

**Presidential Election  
Poll Results August 2011**

**Sunday Independent**

# Introduction

**Sunday Independent**



**POLL**

The survey results presented here are derived from **The Sunday Independent/Millward Brown Lansdowne Poll**. The poll was conducted among a sample of 993 adults representative of the approximate 3.35 million adults aged 18 and over - interviewed on a face-to-face basis in the home at 64 sampling points throughout all constituencies in the Republic of Ireland.

Interviewing on the poll was carried out on 18<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> August 2011

Margin of error +/-3%

The poll was conducted in accordance with the guidelines set by ESOMAR and AIMRO (European and Irish Market and Opinion Research governing bodies). Extracts from the report may be quoted or published on condition that due acknowledgement is given to Millward Brown Lansdowne and The Sunday Independent.

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*\*Data was weighted at the analysis stage to represent the adult population aged 18+ years*

# First Preference Votes

- These results, taken in the second half of August, indicate that Michael D. Higgins is now the clear frontrunner in the race for the presidency. With 32% of first preferences he is 9 points clear of Gay Mitchell - his closest rival.
- However, Higgins has some weaknesses - particularly his relative lack of appeal to female and younger voters.
- Despite his withdrawal from the race David Norris still attracts almost one in five first preference votes (18%). In or out of the campaign the Norris effect is going to be significant in the final outcome: does he have enough latent support to make a comeback? Or how will his supporters vote in his absence? His support amongst women and younger voters suggests a different supporter profile to Higgins' - who cannot therefore be guaranteed his votes.
- Gay Mitchell's strongest supporters is with farmers families, but his poorer showing in the Leinster and Munster areas will be of concern to his campaign overall.
- Mary Davis and Sean Gallagher are garnering around 1 in 10 voters - Mary Davis is polling strongly with women and in the Leinster and Connacht/Ulser areas.

# Candidate Image

- Michael D. Higgins' strongest image attribute is honesty, but his age (or perceived age) may be seen as a negative.
- David Norris stands out as a 'vibrant' candidate, no doubt reflecting his public persona. Few people attach any of the negative images to him - despite the controversies and his withdrawal from the race.
- Gay Mitchell's strongest suits are 'Trust' and 'Honesty', however he also scores relatively highly for 'uninspiring' and 'conservative'. He will need to gain more positive image traction if he is to improve his first preference vote.
- Mary Davis' best trait is her honesty, but her high level of 'unknown' remains a major impediment to her campaign.
- Sean Gallagher does well on 'Inspiring' and 'Modern', but, like Mary Davis, still suffers from being relatively unknown in comparison with the 'bigger name' politicians.

## A Norris Comeback?

- With 18% of first preferences when included in this poll there is evidently some desire to see David Norris make a comeback.
- When asked if in favour of him re-entering the race 1 in 3 likely voters endorse this viewpoint. This is almost twice the number who opt to give him their first preference so there are clearly many people who wish to see him in the race for the presidency - even if they do not support him themselves.
- A further 1 in 5 say they 'don't know' leaving fewer than 50% of likely voters (46%) saying that they are opposed to him re-entering the election.
- Support for the Senator is spread quite evenly across demographic groups - but the west of Ireland is clearly a weak area for him in terms of support.

# Presidential election first preference x Demographics

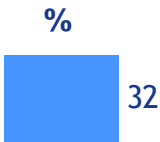
(excluding 'don't knows')

(Base: All likely voters)

Higgins is emerging as the frontrunner but is relatively weaker with younger and female voters



Michael D Higgins



Gay Mitchell



David Norris



Mary Davis



Sean Gallagher



Michael O' Muircheartaigh



	Sex		Age					Social Class			Region			
	Male %	Female %	18-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50-64 %	65+ %	ABC1 %	C2DE %	F %	Dublin %	ROL %	Munster %	Conn/ Ulster %
Michael D Higgins	37	27	20	28	26	43	39	35	30	30	35	28	28	40
Gay Mitchell	24	17	24	21	17	21	24	20	19	34	24	16	18	26
David Norris	14	21	20	21	20	14	14	19	20	0	20	22	18	6
Mary Davis	6	19	15	7	18	11	10	13	12	14	8	18	10	19
Sean Gallagher	9	12	13	18	11	7	6	8	11	18	8	9	18	5
Michael O' Muircheartaigh	9	4	8	5	8	4	6	5	8	4	4	7	9	4

