

General Election 2024
Special Report

The Candidates Answer
Your Questions

Chorley Elects



On Thursday 4th July, millions of people will visit polling stations across the country to cast their vote and choose our next government. Our current Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, is the leader of the Conservative Party, the current biggest party in the House of Commons. He has called the election and is seeking to win another majority for his party.

The second biggest party, the Labour Party, is currently ahead in the polls. Led by Kier Starmer, the Labour Party is hoping to replace the Conservatives as the biggest party in the House of Commons and, therefore, form the next government.

How do Parliamentary elections work?

In a General Election, each Constituency (Chorley is ours) chooses one person to send to Parliament to represent them. It is then these Members of Parliament who choose the next Prime Minister. Usually, they vote along party lines, meaning the party with the most MPs becomes the Government and its leader becomes the Prime Minister.

In Secure, we have looked at the major parties that are vying for votes across the country. All of them claim to have a vision to make society better. Voters will now choose whose promises and vision they believe in most.

The Conservatives have been in power since 2010 and have won the last four elections. They are currently behind Labour in the opinion

polls and look unlikely to win the election. However, opinion polls have been notoriously inaccurate over recent years.

We will start to get results from Constituencies across the country from about 11pm. Usually, it is clear who is going to win the election by the early hours of the morning. That means that when you wake up on Friday 5th July, one party will have won the election.

Why is Chorley different?

Our current MP, Sir Lindsay Hoyle, is the Speaker of the House of Commons. This is a special job that means he chairs the debates in the House of Commons and decides what gets debated in Parliament. Due to Sir Lindsay's special position, the three main parties choose not to stand candidates against him. This means that voters in Chorley have a very different choice to those in the rest of the country.

In this paper, the three locally based candidates have answered questions devised by our newspaper club. How would you cast your vote?

The General Election will take
place on Thursday 4th July.

Sir Lindsay Hoyle

the Speaker seeking re-election

1. Why are you standing to be the MP for Chorley?

I am standing to be re-elected as Chorley's MP as I passionately believe in promoting our community and believe I can bring about further improvements for local residents. Chorley is the place where I was born and have lived and worked my whole life. It has been a privilege to represent my home borough in Westminster and I believe I have an excellent track record in delivering real change for our area. I want to continue with this work and believe I am best placed to ensure Chorley has a powerful voice at the heart of government.

2. Why should people vote for you as MP?

I have a proven track record of delivering on behalf of local residents such as:

- securing £20m investment for our town centre
- helped deliver and fundraise for our Youth Zone
- successfully lobbied for the re-opening of our A&E
- secured agreement for a new hospital whilst retaining our hospital at Chorley
- campaigned to protect our railway ticket offices at Chorley, Buckshaw & Adlington.

These are just some of the things I have achieved as Member of Parliament for Chorley and I will continue to work hard on behalf of local people should I be re-elected. In addition, as Speaker of the House of Commons, I have even greater access to senior Ministers and I will continue to use this influence to ensure that the interests of our local community are promoted at the heart of government.

3. As an MP, what policies would you introduce to help school children?

There are a number of ways I would seek to help school children. Firstly, here in Chorley we need a new school, ideally located in the northern part of the borough. Each year, children are being forced to travel further and further to get a school place. This must be addressed and I will continue to lobby Lancashire County Council for a new school within the borough.

I believe that we should do everything possible to allow school children to flourish and reach their potential. Central to this is providing the correct environment for children to learn and I believe we need more investment in school buildings and reduce class sizes. With reduced class sizes and better facilities teachers will have greater opportunity to help children given their wide ranging needs. In addition, I want any new government to provide extra focus and investment in mental health support for children. We need more specialist services to cater for children's different needs so that no one is excluded from a quality education.

4. How will you help ensure that schools get more funding?

I will lobby Ministers for more funding, in particular highlighting the needs of local schools. Whichever party wins the next election, they will face significant demands for extra investment in all public services. The scale of challenge is huge but it will be a question of prioritising where to invest. I have a proven track record of getting



more investment for our area and will continue to use my position to champion the needs of school.

5. What plans do you have to support disadvantaged children in schools?

Everyone deserves access to quality education. For those most disadvantaged children I believe we need extra tutoring, after-school programmes and mentorship opportunities. In addition, we need greater investment in mental health services for children. I also think travel costs to school is a growing problem for families which impacts on the most disadvantaged children. Therefore, more investment in funding school transport is needed.

