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Ward 1 Bulawayo

A Postmortem of the Ward 1,
Bulawayo Municipality
By-Election

3 October 2026

Key Takeaways



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Why the By-Election

The **Ward 1 By-election** was necessitated by the suspension of Councillor Josiah Mutangi (ZANU PF) from office by the Minister of Local Government and Public Works, Hon. Daniel Garwe, following allegations of fraud, gross misconduct and wilful violation of the law.

By-Election Results

Mathias Tichaona Tsikira (ZANU PF) entered the Ward 1 by-election as the heavy favourite to become a councillor for Bulawayo Municipality, and sailed to a resounding victory over Shepherd Sithole (Independent) & Mduduzi Sibanda (CCC).

The key question is whether ZANU PF's victory reflects the success of its campaign strategies and broader ideological shift since 2017, or whether it has benefited from growing voter apathy

Mathias Tsikira
(ZANU PF)



1,590

Shepherd Sithole
(Independent)



112

Mduduzi Sibanda
(CCC)



74



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Change in Results 2023 – 2026

The by-election represented a shift in the distribution of votes. Total votes cast increased from 1,642 in 2023 to 1,776 in 2026, representing an increase of 134 votes (8.2%).

	2023	2026	Change
	952	1,590	+67.0%

	2023	2026	Change
	655	112	-82.9%

Others	2023	2026	Change
	35	74	+111.4%

*ZANU PF fielded different candidates between 2023 and 2026



ZANU PF



Vote Share

5 OCTOBER
2026

Ward 1 – Bulawayo Municipality

Change in Vote Share – ZANU PF

58%



2023

89.5%



2026

+31.5 percentage points

VOTE

MATHIAS TSIKIRA

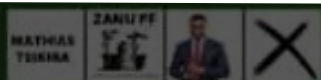
FOR WARD 1 COUNCILOR

BY-ELECTIONS



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Registered Voters

A total of 14,409 voters were registered for the Ward 1 by-election, compared with 13,770 registered voters during the 2023 Harmonised Elections. This represents an increase of 639 voters (4.6% increase).

14,409

Registered voters

↑ 4.6%

Increase in registered voters



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Voter Turnout

The by-election recorded an overall voter turnout of approximately 12.4%. Despite the registered voter population increasing, only a small proportion of registered voters participated in the poll. The increase in registered voters did not translate into electoral participation.

12.4%

Voter Turnout

↓ 2.6

point reduction in voter turnout from the 9 December 2023 by-election



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Why Voter Turnout Remains Low

This was the fourth election in Ward 1 in just eight years, raising questions about voter fatigue and growing disillusionment.

- 2018: Harmonised Election
- 2023: Harmonised Election
- 2023: By-election following the recall of the incumbent councillor
- 2026: By-election following the recall of the incumbent councillor



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Voter Turnout Per Polling Location

