

## Political Questions – Bill Henderson (2011)

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

To carry on my political work, represent my constituency further, challenge Government, Bring my constituents and my policies to Tynwald, make a difference for people and the Island. Fight the buroc and red tape that is within Government. Ensure we have a level playing field for the people of this Island, pressurise Government to connect fully with the people.

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

Some very well, others like the near loss of the Reciprocal Health Agreement, the near loss of free bus passes, failing to see the 'foot review' coming to the IOM, Restructuring Government – huge cost, Misdirected Austerity Measures, Enforced Government Redundancies, Planning for VAT Bomb Shell, Public Sector Pensions, Handling external and international affairs – failed miserably, Government have been caught out asleep at the wheel at times on these issues.

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

Road Traffic Safety projects continued, land adoption issues further addressed, individual issues followed up, ensuring our Community

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

Policing is fully supported and adequate, original bus service reinstated, push for housing maintenance and rebuilds continues especially for Willaston Estate.

Urgent priority – Ensure that Government cut backs are handled sensitively and in a common sense way, to minimise their impact on Health, Education and community safety. To place maximum pressure on Government to ‘mine out business’ for the Island to offset the loss of income – VAT Bomb Shell, and to plan for pensions. More Island Autonomy and further building on better representing ourselves internationally – this aspect we are inadequate and need to box our corner more determinedly. We proved this with the reciprocal health agreement – we can do it!

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

Progressing the Government five year recover plan, following the 20% reduction in our national income – done by the UK ‘VAT claw back’. BUT, this needs to be done carefully, sensitively and always bearing the people in mind in whatever action is

taken and what effects this will have. Government needs to look at its self-first. Next on the other side of this, we must as an urgent national priority work to 'mine out business' for the Island to try and offset this near fatal blow dealt to us by Westminster. Ensure we have effective strategic planning – we keep missing what is coming up on the radar – the 'Foot Review' is a classic example. We need to be better prepared and have contingency plans. Externally and internationally we need to be better informed, better able to represent ourselves in the UK and elsewhere where the UK do this for us, and not in our best interests. We have to be more robust in our international dealings and fight ever harder for ourselves. We have to be ever conscious of the 'international changing goal posts' with regards to off shore jurisdictions such as our selves. We are internationally responsible and have one of the best regulatory regimes in the world. But it seems we are mistrusted by some in Europe and the USA, even with these measures in place. Every time we comply with the rising international

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

standards expected, the goal posts seem to be moved yet again. The Government has failed miserably in getting our message over and ensuring the right people fully understand who we are and what we do. This needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Ironically some of our larger neighbours who are mistrustful of us need to 'tidy up their own back yard'.

It's all about strategic planning, done in a sensitive, commonsense way. It's about getting out of the mind-set that we are 'small and nothing we can do'. This was said when we were going to lose the reciprocal health agreement, then when it was fought – we had it retained – we need a Government with an ability to do this on a regular basis – and we would gain more international respect. We need to manage our budget in such a way that there may have to be cuts in fancy Government projects, and some Departments will have to give way 'for the greater good'. Business needs to be mined out and fought for and we need to be far more proactive in this. The new

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

Department of Economic Development has failed miserably in demonstrating positive business growth brought in here as a result of its formation. It is a national priority to ensure that this Department comes under heavy scrutiny and pressure to perform and bring in results. Our very survival is depending on this. We need to be more robust with the UK in our dealings with them. We need to negotiate more Island autonomy – we need to be able to stand up for ourselves, and not be in this continuous fear of 'not upsetting our neighbours'. We need to get to a position of mutual respect and business arrangements negotiated and new agreements reached as we work towards more autonomy. We also need now, to be planning for any further VAT reductions as I am sure, the UK will be back to re-negotiate further on this.

Multi million pound projects such as new schools (Bemahague), school improvements, new first time buyer housing, public sector housing improvements and rebuilds, new infrastructure.

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

Government restructuring – what a waste of money!! Right in the middle of the VAT Bombshell delivered to us by the UK. The UK slashing our national income by nearly 20% - Bully Britain – no asking they just did it. Near loss of our reciprocal health agreement. This has affected us all. Government in turn had handled this by putting up costs everywhere and making cut backs, and reducing departmental spending - Austerity Measures which are effecting us all and reducing our weekly income. People are finding it ever harder to make ends meet and pay their weekly house hold bills. This is even more acute for the less well-off and our pensioners and those on low incomes. This is further exacerbated by the 'credit crunch', and the rising world fuel prices – all impacting onto our standard of living. In my view, some of the Government cut backs and austerity measures are not being handled with common sense and should come under heavy scrutiny.

**Does the candidate feel that the Isle of man has been too reliant upon the**

Most definitely. This has caused a 'feel good factor' to pervade

**financial services industry?**

through Government, and Government Departments where Departments have become used to 'big budgets' and going back to Tynwald for additional monies. Government have failed to spot 'changing times' and react more quickly and in a proactive fashion. This has also in my view caused Government not to be as active or proactive in diversifying the economy – there has not been a sense of urgency on this. It has been slowly happening, but not to the extent it should be.

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

The new Department of Economic Development has to drive this forward as a matter of priority, and indeed has to mine out business for the Island due to the VAT reductions we have had to suffer at the hands of the UK. I get the sense that this new department, which is an amalgamation of other sections of Government is still 'just doing the same things as they always have' – this is just not good enough it needs to be driven hard to 'go out there' and advertise and canvass for business. We have the most excellent

credentials to attract further business here – Political Stability, a wonderful environment – one of the best in the UK according to surveys and quality of life, SPACE to develop, our independence and uniqueness. These attractive qualities need to be pressed home at every available opportunity. We need high level delegations going out canvassing for business in a more aggressive and proactive way, not just turning up at shows and stands. We need to be knocking on doors and selling the Island as the best place to relocate business to. We are business friendly and have the market edge in some of what we do.

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

Yes

**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?**

Yes



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

Of the Steam Packet, and we should re look at buying a 'slot at Heathrow', we lost this chance a few years ago, then our air operators could use this in an arranged deal, and of course a massive plus for business.

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

No, these need to be carefully managed, we have not got the space of land to 'hide' banks of these ugly landscape ruining windmills'. We should be looking at wave power. Or off shore wind power.

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

There needs to be a cut off at a certain level of income or tapered out using the tax system. Government must have incentives in place for those that can, to enable them to buy their own house, or schemes in place such as split equity, or as we see in Scotland – 'rent to buy schemes'. Currently there are no real incentives to encourage people to buy their own home. There are many that would, but because a mortgage would be too expensive for them (many are in their 40's and 50's) to cope with the repayments. We need



to evaluate how we can help here.