

## Barnet backlash for anti-eruv candidates

By SIMON ROCKER

Orthodox Barnet voters appear to have punished councillors who last year voted against the establishment of an eruv in the borough.

Although the Conservative vote fell in most wards, it plummeted in Hampstead Garden Suburb, scene of the fiercest eruv debates.

The Suburb Tories — including Jewish anti-eruv councillors Frank Davis and Roy Shutz — had their majorities slashed from 2,000 to under 200.

"The eruv was definitely a big issue in the ward," said pro-eruv councillor Julian Czarny, who retained his Conservative seat in Edgware.

A week before the poll, eruv campaigners had published a list of pro- and anti-eruv councillors. Two influential rabbis also encouraged local Jews to take the eruv into account when voting.

Labour's Ellis Hillman — who could become Barnet mayor — also felt that pro-eruv voters had demonstrated their displeasure. "It played a substantial part in the voting."

Although the Tories remain the largest party, they lost control of the borough. Mr Hillman hopes to take the chain of office next Wednesday, aided by Liberal Democrat support.

Good news for the Conservatives was that marginal Golders Green, targeted by the Liberal Democrats, was won by Melvin Cohen. Other wards with large Jewish populations remained Tory.

There are now nine Jewish Conservatives on the council, compared with 14 four years ago. In contrast, Labour's Jewish representation has increased.

The other Jewish Tory victors were Malcolm Lester, Victor Lyon, Anthony Finn, Eva Greenspan and Leslie Sussman. Labour successes included Gina Marks, Nicholas Kissen, Helen Gordon, Gillian Sargeant and Kitty Lyons, while Jack Cohen and Susette Palmer were returned for the LibDems.