

Political Questions – Richard Ronan (2011)

Why this candidate wishes to be a member of the House of Keys?

To contribute positively in creating a new direction for the Island and thus safeguard it for future generations.

How well does the candidate think that the present?

- Too complacent, especially in first 3 years when they should have created “rainy day” funds, and then reactive for 2 years due to lack of vision and clear policy, (reciprocal health agreement, bus timetable review, etc).
- Vote buying in last 12 months through a failure to rein in public spending in a timely fashion when VAT revenues began to plummet, and then cynically trying to win favour with the electorate with initiatives like regeneration, without proper feasibility studies to study their worth to our economy.
- Policy Void which lead to poor decisions and of lack of accountability within the government and senior civil servants. e.g. Richmond Hill, Waste and Sewage, VAT situation, Public Sector Pension liability.

If the candidate were elected, what would their priorities be at a constituency level?

1. Housing for young people, either in or in the surrounding areas of Castletown, looking at all areas including the unacceptable gap

If the candidate were elected, what would their priorities be at a national level?

between the private and the public sector, and work on new policy to make it easier to get on the housing ladder. 2. Encourage employment back to the Castletown (600 jobs in 5 years lost to Douglas from the South e.g. PDMS, Capital International, Boal + Co, Celton Manx, due to lack of suitable quality and size of premises). 3. Continued investment in heritage tourism in the town - needs more focus on heritage in the centre of the town and carefully planned investment which can grow the towns economic contribution from off and on island visitors. 4. Public/Private initiatives to re-invigorate the town, including more open dialogue with the traders, property owners and developers. Reinvent Castletown Chamber of Trade along the lines of the very successful Ramsey Chamber of Trade, to drive a more "joined up" approach to the economic centre of the town.

1. Generate revenue to offset VAT situation. 2. Reduce bureaucracy and thus Motivate Private sector. 3. Develop appropriate policy re ageing population. 4. Reduce cost of

What does the candidate view as the main political and social issues facing the Isle of Man in the next 5 years?

public sector (natural wastage, reviewing Scope of government in line with Quayle Report - corporatisation, public/private partnerships, stopping doing some functions and accepting we just can't afford them at present i.e. more for less, addressing public sector pension liability). 5. Provide jobs/work experience and housing for young people, getting people off benefits and re-engage them in to working practices, (including voluntary work, those who are able to work should be assisted and trained to find meaningful employment to enable a positive contribution to society. 6. Undertake a review of tourism opportunities and increase visitor numbers to this beautiful island, especially eco lead/Rural opportunities outside Douglas, and also harness our motorsport heritage on 2 and 4 wheel, all year round. 7. Ensure we have solid Health and Education policies.

1. We can no longer afford to do everything we have done in the last 5 years. 2. The public sector is too large now and unsustainable – we will have

only about £600m p.a. to spend (natural. wastage, improved efficiency, corporatisation, performance measurement and management). This will be one of the hardest issues to deal with as this decrease needs to be offset by new jobs in the public sector and a large retraining and education programme will be needed.

3. Managing the public's expectations in line with the public purse - Replacing an "entitlement culture" with one that addresses real need.
4. Rebuilding International relations + influence with UK so that ongoing dialogue stops nasty surprises e.g. Reciprocal Health agreement, and ensuring our economic position is clearly understood internationally in the way the TIEA strategy by Treasury has achieved this.
5. Revenue shortage, need to target and develop emerging opportunities for the long term.
6. Ageing population demographic and impact on the economy and public service provision e.g. potential medium term un-sustainability of NHS.
7. Provision of Jobs + Housing.
8. Potential "brain drain" if economy falters – the best

How would the candidate deal with the challenges/issues over the next five years - as stated in the Main Social Issues question?

and brightest could leave the Island if the economy falters and these are the people who drive innovation and create wealth for the economy usually, they need to be retained and a healthy and viable economy with a high quality of life is the best way to ensure this. 9. Delivering a first class education to the young people of the island that supports the current and future needs of society and equips them with employment and employability skills.

