## Council Elections 2020

### Candidate Election Addresses

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Candidate statements are presented in reverse ballot paper order, which is randomly selected.

Each statement is accompanied by the candidate’s name, the geographical area in which they reside (North, East, West, or London & South East), their gender if declared, and whether or not they identify as a member of an ethnic minority.

The Council is responsible for the governance and strategic direction of Unlock Democracy.

**Remember to return your ballot paper before 5pm on 19 June 2020.**
Stephen Carter

The crisis of our democracy is only getting worse. The COVID pandemic threatens to supercharge the tendencies which have are already apparent in the government’s alarming ‘Page 48’ agenda. Unlock Democracy’s work is more important than ever, and once again I would like to continue supporting that work on Council.

I have served four terms now on both the Unlock Democracy and Rodell boards. For the last two terms, I have also served almost continuously on the UD Management Board, meaning that I am active on all of our governance bodies.

I’ve previously served as the Vice-Chair for Policy, and have always been an active contributor in the strategy discussions in council. I have also played my part in more day to day efforts to strengthen UD, notably by making better use of the two London properties that are UD’s main assets. I still have a 100% attendance record (by Skype if not in person), despite being temporarily based outside of the UK.

I’ve taken an active part in the helping both organisations get through some challenging times. I thought we were through the worst: but now we face greater challenges than we have for years. My main concern if I am re-elected is to help UD adapt to these very different circumstances. These present us with some difficult hurdles to overcome, but huge opportunities as well.

The UK is more than ever in a state of constitutional crisis: the dysfunctional settlement between regions, nations and centre threatens the integrity of the whole country, the injustice of the electoral system is increasingly impossible to disguise, and local government is suffering an illusion of reform and a reality of budget cuts and central control. COVID is going to make all these issues even more acute.

I’ve long pushed for us to have a bolder approach. I want us to rethink our campaign strategy both to deal with our likely reduced circumstances, and to build on the work we have done in recent years, like the We the People campaign.

I am currently working as a consultant advisor to the Mayor of Sheffield City Region. Previously I worked as a campaigner and researcher on human rights, conflict and corruption, heading the Afghanistan campaign for Global Witness, an international civil society organisation working against corruption and conflict.

I would be happy to answer any questions UD members might have – I can be reached at postcarter@gmail.com
Hi I’m Phil Starr, many years back as director of Charter88 and working with Peter Facey of NPN I jointly formed Unlock Democracy. For the past few years I have been vice Chair of UD with responsibility for our fundraising through Rodell properties. I’ve made sure our Cynthia Street offices are fully refurbished and returning a healthy income and now we are ready to go on developing our other property which will further increase our assets and campaigning income. Only Covid stopped us this year and once the development is complete UD and Rodell will rest on a very firm footing.

In past years I’ve only ever asked you to elect me to complete the work needed on Rodell, to keep UD financially secure. The plans are all in place and ready to go as soon as the current emergency ends. I’ll finish that project but now I’m asking for your support to do more. If you vote for me I want to return to what we have been so good at in the past, active public campaigning on our core issues of democratic reform; a fairer voting system, proper checks on executive power, a democratic second chamber, returning powers to local government and a more inclusive democracy and of course wrapping all of this up in a written constitution based upon universal rights upheld by a judiciary independent of the executive.

We need to renew the vigour we once had. Recruit new people to our organisation of all ages to join our falling membership. More than that we need people to be talking about our issues. Our democracy is under threat from new government plans to sweep away even the limited checks and balances that exist now. Plans drawn up by unelected advisors will avoid all the messy business of taking laws through parliament and remove the power of judges to make sure our Government has to obey it’s own laws. Effectively this is a challenge to Magna Carta. This is happening against a background of cynicism about politics and increasing numbers of people turning to populist leaders. We who believe in democracy need to fight back.

We need to rise to the challenge, if we want to attract activists we need to be out there in public making the arguments. We need to marshall our arguments, develop our policies and share our ideas and expertise. We need to look outwards not inwards. We need to rekindle the fire that Charter 88 ignited all those years ago faced with similar challenges but this is a new generation and we need new people added to our membership and new enthusiasm. Democracy should not be a hard thing to sell but we need to get out there and fight for it.

Please vote for me as no 1, I need to take a clear mandate to every meeting to make the case for a livelier more effective campaigning organisation. The higher up the ballot I am the stronger the case I can make for active campaigning.

Email me at philstarr@zoho.eu if you want to tell me your ideas or ask me about mine.
Dear Unlock Democracy member,

An MEP for over 10 years I have worked with elected representatives from 28 countries from across the EU. I saw energy, respect and a level of debate from members from diverse countries with differing traditions and histories. We made progress with a tolerance that balanced differing views and delivered carefully constructed legislation.

The EU isn't perfect, but it's a very long way ahead democratically from the House of Commons.

The UK has an over concentration of power, disrespect of the law - and generally childish behaviour in the House that embarrasses me, and our nation.

Now that I am no longer involved with frontline political duties I am determined to do what I can to bring about changes not only in Westminster, but to our electoral processes and to deliver a written constitution.

As an activist and campaigner I will bring energy and experience to help change our democracy and to balance power in the UK. There has never been a better time.

These opportunities don’t come along very often and I want to be involved to drive that change.

The debacle of Brexit and the dismissal of calls for change has not brought the country together. It’s left too many dispirited.

This was very evident before the current crisis, and will be worse as we face economic difficulties as a result.

I would be very glad to receive your first preference vote.

Kind regards,

Catherine Bearder
Election Address for Unlock Democracy
Sophie Franklin
Tewkesbury

I am delighted to offer my services to Unlock Democracy, which I have supported for many years, as I am more and more offended by results of elections in England.

Originally from France, I moved to England in 1973 primarily to improve my knowledge of the language, but I then loved the life style so much that I stayed. I was married and I have two grown-up children, in London and Bristol, and a lovely grand-daughter.

I started a French language school in 1999, which I have now closed because I was ready for retirement, and I have therefore plenty of time to give to the community. I have been politically involved for most of my time in England, supporting the Young Conservatives in London, then moving to the Liberal Democrats, and finally to the Green Party. My MPs received lots of letters from me because I have to say what I think.

