

Clifton People
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What do Clifton People think about the hung Parliament?

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The people of Bristol West made a clear choice on Thursday May 6 to re-elect [Lib Dem Stephen Williams](#) as their MP, who was returned with an increased majority and more votes than his Labour and Tory rivals put together.



Stephen Williams re-elected as MP for Bristol West, remains tight-lipped about deal with Tories

Unfortunately the picture nationally wasn't so clear and as everybody must know by now we are currently 'enjoying' the first hung Parliament since 1974.

Of course there is acres of coverage about this at the moment and I've noticed a fair few commentators trying to make out that the electorate are to blame for being so indecisive. But if ever you needed an example of the system not working then surely this is it.

The turnout was higher than normal so you can't blame apathy and people went out and voted for who they wanted as their local MP. It's really not our fault if the system says one party needs a certain amount of seats to govern. Under first past the post, this was always going to be a possibility at any election, so perhaps the Lib Dems are right to put electoral reform at the top of the agenda. Or should we get on with the business of sorting out the economic mess first?

Clifton People went out and about to try to gauge the mood of the electorate in what is officially the country's most intellectual seat, populated by more people with degrees than anywhere else.

I think it's fair to say there was a general mood of resignation, many expecting a second election before the end of the year but at the same time wishing for a speedy resolution.

Jim Williams, of St John's Road, said: "I think people want something different, especially after the expenses scandal. Labour has lost the backing of a lot of people over the past couple of years, but I really don't think Cameron's lot are the answer.

"I've voted Lib Dem the past couple of elections since living here and that's as much to do with Stephen Williams as anything, but I definitely didn't vote Lib Dem so they could help the Tories into Government."

Stephen Williams, (no relation to Jim), has said himself that he is delighted by the scale of victory in Bristol West, but is remaining tight-lipped about what he would like to see happen next as he is involved in the current negotiations with the Conservatives.

He added: "I know that me and my Lib Dem colleagues must play our hand very carefully in the national interest and with the objective of real reform." [Labour's Paul Smith](#), who had expected to give Mr Williams a closer run for his money, was also concerned about the prospect of a Lib/Con alliance. He is also hoping to get re-selected to stand in Bristol West for the Labour Party to fight the next general election, whenever that may come. Mr Smith said: "I was mainly affected by Labour supporters voting Lib Dem tactically to get PR (they have been telling me) and the postal vote mess which cost me several hundred votes. "Also there was a dramatic collapse in the Green vote which appears to have gone entirely to Stephen Williams, again probably to get PR." However there is no point or merit in complaining the majority was huge, however I wonder what the result had been if people realised that the Lib Dems really might do a deal with the Tories."

But the prospect of a Lib/Con alliance may in fact appeal to business in the area after a poll conducted by a Clifton-based business information website, [FreeIndex](#), showed more than half of businesses polled thought Lib Dem leader Nick Clegg had the best policies to help foster growth.

The results of the poll were issued on April 23, before the country went to the polls or the prospect of a Lib/Con alliance was on the cards. Fifty three per cent of those surveyed said Nick Clegg was the man who would help their business most, while 31 per cent backed David Cameron's party and a meagre 16 per cent supported Gordon Brown's policies.

Martin Turner, FreeIndex managing director, said: "The Liberal Democrat's manifesto on small business issues, which includes intentions such as simplifying the corporate tax system and making cut backs on red tape, appears to be sitting well with business owners.

"Nick Clegg was also widely seen as coming out of the leaders' debates as a strong candidate and this has seemingly not gone unnoticed by the business vote."

As the high-level talks between the three main parties continues to excite television journalists who finally have something to fill their 24 hours of news coverage, people continue to get up and go to work, the world moves on and life doesn't stop happening. So does it even matter which party finally takes over the reins, because as somebody once said, the Government always wins anyway.