<u>PRESS RELEASE 13.05.06 1300hrs – BRENT AND HARROW GREEN PARTY</u>
<u>QUEENS PARK WARD COUNT – INEXPLICABLY HIGH UNSPENT VOTES</u>

Shahrar Ali, recent Green candidate for Queens Park, today made public his intention to challenge the result for the ward he contested.

Dr Ali is circulating a briefing outlining, step by step, why he thinks the count is not true, but far off instead (see table at end).

At the heart of the problem, Dr Ali explained, is the following irreconcilability: "Ask any observer at the count the unloaded question, what proportion of voters were using all three of their votes? The answer invariably given, including the case of cross-party voting, is that the overwhelming majority do so. This answer happens to be correct. If you had to put a figure on it you might say at least 80-90% use all three votes. However, the figures for the count betray a startling anomaly. For the count to be true, it would have to be the case that your average cross-party voter was using only two votes, every time; or, alternatively, 50% of cross-party voters were voting for only one candidate. There were 1,300 of this type of voter and it beggars belief to maintain that this frequency of non-votes was observed at the count. For those who think in decimals, the maths translates as an average of only 1.8 votes used per ballot paper over the whole of that run."

Dr Ali continued, "For avoidance of doubt, this is not about the Greens failing to reconcile themselves to an unremarkable result because of wishful thinking. Nor is it about the inflated ego of a Green candidate, God forbid. This is about having had the wrong result declared, in overwhelming probability. We are talking about hundreds, not tens, of votes remaining unaccounted for here. Unchecked, that effectively disenfranchises hundreds of voters of their say in the democratic outcome, who might otherwise have had a material effect upon it."

Dr Ali continued, "My aim is to get a recount authorised. Unfortunately, even with the cooperation of Brent electoral services, it appears that this cannot be undertaken without a court order – and time is of the essence. It makes sense to make my concerns public now, so that electors may scrutinise the basis of this challenge, mentally prepare themselves for any repercussions, and consider helping us, too. I would be just as relieved to have somebody identify a fatal error in my submission; but alas, I'm afraid that the maths speaks for itself."

Notes and questions to the Green candidate:

1) *How could a recount affect the Green result?* The two Green candidates polled higher than any other candidate on the returns for the mixed ballot papers – quite consistent with an assessment of our chances. The distribution of recorded votes for these papers was as follows: Degas (406), Ali (342), Lawson-Tancred (334), Tullett (234), Nerva (203), Freeson (199), Fernandez (189), Gladbaum (154), Motley (152), Dhillon (96), Wearmouth (88), Kwarteng (63). If votes on *n* hundred of this sort of paper followed the same pattern but went unrecorded, the Green vote share would have been disproportionately adversely affected. The independent candidate also stands much to lose as 96% of his recorded vote was returned from the mixed pile.

2) *How could it affect the overall result, if n hundred votes from the mixed pile went unrecorded?* The discrepancy is sufficiently gross that either of the top two polling Labour candidates, each of whom were within 50 votes of the lowest winning vote as recorded, could readily overtake the third placed Lib Dem on the overall count (and if the distribution observed on the mixed ballots was repeated).

3) *Wouldn't the Greens prefer three Lib Dem gains over even a single Labour hold, as is currently declared?* Not at the cost of subverting the democratic will of the people, we wouldn't. That would be a democratically bankrupt position, alien to core Green values.

4) *Isn't this just a case of sour grapes?* No, Greens have gotten used to suffering less than remarkable results in hotly contested elections in Brent in the past. Why wait until now to act in bad faith? Let our concerns be proven wrong.

<u>QUEENS PARK WARD COUNT – INEXPLICABLY HIGH UNSPENT VOTES – TABLE</u>

Synopsis: In a three-vacancy contest, each voter is entitled to vote for up to three candidates. Some, generally a minority of voters, choose to vote for only two candidates or only one candidate. In the recorded count for Queens Park ward the number of "unspent votes" is found

to be inexplicably large (1,606). The discrepancy is inexplicable on three grounds: (1) in comparison to adjacent wards, Kensal Green (387) and Kilburn (827); (2) in comparison to Queens Park in 2002 (513 on 25% turnout); and (3), more fatally, an approximation of the ratio of unspent votes to used votes that must have shown on ballot papers in the "mixed" pile (where cross–party voting took place) for the overall count TO BE TRUE. Unfortunately, that ratio is CONTRARY TO WHAT WAS OBSERVED. Therefore, the VALIDITY of the count is put into SERIOUS QUESTION.

	Step		Notes
1.	Number Voting = Number of Ballot Papers	3,642	source Brent
2.	Number of Potential Votes	10,929	3 potential votes per ballot paper
3.	Number of Votes Counted	9,320	source Brent
4.	Number of Votes Not Used	1,606	If line 3 is correct
5.	Number of Votes Unspent on Papers Voting for Independent Candidate Only	16	8 ballot papers sorted out (2 unspent votes per paper)
6.	Number of Votes Unspent on Papers Voting for Two Green Candidates Only	120	120 ballot papers sorted out (1 unspent vote per paper)
7.	Number of Votes Unspent on Papers Voting for All Three Party Candidates	0	Three lots of papers sorted out for Con, Labour and Lib Dem have block votes, therefore no unspent votes.
8.	Number of Unspent Votes Remaining to be Accounted For	1,570	1,606 minus 16 minus 120
9.	Number of Mixed Ballot Papers	1,308	This figure was obtained from Brent on 12.05.06 following representations. It corresponds to 36% of ballot papers. On a prior analysis, I made the deliberately high assumption of 40% (as a Devil's Advocate defending the validity of the Count). Less than 40% only makes the problem more acute.
10.	Frequency of Mixed Ballot Papers with One Unspent Vote to Make Line 9 True.	> 1:1	On average, every mixed ballot paper would have to be showing at least one unspent vote – contrary to what was observed
11.	Frequency of Mixed Ballot Papers with Two Unspent Votes to Make Line 9 True.	> 1:2	On average, greater than one in every two mixed ballot papers would have to be showing only one candidate voted for – contrary to what was observed.
12.	Frequency of Mixed Ballot Papers with either One Unspent Vote or Two Unspent Votes to Make Line 9 True.	> 1:3 and 1:3	On average, for every three mixed ballot papers or less, at least one would show a single unspent vote and another would show only one candidate voted for – contrary to what was observed.
13.	Votes on n hundred ballot papers left uncounted by mistake.		CONTRARY HYPOTHESIS to render data in lines 1–9 explicable and in conformity to observations at count.

Synopsis prepared by S Ali, former Candidate for Queens Park, who is currently in contact with other interested parties and is making representations to Brent.