

## Political Questions – Lawrie Hooper (2011)

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

The Island has some tough times ahead and I think the House of Keys needs members with a variety of skills and from different walks of life to make sure it is best equipped to meet the challenges ahead. I also feel that Ramsey has been marginalised in the past and needs someone who is willing to speak up for the town.

**How well does the candidate think that the present?**

The government has managed to keep the Island out of recession which I applaud them for. But on the other hand there have been some issues on which I believe they could have done better. I believe that the financial situation the Island finds itself in now is down at least in part to a lack of forward planning on the part of our current administration.

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

The main thing Ramsey needs is more promotion as a place to do business. Ramsey needs more investment to help the town grow. Specifically, the building of a Marina in Ramsey needs to be investigated as does the renovation of Queens Pier.

**If the candidate were elected, what**

MLC's and our Chief Minister should

**would their priorities be at a national level?**

be elected and this is a priority for me. Closing the revenue gap is a key priority for the Island this means we need to look closely at government spending and at the ways in which government raises revenue. The Island also needs continued promotion as a place to do business and Tynwald should be less focused on Douglas when making its decisions.

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

The main challenge facing the Island is dealing with the loss of revenue. We need to make sure that the government is spending what money it has in the best way for the Island. Politically we need to make sure that government is accountable to the people and to do this we need to have an elected Legislative Council and Chief Minister. The Island has an ageing population and we need to make sure that the government is planning for the future to ensure that current and future generations receive the support that they will need when they retire.

**How would the candidate deal with the challenges/issues over the next**

We need to continue to promote the Island as a place to live and work

**five years - as stated in the Main Social Issues question?**

and as a place that companies want to come to. We need to make government as efficient as it can be to reduce costs whilst still providing an excellent service. A full review of government income and expenses should be undertaken to see if current arrangements are the best for the Island. One of the first actions of the new House should be to arrange for the public election of the MLC's and Chief Minister. The most important thing I would do is involve the electorate in all of the above processes and to make sure that they get a chance to have their say. People have a right to know where their taxes are spent and there should be more communication of this by government.

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

Ramsey has had new schools built, which are a real bonus for the town. The business centre in Douglas is an excellent development which could be replicated in Ramsey. For me, the Island has not changed substantially over the past five years.

**What does the candidate feel has changed for the worse for Isle of Man**

The main change for the worse is that people have lost faith in government.

**residents, in the past 5 years - give examples?**

Government has brought this on itself by continuing to show how out of touch it is. For example, MHK's receiving non-contributory pensions is an absolute disgrace, more so in these trying financial times.

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

No, I don't think that it has. We have a diverse economy on the Island although the finance sector plays a prominent role. A problem we face on the Island is being seen as a haven for "tax dodgers" and the government can do more to help dispel this misconception. The government should continue to encourage growth in all sectors of our economy, just as it should encourage growth in all areas of our Island and not just in and around Douglas.

**If The candidate feels there is too much Financial Services reliance, how does the candidate feel that they would further diversify the Manx economy?**

See above

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

No. Although our current relationship with the UK should be looked at closely to make sure that our current arrangements (such as the VAT

sharing agreement and the reciprocal health arrangements) are what's best for the Island.

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

No. I don't approve of the idea of the government running our transport links any more than I approve of them running the Gas and Electricity. If government monopolies prove to be best for the Island then so be it, but they should all be reviewed to make sure that they really are what's best.

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

No. I have yet to be convinced that onshore wind farms are the right way forward for the Island, but I will always keep an open mind.

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

Yes. The government has to ensure that the money it raises is spent where it is most needed.

