

## **Richard McAleer – Arbory, Castletown and Malew**

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

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

I believe that the time is right to take the next step, I am not standing out of any long standing political ambition, but because I feel I have the ability, skills and drive needed to be a good MHK not only for my constituents but the Island as a whole.

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

Ensuring that we maintain a healthy economy capable of supporting our frontline services. Health – providing more accommodation for the increasing elderly population to free up hospital resources. Additional money for new nurses and training for existing staff to maintain standards. Cut waste inside government to allow savings to be used elsewhere. Education – support our teachers and students to provide the best education possible. Increase after school funding to support Youth Clubs and extracurricular activities. Find a solution to the Pensions issue and look to diversify our economy to avoid over reliance on Finance and E Gaming.

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

Build new affordable housing in and around Castletown in particular, ensure that the proposed Enterprise zone at

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

Ronaldsway & Balthane is a success in attracting Investment. Make sure that the new Castle Rushen High School is progressed sooner rather than later. Ensuring that the more rural areas of the constituency are properly represented. Prevention of flooding not only in the coastal areas but also in inland areas such as Colby, Ballabeg and Ballasalla. Work with the local authorities to promote greater cooperation and ensure ratepayers get value for money. This constituency is as much a gateway to the Island as Douglas claims to be, it is essential that the representatives of this area fight tooth and nail for greater investment and create jobs and footfall for our Towns and Villages. We host some of the best attended events on the Island, Tin Baths, Southern 100, Castletown Festival, Southern Agricultural Show and Laa Columb Killey to name a few. We can be proud of this part of the Island and it would be an honour and privilege to serve as its MHK.

I believe the current administration has made mistakes over the last five years, the Pension scheme debacle is a prime example, money spent on Consultations that have no end result. The Hospital has many issues that have not been resolved, throwing zero hours contracted

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

staff at the problem is not the solution.

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

Brexit repercussions, Financial pressures from outside the IOM, continued scrutiny of our Financial Sector.

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

As far as Brexit is concerned it is very much a waiting game to see what deal the UK can do with the EU. It is vitally important that the IOM Government maintain pressure on their counterparts in Westminster to ensure that the IOM is included in any deal particularly in respect to VAT. Global economic pressures will continue to affect us and it is vital that the sectors that have traditionally done well continue to punch above their weight and that new opportunities are identified and exploited. We are ahead of many of rivals in terms of regulation and transparency and that is essential to maintain our reputation as a well-run jurisdiction.

This is a difficult area as many of the issues are historic, a cap on Lump sum payments is one possibility, a rise in Interest rates would obviously assist in providing a return on investments but there is no sign of that in the foreseeable

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

future. Increased contributions by employees is another logical step, MHKs and MLCs should lead the way in this regard.

In terms of reforming the scheme it needs to be fair and in line with similar schemes in the private sector. This is not a new problem it has been an issue for the last two decades and the current liability is not sustainable over a long period.

Unemployment has continued to remain low bucking the trend in other major economies. Crime rate has continued to be low, a fact that is more laudable when you consider the cuts to the Police budget. The government has managed to keep a handle on its finances but the cuts need to stop now to enable the recovery to be completed.

Small glimmers of light which have been surpassed by failures in other areas.

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

People at the lower end of the pay scales are worse off, pay has been relatively static yet Rents are increasing at alarming rates year on year. Cost of Living is going up. People have lost faith in their government. The government need to do more to support independently run small businesses and the self-employed. Times have been

hard and they have been hit the hardest. This is evident in the high streets by the number of empty units. Regeneration schemes on their own are not sufficient to boost our economies and in many cases these schemes have caused loss of earnings during construction. I support the concept of Regeneration but there should have been provision to compensate for loss.

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

The Island has been over reliant on the finance sector for many years.

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

Attract new industries to the Island, boost the tourist economy through specialised tours e.g. Dark Skies, Cruise ships, use the status of the Island's Bio-diversity. There are always solutions available the Island has reinvented itself many times.

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

I don't think we are ready for economic independence from the UK just yet but I think the case is getting stronger to start considering other options.

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

We could start investigating other options such as links with Ireland, other crown dependencies and if it occurs an Independent Scotland.

**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?**

The process has already begun and I believe it is long overdue, the system of governance by the Council of Ministers needs an overhaul, there should be ways for Ministers to vote with their conscience rather than the block vote that it currently creates. There are times when the block vote is necessary but the old system of Boards with independent chairmen worked reasonably well for many years so there is scope for alternatives. How we elect our MLCs is a farce there has to be a better way to do it than the current pantomime. I have no strong feelings on whether they should be publicly elected but they should not be holding Ministerial posts. Government budgetary system needs an overhaul, the current system promotes waste at end of financial year.

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

MHKs only

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

I am in favour of a better service for the Island but not convinced nationalisation

**Isle of Man?**

is the way forward.

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

Yes, but it has to be in the right areas and not affect our air or sea routes and fishing industries.

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

I believe it is inevitable, it would have been in force already but for mistakes by certain areas of the last administration.

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

Public sector housing rents is the most obvious area. There does need to be an assessment of ability to pay rather than a blanket percentage rise each year as has been the case. It MUST be fair though and properly thought through.