That’s where the system fails us; I do not think I had any influence in what my MPs did, over the years, and I feel very disenfranchised by it all. It is time we had a proper constitution and a government that reflects what we think, not what’s best for them.

In my search to influence the local community, I put my name down for co-option at the local town council, and was elected. Unfortunately, I found that, even at local level, the band of councillors who had been there for longest always won; the status quo lead the group, so I did not stand for election in May 2019.

Money has too much power, and the media do not help. The status quo reigns absolute and we will never move forward if we do not redress the state of affairs.

If you elect me, you will choose a dynamic person, eager to get involved and fight for everyone rather than just the elite.

Thank you.
Paul Daley – Unlock Democracy Council Statement

‘Democracy’. What do we mean by that word? The dictionary defines it as ‘a system of government by the whole population or all the members of a state, typically through elected representatives’

The key phrase there is ‘by the whole population’. That’s where our system is broken. Yes, everyone can vote for the elected representatives but the make up of the Government who are responsible for making the decisions does not represent the proportion of people who voted for them. To take the 2019 general election as an example, we have the conservatives who won 43.6% of the vote but ended up with 56% of the seats whereas the Liberal Democrats polled 11.5% of the vote but ended up with just 11 seats.

How can this be a fair system? We have a party governing the Country with less than half the Country having voted for them. More than half are unrepresented and people who align with other parties are substantially underrepresented. We need a fair system which involves Government by collective decision making

As a member of Council, I would advocate a changed voting system where the Country is represented in proportion to the peoples wishes.

Government itself also needs to be changed. The Government needs to be accountable with impartiality and Independent of the Judiciary.

We also need to fight for a Written constitution defining the role of Government, our rights and freedoms and clear information of what to do where this power is abused. It should reflect societies values and give a clear structure as to how decision making happens. This was brought clearly and abruptly to our attention recently where the Prime Minister was hospitalised and whilst the First Secretary of state was technically in charge he did not have the full authorities and so the Country was in a power vacuum for several weeks

As a member of council I would fight for the change this country so desperately needs – a fair voting system, a structure that keeps the Government held to account and a clear constitution which sets up the way the Country is governed. I would also advocate to an elected House of Lords to properly scrutinise policy with impartiality. I have drive and enthusiasm. I am a strong strategist and planner and believe I could make a real difference as part of Unlock Democracy council. I would be incredibly pleased if you would consider voting for me in these elections and thank you for reading my statement
FOR A GRASSROOTS ‘WEBBOLUTION’: ELECT JACOB WEBB

ABOUT ME
I am standing to help Unlock Democracy engage at a grassroots level with communities across the United Kingdom: promoting collaboration with independent media platforms and active participation in speaker events and festivals throughout the regions.

Professionally, I work in a Students’ Union to support the election process for Course Representatives. Outside work, I am currently developing a hyperlocal independent media platform for the Borough of Hillingdon: Hillingdon Vision. I have a firm academic background in political science having achieved a Bachelors in Social Policy and Masters in Global Social Policy from the University of York.

WHAT I BELIEVE
Our country, and our planet, desperately need to see a transformation of our political systems and values. The next 10 years are perhaps the most important 10 years in our planet’s history. What we do now shapes whether we enter runaway climate Armageddon or start building a fairer, more sustainable, and more democratic future: the pathways couldn’t be starker.

In this context, it is essential that Unlock Democracy acts with the boldness required to help build a radically more democratic society. Botched compromises and half measures will not be enough.

MY PRIORITIES

Collaboration with Independent Media
If elected, I would work to encourage Unlock Democracy to develop stronger working relationships with independent media platforms (e.g. Novara Media and Tribune) in order to help get Unlock Democracy’s messages to new [younger] audiences and to support the further development of these platforms.

Community Conversations and Festivals
Education is central to change. When people get excited about a vision for the future, they take action to achieve it. If elected, I would work to build an Unlock Democracy that hosts community speaker events and takes part in festivals across the regions and nations of the United Kingdom.
Our country is broken in a number of ways, but we cannot ever hope to fix a broken country until we fix our broken Political system. Historic traditions which solely rely on people being decent enough to follow them are not good enough. Instead, we need a Written constitution, which codifies our Democratic processes, ensures our rights and privileges, put checks and balances on the Government, creates a separation of powers, establishes an elected House of Lords and fairer electoral system, sets up term limits for MPs, institutes the three legs of Direct Democracy and which creates a Federal system of power so decisions can be made closer to home - instead of in Westminster.

My name is Luke Williams, I am a 19-year-old Student from the North West, and I’m running for the Unlock Democracy Council. I have always been passionate about major constitutional reform and local control, and as a result just over a year ago, I joined Unlock Democracy. I've thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the group and hope to be elected to the council so I can do my bit, to help bring us closer to achieving our goals.

If elected to the Unlock Democracy Council, I would firstly fully attend all meetings with enthusiasm and an open mind. I want to be proactive and engaged with Council business, to ensure that I can loyally represent the members of Unlock Democracy effectively. I would wish to do my part to help the organisation grow, through any means I could. As it stands, Unlock Democracy is a fantastic organisation which is effectively helping to change the conversation on constitutional reform in the U.K.

But being a Pressure Group is hard in our current political system, we know this more than anybody. If elected, I’d be in favour of moving Unlock Democracy towards a position where we build on the great work we do already. I’d support our group becoming more involved in general elections, directly endorsing candidates who support our values and encouraging parties to nominate candidates who support our values in safe seats. In addition to this, I would lobby the Unlock Democracy Council to establish a legislative scorecard (like those used by Pressure Groups in the USA like the ACLU and the Club for Growth) which would grade MPs on the way they vote on legislation that we believe would advance our goals. So, we can help to slowly turn our enthusiasm and passion into political power.

If elected I’d also support any new ways to enhance our fundraising efforts, to make sure we can continue to punch above our weight. In addition, I would encourage the Council to help to find ways to further support devolved and local Unlock Democracy groups. While finally, if elected, I would support the formation of an official group chat and updates to the Unlock Democracy website to allow members to submit articles, comment on current affairs and stay in touch.

