

WHO WILL BE ELECTED TO BE MAYOR?

by Sandie Goodwin and Bob Fisher

Ken Livingstone has now almost completed two terms as Mayor of London and Londoners are preparing to decide who will be next Mayor. Will Mr Livingstone be re-elected? Or will Boris Johnson or Brian Paddick gather enough votes to beat him? Although the campaigns have already begun to decide in the next Mayor of London, there is a good deal of confusion about the forthcoming elections. The election for the Mayor of London will take place on 1st May 2008. The election will also decide on members of the London Assembly. One of the main problems with these elections is the fact that many of those who work in London, including those in the taxi trade, do not live there and so are not eligible to vote and yet the Mayor's decisions can have a huge impact on their working lives.



ROLE OF THE MAYOR

Some people still get confused between the Mayor of London and the Lord Mayor. The Lord Mayor is elected each year and begins his year in the pageant that is the Lord Mayor's Show. He is part of the Corporation of London, who are responsible for the Square Mile of the City of London. The Mayor of London, currently Ken Livingstone, is at the head of the GLA and The London Assembly.

The Mayor of London takes responsibility for transport services, which includes taxis, police, fire services and promoting London's economy. The budget for this is currently around £9 billion. The Mayor has no responsibility for matters such as council housing, schools, social services, hospitals, street cleaning, council tax or parking fines – these are the responsibility of the boroughs who make up the capital.

ROLE OF THE LONDON ASSEMBLY

The London Assembly is a scrutinising body with 25 elected members. The 25 Members are elected by Londoners; 11 of these Members represent the whole of the capital and 14 are elected to represent constituencies – which are made up of two to four London boroughs. The role of the Assembly is to examine the Mayor's strategies, decisions and actions and to investigate issues that are important to Londoners. The Assembly also has the job of representing Londoners on three key organisations: the Metropolitan Police Authority, the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and the London Development Agency.

The Mayor and Assembly attend a twice yearly People's Question Time at which the public can put questions to them. In addition the 10 meetings a year where the Assembly question the Mayor are open to the public and are broadcast via the internet.

The Government accepted the Review Body on Senior Salaries' recommendation that an Assembly Member should initially be paid £34,438 plus an increase based on that for the Senior Civil Service for 1 April 2000. The list of those standing for election will be published on 2nd April

QUALIFYING FOR A VOTE

To vote you must:

- * live in London
- * be a British, Commonwealth or EU citizen
- * be at least 18 years of age on election day

If you are not on the electoral register you cannot vote.

To vote in the Mayoral and London Assembly elections you must register by 16 April 2008. You just need to fill in and sign a simple form. Download a registration form at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk or contact your local borough's elections office.



City Hall

HOW THE VOTES ARE COUNTED

In the election for the Mayor the voting itself is a little complicated. Those eligible to vote will have two votes – a first and second choice. If you only mark a first choice, your vote will be counted. You do not have to cast your second choice vote. But making a second choice cannot reduce the chance of your first choice candidate being successful.

If you only mark a second choice vote and not a first choice vote, your second choice vote will not be counted.



David Lewis, this year's Lord Mayor

2008 MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Although the main three contenders for the election to be Mayor are probably well known names by now, there are others – some of these you may not have heard of. Here is a full list of candidates, in alphabetical order, with a short resume.

RICHARD BARNBROOK - BNP MAYORAL CANDIDATE (2008)

Barking & Dagenham Councillor Richard Barnbrook, who is also the party's group leader on the council has been selected as the British National Party candidate for Mayor.

GERARD BATTEN - UK INDEPENDENCE PARTY MAYORAL CANDIDATE (2008)

Gerard Batten was elected as the UK Independence Party Member of the European Parliament for London in June 2004 and has been selected by UKIP as its London Mayoral candidate. He was a founder member of the UK Independence Party in September 1993.

SIÂN BERRY - GREEN PARTY MAYORAL CANDIDATE (2008)

Ms Berry studied engineering at university and her professional background is in medical communications, where she worked for several years as a copywriter.

BORIS JOHNSON - CONSERVATIVE MAYORAL CANDIDATE (2008)

Boris Johnson was born in 1964 in New York and moved to London aged five when he went to Primary School in Camden.

KEN LIVINGSTONE - LABOUR MAYORAL CANDIDATE (2008)

Ken Livingstone was born in Streatham, South London on 14th June 1945. He joined the London Labour Party in 1969 and in 1970 enrolled at Phillipa Fawcett Teacher Training College.

MATT O'CONNOR - ENGLISH DEMOCRAT MAYORAL CANDIDATE (2008)

The English Democrats have selected Fathers 4 Justice founder Matt O'Connor as their candidate in this year's Mayoral elections, replacing Garry Bushell who has withdrawn due to work commitments.

BRIAN PADDICK - LIBERAL DEMOCRAT MAYORAL CANDIDATE (2008)

Mr Paddick joined the Metropolitan Police in 1976 where he ultimately rose to the rank of Deputy Assistant Commissioner responsible for the day-to-day running of Territorial Policing across all 32 London Boroughs.