

# Last call for questions as ballot looms

Rhianon Evans

IN one of their last opportunities to speak to the voting public en masse, the wannabe MPs for Hornsey and Wood Green took to the stage at the Broadway hustings last week.

On Wednesday night at Greig City Academy, residents quizzed five of the political candidates vying for your vote – incumbent Liberal Democrat MP Lynne Featherstone, Labour's Karen Jennings, Conservative Richard Merrin, Green Party candidate Pete McAskie and Independent Stephane De Roche.

First up was the big question – if the election results in a hung parliament, which bed are you going to get into?

Ms Featherstone stuck by what she, like Nick Clegg, had said throughout – the people will decide.

"We have to wait to see what the electorate say – it should not be up to politicians to prejudice what the country is going to tell us on that day," she said. "We will work with the man on the moon to implement our key pledges."

Both Mr De Roche and Mr McAskie agreed a hung parliament would be the best solution for the country, with the Green candidate saying it would be the closest we could get to smashing the two party system.

Ms Jennings claimed Mr Clegg had already indicated he would not work with Gordon Brown. Mr Merrin said he refused to play politics by claiming a vote for Lib Dems is a vote for Labour, but added he was concerned at the amount of "horse-trading" that could go on if parliament was hung.

## Would-be MPs on coalitions, Hornsey Town Hall – and how to keep the Tories out

When one questioner later insisted the panel say whether they would form a coalition with the Conservatives with a yes/no answer, Ms Featherstone refused.

Adam Jogee, a Haringey youth parliament member and first-time voter cheekily asked the panel: "I was six when the Tories left government in 1997, but despite this fact I have a huge concern and worry about the Conservatives. As a first time voter, which party should I vote for to ensure David Cameron doesn't become Prime Minister?"

After the laughter had died down – Mr Merrin listed reasons not to vote Labour, but was heckled by audience members demanding he instead give reasons to vote Conservative.

"I genuinely believe we offer the best hope for this country," he then said.

Ms Jennings urged Mr Jogee to vote Labour saying: "The Labour government has built the public services in this country up and we need to lock in that investment because if we vote in the other two parties they will knock it down."

However, Ms Featherstone countered: "There's a lot of scaremongering going on – I



**AND ANOTHER THING...: Sue Hessel (third right, in pink) chairs the debate between, from left, Lynne Featherstone, Stephane De Roche, Karen Jennings, Pete McAskie and Richard Merrin.**

would say vote Lib Dem, get Lib Dem and vote Lib Dem for the real reasons of fairness."

But away from party politics, Green Mr McAskie said: "Vote for what you believe in, otherwise you will not get it."

Things turned local when one questioner expressed his – and the community's – concerns about the proposed redevelopment of Hornsey Town Hall, saying there was not enough parking or social housing and that the previously proposed cinema now looked unlikely.

Ms Featherstone said she would call for a review following community concerns, while Ms Jennings said movement forward was needed and that environmentally a development without a car park could be a good thing.



Dr Rohe Kapur

## Standing so there's someone who cares

AN independent candidate says the introduction of a CPZ where he lives and a lack of trust in the three main parties spurred him on to stand in the General Election.

Rohe Kapur says the imposition of a CPZ in Woodside was a large factor in him standing and that he will hand power back to the people by letting his manifesto be determined by voters – policies would be decided after debate and a vote.

Dr Kapur said: "I need to listen to what concerns you, rather than have a big manifesto that dictates to you what I am here for, because at the end of the day an independent reports back to the people who elected and voted them in, and not to any political party."

Dr Kapur says his one pledge is that he would hold a referendum on the continued membership of the European Union.

He added: "I have one request, that you use your vote. Don't say you are not going to vote because nothing changes."

He added: "30,000 people in Hornsey and Wood Green didn't vote last time and if I could have anything, I would want all 78,000 people in the constituency to put a cross in a box next to whichever candidate they chose."

The other independent candidate standing in the ward is Stephane De Roche, representing the Haringey Citizens Alliance.

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