Thank you for taking the time to read my Manifesto, and I hope you will consider lending me your vote in this upcoming election.
We have never lived through such times. Never has there been the need for strong campaigning to protect and develop our democratic rights.

**Emergencies** call for urgent action. But the rushing through of emergency legislation means concern about accountability via Parliamentary scrutiny, undermining of our long-term democracy rights, and whether it is time limited or becomes permanent.

**Top-down approach.** The centralisation of powers over the last twenty years has meant less ability to respond locally, with local government powers and resources undermined. But also, the dismantling of local health infrastructures has meant that in the current health crisis, only national decisions and actions, instead of early local responses. For example, offers of assistance over local production of protective equipment could not be taken up.

In these times, protecting our **rights to accurate information**, not fake news, is crucial if we are to make informed decisions. The Information Commissioner has indicated their approach means a relaxing of timely reporting requirements – which may be necessary just now but likely to be permanent unless a campaign is raised. “Hacked Off” is drawing attention to how some newspapers are giving space to conspiracy theories, currently those that link the spread of Coronavirus to 5G masts! Freedom of the press is very important, but so also is the duty to inform and not to misinform.

The **Conservative manifesto** in December promised to address “the relationship between the Government, Parliament and the courts; the functioning of the Royal Prerogative; and access to justice for ordinary people.” So Parliamentary boundaries, the role of the judiciary (remember the prorogation issue last summer?) and voter identification documentation are all under review; there are also concerns about the undermining of the Human Rights Act.

My campaign priorities:
- Proportional representation
- Decentralisation of powers
- Lords Reform
- A properly informed electorate

We are not the only body campaigning on these issues; we need to work with others e.g. with Make Votes Matter & the Electoral Reform Society on proportional representation.

*But always arguing that any changes need to be guaranteed within a written constitution*
Hello. Thank you for voting me on to the Council of Unlock Democracy in 2016 and 2018. I am now co-chair of UD’s Management Board with Jessica Metheringham, for whom I have a huge amount of respect. I urge you to also re-elect her to Council.

I still work as a fundraising and campaigning consultant, helping charities (from tiny organisations like Tax Justice UK to massive ones like Save the Children) get the global changes they want to see.

I continue to stand for UK political bodies, most recently in the EU Parliament elections last year. Again, I played a part in helping the Green Party achieve their best ever European election results, electing a total of 7 MEPs.

I have put in hundreds of hours of free consultancy time to help grow the capacity of Unlock Democracy and increase staff skills.

This has helped us pivot towards a new strategy which is beginning to bear fruit in terms of increased membership, But there is still much to be done to address the lack of diversity among our membership.

Before getting sick with what I believe is Covid 19, I made it a priority to steer the organisation through our most challenging time for decades. The resignation of our director and both co-chairs is cause for concern.

I stepped up to fill this leadership gap despite the unexpected time commitment. As soon as I have fully recovered I will continue to root out and fix the cause of this serious issue.

As time goes on, I am more and more concerned that UD relies for our income on profit from rent. I feel ill at ease with this, given that current events may cause economic inequality in the UK to worsen sharply. Never mind that it makes less business sense to put all of our nest eggs in one basket, so to speak.

A vote for me is a mandate to push for Unlock Democracy to quit being landlords. Such a vote gives support to the idea that we invest our capital safely into other activities that address the world’s systemic problems alongside winning our campaign.

A vote for me is also a vote for increased diversity in staff and membership. The make-up of UD’s elected bodies and the people who work for us is moving further towards being white, educated and male than it was four years ago. This must raise red flags for us.

This is a problem that will take a while to solve. However, I will be a resource for UD staff and volunteers when it comes to reaching new audiences and involving a diversity of people in our work. I will commit to prioritising this issue.

If you re-elect me in 2020, I will:

- Continue to be a safe pair of hands as we sail through troubled waters;
- Push for UD to divest from land and property ownership;
- Keep on helping to grow Unlock Democracy’s membership but address the diversity issue;
- Carry on being accountable to you as a member, and contributing my contacts and expertise as I have done for the past 4 years.
I'm standing for Unlock Democracy's Council, because I want UD to be bold, take risks, and make a difference. But most of all, I want UD to grow. I want to take the enthusiasm for the cause, which I've seen in the staff, in the council but most of all in our members, and spread that wider. I want to build a real movement that's ready to not just ask for change, not suggest it might be better, but demand it.

And if I am elected to the Council, that's what I'll be calling for.

I believe that now, with a government that has a large majority, is not a time to be spreading ourselves thin, pushing for small changes on government policies, or trying to cover every facet of democratic reform. This government will have little desire to shift on those areas, and no reason it needs to based just on our say-so. We need to make some noise and be heard by people – learn from movements like Extinction Rebellion.

Because well over half the country did not vote for this government. Many are concerned by the potential gutting of human rights legislation as we exit the EU, and on what they might do with the emergency powers that have been needed for the Coronavirus crisis.

Now is the time to reach out to those people, to fire them up with our enthusiasm for the cause. To convince them of the need for change, and build the movement, build the numbers and the support so we are ready to make a difference when the time comes.

I think we need to be clear - focus on a written constitution, the rights that would grant us all, everyone knowing the definition of what the government owes to the people. In the past UD has tried to do many things at once, but the need for constitutional change was the core of Charter 88, and now should now at Unlock Democracy. It is what makes us unique, where we have expertise. That is what brings people to us rather than elsewhere.

I've spoken a lot about what I want, but who am I? I came to UD by the 2011 AV referendum, volunteering and working on that campaign, seeing the support and enthusiasm that is possible. I was one of those who stayed involved, spending four years working for UD itself. Eventually what I needed from my workplace changed, but my belief in the need for UD is undimmed. And in the past three years (still in the not-for-profit sector) I have seen the benefits of clear messaging, movement building, and making bold arguments, reaching for the stars.

I think it would be very easy for UD to be cautious right now. To retreat into our shell, to make quiet commentary about how bad things are without really affecting things. But I want us to do more, be more than that. If you want the same, please vote for me to be part of the Council.
Unlock Democracy is in Crisis!

