



Township of Blandford-Blenheim

Poverty negatively impacts our ability to create a healthy, vibrant community. The fact that some people in Oxford County cannot afford basic needs, including nutritious and sufficient food is a real concern. In Oxford County, based on the 2010 after tax Low Income Measure, 12.3% of families live in low income.

On September 17, 2014, all Township of Blandford-Blenheim Candidates were contacted via email and provided an introduction to, and a link to the following survey. The survey questions provide an opportunity for voters to start a discussion with candidates about poverty reduction. Our hope is that this survey serves as a starting point to an ongoing conversation about poverty in Oxford County.

Participation in the survey was voluntary. Responses provided by the candidates that completed the survey are posted and have not been changed in any way. The Oxford Poverty Action Coalition and Social Planning Council Oxford would like to thank those candidates who have completed the survey.

The following candidates from Blandford-Blenheim did not submit a completed survey:

Candidate	Position
Mark Burnison	Mayor
Jeff Glendinning	Mayor
Randy Balzer	Councillor
Bruce Banbury	Councillor
Kenn Howling	Councillor
Mark Peterson	Councillor
Swen Willem Frans van den Heuvel	Councillor

Question One

How would you best define poverty? Please select all that apply:

- Lacking the resources to meet one's physical needs for survival (e.g. lacking shelter, food, and clothing)
- Lacking the resources to fully participate in social and recreational opportunities in the community
- Lacking enough resources to be self-sufficient
- I don't know
- Other

Candidate	Position	Lacking the resources to meet one's physical needs for survival	Lacking the resources to fully participate in social and recreational opportunities in the community	Lacking enough resources to be self-sufficient	I don't know	Other
Marion Wearn	Mayor	X	X	X		
Betty Cowan	Councillor	X	X	X		
Jordan Kent	Councillor	X	X	X		
Glenn Koch	Councillor	X		X		

Question Two

Local groups are coming together across Canada to develop comprehensive approaches to poverty reduction and help guide community efforts. These groups (sometimes called coalitions or committees) are usually composed of diverse sectors, including business, government, voluntary organizations, and people living in poverty. At least 14 municipalities in Ontario have poverty reduction coalitions, including: Halton, Hamilton, Huron County, Kingston, Leeds and Grenville, London, Niagara, Oxford County, Peel, Peterborough, Simcoe County, Thunder Bay, Waterloo, and Windsor-Essex County.

Do you think Oxford County needs a *poverty action coalition*?

- Yes
- No

Candidate	Position	Response
Marion Wearn	Mayor	Yes
Betty Cowan	Councillor	Yes
Jordan Kent	Councillor	Yes
Glenn Koch	Councillor	Yes

Question Three

Often one of the first priorities of poverty reduction coalitions is to develop a local poverty reduction strategy to help shape local priorities and provide measurable objectives. At least 10 municipalities in Ontario have local poverty reduction strategies, including: Halton, Hamilton, Kingston, London, Niagara, Peel, Peterborough, Thunder Bay, Waterloo, and Windsor-Essex County.

Did you know Oxford County does not have a *poverty reduction strategy*?

- Yes
- No

Candidate	Position	Response
Marion Wearn	Mayor	No
Betty Cowan	Councillor	No
Jordan Kent	Councillor	Yes
Glenn Koch	Councillor	No

Question Four

Do you think Oxford County needs a *poverty reduction strategy*?

- Yes
- No

Candidate	Position	Response
Marion Wearn	Mayor	Yes
Betty Cowan	Councillor	Yes
Jordan Kent	Councillor	Yes
Glenn Koch	Councillor	Yes

Question Five

There are a number of key roles municipal government could play in overall poverty reduction. Read each of the statements below and tell us whether or not you think Oxford County should be playing that role.

I think that the municipality should be a connector of organizations and partners from various sectors to allow them to work together on poverty reduction:

Candidate	Position	Response
Marion Wearn	Mayor	Yes
Betty Cowan	Councillor	Yes
Jordan Kent	Councillor	Yes
Glenn Koch	Councillor	Yes

I think that the municipality should be an exemplary employer, including implementing employment practices that reduce poverty and providing a living wage to internal staff and outsourced services:

Candidate	Position	Response
Marion Wearn	Mayor	Yes
Betty Cowan	Councillor	Uncertain
Jordan Kent	Councillor	Yes
Glenn Koch	Councillor	Yes

I think that the municipality should be an investor in community programs and processes that support poverty reduction:

