

The Representation of the People Act 1995

RODGER GIMBERT

(Independent)



**For
PEEL**

GIMBERT, Rodger

X

House of Keys General Election

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Dear Peel Resident

I have been honoured and privileged to represent you on the Board of Peel Town Commissioners since May 2004 and as Chairman in 2009/10. I would now like to offer myself as an independent candidate for Peel in the forthcoming House of Keys General Election.

I grew up on the Island and moved to Peel in 1996 when I married my wife Jan. Many will remember Jan's grandparents George and Marion Vick and for us there was no other place to live. Peel has always been a unique and vibrant community and my main reason for entering local politics initially was to try to make things better in the place where my children were growing up. Jan and I have two sons; Arran who is now aged 13 and Bruce who is 9.

Straight talking and honesty are principles I have adhered to during my two terms as a Commissioner as I have tried to do my best for the people of Peel. I also believe very strongly that a MHK once elected should continue to represent the views of their electorate as they work within the system of Government.

I have worked in competitive business environments for the last fifteen years for a number of large companies. I have been responsible for budgets of up to twenty million pounds and my roles have also involved the identification of best practice and the development of innovative solutions to improve service and reduce waste. I feel that this experience would enable me to contribute to the development of policies that would promote effective long term strategic planning for the Island.

We face enormous challenges over the next five years. Common sense, focus and integrity are required if we are to maintain our quality of life and look forward to a future in which the Island will continue to prosper in national and international arenas.

I may have already managed to speak to you in person but if I have missed you and you would like to see me to discuss any issues please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or email.

Lhiats



Rodger Gimbert

The Economy

Now more than ever we need to focus on protecting the growth of our economy. Get this wrong and ALL government plans will be worthless. **We need to balance income generation and expenditure whilst still providing the services that are important in maintaining our quality of life.**

We have had a severe setback in the last few years with the UK twice revisiting our VAT sharing agreement. We are going to have to adapt to the loss in revenue, but the Manx economy is robust – we have had continuous growth over the last 20 years. We need to learn from the mistakes made by the last Government and redress the balance in our relationship with the UK whilst working proactively towards developing **stronger alliances** with other partners throughout Europe and the rest of the world.

We need to continue to **support the development of business** within the Island, as this will improve our income generation and reduce the reliance on secondary taxation. Retail businesses operating on the island should be registered for VAT here in the Island. Check your receipts, Manx companies have a VAT registration number starting with “00”.

I would like to see the Island remarket itself as an **enterprise zone**, as this terminology moves away from the internationally reviled “Tax Haven”. We have the ability to provide incentives for research and development companies to relocate to the Island. Knowledge based industries such as these could be supported by an Isle of Man patents office and other parts of our current business and technology infrastructure. This is just one example of how we could diversify and further strengthen our economy from our current position.

At the same time we must not overlook established industries within the island, such as **tourism**. Short breaks and specialist holidays can rejuvenate this industry providing income and employment all year round.

It is important that our **farming is supported** and protected to promote future viability and food security. The cost of slaughter on the Isle of Man is higher than in the UK and, as a result, you can buy Manx reared meat

cheaper in the UK than at home. We should therefore find a way to make our abattoir more cost effective, thereby enabling the sale of Manx produced meat at a competitive price when compared with imported meat of a similar quality.

We need to ensure that the Island gets the rights to protect fish and shell fish stocks in our territorial waters and that we continue to have a **viable fishing industry**. The licenses for fishing need to be reviewed and allocated to Manx based and registered vessels, allowing stocks to be better monitored and developed. I am concerned that the EU issues licenses to European countries who have little care for the size of nets used or the destruction of the fishing environment and breeding fish/shellfish stocks.

Recent research has demonstrated how easy it is to protect our local fish and shellfish stocks by good and prudent housekeeping, to the benefit of the Manx fishing industry.

Our system of government has the ability to respond quickly through implementing legislation in response to changes in other jurisdictions. This could be used much more to our advantage in the future.

Efficiency needs to be a priority of the Island's next government. Good leaders of government will need to look carefully at how to manage costs and realise solutions that **Maintain and Develop** service provision in the areas of need.

Closer scrutiny of Capital Projects is also essential as we need to ensure that we are continuing to provide the infrastructure that will benefit Island residents well into the future. We must look at both long and short term costs and if a higher short term cost will make long term savings, we should look to accept these. We need to change the culture of relying on UK consultants and trust the Isle of Man based professionals.

We need to **ensure that Work Permit Legislation is robust** in order to allow the recruitment of essential workers necessary for the Island's development but provide safeguards for Manx workers so as to maintain our relatively low rates of unemployment.

Education

It is vital that we continue to provide suitable educational provision for our **children**, as they **are 20% of our population but 100% of our future**. We need to actively invest in them.

We must look to provide **pre-school places for all children**, preferably in the area/school catchment where the family live, so that all children get a good start to their education. In my view, money spent in the early years of life is more than repaid, not just in educational achievements but also socially.

