



i

ndependent

# ELECTION FRAUD?

## Would you believe it?

**PLEASE READ ON, THIS AFFECTS YOU!**

### ***The Mystery of the Missing Ballot Boxes***

*(or not, depending upon which aspect of the fairy story you believe)*

**ON FRIDAY THE 4th MAY 2007 the count for the local election took place. Despite all predictions the result in Beacon & Bents was very close. The Labour Party had 'won' by a mere 33 votes. The election agent for the Independent candidate, Ahmed Khan, asked for a recount. She was denied this by the returning officer despite the fact that in previous years recounts had been held when the difference was over 90 votes.**

The agent then asked to see the rejected postal votes as they were at this stage reported to have been 89. This was considered reasonable as the agents and candidates are always allowed to view spoilt votes that are cast. The agent wanted to see whether the postal votes were rejected for valid reasons. She was denied this too.

Mr Khan indicated there and then that he would be taking further action to challenge this decision. He then proceeded with a high court action in an attempt to examine the rejected postal votes to determine whether they had been rejected for legitimate reasons. He informed the Council that he was doing this on the 14th May 2007.

The actions that followed on behalf of the Council and the ruling Labour group represent a pantomime with tinges of a fairy story which ultimately revealed a mystery yet to be resolved!

■ It took the Council **6 months** to supply evidence to the court, during this time Mr Khan's (the Independent candidate) legal bills continued to

mount and he had to threaten further legal action to get the evidence submitted

- The Council attempted to get Mr. Khan to drop the case by informing him that they would seek costs, but they failed to declare that they had an insurance policy in place to cover these costs
- The Council insisted on secrecy, and demanded that the case be held behind closed doors with the press and public excluded
- When it did present it's evidence on October 22nd it turned out that it was claiming that 18 ballot boxes had gone missing, they just happened to be the boxes containing the rejected postal votes!

This is what the Council's evidence reveals:

- On the 4th May it was decided the Reception Room where all the ballot boxes had been kept needed to be cleared. The boxes were taken to the basement. At 4pm on the 8th May it was discovered the 18 ballot boxes containing the rejected votes were missing. The Council's evidence clearly states it was the boxes that were missing. A search of all the basement rooms was made and none of the boxes were found.
- On the 9th May a lid of one of the boxes was found after another search of the same area.
- On the 10th May another search was carried out



and nothing was found. The car park was searched and nothing was found. By this time the temporary porter was getting the blame for removing the ballot boxes/emptying the boxes [take your pick] and throwing the contents away. He denied this. The skip that he was accused of putting the postal votes in was removed from the car park on the 9th.

- On the 10th of May a count of the ballot boxes suggested that none were missing. The Council thought there should have been 235 boxes, although they didn't know the exact number. Yet the council claimed they would have noticed if any had gone missing. [unbelievable or what]
- On the 11th May the Council asked to see the contents of the skip and were told it could not be opened till the 23rd when the specialist machinery would be available.
- On the 23rd May the skip was opened and nothing associated with the rejected postal votes was found.
- CCTV footage of the area was not examined until July and strangely enough it revealed now!
- On the day of the election the number of rejected votes for the ward was 89, by the 16th May it was 80 and the Council now say it is 62!

Even if this was true none of it would have come to light if it had not been for Mr Khan's legal action. The court hearing took place on the 12th November 2007 and was dismissed because the rejected postal votes were not available [they had been 'lost' by the Council]. The judge at the hearing said that the Council's explanation was at best opaque. In terms of the law he could not grant an order to see what did not exist. The Council keep saying that Mr Khan 'lost' the case. He did not! The case was dismissed because the Council 'lost' the evidence. The Police are still trying to get to the bottom of who removed it from the Town Hall. The Council are now pursuing Mr Khan for their costs which could be in excess of £30,000. The law is an ass or have the Council unscrupulously manipulated it?

**The Independent Alliance will continue the struggle to solve this 'mystery'. Your vote is too important to accept that it could be whisked away by some ballot snatching, invisible, unidentifiable phantom of the Town Hall!**

**If you have any suggestions as to what actually happened please contact Cllr Jane Branley, 456 0152, Independent Alliance Campaign organiser.**

## What did the Council do next?

- Refused to answer questions about the 'mystery' in full Council meetings
- Rejected several notice of motions to discuss the issue
- Tried to block the call for an Extraordinary Council Meeting to discuss the issue
- When the meeting was called it ruled the motion to discuss election security out of order
- Refused to discuss the £30,000 costs bill presented to Mr Khan and refused to rescind it

## What should we the electors do next?

### Ask ourselves

- Do we believe a word of the cock and bull story presented to the court?
- Why did these particular postal votes go missing?
- If the discovery was made that the votes were gone on Tuesday 8th May after the Bank Holiday who could have been in the Town Hall over the weekend?
- Why were the police not informed immediately?
- Who stood to gain from the convenient disappearance of vital votes?
- Was it possible that the Labour Leader and Deputy Leader were kept in the dark about such a catastrophic event?
- Why the Labour Leader and Deputy Leader did not stop this farce as soon as they knew about it?
- Do we trust the democratic system of local elections to people who are so desperate to hold on to power they will stop at nothing?
- Why the Labour leadership are prepared to go to any lengths to stop Independent Alliance councillors from discussing this in the Council chamber?
- Are your votes safe?