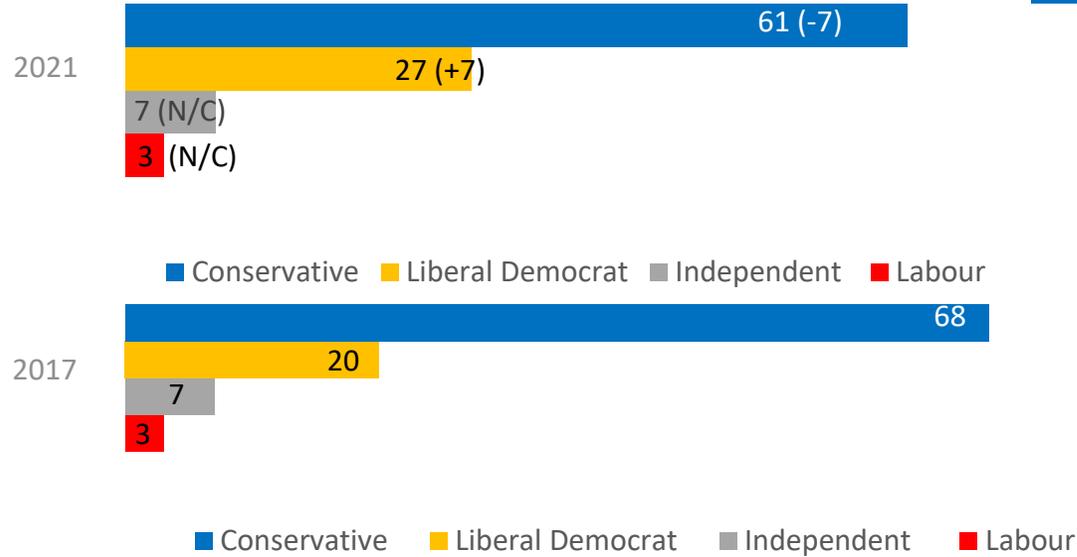


# Wiltshire Council Elections

Results May 2021 Turnout: 40.53%

Con HOLD



## Local Conservative support in Wiltshire remains solid

- Tory support holds firm:** As expected, the Conservatives retained control of Wiltshire Council, securing a majority at an early point of the result declarations. However, they must not be complacent, given the losses suffered by Conservatives in other traditionally strong areas close by, such as Oxfordshire, over the weekend.
- Steady, but not spectacular, Lib-Dem progress:** The Liberal Democrats saw important gains in primarily urban centres, securing seats in Trowbridge and Chippenham. In the latter, the immensely unpopular Wiltshire Local Plan Review will have played into the hands of Lib-Dem candidates who stood on an anti-development platform, warning of Conservative plans to ‘concrete over the greenbelt’. This was a clear vote winner – but Wiltshire is a large 98-seat local authority with significant Tory support at parliamentary level. The issue alone was unlikely to challenge the blue majority this time around.

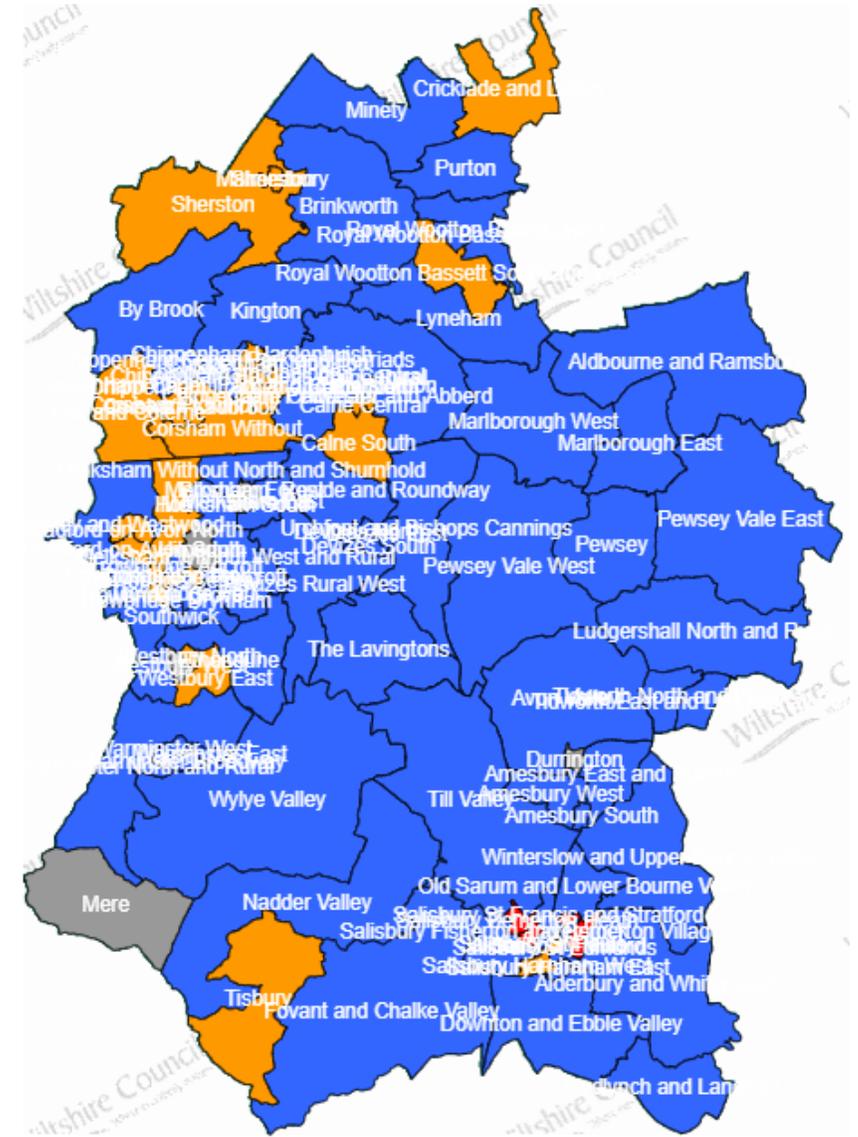


Image courtesy of Wiltshire Council

# Conservative Wiltshire ship sails to victory

As the drama played out along England's 'Red Wall', most results in areas already dominated by the Conservatives had an air of calm. Little was going to capsize the party in Wiltshire, where the Tories had maintained a secure grip on power since 2009 – when the authority was first created. Although some choppy waters were encountered against a background of increased concern over perceived overdevelopment in the county, they never seemed in danger of creating a wave of Lib-Dem gains.

Although Labour retained its three seats in Salisbury, they struggled to find enough candidates to field across the Council in recent months. The lack of candidates in some wards benefited the Liberal Democrats. For example, in Chippenham Hardenhuish, which the Conservatives won by only 35 votes in 2017, the Liberal Democrats gained a majority of 291. The Liberal Democrats also performed well in Trowbridge, gaining two seats from the Conservatives whilst holding them off in a tight contest in Trowbridge Paxcroft, which was a two-horse race with Labour not standing here.

Despite election doldrums, the big news is that Council Leader Cllr Philip Whitehead resigned from the role before the count. Several members could plausibly succeed him. Expect one of the frontrunners to be Cllr Richard Clewer, the deputy leader and a key cabinet member who has stood for leader previously. When asked on his intentions at the count, Cllr Clewer said that he would certainly 'consider challenging for the leadership again.' A new captain at the helm beckons.



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