


City that Walks on Water Southend Stories



Title:	<u>The Councillor who couldn't vote</u>
Date:	1910
Location:	Westborough Ward, Southend-on-Sea
Image:	 <p>Elizabeth Sumner Bannester</p>
Headline:	Southend's first female Councillor
Fact 1	Elizabeth Sumner Bannester was born in the village of Barling, Essex in 1864. From census records her family were farmers who lived at 'The Cottage', Barling. Elizabeth lived with her parents and grandparents at The Cottage.
Fact 2	Some years later, Miss Bannester gained a place at London University where she studied the arts and in 1890 was awarded a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the university. In 1901 Elizabeth Bannester was listed at the head of household at 5 Avenue Road, Prittlewell and her occupation at Private School Mistress.
Fact 3	In 1910 Miss Elizabeth Sumner Bannester was elected to Southend Council for the Westborough Ward - the first time a lady had been elected for the council. Although Miss Bannester could vote as a

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	Councillor, women did not have the right to vote in either General or Local Elections.
Fact 4	The 1911 census has Miss Bannester listed as the Principal of Alexandra College, on Crowstone Road, Westcliff-on-Sea. The college was a private school for young ladies many of who were the children of diplomats working abroad for the British Empire.
Fact 5	Miss Bannester lived at the same address as Miss Rose Brown in both the 1901 and 1911 census, both were listed in the 1911 census as being the Head of household and 'Principal of a Private school'.
Fact 6	Sadly Miss Bannester died on the 2nd December 1914, aged just 50. She left £521 6 shillings, with the notice for probate posted naming Rose Brown as her sole beneficiary.
Close:	It wasn't until 1918 with the Representation of the People Act that some women gained the right to vote in parliamentary elections, and the Equal Franchise Act of 1928 gave men and women, aged over 21, equal voting rights for the first time.
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