

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

On September 10, 2018, all Township of Blandford-Blenheim 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 Township of Blandford-Blenheim did not submit a completed survey:

Candidate	Position
Randy Balzer	Councillor
Ronald Behm	Councillor
Nancy Demarest	Councillor
Charles Doering	Councillor
Bryan Hewitt	Councillor
Justin Read	Councillor



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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.

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

Candidate	Position	Response
Mark Peterson	Mayor	Yes
John Mailloux	Mayor	Yes
William Bell	Councillor	Yes
Jordan Kent	Councillor	Yes
Bruce Banbury	Councillor	Unsure

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?

Candidate	Position	Response A	Response B
Mark Peterson	Mayor	Yes	Although Blandford-Blenheim does not have the tax base to independently create affordable housing, I would passionately support expansion to our existing county run housing. There is a definite need for affordable housing in oxford county
John Mailloux	Mayor	Yes	Has been in discussion with Mr. Mayberry about affordable housing developments in his township.
William Bell	Councillor	Yes	I will promote low income housing projects in Blandford Blenheim township
Jordan Kent	Councillor	Yes	Jordan believes that the solution to getting affordable housing in our township without spending hundreds of thousands of dollars is to allow home owners to



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			convert their home into secondary units which they can rent out. One way that the municipality that can do this is to reduce red tape, and to work towards lowering development fees. If we allow this new type of affordable housing to come into our township, then families, students, and seniors can subsidize their income while opening up affordable housing units that are needed in our community. The responsibility will be on the township to ensure that rates are affordable, that these units are regularly inspected, so that we can ensure that tenants are getting units that are up to standards under the building code. He will also advocate for county-funded seniors housing in Blandford-Blenheim. Jordan believes that housing is a human right and he will advocate tirelessly for more affordable housing whether it be secondary units, county funded affordable housing, or tiny houses.
Bruce Banbury	Councillor	Yes	The main responsibility is the county and province and I will encourage and support the province and county in this issue.

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
Mark Peterson	Mayor	Yes	In the township of Blandford-Blenheim the 7600 residents occupy a vast geographical area. This prompts a huge undertaking in the development of a physically responsible plan. However with the discussions of the south west lynx program joining train and bus services to rural areas may make this feasible
John Mailloux	Mayor	Unsure	Transportation plan needs to be an economical use of tax dollars
William Bell	Councillor	Unsure	I would promote subsidized transportation for low income families
Jordan Kent	Councillor	Yes	If Jordan Kent is elected to serve as a Councillor in the Township of Blandford-Blenheim, he will advocate for the creation of ride-sharing and transit plan. Jordan believes that by partnering with Uber we can create a cost effective transit plan that allows for residents in the township to travel across the township, and by partnering with Oxford County, Brant County and Waterloo



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			Region we can expand the Uber partnership to allow for residents of our Township to travel to Ayr, Waterloo, Kitchener, Woodstock, Paris and Brantford for as low as \$3.00 each way. I propose that the township make an investment \$40,000 in the first year to allow ourselves a chance to see how this project goes, and who we can partner with to expand this project across the region. Jordan will also advocate for a free transit pass for those living in poverty to allow them to use the service whenever they require it.
Bruce Banbury	Councillor	No	I will county initiatives.

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
Mark Peterson	Mayor	As co-lead of the Blandford -Blenheim foodbank I have developed a confidential manner in which to aid the less fortunate across our township. By utilizing various churches , schools and service clubs regular food drives provide most necessities in times of need. As soon as a family is identified the food is immediately delivered.
John Mailloux	Mayor	Housing is his main platform and will continue to support initiatives for affordable housing
William Bell	Councillor	I would promote greater mental health accessibility and lobby for more provincial and federal funding and/ or grants
Jordan Kent	Councillor	If Jordan Kent is elected to serve as a Councillor in the Township of Blandford-Blenheim, he will advocate for Council to create their own version of Oxford County's Zero Poverty plan so that we can work to eradicate poverty, income inequality and food insecurity in our communities. In addition to this, he will advocate for the Mayor to ask Oxford County Council to bring a mobile health unit to Blandford-Blenheim so that everyone has access to see a doctor, and to get the medical care that they not only need, but deserve.
Bruce Banbury	Councillor	Creating jobs will help through economic development.