The current Council is considering reducing our paid staff responsible for campaigning whilst a speculative building redevelopment in Central London is underway. The Directors post is still vacant. Priorities seem to be very confused. Read the last Council Minutes on the website.

I have previously undertaken the role of Acting Director for six months (unpaid) and stabilised a financial crisis. As Chair of my national unions Finance and Legal Committee I played a decisive role in overcoming a massive deficit.

I want to play a role on the Council prioritising Proportional Representation and a Peoples Convention for wider constitutional reform. Unless we concentrate all our energies on effective campaigning rather than internal disputes we shall continue our organisational drift.

My background has been mainly union being a branch secretary, National Vice-President, TUC national and regional committees.

More recently, I was Director of Action4Equality, campaigning for Equal Pay in Local Govt. and the NHS. I have a lifetime’s experience of campaigning on LGBT, democracy, pay and conditions, safety, housing and much more. I have previously served on both the Council of Charter 88 and Unlock Democracy. I believe strongly in cross party working mainly with Labour, Green and Liberal Democrat Parties.

I am active in my local community as Chair of the Springfield Community Centre. It is run entirely by volunteers. I have previously been a local councillor. Anyone wanting more information just contact me:

Stuart Hill, 14 Park Drive, Forest Hall, Newcastle, NE12 9JP

stuart.hill4@gmail.com 07970011375 or 01912662988
Jessica Metheringham
jessica.metheringham@gmail.com
@QuakerDissent

Thank you for voting me on to council two years ago. I became co-chair in March 2020, and over the last couple of months I’ve been working with the staff, management board, and the council. I’ve been happy to serve.

If I’m re-elected

I hope to stand as co-chair again, and would be an enthusiastic member of the team regardless of whether or not I’m successful. I can help Unlock Democracy campaign for a better democracy upheld by a written constitution by working with the staff team to plan each step. What campaign themes help us to achieve our overall goal? How can we work with other organisations to promote democracy? What can we say which will really speak to people and get them talking about democratic reform?

I would like to examine every aspect of how we work to ensure that we are functioning as best we possibly can – members, council, and staff together. I want us to be both ambitious with our campaigns and realistic in the steps we’re going to take to bring about democratic improvements. Unlock Democracy sits at the crossroads of the democracy sector — we are not an academic think tank, but a campaigning group able to turn grassroots concerns into real campaigning asks.

I can continue to offer a couple of days each week, providing leadership and setting the direction for our campaigns.

About me

I’ve worked for an MP, for the Electoral Commission and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, and as a campaigner. I spent nearly six years working for Quakers in Britain, where I was responsible for political and parliamentary engagement. My knowledge and experience lies in the “how” of political campaign planning.

I have experience of campaigning on issues such as political lobbying, civil society, sustainability, peace education, nuclear weapons, welfare, housing, criminal justice, and immigration. I know about Westminster, the Scottish Parliament, local authorities, and a little about the Welsh Senedd. (Not much about Stormont, though.) I’ve written Statutory Instruments on electoral arrangements of civil parishes in England, and have monitored elections on behalf of the Electoral Commission. I was previously co-opted on to the power and accountability board of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

Last year I went freelance, and spent some of my time creating a board game about disarming war planes, with all profits (currently about £5k) going to Campaign Against Arms Trade. Other campaigning games are in the pipeline, including one about voting reforms.

I was not a member of any political party when I worked in Parliament, I am not a member of any political party now, and I don't have any intention of joining one.
Unlock Democracy Election Address

I’m Tom, based in Sutton Coldfield, near Birmingham. I have been an activist in British politics for a decade. I was inspired to get involved in the Take Back Parliament campaign after the 2010 general election, and my passion for overcoming political, economic, and social injustices have grown with each passing year. I’ve been a campaigner in two national referendums, stood for election at town council level, chaired several groups, including Unlock Democracy Birmingham, organised a march outside a party conference, led indoor events and sent countless emails to supporters to inspire them to take action.

I must confess that reflecting on the last 10 years, at times, I wonder what it’s been for and what good I’ve done. It’s fair to say that there have been several damaging defeats over the last decade which have undermined the fabric of British democracy, and made the prospect of real, progressive reforms feel so far away. We now have a majority government, elected by a minority of voters, that abhors scrutiny and prefers to conduct policy through morning headlines.

And yet, the pandemic shows up the failings of successive governments and illustrates how deliberate political choices can have dire consequences for every British citizen. This moment, combined with the shambolic handling of Brexit and the growing climate emergency, illustrates- and now must accelerate- the case for wide-ranging reform. We can not go back to the inequalities of the early 21st century- our society will, rightfully, no longer tolerate it.

For me, Unlock Democracy has been the model of a superb campaigning organisation: its focus has always been appropriate, and its work invites constant analysis of the recurring themes that spring up in each of the UK’s crises. If elected, I intend to help Unlock Democracy further its work by helping to build strong links with civil society and campaigning organisations ranging across the board. The roots of the country’s problems lie with its democracy, and it is important that Unlock Democracy continues to lead the clamour for change by bringing on board the many interests that are adversely affected by the rigged democracy we have right now.

As an organiser and leader, I believe I understand what motivates people to campaign, and know how to retain their enthusiasm over long periods of time- I would help Unlock Democracy to reach out to new supporters by encouraging as many new ways of working as possible, and expanding the promotion done via, for example, podcasts and social media outlets. The situation calls for big thinking, big ideas and big change. I believe that Unlock Democracy has a brilliant opportunity to lead the charge, and I would love to be able to make a significant, positive, lasting contribution.
I’m Sab (they/them) and standing to be on Unlock Democracy’s Council! Here’s what I look like, so you know I don’t bite:

Why me?

I currently work in Student Democracy at a Students Union in the West Midlands. I see the powerful effects that transparent, open democratic processes can have on our institutions.

Unlock Democracy should be working towards the same on a national scale – for our government and for our people.

Through working on the council, I want to insure **inclusive**, **informed** and **energised** work for UD as a whole!

