

Ray Harmer – Glenfaba and Peel

Political Questions (2016)

Why do you want to be a member of the House of Keys?

To serve and represent the constituents of Glenfaba and Peel and to see the fruition of a number of projects and policies over the next few years such as the completion of sewage treatment plants in Peel & St John's and the expansion of Peel Medical Centre.

The way in which we approach the next five years is crucial. Innovation and vision are needed to deal with the impact of Brexit effectively, to find creative solutions for the public services pension and budget deficit, to grow the economy and reshape government to meet future challenges.

I am passionate about working with others to face these challenges and move forward together with what is best for the Isle of Man.

If you were elected, what would your priorities be on a national level?

My priorities would be:

- Continue to grow and diversify the economy in the light of Brexit, ensuring the Island retains and grows its access to markets and retains and attracts workers
- Care for and support those in

If you were elected, what would your priorities be on a constituency level?

need

- Implement a health strategy to cater for the growing needs of the population. Move to community hubs and early prevention to reduce the demands on Nobles hospital
- Support lifelong learning, expand provision for entrepreneurial and vocational skills, and offer scholarships for university students.
- Maintain and develop international relationships and promote the Isle of Man
- Eliminate the annual £80 budget deficit
- Provide workplace pensions for those in the private sector and reduce the pension liability in public services

My priorities would be:

- Sewage Plant for Peel & St Johns
- Expanded provision in the Health Centre and First Responder capability
- Improve Infrastructure, including parking
- Support growth for farming,

How well do you think the present administration has handled the major challenges of the past five years?

- fishing and business
- Support for local schools and nursery education
- Area Plan for west

On a positive note, in roads were made to address the loss of VAT income. Also positive moves were made in policing and in education such as the provision of the engineering facility.

However, although some issues were tackled, the administration did not move quickly enough in its early years, such as in tackling the health service problems and in addressing the pension deficit. The budget process needs to be improved based on need rather than artificial targets.

What are the main political and social issues facing the Isle of Man in the next five years?

The way in which we approach the next five years is crucial. Innovation and vision are needed to deal with the impact of Brexit effectively, to find creative solutions for the public services pension and the budget deficit, to grow the economy and reshape government to meet future challenges.

How would you deal with the challenges referred to in the previous answer?

Maintain strong relationships with UK and Channel Islands

How would you deal with the issue of public sector pension reform and the public sector pension deficit?

The reforms in July were an important step because it capped the cost of the pension to a proportion of the employee's salary.

That set the principle but more work needs to be done. The detail of the changes in July needs further work such as the split of payments between employee and employer, potentially using career average, and for the option of linking the retirement age to the state pension age.

Because the public sector pensions are unfunded, we will need to build reserves to support those who will retire over the next 20 years.

I do not support closing the scheme. This would present a significant budget deficit as employee's contributions fund those who have retired. Our cash flow would be severely impacted.

What has changed in the past five years for Isle of Man residents for the better? (Please give examples)

We have seen further diversification and growth in the economy and low crime levels.

What has changed in the past five years

There has been little growth in wages,

**for Isle of Man residents for the worse?
(Please give examples)**

particularly those on lower incomes. We have seen the rise of taxes and charges.

Is the Isle of Man too reliant on any one sector of its economy?

We rely on Finance and e-gaming which are large sectors in the economy. Although we are diversified to a certain extent, we need to develop this in order to grow.

If you feel it is, how would you further diversify the Manx economy?

Through innovation such as bio-medicine, IT, crowdfunding and bitcoins. A key advantage is that as well as being innovative, we are able to react to change more quickly than others because our Island can create its own legislation. The Government needs more qualified staff to write legislation so that bills are not delayed.

Are you in favour of increased independence from the United Kingdom?

No

If you are, in which areas?

n/a

Are you in favour of parliamentary reform in the Isle of Man?

Yes

If you are, which aspects of the parliamentary system would you change?

In particular the introduction of draft bills to allow better scrutiny

Who should have the responsibility of electing the Chief Minister?

Only MHKs

Are you in favour of the nationalisation of air and/or sea services to and from the Isle of Man?

No

Are you in favour of renewable energy projects in Manx territorial waters?

Yes, particularly tidal and wave energy, provided they are clear of strategic sea and air routes.

Are you in favour of an increase in means testing for financial support and/or services provided by Government?

Yes

If you are, in which areas?

Housing is one area which would benefit.