



## Municipal Election 2018 (Survey Results): 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 2015 after tax Low Income Measure, 10.8% of the population (11, 835 people) live in low income.

On September 10, 2018, all City of Woodstock Candidates were contacted via email with a follow-up call 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. Social Planning Council Oxford would like to thank those candidates who have completed the survey.

The following candidates from the City of Woodstock did not submit a completed survey:

Candidate	Position
Shawn Shapton	Mayor
Michael Harding	City-County Councillor
Colin Matthews	City Councillor

### Question #1: Poverty Reduction Strategy

In 2017, Oxford County declared:

*“Poverty reduction in Oxford County is achievable and will strengthen well-being for all. It’s the right thing to do.*

*Through leadership, innovation, and the transformation of relationships, in working to eliminate poverty. Oxford County will deliver improved health and well-being for all residents and enhance community prosperity.”*

As a result a draft [Zero Poverty Plan](#) was presented to council in June 2018.



## Municipal Election 2018: Candidate Survey Responses to Social Issues

### Do you support the funding and implementation of the Oxford County Zero Poverty Plan?

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Response</b>
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	Yes
Peter Croves	City-County Councillor	No
Deb Tait	City-County Councillor	Yes
Naseeb Singh	City-County Councillor	Yes
Sandra J. Talbot	City-County Councillor	Yes
Jerry Acchione	City Councillor	Yes
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	Yes
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	Yes
Ron Fraser	City Councillor	Yes
Kate Leatherbarrow	City Councillor	Yes
Mark Schadenberg	City Councillor	Yes

### Question #2: Housing

- a) Is safe, decent and secure affordable housing a priority in your platform?  
 b) How will you help families and individuals secure and maintain safe, decent and affordable housing?

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Response A</b>	<b>Response B</b>
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	Yes	fully support the County's housing first policy. I am also a huge advocate for geared to income housing which can also provide affordable shelter for precarious workers and their families.
Peter Croves	City-County Councillor	Yes	Will, in the short term we can go on with the meares being done, but long term we need to look at why their is this need and answer the reason for this need
Deb Tait	City-County Councillor	Yes	Since I was elected to council we have approved all affordable housing applications and when and where they have needed help we have indicated to staff to provide that help.
Naseeb Singh	City-County Councillor	Yes	Through on going education, training, information, counseling, and patrolling the areas by either our police or special constables.



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Sandra J. Talbot	City-County Councillor	Yes	Being a Member of County Council I supported the Zero Poverty(part of our Sustainability Plan) and this has already included initiatives in creating partnerships with the private sector to invest in affordable housing. To date we have brought on 386 new units, a \$4.7 million in municipal funding. We hope to do more!
Jerry Acchione	City Councillor	Yes	At the City level we must maintain pressure on the County to ensure funding is in place as Families young and old shouldn't need to choose between paying for rent or eating.
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	Yes	I sit on the Woodstock Non-profit housing board for Kent and Canterbury. We are engaged in looking to do a development or assist in one. I would promote initiatives like the County's 34 units to be completed in 2019 on Blossom Park Rd. I would encourage and educate Developers/Builders on the current incentives available from all levels of government to build affordable housing units in Woodstock/County. The use of residential infills and intensification were appropriate assist in affordable housing/rental units. Promoting building of affordable residential units in the downtown core would be two fold supporting housing and local businesses.
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	Yes	Affordable housing is a function of the County funded mainly by Provincial and Federal levels of Government. I will continue to advocate for affordable housing certainly when any zoning applications come to City Council for approval. The County continues to approve housing for example the project to be built on the excess land at Woodingford Lodge
Ron Fraser	City Councillor	Yes	Advocate for the development of affordable housing that is desperately needed. Encourage cooperative and creative solutions to the housing shortage to create a healthy community. Currently in Woodstock the available affordable housing is 0.7 percent. The lead role for affordable housing for persons living in poverty is the County of Oxford -- but many advances have taken place in recent years by Woodstock council to support this initiative. Indwell Homes is a prime example of a private organization that has created affordable Housing in Woodstock -- both on Vansittart Ave in the Harvey Woods Lofts and in the expansion at Blossom Park on Devonshire Ave. The Woodstock Council in conjunction with the County of Oxford and the Federal and Provincial Government(s) can encourage companies such as Indwell to develop interest in constructing affordable housing within the City and elsewhere in Oxford County. Lending a vision towards creative solutions in conjunction with Community Partners is a future and immediate requirement.