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**Step 1 - Inclusive:**

As a council, we need to ensure that no one is left behind by Unlock Democracy. This means:

- Pushing for more work to be done by the Government Equalities Officer on the barriers Disabled and BAME people particularly face, as well as low-paid workers to Britain’s democracy
- Our work needs to consider how democratic rights differ within each Devolved Nation.
- Ensuring the Council are equipped to discuss and deliberate on issues that affect marginalised people’s democratic rights – from legal troubles to financial barriers
- Helping the council understand the barriers of engagement for Unlock Democracy’s work (and how to break them down!)

**Step 2 – Informed:**

- To push Unlock Democracy to provide clear information and raise awareness of how democratic rights differ across the devolved nations e.g. how 16-17-year olds and migrants can vote in Senedd elections in Wales in 2021
- A focus on outreach & awareness on Unlock Democracy’s work. UD does valuable work, but more people need to know about it!

**Step 3 – Energised:**

- Helping to build more of a movement beyond Council and staff, so that the membership can feel direct engagement with council
- We should consolidate our social media as well as physical spaces regionally. This will help our work seem friendly and inviting to all!

This is a short overview of what I think I can bring to council, and ideas to help grow Unlock Democracy. Please get in contact with me if you want me to expand on anything!
I joined Unlock Democracy in January this year and I think that work that Unlock Democracy does in pushing for a fully democratic society is invaluable. I’ve spent some time reading through the website including the various campaigns and am keen to get further involved. Although I have never been directly involved in voting campaigns I am very interested in different styles of political representation.

I have recently stepped down from the steering committee of a small campaigning organisation after being a committee member for over 10 years and am interested in finding a new committee position. The organisation that I was involved in had a non-hierarchical management structure so there was a greater than usual involvement of staff in the steering committee and steering committee members were also very involved in shaping the organisation as well as reviewing staff management, policies and procedures. I am keen to bring my previous experiences to Unlock Democracy’s Council and explore different organisational structures.

I also work for a small research charity that also has a non-hierarchical structure, and therefore have experience of working within such a structure and the advantages and disadvantages this can bring.
No election address supplied.
Peter McLaverty’s Statement

I am a 67 year old retired academic, who has worked, and published, for over 30 years on the theory and practice of democracy and political participation. I was the founding convenor of the Political Studies Association Participatory and Deliberative Democracy Specialist Group. As an academic, I have worked with local authorities, the Scottish Parliament, young people and young people’s groups, and tenants’ associations on issues relating to democracy.

I am a member of a number of civil society groups, as well as Unlock Democracy, such as the New Economics Foundation, Compass and the Electoral Reform Society. I am a member of the Labour Party.

I want to see not just an enhancement of democracy in the political sphere but to actively help to create a more democratic society. I want to see the introduction and extension of forms of industrial democracy, as well as a written constitution that sets out how political power will be distributed in Britain and the powers of different political institutions. I support the creation of a citizens’ assembly or convention to consider and make recommendations about how power can be redistributed in Britain, so that power lies in the hands of the people and political institutions can be made more accountable to the people.

I think my work on democracy over the years could help to give form to Unlock Democracy’s thinking and campaigns. That is why I am standing for election to the Council.

As I write this in April 2020, the world has been transformed by the Covid-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, we need to ensure that voices of all groups, classes and sections of British society are listened to and influence political and economic decision-making processes. By building on its existing work, Unlock Democracy needs to play its part in helping to work out how, when we get back to something like ‘normal’, Britain can become a more equal, sustainable and democratic society, for we cannot allow things to go back to how they were before Covid-19 struck. If I became a member of the Council, I would want to help Unlock Democracy in that crucial task and hope the analytical skills I have would make me a useful member of the Council.

I can be contacted at: petermclaverty@hotmail.com. I currently live in Rugby.
Henry James Riley (Jim)

Ferndown, Dorset

07971554410 EM-ferndownaction@aol.com

Place of Birth- Dumbarton, Scotland

Lived in South of England since 1993

Retired- 2008, Volunteered in a number of roles within my community including being Chair and Secretary of Ferndown Local Action Group, This was supported by East Dorset District Council, which during mid Eighties partnered Community Groups setting up focus groups invited from Local Action Groups and Senior Council Officers covering a number of issues which were concerning communities. I was invited to apply to be a member of The Tenant’s Voice, an organisation being funded initially by Government, I declined. These were wound down around 2013ish. I was then involved with my Local Housing Association representing my Community within their Neighbourhood Panels of which their was around 30, tenant led groups which were given grants of £16, 000 annually, to disburse until the Government decided to require Social Landlords to discount rents by 1% over 4 years.

I have been a member of different political parties since 2007. I am no longer a party member.

I ask for your support in this election as I believe the time has never been more suitable to mount a challenge against the continuing mismanagement of Taxpayers hard earned money by politicians, many of whom are no longer fit for purpose (if they ever were) and who continually seem to be more interested in following party agenda’s than the will of THE PEOPLE who they seem to forget pay all the bills for their mismanagement and lack of forethought.

If I am successful in gaining a position within Council it will be my aim to put a Concept document together for discussion later in the year.

Thank you for reading

Jim

Having enjoyed success as both a campaigner and a business owner (now retired) I’m asking you to let me indulge my passion for constitutional reform in the UK.

When I was at a suburban comprehensive in the 70s we were taught that the UK’s constitution was the “best in the world”. When pressed on what that actually meant the best that our teachers could offer was “the Crown is sovereign in Parliament”. Traveling the globe, doing business face-to-face in a great many countries, has shown me personally how wrong those teachers’ trite, rote-learnt exceptionalist assumptions were!

If you give me the honour of representing you at Unlock Democracy my first focus will be on campaigning. Back in the early 90s I became a LibDem councillor in an “unwinnable seat” in the Conservative super-safe borough of Bromley, only standing down four years later as my wife and I started a family and I needed to grow our business. I would love a chance to bring that direct campaigning experience to bear in pushing for a legitimate, reformed UK constitution.