6. How will you raise awareness of current international issues (for example Gaza and Haiti)?

There are many international issues of grave concern including Gaza, Haiti and the Ukraine to name but a few. It is important that we use our influence to try and stop injustice and war and the UK continues to play a role on the international stage. I have raised these issues with the Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister and will continue to press our government to do what it can to oppose aggression, promote justice and bring about peaceful solutions to current conflicts.

7. How will you ensure I can buy a home in Chorley when I grow up?

We need more affordable homes built in our area. We also need more social housing for people to rent when they can't afford to buy. I will be pushing the newly elected government to incentivise councils and housing associations to build more affordable properties and social rented accommodation. In addition, I will be supporting policies to help buyers afford a mortgage so they can buy a home rather than be constantly trapped in the rental market as they can never save enough for a mortgage.

8. How will you ensure that schools remain inclusive, given recent government guidance on issues such as transchildren?

I want to encourage a culture in our schools where everyone, irrespective of background, identity or other social characteristic, feels valued and respected, and has equal opportunity to flourish. Children need to know they will be supported and be in a safe space when in school. In order to facilitate this, it is important that staff are given the necessary training and guidance so that they can adapt to the needs of children.

9. What will be your first priority when elected?

As mentioned earlier I believe we need a new high school in Chorley. If re-elected this will be my first priority.

Martin Powell-Davies

the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC Against Cuts)

1. Why are you standing to be the MP for Chorley?

I am standing to give voters in Chorley a real choice, a chance to elect an MP who will speak up in their interests - for homes, health and public services - instead of the constituency having to just return a 'Speaker' who has no vote in Parliament.

2. Why should people vote for you as MP?

As a trade unionist, socialist and community campaigner, I have spent all my life organising – and winning – to improve the lives, pay and conditions of the workers and communities that I represent. I'm not standing for my personal gain but to use my experience and passion to win change for Chorley. I would do so as a "Workers' MP on a Worker's Wage", remaining on a teachers' salary, not the £91,000 paid to an MP, and certainly not the £171,000 paid to the Speaker!

3. As an MP, what policies would you introduce to help school children?

As a science teacher for over 30 years, I have seen class sizes shoot up, special needs support slashed, staff driven out by unrelenting workload and schools turned into 'exam factories' rather than places where every student can thrive. I would speak out for the policies set out in (my union) the National Education Union's 'Manifesto for Change' which calls for an end to cuts and child poverty, an engaging and inclusive curriculum, and an end to the exam factory culture.

4. How will you help ensure that schools get more funding?

School budgets in Chorley have been cut by a staggering £7M in real terms since 2010. Instead of demanding that the enormous wealth in our unequal society is used to fund schools, both main parties are agreed that they will maintain a tight hold on spending. So, winning better funding is going to need parents, students and school staff to get organised. As MP, I can use my position to help lead those struggles, in the House of Commons, at local demos and meetings, and on the picket lines of school staff unions taking action to demand the funds we need.

5. What plans do you have to support disadvantaged children in schools?

Firstly, that disadvantage needs to be tackled in the communities our schools serve. I stand for a minimum wage of at least £15 an hour, for a cap on soaring rents, for a benefits system which is based on actual need and a reversal of the cuts to our NHS, social care, mental health and youth services. In school itself, every child should have a free nutritious school lunch, and support based on need instead of resources being blocked by bureaucracy and a cap on council budgets.

6. How will you raise awareness of current international issues (for example Gaza and Haiti)?

I will be an MP who, in the words of Keir Hardie, one of the first ever trade unionists to be elected, won't be 'silenced nor controlled'. So, I will speak up against injustice, inside and outside Parliament, both in Britain and across the globe. I would speak up for a permanent



VOTE MARTIN POWELL- DAVIES **TUSC AGAINST CUTS**
Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition in **CHORLEY**

A WORKERS' MP ON A WORKER'S WAGE

FOR HOMES & HEALTH NOT INEQUALITY & WAR

Promoted by David Beale of 36 Pleasant View, Chorley, PR6 6SE, on behalf of Martin Powell-Davies of 80 Windermere Rd, LA9 5EZ

ceasefire and demand an end to the siege of Gaza to allow urgent action on its health, housing, food and sanitation crisis. I will call for the global solidarity needed to reverse disastrous climate change and to prevent the disintegration of countries like Haiti where people have been left by the world's powerful to face poverty and violence for too long.