Candidate	Position	Response
Marion Wearn	Mayor	Yes
Betty Cowan	Councillor	Yes
Jordan Kent	Councillor	Yes
Glenn Koch	Councillor	Yes

I think that the municipality should be a leader and champion for community based poverty reduction initiatives, including raising community awareness about poverty and advocating to the federal and provincial levels of government:

Candidate	Position	Response
Marion Wearn	Mayor	Yes
Betty Cowan	Councillor	Yes
Jordan Kent	Councillor	Yes
Glenn Koch	Councillor	Yes

I think that the municipality should be a provider of services that reduce poverty, such as child care, social assistance, arts and recreation, etc:

Candidate	Position	Response
Marion Wearn	Mayor	Uncertain
Betty Cowan	Councillor	Uncertain
Jordan Kent	Councillor	Yes
Glenn Koch	Councillor	Uncertain

Question Six

Municipal governments across Canada are taking steps to assist in poverty reduction in a variety of ways. **If elected, would you support the implementation of any of these public policies and programs in Oxford County?**

Affordable housing strategy: *Affordable housing strategies identify the ways in which the municipality will assist with housing affordability*

Affordable transit programs and services: *Affordable transit programs and services increase people's ability to participate in employment, attend important medical and other appointments, and participate fully in community life*

Food charter: *Food charters are statements of values, principles, and priorities that guide municipal food related planning, policy, and programs*

Food policy council: *Food policy councils support a variety of community food initiatives and promote a healthy sustainable and accessible food system for all*

Housing first policy: *Housing first policy is an approach to ending homelessness that involves giving people direct access to permanent housing, along with the services they need and want to maintain it*

Candidate	Position	Affordable Housing	Affordable Transit	Food Charter	Food Policy Council	Housing First Policy
Marion Wearn	Mayor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Betty Cowan	Councillor	Yes	Uncertain	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jordan Kent	Councillor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Glenn Koch	Councillor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Question Six Continued

Municipal governments across Canada are taking steps to assist in poverty reduction in a variety of ways. **If elected, would you support the implementation of any of these public policies and programs in Oxford County?**

Living wage campaign: *Living wage campaigns are community-based initiatives that calculate the amount a family needs to meet basic expenses, such as housing, child care, food, and transportation, and supports measures to ensure they can be met*

Municipal living wage policy: *Municipal living wage policy ensures that municipal workers, as well as contracted staff, are paid enough to meet basic family living expenses*

Discounted supplies for municipal recreation, arts and culture programs: *Sports, recreation and other leisure activity access promotes inclusion and are associated with an enhanced quality of life through gaining new skills and improved physical and psychological well-being*

Financial assistance to youth to cover the cost of non-municipal recreation program fees, equipment, and/or transportation: *Sports, recreation and other leisure activity access promotes inclusion and are associated with an enhanced quality of life through gaining new skills and improved physical and psychological well-being*

Free admission to municipal recreation facilities: *Sports, recreation and other leisure activity access promotes inclusion and are associated with an enhanced quality of life through gaining new skills and improved physical and psychological well-being*

Candidate	Position	Living Wage Campaign	Municipal Living Wage Policy	Discounted Supplies for Municipal Recreation	Financial Assistance to Youth for Non-Municipal Recreation	Free Admission to Municipal Recreation Facilities
Marion Wearn	Mayor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Uncertain	Yes
Betty Cowan	Councillor	Yes	Uncertain	Yes	Yes	Uncertain
Jordan Kent	Councillor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Glenn Koch	Councillor	Yes	Yes	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain

Question Seven

Nutrition-related diseases (e.g. diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers) cost Oxford County and the province of Ontario millions annually. Low income residents can't afford to eat a healthy diet, once housing and other essential bills are paid.

What would you do, if elected, to help ensure that everyone in Oxford County is available to afford a healthy diet?

Candidate	Position	Response
Marion Wearn	Mayor	"Whether elected or not I will support initiatives that put good, safe, healthy food into the hands of those in need."
Betty Cowan	Councillor	"I would like to educate myself, and others, on how we all can promote healthy choices for not only people with low incomes, but for all residents. There needs to be a way to ensure fresh fruits and vegetables are available for all. Possibly educating the public that fruit and vegetables that have an odd imperfection (blemish, or wrong shape) is still healthy, and can be purchased at a large discount direct from the farmer. I would be interested in helping a group to look into ways of getting these fruits and vegetables (especially locally grown) to the tables of all residents."
Jordan Kent	Councillor	"One, work towards lowering the cost of living (taxes, water and sewer bills, etc.). Two, personally advocate for a poverty reduction strategy in Oxford that also includes a meal plan for our residents. One thing I will admit is that while I don't have all the answers I will fight alongside of you to fight poverty in our county!"
Glenn Koch	Councillor	No response

Question Eight

If elected, would you support poverty reduction in Oxford County?