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Kate Leatherbarrow	City Councillor	Yes	I will continue to advocate for the residence of Woodstock at City hall. As I have gone door to door throughout this campaigning period and I have heard the concerns on affordable housing. Although I was born in Woodstock I moved away for most of my life. When I met my husband and we started our family we knew it was time to move back to Woodstock where we could raise our family. In addition, we moved from Guelph four years ago because the price of real estate suited our needs and our budget. This has changed dramatically in the past four years. Residence cannot afford a single family home, apartment, or in some cases cannot even be considered as a tenant due to the competitive market. We have residence that are homeless and are couch surfing in order to get by. I want to voice their concerns and ensure their representation at city hall and also echo their concerns in our community. I want to work with the social planning council (and volunteers) so I may give my full support to bettering the affordable housing crisis in Woodstock.
Mark Schadenberg	Councillor	Yes	Reduce taxes to be paid by landlords providing low income living. I do think it's time that rural residential (villages and rural clusters of homes - not family farms) should be contributing more to the County. I also think the plan can only work with an analysis of the root of problem. Can some youth continue to live at home (and why not) instead of in a subsidized living system. I do realize we also have a huge number of working poor and single mothers and fathers trying to create a living.

## Questions #3: Transportation

a) Is affordable public transportation a priority in your platform?

b) How will you create or enhance public transportation that is affordable for everyone, especially people living in poverty?

Candidate	Position	Response A	Response B
Trevor Birtch	Mayor	Yes	During the last election campaign I vowed to improve and extend transit service in the City. We now start earlier and have buses on the road later. We have to find creative solutions to promote ridership and assist those who struggle financially. The easiest way to find solutions is to talk to riders and people who would like to use transit but are unable to and hear their suggestions.



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Peter Croves	City-County Councillor	Yes	people that are living in poverty, do not have money for public Transportation, so they should be issued a card that enables them[jif the person choses to use this service] to use public transportation for free
Deb Tait	City-County Councillor	Yes	I believe we took the first steps when we approved longer hours for the buses.
Naseeb Singh	City-County Councillor	Unsure	To help people living with poverty should get discounted monthly passes to travel.
Sandra J. Talbot	City-County Councillor	Yes	Presently at County Council, as part of the Sustainability Plan we hope to provide cost efficient transportation within Oxford County and to major centres outside. We are still working towards this goal. I would also like to see our City buses full and would be prepared to have City staff along with the County look at providing reduced bus passes to those living in poverty and in need.
Jerry Acchione	City Councillor	Yes	We must look at all options to ensure people have the transportation they require to get to the essentials of living.
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	Yes	I would support a review of current transit routes, if they provide effective transportation needs to all residents of Woodstock. The review would include accessibility and affordability of all including low income individuals and seniors. Staff would report back to Council with the findings and recommendations for Council to act on.
Connie Lauder	City Councillor		City Council approved extended hours for busing within the City in this term which seems to be a success I am sure in the next term of Council this will be reviewed at sometime for any further enhancements. The County provides funding for those in need of assistance of public transportation
Ron Fraser	City Councillor	No	The City of Woodstock provides a public transportation system and paratransit service within Woodstock. This is a fee for service, which is basically \$60.00 a month for an adult, but reduced for seniors and students. I realize that for persons living in poverty or the working poor that this fee for service is taxing on their incomes. Once again I believe that creative solutions can be researched and developed to assist those with limited incomes. I am aware of a pilot project within Tillsonburg which was titled "T:GO Call and Ride"-- A person can call for a ride when needed which is provided by a volunteer in their own vehicle. A small fee was charged starting at \$2.00 and up. This program after the initial stages was supported



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			by Tillsonburg Council and has now received funding from United Way Oxford (\$28,000). This was a creative solution and possibly a solution similar to this would service transportation issues throughout the County of Oxford. This type of initiative would require County Stewardship and Leadership. There are other creative solutions out there they just need to be identified. As a Woodstock Councillor I would advocate to the County of Oxford for development of creative solutions while requesting visions for possibilities within the City of Woodstock.
Kate Leatherbarrow	City Councillor	Yes	We are fortunate to have public transit in our city but we must adjust pricing for families and children. It is my understanding that once a child turns five their monthly pass is almost similar in price to the monthly pass for an adult. If we want to continue to have public transit we need to make it affordable for our community and promote riding the bus. Toronto is a larger city and that most residence rely on the TTC but their price for anyone under twelve is free, this making it financially easier for children and students to utilize public transit. I will commit to addressing this issue and pushing for adjustments so our residence may access public transit. It is a vital to have transit in Woodstock as our city continues to grow at a rapid rate. I would also like to advocate for extending bus routes so current and new residence may have the opportunity to utilize our public transit system
Mark Schadenberg	Councillor	Yes	People should be able to apply for bus passes that would be less than \$60 per month. Recreational facilities and summer camps have a subsidized program available - so should buses. More affordable housing near grocery stores.