Norris still gets almost 1 in 5 voters - despite withdrawing from the campaign

○ Stronger

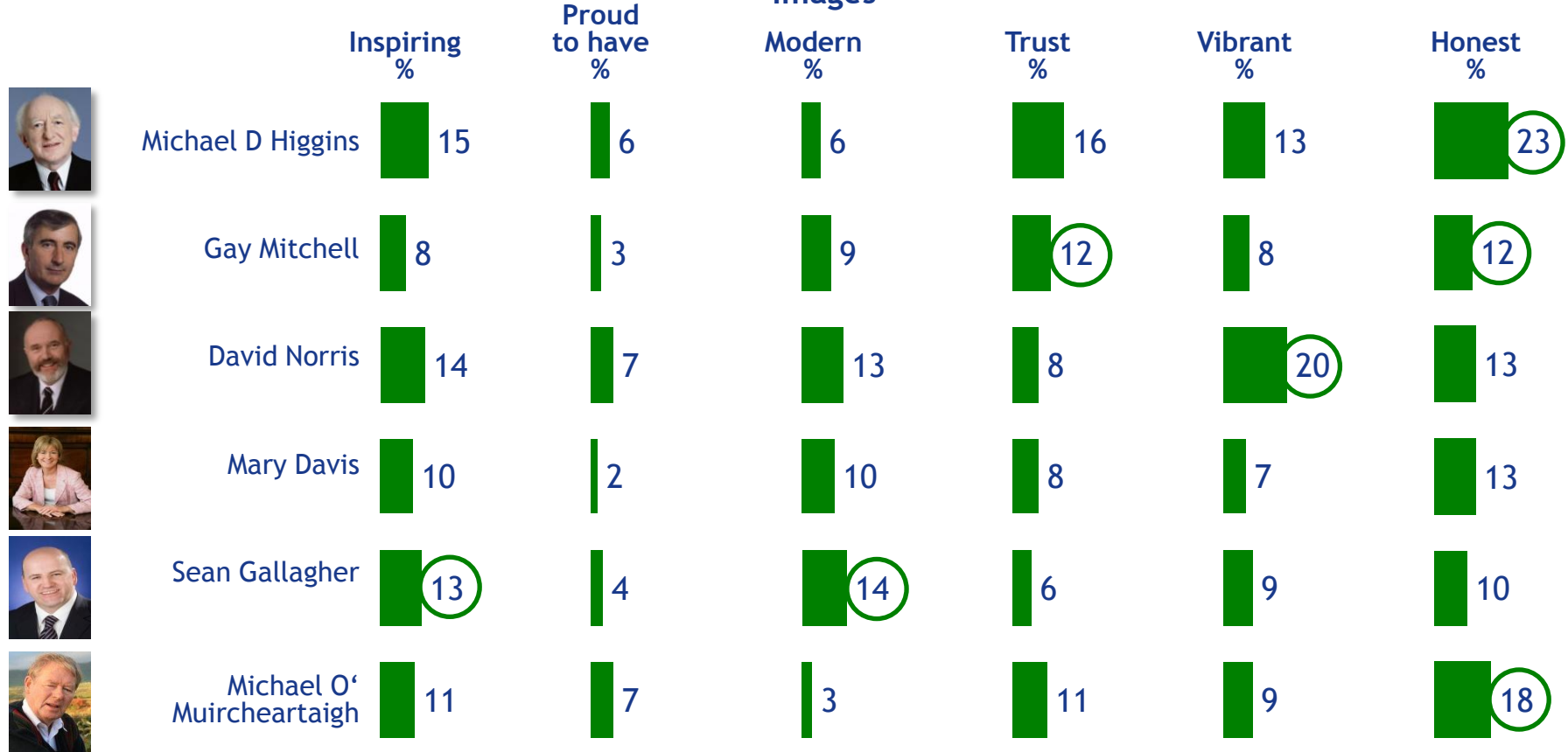
□ Weaker

# Which words would you use to describe...



Norris still stands out for 'vibrancy', whilst 'Honesty' is a key attribute for Higgins and to a lesser extent Mitchell