We have an increasing number of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (**NEET**). This is a trend we need to reverse now by providing appropriate training opportunities that develop real skills. We need to stop these young people from becoming long term dependent on our benefits system and give them a brighter future. This needs to be supported through enhanced **vocational education opportunities** being offered in schools alongside more **traditional GCSE and A level courses**. On leaving school young people should be able to continue their education following an **appropriate pathway**. This could be the IOM College, an apprenticeship or a university place.

Finance should not be a barrier to IOM students who have the grades to be able to take up **university** places but this does need to be balanced with costs to the taxpayer and direct benefits for the Island. Additional funding of higher education for doctors, dentists, nurses and teachers in shortage subject areas could be provided through the introduction of a **bursary system to top up grants** with the recipient agreeing to return to the Island to work for a period of time post qualification or paying back the bursary.

We also need to continue to invest in those with **special educational needs**, not reduce the available budget as this will lead to them being less likely to be actively involved in employment. **Education should be for all**, not just the most able.

We need to look at **our long term provision for all** of our children as they move into adulthood and **support** the transition of our most vulnerable so that they can become active, contributory members of our society.

As is the case at the moment **Manx Culture must be part of the curriculum** delivered to our students in school. This is so our young people develop a Manx identity while still being able to achieve in UK national examinations that will enable them to compete in the employment market.

The Health Service

The Health Service needs to be adequately funded, but equally it is imperative to get in place a **management** structure that is capable of running a modern, complex, high tech service industry, utilising a **best value** for money approach.

Waiting lists need to be addressed, they are ever increasing and we need to look at ways to reduce them as early diagnosis by a specialist can mean the difference between at best costly surgery, but in the worst case scenario life and death.

The new Doctors Surgery in Peel is very welcome but more needs to be done to increase the number of **doctors** available. We also need to push to have the **Podiatry service reinstated in Peel**. The North, South and East each have their own clinic and the West should not be left out.

Our Community

The **elderly** should be able to live within the area of the Island that allows them to be **close to family and friends**. I would like to see greater investment in appropriate provision for our increasing, elderly population.

Public buildings owned and financed by local and central government, should be utilised collaboratively with private companies and third sector providers to **make local facilities available for older people to meet and socialise**.

Young **children need safe places to play** so it is important that, as part of building developments now and into the future, space for playgrounds and equipment are included as planning conditions. Replacement and

renewing of equipment should continue to be jointly invested in by local and central Government.

Greater provision of **facilities** for the **youth** of the island needs to be encouraged, with investment partnerships derived from the public/private sector.

Social Housing

All social housing needs to be managed by the respective local authorities with the Department of Infrastructure providing regulation. The local authorities already have the manpower and resources available to manage the housing stock and they are also in a position to employ a local housing officer to monitor housing for necessary improvement.

Social housing needs to continue to be provided and invested in. We have started but it is important that this doesn't stall due to the current economic constraints.

Social housing needs to have an **affordable exit strategy** for those whose circumstances permit.

I would like to see **housing associations** and **part equity schemes** introduced which would allow people to take the first step on the ladder to home ownership.

Pensions

The Pension time bomb is ticking and we need to find an equitable solution for individuals and the economy in the future. **MHKs must lead by example in this.** MHK pensions should be contributory at a level in line with other public sector workers.

Pensions need to meet everyone's expectations to provide a reasonable and comfortable old age. To this end we need to provide legislation to ensure that **a pension is offered to every person over the age of 22**, subject to some exceptions such as part timers and voluntary staff.

Planning

The Island has been let down by the planning system. The west of the Island in the “All Island Strategic Plan” was supposed to have a maximum of 1,000 properties built up to 2016. This limit has been exceeded already and there are plans for further development within the west. **Development** needs to be at a **sustainable** level with the **services** (including schools, doctor’s surgeries and play areas) being part of the planning process. I will work towards introducing new policy to facilitate this practice.

We need to ensure that the whole Island has sustainable, **affordable**, **housing and the community remains well provided for and cohesive**.

Sympathetic regeneration of Peel using public and private sector funding needs to be encouraged. One such area includes the Sailors Shelter on Peel Quay. This is a facility that needs to be protected as part of our heritage and if the area is re-developed, it should be enhanced as part of any proposed scheme.

Peel is a cost effective option for the relocation of business as our rents and rates are competitive with other areas of the island. I would actively promote Peel as a supportive environment for ‘niche’ business opportunities.

The Environment

We need to make certain that all means of waste disposal are **equally subsidised**, not just the incinerator and landfill. This would encourage alternatives that can cost less than incineration and landfill.

Currently there is no Government policy to ensure the incorporation of **renewable energy technology** (such as solar ‘slates’ or ground source heat pumps) in **new builds** by the private sector. This technology is most effective over the lifetime of the property and will be a selling point for the future as energy costs continue to rise, this needs to be looked into as a possible planning policy.

All local and central Government owned buildings and establishments need to work to best practice in terms of **energy saving**.

Sewage Treatment

The pumping of raw sewage into Peel bay needs to stop BUT this cannot be done to the further detriment of our community.

