

30 Women in Local Government: Celebrating CLGF's 30th Anniversary

Featured Interviewee #17: Her Worship Kerry Breedy-Prince

Mayor of Portsmouth, Dominica



Profile

Kerry Breedy-Prince has served as Mayor of Portsmouth, Dominica since November 2020, becoming the town's second female mayor after several terms on the Portsmouth Town Council. Her leadership is grounded in community development, inclusive governance, and sustainable growth for one of Dominica's most important urban centres.

Born and raised in Cocoa Town, Portsmouth, Mayor Breedy-Prince brings deep local roots and extensive grassroots experience to public service. She holds Associate degrees in Business Administration and Entrepreneurship from Dominica State College. In 2024, she graduated *Summa Cum Laude* with a Bachelor of Business Management (minor in Marketing) from Monroe University and was inducted into the Delta Mu Delta Honor Society, balancing academic excellence with her roles as mayor, professional, wife, and mother.

Under her leadership, Portsmouth has advanced infrastructure rehabilitation, economic development, small business support, cultural initiatives, and environmental stewardship. She is widely recognised for her forward-thinking, community-centred approach and her commitment to building long-term resilience and opportunity for Portsmouth's citizens.

Her Worship Kerry Breedy-Prince

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Interview Highlights

1. How has the role of women in local government evolved over the past three decades, and how do you think women can accelerate action for gender equality today?

Over the past thirty years, women in local government have come a long way. What was once a space where women were largely underrepresented has gradually changed, with more women now serving as leaders, decision-makers, and voices for positive change in their communities. Even so, progress has not been equal. Women in leadership are still fewer in number and are often judged more harshly than their male colleagues.



Despite these challenges, women today have greater opportunities to push gender equality forward. By stepping into leadership roles, supporting and mentoring other women, and advocating for policies that reflect real community needs, they continue to break barriers. It is especially important that women's perspectives are heard during decision-making and that strong networks are built to support one another. Using data to highlight gender gaps also helps bring attention to areas where change is still needed.

When women lead with confidence and work across sectors, they play a key role in shaping local governments that are more inclusive, fair, and responsive to the people they serve.

2. What inspired you to enter local government, and how has your journey advanced gender equality in your community or country?

I was drawn to local government because I wanted to serve my community at a deeper level. I had already been active in local groups, and I wanted to help shape policies that could make a real difference in people's daily lives. I've focused on bringing women's voices into discussions about community development, social services, and local planning. Being a woman mayor has allowed me to show that women belong in leadership and that our presence should be normal, not exceptional. I also work to encourage other women, especially young women, to step forward and take on leadership roles. For me, leadership is about opening doors for others and making sure everyone feels they have a place at the table.

3. What has been your most rewarding experience as a woman leader in local government, and how did it contribute to promoting gender equality?

One of the most rewarding experiences has been being invited to international forums to share the real concerns of my community. Coming from a small island, it was incredible and showed that what once seemed impossible is achievable. More than representing myself, it's about showing other women that their voices matter and that they can take up space in decision-making. Every time I share our experiences, I feel like I'm helping to open doors for others and reminding women everywhere that change is possible when we speak up.

4. What challenges did you face as a woman entering local government, and how did you overcome them? What can be done to accelerate overcoming these barriers for future women leaders?

Entering local government as a woman wasn't easy. I faced gender bias from my male counterparts within my council and externally, extra scrutiny, and the challenge of balancing leadership with work and personal expectations. There were times my competence was questioned just because I'm a woman. I overcame these challenges through resilience, continuous learning, and showing consistent results with integrity. Support from mentors, colleagues, and my community made a huge difference. To help future women leaders, we need policies that promote gender equity, leadership training, mentorship programs, and efforts to challenge stereotypes. Creating supportive spaces in councils and communities isn't just helpful; women need to thrive in leadership.



5. What advice would you give to other women considering a career in local government to help them accelerate gender equality in their communities?

My advice is simple: believe in yourself, your voice, and your ability to lead. Don't wait for permission to step forward; your perspective and voice matter. Learn as much as you can about the policies of local government, find mentors to guide you along the way, and build strong networks. Be brave in speaking up, push for inclusive policies, and don't avoid difficult conversations. Leadership is about service, not perfection, and neither is it always easy. By showing up authentically and consistently, you can influence change and inspire others. When women support each other and work together, we create real momentum for gender equality in our communities

6. How can we encourage more women, particularly young women, to enter leadership roles in local government, and what actions can governments take to create more inclusive environments for women?

To encourage more women, especially young women, we need to make sure they can see themselves in leadership. They need role models who look like them and stories that reflect their experiences to remind and encourage them that it's a real possibility

Programs like internships, leadership training, and civic education help, but we also need safe, supportive spaces where women can balance work, family, and community responsibilities. When governments create systems that support women, they send a clear message: your voice matters, you belong, and you can make a difference.

7. Why is it urgent to increase the number and influence of women in local government, and how will this contribute to positive change in governance?

It's urgent to increase women's representation because women bring perspectives often missing or overlooked in decision-making. Women leaders focus on what affects everyday life, families, youth, fairness, and community well-being. We not only serve with integrity but compassion. When women have a seat at the table, policies respond and better reflect real needs. Balanced leadership also strengthens democracy by reflecting the people it serves. More women in leadership means governance is more transparent, accountable, and people-centered, which benefits everyone in the community.

8. How has digital technology helped or can help accelerate women's political inclusion in local government, and what steps should we take to make it more accessible to women in leadership?

Digital technology has created exciting opportunities for women to participate in politics and local government. Online meetings, social media, and virtual platforms make it easier to stay involved while balancing other responsibilities, which is equally important to women, especially family. Tools, like social media, amplify women's voices and help them advocate for change, publicly and largely, reaching a greater audience. But to make technology truly effective, governments must invest in digital literacy, provide affordable internet, and create more user-friendly tools. When



women have access and skills, participation improves, and local government becomes more transparent, balanced, inclusive, and connected to communities.

9. What innovative practices or strategies have you used to accelerate women's participation and leadership in local government in your region or country?

I encourage women to step forward and take meaningful roles in areas where they have expertise. By giving women responsibilities that match their skills, they see that they can make a real, tangible impact. Demonstrating that women can lead effectively inspires others to take on leadership and contribute fully to decision-making. This approach builds confidence, strengthens women's presence in government, and shows communities the power of inclusive leadership.

10. As CLGF celebrates 30 years, what actions must be taken in the next 30 years to ensure the continued empowerment of women in local government?

Over the next 30 years, we must stay committed to gender equality in local government. This means supporting women in real ways, investing in leadership, and creating opportunities for mentorship and networking. We also need to remove barriers like unequal access to resources or decision-making spaces. Collecting data is important, but more important is seeing women's empowerment as essential, not optional. When women are supported, local governments become stronger, more inclusive, and better able to serve communities. By investing in women today, we're building a future where leadership truly represents everyone.

CLGF 30th Anniversary Commemoration

In celebration of CLGF's 30th Anniversary, we are honoured to spotlight the inspiring stories of 30 trailblazing women in local government from across the Commonwealth, all members of the Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network. These interviews celebrate their groundbreaking contributions to gender equality and their transformative impact on building inclusive, empowered communities.

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