## Positive Images

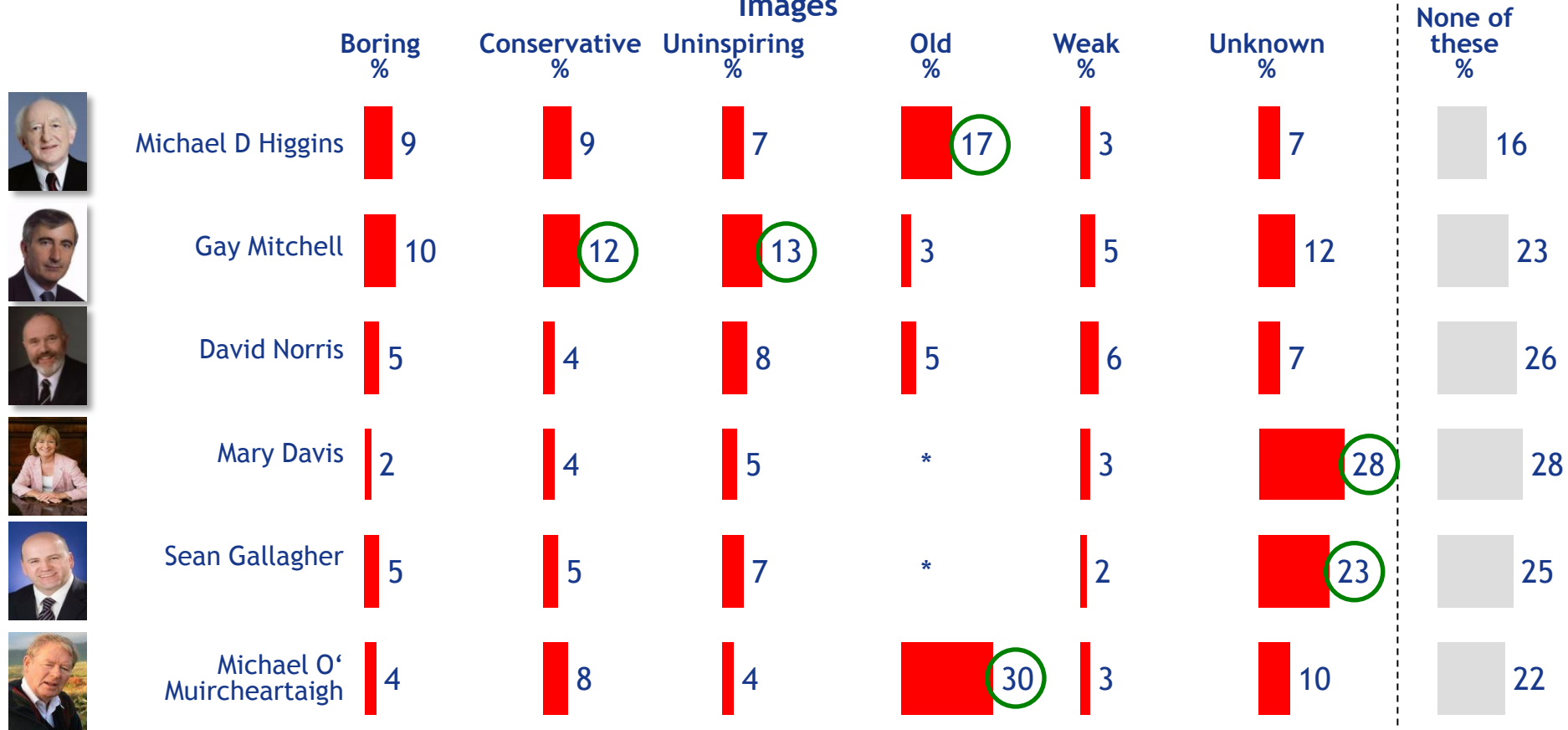


# Which words would you use to describe...



Mitchell is the most 'uninspiring' & 'conservative'. Age may be an issue for Higgins. Norris attracts few negative associations. Davis and Gallagher are still not known by many.

