

House of Keys By-Election  
Thursday 10th September 2015

YOUR  
CANDIDATE  
FOR PEEL

Ray  
**HARMER**

*Stronger Together*

Dear Constituent

Peel is a great place to live with a vibrant community at its heart which I care about very much. Peel has a rich heritage and so much to offer.

We can make a difference, not because of one individual, but because of the many working together with a common vision for the benefit of the community. I believe in an open and inclusive society which seeks to protect and support all in our community.

Over the years, I have built strong relationships across business, the community, the commissioners, charities, government and wider afield. I am committed to work hard to build on what has already begun and to keep aiming for better. I am more a marathon runner than a sprinter!

I believe strongly that working together is a vital ingredient for a bright future.

Best wishes

Ray Harmer

## Profile

Having attained an Engineering degree at Cambridge University and later an MBA with the Open University, I have worked in business on the Isle of Man for over 20 years. This has included responsibility for setting up offices worldwide and implementing systems and processes to enable companies to expand and become more efficient.

I was elected a Peel Commissioner in 2009 and have served as Chairman four times. It is a privilege to serve the people of Peel, bringing people together to make things better, such as creating a playground at Clothworkers School, regenerating areas of the town such as Marine Parade, improving Commissioner Housing, providing more recycling sites, more events such as the Soapbox Derby to attract visitors, harrowing the beach, reducing costs, whilst at the same time offering free library membership, free WIFI and free tennis courts.

Being involved in local life is very important to me; I am Treasurer of Peel Heritage Trust, a member of Peel Golf Club and Western Athletics. More widely, I support the Manx Wildlife Trust and Manx National Heritage. I enjoy running and have completed the London and Paris marathons for charity. I play saxophone with the Manx Saxophone Ensemble and have entered the Parish Walk, finishing at Peel several times and completing it twice. I am married to Adele and my son, Nathan, studies at QE2.



# PEEL

## *Sewage*

Originally the plan for Peel was an open sewage plant to meet 1976 bathing quality standards. After much hard work, research and negotiation, we finally reached an agreement with Manx Utilities for the building of a closed sewage treatment plant for Peel with tertiary Ultra Violet treatment, which meets the highest European standards. We want to move forward with this solution because we need a safe and clean beach in Peel without delay.

## *Infrastructure*

The infrastructure in Peel needs to be updated in keeping with newly built houses, ensuring that our local services meet the needs of an increasing population. More regeneration would greatly add to what has already been achieved, such as more parking and better pavements. The playground at Peel Clothworkers School was a testimony to many different groups coming together to outwork a common vision. In economically challenging times, when no individual group had the finances, it was made possible by pooling resources. Michael Street finally got a lick of paint and the end of Marine Parade offers a more welcoming environment.

Peel has not seen the same investment from the Regeneration Fund as have other parts of the Island. In spite of this, we have just secured agreement for improving Market Place.

## *Business*

We have created a Peel Chamber of Trade and Commerce. However we need to go further. We can expand existing potential in Peel by supporting our fishing industry and building on Peel's art and cultural heritage as well as tourism. Working with the Department of Economic Development and the Commissioners, the role of Business Development Manager could be created to promote employment in Peel, use the Food Park to its full potential and set up artist units in Mill Road.

## *National Priorities - Economy*

We live in a fast changing world, politically, socially and technologically, and where, for example, the computer processing ability doubles about every 2 years. At the same time our finance industry is facing new challenges. This means we need the skills to adapt quickly to



change. I support the government's digital strategy and by forging new partnerships with China or India and in IT services, we can help grow the Island's economy.

More links between business and education to develop relevant skills should be encouraged. Investment and tax breaks are important for those wishing to set-up niche businesses. By partnering with businesses, I would like to see learning grants introduced to support everyone who wishes to develop new skills or re-train.

We cannot remove VAT as some have suggested. This would create a £242 million black hole. I support a simple, fair tax system. Raising the tax allowance threshold would help those on lower incomes. Replacing the existing charitable allowance with a full 20% tax allowance for Manx charities is important as it is the local charitable sector which leads the way for supporting the vulnerable.

Communications and low transportation costs are vital to the Island's economic prosperity. Telecommunications enable us to operate a business globally. A 4G network made available in the home and at work would improve communication and increase competition. An alternative proposal of using the power lines, which is outdated technology, would be slower than what we have now and would be a step backwards, not forwards.

The Island's size makes it a perfect location to advance new technologies such as the installation of fibre in new homes instead of the existing copper.

## ***Health and Social Care***

My priority here is to focus our support and investment on those who are at the sharp end, whether they are social workers, teachers, nurses, doctors, fire-fighters or the police.

I believe it is vital to work constructively with community groups and outside agencies to better address the needs of the vulnerable.

We need to focus on the individual and seek more investment for mental care.

I also believe in simple, but creative solutions such as a grant scheme to help workers switch from cars to bikes, so improving our nation's health and reducing the parking and congestion at rush hour.

## ***Policing***

We have an excellent police force on the island. We do not want to see police numbers reduced any further. Technology could remove some of the administrative burden. Tablets could be used to record crime details on the spot, rather than inputting data back at the police station, resulting in more time on the beat.



## ***Education and Skills***

Education is critical to our future

All of our children have the right to the best education, irrespective of social, emotional or academic differences. All services for children should be supported financially to enable the most vulnerable to flourish, whilst providing excellent opportunities for all to achieve the very best they can.

Free nursery education would give all an excellent start in life and allow parents to continue to work.

Class sizes in school should be kept as small as possible and resources to support children's learning should always be available.

A government sponsorship scheme for our future Island-based doctors, nurses, teachers and police could be explored. Education is now life-long and we should provide assistance to those who need to retrain or those who want to acquire new skills.



## ***Pensions***

Steps have been taken by the unions and government to address the funding problem in our pensions. However, the deficit is approximately £3 billion and will need further commitment. MHKs should take a lead and have a non-subsidised pension scheme. All Isle of Man workers should have by default a private, government or company pension.

For those with private pensions, annuity rates are very poor, leaving pensioners with low levels of income after having saved for many years. I support flexible pensions where you can invest and use as you need, rather than relying on an annuity.

## ***Governance***

Good governance requires honest and constructive challenge. Amongst these, this has included demonstrating the unfairness of the 'toilet' tax, which resulted in the government replacing the original fixed charge with one based on rateable value. We were also able to stop the loss of the registry service in Peel for births, deaths and marriages.

I support the Freedom of Information Bill and the single legal entity to bring about better joined up governance. Devolving some local matters such as parking, adjusting speed limits and building control makes sense.

I believe we are over governed and in Peel we reduced the number of commissioners from 9 to 7. By local authorities working together we can deliver services better. For example we have created a business plan for a Western Housing Authority to replace three housing waiting lists with one.



# Thursday 10th September 2015



Polling Stations: Corrin Hall or Centenary Centre  
Will be open 8am until 8pm

*If you would like a lift on the day  
please call 215577*

**Surgery on Saturday 5th September 2015  
at 11am - 12pm Phillip Christian Centre**

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