



City of Woodstock

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 City of Woodstock 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 Woodstock did not submit a completed survey:

Candidate	Position
Pat Sobeski	Mayor
Christina Atkinson	City and County Councillor
Dave Nadalin	City and County Councillor
Bill Bes	City and County Councillor
Paul Plant	City and County Councillor
Deb Tait	City and County Councillor
Sandra Talbot	City and County Councillor
Jerry Acchione	City Councillor
Owen Farrell	City Councillor
Laurie Fraser	City Councillor
Jim Northcott	City 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
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	X	X	X		
Michael Harding	Mayor	X				
Jonnathan Brownlee	City Councillor	X	X	X		
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	X	X	X		
Steven Gilbert	City Councillor					"I believe there are many different types of poverty. There should be an all of the above button."
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	X	X	X		
Todd Poetter	City Councillor	X	X	X		
Shawn Shapton	City 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
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	Yes
Michael Harding	Mayor	Yes
Jonnathan Brownlee	City Councillor	Yes
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	Yes
Steven Gilbert	City Councillor	Yes
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	Yes
Todd Poetter	City Councillor	Yes
Shawn Shapton	City 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
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	Yes
Michael Harding	Mayor	Yes
Jonnathan Brownlee	City Councillor	No
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	No
Steven Gilbert	City Councillor	No
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	No
Todd Poetter	City Councillor	No
Shawn Shapton	City Councillor	No

Question Four

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

- Yes
- No

Candidate	Position	Response
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	Yes
Michael Harding	Mayor	Yes
Jonnathan Brownlee	City Councillor	Yes
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	Yes
Steven Gilbert	City Councillor	Yes
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	Yes
Todd Poetter	City Councillor	Yes
Shawn Shapton	City 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
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	Yes
Michael Harding	Mayor	Yes
Jonnathan Brownlee	City Councillor	Yes
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	Yes
Steven Gilbert	City Councillor	Yes
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	Yes
Todd Poetter	City Councillor	Yes
Shawn Shapton	City 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
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	Yes
Michael Harding	Mayor	Uncertain
Jonnathan Brownlee	City Councillor	Yes
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	Yes
Steven Gilbert	City Councillor	Yes
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	Uncertain
Todd Poetter	City Councillor	Uncertain
Shawn Shapton	City Councillor	Yes

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

Candidate	Position	Response
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	Yes
Michael Harding	Mayor	Yes
Jonnathan Brownlee	City Councillor	Yes
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	Yes
Steven Gilbert	City Councillor	Yes
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	Yes
Todd Poetter	City Councillor	Uncertain
Shawn Shapton	City 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
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	Yes
Michael Harding	Mayor	Yes
Jonnathan Brownlee	City Councillor	Yes
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	Yes
Steven Gilbert	City Councillor	Yes
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	Yes
Todd Poetter	City Councillor	Yes
Shawn Shapton	City 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
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	Yes
Michael Harding	Mayor	Uncertain
Jonnathan Brownlee	City Councillor	Yes
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	Yes
Steven Gilbert	City Councillor	Yes
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	Yes
Todd Poetter	City Councillor	Yes
Shawn Shapton	City Councillor	Yes

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
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Michael Harding	Mayor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jonnathan Brownlee	City Councillor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Uncertain	Yes
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Steven Gilbert	City Councillor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Uncertain	Yes
Todd Poetter	City Councillor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Uncertain
Shawn Shapton	City Councillor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Uncertain	Uncertain

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
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Michael Harding	Mayor	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes	Yes	Uncertain
Jonnathan Brownlee	City Councillor	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Uncertain
Steven Gilbert	City Councillor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Uncertain
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	Yes	Uncertain	Yes	Uncertain	Yes
Todd Poetter	City Councillor	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes	Uncertain	Uncertain
Shawn Shapton	City Councillor	Uncertain	Yes	Yes	Yes	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
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	"Nutrition – part of the 'Health' Quality of Life Indicators (2008 Oxford Social Report). More local programs that partner with local farmers and business; such as the garden fresh box hosted by the Woodstock and Area Community Health Centre. This program allows families to obtain fresh produce at reduced prices. This program, as well as many other outreach programs could potentially be expanded to benefit more residents, with guidance from the county."
Michael Harding	Mayor	"Fresh food box is a good start. Healthy breakfast programs are another. Lobby the provincial government to increase food allowance support."
Jonnathan Brownlee	City Councillor	"I have been exploring opportunities to creating a program that would be implemented city-wide to combat poor nutritional habits through school meal programs and potentially setting up a free cooking class run by local chefs. More research is required, but this will be something I will passionately explore."
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	"Lobby to have a food policy council in Woodstock. Although food banks are not the answer ensure that all residents are educated on Operation Sharing's program to assist those in low incomes to eat healthy. Also ensure that every school has snack/nutrition program funded if that school/school council is struggling to provide one. Bring forward the use of City owned property to be converted into seasonal vegetable growing areas for residents."
Steven Gilbert	City Councillor	"I believe there are many different programs out there now but we should definitely try to go above and beyond. For example, talk to local farmers and markets about end of day unsold meats and produce for free or at a discounted rate, and making urban gardens for everyone to use."
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	"It is my understanding that some of this is handled under the Oxford County Health and I am sure the \$.25 program is still being carried out by the grocery stores, although I think there should be more awareness made of that program."
Todd Poetter	City Councillor	No response
Shawn Shapton	City Councillor	"I would like to see more collaboration between food distributors, local growers and ALL grocery stores to help encourage more healthy options. I am sure food banks and other local food supplementing agencies are over run with non-healthy options based on price. Working together and sharing the burden is paramount. It's also important to remember people are giving to these organizations what they can afford!"

