National Autistic Society Swindon and District Branch

2015 General Election Hustings

Event Briefing
Event details

This is a hustings event for residents of the South Swindon constituency, focused on issues relating to autism and autism provision. Parliamentary Candidates from four main parties will be there to answer questions from the public about a range of topics.

Members of the public should begin arriving at 18:45 for the opportunity to meet the candidates before the event begins. The hustings itself will begin at 19:00. There will be a short introduction given by Mark Lever, Chief Executive of the National Autistic Society, to welcome members of the general public and parliamentary candidates. After introductions have been made, each candidate will have five minutes to introduce themselves more thoroughly, and explain what they and their party will do/is doing/has done for autism-autistic people, and why they think you should vote for them.

Following this, the panel will be asked a series of pre-submitted questions, some of which will have been sent to them in advance. The chair will then open the room to off-the-cuff questions to the panel.

If there are no more people waiting to ask questions, then the question and answer section of the event will conclude at 20:30. After this, the panel will be free to mingle with the room and chat directly to the audience. This will continue until 21:00.

We will be asking audience members to Tweet about the event with the hashtag #imone; candidates and their teams are encouraged to do the same.

Date: 23/04/15
Time: 19:00-21:00
Chair: Paul Grubb (NAS Swindon and District Branch), Mark Lever (NAS Chief Executive)
Location: Trinity Business Centre (Bible Society), Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon, SN5 7DG
Map:
Timeline:

18:30 – Candidates arrive and are introduced to the chair and event organisers before a short briefing.

18:45 – Attendees begin to arrive and take seats or meet candidates.

19:00 – The event begins with a short introduction from Mark Lever, Chief Executive of the NAS.

19:15 – Candidates are given 5 minutes each to introduce themselves and to talk about their work to support people with autism.

19:30 – Pre-selected questions are given to the candidates who are each given 90 seconds to give as full and honest answer as possible. Once the pre-selected questions are finished, questions will be asked from the audience. If there are a lot of questions still to be asked then we will run this session until 20:45 and cancel the mingling session at the end.

20:15 – Each candidate will make a closing statement of no more than 5 minutes explaining any points they feel they weren’t able to get across during the Q&A session.

20:30 – An informal mingling session to meet and greet your candidate.

21:00 – The event ends.
Robert Buckland is the Conservative candidate for Swindon South, and has served as MP for the constituency since 2010.

Robert grew up in Llaeni before attending University of Durham where he read Law. After graduating in 1990, he returned to South Wales as a criminal lawyer based in Swansea from 1991, and based in Cardiff from 1999. During this time he also served as a member of Dyfed council from 1993-96, and as the Conservative parliamentary candidate for Islwyn in 1995.

Robert was previously the Conservative candidate for Swindon South in 2005 before being elected in 2010. After being elected to Parliament, Robert has been an influential backbencher, having served as one of the elected chairs of the 1922 Committee (an internal Conservative grouping) from 2012-14, and chair of the Conservative Human Rights Commission from 2011-14. In 2014, he was appointed as Solicitor General.

The area he has most focused on is autism in his capacity as a chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Autism. He started the Swindon Special Educational Needs Network in 2006, and was awarded the Grassroots Diplomat Policy Driver Award in 2013 for his work on advocating for children with Special Educational Needs. As Solicitor General, he has also sought to strengthen hate crime laws.

Anne Snelgrove is the Labour candidate for Swindon South, and was previously an MP for the constituency from 2005-10.

Anne attended school in Bracknell before attending the University of Winchester and City University London. She then went on to work as a teacher for 8 years, and as a Local Education Authority policy advisor for 7 years. Anne has served on the boards of two Swindon Children’s Centres and was governor of a local secondary school for several years. She has been active in lobbying against closure of such centres.

After serving as Labour candidate for Backnell in 1997, she was elected to the Swindon South constituency in 2005. She served as a Parliamentary Private Secretary for various different ministers in the Department of Health from 2005-07, before becoming PPS for Ruth Kelly from 2007-08, for Ed Balls from 2008-09, and finally for Gordon Brown from 2009-10.

She is currently a freelance trainer in presentation and communication skills, and also offers CV and interview training for unemployed people in Swindon.
Damon Hooton is the Liberal Democrat candidate for Swindon South.

Damon served in the military for over 20 years, before becoming a property lawyer for 8 years. He currently serves on the Frome council and was previously the Lib Dem candidate for Swindon South in 2010.

Talis Kimberley-Fairbourn is the Green Party candidate for Swindon South.

Talis grew up in Bristol, and moved to Swindon nine years ago. She has previously worked in the insurance industry and for a legal aid practice, and is also an active musician. She has previously served as a Green Party press officer, and stood last year as a Green candidate for the Swindon council local elections.