7. How will you ensure I can buy a home in Chorley when I grow up?

Everyone should have the right to a safe, secure, and genuinely affordable home. For those who want to buy – an impossible dream for so many nowadays ! – there should be cheap low-interest mortgages for home buyers. But we also need the mass building of high-quality, carbon-neutral council housing to provide the homes we need and rent controls and an end to 'no fault evictions' too.

8. How will you ensure that schools remain inclusive, given recent government guidance on issues such as transchildren?

Hated for the way they have served the wealthy instead of the working-class, some Tories have tried to divert opposition by spreading anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ+ scare stories. I would urge Chorley voters not to fall for those 'divide-and-rule' tactics. Schools must be inclusive places where every young person feels secure, and staff can ensure student welfare is always the highest priority.

9. What will be your first priority when elected?

To meet with all the many different parts of the Chorley community that have already contacted me about the issues they face: trade unionists, young people and parents; hospital campaigners and those demanding action on war and climate change; all the many local people we have met on the doorsteps and on our stalls who are struggling with the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. As Bob Crow, the union leader who first helped found the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition famously said "If you fight you won't always win. But if you don't fight you will always lose". I intend to be a workers' MP that can give people confidence that, together, we can win change for Chorley – and for working people across Britain.

Mark Tebbutt

the Green Party

1. Why are you standing to be the MP for Chorley?

To provide Chorley residents with an alternative vote to the speaker who must remain impartial and cannot ask questions, debate, or vote in parliament.

In addition, I want to demonstrate that there are votes to be had for green policies and thus push the future government to have greater climate / environmental ambition.

2. Why should people vote for you as MP?

We think change is best achieved by voting with your values - a vote for something you don't believe in is a wasted vote. If you are passionate about looking after our planet so that future generations have the clean air, clean water, food security, and a safe climate that we have so far taken for granted, vote Green.

3. As an MP, what policies would you introduce to help school children?

Schools' ought to inspire learning, not feel like an exam factory. We would remove high-pressure tests in primary schools and high schools, and focus on students' individual abilities, because we know that this is the best way to nurture talent.

4. How will you help ensure that schools get more funding?

The Green Party would increase spending on schools to £8 billion to make sure school buildings are safe and increase teachers' pay.

We will pay for all this by increasing taxes on private schools and increasing taxes on the richest people in our society.

5. What plans do you have to support disadvantaged children in schools?

Green MPs will push for £5bn to be spent on special needs provision within schools - all schools will have fully accessible buildings and specially trained teachers, and local councils will be able to support students at school and in getting to school.

We would make sure all students had free school meals.

We would bring back financial support for students in college. We would get rid of university tuition fees and restore maintenance grants to university students, so that young people don't start their working lives saddled with huge amounts of debt.

6. How will you raise awareness of current international issues (for example Gaza and Haiti)?

We believe that in a world threatened by wars, anti-democracy, and authoritarian regimes, it is more important than ever to stand up for our democracy, protect our human rights and make a stand for global solidarity.

We need an immediate bilateral ceasefire in Gaza to protect innocent lives. And we need to make our voices heard where we see the huge injustices occurring in Haiti and beyond.



7. How will you ensure I can buy a home in Chorley when I grow up?

Private companies fail to meet house building targets every year - and often the houses they do build are the ones that make them the most profit, not the ones that are most needed.

The only long-term term solution to our national housing crisis is for Councils to build council housing - Greens would build 150,000 per year. We'd also make sure that once you have a home, it was affordable to heat and run, by making sure all homes are well insulated.

8. How will you ensure that schools remain inclusive, given recent government guidance on issues such as transchildren?

Greens would make sure all students are given evidence based and age-appropriate Relationships, Sex and Health Education, including LGBTIQ+ content. We would also make sure schools are inclusive places for pupils with special educational needs, with extra money available for making schools accessible and providing specially trained teachers.

9. What will be your first priority when elected?

The NHS. It faces the worst crisis in its 80-year history. This is the result of deliberate Conservative under-funding that's seen the NHS undermined and at risk of collapse, paving the way for further privatisation. The Green Party is committed to a fully public, properly funded health and social care system, and to keeping the profit motive well away from the NHS.

