

## Political Questions – Gareth Kelly (2011)

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

I want to help the Island in its time of need. I know I have the skills required to do the job. I'm committed, determined, hard working and have real life experience in the current climate, and feel I'm more in tune with the people and what they want, and how to get it done.

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

I don't think they have handled the challenges particularly well. They seem to have been hiding in the background and hoping it would all pass them by – the current VAT crisis being a case in point.

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

To make sure we keep Malew and Santon the wonderful places they are; to be more active in the community and be the voice of the people for their needs; to see if we can bring more companies down south.

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

To reduce the amount we spend - we have no option but to do this; to look at ways to bring value for money for every £ the government spends, to reduce waste; to run the government more closely to how a private

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

company would be run, but still offering good services; and to bring new companies, local and from abroad to the Island. Only then can we start to think of how we can improve the Islanders' lives.

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

The main political issues are without a doubt the loss of the VAT and where that will lead us. It really all does hinge on how we deal with the loss of £200m in income, and what knock on effects this brings with it. Managing the economy to keep the Island growing is another area in which we actively need to be working, and keeping up the frontline services of the health and education sectors.

Look at ways to reduce the waste in government for a start. A complete evaluation of costs needs to be done, and a value per hour needs to be put on these services; only then can we start to fix the problem. Look at ways to encourage people in the Island to go out and start up on their own, to promote their ideas and help them get started and to actively look at ways we can bring companies over to the island. Make sure that

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

cost cutting does not impact the frontline services.

That's a tough one. I'm not sure anything has changed for the better in the last 5 years. Maybe the fact there is an election could be the thing that's changed for the better, at least the people will have a chance to see their MHK for a change and voice their views. However I do think the stable economy has been a good thing for the Island and its people. We have weathered the recession very well in terms of job losses on the Island. The continuing investment in children and education has been another positive.

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

Without a doubt the VAT agreement and I think the most damaging thing to us personally is the worry about what is going to happen to us - the uncertainty over our jobs and livelihood.

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

I think the Isle of Man has benefited from the financial industry as a whole. Has it been too reliant on it? No I don't think so; it gives a lot of jobs and the services that go hand in

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

hand with this type of work. And while many say that the time is over for the financial industry, I don't think it is; we will always need financial services, we just have to change and adapt to keep ahead, as you have to do in any business. Yes we need to look at other areas to provide jobs, and I think the government has tried to do that, with the e-gaming, space companies etc. But the government has been too reliant on the income we have had from the VAT over the last few years.

We need to look at the high-tech sector and how we can encourage those businesses over to the Island, as these companies will be in the spotlight for the next 10-20 years. Also companies that produce something for export, to offset the balance of trade between here and the UK. While manufacturing is always difficult on an Island with the added cost of shipping raw goods into the Island, it is still worth looking into. We need to encourage more people to set up their own companies. Innovation is what we need and the Island has plenty of people with it. We

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

just need to offer them the means and guidance to achieve this.

I think with the way the UK can reduce our VAT income with little notice, that this has maybe pushed us to look at how we can claim our own VAT on the Island, and this is a first step to becoming independent. Once we know what income we would have then we can move on from there. Lots of work has to be done yet, but this could be the shake up to cutting ties with the UK. But only if it was in the best interests of the people and 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

**Is the candidate in favour of onshore**

No, but if economically viable, then

**wind farms in the Isle of Man?**

offshore wind farms could be a good alternative.

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

Yes, if done right and fairly on a case by case basis.