

Thursday's local authority elections produced a historic result in the London Borough of Hounslow; with supporters of Brentford FC seeing the election of one of their A-Bee-C Party candidates.

Luke Kirton, committee member of the Brentford Independent Association of Supporters, and a life-long Brentford resident, was returned in the club's home ward - registering a major upset in the borough, traditionally a Labour stronghold.

The election of a Bees fan to the local authority follows the recent invitation onto the club's board of John McGlashan, of supporters' trust Bees United, and firmly establishes a two-pronged effort towards securing the future of the cash-strapped Bees as a community-owned club, playing in a much needed new multi-purpose stadium.

With a campaign centred around achieving recognition, both for the value of Brentford FC as a local institution, and for the pioneering work of the club's Football in the Community scheme; and of safeguarding this legacy for the people of Hounslow, the A-Bee-C party stood in 14 of the borough's 20 wards, under the banner of 'A future for Brentford FC in your Community'.

Frustration amongst fans had grown, as time and again the political establishment within Hounslow had shown itself to view the club's likely exile or demise as worthy of no more than indifference or resignation. Following the lead of those such as Charlton Athletic's Valley Party, supporters set out to prove this assumption wrong, and last night's result will come as a vindication of their efforts.

As A-Bee-C's elected councillor, Kirton has pledged to combine an insistence on a more enlightened consideration of the club's place within the borough, with a wider brief to improve Hounslow's poor leisure and recreation facilities. In doing so he will stress the benefits that sport can bring in terms of health and social inclusion, and the key role the borough's professional football club can play in this, through an extension of its existing community programme.

Much is made of the rise of voter apathy, and the disenchantment of the young with politics, and given the barrage of spin an elected independent such as Kirton, 31, will surely face from the wounded beast of mainstream politics, few would envy his task. However he is determined that he will serve the interests of his electorate, and hopes to be able to work productively with his fellow councillors for the good of the community.