

Political Questions – Paul Craine (2011)

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

I am passionate about the Isle of Man and believe that this is a great place to live and has a good community spirit. I want the Isle of Man to thrive - economically, politically, socially, culturally and environmentally. I am keen to see the Island's reputation improve, particularly for the integrity of its business dealings, for the honesty and openness of its Government and for its good communications with the wider population. I want to contribute and make a difference and have been planning to stand for over 30 years.

How well does the candidate think that the present?

It is important to look at the evidence. What has the Government achieved? There are new water treatment works in Sulby and Douglas. There has been very good progress on

improving local authority housing in Lower Pulrose, Janet's Corner, Clagh Vane and the Lezayre Estate. With the Zero-10 tax strategy, new businesses have been attracted especially in e-commerce and the space sector and the economy has become more diversified. Despite the global economic downturn, unemployment in the Isle of Man has kept around 2% and economic growth of 4% or more has been maintained. New schools have been opened (eg Scoill Ree Gorree) or building started (eg Bemahague). Have there been failures? The Government very nearly lost out on the Reciprocal Health Agreement. There have also been significant concerns about value for money and hospital waiting lists. On balance the evidence suggests that the present administration

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

may have done better than many people perceive.

Views on the doorstep have confirmed my belief that the main issues in Middle relate to planning in the broadest sense: the planning of local services (shops and other amenities), the planning of future developments (whether commercial or housing), the planning for road traffic and the planning of recreational facilities. Work on the new planning blueprint for Middle, the Eastern Area Plan, is about to start and provides an opportunity to tackle these issues that must not be missed. I would engage with this process and work hard to ensure that planning meets the needs of the communities in Braddan and Marown.

If the candidate were elected,

The highest priority at the

what would their priorities be at a national level?

national level is a very broad one that affects many aspects of life here. The Island must balance the budget whilst maintaining good health care and education and yet still providing encouragement for businesses. This would be my priority. I would push for a review of taxation (see my manifesto), better value for money in all departments and a reduction of the scope of Government.

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

The main political issue is the one I have described in the previous answer as my priority at the national level: balancing the budget whilst both maintaining services and encouraging businesses. The main social issue is the growing number of 16-24 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). With a total number

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

approaching 500, many of whom have never worked, the concern is that these young people become long-term unemployed potentially costing the Government over £300,000 each over their lifetime.

Education is part of the solution, and I would oppose any reduction in education funding. I would support an increase in places on 14-19 pre-vocational and vocational courses, as well as the introduction of guaranteed places in education and training for 16 year-old school leavers. Funding should be made available to, or prioritised within, the DEC for this to happen. The quality and experience of staff at IOM College is an asset to be used to the full. Employers also have a role to play as do private training providers. There should be incentives for businesses to

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

employ unemployed young people. Benefits should not simply encourage young people to remain out of work.

The economy has grown and diversified over the last five years. The level of crime has been reduced. There have been numerous capital projects: marinas in Douglas and Peel, new water treatment plants, refurbishment of local authority housing, new schools. There has been increased recycling.

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

The most obvious change for the worse is the reduction in Government income, which has fallen back to its 2006 level. There also appears to have been a growth in hospital waiting lists. Higher inflation has led to higher fuel and food costs and there is more traffic on our roads. Farm production appears

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

to have been reduced and the construction industry is facing difficult times.

The finance sector is obviously hugely important and contributes around 38% of the Manx economy. Having said that, the finance sector has considerable breadth to it. It is better for the Island to have something to 'rely' on, than nothing but there has been recognition for many years that the economy needs to be diversified. In recent years we have seen growth in the e-commerce sector and the space sector. In some respects the Manx economy is now perhaps more diverse than for many years. The role of the new Department of Economic Development is crucial in helping new business start-ups, bringing in new businesses and maintaining the best economic

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

climate across all sectors.

Diversification must not become an end in itself – a small Island cannot specialise in everything and with the financial challenges being faced across Europe it is important to consolidate what diversity we have. We need Government to show leadership in identifying what the Isle of Man offers across a range of complementary activities that do not conflict in their marketing. My manifesto outlines how I would work to ensure that DED has the resources to develop all sectors including manufacturing, tourism and farming with a priority on e-commerce, space and 'clean-tech' (green energy) industries. It is important that the finance sector itself diversifies into the large and rapidly growing economies of India

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

and China.

It sounds a great idea – but there are so many down sides that I do not see it ever happening. Issues of currency; trading partners, customs duties and tariff barriers; diplomatic representation abroad; foreign policy; defence; the cost of representation on international bodies etc all combine to form major obstacles to full independence. That does not mean that we cannot seek more independence than we currently have. My manifesto raises the question of why the Island does not have economic control over the parts of the Irish Sea that are nearer to the Isle of Man than the UK or Ireland. I believe there are many ways in which our level of independence from the UK could be developed within the existing relationship and I would

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

actively pursue these.

The Legislative Council has always provided some able and experienced people, but it cannot be right to have departmental decisions made by unelected politicians. The key role of the Council should be one of scrutiny as a revising chamber. I would support a reduction of the role of MLCs so that they do not sit on Departments. I would also support direct elections to the Legislative Council but only on an appropriate basis. I would prefer MLCs not to be tied to a constituency.

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

There may be some arguments in support of this idea but it would give almost presidential powers to the Chief Minister. A recent poll suggests that no single candidate would have the support of more than a

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

quarter of the voters. On balance I would not support the direct election of the Chief Minister without a range of accompanying changes. If a referendum were to be held, I think that the public discussion would persuade people that this would be a bad move.

There can be no doubting the importance of the Island's air and shipping links. The idea of having transport providers that are owned by Government and operated to meet the needs of the community sounds attractive but once you take away the profit motive of these companies they become something else altogether. Just as the bus service loses millions of pounds each year, nationalised air and shipping companies run as a service and trying to meet all expectations would make huge losses.

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

Governments are not best placed to make hard-nosed business decisions.

I support the Government's existing commitment to generate 15% of our electricity from renewable resources, though I doubt that this can be achieved by 2015. Given the technology available over the next decade or two, wind power is needed to take this forward. On-shore wind turbines would produce electricity at perhaps 2p more per unit than our current combined cycle gas power station. Off-shore wind turbines might be in the region of 9p more per unit. Given the necessary cover from a power station for variation in the wind, the maximum wind capacity for Island use would appear to be 20MW requiring a wind farm of perhaps just 7 wind turbines and contributing 12% of our

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

electricity. As gas and oil prices rise, this will become more and more cost effective. If a private company is willing to fund this and if a suitable site can be found, I would support such a development.

As the Isle of Man faces up to reducing government spending there will be many difficult decisions to take. There are some high earning residents in the Isle of Man who do not need tax-relief on their mortgages or child benefit and some very wealthy pensioners who do not need free prescriptions. I would urge Government to look at this unnecessary expenditure and explore ways to reduce it with minimum expense. I do not favour means testing for social housing but there should be greater encouragement for people living alone to release 3-



bedroomed houses. I would also seek to introduce a requirement that local authority tenants could not own additional properties.