

## COUNTING WOMEN IN: BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES 2014

### WHAT HAVE THE CANDIDATES SAID ABOUT WOMEN'S INTERESTS & SUPPORTING WOMEN'S EQUALITY?

We have asked all candidates running for Bristol City Council to answer three questions so that we could gauge their individual approaches to issues of concern to women in Bristol<sup>1</sup>. This is in order to provide more information to voters, and also to help raise awareness about issues of concern to women in local politics. The three questions were as follows:

- Question 1:** In one sentence, what is your personal pitch to the women of Bristol?
- Question 2:** Will you make a clear commitment that if elected you will do everything possible in office to ensure that services for women who have experienced sexual or domestic violence are of a high quality and are not subjected to cuts?
- Question 3:** Harmful attitudes to women and girls give rise to everyday sexism, to discrimination and to many forms of violence in our city. If elected, will you work with the heads and governors of all the educational establishments in your ward to put prevention on the curriculum?

Out of 141 candidates 24 responded by our deadline. Political parties represented by these candidates were: the Trade Unions and Socialists Against Cuts (TUSC), Independents for Bristol, Liberal Democrats, the Green Party and the Labour Party. No independent candidates or those from the Conservative Party, UKIP, or Respect, responded. Our scoring gave credit to all the candidates who took the time to respond, and further merit was awarded for answers to each question. Points were awarded for making specific commitments and for demonstrating understanding of the issues that have been identified by women in Bristol as being of concern. Our scoring system produced a rating which, in our analysis, corresponds to the following:

★	No understanding of issues of concern to women, no commitment stated.
★★	Has demonstrated some awareness of the issues, but has made no commitments.
★★★	Has demonstrated some awareness of the issues, and has made some general commitment.
★★★★	Good understanding of some issues and has made specific commitments.
★★★★★	In depth understanding of issues facing women, demonstrating strong and specific commitments.

The ratings were independently scored, before being compared and averaged<sup>2</sup>, by 3 members of the Bristol *Counting Women In* group. None of these members are affiliated to any political party and none are active in any candidates' campaigns. We would also like to stress that this summary is no substitute for learning more about the candidates' policies and commitments through their manifestos, social media communications, literature and events. Neither is this a comprehensive report on everything the candidates have said on all issues affecting women, or about women's equality. However, we believe it will be useful in gauging candidates' awareness and commitment to issues affecting women. There may be some candidates whose political parties did not immediately forward the list of questions to them, and there may be some candidates who will reply to the questions but who have missed the deadline for this report.

<sup>1</sup> All political parties were emailed the questions by Bristol Women's Voice. In addition, the questions were publicised on social media (Facebook; Twitter) by a range of groups and individuals across the city.

<sup>2</sup> Calculations were averaged and moderated up rather than down

## Who answered our questions and in which wards?

Ward	Candidate	Affiliation	Rating
Bedminster	Robin Clapp	Trade Unions and Socialists Against Cuts	★★★★★
Bishopston	Barry Cash	Liberal Democrats	★★★
	Tim Malnick	Green Party	★★★★★
	Martin Saddington	Trade Unions and Socialists Against Cuts	★★★★
Hartcliffe	Naomi Rylatt	Labour Party	★★★★★
Horfield	Martyn Ahmet	Trade Unions and Socialists Against Cuts	★★★★
	Cheryl Ann	Liberal Democrats	★★★★★
Knowle	Dominico Hill	Trade Unions and Socialists Against Cuts	★★★★★
Lockleaze	Gill Kirk	Labour Party	★★★★
Redland	Martin Fodor	Green Party	★★★★★
	Stella Perrett	Independents for Bristol	★★★★★
	Alex Smethurst	Liberal Democrats	★★★★★
Southville	Matthew Carey	Trade Unions and Socialists Against Cuts	★★★★
Stockwood	Robin McGhee	Liberal Democrats	★★★★★
Stoke Bishop	Mary Page	Liberal Democrats	★★★★★
Westbury-on-Trym	Graham Donald	Liberal Democrats	★★★★★
	Mike Luff	Trade Unions and Socialists Against Cuts	★★★★★
Whitchurch Park	Alice Bouquet	Labour Party	★★★★★
	Tim Kent	Liberal Democrats	★★★★★
Windmill Hill	Tom Baldwin	Trade Unions and Socialists Against Cuts	★★★★★
	Andrew Brown	Liberal Democrats	★★★★★