In 2009 the Department of Transport Minister told Peel that it had to accept the Western IRIS regional strategy as planned by Government or it would be put to the back of the queue. **The only option offered was an open sewage treatment works within our town boundary that would not only take Peel's sewage but also that from the large and developing Foxdale and St Johns communities.** After I used the chairman's casting vote on the Board of Peel Town Commissioners to reject this option, the Minister carried out his threat and it is widely known that the Minister refused to enter into any discussion on alternatives.

The planned open treatment plant would have had a visual impact as well as a smell that would detract from the beauty of Peel and treated effluent would continue to be pumped into Peel bay. I will continue to oppose this option as it is not the right one for Peel.

Knockaloe would be the best suited area for a Western Sewage Treatment Plant as it is already owned by the Government. It would **save £650,000 on land purchase** and would mean that in the future **NO sewage or treated effluent would go into Peel's bathing area** as treated effluent from Knockaloe would be disposed of to sea. This would be similar to the South Eastern and planned Northern treatment plants ie. **situated on farms well away from towns**, with the treated effluent being discharged away from bathing areas. **Why, yet again, is Peel being viewed differently by Government?**

Roads and Parking

Our roads need to be pro-actively maintained and I would like to see a strategy of **advising those responsible for the utilities when road works are scheduled**. This is so that they can take advantage for the installation/ maintenance /modification of services buried under the road, thereby **avoiding duplication** of road works along with its resultant inconvenience to the public and waste of materials and manpower.

Roads around Peel are a major issue with HGVs using the town as a short cut. I will work towards a **weight restriction** on the roads through the town apart from the dedicated HGV route to the power station and buses. I will also endeavour to work towards a **long term solution for Peel in the form of a properly designed and situated relief road.**

Transferring the traffic to Oak Road does not resolve the issue. As part of the next Western Area Plan a planning policy statement will be needed to indicate the route of a distributor road, which must be included as part of planning gain within future development.

Parking has been an issue in Peel for a number of years. I will endeavour to **improve parking** by promoting a second level on the Douglas Street/Market Place car park, bringing benefits to businesses and residents.

Government

Following on from the establishment of how many **Government buildings** are actually publicly owned and how many are leased, **cost savings need to be made.** Alongside the reduction in the number of leased buildings some Departments could relocate outside of the expensive centre of Douglas. Government services do not all have to be based in Douglas. **Relocation of offices to other areas would have a positive impact on the local economy, stimulating regeneration,** as people tend to shop where they work.

We need to look at ways to **improve the system of Government, as at present, there is a lack of transparency, accountability and freedom of information.** Responsibility for mistakes must be acknowledged as a first step to reduce the likelihood of a reoccurrence. **I will work towards a robust Freedom of Information Bill,** within the first legislative year.

A review of the rating system for the island is well overdue. The current system has flaws, such as there being no single occupancy provision. We also need to make certain that other charges are not added, such as the inclusion of sewage treatment, which is possible due to existing legislation. I will oppose incorporating those costs in the water rates.

We need to ensure that we have all members of the Government publicly elected, to this end, I will promote legislation to have **MLCs elected by the people.**

The Chief Minister needs to be endorsed by the people, and not just appointed, without a public mandate, by the elected and non-elected representatives of Tynwald. I will support legislation requiring the outgoing House of Keys to ask for nominations to be put onto the ballot papers for the next election.

There needs to be a reduction in departmental membership to reduce patronage and promote **greater cross departmental scrutiny**.

Open communication channels for the electorate are vitally important if a MHK is to represent the constituent's views accurately. If elected I would hold monthly open surgeries as part of my commitment to represent Peel residents in Government.

We need to look in as well as out. Government needs to actively protect the use of the Manx language and promote Manx culture as a means of maintaining Manx identity whilst making strong representation of the IOM with the UK and Europe to protect our current agreements and enhance our international standing.

Law and Order

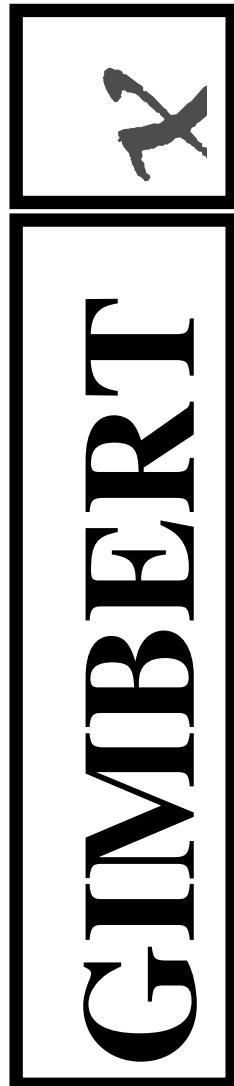
We need a community based police presence, on foot, and involved with all levels and sectors of our society. Petty crime, nipped in the bud, is a far better deterrent than ASBOs. We have to encourage respect for the law, and at the same time, self respect. This would be far better than paying lip service to short term emotive issues.

I am supportive of Sarah's Law adapted to work within the Manx system which would be a benefit to help protect our children.

A Candidate for Change, Working for PEEL.
Vote Rodger Gimbert on the 29th September, 2011.

Thank you for reading my manifesto and if you would like to show your support the back page can be used as a small poster for your car or house window.

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Time for Change, Time for Peel

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