

## VIEWS OF NORTH RICHMOND BY-ELECTION CANDIDATES ON RISC ISSUES

There is a Council by-election in the North Richmond Ward on 3<sup>rd</sup> May. We asked each of the five candidates to answer two questions related to the Catholic school issue. Here are their answers.

- 1. Do you agree that the Clifden Road site should be used for an inclusive community school or schools (meaning a school where no child can be discriminated against in admissions on the basis of the religion or beliefs of their parents)? (Agree/Disagree)**
  - Bran Caton (Labour): Agree
  - Marc Cranfield-Adams (Independent): No direct response – see comments below
  - Jane Dodds (Liberal Democrat): See comments below (effectively “agree”)
  - James Page (Green Party): Agree
  - Stephen Speak (Conservative): No direct response – see comments below
- 2. Do you agree with Vince Cable and Michael Gove that, if there is to be a Catholic Voluntary Aided school, 50% of the places should be open on a “non-faith” basis. (Agree/Disagree)**
  - Brian Caton (Labour): Disagree – see comments below
  - Marc Cranfield-Adams (Independent): No direct response – see comments below
  - Jane Dodds (Liberal Democrat): No direct response
  - James Page (Green Party): failing (1), then agree
  - Stephen Speak (Conservative): No direct response – see comments below

### Additional comments:

- **Brian Caton (Labour):** “I am very much against the funding of voluntary schools of any description by public funds. Voluntary must mean that and they must fund their own projects.”
- **Marc Cranfield-Adams (Independent):** “My manifesto states ‘I favour choice in education; to that end I welcome faith schools, provided they do not operate on an exclusive basis.’ At this stage, I have not considered the issues around Clifden Road as this is not to be found in North Richmond. I declare that I am a serving Governor of a Church of England Primary School.”
- **Jane Dodds (Liberal Democrat):** “The Clifden Road site is the first site suitable for a secondary school which has become available on the Middlesex side of the river, at an affordable cost to the Council, for a number of years. It is difficult to predict the demand for secondary school places during a time of increasing pupil numbers, and changing transfer patterns. If the Borough were to ignore the effect of removing the linked schools scheme, and a possible new school in North Kingston, the Borough is likely to be short of about 129 places on the Twickenham side of the Borough in 2016, 169 in 2017 and 224 in 2018. These are very conservative estimates and do not take into account the potential extra demand for example if new places were created at our most popular secondary schools.  
The Liberal Democrats consider that a new 5 forms of entry (150 places) school is required by 2016, on top of the one new form of entry already planned for Christ’s school. The Conservative Administration has announced that they are unwilling to use the spare space at the other Borough secondary schools for 11 to 16 accommodation; instead they planned to use the space for post 16 provision.  
The Liberal Democrats therefore propose that the Clifden Road site should be reserved for a new 5 form entry community school to be opened in 2016. The school would have to be an Academy. The Council would have to find a suitable sponsor and then apply to the Government for capital for converting the buildings back to a school. The timescale is not

excessive if one considers the problems our neighbouring borough of Kingston have had trying to build the new school in North Kingston, when they already had a site available.”

- **James Page** (Green Party): “You might be interested in this link to our education policy, and also that our local newsletter just published has an article promoting inclusivity in schools. <http://policy.greenparty.org.uk/ed>”
- **Stephen Speak** (Conservative): “As the volume of information published on the RISC web site amply demonstrates, the issues are too multi-faceted to be distilled into one word responses. I can however state that, if elected as a Councillor for North Richmond, I will be representing the views of residents of any faith (and indeed of no faith) to the best of my ability. I would evaluate issues based on the facts available to me as a Councillor whilst also recognising existing Council policy and manifesto commitments.”

*Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign  
23 April 2012*