Question Eight

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

Candidate	Position	Response
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	Yes
Michael Harding	Mayor	Yes
Jonnathan Brownlee	City Councillor	Yes
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	Yes
Steven Gilbert	City Councillor	Yes
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	Yes
Todd Poetter	City Councillor	Yes
Shawn Shapton	City 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
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	"I would work together with County Council and community stakeholder groups like yours to revisit the 2008 Oxford Social Report to bring heightened awareness to the Quality of Life barriers faced in the community. Together with the involvement of local groups, the Human Services department at the County, and the Ministry of Community and Social Services; we can develop practical solutions that can be implemented in a broad context with many community partners. Together we will overcome poverty."
Michael Harding	Mayor	"Quality, permanent and affordable housing for low income households and provide rent supplements to make them affordable."
Jonnathan Brownlee	City Councillor	"As mentioned above, a school meal program that offers subsidized/discounted nutritional meals and promotes healthy awareness to families at home is a personal priority for me. Additionally more research needs to be done in the area of soup kitchens, but not simply a means to hand out meals. A program rather where groceries are brought to a person's home and a meal is cooked in unison with the benefactor so they learn HOW to cook healthy meals as well."
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	"Provide reduced or free public transit to low income earners. Encourage more geared to income housing ventures to reduce the now waiting list and those who have just gave up waiting."
Steven Gilbert	City Councillor	"One, by putting up an open for business sign on this city, job creation would be my main focus, especially hiring the unemployed and underemployed. Two, by being involved, it seems our council has always been an arm's length away from poverty initiatives. We need people that will stand up for and with these people. I for one have been poor and underemployed and I know what it's like to live paycheck to paycheck."
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	"For Woodstock we have a program of money set aside for those young people who cannot attend the recreational facilities, I fully support this. It is my understanding the City also gives a grant to the County to assist families who cannot afford to have their children participate in programs. If that is not still in place I fully support that initiative."
Todd Poetter	City Councillor	No response
Shawn Shapton	City Councillor	"Creating more affordable housing options. Providing support to help end the poverty cycle."

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
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	#1: The number of people living in poverty is reduced #2: The overall health of our community improves #3: People who are homeless get housed as quickly as possible
Michael Harding	Mayor	#1: Extensive and affordable recreation programs are available for all individuals #1: Free income tax clinics are available to families who need them #1: People on low income have access to subsidies to live in private market rental properties #1: People who are homeless get housed as quickly as possible #1: Portion of all new housing developments is dedicated to subsidized housing for those living on low income #1: The number of people living in poverty is reduced #1: The overall health of our community improves #2: Affordable public transit is available for all individuals #2: Extensive and affordable library services are available #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 child care is available for all families

Candidate	Position	Response
Jonnathan Brownlee	City 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: People on low income have access to subsidies to live in private market rental properties
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	#1: The number of people living in poverty is reduced #2: People who are homeless get housed as quickly as possible #3: Portion of all new housing developments is dedicated to subsidized housing for those living on low income
Steven Gilbert	City Councillor	#1: Affordable child care is available for all families #2: The overall health of our community improves #3: Extensive and affordable recreation programs are available for all individuals
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	#1: Extensive and affordable library services are available #1: Extensive and affordable recreation programs are available for all individuals
Todd Poetter	City Councillor	No response
Shawn Shapton	City Councillor	#1: 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

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

Candidate	Position	No Responsibility	Some Responsibility	A lot of Responsibility	Don't know
Michael Harding	Mayor		Charitable organizations and non-profits General public not living in poverty General public living in poverty Private business Municipal government	Provincial government Federal government	
Jonnathan Brownlee	City Councillor		General public living in poverty Private business Provincial government Federal government	Charitable organizations and non-profits General public not living in poverty Municipal government	
Ross Gerrie	City 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	

Candidate	Position	No Responsibility	Some Responsibility	A lot of Responsibility	Don't know
Steven Gilbert	City Councillor		<p>General public not living in poverty</p> <p>General public living in poverty</p>	<p>Charitable organizations and non-profits</p> <p>Private business</p> <p>Municipal government</p> <p>Provincial government</p> <p>Federal government</p>	
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	General public living in poverty	<p>Charitable organizations and non-profits</p> <p>General public not living in poverty</p> <p>Private business</p> <p>Municipal government</p>	<p>Provincial government</p> <p>Federal government</p>	
Todd Poetter	City Councillor		<p>General public not living in poverty</p> <p>General public living in poverty</p> <p>Private business</p> <p>Municipal government</p> <p>Provincial government</p> <p>Federal government</p>	<p>Charitable organizations and non-profits</p>	

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