Candidate	Position	Response
Marion Wearn	Mayor	Yes
Betty Cowan	Councillor	Yes
Jordan Kent	Councillor	Yes
Glenn Koch	Councillor	Yes

Question Nine

If you would support poverty reduction in Oxford County, please provide at least two specific examples or actions of support you would take:

Candidate	Position	Response
Marion Wearn	Mayor	"I will raise awareness in my community on the need to support poverty reduction and encourage those who are able to investigate ways to become involved in finding solutions regardless of the election results."
Betty Cowan	Councillor	No response
Jordan Kent	Councillor	"One, ask to join the committee working on the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Two, advocate for more affordable housing so that everyone has a shot at living in better circumstances, we need to all work together to eradicate poverty and help build our communities together."
Glenn Koch	Councillor	"A partnering program of front line producers of food and those in need of assistance. An incentive program for builders/developers to increase affordable assisted housing."

Question Ten

Please select up to three issues you would be committed to championing, if elected. Select #1 for your first choice, #2 for your second choice, and #3 for your third choice:

- Affordable child care is available for all families
- Affordable public transit is available for all individuals
- Extensive and affordable library services are available
- Extensive and affordable recreation programs are available for all individuals
- Free income tax clinics are available to families who need them
- People on low-income have access to subsidies to live in private market rental properties
- People who are homeless get housed as quickly as possible
- Portion of all new housing developments is dedicated to subsidized housing for those living on low income
- The number of people living in poverty is reduced
- The overall health of our community improves
- The right to live in a food secure community with dignified access to sufficient, affordable, healthy, safe, and culturally appropriate food is obtained by all

Candidate	Position	Response
Marion Wearn	Mayor	#1: People who are homeless get housed as quickly as possible #2: The right to live in a food secure community with dignified access to sufficient, affordable, healthy, safe, and culturally appropriate food is obtained by all #3: Affordable public transit is available for all individuals
Betty Cowan	Councillor	#1: People who are homeless get housed as quickly as possible #2: The right to live in a food secure community with dignified access to sufficient, affordable, healthy, safe, and culturally appropriate food is obtained by all #3: The number of people living in poverty is reduced

Candidate	Position	Response
Jordan Kent	Councillor	<p>#1: Affordable child care is available for all families</p> <p>#1: People on low income have access to subsidies to live in private market rental properties</p> <p>#1: People who are homeless get housed as quickly as possible</p> <p>#1: Portion of all new housing developments is dedicated to subsidized housing for those living on low income</p> <p>#1: The number of people living in poverty is reduced</p> <p>#2: Free income tax clinics are available to families who need them</p> <p>#2: The overall health of our community improves</p> <p>#2: The right to live in a food secure community with dignified access to sufficient, affordable, healthy, safe, and culturally appropriate food is obtained by all</p> <p>#3: Affordable public transit is available for all individuals</p> <p>#3: Extensive and affordable library services are available</p>
Glenn Koch	Councillor	<p>#1: Portion of all new housing developments is dedicated to subsidized housing for those living on low income</p> <p>#2: People who are homeless get housed as quickly as possible</p> <p>#3: Affordable public transit is available for all individuals</p>

Question Eleven

In your opinion, rate each of the following on their responsibility to reduce poverty as either: No responsibility, Some responsibility, A lot of responsibility, Don't Know.

- Charitable organizations and non-profits
- General public not living in poverty
- General public living in poverty
- Private business
- Municipal government
- Provincial government
- Federal government

Candidate	Position	No Responsibility	Some Responsibility	A lot of Responsibility	Don't know
Marion Wearn	Mayor		General public living in poverty	Charitable organization and non-profits General public not living in poverty Private business Municipal government Provincial government Federal government	
Betty Cowan	Councillor		Charitable organizations and non-profits General public not living in poverty General public living in poverty Private business	Municipal government Provincial government Federal government	

Candidate	Position	No Responsibility	Some Responsibility	A lot of Responsibility	Don't know
Jordan Kent	Councillor	General public living in poverty		Charitable organizations and non-profits General public not living in poverty Private business Municipal government Provincial government Federal government	
Glenn Koch	Councillor		General public not living in poverty Private business Municipal government Provincial government Federal government	General public living in poverty	Charitable organizations and non-profits