not possible for Brentford so geography dictates it to be large retail hub. We do need local shops but not massive retailers, better to concentrate on small businesses. Even with population expansion never going to succeed at massive high street

DC: we should be telling planners what we want. Want new jobs and better transport. We the people should be having a greater input to what goes on. If it takes another 20 years to get it right, then that should be so.

GG: haven't studied plans in great detail; needs to represent local interests, both residents and businesses. Must not destroy aesthetics and must make people want to come.

Joe: effort to open up the waterway is a positive development, but the drawings presented are not terribly inspiring. Developers do not appear to have taken note on

MC: expecting new plans later this year. Want to retain heritage, retain wildlife of area, gentle mixed development of character. Re last plans were totally characterless, looked like army barracks. Not too high. Retain small businesses and encourage new businesses with mixed retail outlet. Brentford is not going to attract major retail. Vibrancy, character, ecology and heritage.

Q: what is the one thing they would like to achieve in their 4 year term

JB: would like previous questioner to say thank you for serving

DC: not in it to go higher or further. Would like to hear "you've done a good job". People will see him on the doorsteps. Talking to people. Here to help

GG: have the opportunity to make the change in one person's life.

Joe: people to say that their voices were listened to. Councillors are there to be a voice for local community.

MC: continue to deliver on my individual casework. To win when winnable and be honest when can't. Personal goal to see lottery money to come into Gunnersbury Park to brighten up a decimated area. It would bring jobs.

Q: Main aim of local plan to deliver housing targets from Boris, not what local people need.

JB: local councillors severely constrained by wider plans. Councillors live in fear of applications being won on appeal and developers get what they want. Gut instinct might be to throw out plan but not always allowable. Think councillors too soft on developers who are trying to make a profit. Councillors have to work to get a better deal in negotiation with developers.

DC: don't think politics, think community. Go back to grass roots and take more notice of people who live in community. Was chair of HFTRA. What the council wants, the council gets. Not enough give and take between residents and council.

GG: not a huge fan of targets, not representative of local realities or what is necessary achievable.

Councillors should negotiate with Boris or central government to make sure targets are realistic and achievable.

Joe: local plan in consultation. Proposals for concentration of growth is in Hounslow town centre and Brentford town centre.

MC: Planning has changed. It is right that we talk to developers and we need to be careful what we discuss. Must declare interest at planning committee and there is a fine line on comments you can make and decisions you can then partake in. Please feed into consultation. Gained experience on Reynard Mills development which will use on future applications.

Q: What is your view of Local Plan?

JB: I don't know. Sometimes people can make a difference e.g. preserving some old buildings from re-development at Soaphouse Creek.

DC: why is it important for you to know my personal views when I am here to represent your views. I have to do what you want.

GG: haven't seen it

Joe: have seen it. Important to see result of consultation. Very heavy concentration in Brentford town centre and Hounslow centre. Preponderance of development in those two areas. Have concerns but would wait to see

MC: involved in cross-party subcommittee that examined it before it went to consultation. Went to public consultations to hear views. Want to reconvene that subcommittee post election. Does not agree with the local plan as is. It is up to us all to listen and take note. There is density and there is strangulation. Green areas need to be preserved and made more attractive so people want to use rather than abuse. Would like changes to be made to local plan.

## Syon Ward

Green: JB for Tony Firkins

ICG: Ian Speed IS

Conservatives: Ron Mushio RM

Labour: Theo Dennison TD

Liberal Democrats: Joan Brown Joan

Joan: have not done this for a very long time; worked in NHS for many years at local hospital and have enjoyed it. So many changes over the years and hope it will continue to go from strength to strength. Don't allow time for changes made for things to work. People don't talk enough to other people.

TD: moved here 21 years ago on Lateward Road, now Avenue Rd. Thinks Syon is nicer than Brentford. Privilege to represent Syon. Priority back in 2010 was to get council more focused on residents. Needed affordable housing, jobs, didn't believe were getting good value for council tax. Council should be less remote and arrogant, take more heed of people. Devolve more power out of council chamber into local communities.

JB: Tony Firkins is candidate for Syon. JB lives in Syon.

IS: Been chair of ICG for 4, member for 9, worked in local govt for 25, lived in area for 50. ICG are non party political formed 1994 to give people more of a say and to represent the community at the council rather than the other way round. Held balance of power last time were elected but that is less likely this time. Community democracy and consultation are two main strands, with stronger area forums, community representations like G15+, commitment to public buildings like libraries and community halls.

RM: Born in Uganda, arrived here 11 and was fostered in Hounslow two years later. Was then housed on Green Dragon Lane. Been in Brentford for 12 years. Owe something back to the community that looked after me. Belong to various community groups. Being joined by 2 excellent candidates for Syon. Basic family values. Future kids who need looking after need to get the same looking after that I got.

