

Chris Robertshaw – Douglas East

Political Questions (2016)

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

To drive forward the work I started in the previous House – there is a great deal of unfinished business.

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

To help deliver a reformed government both fit for future purpose and capable of properly serving the citizen.

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

One: To continue the work I started with the Douglas Master Plan – the capital remains desperately in need of significant investment. Two: To make the promenade refurbishment actually happen! Three: To ensure Douglas rate payers are fairly treated when the revisions to our current system are brought in.

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

Externally I think it did well. Internally it was disappointing and too slow to reform. The next administration will face new issues externally and has a very great deal to do internally.

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

Internally there will be a need to allocate increasing funds to Education, Health and Social Care against the backdrop of

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

limited resources.

Externally to steer the island through the complexity of a post Brexit world.

Internally by significantly reforming government – redirecting funds from an archaic administrative system and a top heavy government structure through to the front line services identified in the previous answer.

Externally by creating the strongest possible team lead by a Minister for External Affairs sitting within in the Cabinet Office to deal with the repercussions from Brexit and co-ordinate our response.

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

The importance of fair and sustainable public sector pensions (as well as responding to the priorities outlined in the previous two questions) is at the heart of the very significant internal challenges facing the next House and it will require a truly reforming administration if it is to overcome them. We are a low tax jurisdiction and must remain so and yet, quite rightly, we have high expectations in terms of government service delivery. This was fine during the years of plenty but much more difficult now and in the

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

future. I have outlined what I believe are the solutions in my manifesto entitled **'The Little Book of Government Reform – a guide to making government work for you'**.

I am not a pessimist but in some respects I struggled with this question as it has been a difficult period in a number of ways. There have however been some steady steps forward in various areas - for example the Freedom of Information Act and the determination to enact disability protection which has been long awaited. I also believe the Regulation of Care Act was an important step forward to protect the elderly and vulnerable adults and children.

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

The pressures on individual and family budgets has been remorseless through wage and salary suppression combined with an increase in the charges passed down by government.

On a personal note I have to say that I was very disappointed that the Landlord and Tenant Bill did not find its way successfully through the House.

Is the Isle of Man too reliant on any one

Reliance at least suggests that a given

sector of its economy?

area of the economy is strong and that must be welcomed but what we must do is constantly work towards further diversification.

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

It is vital that we continue to do so and that is why, whilst a minister, I instigated the work through the National Strategy Group that ultimately emerged later as the Business Enterprise Scheme.

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

I think this is a somewhat simplistic question and as such is really part of an outdated narrative or mindset. The Isle of Man has over the years progressively and carefully repositioned itself to achieve the right level of self determination having regard to adjacent jurisdictions and our own contemporary circumstances. If as a result of the, yet unknown, degree of fallout from Brexit the Isle of Man finds it necessary in some way to further adjust our present position then I trust we will pursue this with great care. That is why in an earlier question I have suggested we now need a Minister of External Affairs to lead a team with the appropriate focus.

If you are, in which areas?

We will have to carefully monitor Brexit developments in the coming months

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

and years but clearly the key area of interest must be our capacity to support trade and industry.

Yes – both government and parliamentary reform. These two are inter dependent and I deal with both in my manifesto. I believe that they will be crucial to our future well being.

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

Too much to list in a short Q and A piece so I would again refer you to my manifesto which deals with this question.

Who should have the responsibility of electing the Chief Minister?

Tynwald should elect the Chief Minister but he or she should soon thereafter, in consultation with the rest of the newly elected members, bring forward a program for the following five year administration. This in turn should then be subject to a Tynwald vote.

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

I would wish to retain the open sky policy but I am a very long standing critic of the user agreement which has placed our lifeline in the hands of the international financial markets. I believe the people of the isle of Man should own the sea assets whilst outsourcing the management of the operation.

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

In principle yes.

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?

Please see my manifesto for details