The candidates' full responses are available here:

<http://www.bristolwomensvoice.org.uk/counting-women-in-2014/>

All candidates who replied made commitments to:

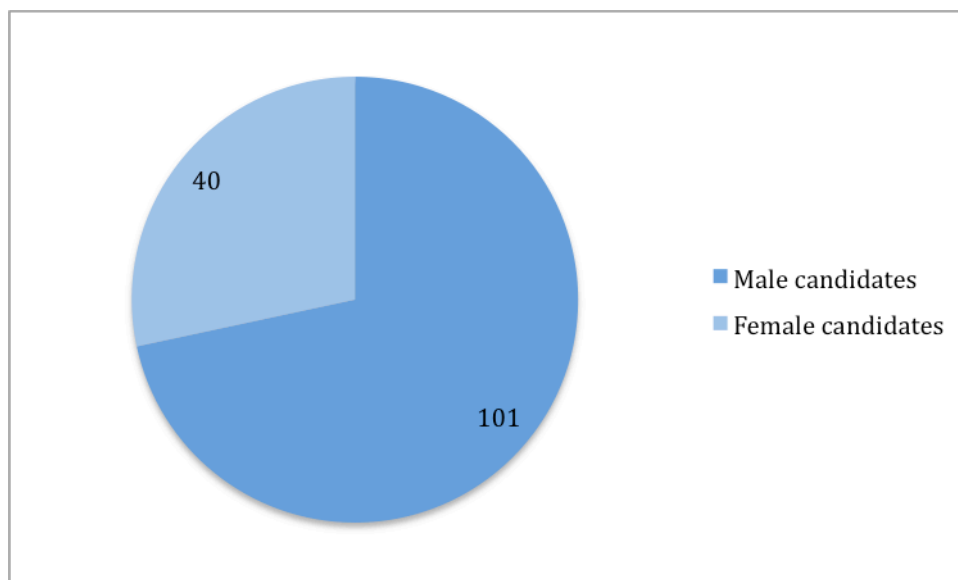
1. Oppose cuts to services for women who have experienced sexual or domestic violence.
2. Work with the heads and governors of all the educational establishments in their ward to put prevention of sexism on the curriculum.

We also researched all of the party websites and leaflets, looking for indications of their awareness of issues affecting women in Bristol. Our main findings were that most parties do not mention women's rights or equality, with the exception of the TUSCs who have a good paragraph on their national website, and the Green Party who have a commitment to equality and justice (albeit very non-specific).

Finally, we calculated the percentage of female candidates represented within each party. The results are as follows:

<b>Independents for Bristol:</b>	66% (2 out of 3)
<b>Labour Party:</b>	45% (11 out of 24)
<b>UKIP:</b>	31% (5 out of 16)
<b>Green Party:</b>	30% (7 out of 23)
<b>Liberal Democrats:</b>	25% (6 out of 24)
<b>Conservatives:</b>	21% (5 out of 24)
<b>TUSC:</b>	17% (4 out of 24)
<b>Respect:</b>	0% (0 out of 1)
<b>Independent candidates:</b>	0% (0 out of 2)

Overall, the proportion of male candidates to female candidates is extremely skewed, with women representing only 29% of candidates:



While the responses of the candidates show an awareness and willingness to engage with issues of concern to women in the city, the low response rate suggests that there is still a lot of work to be done. Recognising that there is such a stark disparity between men and women in politics is essential in order to get more candidates discussing women's issues – in politics as well as in Bristol society as a whole.

**The full list of candidates for all wards is available here:**

[http://www.bristol.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/council\\_and\\_democracy/elections/Statement%20of%20Persons%20Nominated%20%20Local%202022%20may%202014%20with%20bookmarks.pdf](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/council_and_democracy/elections/Statement%20of%20Persons%20Nominated%20%20Local%202022%20may%202014%20with%20bookmarks.pdf)

**If you have any responses/ questions please tweet to us at:**

[www.twitter.com/wearstheshoes](http://www.twitter.com/wearstheshoes) or email us at: [wearstheshoes@gmail.com](mailto:wearstheshoes@gmail.com)