

## **Paul Craine – Middle**

### **Political Questions (2016)**

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

I am well qualified (BA, MA, MPhil, NPQH) and have considerable expertise on on the Island's population. I have good analytical and communication skills and believe that I could contribute a great deal in the House of Keys. Above all I am a Manxman and care about the Island's future. I am proud of many of the things we achieved in the past and I want to be proud of what we achieve in the future.

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

The budget and the population are the two highest priorities. Everything else depends on these. Getting the balances right are essential.

Government has wisely avoided 'slash and burn' cuts but the drive for ever-smaller government is hitting some people hard and certain policies may be contributing to migration losses. I support the views expressed by the outgoing Treasury Minister that our tax strategy needs to be fairer.

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

Ensuring that government planning meets the needs of the parishes. Middle has taken the brunt of population and

economic growth in the past. The new Area plan must secure adequate amenities such as shops, must retain green separations between rural communities and must not swamp villages with new development.

Ensuring that road surfaces are improved in the residential areas of Middle. There needs to be a structured programme of repairs over the next five years.

Ensuring that speeding in Middle is addressed. Speed limits need to be enforced and traffic needs to be slowed down.

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

The present administration has 'grown the economy' and kept unemployment to a low level - but this has not helped government income to increase. Front line services are not well funded. Government was slow to accept that population growth had ended and the population had begun to decline.

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

Public finances are likely to be the key political issue. Population ageing and pensions will feature as important social issues.

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

Public finances are about getting the balances right. With government income

flat-lining below inflation, mid-point earnings falling and population decline, we must be cautious about taking money out of the economy to put into reserves. On the other hand... we cannot afford to waste public funds. Population and pension issues can be eased by encouraging a return to population growth. Attracting jobs through the Enterprise Development Scheme and removing barriers to young families remaining or returning can stimulate population growth to give a better age balance. My understanding of migration would be at a premium here.

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

Again it is about getting the balance right. Public sector pensions have been reformed but they remain unfunded. This must be addressed in a sustainable way. There is still a need to attract and retain key members of the workforce.

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

There have been many improvements: rebuilding of public sector housing, new secondary school in Onchan, new primary school in Douglas, more apprenticeships, new exams for 14-16 year olds, reduced youth unemployment, new government shared equity house purchase scheme – in

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

addition to economic growth and reduced crime.

There have equally been many changes for the worse: the move from population growth to decline, declining birth rate, fall in mid-point earnings, many people worse off financially than a year ago, underfunding of health care, longer hospital waiting lists, deterioration of roads, inferior air services, increasing charges imposed in unfair ways eg through rates.

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

The diversity of the Isle of Man economy remains a strength. We would have been considerably worse off in recent without the high salary e-gaming industry but we must not become over-dependent on this. It is subject to risks and cycles like all other sectors.

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

There are high expectations for the Enterprise Development Scheme, the £50 million flagship development programme. This needs to focus on high growth sectors such as biomedical, ICT, cleantech/greentech and advanced engineering.

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

I support reform and dialogue to ensure fair treatment from the UK. But this must not get in the way of work on population and the economy.

**If you are, in which areas?**

When Scotland was considering leaving the UK it was guaranteed an Extended Economic Zone of 200 nautical miles around its coast. The Isle of Man should have more than 12 nautical miles of territorial sea.

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

Yes - but this also must not get in the way of work on population and the economy.

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

The introduction of a 'Programme for Government', reduced role for MLCs and strengthening of the policy review (scrutiny) committees – all recommended in the Lisvane Report.

**Who should have the responsibility of electing the Chief Minister?**

I believe that a direct election for Chief Minister would hand too much power to one individual. It is essential that the CM has the support of Ministers, the Keys and Tynwald. I would support the election of the CM by MHKs rather than by Tynwald.

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

No. Airlines and shipping companies are better delivered by the private sector where the balance between investment and financial risk is not borne by government. However, government has a role in regulating essential sea services and essential air routes such as London and Liverpool. These are too important to leave to purely commercial decisions.

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

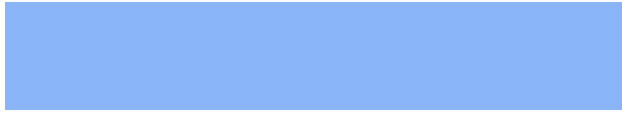
Yes. At some stage we will need to use renewable options to meet our carbon reduction commitments. In the short term we are locked into traditional technology and have an overcapacity for electricity production. In the longer term tidal turbines may offer greater potential, greater continuity and less environmental damage than off-shore wind turbines.

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

Means testing is currently in use in some areas (eg university fees, child benefit) but not in others (eg prescription charges for older people). Our tax structure is more regressive than most other jurisdictions so there is scope to increase means testing to make taxation more fair.

**If you are, in which areas?**

Prescription may be one area. There is no



need to subsidise residents with a very high income.