As a business person I took a small, closely held company and made it internationally successful, raising turnover thirty-fold before selling-out to protect the firm’s 60 jobs from Brexit. That growth was down to a fantastic team that I directed, focusing tightly on customer satisfaction. I’d like to bring that experience to bear too but – perhaps controversially – would not view you, members, as the key customer cohort. Instead I would prefer to focus on those outside our enlightened circle; those who’ve yet to understand the potentially dire implications of our loose, informal constitution.

In both of my previous roles I found cooperation to be key, whether across industries or parties. My third focus therefore would be on sharing what works with other like-minded organisations. Whether as a school governor, a local Councillor, a Trustee of a public pension or a senior board member, I’ve found my good-humoured seriousness aids cooperation.

- **Life long enthusiast for constitutional regularisation and reform.**
- **History of success.**
- **Offering focus on campaigning, on enlightenment and on cooperation.**

Current commitments:

- Covid Taskforce member for LDBEN.
- Frequent attendee at briefings from UCL Constitution Unit, LSE and Chatham House.
- Policy Forum contributor for LibDems.
Bill Thompson – Before retirement I worked for Aerospace manufacturing companies for 48 years in many different disciplines. The common thread however, was always being involved in improving productivity and company performance throughout my career. In the early days this was a top-down approach from management and you didn’t always get buy-in from the workforce so the new ideas gave limited success. However in recent years using Continuous Improvement techniques and involving the teams who were doing the work, in a bottom-up approach to generate new ideas, the productivity gains on new policies and working practices were highly significant, enabling the company to grow, and with a happier workforce who bought in to the new practices they had helped formulate.

My experience above in contrast to our current political system, gives the main reason why our Governments are never fit for purpose. The elected politicians and parties are not representative of the citizen’s needs or wishes. You always get autocratic top-down decision making which is mainly ill-thought out or divisive. Poor unaccountable political policies and ‘u’ turns are costing us billions of pounds a year representing thousands of pounds annually to every man, women and child.

Although we have a political democratic structure, it has been hi-jacked by the political class, the establishment and senior civil servants, who are so far removed from ordinary people lives and communities of the country, that we are not being represented effectively or democratically. The parliamentary processes are more like complex archaic theatre designed for the status quo and keeping us in the past, rather than being simple and logical to concentrate on arriving at good policies to improve the well-being of the nation, in a forward-thinking society.

The politicians themselves generally lack the ability to problem solve and make good decisions. The type of intelligence required for this is common-sense, logic, ‘thinking outside the box’, and root-cause analysis, plus the ability to listen to others with an open mind, and change yours if necessary. Going to an ‘Elite’ school or getting a political degree will not afford you this, as you cannot teach intelligence; it is random throughout the populous and we need a democratic system that enables the best people for the role from any walk of life elected truly democratically.

I have been frustrated over our governance and democratic performance for a long time now like so many others. However when I get on my soapbox to people about the need to change our democratic system radically, most people say ‘you’ll never change that!’ Well I never up on things that are morally and ethically wrong, and ‘The hundred mile walk starts with the first step’.

On recently becoming aware of ‘Unlock Democracy’, I realised that rather me just writing letters to newspapers complaining about our broken democratic system, here is a group of like-minded people I can join who all want a better society through a new radically changed truly democratic system. An accountable bottom-up system, from the people for the people, where we all share the gains from a fairer and more productive society, by reaching our full potential through effective government.

I am seeking your support for election to the Unlock Democracy Council and I believe there has never been a better time to build a movement for democratic change, given the current dissatisfaction of the general public to political performance and election processes. We can now attract the ‘critical mass’ of membership to take us forward. If elected I will do my very best, and am not party-political, to aid the council with a balanced unbiased offering, in helping to build policies for a powerful campaign for change, to truly unlock our democracy. Thank you!
I first became politically aware in the early 1980’s, when the ‘Gang of Four’ (Roy Jenkins, Bill Rodgers, David Owen and Shirley Williams), then founding members of the Social Democratic party, spoke about electoral reform at a meeting in Woolwich, south east London, close to where I grew up.

Later, as part of my Open University degree, I studied the module ‘Democracy: From Classical Times to the Present’ which introduced me to the history of democracy and some of the ways it has been developed over the centuries.

Previous employments have given me experience of working in local government, particularly in housing, economic development and in a planning department.

Now, I live in Frome, Somerset, where we currently enjoy an independent town council. In 2017/18, as a post graduate student at the University of Bath, I participated in the student council, and gained some valuable insights as a volunteer, working within the Student Union.

I would like to be elected onto the ‘Unlock Democracy’ Council because the events of the past four years have made me question whether our elected MPs are truly able to represent the interests of their constituents, or whether ‘towing a party line’ has become more important to their political survival. I believe that we can no longer rely on an ‘unwritten’ constitution in the 21st century, with a network of ‘old boys’ making their own ‘gentlemen’s agreements’ of how things should be done.

To refresh or re-create our democracy, I believe that we need a written constitution, to deliver a more deliberative, and consensual form of politics, using feedback from local and regional assemblies, rather than the current system of combative contention. This constitution also needs to introduce and guarantee a system of proportional representation to give a fairer distribution of votes, which will hopefully make MPs more accountable to their constituents, throughout their period of tenure, and not purely during periods of election canvassing.

I am a mother and a grandmother, who simply thinks that in the 21st century we need, and deserve, a more equable and efficient way of conducting our nation’s politics. A vote for me will be a step in the direction of creating a fairer constitution for now and the future. I do not belong to any political party.
Claire Hill
London & South East | Female | Not declared

No election address supplied.
my name is Mike Young. I'm 48 years old, severely disabled (tetraplegic full-time wheelchair user), and I also consider myself part of the 'LGBT' population.

I'm also a qualified and experienced counsellor and cognitive-behavioural therapist.

In the past I also worked from home as a benefits advisor for the Spinal Injuries Association, co-founded and volunteered for a local (now sadly defunct) access/advocacy group (Ceredigion Access) and since have volunteered as a counsellor (complicated bereavement care) and a counselling group for adult survivors of childhood sex abuse.

My personal experience of the community and secondary care systems, coupled with knowledge of a Humanistic approach to individualism and a clear minority status perspective may be helpful and provide insight on a fairly broad range of issues.

