



Armstrong



Blanch



Zann



Duchesne

2019 Federal Election Questionnaire to all Candidates – Cumberland-Colchester

The Shoreline Journal canvassed Cumberland-Colchester candidates for the Conservative, Green, Liberal and NDP parties to response to 14 questions. All candidates were requested to provide their response by 12 noon, September 18, 2019. We corrected some spelling and punctuation, but did not edit.

What policies in your party's platform do you feel will be most beneficial to residents of Cumberland-Colchester?

(Armstrong - Conservative): Our policies that put local families first. First, our initiative to increase healthcare transfers to the provinces by at least 3% per year. This will allow the province to hire more doctors and nurses, open more long-term care beds, and keep our rural ERs open. Second, is our Universal Tax Cut. This will reduce the lowest-income tax bracket and put more than \$850 back into the pockets of an average family in Cumberland-Colchester. I am proud the Conservative Party platform is focused on allowing families to get ahead, not simply get by.

(Blanch - Green Party): Our riding will benefit most from the Green Party's policy to address the climate crisis. As a coastal community, open to both the Bay of Fundy and the Northumberland Strait, we are very much threatened by sea level rise, increased frequency and intensity of storms and the flooding associated with storm surges. Meeting the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) recommendation of keeping global temperature change to 1.5C or less will lessen the worst impacts of global warming and hopefully allow the crucial link between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to remain intact. This is crucial to our riding and all of Nova Scotia as an estimated \$50 million in trade flows through the isthmus daily via road and rail.

(Duchesne - NDP): A national Pharmacare program will make a huge difference to people here, enabling even our most marginalized citizens to afford their medication without compromising their ability to eat or to heat their homes. Our program to retrofit housing and other buildings will not only help combat climate change by reducing energy use it will also create good, green jobs and enable people to heat their houses at lower cost

(Zann - Liberal): The new Canada Child Benefit offers more money for 9/10 families. A rigorous and balanced approach to mitigating Climate Change and our plan to protect the Chignecto Isthmus from rising seas. We are investing more in NS Healthcare and homecare this year than ever before - one billion this year - and a 4% increase in Health Transfers each year including 138 million extra per year for Mental Health for the next 5 years.

If you are working with provincial and municipal governments, what specific talents will you bring to the table to rebuild or significantly improve the economy of Rural Nova Scotia?

(Armstrong - Conservative): Working collaboratively is something I have done my entire life, whether it was as a basketball coach, a school principal, or when I was the MP from 2009-2015. As MP, I regularly met with municipal councillors and government officials to determine their needs/priorities and determine areas where we could work together on behalf of the people we serve. This approach got results: along the Fundy shore we were able to secure Federal funding for the Veterans' Memorial Park in Bass River; the Ottawa House in Parrsboro; the tidal power demonstration project; and the Advocate Harbour Sea Wall. These are local projects that create jobs and improve the quality of life in rural communities.

(Blanch - Green Party): I possess the ability to present and explain an idea so that its merits for a variety of beneficiaries are highlighted. I am also tenacious and therefore willing to return as often as necessary to a point until its value is recognized. Thankfully, I am a good listener and I am quick to recognize a great idea and am content to abandon my own idea in favour of a better idea from a colleague. I have been an Amherst Town Councillor since 2016 and this role has prepared me to understand the needs and expectations, as well as limitations of different levels of government. The Green Party will support the model of collaborative federalism, working with and ensuring fair treatment for provinces, territories, municipalities and Indigenous Peoples by establishing a Council of Canadian Governments to set higher order policy priorities, with the goal of policy coherence to optimize public spending.

(Duchesne - NDP): As a former reporter I'm a good listener and know how to consult with people in their communities. I would encourage local governments to support the establishment of co-ops to develop community solar and other green energy infrastructure.

(Zann - Liberal): Where there is political will there is a way. I am proud of my ability to build relationships and build political will to get things done for my constituents. I did that when I was an MLA and I will continue to do that as an MP.

Many economists maintain rural areas need internet and cell phone service with the same speed and capacity as urban areas. What will you do to access funding from Ottawa for these projects?

(Armstrong - Conservative): Rural internet and cell access are vital for our future economic growth. That is why it will be one of my top priorities if re-elected. Rest assured it is a top priority of the Conservative Party as well, as we are the true advocates of rural Canadians. I will use my voice as a rural MP, to bring together private industry, community groups, and other levels of government to ensure the funding is in place to make sure that this vital infrastructure is in place.