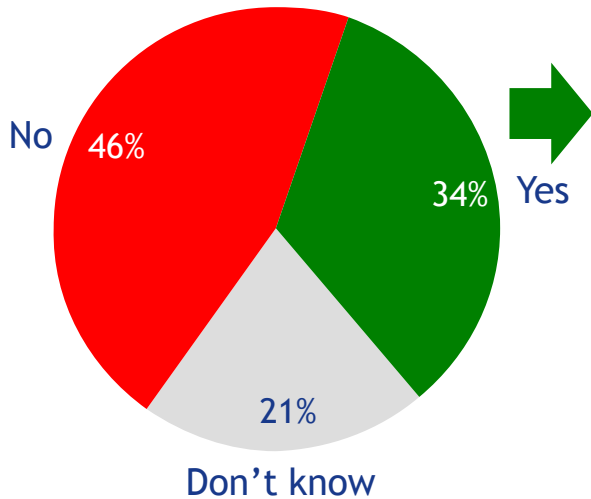
## Negative Images



# Attitudes towards a ‘Norris Comeback’

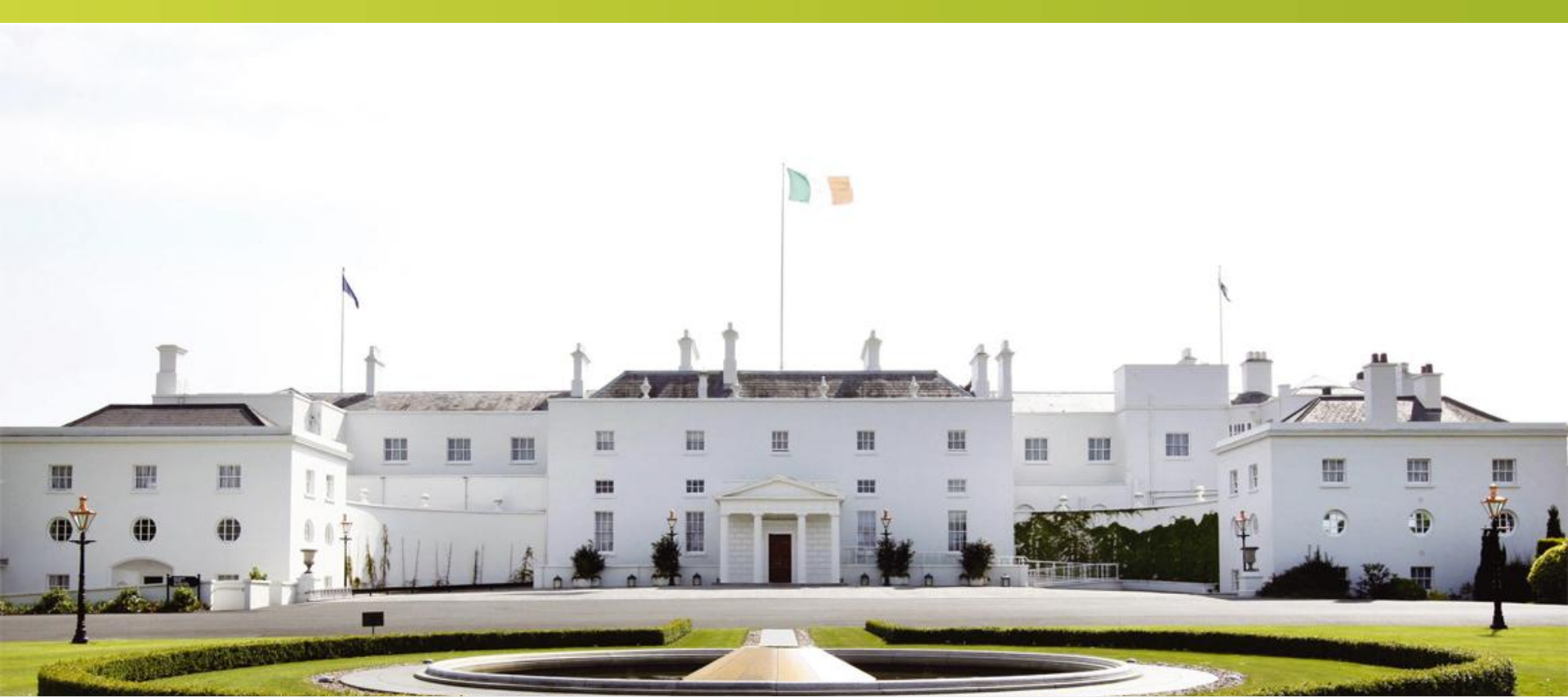
(Base: All likely voters)

In favour of Norris comeback...



Support for a comeback is significantly ahead of his first preference vote (of 18%) - indicating a desire among many voters for David Norris' return, even if they are not supporters of him themselves.  
 Support levels are consistent across most demographic groups - but the west is clearly a weak area for him.

Sex		Age					Social Class			Region			
Male %	Female %	18-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50-64 %	65+ %	ABC1 %	C2DE %	F %	Dublin %	ROL %	Munster %	Conn/ Ulster %
34	33	26	33	37	34	33	35	35	21	37	37	34	23



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