**Robert
Tredgold**

25.6%

**Peter Pan
Nursery**

18.5%

**Milton Junior
School**

15.7%

City Hall

14.9%

**Pick n Pay
Tent**

12.6%

**Bradfield
Shopping**

7.8%

**Baines Junior
School**

6.8%

**Baines Infant
School**

5.4%

**Montessori
Primary**

2.4%

**King George IV
School**

2.2%

**Milton High
School**

2.0%

**Carmel
Primary**

No Data
Available

**Eveline High
School**

No Data
Available

**Gifford High
School**

No Data
Available

**Mckeurtan
Primary**

No Data
Available

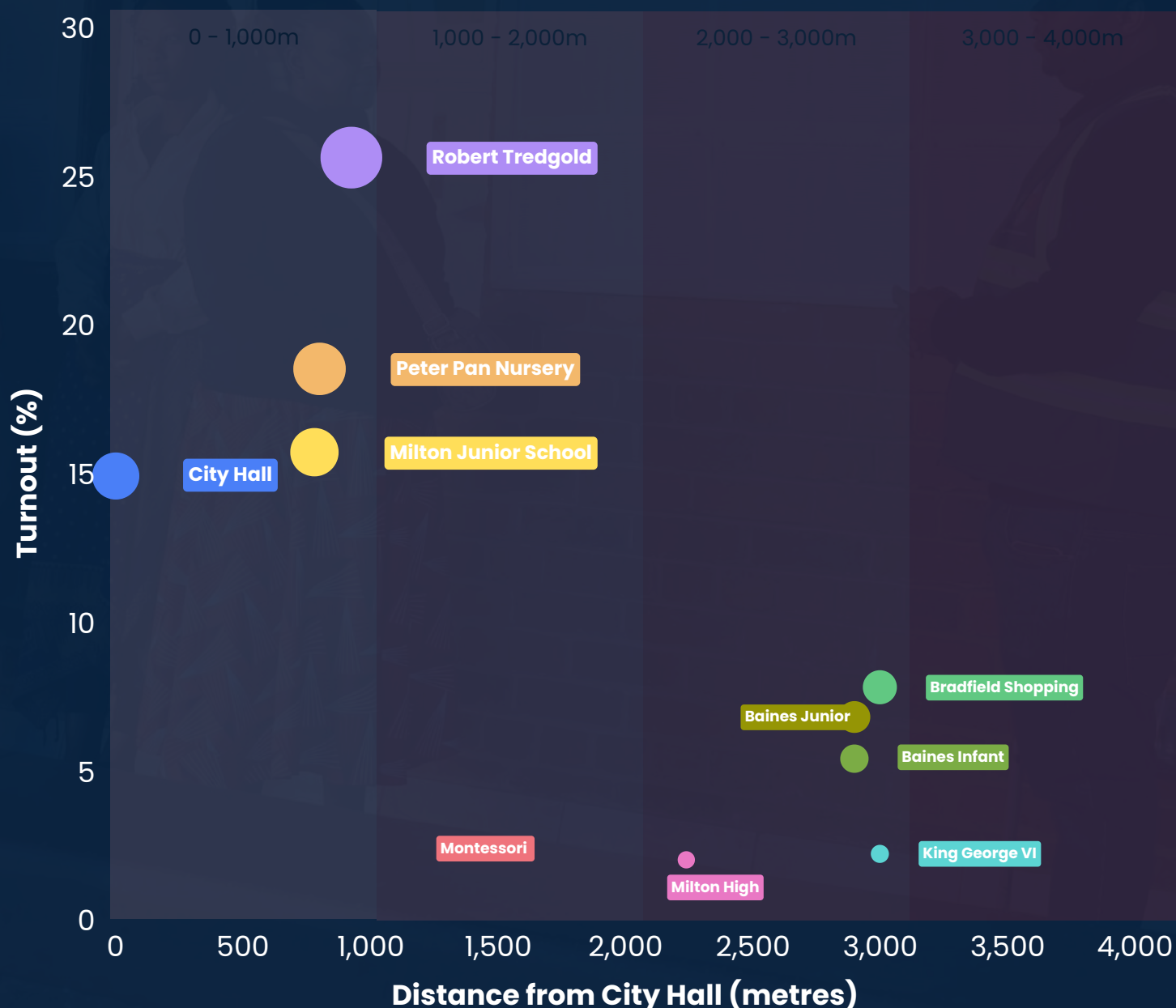


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Relationship between distance from the City Centre & Voter Turnout

The further away from the city centre you were, the lower turnout became.



The relationship between distance from the city centre and voter turnout may suggest that accessibility influenced electoral participation. Higher turnout at centrally located polling stations may partly be attributed to their proximity to major transport hubs, such as Egodini Rank. However, distance alone does not establish causation, as other factors also influence turnout.



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UNDERSTANDING ONE
PERSON, ONE VOTE

Analysis of Constitutional
Amendment Bill (No.3) 2026

May, 2026



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