

Phoenix poll candidates up for challenge

CHANELLE LUTCHMAN

THE submissions for candidates ahead of next month's by-elections closed with Ward 48 in Phoenix being hotly contested.

On August 7, residents of Phoenix, Overport, uMhlanga, and Pietermaritzburg, among other areas, will vote on who should oversee the wards.

Phoenix, which comprises Stonebridge, Clayfield, Rockford, and Greenbury, has 10 candidates.

The DA's Bradley Singh oversaw the ward for several years. He is now an MP in the KZN Provincial Legislature.

His predecessor, Michelle Lutchmen, said she was confident the residents would back her.

"I have been a political activist in this area for over a decade and I worked with Bradley during his time as a councillor.

"I have learned first-hand how to lodge issues with each department and to follow up to ensure the residents get service delivery quicker."



Rivaaj Ramdas

The mother of three, of Rockford, said she engaged with dozens of residents while on the by-election trail.

"Issues like illegal dumping, dysfunctional street lights, water disruptions, and overgrown verges are a huge concern for the community."

"I can assure everyone that my passion for the community is there because I am living here for years."

One of her counterparts, the



Michelle Lutchmen

MF's candidate, Rivaaj Ramdas, said should he win the ward, he was also ready to hit the road running.

"I have been active in this community and serving the community long before the by-elections," said the 43-year-old of Westville.

He said he was "head-hunted" by the party.

"Mrs (Shameen Thakur) Rajbansi knows about the type of work I do, how I serve communities, and about my charity drives.

OTHER WARD CANDIDATES:

- **ACDP:** Kishorelall Roopnarain
- **ANC:** Phiwinhlanhla Mziki
- **African Transformation Movement:** Fikile Eunine Khuzwayo
- **DLC:** Rogers Naidoo
- **EFF:** Hlengiwe Samkelisiwe Mahlobo
- **Independent candidate:** Moonsamy Govender
- **IFP:** Alisha Rabbipal
- **Minorities of South Africa:** Mannie Roy Moonsamy

"She also knows that, if given the chance, I can improve the quality of the community."

He said his security tactical shooting team would assist in his endeavours.

"I am a team player at all levels. I will work with residents and I will also have members of my own team come out and assist. If elected, I will have the opportunity to walk into police stations and have meetings on crime."

Ramdas said he intended creating social and political cohesion in the ward.

Asked about their strategy to tackle the scourge of drugs, Lutchmen said: "I am a substance abuse councillor for the Expanded Public Works Programme and I know first-hand about the damaging consequences (of drug abuse). I plan to bring in establishments and people of influence to assist me in this fight."

Ramdas added he would work with Metro police, who recently formed an anti-drug unit, as well as the provincial police, to not compromise on planned operations.

He planned on becoming a mentor to youth in the ward to tell them that "it's cool not to smoke, consume alcohol and do drugs".

"We need to prevent more people from falling victim to the scourge. This is how my unique leadership style and approach with the skills that I possess will benefit not only Ward 48 but all of Phoenix."