

Political Questions – Laurence Skelly (2011)

Why this candidate wishes to be a member of the House of Keys?

Want to make a difference. Rushen needs better representation and I believe I have valuable business experience, ability and vision to help the Island ride this economic storm and build a brighter future for us all.

How well does the candidate think that the present?

The reaction to the VAT bombshell was their lowest point. Being aware of it and having no Plan B was poor political management. Health Agreement was another grossly mismanaged and under-estimated issue.

If the candidate were elected, what would their priorities be at a constituency level?

Rushen is a big constituency with many issues; My priorities are as follows: Ballakilley – housing, recreation & more facilities for young people Southlands – open all wards. Crime – Ensure neighbour hood policing is maintained to high level. Employment – Attract new employment & move jobs out of Douglas. Regeneration Funds – Campaign for community/people to have greater say. Port St Mary – Marine & Heritage Centre with Aquarium. Port Erin – Develop as “Watersports/Outdoor Capital &

If the candidate were elected, what would their priorities be at a national level?

strengthen retail sector.

Economy – No 1 issue for foreseeable future. Healthy economy = good quality of life for all on Isle of Man. Government must work harder to support local enterprise, develop new initiatives and create new revenue streams and employment. Stricter regime on government spending and reopen scope and structure report to examine ways of reducing government expenditure. Stronger emphasis on diversification of economy for long-term stable employment. Work on new affordable housing schemes to get our young people on the property ladder.

What does the candidate view as the main political and social issues facing the Isle of Man in the next 5 years?

Greatest political challenge will be managing our relationship with the UK and other external bodies. Socially we must provide for the elderly and less fortunate and keep our family safe and invest in our future – our youth. Must not have a wasted generation – ensure education, training or apprenticeship available.

How would the candidate deal with

Given the health agreement,

the challenges/issues over the next five years - as stated in the Main Social Issues question?

Icelandic bank, VAT and Zero-10 issues it highlights our ineffectiveness under the current constitutional agreement and I would call for a comprehensive review of our position. We need to examine the true benefits for the Island and consider all options to ensure we can continue to "flourish with freedom". Socially its spend, spend spend where we can ill-afford but must prioritise. The economy has to remain healthy to maintain the level of support necessary. Focus on economy to support our social welfare.

What does the candidate feel has changed for the better, for Isle of Man residents, in the past five years - giving examples?

Very little for the man/woman in the street. We may have faired better than the UK & Ireland but with pay decreases or freezes, reduced business opportunities and stagnated house prices combined with increased inflation it is difficult to say many people are better off than 5 years ago.

What does the candidate feel has changed for the worse for Isle of Man residents, in the past 5 years - give examples?

Quality of life has been downgraded with loss of value of income with massive increases in food and energy prices without corresponding earnings. Change in political

Does the candidate feel that the Isle of man has been too reliant upon the financial services industry?

direction and leadership is needed to guide us back to prosperity.

Perhaps. However, it must be recognised how its success has helped improve our quality of life. I believe it is time to review our position and seek a related direction in Social Finance. Attracting this new global industry where ethical investment and social dividend sit together. The positive PR we can generate can be an excellent counter balance to the age-old "tax haven" label.

If The candidate feels there is too much Financial Services reliance, how does the candidate feel that they would further diversify the Manx economy?

Diversifying the economy should still remain an equal priority. We all understand the "too many eggs in one basket" saying and how vulnerable that can be in business. I am in favour of creating an enterprise zone to attract industry and job creation to the Island. Focusing for example on renewable, digital, clean tech and innovative manufacturing. These can benefit the Island as a resource and create jobs for the future. We must instil an enterprise mentality with public and private sectors working together.

Is the candidate in favour of independence from the United Kingdom?

Time to review our position. It was over 10 years since we last reviewed and much has changed since then both politically and economically. An updated and comprehensive report is needed to open the debate in true context for the people.

Is the candidate in favour of -and if a standing member, did they vote for- a popularly elected Legislative Council?

Not necessary. I believe if MLC's return to their primary function and subsequent reduced pay it might change the view of the people.

Is the candidate in favour of -and if a standing member, did they vote for- a popularly elected Chief Minister?

Not convinced. Still to meet the electorate and hear from the people. I believe there should be an open debate for the people to understand the policies and views of CM candidate. As it stands if elected I would vote for the CM candidate who would most align their vision and policy with my manifesto.

Is the candidate in favour of nationalisation of air and or sea services to and from the Isle of Man?

I believe we need consistent well-regulated agreements for all links and are in the best interests of the Isle of Man.

Is the candidate in favour of onshore wind farms in the Isle of Man?

In favour of renewable energy and believe wind farm is a good short term solution at the right site but

Is the candidate in favour of Means testing for "universal" benefits and social housing?

government needs a long term strategy first.

In principle yes but mindful of the system employed.