Currently in lockdown but not officially listed as shielded or high risk from infection with covid19.

I have been housebound for financial and health issues for a year and a half already.

So I know a thing or two about isolation and its effects!

Mike Young
‘We are living in unprecedented times’ is a fairly overused phrase, especially at the moment. But I can’t think of a better one to describe what is happening on the UK political scene.

Brexit, Coronavirus, the infamous ‘Page 48’ of the Conservative’s manifesto all pose a very real threat to our democracy and way of life.

Unlock Democracy represents the resistance to the damaging status quo of British politics and the figures that strive to diminish our democracy, while promoting a positive alternative way forward that preserves and enhances our democratic rights as citizens.

That is why I’m standing for election to Unlock Democracy’s Council. I am not prepared to stand by and observe our democracy get whittled away. I want to be able to provide positive feedback and ideas for the direction of Unlock Democracy’s campaigning and collaborate with other council members in order to further strengthen their position at the forefront of progressive political campaigning. I am also keen to bring the perspective of younger generations, both from within my home of Leeds as well as towns and cities across the country, to the table in order to diversify the range of voices being heard within this movement.

As a dedicated grassroots campaigner and community activist, as well as someone with an in-depth and ever-expanding knowledge of politics on local, national and global levels, I believe I would be able to bring positive, radical contributions to Unlock Democracy’s Council.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions on: marcus.cain@icloud.com twitter.com/marcus_cain11
No election address supplied.
Mike Madgwick - I am standing for election for both the Rodell Property directors election and the Unlock Democracy Council. I started by writing something else, then looked at what is happening in front of my eyes today and it shouted back at me that, the very issues we stand for are being played out right now and there is next to no debate or examination as to where this all started to go so horribly wrong. The public have been relegated to spectator status. This occurred with minimal democratic input from the talent and capability this nation has in abundance – the situation was imposed on us by executive decree that swept away all else before it. I am more than a little disappointed that all campaign groups for democratic reform have not been actively communicating the glaring issues the current situation has exposed, it makes many look like democracy part-timers; I believe this can be used to make our message and end-point more potent.

The core messages of Unlock Democracy today are more relevant than ever before; a written constitution authored by the very people it serves, that constitution having equality and justice as building blocks for everything else, every vote making a difference, local voices really having meaning and an ability to drive local services and choices, local people know far better what is needed than remote centralised decision making that serves all too often party political paymasters, a defined relationship with devolved governments of the other nations, rebalance our partnership for the good of all, and, whilst fracking is one example - the real underlying issue is where the balance of authority exists of central government to impose solutions on local communities against their will. All these concepts resonate today so loudly when one steps back and asks, if we had them in place would our pandemic response be vastly improved along with our ability to get this country back on its feet, or, sleepwalk into economic output levels last seen in the 18thC, with potentially horrific long-term consequences.

Our membership embraces the core principles each in our own way, we actively challenge that which seeks to insidiously erode each hard won right. This movement is founded on the very principle of all the population having an equal right and responsibility to grow our democracy.

Covid will in my view be a game changer. It will not be too long before the many misrepresented facts and decision making with limited oversight are exposed in full, the serial denial and cover-up up of failure to discharge the duty of care of government and how many voices that were not ‘on message’ were actively suppressed to serve political ambition above and beyond service of the national need.

Rodell Properties is linked far more deeply today than ever before with the ability to get the message out, it is a major financial support mechanism of the movement. It is commercial property based and that form of income-stream will come under enormous pressure in the coming years. The office and retail shop based economy will start to fragment and disintegrate in places – the rent levels of yesterday will be slashed. Tough strategic decisions will have to be made now to save the income that pays for the jobs and talent that supports the movement’s aims. A more diverse and protected portfolio is likely required going forward.

Grass roots is key to be energised and something many others are alighting on, we must unlock the talent of this nation which is our collective prosperity, locally people know what works best, they engage to make things happen, they also maintain and sustain all that which adds to community value. Government must trust the people and increasingly act as an enabler, not our controller. Different parts of our nation have different and changing needs – imposed ‘one size fits all’ in many ways reflects the lack of ambition and capability of those who resort to it.

My enthusiasm and driver is to make our messages so compelling that they become the new norm for all and are owned by all – democracy for me is a personal item which the population at large can be trusted to own and nurture. Unlock Democracy has the ability to truly come of age; we must grasp the moment.
Dr Peter John Hirst’s Election Address for Unlock Democracy Council 2020-22

Why I am standing for re-election

Dear Unlock Democracy Member,

I am writing to you to request your first preference vote in the forthcoming election for membership of Unlock Democracy Council.

I would like to continue working on your behalf to strengthen our democracy by increasing transparency, accountability, fairness and participation.

I believe in a vibrant democracy where the people are actively involved and participate in devising and implementing the laws that govern how we organise ourselves.

I realise that times have changed significantly and the climate for constitutional and electoral reform is not as conducive as it was before the pandemic.

This and other factors have altered our finances and we are working to adapt our style of working to reflect these changed circumstances.

This could result in us being a slimmer organisation though with greater resources to pursue campaigning possibilities as and when they arise.

I would like to in particular continue working with the other Council members to progress our pivotal issue of a written codified constitution that will detail the various constitutional arrangements for the United Kingdom and its various components.

We have our best chance of achieving this lasting change if we work closely with other organisations that share our aims, civil society and the political establishment.

The Constitution as I see it would, once delivered be overseen by a constitutional court with powers and resources to strike down any Acts that do not conform with it. The Court would also oversee any attempts to change it.

I see this document as being a modern, living and breathing record of the relationships above that will help refocus the thoughts of the inhabitants of these islands on what it is to be British.

It will help to furnish us with our national identity and distinguish us from other countries. It will contain something of which we can be proud and constant in a changing and challenging world. A copy would be circulated to each household on completion.

This will only be possible if the creation of this document is done in a way that allows everyone to feel that it has been produced in as open, transparent and inclusive way as is feasible. This in my view is best done by a citizens’ convention in which a random sample of the electorate debate and create this document over some months. This convention would be informed by a range of experts in constitutional and democratic matters and civil society. It would be decided however by the convention, i.e. ordinary people much like our jury system.