(Blanch - Green Party): To participate fully, individuals and communities across the country need access to reliable, affordable, high-speed internet. The Green Party supports the government's Connectivity Strategy but also understands that people need this service now. We will immediately offer high-speed internet access in post offices, particularly in under-served rural communities without libraries.

(Duchesne - NDP): I would support our municipal units in their joint effort to bring high speed internet to everyone in our area and I would lobby for infrastructure spending and for the federal government to put pressure on the telecommunications companies to bring high speed internet to us.

(Zann - Liberal): Internet and cell access is no longer a luxury; it's now an essential part of everyday life. We are investing \$500 million to extend high-speed Internet services to rural and remote communities across the country. In addition, Justin Trudeau appointed a female Nova Scotian MP as the Minister of Rural Economic Development, a newly created ministerial position.

What will you do to ensure the RCMP Communications Office remains in Truro rather than moved to Dartmouth?

(Armstrong - Conservative): The Liberal Government has failed on this file. Make no mistake, the current Liberal Government has the power to stop this from happening. They have not done so. Their inaction shows they do not consider us a priority. I do. Our Party does. I am committed to raising this issue directly with the Minister of Public Safety and the Prime Minister's Office if elected.

(Blanch - Green Party): This is an issue that I have already been involved with as a Town Councillor in Amherst as we wrote a letter protesting the move on the grounds of safety concerns related to the declining presence of RCMP in our riding and the lost ability to have a backup dispatch capabilities in the Truro area. As an MP I will with greater power continue the effort to insure the Communications office and its workers remain in the Truro community.

(Duchesne - NDP): I would continue the work of pointing out that the move jeopardizes the safety of our residents.

(Zann - Liberal): Working to keep the Communications Office is something I have ALREADY done. I have worked side by side with Bill Casey, Mayor Mills, Mayor Blair and Chief Gloade to halt the move. I will continue to do so.

How will you work with community groups, which focus on a specific region (Example: Glenholme to Five Islands) to strengthen the economy of all rural areas?

(Armstrong - Conservative): I will use my office to work with community groups and the private sector to make sure that funding is directed to areas of local priority such as rural cell phone and internet service. That means regularly meeting with them to hear their goals and concerns; that means helping them access government funding where applicable; and ensuring their voices are heard in the House of Commons.

(Blanch - Green Party): I will use some form of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), to identify the areas greatest strengths and then leverage and encourage Federal investment in developing these assets. I would rely heavily on the leadership of the community and follow and develop assets that they identify. The development of the Fundy GeoPark is a perfect example of the kind of initiative that I would focus support.

(Duchesne - NDP): I would support their ideas such as making the area along the shore a world heritage area provided there has been adequate consultation with residents and that it wouldn't jeopardize parts of the local economy. I would convene a meeting of community groups from all rural areas to brainstorm ideas. I would encourage more cooperation among all areas of the riding in order to promote tourism, which benefits us all.

(Zann - Liberal): Community groups need access to resources and access to funding. I see myself as a direct link to both of those. I am proud to be a champion for community groups working hard to make their hometowns and villages even better.

Which choice will you make: Promise to vote in accordance to constituent's wishes or follow party policy?

(Armstrong - Conservative): I will always vote in the best interests of my constituents. Period.

(Blanch - Green Party): Green Party is unique in that it is party policy to promise to vote in accordance with the constituents best interests. Green Party has a no whipped vote policy so I will always be free to represent my constituents needs and concerns and never be forced to represent the party's decisions to my constituents.

(Duchesne - NDP): It is difficult to establish what most citizens want on any given issue. The most vocal don't always represent the majority view. I would hold meetings around the riding to listen to people's views and during the campaign I will be very clear about my values and what I stand for. On a controversial issue I will vote my conscience and accept the consequences.

(Zann - Liberal): I work for the people I represent. I will not back down for what is right and what is just for my constituents.

What action will you take to ensure there are initiatives to raise household income thus contributing to a reduction in homelessness and poverty throughout the constituency?

(Armstrong - Conservative): The best way to raise household income and reduce poverty is to grow the economy. That is why I will support initiatives allowing the families of Cumberland-Colchester to keep more of their hard-earned money; keep the costs of living down; and ensure policies are in place that allow good paying jobs come to our area once again. We cannot do this by continually raising taxes as the Trudeau Liberals have. It makes it harder for families to make ends meet and harder for businesses to hire more workers. Lower taxes and pro-growth policies will allow families to get ahead, not just get by.

(Blanch - Green Party): The Green Party has several polities to address poverty in Canada by both raising income and by reducing costs. We will raise Minimum wage to \$15 per hour. We will institute a Universal Basic Income (UBI) that will insure that no Canadians lives below the poverty line. UBI allows

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