### Question #4: Other Comments

Any other comments or areas in your platform that will address poverty or other social issues in Oxford County?

Candidate	Position	Response
Peter Croves	City-County Councillor	Fees, be they rent bank fees etc as an high income person. ODSP need to give rent that is the same as rent being paid or they should pay almost 0 rent and have no money taken away from their rent money.
Deb Tait	City-County Councillor	I have always maintained to keep spending down on the extras and spend services that affect everyone.



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Naseeb Singh	City-County Councillor	As far as we know Woodstock doesn't have a Men's shelter, so I would like to work on that. Hands on training for people living in poverty will get them jobs. More over need food banks or cooked to serve food banks. After the election I am going to start cooked meal food drive in Woodstock area.
Jerry Acchione	City Councillor	I have spoken to lot's of residents about affordable living and understand the needs of so many "working poor" that I will continue to advocate for them and keep pressure on any funding and services we can provide.
Ross Gerrie	City Councillor	Ensuring Woodstock has enough land stock is part of my platform. We must have enough land stock for Industrial land as well as housing. Currently there is less than 80 acres available of Industrial land. The WEDAC (Woodstock Economic Development Advisory Committee) suggests the land stock needs to be much higher. If we are to encourage business to build here which in turn creates employment lower unemployment we need land to meet those needs in the future.
Connie Lauder	City Councillor	I will continue to support grants for those organizations requesting funding for example Big Brothers Big Sisters, the FAIR program administered by the Parks and Recreation. On this particular program we approved and increase of \$15,000.00 this year now totalling \$30,000.00 to assist families for recreational and culture programs
Ron Fraser	City Councillor	I believe that some of my platform speaks to addressing social issues through engagement with different sectors within our population with in Woodstock. • Immediate and long-range planning for the needs of seniors. Our 50+ population has grown and is continuing to grow at a rapid rate. Their needs must be identified and then met. We have many living in poverty that are seniors who could benefit from City of Woodstock sponsored partners such as Southgate Centre. • Vision and plan for the needs of our youth. The Youth Advisory Committee to City Council continues to thrive. Youth are our future and there are youth who are living in poverty with their families. We need to encourage these youth to put forth their challenges and visions to create change through such committees as the Youth Advisory Committee. • Review our Master Recreation and Leisure Plan with regard to our growing population and ethnic diversity. Allow for consultation with our citizens to ensure their recreational needs will be met in the future. This would include researching options to ensure that the persons living in poverty would have access to recreational programs. • I believe that the City of London in the recent past commenced a program called Active and Green Communities. This adopted program addresses citizens' concerns about environment, health, household finances and community well being that would lead towards a more sustainable and resilient community. Researching programs such as this by the County of Oxford and the City of Woodstock could change the paths of many people.



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Kate Leatherbarrow	City Councillor	One of my platforms focuses on revitalization of our downtown. Committing to bettering our city core can give our community a sense of belonging and offer a space that everyone can benefit from. Utilizing the public space downtown for events, festivals, and to promote resources that are offered in our city and Oxford County is incredibly important as we move forward. Having a thriving downtown core full of diversity can bring our community together and create opportunities. I would also like to add that I am running because I believe it is time for a renewed relationship between Woodstock residence and our local government. I want members of our community to feel they can approach me with their concerns, I want them to know that I have their best interest in mind, and that I am dedicated to bringing positive change to our city. It begins with proper representation for all! Thank you for sending me this survey, I appreciate the opportunity to explain my stance on some of our important social issues in Woodstock.
Mark Schadenberg	City Councillor	There is seems to be an overlap in healthcare whether it be counselling services (Wellkin vs Canadian Mental Health Association vs OCCC vs services offered at old post office) or other programs. There should be more incentives for landlords who have market-rent units to also offer geared-to-income living as there is an opportunity for them to be paid directly from the County. More publicity needed for services that are available already which some people do not know about.