The product would then be put to the people in a referendum and require a threshold of support to pass. It would then pass to parliament for a Bill that would include setting up the Court for monitoring.

All the other issues that we have campaigned on would be within this constitution campaign such as devolution, systems of voting, campaigning, political parties and their funding, referenda, House of Lords reform, local government, the media, lobbying etc.

Of course, we will continue campaigning on these specific issues as long as these campaigns do not interfere with this overarching campaign. If you elect me to Council, this would be my main objective over the next two years.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me using the details shown.

Please give me your vote.

Yours sincerely,
Dr Peter Hirst
Middlewich

Contact Details:
Address: 33 Rushton Drive, Middlewich CW10 ONJ
Phone: 01606 737108
Mobile: 07760 203439
Email: hirstp7@gmail.com
Twitter.com/peterhirst9
Facebook.com/peter.hirst3
www.linkedin.com/in/consistentwisdom
Richard Slack
London & South East | Male | Not declared

No election address supplied.
Unlock Democracy Council Election Ian Driver’s Election Address

**Why am I standing?** I am a member of the Unlock council and the Rodell board. I am seeking re-election for a third term to contribute to the important work of Unlock. This work will become even more important during a post-Covid, post-EU, world in which, I am sure, many fundamental democratic questions will be raised.

I would also like to play a role in extending and strengthening democracy in the UK and developing a democracy which will encourage and promote much greater public participation.

I believe in a fairer voting system, voting from 16, the abolition of the House of Lords and its replacement with a democratically elected second chamber, and a written constitution. I also believe that local, regional and national government should be much more transparent and accountable with more public consultation, citizens juries, and greater involvement in decision making. Freedom of Information rights must also be extended and strengthened.

We have witnessed during the Covid crisis an exciting glimpse of the democratic possibilities of new communication technologies, as Parliament, regional, and local government embrace virtual, online meetings. As a society we should be investing in these tools to develop a non-London-centric virtual and real-world democracy with increased transparency and accountability and greater opportunities for citizen participation in decision making.

**Political Background.** I am a member of the Green Party and was the Party’s Parliamentary candidate in the South Thanet constituency in 2015. I was a Thanet councillor until 2015. Before that I was a Labour Party member, a councillor in Southwark in the 1990s and a trade union activist and member of my union’s NUPE (now UNISON) National Executive.

**Campaigning.** I am an experienced community campaigner who has been involved in a social justice, animal welfare, environmental and anti-fracking campaigns. I have actively promoted democratic accountability including –

- Campaigning for public’s right to film council meetings.
- Campaigning to defend and strengthen the Freedom of Information Act
- Campaigning against undemocratic “Cabinet” system of governance in local councils
- Campaigning for abolition of County councils and devolution of powers to more localised unitary authorities

**Other.** I am an active blogger focusing on local and sometimes national politics. Here’s the link http://iandriverthanet.blogspot.com/ Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/ian.driver.7 Twitter @IanDDriver

E-mail ianddriver@yahoo.co.uk.
Tony Hamilton (b.1938)

I now live in Southampton and am married with 2 natural and 2 adopted children. My career was as a Systems designer and a teacher.

I remain, as I have always been, a pragmatic political activist. My views are of a sort of liberal, green, socialist. At a couple of times I have run as a local candidate, though not got elected, once for the Labour party and once for the Lib-Dems. I am a member of Extinction Rebellion and an Agenda 21 group.

I support all the strategic objectives of Unlock democracy except that I have reservations about local democracy and people’s assemblies. This is because there is a fundamental problem with local democracy. Most people do not want to live next door to a nuclear power plant (which I disapprove of anyway) or a wind-turbine, or a new railway line. Or, more locally, a school, or waste recycling centre, or a high rise block of flats etc. Yet we need these things so we have to find a sensitive way to install these kind of things despite local opposition. A similar difficulty applies to people’s assemblies. If they are genuine random selections of the population, they will need to gain considerable education and guidance to be able to come to informed decisions. They will then be heavily influenced by those providing the guidance and/or the members may become another elite group.

Although I support most of the aims of U.D. as strategic goals, I feel that tactically we should concentrate on what I see as the first priority. This is the absolute necessity of changing the FPTP election system. All my voting life I would really have preferred to vote Green but have been prevented from doing so by the awareness that such a vote would be liable to deliver my most unwanted outcome and would be a wasted vote. Pragmatically I have therefore worked for and with another party. One of my sons takes a different view of the pragmatic approach and we have on-going discussions! Until we can change the FPTP system I do not think that the other strategic goals are likely to be achievable.

Even with the long term objective of a proper PR system I think we need to move slowly in order to achieve anything. I favour something like the Roy Jenkins proposal. This would be a system in which say we reduce the number of constituencies to 400 and have the other 250 seats elected from party lists on a PR basis. Voting should be by single transferable vote with votes being transferred until a candidate achieved 50% +1 votes. But the first preference vote would be taken to achieve a PR total for its party. Such a system would ensure: that there would be no completely wasted votes - every vote would count towards the preferred party’s total. There would still be a local MP. It is a great system, which we might be able to sell to the British electorate.

My objective if elected would be to promote such a tactical policy.
I'm Jim I'm 67 married to Joy for 48 years we have 3 children and 4 Granddaughters

For many years through various companies I worked for I fought hard for democracy within the work place for fairness for all and for those that thought they were being overlooked for more senior positions

I have many different board experiences many with disability organizations I'm no longer on these because of change of members at agms and constitution changes again democracy rules

At present I'm on the board of a housing association
I'm Secretary to the board chair of the area committee vice chair of audit and director of our subsidy company with all members being elected at our yearly agm this will be my third time this year ,if elected I have knowledge of governance and health and safety we are all appraised once a year to see if we are still doing the right things and need anymore specialist training on any issues

I'm now retired so time will not be a problem if elected

I hope you can vote for me I will continue to fight for democracy in all walks of life

Thank you

Jim
No election address supplied.