1. Review scope of government – go back to the Quayle report from 2006 work to £600m p.a. budget. 2. Ensure that where service provision becomes more limited (which appears an inevitability given the VAT situation) it is more accurately targeted at those that need it most. At the same time develop and implement Policy that ensures that those that can work and are fit and healthy should be found meaningful employment and contribute to our society and those who refuse should lose their benefit. We need to be a more caring sharing community where everybody who can

contributes. Develop public/private delivery mechanisms that substantially reduce costs in delivering necessary services. Review alternative mechanisms e.g. Social Enterprise, Public/Private partnership model, Privatisation with and without subvention. 3. Policy focus to support economically active – at the end of the day it is the working population that pay for everything and we need to ensure that they don't lose out the most when cutbacks are made and that we keep them fit and healthy to keep working and earning for the economy. 4. Identify + create new and positive international linkages – e.g. follow on the TIEA initiative. 5. Protect and incentivise local food production and increase island exports and promote goods as synonymous with quality. A more joined up approach to the islands marketing. 6. Promote accelerate and growth of niche & new market exports.

Sporting and leisure facilities, refurbishment of social housing and tax agreements.

What does the candidate feel has changed for the better, for Isle of Man residents, in the past five years - giving examples?

What does the candidate feel has changed for the worse for Isle of Man residents, in the past 5 years - give examples?

1. Lack of international Trust and confidence. 2. Planning + Economic policy too Douglas centric. 3. Erosion of power by central government. 4. Financial mismanagement and Squandering of reserves – often to buy popularity. 5. Lack of forward thinking policy has made us “reactive not proactive”, so forced us to “live today” with little thought. for “future proofing”(see 7 below) A type of “X Factor” politics. 6. Complacency + demonstrable lack of confidence on part of CoMIN e.g., reciprocal health agreement, consultations etc. 7. Lack of Vision, Poor leadership, No accountability e.g. still no FOI legislation.

Does the candidate feel that the Isle of man has been too reliant upon the financial services industry?

Not in the absence of anything else, however for the future diversification and development of new and niche industries is key e.g. Space, high tech manufacturing, leaders in eco industry & housing, forming partnerships with major corporations enabling them freedom and giving them off-shore headquarters.

If The candidate feels there is too

1. “Think locally act globally” - needs

much Financial Services reliance, how does the candidate feel that they would further diversify the Manx economy?

to be our mission, to look after and develop those at home whilst harnessing modern technology, connectivity and communications to grow our economy and influence. We are only an “isolated” Island if we think and behave as if we are! 2. Incentives for local businesses to grow off island (especially via WWW). 3. Ensure training and education offered to young people (especially Graduates, Business School and IOM College) supports needs of future IOM labour market. 4. Create networks for general and specialised Executive “Homeworking”. Lets be the leaders in this growing field. 5. Develop, Produce and export premium quality foods, with a true Manx feel (e.g. Jersey royals for example) (also mentioned in Q5 item 6).

Is the candidate in favour of independence from the United Kingdom?

In an ideal world yes, but we are informed the island has too much to lose however all the facts and long term implications need to be looked at before any decision is made. As the recent VAT negotiations have been conducted so secretively there needs to be much greater openness

Is the candidate in favour of -and if a standing member, did they vote for- a popularly elected Legislative Council?

and understanding of this particular issue before we consider all the other aspects of independence. I was born a proud Manxman and remain one and Independence will not change that for me.

Is the candidate in favour of -and if a standing member, did they vote for- a popularly elected Chief Minister?

I would be open to the argument for elections, but issue at the moment is not the election process but rather the purpose of the second Chamber. Their function needs to change to become scrutinising not revising.

Is the candidate in favour of nationalisation of air and or sea services to and from the Isle of Man?

This is a leadership role that requires vision and management skills and is not a popularity contest.

Is the candidate in favour of onshore wind farms in the Isle of Man?

1. Air – key routes need protecting and affordability for residents and tourists is key. 2. Potential for Public/private partnership of sea should be explored.

In developing forward looking Policy the Island must find innovative ways to improve sustainability in all aspects of our life: energy, shelter, food. Solutions need to be long term, cost

Is the candidate in favour of Means testing for "universal" benefits and social housing?

effective and in sympathy with our environment.

We need to change an entitlement culture to one that focuses more limited resources to where they are most needed. The Island has a good quality of life in part because recent Policy has ensured that we have "cared for" those more vulnerable and marginalised within our society. Just because we face having less to spend we should not put aside our wish to be a Caring society. Means testing in itself could divide and segregate our communities, and if we are going to introduce this as a policy then it should be considered beyond the boundaries of benefits and social housing. Going forward Policy needs to ensure that those who are able to work and look after themselves should be found meaningful employment and be able to contribute to society. Those who are fit and healthy and refuse should lose benefit and social entitlement. We will still be a "caring" island but we no longer have the luxury of being able to carry "passengers".