



**middlesex**  
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# Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MIDDLESEX COUNTY, ON – On November 23, 2020, the Women’s Caucus of Middlesex County Council hosted their very first webinar for women across Middlesex County to voice their stories on the impacts they are feeling during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Her Honour Lieutenant Governor of Ontario Elizabeth Dowdeswell attended in person and offered greetings to all of the Middlesex County women and discussed the importance of taking care of themselves. Her Honour acknowledged that 2020 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.

After Her Honour’s greetings, Professor Shawna Lewkowicz presented the staggering statistics that are coming out of the pandemic for women, including the number of women in the workforce has dropped to the lowest level in three decades and the increased need of resources for women who are experiencing domestic violence.

During the open conversations, the Women’s Caucus listened to stories from local women which included increased stress and anxiety, feelings of isolation, loss of resources and programming for respite care for aging parents and high needs children, concerns about mental health for their children and the impacts of increased screen use, access to childcare and the lack of access to Internet and technology. Women were very open about the increased stress during the pandemic and concerns about their own personal health.

“It was important for the Women’s Caucus to listen firsthand to how COVID-19 has affected women and families right here in Middlesex County, so the Women’s Caucus can make the greatest impact on how we move forward to ensure the success of our communities as we recover from the pandemic” explained Warden Burghardt-Jesson.

From here, the Women’s Caucus of Middlesex County members will focus on the topics discussed during the webinar and will be hosting additional webinars for women to continue this vital discussion.

The Women’s Caucus of Middlesex County Council is made up of Middlesex County Warden Cathy Burghardt-Jesson (Mayor of Lucan-Biddulph), Joanne Vanderheyden (Mayor of Strathroy-Caradoc), Alison Warwick (Mayor of Thames Centre), Aina DeViet (Mayor Middlesex Centre) and Kelly Elliott (Deputy Mayor of Thames Centre).

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