

## Political Questions – Kate Beecroft (2011)

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

I love the Isle of Man but we have a right to a better government, and better governance, than we have at the moment. Whilst the Ministerial system was brought in with the best of intentions it is not serving the best interests of the people of the Isle of Man. One of our grandchildren lives on the Island and will be five at Christmas. If things are allowed to continue as they are, his generation will be saddled with debts of enormous proportions that our Government has allowed to happen. Our children and grandchildren are the future of our Island and it is wrong that they are in debt before they are even born. This is not only irresponsible, in my book, it is totally immoral. I want to be part of a strong team that reverses this trend of storing up debt for future generations. To achieve this, we have to have a government that is more democratic and is subjected to more scrutiny, audit and accountability.

**How well does the candidate think that the present?**

The Council of Ministers have not tackled the real issues and, as stated in the previous question, they are

simply storing up debt for future generations. For example, the MEA can never trade out of its debt which stands at some 300 million pounds. Another example is the final salary public sector pension scheme. This should have been closed to new entrants years ago. The private sector discovered that final salary schemes were unsustainable a long time ago and took action. Had government followed their example there would not be the same problem today. The Report into the Scope of Structure was produced prior to the general elections in 2006 to assist the incoming Council of Ministers. Had more emphasis been placed on its finding and recommendations, the current problem of reduced departmental budgets would have been minimised as action would have been taken earlier and the effects would have been more gradual.

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

The priorities for local issues are dictated by the people who live in the constituency and are subject to change. You have to listen to their concerns and act on them. Up to

now, the main concerns have been lack of facilities for our young people. There are few places where they can safely just “chill out”. Pre school places are another area of concern and one that our proposed voucher system would solve. Speeding is an issue in areas of Douglas South. These are the main issues that have been raised so far in Douglas South and whilst they are local issues they are replicated across the Island and become national issues. I am really heartened that the majority of people I have spoken to so far are definitely more interested in the national issues this time. People are beginning to get worried, and quite rightly, about the current situation. Liberal Vannin as a team of strong people, all standing with the same manifesto, is appealing to them.

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

Health - This would be my number one priority. It is the duty of every government to ensure that its people have a first class health care system. A system of benchmarking outcomes should be developed and independent audits introduced. Care of the vulnerable - The elderly and

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

**How would the candidate deal with the challenges/issues over the next five years - as stated in the Main Social Issues question?**

disabled are far too often overlooked and care has to be taken to protect them in the financially difficult times ahead. The Disability Discrimination Act should be enforced and the legislation for residential and nursing care needs to be updated and improved. Education - Our children are our future and we need to protect our own future by ensuring that all of our children are able to have an education that is appropriate to their capabilities and aspirations.

a. The effects of the changes to the Customs Agreement. b. Employment. c. Housing.

a. The effects of the changes to the Customs Agreement - There is no doubt there are financially difficult times ahead but it is essential that savings are made in all other areas before any cuts are made in frontline services. I find it totally unacceptable that, according to the BEAR Report produced by the Public Accounts Committee, this government is actually budgeting for an increase in

headcount and associated staffing costs. Every area should be pared back as far as possible before cuts in frontline services, particularly Health, Education and Caring for the Vulnerable, are even considered.

b. Employment - The economy needs to be based on more solid foundations than present and diversification is more important than ever. Government needs to create the environment for businesses to grow and to attract new business. This, in turn, will generate more employment.

c. Housing - For too long, houses have been viewed as investments rather than homes. Liberal Vannin has three policies that would help people to own their own homes or rent acceptable accommodation. Firstly, by creating another tier in the housing market, the Restricted Sector, which would only be available to Isle of Man workers. Secondly, joint equity schemes. This would be of real assistance to low income families, single people or divorcees. Thirdly, the introduction of a Landlords Registration Scheme. There are far too many properties in the rental market that are either substandard,

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

over-priced or both. For those who either choose to rent or have no alternative, this would ensure housing of a minimum standard at a fair rent.

There is far more political awareness. People are realising that the way the Island is run is not sustainable and that change must happen. This has led to people recognising the importance of an effective, transparent and accountable government and the need for a change in the way the Ministerial system operates. People are also, quite rightly, demanding a Freedom of Information Act. Everyone has the right to know how their money is being spent.

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

Loss of confidence in government.  
Loss of job security. Less pay increases with inflation outstripping most increases.

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

The financial services industry is a wonderful asset but the income to the economy arising from this sector should be used to create further diversification. We need to

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

encourage and help new businesses in areas that have a more solid foundation. This will protect our future and we will not be so heavily reliant on one sector of the economy.

What is really needed is a more positive “can do” approach. We need to create an environment where entrepreneurs and “outside the box” thinkers can flourish. We need to look at new areas of the hospitality industry such as conferences and seminars. The main hindrance to this industry is the high cost of travelling here. We should look, in the long term, to bringing Isle of Man Steam Packet Company back into local ownership. Without the enormous debts that the company carries it would be possible to have very competitively priced fares. We need to explore more niche, high mark-up markets. Manx cheese has been a huge success and there are similar many opportunities in agriculture, such as compassion branding, where higher profits could be made.

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

We need better systems of governance in place first. Once these are achieved the people should decide by way of a referendum.

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

Yes

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

Party politics negates the need for this question but as we stand now, I think that all those who want to stand for Chief Minister should declare their intentions when they present their nomination papers. At the same time, they should then publish their manifesto on national issues. Most importantly, the vote for Chief Minister should not be by way of a secret ballot.

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

I would not be in favour of nationalisation as the less Government has to do with running businesses the better. I would be in favour of local ownership with government holding a "golden share.

**Is the candidate in favour of onshore**

Only if it was to be funded 100% by



**wind farms in the Isle of Man?**

the private sector should this be considered.

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

I would be against means testing for "universal" benefits. Regarding social housing, I think that some sort of reassessment is inevitable but I most definitely would not be in favour of forcing anyone to leave their home.