

Political Questions – Raymond Harmer (2011)

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

I wish to be a member of the House of Keys, to see the Isle of Man prosper under wise financial stewardship and for Peel to have the investment and representation it needs.

How well does the candidate think that the present?

The present administration has tackled the challenges of the banking crisis and threats to our tax status well. However, the Government restructure was poorly thought through and executed, and the financial management has been weak. One example is the £2 million was lost in error by not buying Euros in advance for the runway extension. They have wasted money on unnecessary infrastructure projects. The government has not handled the negotiations well on the VAT sharing agreement with the UK, which means the Isle of Man will lose £189 million annually.

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

To campaign for better amenities and services for Peel for all ages, such as a free nursery place for each child, reduction in waiting time to see a doctor, a community centre, and sports, gym and recreation facilities
More employment for Peel, in

particular government offices could move to Peel. To seek proper representation for Peel where Peel has 2 MHKs to reflect Peel's size and future growth. To campaign for immediate investment for our sewage infrastructure and see a blue flag for our beach. To be open, transparent and always ready to listen through surgeries, newsletters and the website and to see changes to this effect in government.

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

To seek to reverse the UK's seizure on the VAT agreement, to tackle the pension deficit and to see a more effective use of government funds, cutting waste.

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

1. Renegotiation of the VAT agreement. 2. Bringing order to the government finance and better scrutiny of our finances. 3. We need to ensure education and health are carefully protected and developed and the vulnerable are shielded against any cuts. 4. Tackling the pension deficit 5. Lack of Trust in the Government 6. Drug abuse, homelessness and crime.

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

1. We have been far too passive and obliging. The government needs to be much more vocal in the opposition to any change in the VAT and we need to take the fight to the UK rather than wait for the next raid. We need to create a dedicated team to tackle this issue. We should base our negotiation on the VAT the Isle of Man generates and the service the Isle of Man gives to London's financial sector. Negotiation is based on relationship and our government needs to have better relationships with the corresponding ministers in the UK government.

2. We need to reduce the size of the government, partly by avoiding waste such as in infrastructure projects and the excessive use of consultants, and partly through the privatisation of certain areas, such as the MEA shops. We need better scrutiny of financial expenditure.

3. We need to ensure Education is supported. This starts from an early age when the government needs to support pre-school by assisting with paid nursery places for all. This support should continue throughout school life; short term budget cuts affecting teaching

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

staff and teaching assistants need to be resisted. We need to be more proactive in health care and support needs to be maintained for the most vulnerable. 4. On the pension deficit the government scheme needs to become fully funded. We need a simple and better paid state pension available to all who pass a 5 year residency test. All Isle of Man workers should have by default a private, government or company pension. 5. Trust needs to be restored through a relevant and strong Freedom Of Information Bill. We need to devolve more local matters to commissioners rather than Tynwald. 6. We need to remove bureaucracy, such as paperwork within the police force so that they can concentrate on fighting crime. We also need to improve the time cases take to get to trial. We must not be complacent with tackling drug abuse and homelessness.

The economy has continued to grow and there has been low unemployment despite the upheaval of the credit crunch. For Peel, the marina has been a significant boost.

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

The loss of VAT revenue to the UK has been a major blow to our economy as it reduces government income by approximately 40%. We have seen a loss of leadership and direction in the government. For Peel, there has not been the planning and investment in infrastructure required for the houses built (for example the sewage, nursery places and community centre).

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

The finance industry has served the Isle of Man very well over the last 30 to 40 years. However there are threats to it, such as an attack on the 0/10 tax arrangements, which means we need to diversify into areas that do not rely solely on the zero tax rate.

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

We need to diversify through the service industries and skilled, niche manufacturing. For example, supporting the IT service sector, by investing further in the IT infrastructure. We need to provide grants and tax breaks for business wishing to set-up niche businesses. We could provide sponsorships for those employed in these areas to

become skilled. We need to partner with business to expand our further education to provide vocational training to support these industries. Within the finance industry we need to develop mitigating strategies with the industry against the possible abolition of the 0/10 tax arrangements.

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

No

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

No

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

No

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

No

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

No

Is the candidate in favour of Means

Child benefit for example is paid to

testing for "universal" benefits and social housing?

all. Means testing has many pitfalls, such as high administration costs, tends to hit the middle incomes the most, and can create of poverty traps. However, if removing benefits for very high earners can help the Island's finances, it should be considered, along with the removal of tax allowances. (Similar to Jersey's 20% means 20% tax rule.)