Q: Minor developments – latest consultation of local plan draws a boundary round whole of Brentford saying it's all good for growth. This will be used by developers to get permission for infill developments. What would you do?

Joan: very important to everybody. Residents need to make a stand. Councillors need to do their job right. Councillors need to be thorough.

TD: local plan in current form is unacceptable, M4 gateway sausage and Brentford area are not right. Need jobs. Don't want to see development in Carville Hall Park. Not a sensible way to look at future. Infill has to be within character and scale of surrounding roads. The only decent building in Town Meadow is the old buildings.

JB: identify all odd patches of land and look at ownership. The Butts is common land and registered as such. A road is being built on it and thus small patches of land are being eroded.

Ian: Must have strong robust council officers acting on residents' behalf, need best planning officers and lawyers on appeals to make. Champion House told no chance could block 6 storey block of flats and ended up with houses instead after massive campaign. Need robust case. Weakening roles of area committees haven't helped these very small developments.

Ron: Are we protecting the wildlife, does it change character of area, strong leadership which needs to come from councillors. People don't have trust in councillors because councillors do not demonstrate leadership.

Q: BAAP will be superseded by local plan. Wouldn't it be good to keep some of it and incorporate it into local plans

Joan: go along with what has been voiced; money spent on BAAP which has not become reality. Constant battles in the area with planning. Is this a waste of time to have these frequent battles. Speak a little stronger and make a stand.

TD: bringing back BAAP would be best placed to preserve community. Local plan is not up to scratch. Doesn't give any protection. Don't think party has ever discussed. Local plan is very tedious document.

JB: too many plans. Cycling Campaign plans which take a huge amount of time to develop and don't get carried out. Currently Chair of Friends of Boston Manor. Can we just have one plan, stick to it and implement it, amending it if necessary. And then start a new one.

Ian: Theo is going out on a limb and criticising the council that he is a part of. It is being run by the Labour party. Labour appointed Brendon Walsh into role. Maybe having broader spectrum of councillors may get broader views incorporated.

Ron: Back in 2006, things were being done, under Conservative council. Current leadership needs to be changed. Peter Thompson is a very strong leader. Labour should stop dithering.

Q: 2 weeks ago thick smog over London. 4000 people die from air pollution each year in London.

Joan: far better off than similar conditions in China; had impression we weren't doing so badly

TD: should represent what the residents want but not to try and sell the council to the borough. Frequently disagrees with Steve but values Steve's achievements. Know how bad air pollution is near A4. Increase car parking in new developments to help fix parking issues. Money set aside for air quality but has laid idle for several years. Even planting new trees would help. When Boris introduced his tree planting scheme LBH cut their tree planting scheme. What can we actually do in practical terms?

JB: If you reduce amount of car parking provision you reduce car use overall. When Paris had same problem a fortnight ago they made public transport free for a couple of days to encourage everyone

to use it rather than cars. Lobby GLA with other boroughs to do similar. Respiratory diseases are preventable.

IS: Third Runway. Must be resisted. Limit to how far you can restrict people's car parking. Public transport is a bit scarce in some areas. Need better public transport.

RM: pollution is a huge problem. Needs thought. I use my bike, need to encourage more cycling. Not appropriate for all. Look to improve traffic flow as much as possible by tweaking signals. More investment needed in public transport.

Q: closure of public halls and community centres, how long have you held views

Joan: help run arthritis care group, had about 12 people, 3 years ago and this has doubled in last year. have come across halls that are getting more and more members. Not all can travel further when halls close. Groups close when transport not available to sustain.

TD: main source of info on closure of halls is from ICG. In 2011 was £2m growing black hole in social care budget that needed to consider Isleworth hall and St John's centre. Squeezing out every bit of value out of council. No closures of community halls by next Labour council. Should stop scare-mongering about possible closures.

John: parts of council do not get money in which they are entitled to. e.g. rents lying unclaimed, not acceptable to not pursue these.

IS: ICG never had lead responsibility for finance or social service, finances were not run brilliantly and some issues were not pursued, council announces closure, councillor stand against, public consultation and fuss and decision overturned. Sweeteners of redundancy over and above statutory used to encourage people to leave of over £1m a year, when £40k to keep community centre open.

Ron: closure of people's home in Chiswick, was in council chamber at time. Why are we playing politics with community centres and libraries. Would introduce a card so people can use libraries, parking, community halls with local discount for council tax payers.

Q: Is a cut/freeze in council tax preferable to maintaining services

Joan: Very difficult. People are so important. People are more important than money.

TD: should not be raising tax unless have squeezed use out of every penny of council tax. If you believe you can't get better for less, you will never do so. Need to get best value out of council. Peter Thompson described spending on youth as waste.

JB: It all depends on the services. Fiscal prudence.

Ian: need to look at value of service to recipients and community and how vulnerable recipients are.

Ron: 2006 one of first two boroughs to cut council taxes by Conservatives .and has remained cut or frozen each time year.