

## Political Questions – Geoffrey Boot (2011)

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

I have now reached an age where I have acquired a lot of experience in building businesses and dealing with legislation and regulation and feel that it is time to give something back. A frequent complaint of Manx politicians is their lack of business acumen. It is difficult to get involved in politics when you're younger, with children and a career to build, but I now have the time to devote to the task.

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

I quote David Cannan MHK here "The present administration is probably the worst in living memory" and yes it has been poor. Money has continued to be spent prolifically with little hard scrutiny; the VAT issue continues to rumble on with a complete lack of transparency; austerity that has been imposed through no fault of the Manx working people; the near loss of the reciprocal health agreement; continuing problems in the health service and the drip drip of legislation emanating from the UK or Europe. Even the UK government's own review of the relationship between dependencies like the Isle of Man

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

revealed far too much UK intervention in our affairs.

No 1 priority is restoring the link with constituents, sadly lacking in the last 10 years. In addition, working and communicating with the Local Commissioners to facilitate better local outcomes. Good communication, consultation, local surgeries.

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

It's time to start looking at generating our own solutions to problems that appear on the Isle of Man — Manx solutions to Manx problems, and stop doing things just because it happens in the UK or Europe. The priority must be to ensure our economic prosperity but, having surveyed the electorate, their No 1 priority is health followed closely by education. I can't disagree with these priorities but they do require a sound economy. Dentistry, podiatry, specialist provision such as breast cancer care are all priorities. We also need better scrutiny of our spending, with a more business like view.

**What does the candidate view as the**

It seems to me that we are at a

**main political and social issues facing the Isle of Man in the next 5 years?**

crossroads: do we become more dependent on the UK or take a harder, ultimately more independent, stance? I suspect there would be some hard costs to complete independence. I therefore favour using the independence that we have and exerting more authority over the regulation and legislation that we have, including immigration. Much more transparency over the VAT issue would help electors make a reasoned choice.

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

Continuing economic prosperity will provide the tools to enable continuing and better health provision, education, transport and environmental protection including resolving the problems around agriculture. This requires scrutiny and a business like approach, something I believe I can bring to the table.

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

We continue to live on a beautiful island with good services. In specific terms it is difficult to quantify people's experience in quality of life. I see a lot that is good but could be better but there are dark clouds on the horizon. Sometimes it seems we prosper in spite of, not because of, our

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

government.

The financial situation tops the list as this is the key to all of the things that we desire for the island: our health service, dentistry, roads, provision of social housing, provision of elderly care. We still have a distinct lack of transparency. I know as an MHK candidate, having requested information from various government departments and frequently getting no reply.

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

All countries tend to specialise in something. I believe the Isle of Man offers a unique off-shore provision that with careful management and legislation will continue to provide a healthy financial sector. We must not, however, ignore our farmers, who are landscape custodians, or tourism, we have unique opportunities here, and other value added industries. The Manx small ship and aircraft registers are excellent examples of niche markets in which we are doing well. Innovative targeting when provision is identified will be essential to our future. Developing markets in China, India and Russia all require

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

sophisticated services and we need to look at satisfying that demand. It seems we even have a space industry now.

Having the correct regulatory approach and passing enabling legislation are the keys to developing new services and businesses. The way we tax business and individuals plays an important part in where people decide to locate their business or personal wealth so this requires careful scrutiny. It would be great to have more manufacturing on the island but we have to face the fact that it is expensive to move goods on and off and we have a very limited labour pool and frequently end up importing expertise. I would like to see further consideration of our farming industry, which is in serious decline as we no longer subsidise or promote production. There are opportunities here for adding value to our products and reviving that industry. Tourism is an obvious earner. There are opportunities that we probably don't know exist at the moment but need exploring: that's how new businesses are born.

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

Not completely, but a more independent approach.

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

Yes, but a transparent, public debate on a mechanism and a referendum as this will be a major constitutional change.

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

Yes, again with a full transparent, public debate and referendum as this will be a major constitutional change as above.

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

No. There tends to be an air of rose-tinted spectacles about the previous nationalised transport. Better negotiation and control by government may reduce the cost.

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

No, I am seriously worried at the impact on our landscape for questionable benefit. There may be better, less intrusive solutions in the near future so I would advocate a cautious approach.

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

No, although these are matters for deeper discussion.

